



Gaio brings music home | Page 12



Benny Marotta.

## Town asks OPP to investigate after developer gives councillor \$10,000

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council has asked the Ontario Provincial Police and the town's integrity commissioner to launch investigations after prominent developer Benny Marotta

gave \$10,000 in cash to Coun. Gary Burroughs.

The Lake Report learned late last week that Marotta handed Burroughs an envelope containing \$10,000 during a meeting at the developer's winery, Two Sisters Vineyards, on Saturday, March 11.

In interviews, Burroughs and Marotta independently confirmed the exchange happened, but both said it was not politically motivated.

Marotta said the money was not a bribe and he didn't ask Burroughs for anything in return.

It was a personal donation to Burroughs, mainly to help with re-election campaign expenditures, he said.

Burroughs said, "That isn't what happened. But I can't go further into it."

Continued on Page 2



Gary Burroughs.

### Special Report: Rental costs are high, supply is scarce in NOTL

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

First in a series

Debbie Delesky couch surfed for more than a year before finally finding a place to live in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A NOTL native, she has been living with a couple in Virgil since November, after spending about five months at a friend's house in St. Catharines.

Since about 2021 she's hopped among a half-dozen places — sometimes in different cities — seeking a place to call home while trying to make ends meet.

Delesky says she was paying her hosts rent but it was a temporary solution to her personal housing crisis.

She's not alone, though.

Across Niagara, throughout Ontario and nationwide, the inability to find

Continued on Page 11

## NOTL swimmer sets sights on Olympics



NOTL swimmer Peyton Leigh, 15, will compete in the Olympic qualifiers in the 200-metre butterfly and 400-metre freestyle. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Standing just five-foot-five, with a shoe size of eight and a half, Peyton Leigh says she is "short for a swimmer," but the 15-year-old has never let that slow her down.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake teen has just qualified to compete in the Canadian Olympic trials in two events — the 200-metre butterfly and the 400-metre freestyle.

A strong performance could mean a chance to represent Canada at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

Her mother Christi notes the journey toward the Olympics

began when Peyton was just four months old, with swimming lessons under coach Margaret Park.

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## Niagara wineries unite to pressure province for changes

Jill Troyer  
The Lake Report

Niagara wineries travelled to Queen's Park with an important message, as well as some delicious VQA wine in an effort to lobby

the government for changes to help the industry grow.

Leaders from more than a dozen wineries were on hand to underscore the economic importance of their industry and to pour some of their best wines at

a reception following the official presentations.


"We hosted a launch of the Vision 2030 document at Queen's Park, where we met with all levels of government, both political officials and bureaucrats,

to celebrate the launch of the vision and to share with government the role that they need to play to help us achieve our ambition," said Del Rollo, chair of Wine Growers Ontario.

Vision 2030 is a report

created by the wine industry. It outlines a forecast for ambitious growth with big benefits to the economy — and it calls for more support from the government,

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# Farmworker Hub opens doors to **new social space**

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

Sunday afternoon the Niagara-on-the-Lake Farmworker Hub's social space opened for the first time and welcomed workers to a place for rest and relaxation. Director Julia Buxton-Cox was excited about what the new space will provide. "It's a place that they can come that's away from the farm, where they can feel like they can relax a bit after work. We've got free wifi up here, they can just relax and have a little bit of fun," she said. "They can play pool, we'll have sports, there are snacks for them and then at the back there's some dominos and games."



Jamie Knight of the Rotary Club presents a cheque to Julia Buxton-Cox to help assist the Farmworker Hub, which is now equipped with a pool table and a lounge space for workers to relax in. SUPPLIED/JULIA SACCO



Volunteers said the space was already bustling within the first hour of opening. "We probably had close to 80 people stop by within the first hour and a half today," said Buxton-Cox. The upstairs space was donated by Cornerstone Community Church and features multiple small rooms in addition to the

large, communal space. One of the rooms will be dedicated to religious and spiritual affairs. "Many of the workers are people of faith and so they're looking for prayer and pastoral counselling,"

said Buxton-Cox. "So starting in April we have four different pastors from different churches and different denominations who will be coming to volunteer their time." Two Sundays of the

month Spanish-speaking pastors will visit. The NOTL Rotary Club presented a cheque to the Farmworker Hub to help with its rent payments. Buxton-Cox said the cheque is greatly appreci-

ated and that her next goal is to find more volunteers. "We could use some drivers to help bring workers who aren't within a biking distance here," she said. "There's two of us leading this and 2,000 work-

ers, so any extra hands are appreciated." The Farmworker Hub is operating with about 34 volunteers, including Chrystal Haverstock, a new resident who chose to volunteer as a way to get involved. "I'm new-ish in town and NOTL is unique so I'm looking for my place to fit in," she said. "I really decided after talking to Julia when I came to donate some stuff and I thought, 'I like how this woman thinks.'" With the opening of the social space, Buxton-Cox expects more workers to visit. "Last year we had just under 3,100 visits, this year we're expecting close to 5,000," she said.

