



NEWS RELEASE

Town Council Approves Motion to Reduce Niagara-on-the-Lake Council Size

For Immediate Release

March 25, 2026

At its March 24 meeting, Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Council approved a motion to voluntarily reduce the size of its Council from one Lord Mayor and eight Councillors to one Lord Mayor and six Councillors, effective for the 2026 municipal election. The approved motion reflects Council's commitment to being responsive to the Province's concern regarding governance in Niagara.

This change reflects a broader regional discussion about modernizing governance structures, improving efficiency, and ensuring Council composition aligns with community size and needs. Niagara-on-the-Lake, with a population of approximately 19,000 residents, currently has one of the highest Councillor-to-population ratios in the region.

"Niagara-on-the-Lake is a small, rural community, and our governance structure should reflect that," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "A smaller Council is not a weaker Council; it is a more focused, more accountable, and more effective one that can better serve our residents. This decision also reflects ongoing feedback about the importance of keeping government efficient, cost-effective, and aligned with the needs of residents."

Niagara-on-the-Lake is not alone in considering changes to Council composition. Across the region, municipalities are reviewing governance models, with some already moving toward smaller Councils. Thorold, Port Colborne, and Grimsby have each passed formal resolutions to reduce the size of their local Councils. In total, more than 100 elected officials currently serve across Niagara's twelve lower-tier municipalities, with Council sizes ranging from four to twelve councillors, depending on population and structure.



The decision to reduce Council size is part of a broader effort to ensure efficient, responsive, and financially responsible local government. It also aligns with discussions aimed at reducing duplication and improving service delivery for residents.

Town Staff will now begin the administrative and legislative steps required to apply for the change ahead of the 2026 municipal election, including any required approvals and updates to election processes. The Town is now asking the Province to provide the legislative framework to make this change effective for the 2026 election, with a deadline of May.

For more information about the regional governance review, please visit the Town's dedicated [amalgamation webpage](#).

For immediate alerts, follow the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). [Subscribe](#) to receive Town news directly in your inbox.

Media Contact:

Marah Minor, Corporate Communications Lead
905-468-3266 | communications@notl.com