



March 7, 2026

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa
Members of Council
The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
1593 Four Mile Creek Road
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0

Re: Support for Niagara-on-the-Lake's Position on Amalgamation and Request for Release of the 2019 Seiling–Fenn Report

On behalf of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association (NOTLRA), we are writing to express our full support for the position taken by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in its March 4, 2026, submission to Minister Flack regarding the Province's amalgamation considerations. We also wish to express our support for the stance taken by the eight Niagara regional councils who have raised similar concerns about the absence of evidence-based justification for structural change.

We commend Council for clearly articulating that Niagara-on-the-Lake is a financially stable, operationally strong, and high-performing municipality, and that no business case, financial analysis, service-delivery study, or measurable evidence has been presented to justify forced amalgamation in Niagara. Your message that governance reform must be rooted in transparent, data-driven evaluation is entirely consistent with the views of NOTLRA members. We also support the premise that any review must include public consultations to ensure that all residents are part of any proposed solution and that the review is clearly transparent and accountable to all Niagara residents.

Additionally, your submission rightly emphasized that Niagara-on-the-Lake continues to deliver strong results across provincial priorities, including responsible growth management, agricultural protection, tourism stewardship, and infrastructure planning.

The NOTLRA remains concerned that the 2019 Provincial Regional Government Review conducted by advisers Ken Seiling and Michael Fenn was never released publicly. Many of the governance, service delivery, and accountability issues now raised again in 2026

appear similar to those reviewed in 2019. Without access to the original findings, municipalities and residents are being asked to evaluate structural change without access to the only comprehensive provincial review ever completed. When the emphasis of the recent amalgamation conversation has been on saving taxpayer dollars, how can we honestly proceed with the proposed review and spend potentially tens of thousands of additional taxpayer dollars without access to what is believed to have been a comprehensive review in the Fenn-Seiling report of 2019? To re-emphasize, it is imperative that this report be made public before any further action is taken.

For this reason, the NOTLRA respectfully requests that the Lord Mayor and Council advocate both at the municipal and regional council levels, for the public release of the **2019 Seiling–Fenn Report** and use its findings as the evidence-based starting point for any current or future governance discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Simkus, Norm Arsenault, Stuart McCormack, Andrea Lena, Steven Hardaker, Peter Neame, Bette Ann James

Board of Directors

Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association (NOTLRA)

Comparison: Niagara's 2026 Issues vs. What the 2019 Review Was Intended to Address (from public sources)

Theme: Service Duplication

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Ongoing confusion between regional and local roles, particularly in planning, transit, and housing coordination.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Identify duplication and recommend streamlined service responsibilities.](#)

Theme: Infrastructure & Capital Pressures

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Significant infrastructure backlog and capital-funding challenges.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Evaluate whether governance changes could improve long-term sustainability.](#)

Theme: Council Size & Governance Mechanics

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Large number of elected officials contributing to complex decision-making.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Assess governance structures and modernization options.](#)

Theme: Two-Tier Accountability Issues

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Blurred accountability for planning, transit, and emergency services.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Clarify roles and responsibilities.](#)

Theme: Evidence-Based Reform

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Lack of transparent, publicly available data for decision-making.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Provide research and financial modeling to support decisions.](#)

Theme: Public Legitimacy

Niagara's 2026 Situation: Residents demand greater inclusion in governance discussions.

[2019 Review Intended Focus: Ensure transparency and public engagement.](#)