



A Message From  
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## FARMING, PIES, PICKLES AND PRESERVES

I'm writing this just after the Thanksgiving weekend and I hope that, like me, you enjoyed this special holiday with your loved ones.

Thanksgiving goes hand-in-hand with harvest celebrations, and throughout the rural areas of Niagara-on-the-Lake we see signs that the growing season is coming to an end. Orchards are being pruned, or uprooted for new plantings, grapes are being picked, and farm stands are gradually closing down.

The farm stands are one of the great pleasures of living in NOTL, and we're fortunate to be able to buy genuine farm-to-table produce from the stands that proudly sell what they've grown, whether on the farm or in thriving backyard vegetable gardens. I love it when, by chance, the fruit I buy has only just that minute arrived from the field.

When I see people leaving the stands with large trays or baskets of fruit or vegetables, I can't help imagining all the pies, pickles and preserves that are being created in family kitchens throughout the town, as well as being taken home by visitors to create a winter store-cupboard from the freshest produce possible.

(And, as a side-note, I love that fruit stands are increasingly using reusable baskets and containers, and the ones I visit are always pleased to use re-usable produce bags and to receive returns of containers in good condition.)

The Town's [Official Plan update](#) (currently in its second draft) will continue to enshrine the requirement for farm stand produce to be 100% local. It states that:

*"Roadside produce outlets...and 'pick your own' facilities are limited to distribution of product produced from the farm operation on which it is located or surrounding farms in close proximity."*

It's critical that we preserve our remaining agricultural lands, avoid its fragmentation and prevent commercialization of the specialty crop area. Our Official Plan has to address these issues.

## STORMWATER, AGAIN

In a way, it's sad that our beautifully warm September is over, but we know the lack of rainfall wasn't entirely a good thing and, according to [agriculture.canada.ca](#), Niagara-on-the-Lake was experiencing a moderate drought. Other parts of the Niagara Peninsula were experiencing a severe drought.

I can't help comparing this with last year, when Spring and Summer storms caused extensive damage throughout the town, and the question of water management became a major focus of attention for Council. In [December](#), I reported on the water management issues being considered for the 2025 budget and now, the final quarter of the year, is a good time to update you on what's been done.

- **Cleaning stormwater ponds** was included in the 2025 budget and is now taking place on a rotating schedule. The Town is also working on capacity limits at [Sandalwood Pond at Sandalwood Crescent](#), St. David's. It's been confirmed that this system is experiencing increased flows, and the Town is evaluating contributing factors, including property discharges into the pond and regional water redirection. The next steps include continuing technical assessments, conducting additional site evaluations, and developing targeted mitigation measures.
- The 2022 One Mile Creek inspections identified the overall condition of **the Regent Street culvert** as "Poor", and it's due to be replaced in 2026.
- The **Chautauqua Storm Study**, initially intended to take place in 2024, was moved into the 2025 Master Services Plan, which is now likely to begin in 2026.
- Similarly, the **Dock Area Master Plan** was slated for 2024 and was moved to be part of the Dock Area Shoreline Protection Study in 2025. Now titled the Dock Area Secondary Plan, the project is underway with a public information session due to take place shortly. On the Town's website, you can see what the draft Official Plan ([Clean Copy](#)) Section 10.4) sets out for the Secondary Plan..
- The NPCA has now started the **Four Mile Creek Watershed Plan** on behalf of the Town, with a Rapid Geomorphic Assessment report due to Council before the end of the year. However, the full study will take until 2029 to complete.
- The **Town's Engineering Standards** will be updated in 2025 and will focus heavily on climate change adaptation and green infrastructure solutions. In addition, the Town has requested that the Province review and update stormwater design standards to reflect our changing climate. For example, by increasing the one-in-one-hundred year storm criteria to better reflect our current reality.
- Other aspects of stormwater management are **roadside ditches and municipal drains** which are integral for moving water into areas that can take the volume away from properties and infrastructure. This year the Town will implement a proactive maintenance approach to these important pieces of our infrastructure.

As always, improving critical infrastructure takes time, especially in the planning stage, if we're to get comprehensive results that will meet long-term demands. Nevertheless, I'm pleased to see that these projects to mitigate stormwater damage are definitely underway or, at least...in the pipeline!

Thank you for your attention,

Sandra O'Connor  
Town Councillor  
Niagara-on-the-Lake

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**RESPECT THE PAST - PLAN FOR THE FUTURE - ATTEND TO THE PRESENT**

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