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Remembrance Day | Pages 10-13

Airport lays out \$195M vision for commercial flights

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Flights from Niagara-on-the-Lake to cities like Ottawa or Chicago could one day take off under a newly approved \$195-million, 20-year master plan to expand and modernize the Niagara District Airport.

Approved by the airport commission last month and released publicly Oct. 28, the 2025–2045 master plan outlines how the airport could expand in stages, with proposed upgrades to its terminal, runway, parking, and screening and customs facilities.

“At completion of the plan, the airport will be positioned to accommodate almost 600,000 passengers annually,” the commission said in a news release last week.

If funding and airline partnerships fall into place, the goal is to eventually ready the airport — jointly owned by the Town of

Continued on Page 4

Parliament Oak dumped

Trucks are taking fill from future hotel site and dumping it at Glencairn



After a tip from a neighbour, a Lake Report reporter discovered trucks are taking fill from the former Parliament Oak site and dumping it where Glencairn Hall once stood. The town was unable to confirm by press time whether the dumping is authorized. DAN SMEENK

Parents say DSBN is making a huge mistake with school boundary change

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

A meeting intended to ease tensions over new school boundaries for Niagara-on-the-Lake elementary

schools has only heightened frustration among Niagara on the Green families.

The change, approved by District School Board of Niagara trustees on Oct. 28, will move about 125 students from Niagara on

the Green out of the St. Davids Public School catchment and into Crossroads Public School starting next September.

The board cited overcrowding and traffic congestion at St. Davids as reasons

for the change.

It follows weeks of objections from Niagara on the Green families, who sent a letter to the board and provincial officials on Nov. 2 calling the process “fundamentally flawed and

inconsistent with both best practices and established policy across Ontario.”

“I’ve went here since (junior kindergarten) and like, it doesn’t make sense to be kicked out of the school,” said Grade 7

student Safaleen Johal.

Hearing those feelings echoed by their children has pushed parents to speak up — but they say Monday’s St. Davids school coun-

Continued on Page 6



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NOTL rallies behind jailed dissident **Jimmy Lai**

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

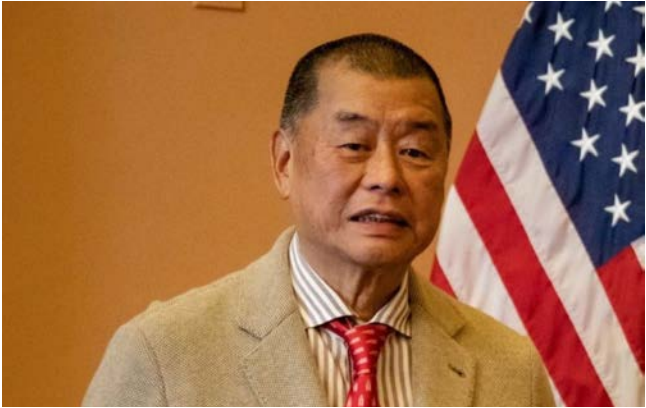
A flurry of activity has emerged this week surrounding the imprisonment of Hong Kong media tycoon and Niagara-on-the-Lake hotelier Jimmy Lai, just ahead of the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in the Niagara region.

On Monday, Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa announced he had sent a letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, advocating for Lai's release.

"This is something I've been thinking about for a while," Zalepa said.

"I've followed, I guess, the plight of Mr. Lai for many years and have a keen interest in knowing the gentleman's business investments and the significant role they've played here in town."

Zalepa said he does not have a prior relationship with Anand and has not yet received a response. He timed his letter to coincide with the G7 foreign ministers' meeting, which Anand will host Nov. 11 and 12 in Niagara.



A rally will be held for Jimmy Lai on Nov. 12 at Simcoe Park.

The exact location of the meeting has yet to be publicly confirmed.

The meeting will bring together Anand and her counterparts from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan and Germany. Zalepa said raising Lai's case now felt timely.

"I wanted to make sure that that message was being conveyed," he said. "This gentleman and his plight is important."

Lai was imprisoned by Chinese authorities in Hong Kong in 2020 and remains there today, accused of participating in pro-democracy demonstrations. Amnesty International lists him as a prisoner of conscience.

He is the owner of Vintage Hotels, which operates hotels such as the Prince of Wales, Queen's Landing and the Pillar and Post, among other luxury buildings in NOTL. Members of his family, including his twin sister, Si Wai Lai, who owns the Oban Inn, live in town.

In Hong Kong, Lai founded Apple Daily, a prominent pro-democracy tabloid newspaper.

Community members are also speaking out in support of Lai. Amnesty Niagara Group 137, the local branch of Amnesty International, will hold a rally on Lai's behalf on Nov. 12 — an event planned before Zalepa's letter was announced.

Lidija Biro, a member of Amnesty Niagara, said Lai's family will attend, along with supporters such as Yimlei "Molly" Yip, a Chinese-Canadian who admires Lai and his contributions to Niagara.

"I'm not sure how much the residents know about (Lai)," Yip said. "I knew about the history of the Lais, having moved here a year or two after them."

Yip said her participation in the rally is not about Chinese politics but about supporting Lai.

Biro emphasized Lai's long-standing ties to Niagara-on-the-Lake and hopes the event helps keep attention on his case.

"He and his Canadian family have contributed greatly to the town of NOTL," she said. "From the Vintage Hotels to the Monet-inspired public garden, he has had a hand in preserving the town's cultural heritage and securing its economic well-being."

"Mr. Lai has not been forgotten."

The rally will take place from noon to 1 p.m. at Simcoe Park, across the street from the Prince of Wales Hotel.

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Working with Niagara Workers Welcome, the Farmworker Hub is collecting small items that workers can take home to Jamaica — including solar lanterns, headlamps and power banks. Lanterns remain the most urgently needed item as Hurricane Melissa has left much of the island without power. SUPPLIED

NOTL sends hurricane support to Jamaica

Paige Seburn
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

When Hurricane Melissa tore through Jamaica last week, cutting off power and communication across the island, local residents and provincial advocates moved quickly to help — collecting supplies, raising funds and supporting farmworkers desperate to reach loved ones back home.

“We’ve been going to the farms and talking to guys and just, you know, being there for them,” said Brittney Kranz, lead coordinator at the Farmworker Hub.

“I still have friends that have not heard from their families.”

The hurricane has devastated homes, cut off communications and left many workers, including those in Niagara-on-the-Lake, unable to reach their loved ones at home, says Kit Andres, an organizer with the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change — a member of, and the secretariat for, the Migrant Rights Network and its Ontario chapter.

Andres said over the past week, the alliance has been in touch with about 100 workers from devastated areas through its WhatsApp helpline and farm visits across Niagara and Norfolk.

“Many of them are facing homelessness when they return,” Andres said. “I’m getting texts and voice notes from workers saying, you know, I’ve lost everything — house gone, church gone, everything gone.”

Both groups are focused on the same goal: getting immediate aid into the

hands of farmworkers and helping them recover after the most powerful storm to ever hit the island.

Collecting supplies for workers returning home

Working with Niagara Workers Welcome, the hub is collecting small items that workers can take home with them: solar lanterns, headlamps, flashlights, power banks, hygiene products, safety gear, water boots and rain gear, tools, fruit and vegetable seeds, and gardening equipment.

Lanterns remain the highest-priority item.

“The workers have a limit as to what they can travel with and bring home at this point,” Kranz said.

The first flight of farmworkers returning to Jamaica since the hurricane left this morning — “all of them went home with lanterns and headlamps,” she said.

Raising direct, barrier-free funds

Meanwhile, the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change is urging Canadians to donate to a newly launched emergency fund to help Jamaican farmworkers rebuild after the storm.

Donations can be made at migrantworkersalliance.org/hurricane-emergency. As of Wednesday, the campaign had raised about \$1,800, just \$1,400 short of its \$3,200 goal.

The fundraiser offers direct, barrier-free cash aid to cover emergency food, medication, home repairs and transportation from the airport in Jamaica.

Hub named official drop-off site for relief supplies

Jamaica’s liaison service asked the hub to serve as

Niagara’s only drop-off site for relief supplies bound for the island.

Kranz said Althea Riley, the chief liaison officer, told her the service is “working with a shipping company to deliver aid directly to Jamaica.”

Residents can drop off donations at the hub or contribute through its Amazon Wish List, which focuses on lightweight items.

The Jamaican liaison list is “pages long,” she said, and will be posted to the hub’s Facebook page this weekend.

The hub, normally a free store for seasonal workers, has been cleared to make room for donations.

“We’ve already had a local farmer come and bring power tools that were on the list of items needed,” Kranz said.

“We have to band together”

Some workers have lost their homes or roofs and others who were supposed to fly home are now delayed, Kranz said.

Her time living in Indonesia during the 2004 tsunami that affected Thailand, she added, shaped how she values small-town efforts in times of crisis.

“We have to band together, as human beings, to help and make a difference,” she said.

“I think that Jamaica is, especially, in the hearts of everyone here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, in Niagara region, just because of what they do,” she added.

Many farmworkers have been part of NOTL’s community for decades, making it a “second home” for many, Kranz said.

“We need to be people that they can rely on to help when something like this happens,” she said, “because it’s devastating.”

If roles were reversed, “we would need the support” too, she added.

“It’s just important for us to step up,” Kranz said. “Because we can.”

“We have their backs — 100 per cent”

Although it will take years for the island to fully recover, Andres said the hope is that the fundraiser will offer a small boost of support “and send a clear message that our farmworker neighbours are not alone.”

“We, here in Canada, have their backs. 100 per cent,” they added.

About 10,000 Jamaicans come to Canada, each year, to work in the agri-food sector — many from regions hardest hit by the hurricane.

“These are neighbours, who have been valued residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake for decades,” Andres said.

“So, it’s really encouraging to see all the ways that the community has been coming together, to offer support during this crisis.”

Andres said small donations make a difference too: “\$10 can buy 10 packets of chicken noodle soup mix, \$60 can buy large zinc roofing for home repair — and if everybody gives a little bit, it can go such a long way to supporting the people who feed us.”

“I encourage everyone to contribute what they can,” said Andres.

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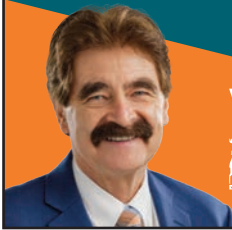
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Airport could offer sun destination flights

Continued from Front Page

NOTL, City of Niagara Falls and City of St. Catharines — for regular commercial flights, connecting Niagara to major Canadian and U.S. cities.

The plan states that by 2035, in a high-growth scenario, the airport could offer year-round service to two to three Canadian cities, two U.S. hubs and at least two sun destinations.

Airport chief executive officer Dan Pilon said the plan offers a direction, not a promise.

“A plan is just that: it’s a vision,” he said. “We’ve set forward a vision and a realistic plan for trying to get to that.”

“There’s a lot of work that needs to continue to move forward,” he added.

The plan was developed by airport consulting firm Avia NG Inc. between summer 2024 and 2025, following months of data collection, infrastructure review and public consultation.

Following an enabling stage through 2028 focused on funding and airline partnerships, the airport expects to begin construction by 2029.



Niagara District Airport chief executive officer Dan Pilon says the newly approved master plan sets the stage for commercial flights and major growth. PAIGE SEBURN

This will include building a larger terminal, adding parking, upgrading aprons, building a new service building, improving vehicular access, constructing new runway safety areas and preparing nearby land for future expansion.

The airport expects “transformational improvements” to start in 2034 — widening and extending the main runway, adding a parallel taxiway, expanding the fuel farm and building a new passenger terminal

with screening and customs facilities.

Beyond then, the plan calls for continued terminal and apron expansion, new commercial development on airport lands and preparation for electric and hybrid aircraft.

The plan said its timelines are estimates — implementation depends on factors such as progress, cost, possible future studies and operational need, rather than fixed deadlines.

“Much of it is dependent

on when you’re able to identify the funding,” Pilon said. “If you don’t identify the funding, it quickly has a drastic implication on the timeline.”

The plan will follow a “phase trigger” approach, he said — each stage of expansion will only move forward once certain conditions, such as passenger demand or funding, are met.

The airport is well-positioned to broaden its role “with the right investments,” said the plan — it could attract scheduled Canadian and U.S. flights, serve as a reliever for Toronto Pearson Airport with lower costs, expand commercial development and become a hub for emerging aircraft technologies.