The social space will be open every Sunday from 2 to 6 p.m. and the hub will also operate Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for drop-offs and donation sorting. "We come from a place of abundance, this is our way of neighbours helping neighbours," Buxton-Cox said.

## If you're single, finding an affordable rental is **huge challenge**

Continued from Front Page

an affordable place to live is a common refrain for thousands. In NOTL, rent for a two-bedroom home can easily exceed \$3,000 a month. You might have better luck winning the lottery than finding an affordable one-bedroom in town. In January, Delesky's hosts gave her until the end of March to find a new place, but her move hit a snag because it seemed impossible to find an affordable apartment for one person. Despite her predicament, Delesky actually might be considered one of the lucky ones.

And, eventually, a place to stay. Thanks to the tips and leads she received, she found a studio apartment above a couple's garage in NOTL. Delesky said she felt like she "could finally sleep." "(I) couldn't be more grateful," she said in a text message to The Lake Report. Delesky is 48, works in Virgil and wanted to find a place to rent in her hometown. "I would like to stay in town. This is where I grew up," she told The Lake Report. However, finding affordable renting options in Niagara-on-the-Lake is "almost impossible," she said.



Struggling to find a place to live, Debbie Delesky has rented studio space above a garage in NOTL. SOMER SLOBODIAN

There was light at the end of the seemingly dark tunnel thanks to a social media post on Facebook. "I could not believe the outpouring of support," Delesky told The Lake Report. She posted on the NOTL 4 ALL Facebook group page in January, but didn't receive many comments. It wasn't until she reached out again in February that her fortunes turned – with more than 40 comments from kind members of the community.

For more than 12 months, she's bounced among different living situations. When she was told she had until the end of March at her current place, she began to panic. Her budget was about \$1,000 a month since she's living on her own. "I'm working as much as I can and I know that I will have another part-time job in the spring, just (to) make more money. But it's not easy for one single person," said Delesky.

The options, especially in Niagara-on-the-Lake, are few. Rents are high – and supply is scarce. When you look at the housing costs in Niagara-on-the-Lake compared to the rest of the region, NOTL is "a little bit of an anomaly," said regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser. And it is making it more difficult for residents to stay in town, she added. As of early March, about

56 rentals in Niagara-on-the-Lake had been listed with the Niagara Real Estate Board in the previous 365 days. The average listing was a three-bedroom, two-bathroom unit averaging \$3,032 a month, said Cheryl Munce, a realtor with Engel & Volkers Niagara. Of the 56 rentals, 23 were townhouses, 30 were houses and only three were apartments.

A search this month on Rentals.ca showed just five rental options in NOTL and the lowest price for a basement apartment was \$1,545 a month. A flyer on the kiosk outside the post office on Queen Street promoted a listing for a fully furnished, shared home for rent. The price for the shared space was \$1,250 to \$1,350. And only one apartment in Virgil was listed on

Facebook Marketplace at \$1,500 per month for a one bedroom. **Next week:** Debbie Delesky's situation raises some bigger questions — what options are there in Niagara-on-the-Lake for people looking to rent a studio or one-bedroom apartment at an affordable price? And what does the future hold for renters who want to live in NOTL. We'll explore those issues in part 2 of this series.





Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.

## Council **still debating** what to cut or keep in 2023 budget

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Councillors were dazed and confused during some of their budget deliberations

Tuesday night, but managed to push through the 2023 capital budget.

Niagara-on-the-Lake council has been locked in budget discussions since February and was initially

scheduled to adopt the full annual budget March 23.

But debate and discussion on what to cut and what to keep continues.

The draft budget proposal shows a tax increase to

residents of about 8.85 per cent or just under \$105, for a home assessed at \$541,000.

Council on Tuesday approved a \$9,695,042 capital budget with some amendments.