Residents and businesses can learn more about the plan, ask questions and share feedback at an upcoming public information session, taking place Nov. 13 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the airport.

The full plan and its executive summary are available online at niagaradistrictairport.ca, under “2025–2045 Master Plan.”

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Rotary Club gives museum a \$100K boost

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club has pledged \$100,000 to support the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum's renovation and expansion project. The donation was recognized Thursday morning during a cheque presentation at the museum on Castlereagh Street.

Rotary Club president Cindy Grant and museum chief executive officer and curator Sarah Kaufman attended the event, along with other representatives from both organizations.

The donation contributes to the museum's \$10-million expansion project, which will add a new wing featuring an elevator, community room, guest lobby and temporary exhibit space.

"We feel blessed that they decided to provide the donation to us because it shows how there is community support for this community project," said Kaufman. "It's such a symbolic donation."



From left, Cindy Grant, Jamie Knight, Sarah Kaufman, Sean Simpson, Susan Wery, Jeannie Manning, Chris Hatch, and Helle Brodie celebrating the Rotary Club's \$100,000 gift at the NOTL Museum on Thursday. DAN SMEENK

Grant said the club values supporting the museum.

"The historical society is an important part of this community," she said.

In October, the museum also received \$150,000 in funding from the Royal Bank of Canada Foundation to fund the elevator in the new wing behind Memorial Hall.

Kaufman said more donations are expected "within the coming weeks."

Grant said the Rotary

Club voted to make the donation at its October meeting.

"This most recent request for funding, Sarah made to us back in the spring," she said, saying later to The Lake Report that it was made specifically on June 12.

Kaufman presented the proposal to the club earlier this year, and members voted unanimously to approve the funding. Any donation over \$50,000

requires approval from the entire branch.

She says the museum was "over the moon" when it found out it would be receiving this money.

The Rotary Club will distribute the \$100,000 in \$25,000 installments over three years. Three years ago, the club committed \$25,000 over five years, with \$10,000 still to be paid.

"It's just a matter of financing and our financial means," said Grant. "The museum is not the only community organization that we're funding this year."

Grant said the club hopes to raise additional funds during its Holiday House Tour on Dec. 5 and 6, a major annual fundraiser.

Kaufman said the museum appreciates multi-year contributions.

"There are other organizations who donate over a couple of years," she said. "That works wonderfully for us."

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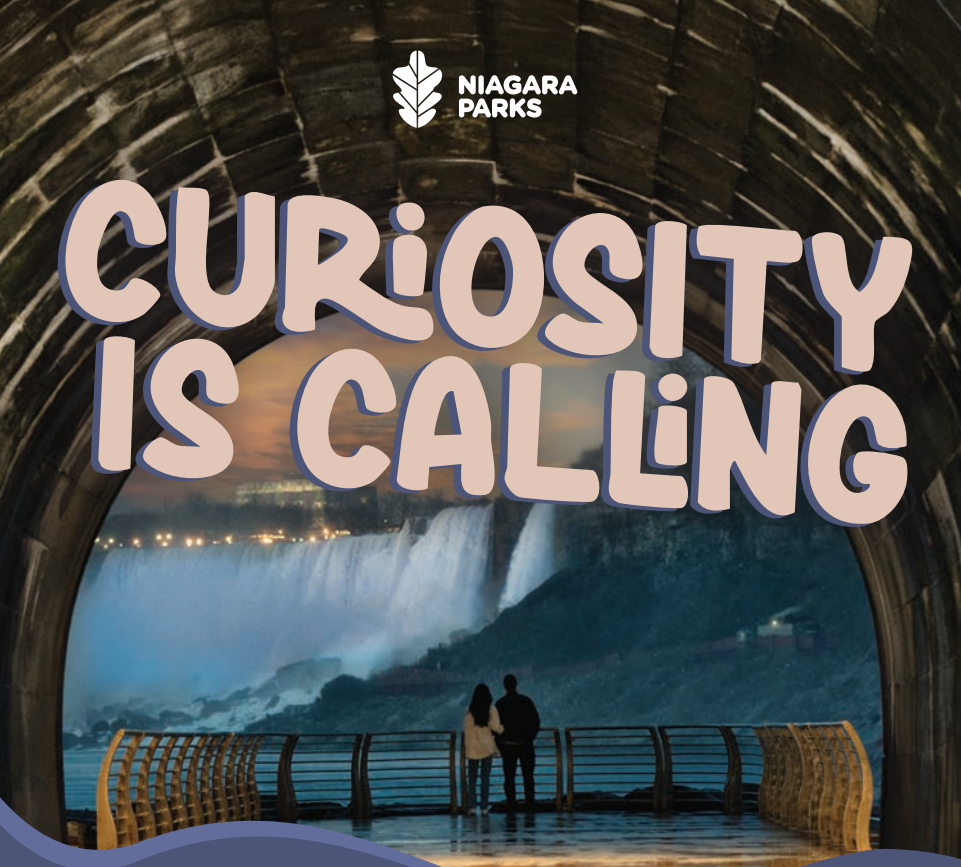
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Town aims to keep 2026 tax hike low at 1.81 per cent

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

After this year’s budget saw property taxes for Niagara-on-the-Lake residents go up by 7.92 per cent, the town is looking at a more modest tax hike for next year of 1.81 per cent.

That increase amounts to an extra \$27.87 per household (at an assessed value of \$546,000), bringing the total property tax to \$1,560.

Kyle Freeborn, the town’s treasurer and director of corporate services, says the smaller hike will not come at the expense of valued municipal services.

“Based on the 2025 levels of service, you can’t expect any changes really in 2026,” he said.

Freeborn said the town “leveraged different revenue sources,” such as parking and municipal accommodation tax revenue, to minimize the increase to property taxes.

This year’s proposed operating budget totals \$44.2 million, excluding wastewater costs. Salaries make up



Kyle Freeborn, NOTL treasurer, helped put together the budget which was introduced in a special council meeting last Wednesday. The budget forecasts a 1.81 per cent rise in property taxes in 2026. DAN SMEENK.

about 35 to 40 per cent of municipal budgets, Freeborn noted. The stormwater levy rate is unchanged.

Several councillors told The Lake Report they’re generally pleased with the draft budget despite some initial concerns.

“Overall, this year’s budget finds a good balance between being financially responsible and maintaining the services residents expect,” said Coun. Andrew Niven.

The town plans to invest about \$8.5 million in capital

projects this year, down from \$14.8 million last year.

Freeborn said 55 projects are proposed, including Line 3 road construction from Concession 3 to Concession 4 (\$2.36 million), Warner Road reconstruction (\$800,000) and the Regent Street culvert replacement (\$675,000). Wastewater projects are excluded from those figures.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa highlighted four key areas of focus: infrastructure funding, parks and recreation investment, water

space and dock funding, and climate change and stormwater projects.

“There’s a significant allotment for projects there,” he said, referring to the stormwater work.

Not everyone supports the proposal.

Steve McGuinness, a member of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association and a business writer who has contributed to The Lake Report, criticized the budget, saying the town overtaxed residents in previous years.

McGuinness also objected to the use of strong mayor powers in the budget process.

Those powers, granted to Ontario mayors by the province, require the mayor to table a budget and finalize it by Feb. 1. They also give the mayor veto authority over council amendments. A veto can be overturned with a two-thirds council majority.

“To our knowledge, the lord mayor has, to date, failed to publicly commit not to use his veto in the budget setting process,” McGuinness said in an email.

Zalepa said he could use the veto if necessary.

“The answer is that it depends,” he said. “If I see amendments that do not have general consensus, then I most likely will veto those. As they would not pass as amendments in a meeting of council without consensus.”

He said he aims to work collaboratively with councillors, including through “one-on-ones with every member of council.”

Zalepa also raised concerns that the October increase in building permits and planning fees could put the town at a disadvantage.

McGuinness said the changes were overdue, noting that planning fees had not been updated since 2005.

“The planning act requires costs incurred by the planning department to be fully recovered by chargebacks to users,” he said. “Unfortunately, that has not been the case for the last 14 years.”

He said that even with the new fee schedule, the town will not fully recover its

costs due to caps meant to stay competitive with surrounding municipalities.

Freeborn called the fee hikes a “good news story,” saying they align fees with actual costs.

“Planning fees, for example, they were up to 70 per cent subsidized in taxes, so that’s the resident paying more for planning services,” he said.

He acknowledged the hikes could discourage some developers from coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Councillors can submit budget amendments starting Nov. 17, with final approval scheduled for Dec. 3 during a special council meeting.

This year’s process is significantly faster than last year’s, when the budget was finalized in March. The accelerated timeline stems from the strong mayor legislation.

The 1.81 per cent increase comes after the town accounted for an assessment growth of one per cent, sum of all the changes that happen to the tax base during the year.

daniel@niagaranow.com

Students and parents decry DSBN for school boundary change

Continued from Front Page

cil meeting offered little chance to do so.

Parents say the meeting, attended by superintendent Darren VanHooydonk, initially limited discussion to pre-submitted questions — a format some parents say they were not told about beforehand.

It was only after a Niagara on the Green parent raised the issue that parents were given a chance to ask questions, said parent Priya Litt.

Niagara on the Green parents Navpreet Johal, Sonal Ahluwalia and Litt said they were all unaware that questions had to be submitted in advance and that principal Carl Glauser did not send any emails informing them of this.

“Where in the world is the transparency in this?” Litt said in a message.

Last night’s meeting left many parents feeling frustrated and unheard, said



The Johal and Ahluwalia families say the boundary change shifting St. Davids students to Crossroads was pushed through without warning, leaving parents feeling ignored. From left, Parents Amarjog Johal, Bharat Ahluwalia and Sonal Ahluwalia, Grade 7 student Safaleen Johal, and parent Navpreet Johal. PAIGE SEBURN

Ahluwalia.

“We expected a chance for open dialogue, but instead, we were told the decision was already made,” she said. “Only then did we learn new information, like the change also affecting which high school our children will attend.”

At the meeting, Ahluwalia said that VanHooydonk told parents that Niagara on the Green students being directed to Crossroads will also be moved from attending A.N. Myer Secondary School in Niagara Falls to Laura Secord Secondary School in St. Catharines.

Learning those details so suddenly is “adding to the sense of confusion and mistrust,” she said.

The lack of communication has “shaken parents’ trust,” she added, noting that her Grade 5 daughter, who has been at St. Davids since kindergarten, was devastated.

Safaleen wants to stay put too, especially with graduation approaching — “it’s only one more year,” she said.

“I don’t want (the boundary change) to happen,” added Safaleen. “I really want to graduate at this school because it’s a good school.”

Parents also said the board’s justification — reducing traffic congestion around the school — doesn’t hold up for them.

Niagara on the Green parent Amarjog Johal said most of the congestion is caused by families living in St. Davids — those still within

the school’s boundary, while Niagara on the Green is over in Glendale.

“It’s not going to solve anything. We never drop our kids off,” Amarjog said.

“That’s why this solution has nothing to do with the problem,” added Navpreet.

“It’s just a band-aid,” Amarjog said.

Navpreet said if schools are being closed, there should be a long-term plan to build new ones — not temporary fixes that shuffle students around every few years.

Her comments come after years of public school closures in NOTL — including Virgil, Colonel John Butler and Parliament Oak public schools and Niagara District Secondary School.

The board should have looked at multiple options, she said, instead of treating the boundary change as the only choice.

“There has to be a better solution — and every

problem has more than one solution,” said Navpreet.

The Nov. 2 letter asked trustees to suspend the boundary change, provide supporting data and consult directly with affected parents.

It also said a petition launched Oct. 24 by local parent Lynette Wang — now with 120 signatures — was ignored before the vote.

Addressed to the board, VanHooydonk, Glauser, Minister of Education Paul Calandra, Wayne Gates, member of provincial parliament for Niagara Falls, and trustee Jonathan Fast, who voted in favour of the boundary change, the letter argues the move won’t fix congestion or overcrowding and will only be a temporary solution.

Neither Glauser nor VanHooydonk responded to requests for comment by press time.

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Ambulance station moving from Old Town to Virgil

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara Emergency Medical Services is looking to relocate its station in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town to be closer to Virgil, in an effort to respond to more emergencies in the community faster.

This was one part of a 10-year master plan presented to NOTL council by Niagara EMS, which examines regional demand for emergency care, some of the organization's challenges in meeting its goals and facilities it needs for the future.

It also includes a proposal to relocate the existing Old Town station on Wellington Street to Niagara Stone Road and East-West Line.

Newly appointed Niagara EMS chief Karen Lutz-Graul presented the plan to council, which includes recommendations made by consultants in NOTL for improving what it does.

Lutz-Graul said NOTL currently has two EMS stations: one at the former hospital site and another at Westwood Court off York Road.

The former hospital site operates one 24-hour ambulance and one 12-hour ambulance, while Westwood Court has two 12-hour ambulances.

The plan recommends locating a hub station at Niagara Stone Road and East-West Line, which is expected to help meet the target of responding to 80 per cent of the most urgent calls within eight minutes.

"I can say, having worked in NOTL for much of my career, the Niagara Stone Road access gets pretty busy, especially in the summer months," Lutz-Graul said.

"Having the option to go on the backway into NOTL is pretty important as well."

She said they haven't achieved the eight-minute target for the sickest patients, yet.

In 2023, response times met the target 51.8 per cent of the time; in 2024, 46 per cent; and from January to September 2025, 69 per cent — an improvement she attributed to adding a second ambulance at Westwood Court.

Computer modelling predicts that relocating the station to East-West Line would improve response times to 80.5 per cent.

"It's a massive improve-



NOTL's ambulance centre at 176 Wellington St. is moving to Virgil to help improve response times. DAN SMEENK

ment," she said.

Lutz-Graul said the service is adopting a "hub-spoke-post" model to better organize the full scope of what it does.

Niagara EMS's main hub would be located near the current Westwood Court station with 60 per cent of the emergency medical service's staff reporting to this hub.

The remaining 40 per cent, meanwhile, would report to two smaller hubs, or "spokes," in west and south Niagara.

Additional smaller "post" stations across the region would support the network and improve response capacity.

She said the model is designed to reduce non-emergency duties for paramedics at their stations, keeping them ready to respond im-

mediately when calls come in. Niagara Region endorsed the model in February.

She noted there has been interest in relocating the former hospital site station.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor asked whether the fire station near the Community Centre had been considered as a potential site.

Frank Fucile, the region's manager of real estate, said it had been reviewed, but consultants recommended a more central location between Old Town and outlying areas, such as East-West Line.

Lutz-Graul said Niagara EMS began working with a consultant on the master plan in 2023.

Emergency medical services in Niagara are funded equally by the province and the region.

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NOTL to hike planning fees next year

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Anyone looking to build or renovate a home in Niagara-on-the-Lake can expect to pay more for permits and approvals next year.

Starting Jan. 1, the town is increasing a wide range of planning and building permit fees, as well as introducing new fees, in an effort to take care of a \$1.67 million deficit between the cost of its planning programs and its revenue from planning fees.

For instance, building permit fees for new construction and additions on a single-detached, semi-detached and duplex dwelling will go up to \$2.16 per square foot, up from \$1.41.

Zoning bylaw amendment planning fees will hit \$14,980, up from \$9,260, while official plan amendments will jump to \$13,940, up from \$9,385.

Planning fees for base charges for the draft plan of a subdivision will go up to \$18,800 from \$10,400. The extra fees per lot per block will more than double to \$370 from \$170.



Thinking of building in NOTL next year? Expect heavy increases in planning related fees. FILE

The approval of a final plan will also double, going to \$4,280 from \$1,975. Standard site plan applications will go up to \$14,680 from \$9,070.

Derek Ali, an engineer from DFA Infrastructure International Inc., which conducted the review of the town's planning fees, says NOTL's planning fees haven't been updated since 2005, while building fees were last reviewed in 2018 — an adjustment made only

to reflect market conditions at the time.

"It's due to be updated," he told council on Oct. 21.

Currently, he said, there's a \$1.67-million deficit between the cost of planning programs and revenue from planning fees. For building services, the deficit stands at just over \$297,000.

"There's a big gap in the revenue generation," Ali said.

Because revenue and costs vary year to year, he said, municipalities are generally advised to maintain a reserve fund to offset losses. Niagara-on-the-Lake currently has no such reserve.

The shortfall is covered by property tax revenue. Ali said the new fees are designed to remain competitive with other Niagara municipalities — as in, not charging significantly more than other cities and town in the area.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita expressed frustration with the town's past approach to fees.

"Oh my god, we've left so much money on the table for the last 20 years," she said.

Reducing the burden on property taxpayers was a

key argument for the increase. The staff report said the new fees could lower the tax-funded portion of planning and building costs to 48 per cent, down from 68 per cent.

Coun. Andrew Niven questioned why full cost recovery hadn't been pursued.

"What keeps the town from achieving full cost recovery on that side?" he asked.

Ali responded that maintaining competitiveness with neighbouring municipalities was a key consideration.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor said she supported the proposed building fee increases but raised concerns about planning fees and the deficit. She proposed even higher costs for planning fees. However, there were questions about whether staff had enough time to assess the impact of such a change.

In the end, there was no one to second her motion and it was not tabled.

All councillors except O'Connor voted in favour of the fee increase during council's meeting on Oct. 28.

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Master plan aims to improve dock area

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is prioritizing the dock area as it works on an update to its master plan for the site, the town announced last Wednesday — specifically, it'll be looking at ways to make Melville Street look better and create more amenities in the area.

The town defines the focus area as Queen's Royal Park in the north to Melville Street in the south, bordered by Delater Street on the west and the Niagara River on the east.

The most recent plan, completed in 2015, highlighted the dock area's importance and recommended several improvements.

These include separating pedestrians and vehicles, protecting historic features on the site, completing missing sections of the pedestrian route to Queen's Royal Park, adding trees to enhance the view along Melville Street and accommodating visitors from locals to tourists.

"We've made a lot of great strides at accomplishing what



NOTL residents will have a chance to comment on dock area plans on Nov. 26 at the community centre. FILE

was in there," said Kevin Turcotte, the town's manager of parks and recreation, who is leading the update.

"This will be an update to that plan, looking at more opportunities, and kind of finishing off the dock area master plan in that area."

By "finishing off," Turcotte said the town wants public input on ways to beautify Melville Street.

The update could also include a "small watercraft launch" for kayaking and paddleboarding.

Turcotte said the town's priorities include "(increasing) access and connectivity still."

He also wants "more amenities" for residents at

the Melville Street dock, the parking lot and open green space in River Beach Park, as well as improved "shore-line protection."

He said the update will also explore how to highlight the area's history through "interpretive plaques we need to install" and design elements such as the historic rail line near Delater Street.

Turcotte said community feedback will help shape the historical interpretation and decide "what you would like to see on those plaques."

He also acknowledged the ongoing debate about water access and how small boats currently reach the river.

But he said there is broad agreement about revitalizing the Melville Street dock, which many residents consider a "blank slate."

"We really want the public to give us feedback on what we'd like to see there," he said.

Since the 2015 plan, the town has built and improved several connections, including a pathway through Balls Beach Park, a link from Delater Street to Queen's Royal Park, and a new sidewalk from Lockhart Street to the parking lot.

After a public meeting later this month, consultants will review community feedback and develop updated designs. Turcotte said his team hopes to present the revised plan to council this upcoming spring.

"We're just at the start of the process," he said. "We have the consultants on board and they're fully aware of the project and excited to hear what the community has to say on Nov. 26."

The meeting will take place at the NOTL Community Centre's Simpson Room from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
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REMEMBRANCE DAY 2025

What's on in NOTL to commemorate **Nov. 11**

- Remembrance Day service at the Queen Street cenotaph, 10:45 a.m.
- Remembrance Day service at the Queenston War Memorial, 1 p.m.
- Light lunch and refreshments at Legion Branch 124 following the Queenston ceremony, free or by donation. All welcome.
- Poppy campaign, running now until Nov. 11, raises funds to support veterans and their families in need. Available at Legion Branch 124 and storefronts around NOTL.
- Youth remembrance contest, multiple branches including visual art, writing and video. More information available for teachers and principals at legion124@gmail.com or 905-468-2353.
- The NOTL Museum Poppy Project will be on display until Nov. 12 at the museum, Legion Branch 124 and the Court House on Queen Street and RiverBrink Art Museum in Queenston.



NOTL will honour Canada's soldiers, past and present, in a Remembrance Day service to be held on Nov. 11 at the Queen Street cenotaph, itself a monument to the lives lost in both world wars. FILE/DAVE VAN DE LAAR

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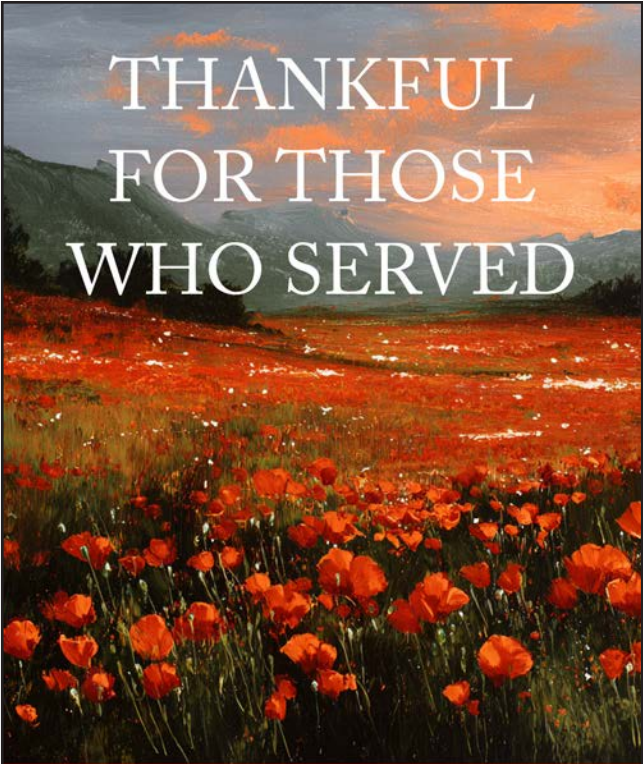
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REMEMBRANCE DAY 2025



Canadians pay tribute in Netherlands

Robert J. Christopher, right, seen here with his son Eric on May 5 in Arnhem, the Netherlands, where they paid their respects to the almost 2,500 Canadian Second World War soldiers buried in the country. Robert, who was one of dozens of Canadian soldiers at the event, says they laid wreaths and flowers on the soldiers' tombs and reflected on the sacrifices made to free the Netherlands during the war. The Dutch people in attendance were deeply appreciative of the Canadians, he adds.



In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

The Lake Report
LEST WE FORGET

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REMEMBRANCE DAY 2025

‘The history of the town is wrapped up with the military’

Zahraa Hmood
The Lake Report

Here in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the history of the town is deeply intertwined with the history of the Canadian military.

Whether it's places like Butler's Barracks or Queenston Heights, the fact that places like Garrison Village and the Jackson-Triggs Winery used to host military training grounds, or that the Royal George Theatre was built to entertain the troops of Camp Niagara, the legacy of war is everywhere in NOTL.

And during this time of year, it's a part of history that Al Howse, president of the local Royal Canadian Legion branch, is thinking deeply about.

"The history of the town is just wrapped up with the military, before and after we became a country," he said.

As Canada approaches Remembrance Day, Howse



The poppy installation at the Court House on Queen Street is meant to remind people of the sacrifices of those who fought for our freedom. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

says while not everyone in town may be aware of how much the military's history and NOTL's history are on in the same, he says his focus leading up to Nov. 11 is simple: asking people to remember — or, if they

can't remember, to think about it. "We want the focus to be on the sacrifice that all these people made and what the sacrifice means to you," he said. "Are you happy that we still have all the

freedoms we have and how much people know of what it took to keep them."

His father and uncle were both Second World War veterans, while his grandfather was a First World War veteran.

"I have an acute knowledge of service and what it's like to volunteer to be a soldier from them," he said.

This time of year, the Legion is hard at work readying to host the town commemorative service for Remembrance Day, held at the Queen Street clock tower cenotaph, with two minutes of silence at 11 a.m., and the cenotaph in Queenston.