This amounts to a small increase to the town's 2022 capital budget, which was \$9,580,042.

The increase comes at

*Continued on Page 5*

## Speed cameras will mean big fines in NOTL safety zones

Evan Loree  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Niagara Region is stepping up its traffic enforcement game in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

And it could mean big fines arriving in the mail for drivers who exceed posted speed limits.

The region is installing speed cameras to automatically enforce speed limits in NOTL's community safe zones near schools, says Scott Fraser, the region's associate director of transportation planning.

The move is part of a larger traffic safety plan called the Vision Zero Road Safety Program, which aims to "eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries on the regional road network," Fraser said in an email.

Speed cameras will be used to automatically enforce speed limits in 13 community safety zones across Niagara.

In NOTL, the cameras will be used near Crossroads Public School and St.

*Continued on Page 5*

## 'A single step is a **closed door**'



Many businesses along Queen Street are inaccessible because of a single step, says resident Pamela Turner Smith. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

A single step might as well be an insurmountable wall for Pamela Turner Smith.

In the eight years she has lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Turner Smith says she hasn't been able

to enter many of the businesses on Queen Street because she is mobility impaired.

"I cannot go into 60 per cent of the stores and support them," she said.

"If I am here with friends, I have to wait on the sidewalk."

Last year, Turner Smith, who used a mobility scooter, photographed every store on and around Queen Street.

Her research determined that 60 stores out of 100 were inaccessible.

In many cases, just a single

*Continued on Page 12*

## Special Report: One-bedroom units **don't really exist** in NOTL

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

*Second in a series*

Renting a one-bedroom apartment anywhere in

Niagara is pricey, but in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one-bedroom apartments are not only expensive, they're also rare.

In fact, one-bedroom NOTL rentals don't really

exist, says Cheryl Munce, a realtor with Engel & Volkers Niagara.

There aren't many apartment buildings in town to begin with and the buildings that do exist are mainly

premium-priced condos, she said.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa says this highlights the need for lower-cost, attainable housing options in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Zalepa told The Lake Report that he comes across many people who work in town and want to be able to live here – but simply can't.

As well, there's a "huge gap" in housing options for

downsizing seniors and for "that younger, maybe single individual who's working in town and can't find housing under budget," Zalepa said.

*Continued on Page 2*



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# Mayor thinks non-profits can help with housing

Continued from Front Page

Munce is becoming increasingly concerned about that gap.

There's a lot of young workers in town and every time she encounters one, "I ask them if they live in town and every single one of them says no," Munce said.

They can't afford it and there's no apartment buildings here, she added.

However, NOTL could change that, the mayor says.

### Building more along regional roads

There's an opportunity to build attainable housing along regional roads and within walking distance of public services and amenities, Zalepa said.

He said it would be appropriate to build such housing in Old Town as long as it fits the surrounding area.

Many people would benefit, including downsizing seniors who want to stay in Niagara-on-the-Lake, he said.

Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser gets excited when she sees some of the new builds in Niagara-on-the-Lake, such as in Garrison Village and in St. Davids.

She thinks it's exciting for the community, but also good for people to get used to the idea of new buildings.

"There has to be a place where we can do a tiny bit of intensification that's appropriate to make sure that people can afford to live here," she said.

Munce thinks the controversial 3.5-storey, 41-unit condominium proposal on Mary Street is not only a great idea, but a much-needed development, especially for seniors who want to downsize.

She thinks the Mary Street proposal is a smart option since "there's nowhere for them to go."

The prices of buying and renting have gone up tremendously over the years – and not just in Niagara.

"It's a pan-provincial (and) international problem," said Zalepa.

"I think in the smaller brackets, like Niagara-on-the-Lake, it becomes even more acute, because we have limited supply even to begin with," he added.



One-bedroom apartments in the Village start at \$1,800 a month. They're almost non-existent elsewhere, says realtor Cheryl Munce. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Back in 2017, NOTLer Debbie Delesky paid under \$1,000 for a two-bedroom apartment at Brockton Apartments on Lake Street in St. Catharines. Now, that same unit rents for more than \$1,500.

As Delesky's search for an affordable NOTL apartment showed in last week's Special Report, the average rental cost in Niagara-on-the-Lake is \$3,032 a month.

### Driven by decades of controls

Housing advocate Scott Robinson says it's a problem that has been driven by decades of development controls in town.