The two cenotaphs bear the names of those from NOTL who fought and died in the First and Second World Wars.

On the subject of recognizing the history of how these wars affected NOTL, Howse highlighted historic writer Ron Dale's column The Monuments Men, published in The Lake Report,

which sheds light on the lives of the men whose names are listed on the cenotaphs.

Alongside the Nov. 11 services, starting on the last Friday of October, the Legion is busy campaigning to encourage those around them to wear a poppy as a visual commemoration to those who've served Canada.

"My focus, especially during the poppy campaign and Remembrance Day, is to get out the message to the community through the poppy," Howse said.

Outside the Legion, its memorial cairn has been adorned with one of the NOTL Museum's poppy displays, a netting of wool poppies joined together to create a draping of hundreds of poppies.

The same drapings are also installed at the NOTL Museum at the old Court House. The poppy installations will be on display until the end of Remembrance Day.

"I think it's great," he said of the poppy display at the Legion. "We have people every day stopping by and taking pictures."

There are some who may not have picked up a poppy or made a donation in one of the Legion's white boxes yet.

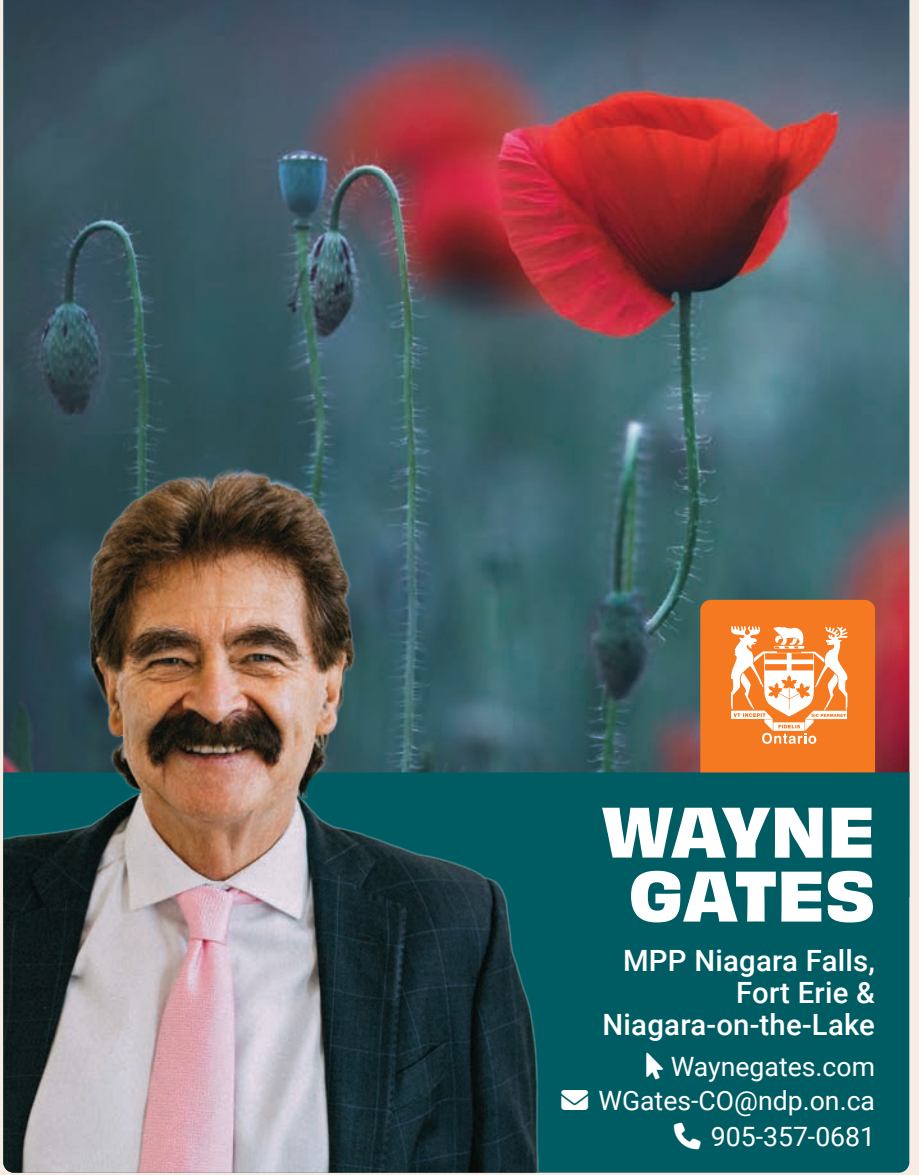
On those people, Howse said, this represents that they live in a free and open society where poppy-wearing isn't forced on anyone.

"That's your choice, whether you want to give reverence to remembrance," he said. "It's our job to educate people, from school children and up."

As for what remembrance looks like in action, Howse said every person can choose their own way to do so — whether it's researching the wars online, talking to their grandparents about it or reading the names of the men who gave up their lives on the two cenotaphs standing tall in Old Town and Queenston.

zahraa@niagaranow.com

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A fall walk

Underneath a canopy of golden fall foliage, Rona Waddington walks her golden doodles, Maisie and Aphra, through the Commons on Nov. 1.
DAVE VAN DE LAAR

Editorial

Folksy Ford and the end of speed cameras

Garth Turner
Columnist

It seems Doug Ford has seldom met a populist idea he isn't willing to embrace. And sometimes those folksy stances even make sense — notably his efforts to push back against U.S. President Donald Trump tantrums and ridiculous anti-Canadian crusades. Oddly, the burly Progressive Conservative premier — who often governs more like a centrist liberal than a right-wing neocon — seems to be able to do no wrong in the eyes of most Ontarians, despite major ethical missteps, including the Greenbelt development scandal, political cronyism and now the auditor's report on the Skills Development Fund fiasco.

Since his days as a Toronto city councillor, the millionaire from Etobicoke, who, with his siblings, inherited a successful label business built by his father, has worked to cast himself as a working-class Everyman and champion of blue-collar causes.

His folksy “for the people” mannerisms and utterings have turned the one-time entrepreneurial high schooler into a hero for those who love the “less government, more common sense” mantra.

From a political perspective, it's pure gold.

From a public policy perspective, it's mostly pure bunk aimed at letting Ford continually ingratiate himself with his diehard supporters.



Ontario Premier Doug Ford has used his Tory majority to get rid of “cash grab” speed cameras despite opposition from a surprisingly broad-based cadre of individuals and organizations, writes Kevin MacLean. FILE

Like Trump's crazed meanderings, when Ford muses about the courts or outlawing things like speed cameras, it plays well with the base.

And now, Ford has used his Tory majority to ram through legislation to get rid of those “cash grab” cameras despite opposition from a surprisingly broad-based cadre of individuals and organizations.

When you have Sick Kids Hospital, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and leaders of police forces across the province telling you you're wrong, chances are you're making a mistake.

Nevertheless, municipalities have until Nov. 14 to remove their speed cameras.

Ironically, that hasn't been an issue in Niagara-on-the-Lake thanks to vigilante types who repeatedly cut down the camera outside Crossroads Public School in Virgil.

It's been gone for weeks

and won't be back. All that remains is a lonely stub of metal, a sad sack reminder of what once was. If you have ever driven along that stretch of roadway, you'll know the camera experiment has been a success.

In the camera's absence, anecdotally speaking, just having a couple of centre-line signs reminding you of the reduced speed limit, plus other signs warning about a speed camera ahead have greatly cut the speed of traffic on that section of regional road.

When the cams were active, yes, people whined about the “cash grab” of getting a fine in the mail a couple of weeks after speeding past the school.

And it is a cash grab, sure, as we stated in a previous editorial. But so what? It's a penalty earned for not obeying the law, in a school zone, amid warning signs.

Personal accountability for one's actions seems to have been lost in the out-

raged “how dare they” over-reaction to getting dinged in the wallet.

Ever travelled in the U.K., Europe and elsewhere? Speed and parking cameras are literally everywhere. But don't dare do it in Doug Ford's Ontario.

His government says it will give municipalities money for other speed reduction and “traffic calming” measures, but those alternatives won't be in place before the speed cams vanish.

But given how successful (and therefore hated) the speed camera program has been, it remains to be seen whether new, more passive interventions will have the same effect.

Certainly, speed humps, centre-line signs and raised crosswalks slow down traffic. But as any NOTL resident who lives in an area with reduced speed limits, 30 or 40 km/h signs alone do not deter drivers from booting it. Behaviours need to change.

And, as we've said before, the good folks who speed along our residential streets and rural concessions, inevitably are not visitors and tourists. They're locals, many of the same folks who complained about speed cameras.

Will Ford's new “for the people” approach get their attention and change their behaviour?

We doubt it. But given no other choice, let's see what alternatives our town and Niagara Region come up with.

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Old Town wouldn't be the same without Jimmy Lai

Dear editor:
Please join me and some friends to support Jimmy Lai on Nov. 12 from noon to 1 p.m. in Simcoe Park opposite the Prince of Wales Hotel.
The G7 foreign ministers are meeting in Niagara Falls on Nov. 11 and 12 and we are hoping to attract their attention.
I grew up in Canada and never met the Lai family. After living here for 25

years, I think that the town of NOTL would not look so prosperous without Mr. Lai's and his sister's arrival.
I don't think I really appreciated how much they did to preserve and enhance the Old Town, in contrast to other owners who demolish and rebuild.
The Lais seem to appreciate the value of British heritage and history, as Hong Kong thrived under British rule.

Also, it was Mr. Lai who commissioned the Monet-inspired garden for public use with free skating in the winter. This garden near Pillar and Post is truly a gem in NOTL — so beautiful and peaceful.
Mr. Lai never saw his garden since he was jailed for defending freedom in Hong Kong. He has been in solitary confinement for five years.

I recently read his new biography, "The Troublemaker" by Mark Clifford, which I borrowed from the Queenston Library.
If you do join us, please feel free to make your own rally sign to support Mr. Lai. The sign I made is "Free Jimmy Lai." We hope many local residents will turn up on Nov. 12.
Yimlei Molly Yep
NOTL

Opinion

NOTL and the elitist cabal



THE TURNER REPORT
Garth Turner
Columnist



Longtime political groupie and Glendale resident Derek Insley suggests we should talk about 15-minute cities.
I'm game. The conspiracy whackadoodles certainly are.
Some people believe our little lovenest of a town is lurching toward surveillance, confinement and control. Look at the official, shiny new draft official plan, they say. Released a few weeks ago the following directive is spelled out clearly as the No.1 goal of "Community Design":
"Encourage a compact, walkable and well-connected community."
That may sound benign to you, but they're fighting words for the many among us who believe, ardently, there's a war on between freedom-loving souls and the elitist cabal of lefty, climate-change zealot wokester, WEF radicals who seek political and social dominance. Seriously.
They think COVID was the dress rehearsal. The pandemic created a great opportunity to impose jackboot restrictions on all of us, shut down the economy,

Is a global conspiracy when you can get all you need within 15 minutes of the house? Or does this place just work?
curtail travel, force vaccine mandates, block the border, make workers dependent on government dole and prompt leaders to plan a post-pandemic "great reset."
Remember the truckers? The "Freedom Convoy"?
It was not about vaccines, the organizers said, but about fighting the World Economic Forum's plans for social change that would throttle our way of life for the ultimate goal of environmental rescue. This was the antithesis of the supposed leftist mantra of, "you will own nothing and be happy."
Guess what happened next?
Yup, Ottawa froze individual bank accounts of the protesters, validating their fears. Then Trump and MAGA stormed back to power. Conspiracy theorists were actually placed in the U.S. president's cabinet.
Vaccines are now restricted. Federal structures being dismantled. In fact, the whole American government has been shut down for a month. Climate

change is refuted. Universities are being targeted for leftyism and DEI programs. Political opponents are being indicted as criminals.
And, yes, words like, "encourage a compact, walkable and well-connected community" are at the centre of a theory that has already led to other Ontario municipalities turning into little war zones.
So what is a 15-minute city? Are we one? Is it bad?
French egghead Carlos Moreno (University of Paris) coined the phrase to mean a place where residents could access almost everything they need to be happy by walking or biking, within 15 minutes of their homes. Work, bank, groceries, post office, health care, school, retail, recreation.
Simply put, a life where commuting, cars and the QEW is replaced based on hoofing or riding to a job, the doctor, the liquor store or to buy lettuce.
Yes, like here in Old Town.
The anti-WEF crew —

who have stormed local council meetings in south-western Ontario and the GTA — claim this is about enslavement and control. By keeping people corralled in a 15-minute radius they're restricting freedom of movement, choice and mobility. This lockdown, they say, will be mated with digital currency and surveillance. Every action monitored. Any boundary breach punished.
None of this has been helped by the Bank of Canada's plans for a digital currency (which is inevitable) or the federal government's move toward a stablecoin. It's all more gas heaped on the still smouldering convoy fire. Remember that column I wrote about the Second Sons and their Brock Monument bivouac? This is real.
"The 15-minute city is yet another way in which the self-described elites in places like the UN and WEF plan to tell the rest of us how to live, for our own good of course," writes Catherine Swift. She's a conservative economist (TD Bank, then the Canadian Federation of Independent Business) who penned a local Niagara column. Yikes.
"As long as the climate and other societal goals are achieved," she says, "it's irrelevant if anyone even wants to live this way."
But wait. I do. NOTL rocks.
(Shhh. It's a conspiracy.)
Garth Turner is a NOTL resident, journalist, author, wealth manager and former federal MP and minister.
garth@garth.ca



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: "BAD" LANGUAGE

This racquet sport developed after British Army officers played a game called poona in India in the 1860s.

Last issue category: HELLO AND GOODBYE
Clue: She greeted listeners with the 2015 song "Hello" and got a monster hit.
Answer: Who is Adele?
Answered first by: Jamie Swanson

Also answered correctly (in order) by:
Bob Wheatley, Sue Rautenberg, Susan Hamilton, Jesse Agnew, Lynda Collet, Esther VanGorder, Jeff Lake, Kimberly Amaral, Jim Dandy, Randie Topps, Howard Jones, Wade Durling, Margaret Garaughty, Claudia Grimwood, Marla Percy, Margie Enns, Susan Dewar, Tuija Johansson, Catherine Clarke, Katie Reimer, Nick D'Amore, Hedy Wiebe, Daniel Smith, David Spencer, KC King, Nancy Rocca
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Progress or peril? The fight for NOTL's heritage future



ARCHITEXT

Brian Marshall
Columnist

Let's consider the word "progress."
The Oxford Dictionary defines progress as: "Advancement to a further or higher stage, or to further or higher stages successively; growth; development, usually to a better state or condition; improvement."
Over the past couple of centuries, economists and social scientists have pondered this word, struggling with the question of how, and if, "progress" in commercial, technological or economic endeavours actually benefits the society in which it occurs.
John Stuart Mill, the most influential socio-political and socio-economic thinker in 19th-century England, wrote, "Hitherto, it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being."

Across the pond, Mill's American contemporary, economist Henry George, bemoaned the concentration of wealth generated by "progress," stating, "Grant that a man has a right to appropriate such natural elements as he can use, has he any right to appropriate more than he can use? Has a guest in such a case as I have supposed a right to appropriate more than he needs and make other people stand up? That is what is done."
Nor has this situation changed markedly since 1900; as illustrated by Amazon's recent announcement that it would be cutting 14,000 jobs as a result of the "progress" inherent in extensive use of AI to provide "efficiency gains."
In his recent essay entitled "Need a New Philosophy of Progress," Jason Crawford suggests, "We need a new philosophy of progress for the 21st century. One that reaffirms the reality and value of progress, and reminds that we possess the agency to shape the future."
"But we must also avoid the mistakes of the past. First, progress is not inevitable: it does not, as some optimists once thought, unfold according to a divine plan or cosmic will. Progress depends on choice and effort. It is up to us."



The unbridled pursuit of "progress" will, almost certainly, result in the evolution of NOTL's historic Queen Street and surrounding Old Town neighbourhoods into an upscale commercial knock-off of Clifton Hill. BRIAN MARSHALL

He continues, "Second, progress comes with costs and risks, which we must control: pollution, health hazards, economic upheaval, war. And future technologies, such as genetic engineering or artificial intelligence, may pose greater risks still. Safety must be considered a key goal of progress, even as it forces trade-offs with development speed and cost."
And concludes, "Third, moral progress does not automatically go hand in hand with technological progress. One of the darkest lessons of the 20th century was how technology could be used to enable empire, wars of conquest, and totalitarian oppression. We must continue to fight against these evils, lest 21st-century technology be used to make them even worse."
Now, I am advocating that an individual or company should not pursue growth and development?
Absolutely not. I am a fierce proponent of capitalism.
That said, it is extraordinarily disingenuous for an individual or corporation to suggest that the "progress" they seek — or achieve — automatically confers benefits upon the society or community they operate within.
History clearly and unequivocally shows that it does not.
Simply, the successful pursuit of "progress" will result in increased personal and/or corporate wealth. Should they then choose to use a portion of that wealth in making charitable

contribution(s) is entirely discretionary and not an inevitable outcome of their undertaking.
Furthermore, it is simple arrogance for someone to suggest that their definition of "progress" should be universally accepted as God's truth and that any efforts by the community (or society) to modify or manage that "truth" can only be the reaction of Luddites.
The fact is, despite the Ford government's (and his sycophants at lower municipal levels) opinion to the contrary, corporate pursuit of "progress" without oversight will often end in disastrous consequences, whether it be for the environment (remember the international Love Canal debacle?), community, economic diversity and/or national food security — not so long ago, Niagara was the primary "fruit basket" for our nation.
This is a challenge faced by communities across Ontario. Witness the recent block resignation of the entire municipal heritage committee in protest of the pro-progress Town of Mono council's decision to deny protection to a historically unique 1850s pioneer stone-built homestead complex.
It is a truism that, if one is allowed to cut the roots of a tree or indiscriminately cut it back, that tree will almost certainly die.
This is not NIMBYism.
Build a hotel in the middle of an established residential neighbourhood and the surrounding single-family properties will, almost certainly, become short-term rentals. Bluntly, what family wants to live in the shadow of a hotel?
Build a modern, architecturally incompatible monster theatre in a designated historic district and, not only is the heritage compromised, but again, the single-family custodians of neighbouring properties will sell out to short-term rental investors with little or no skin in the game relative to preserving that heritage.
So, bite by bite, a community is eroded away by "progress" and, within the foreseeable future, the centre of NOTL's Old Town could easily be a knock-off of Clifton Hill in the Falls.
Perhaps sound judgment and good sense (both synonyms for "common sense") should prevail in the direction of "progress" in Niagara-on-the-Lake. But, which future manifests remains your decision.
Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.

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Short-term rental boondoggle Who's really paying for it?

Dear editor:

Our town council and staff have fumbled the ball on this major issue yet again.

A process begun in December 2024 looks like it will easily drag into next year's municipal election. Hopefully, the voters will remember.

In December last year, council directed staff to prepare a pause on the issuance of new short-term rental licences and undertake a detailed analysis on an appropriate limit for short-term rentals across the town.

On May 27, that report came forward which showed a total of 399 short-term rentals across the whole of Niagara-on-the-Lake and recommended that cottage and villa short-term rentals be frozen at 231.

Staff attempted to determine how many buildings within each area might be eligible to apply for a short-term rental licence using census data, but were unable to do so.

One wonders how our staff don't already know how many residences there are in each area? Personally, it took me about a half-hour to determine there are 2,292 residential units in Old Town simply by consulting Canada Post.

Given their report shows a total of 230 short-term rentals are located in Old Town, that means more than 10 per cent of Old Town housing



Letter writer Bob Bader says this council has zero foresight in allowing more short-term rentals to take over town.

stock is used for short-term rentals.

On July 22, the staff came with the recommendation that the short-term rental bylaw 2025-032 identified in FES-25-013 be approved and that the draft short-term rental bylaw amendment be forwarded to council for adoption.

Said action was deferred to October with the limit on cottage rental and villa rental licences being held at the existing 231 licences and not allowing any new properties to replace any existing licences.

Then, on Sept. 16, another staff information report came to council suggesting yet another "engagement" be completed by the second quarter of 2026.

The Oct. 21 committee of the whole meeting was confusing and confounding to say the least.

The staff recommendation from July 22 was brought back again to be

forwarded to council for adoption.

The meeting was confused and befuddled by the discussion of the delegation by James Mitton to correct his licence and the procedural shutdown of Norm Arseneault of the NOTL Residents Association delegation on the issue and apparent mass confusion of the council members, resulting in the staff recommendation being only "received" instead of accepted, and apparently, this meant the freeze was lifted.

The town sent out a notice Oct. 30 that they were again accepting short-term rental applications, so by the time this gets around to another decision, maybe 20 per cent of housing in Old Town will be short-term rentals ... a great way to deal with the housing crisis and keep the full-time residents of NOTL happy.

Bob Bader
NOTL



ROSS'S RAMBLINGS

Ross Robinson
Columnist

Have Canadians ever been classier and more enthusiastic than during the recent World Series run by our amazingly awesome Toronto Blue Jays?

Everyone involved went to the wall, trying their best, and showing such sportsmanship throughout the entire ride on the bandwagon. On the field and off the field.

But darn, a baseball stuck under the outfield fence? Simply unfair. And then a broken bat?

We all agree the players are paid too much for playing a game, but that's the system we have created in our celebrity-centric culture. They have earned our respect and love. And now, I can't wait to cheer for the Jays again next year.

Please allow me to switch topics with an awkward segue. I just don't like it when our trusted leaders attempt to play me for a fool. Naive I may be at

times, but lately, politicians and their communications experts have been pushing the envelope too far, too often.

During the recent World Series games on television, a commercial featuring the Ring of Fire up in northern Ontario was shown several times. Each spot ended with the graphic, "Paid for by the Government of Ontario."

That's enough. I refuse to let them try to fool me again. I'm going to ramble way off topic. The "Government of Ontario" didn't pay for these commercials. The Conservative Party of Ontario didn't pay for them. Premier Doug Ford didn't pay for them.

We, the citizens and taxpayers of the province of Ontario, paid for the ads. It's that simple.

In the same vein, we regularly listen to our political leaders making important announcements on television. For example, "The Liberal Party of Canada will spend \$700 million on an affordable housing construction program."

And we, the trusting taxpayers, never seem to think about how the politicians are depending on us to silently listen without asking questions.

Asking me to believe the political parties and governments in fact pay for

their programs? Enough.

Governments are supposed to identify problems and develop solutions to create better environments for citizens of their jurisdictions. But, we don't expect them to use their own money.

It's so simple, isn't it? They don't think we will think.

I don't mind being told the truth. But don't try to fool me.

In conclusion, I know it has been a long time since I have been a fan of professional sports. For several reasons. Some important, and some petty.

But this Toronto Blue Jays team was special. Unique. I am so glad I climbed aboard the bandwagon. As they played cliffhangers against the Yankees and the Mariners, the team really seemed to love being around each other.

And my favourite player became Alejandro Kirk, the heavily set Mexican who was so strong both squatting behind home plate and hitting from beside home plate.

My goodness, I have "double rambled" off topic twice this week.

It's been a fun ride with the very professional and loveable Jays.

In a world that really needs some fun, love and kindness.

rossrocket9@gmail.com

How the federal budget will impact us in Niagara-on-the-Lake



BOTTOM LINE

Steve McGuinness
Columnist

few weeks ago, Bottom Line previewed the federal budget. The 406-page document was finally presented in the House of Commons earlier this week.

Our forecast of no reductions in program transfers to individuals and provinces was accurate. So were our predictions about increased expenditures on infrastructure and defence. But the budget also contained many other new measures, some less anticipated.

How it will impact you as a NOTLer will depend on several situational factors.

There are no major tax changes impacting individuals that will pad or empty our bank accounts, unless you own a yacht valued at over \$250,000 moored at the local sailing club or a private aircraft hangared at Niagara District Airport, valued at over \$100,000.

Then your luxury tax will be eliminated.

If you're a local residential property owner without a short-term rental permit, you will no longer need to pay the one per cent tax on the ownership of vacant or underused housing.

Mainly, the government has chosen to focus tax benefits on businesses. It will shorten the period over which businesses can deduct the capital costs of new property, calling this a "productivity super-reduction."

Businesses in sectors like

oil and gas (and specifically producers of liquid natural gas) are especially favoured. These business sectors are centred in locations outside of Ontario. Sometimes the squeaky wheel attracts the grease.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has been busy noisily fanning the flames of national disunity to try to rebalance that province's fiscal relationship with Ottawa.

Members of the groups like Seniors for Climate Action Niagara will be unimpressed with the tax breaks for the oil patch at a time when Canada is already exporting record volumes of oil and gas.

While liquid natural gas burns cleaner than some other fossil fuels, it nevertheless emits more carbon and methane than greener energy sources.

Unfortunately, these new tax measures undermine the

achievement of our Paris Accord carbon control commitments to combat climate change.

The industrial carbon tax was left untouched, despite Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre's insistence on that as a precondition of his party supporting the budget in our minority parliament.

If you are a federal government employee or know one, the budget reduces employment prospects. Ottawa is conducting a "comprehensive expenditure review" with the goal of reducing administrative costs across all departments.

That effort is forecast to save \$13 billion annually by 2028-29 and \$60 billion over five years.

Close to 40,000 positions will exit the federal government workforce, bringing it down to 330,000 employees in 2028-29 from 368,000 last year.

Most of these cuts will be

achieved through attrition. Workers will also be offered buy-out incentives to voluntarily retire or otherwise quit.

The budget also puts more meat on the bones concerning infrastructure spending. For example, it provides \$214 million in funding over five years to the Major Projects Office. Among the recipients is the high-speed train running from Toronto to Quebec City.

But first, NOTLers need Premier Doug Ford to make good on his promise to increase GO Train frequency in the Niagara to Hamilton corridor, so we can get to Toronto to board it.

Of key importance to municipalities like NOTL is the \$51 billion over 10 years earmarked for local infrastructure in a "Build Communities Strong" fund.

For a town like NOTL—currently trying to redress the inadequacy of storm

water containment ponds in fast-growing villages like St David's — this is welcome news.

Finally, there's a reduced immigration settlement plan, drastically reducing the target for new temporary resident admissions from 673,650 in 2025 to 385,000 in 2026.

This is unlikely to impact the seasonal foreign farm-worker quotas that agricultural businesses in NOTL import.

However, there is also a one-time measure to accelerate transitioning up to 33,000 work permit holders to permanent residency in 2026 and 2027.

Steve McGuinness was a senior adviser to major financial institutions during his Bay Street career and is now retired in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Send your personal finance questions to him at smcgfinplan@gmail.com.

Niagara Children’s Garden crucial for kids’ well-being

Dr. Robin Williams
Dr. Richa Agnihotri
Special to The Lake Report

Children are experiencing a mental health crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with excessive screen use, physical inactivity, parental stress, social isolation, food insecurity and many other contributing factors at play.

As pediatricians (one retired and one very active), we advocate for accessible services and spaces that offer children and families from all walks of life opportunities for learning, enrichment of health and well-being, and connection.

And in our practices we regularly hear stories about the addictiveness and capture of screens on our kids,

Here is just one example: One parent recalls how her three-year-old son refused to go on a walk because he wanted to watch the cartoon show “Bluey.”

With great difficulty, the mother relented and offered that he could watch “Bluey” on the family’s tablet when he was at the park where the rest of his family was planning to meet them.

He agreed but, once at the



Dr. Richa Agnihotri and her daughter Ava explore natural elements in a local park. More outdoor play and less screen time are essential for children, she says. SUPPLIED

park, he ran off to explore the rocks, the leaves, the acorns and flowers, having completely forgotten about the promise made earlier.

He played for hours and was delighted and engaged the entire time. He bonded with his family and had a great night’s sleep following his eventful day.

Anecdotes like this make us excited to support the Niagara Parks Commission and its foundation for once again thinking of children and families with their lat-

est initiative of building a Children’s Garden next to the Butterfly Conservatory on the Niagara Parkway.

This project has the potential to make a profound and magical impact on child and family health and well-being — today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Niagara Parks’ announcement this summer of its plans for the garden is timely and welcome.

The vision for a 1.6-hectare garden with 12 sensory-rich elements that celebrate

Niagara’s unique features and important history, provides an enriching alternative to screen time and is aligned with the Canadian Paediatric Society’s recommendations on screen use.

The organization encourages young minds to engage in activities that foster educational, social and emotional development while promoting creativity and exploration.

Connecting with nature and connecting in nature both have solid benefits: little hands in sand and water and soil, bring the principles of science and math and literacy alive.

Children will be given the opportunity to learn how plants and vegetables grow, down to their roots (in the Root Zone), giving them opportunities to build an understanding of nutrition and improve their food literacy, which can translate to healthier eating habits.

The Children’s Garden also has the potential to enhance respect for our environment and grow a future cohort of children conversant in sustainability and environmental protection, which can be empowering during a time in which

climate anxiety is prevalent.

Learning in this shared space can encourage creativity, social and emotional skill-building, focus and attention and stress management skills, thereby enhancing resilience.

As well, it will let families come together and build stronger social connections, developing a sense of community, which has also been shown to improve mental health.

Furthermore, the garden has the potential to bring communities together, foster teamwork and improve cultural understanding, especially of our Indigenous partners.

The importance of physical activity and outdoor play, in particular activities that include some risky elements, has been highlighted in recent work from the Canadian Paediatric Society.

This vast Niagara Parks garden, along with the tree-top walk, and areas for water and rocky elements, will enable children to explore, learn, climb, relax and build skills such as visual-spatial awareness and water safety.

Although we know parenting styles change

over the years, the supports that institutions and society provide for young families is always important in this journey.

So, this garden will be not only a destination for tourists, but we hope it will become a regular drop-in spot for Niagara’s neighbourhood families.

The future of the Niagara Region, and Canada and beyond will be in these “little hands” and what better way to contribute to the overall health and well-being of families, than Niagara Parks’ commitment to establishing a Children’s Garden.

We are very excited about the great potential it offers.

To learn more about the Children’s Garden, contact Niagara Parks Foundation chair Deborah Whitehouse at foundationchair@niagaraparks.com.

Dr. Robin Williams, a member of the Order of Canada, is a retired pediatrician and former Ontario associate chief medical officer of health. Dr. Richa Agnihotri, the mother of two young children, is a Niagara pediatrician who specializes in children’s mental health.

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Reflections after an astounding World Series in Toronto

Keith McNenly
Special to The Lake Report

After an exhausting World Series and incredible Game 7, we wake up to a new day, giving up Daylight Saving Time, as we brace for another gruelling winter. With the clocks turned back just hours after the epic game, our lives literally got darker.

This baseball playoff season became a metaphor for Canadians' current experience with the United States, a David vs. Goliath match, with Goliath coming out the winner, as most often happens in real life.

The Dodgers won the pennant while Canadians sat in stunned silence.

Even Canadians who have shown only passing interest in sports became entranced by the spectacle of the post-season Blue Jays.

The Jays as the underdog struggling against their American opponent, mirroring our Canadian struggle against the current



Keith McNenly says that more important than a win was the realization that Canadians come together from coast to coast to cheer on our national team. SUPPLIED

American government, an adversary working to crash our economy and leave us fighting to survive, all the while threatening to absorb our sovereignty.

What I find most interesting, aside from the very fact that we ubiquitously got on the metaphorical

bandwagon of cheering on "Canada's team," is that the loss wasn't a gut punch to us, a big disappointment, sure, but still psychologically manageable.

Just like Americans gave themselves the moniker "greatest country in the world," we call ourselves

the "true north strong and free." And that's just exactly what Canada is.

We don't pout and lament over disappointments because we know life isn't about birth and death, but about what transpires in between.

The beginning and the end are irrelevant; we can't control either one. It's all about the middle.

That's what the Jays demonstrated over the past few weeks to Canadians.

Watching it being played out was arguably the best televised drama I can remember seeing, filled with injury, skill, the coming together of young and mature players, leadership, underpinned by honest and empathetic struggle, with not ever a moment of giving up or giving in.

The Blue Jays' managers, coaches and players "got it" early on that they had been drafted into a metaphorical Canadian struggle of survival and nationhood, and to their credit, no matter their

own individual country of origin, even American players, they came to the plate as a team to support us.

They bought into our Canadian vision, struggling on a relentless journey to a common goal, not for personal aggrandizement, but to keep everyone afloat, just as our country faces a flood of unearned external aggression.

That's why Canadians are still cheering the Jays, why we see the loss of the title World Series Champions as less relevant than the record of their inspiring journey.

Players will come and go, but the Jays have left their imprint on our Canadian soil at a time when we needed a fulcrum to lever Canadians into a stronger team for the struggle ahead, in a world once again drifting toward economic warfare and authoritarianism, with Canada on the front lines.

Babe Ruth, among his many quoted phrases, said, "It ain't over till it's over."

That amazing team of

Blue Jays players has proven what we already knew: it's never over, we're just occasionally between innings.

Life isn't about the start or the end, it's about the in between, the struggle for a bite of food, clean water and air, someone to care for, a place to work and a place to rest, a team of nation builders and nation keepers so we can spread the burden of life over many hands sharing the good fortune and the bad.

On reflection, perhaps there's an irony after our weeks of white knuckling the sofa arms, coming down to the final seconds in the 11th inning in the witching hour, what we really needed was not a win after all, it was the lesson that from sea to sea to sea we can come together as one when our Canadian ideals are under threat.

Niagara-on-the-Lake resident Keith McNenly was the chief administrator of the Town of Mono for 41 years.

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NOTL's Margot Devlin completes her 13th NYC Marathon

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

Like the proverbial Energizer Bunny, marathoner Margot Devlin just keeps going and going.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake resident completed her 13th New York City Marathon on Sunday, a phenomenal accomplishment for anyone, let alone a senior who trains at home and on the streets of NOTL.

Devlin is a veteran marathoner, who earlier this year ran her sixth London marathon and also added the Paris race to her collection. Overall, she has finished more than 20 marathons.

On Sunday, she completed the 42-kilometre race in just over seven hours, running in the 65 to 69 age category.

For Devlin it's all about finishing — she doesn't worry about how fast she runs or how many others cross the finish line ahead of her.

"There were 59,000 people in this year's marathon from over 120 countries," she told The Lake Report.

It was "amazing," she added.

"People of all ages par-



Left: Niagara-on-the-Lake's Margot Devlin holds the medal she earned for completing her 13th New York City Marathon on Sunday. She also ran the Paris and London marathons this year. Right: Devlin poses in front of the Arc de Triomphe with her T-shirt and medal after completing the Paris Marathon in April. SHAUN DEVLIN



anticipated and there was a huge group of physically challenged participants."

The New York race keeps the finish line open until every participant finishes.

"One fellow, I heard, walks the marathon every

year and it takes him 10 hours. An 85-year-old Italian man that I met has done over 36 New York Marathons," she said.

Devlin noted the New York Road Runners Streakers Club lists more than

1,500 people of all ages, from an assortment of countries, each of whom has run at least 15 New York Marathons. "Inspiring," she said.

"Hopefully my old legs keep working so that I can

join that club."

That is one of her goals because in addition to being a milestone, after you complete 15 NYC Marathons on future race days runners are able to warm up in a heated tent on Staten Island, shel-

tered from the elements. The logistics of co-ordinating 59,000 runners on the streets of New York are complex.

"It was a bit of a challenge getting through security at Staten Island this year. Usually it moves slowly as we all go through the metal detectors and wandering, but this year we got off the buses and stood still for over an hour in the sun."

And timing is interesting at the Big Apple run. "There is an expo before marathon day where you pick up your bib after standing in line for 30 to 40 minutes," Devlin said.

On race day, you get on a bus around 6 in the morning, after lining up for half an hour, she said. It gets you to Staten Island around 7 a.m. and then runners go out in waves from 8 to 11:30 a.m.

"Because I am slow, I was in the last wave. Patience is a virtue in this marathon," she said.

For now, she can rest and relax a bit until training begins for her next race — her seventh London Marathon in April.

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Taekwondo gave her strength – now she’s teaching others

Dan Smeenk
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Since November 2016, TyVes Taekwondo in St. Davids has been a place where people, young and old, can come together to learn and practice the art of taekwondo.

It’s an art that Badri Ricciardelli, who operates the local studio, got into as a means of learning self-defence — something she started 26 years ago, at the age of 37.

However, her age was never a barrier, she says — and, she wanted to be a role model to her two daughters. “Until you’re 70 or 80, your body is able,” she said. “It’s how you treat your body.”

Niagara-on-the-Lake town council honoured the six-degree black belt last Tuesday for her contributions to taekwondo and her success in the sport nationally and internationally.

Ricciardelli, who attended the ceremony with several of her students, received a certificate recognizing her achievements and posed for photos with her black belt and medals.

“It’s truly an honour to be

recognized by the town and the council,” she said during the council meeting.

The certificate now sits prominently in her basement dojang — the taekwondo equivalent of a dojo or gym — alongside her medals and trophies.

Ricciardelli has operated TyVes Taekwondo in St. Davids since November 2016. Her students range in age from five to seniors.

She competes in poomsae, a taekwondo discipline focused on technique and pre-practised movements rather than sparring.

Among her accomplishments are a bronze medal at the 2024 World Championships in Hong Kong, where she became the first Canadian to reach the podium. She said she was proud that she “beat the American” to win bronze.

“This is the equivalent of the Olympics for us,” she said.

Ricciardelli also earned two Canadian national championships in 2024 and 2025. She began competing nationally in 2018.

Originally from Iran, she paused competition in 2022 to stand in solidarity with protesters in her home country following Mahsa



Badri Ricciardelli shows off what won her nationals taekwondo tournaments and a bronze medal at a world championship in Hong Kong in 2024 in her dojang. She was honoured by the town for her accomplishments last Tuesday during a meeting of council. DAN SMEENK

Amini’s death.

She won gold medals at both the 2024 Pan-Am Games in Brazil and the 2024 Canadian Open Championship.

Ricciardelli immigrated to Canada from Iran in 1978 during the Iranian Revolution.

She described her up-

bringing as “strict,” noting her father valued education and wanted her to pursue better opportunities in Canada.

She studied construction engineering technology at Niagara College and later joined Vesuvius, a heat-resistant materials company in Welland.

She eventually became head of the company’s precast division, which took her on business trips across North America.

“I remember one time in Regina, I was in an elevator coming down and this guy was really, really close to me and I looked at him and said, ‘What are you doing?’ and he said, ‘You smell good,’” she said.

That incident became her motivation to learn how to defend herself.

Ricciardelli said taekwondo appealed to her because of its self-defence benefits and the distance it allows between opponents.

“It’s a dynamic sport,” she said. “Because of its dynamics, because of its energy, that’s what drew me into it.”

Over time, taekwondo became more than just self-defence. Ricciardelli opened her own studio after hearing that other dojangs lacked strict technical standards.

“My studio is high-performance,” she said. “We train champions.”

She said her classes started small in 2016.

“It was slow at the beginning,” she said. “But then they opened up.”

Now, she teaches her students the same self-defence skills she learned through the practice.

“(The self-defence) is part of the taekwondo,” she said. “I’m a big fan of it myself.”

She said taekwondo also teaches confidence and mastery of a challenging physical discipline.

Her journey wasn’t without setbacks. In 2003, she was in a car accident that completely fractured her right wrist, requiring a bone graft from her left hip.

She also needed shoulder surgery and suffered a punctured eardrum. The injuries sidelined her for a few years, but she credits taekwondo with helping her recover.

Ricciardelli has since trained three times in South Korea with Grandmaster Chinchul Kang, an internationally recognized master whose photo hangs in her dojang.

Through it all, her dedication to the sport never wavered.

“I never thought of giving it up,” she said.

She teaches classes for ages five to nine, 10 to 18, and adults. More information is available at tyveslife.com.

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Artists bring urban beauty to Ironwood

Andrew Hawlitzky
The Lake Report

Some people may find it odd, or even unnerving, to stand in a place once filled with life and find it empty, such as a run-down building or a deserted house.

Photographer James Mattiazzo, however, experiences things differently.

“For me, it’s relaxing. It’s how I get out of my head,” he said.

He was one of a handful of artists whose work is featured in NOTL Contemporary’s latest exhibition at Ironwood Cider House, which invites people to see beauty hiding in decay, with abandoned spaces turned into works of art.

The show, called ENTROPY, gathered urban photographers and urban explorers from Niagara and beyond who capture the forgotten corners of cities and give artgoers a look at worlds they rarely see.

Mattiazzo, who’s one of the organizers, captures the quiet stillness of forgotten buildings.

“When I first started exploring, I was doing outreach with homeless people. Nobody wanted to go into those buildings, so I did — and I started taking



Visitors take in the diverse works of local photographers during Entropy – Urbexhibition, held at Ironwood Cider House on Nov. 1. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

pictures. That’s what pulled me into this whole community,” he said.

Mattiazzo, who runs the Antidote Apothecary candy store in St. Catharines, said exploring forgotten places brings him peace.

His portraits and abandoned-building shots filled much of the gallery’s main floor, sharing space with pieces from artists across Canada, the United States and overseas.

“I like bringing subjects

into forgotten places and showing a bit of hidden history. There’s a lot of beauty in decay if you take the time to see it,” said portrait photographer Grant Guillemette of Welland.

One of Montreal artist Guillaume Fugère’s most striking photos was a drone shot of a Second World War bomber plane crash site in a wooded area of British Columbia, where drones typically aren’t permitted.

“It was a no-fly zone, but I got lucky. I think I’m the only person to have a drone shot of that site,” said Fugère.

In a side room in Ironwood, photographer Dave Conlon built an immersive installation using objects recovered from an abandoned home once owned by a woman who died five years ago, leaving behind rooms filled with her belongings.

Conlon said he wanted to give visitors the chance to safely feel the thrill and curiosity of exploring a place most would never dare to enter.

“I wanted people to feel what it’s like to step into one of these places — the smell, the atmosphere, the stories left behind.”

For organizer Marinko Jareb, the evening was another milestone for NOTL Contemporary, which has hosted several shows inside Ironwood over the past year.

“At this point, it’s a labour of love. We’ve started applying for funding and stuff, but for now, we just do it because we believe in it,” said Jareb.

He hopes the gallery’s growth will continue with more events and greater local participation.

andrew@niagaranow.com



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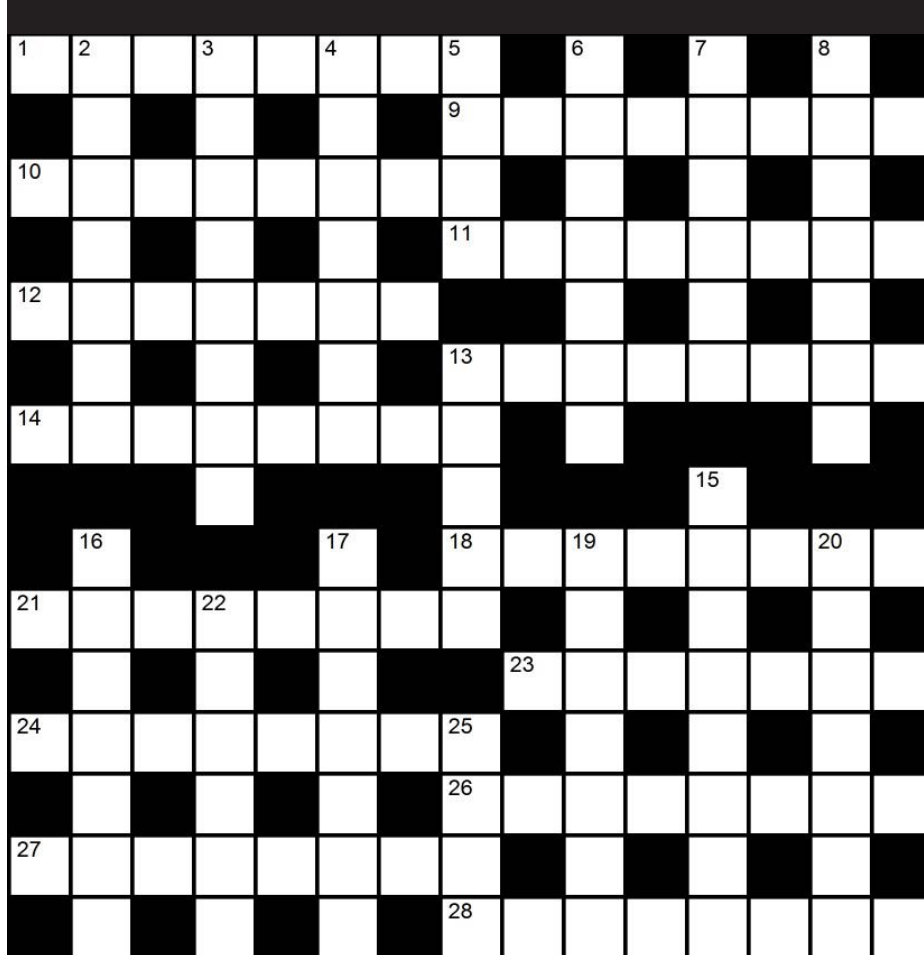
Across

1. German liqueur (8)
9. Burden excessively (8)
10. Self-important (8)
11. Travelling case for clothes (8)
12. Refrain voluntarily (7)
13. Gambling game (4,4)
14. Private feud (8)
18. Acts (8)
21. Bald (8)
23. Black magic (7)
24. I o W town (8)
26. Staple of Mediterranean cooking (5,3)
27. Goodbye (8)
28. Charismatic (8)

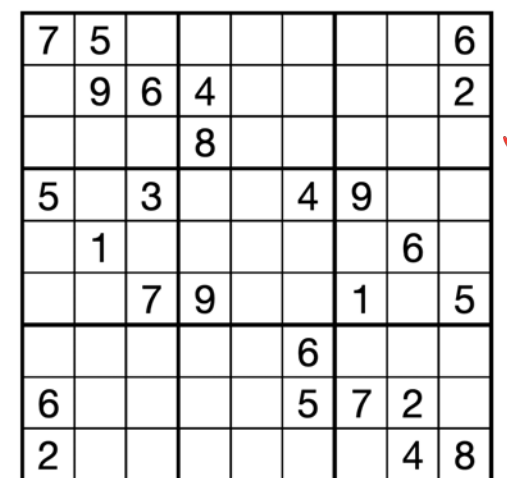
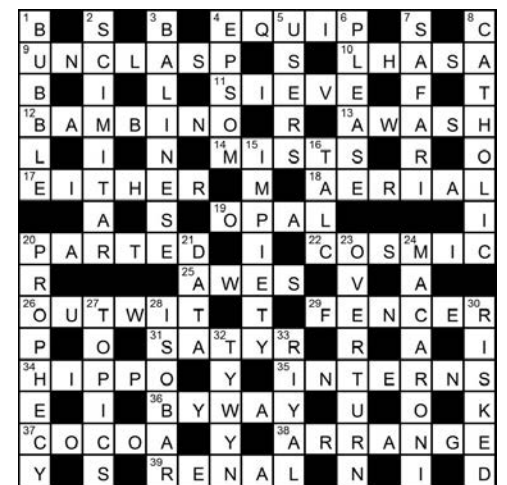
Down

2. Responsive to drugs (7)
3. Midday (8)
4. Musician who could play the Moonlight Sonata (7)
5. Drunkards (4)
6. Musical performance (7)
7. Tranquil (6)
8. Cushion for kneeling (7)
13. Poaches with a torch (5)
15. Substantial (8)
16. West Atlantic island country (7)
17. Decreased (7)
19. Covering for a building (7)
20. Cocktail (7)
22. Battered (6)
25. Small island (4)

Crossword Puzzle



Last issue's answers



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EXPLORING HISTORY WITH NOTL MUSEUM

A warm welcome for returning soldiers



When Lance Cpl. Everton Howard McLelland, featured here, was a young boy, he lived with his mother and sisters in the dock area of Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake. Later, the family moved to Toronto but they still had family here in town. McClelland enlisted Nov. 23, 1915 with the 81st Battalion and served with the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion in France and Belgium for three years. Although this photo shows their Toronto home, it is a good example of the celebration that most soldiers received when they returned. Many locals would decorate their homes and invite both family and neighbours to join their revelry. After the celebrations quieted down, the home front would soon have to find ways to adapt to the new reality of men returning home with both physical and mental disabilities. From the ultimate sacrifice to lost limbs to survivor's guilt to shell shock, generations to come would feel the severe after-effects of the Great War. On Remembrance Day, let's be thankful to all Canadian soldiers, past and present, who did not return and for those who did and the sacrifices they made to their bodies, their minds and their futures.



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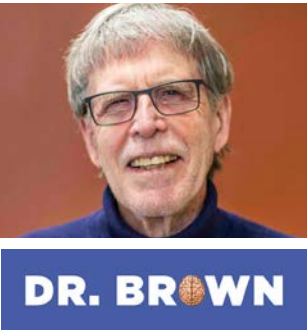
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The standard model of the universe — what's wrong with it?



Dr. William Brown
Columnist

In 1900, what scientists understood about the universe was limited to a small part of the Milky Way and most scientists, including the two giants in physics, Isaac Newton in the 1500s and Albert Einstein in the first three decades of the 1900s, considered what they saw of the universe was an orderly stable affair with no beginning or end.

Cracks in that view came in the 1920s from theoretical physicists such as Lemaitre, who, after examining Einstein's equations for general relativity, realized that far from a stable affair, the universe was expanding.

Then observations by the astronomer Erwin Hubble revealed that galaxies close enough to see with one of the largest telescopes of the day were speeding away from one another and faster, the further away they were, all carried by an expanding universe.

If so, it was reasonable

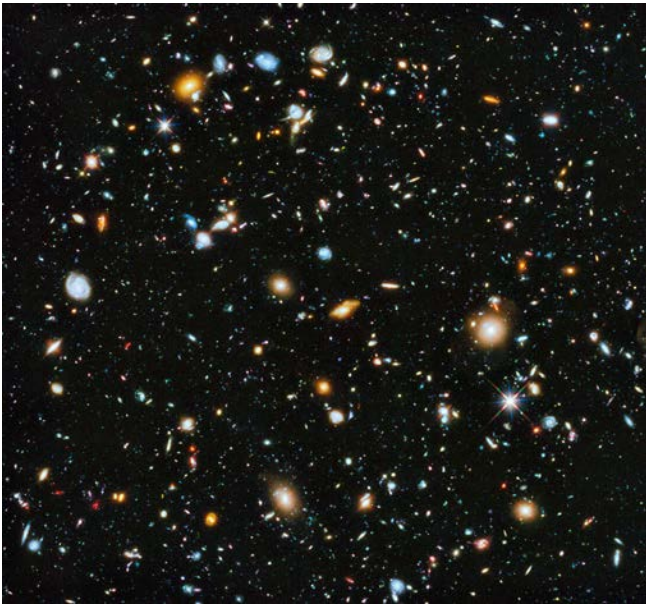
to suggest that the universe must have been very much smaller at one time, a hypothesis which led some theoretical physicists to suggest that the universe had a beginning with a sudden violent burst of energy.

That moment became popularly known as the Big Bang, a term derisively coined by the famous astronomer Frank Hoyle, who vigorously opposed the whole notion of a Big Bang. At this point, theoretical and experimental physicists were stuck.

The first solid scientific evidence for the Big Bang and subsequent expansion of the universe began when Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, working then at Bell Labs, were frustrated by faint radiation in the microwave range seemingly emanating from all directions in the universe, which was interfering with their unrelated projects.

The two men systematically and scrupulously excluded any earthly sources for the radiation but had no idea what was causing the radiation. They shared their finding with James Peebles and colleagues, who immediately grasped the significance of the findings because that's precisely what they were looking for as evidence for the Big Bang.

Here, many billions of



A Hubble image shows thousands of galaxies. WIKIMEDIA

years later, was evidence of the radiation created in the Big Bang, now cooled to a few degrees above zero Kelvin and stretched by the expanding universe into the microwave range — what became known as the cosmic background radiation.

Key to the Big Bang theory was accompanying evidence that there were significant random variations in the distribution of that residual heat consistent with variations in the distribution of matter in the earliest universe for gravity to work on and create the earliest condensations of matter and stars.

Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson received a Nobel Prize for their observation and James Peebles and

Because it's six times more common than the matter we're familiar with, it must play a key role, together with giant black holes, in shaping gaseous clouds of hydrogen and some helium into stellar matter and planets, as governing the shape of whole galaxies and groups of galaxies.

Then along came the James Webb Space Telescope, which was designed to see light in the infrared range and thus much farther back in time than Hubble.

The standard model suggested that it would take more than half a billion years to create mature galaxies and stars capable of creating heavier elements such as carbon.

To the surprise of many astronomers and theoretical physicists, this telescope revealed some large galaxies half that age or less, which suggests that they might have begun to form hundreds of millions of years earlier.

The observation of early galaxy and star formation raises several questions.

Is the standard model wrong, if so, what's assumptions were wrong or left out, or as some wilder cosmologists suggest those, perhaps those "too early" galaxies might belong to an earlier more mature galaxy?

Many theoretical physi-

cists speculate that there might be many galaxies.

The 2020 Nobel laureate, Roger Penrose, suggests that universes might be serial, ours followed the end of a previous galaxy and one that will follow the demise of our galaxy or as others suggest, there might be many, many other galaxies overlapping with one another in time — or does time even matter with speculations like that?

Some of those questions will never be answered if only because the universe is so much larger than the "observable" universe and well beyond any tools now available to search as well as the limits imposed by the speed of light.

This brief summary of the revolution in cosmology traces for little more than a century the scientific journey from set beliefs to massive changes in how we understand the universe writ large and the role of quantum physics in determining those earliest changes, which later created stars and thus all the elements and life itself.

That's perspective on a grand scale.

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the InfoHealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

Obituaries

Allan McKenzie



McKenzie, Allan N. W. —
Peacefully, on Oct. 24, 2025 at the age of 98. Husband of the late Dorothea for 60 years and survived by his sons Malcolm “Mac” (Ann) and Martin (Mandy); also, his grandchildren Andrew (Kristina) Elizabeth (Drew), Ian (Amy) and Victoria (Scott), and great grandchildren Hazen, Jessica, Scotland, Fraser, Islay and Wesley.
Born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1927, Allan emigrated to Canada with his wife Dorothea and son Malcom in 1955. From 1956 to 1971, he was employed by H.G. Acres & Co. Ltd. In Niagara Falls, and from 1971 to 1988 the Lincoln County Board of Education, from whose employment he retired as Superintendent of Business and Treasurer. After retiring, Allan served for several years on the Board of Directors of Information Niagara and the Niagara Branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses. Allan held an honorary Life Membership from the Society of Management Accountants of Ontario. He was a member of the St. Catharines Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, having been an originating member in 1960. He also taught Scottish Country Dancing for many years at the St. Andrews Society S.C.D. Group in Niagara on the Lake. Allan served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1947.
Cremation has taken place and a private family inurnment will be held at a later date. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Radiant Care Pleasant Manor or Old St. John’s Stamford Heritage Association.
Thank you to the staff at Pleasant Manor and the nurses at the Trillium Ward (GNGH) for their care and kindness.
Memories, photos and condolences may be shared at morseandson.com.

Judith ‘Judy’ Van Lammers



Van LAMMERS, Judith “Judy” —
Judy lived life with warmth, laughter and a spark that lit up every room she entered. Predeceased by her husband Robert “Bob” Harold Van Lammers, she leaves behind cherished memories as mother of Lisa (Martin) and Susan (Marc), and as “Gannie” to her beloved grandchildren: Kellan, Matthew, Paul and Emma.
She was predeceased by her sister, Carole Anne Kavanagh (John), and is survived by her brothers: Terry (Debbie) and Tommy (Lydia) Clancy. Her late-in-life partner, Philip Nicholas, mourns her deeply.
Born in Toronto and raised in Ottawa, Judy moved back to Toronto as a teenager where she attended Loretto Abbey High School and began nursing studies at Saint Michael’s Hospital. True to her adventurous spirit, she ultimately pursued a career in Secretarial Administration, excelling as Executive Assistant to the Director of the Toronto Metropolitan Separate School Board for many years.
Judy’s sociable nature meant she was never short of friends; from childhood friends in Ottawa, high school classmates, young families in the Henry Farm community, to the many teammates and wives she met through Bob’s sporting life, her connections endured across decades.
The sudden loss of Bob at only 60 was a heartbreaking shock that altered the course of the family. Judy’s strength and resilience shone through, guiding her forward with courage as she created a new life near her daughters in Niagara-on-the-Lake. There she embraced her new community with her signature energy and spirit-engaging with her condo board, playing bridge several times a week and serving as the driving force behind countless outings and gatherings. In doing so, she wove a rich tapestry of friendships in her new home.
Judy’s story came full circle when she reconnected with Phil, an old friend from Bob’s hockey community. Their companionship blossomed into a loving partnership that allowed them to share their golden years together. Judy’s spontaneity, resilience and enthusiasm for life will be remembered and cherished by all who knew her.
In honouring Judy’s wishes cremation has taken place. A Memorial Mass will be held at 11 am Friday, November 7, 2025 at St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church, 73 Picton Street, Niagara on the Lake. A reception at the church hall to follow.
Arrangements entrusted to Considerate Cremation & Burial Services, 26 Nihan Drive, St. Catharines (between Lake Street & Scott Street), 289-362-1144. Online condolences may be made at CCBSCares.ca



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MOVING WATER FORWARD

Notice to Residents – Road Closure

York Road (Regional Road 81) Watermain Upgrades

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Project Description

This project is located on a 3.4 km stretch along York Road (Regional Road 81) between Concession 7 Road and Four Mile Creek Road (Regional Road 100) in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The purpose of the project is to upgrade the existing watermain to continue providing safe and reliable drinking water, address aging infrastructure, and meet future growth demands expected in the area. Replacing this watermain is necessary to avoid future failures that would negatively impact residents and businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Upgrades include the installation of a new PVC watermain with associated valve chambers, fittings, joint restraints and other items.

For more information, please visit the project website at: niagararegion.ca/projects/york-road-watermain-replacement

Thank you for your patience as we complete these necessary upgrades.

Road Closure

Monday, Nov. 10, 2025 to Friday, Nov. 28, 2025 (weather permitting or the next business day).
Dates are subject to change.

The York Road and Four Mile Creek Road intersection will be closed to all vehicle traffic for completion of the watermain installation within the intersection.

Detours

- **Northbound traffic (Option 1):** Four Mile Creek Road > Warner Road > York Road > Concession 6 Road
- **Northbound traffic (Option 2):** Four Mile Creek Road > York Road > Concession 3 Road > Line 9 Road
- **Southbound traffic (Option 1):** Four Mile Creek Road > Line 9 Road > Concession 3 Road > York Road
- **Southbound traffic (Option 2):** Four Mile Creek Road > Line 7 Road > Concession 6 Road > York Road
- **Westbound traffic:** York Road > Concession 3 Road > Line 9 Road > Four Mile Creek Road > Line 7 Road > Concession 6 Road
- **Eastbound traffic (Option 1):** York Road > Concession 6 Road > Line 7 Road > Four Mile Creek Road
- **Eastbound traffic (Option 2):** York Road > South on Four Mile Creek Road

Businesses and residents along York Road will have access up to Four Mile Creek Road while on York Road, but will not have access through the intersection. Eastbound traffic will have the ability to proceed south on Four Mile Creek Road. Northbound traffic will have the ability to proceed east on York Road.

Businesses and schools will remain open at all times.

Information and Updates

Visit niagararegion.ca or municipal511.ca for real-time information on closures and construction updates. Municipal511 shares road information that connects to Google Maps and Waze. It helps Niagara Region, local municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation better coordinate local construction projects to minimize traffic disruption.

What to Expect

During construction, expect dust, periodic noise and road closures near construction activities with detour routes set up through nearby neighbourhoods. Advance notice will be provided if access to your property or services will be interrupted.

Working hours will typically fall between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday to Friday. Some activities may require working hours outside of these times.

Safety

This work involves heavy equipment and open trenches. Please keep away from all fenced areas and follow the posted safety signage. Always keep yourself and others a safe distance from all work areas.

Project Contacts

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Special accessibility accommodations and materials in alternate formats can be arranged by contacting the Niagara Region's Accessibility Advisory Coordinator at 905-980-6000, ext. 3252 or accessibility@niagararegion.ca.

This notice was first issued on Oct. 30, 2025.

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