"It's so expensive to rent to Niagara-on-the-Lake because for the past 50 years, Niagara-on-the-Lake planning and zoning policies made it illegal to build anything except for single-family homes," said Robinson.

No purpose-built rentals have received zoning approval in NOTL since the 1990s, he said in an interview.

"The only purpose-built rental is the one in the Village (neighbourhood) that was only built because John Hawley got the zoning in the '90s with the entire site," said Robinson, who previously worked as a



Cheryl Munce.

development co-ordinator for Hawley's company.

According to BILD, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, purpose-built rentals are projects constructed specifically for long-term rental accommodation.

The average cost of a one-bedroom apartment in the Village is \$1,800 and two-bedroom are about \$2,150.

Rental prices are often an indicator of the cost of houses in general, Munce said.

The more expensive the house, the more a landlord needs to charge to cover expenses and turn a profit.

In February 2023, the average house sold in all of NOTL for over \$1 million and the average house in Old Town alone went for more than \$1.1 million, Munce said.

She's concerned about people who have been renting for many years and are paying a low rent, only to have their landlords sell to a new



Gary Zalepa.

owner. What happens if the new owner kicks them out.

"They have nowhere to go and they'll never find a property for \$1,400 a month," she said.

### Mayor thinks non-profits can help

Zalepa has hopes for the future and said he thinks non-profit organizations could help with the housing shortage in town.

"I think in Niagara-on-the-Lake, there's probably an opportunity to work with Niagara Regional Housing and a non-profit charitable group in town that wants to help bring more deeply affordable housing to Niagara-on-the-Lake," he said.

Charitable groups could work with Niagara Regional Housing to bring "small-scale, gentle buildings to really help those who need deep affordability," he said.

He cited Community Care and Bethlehem Housing as great examples.

Bethlehem Housing, for example, partners with Niagara



Scott Robinson.

Regional Housing and other organizations to bring affordable housing to low-income families in the region.

Other church and non-profit organizations also have become partners in housing provider projects, he said.

If charitable groups worked with groups like Niagara Regional Housing, they'd get the guidance they need but still "have some ownership or they have some say in how they're building or how their complex runs," Zalepa said.

"I just can't help but think we don't really have anything like that here," he added.

Robinson said he's in support of that, but hasn't seen any "examples of that in the past 20 years" in NOTL.

Zalepa said town staff will soon bring a report to council "that speaks to helping council understand and be more aware of the actual level of attainable housing in town."

In an email to The Lake Report, chief administrator Marnie Cluckie said planning staff "will gather and provide information related to affordable housing and attainability through the growth management work they will be doing as part of the official plan work."

For his part, Zalepa has a target for what is affordable. "When I think affordability, I think of any type of housing that can be financially attainable with 30 per cent of your income," he said.

That's the "kind of measure we need to get a handle on" and he expects that is what town planners will bring to council.

Meanwhile, Delesky would like to see something in town that would keep locals in the area and allow people who grew up here to stay, if they so choose.

"I never felt comfortable anywhere else," she said.

**Next week:** *Non-profits collaborating with Niagara Regional Housing is just one example of what NOTL can do to address the housing crisis. Scott Robinson believes secondary suites and accessory dwelling units could also be answers. What would that look like and how might that benefit residents? We'll explore those issues in part 3 of this series.*



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The road to sobriety | Pages 12-13

## Changes urged after woman killed by cyclist in Queenston

Julia Sacco  
The Lake Report

The death of Louise Leyland has shaken the small village of Queenston, whose residents have been fighting to improve traffic safety in the community for years.

• **An Appreciation:** Friends of Fort George executive director Amanda Gamble pays tribute to Louise Leyland. **Page 11**  
• **Traffic concerns:** Letter writer urges the town to act in the wake of this tragedy. **Page 7**

While out walking on Saturday afternoon, Leyland was tragically struck and killed by a cyclist on Queenston Street near Willowbank.

The retired teacher and board member of the Friends of Fort George was passionate about Niagara-on-the-Lake history and was active in the community.

Niagara Regional Police said she was hit by a 64-year-old cyclist as she crossed from the east to the west side of the narrow residential street.

The unidentified cyclist was southbound, riding toward the escarpment, police said.

Detectives from the police force's collision reconstruction unit are



Continued on Page 11 Louise Leyland.

## Council cuts \$95K from operating budget

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake council still hasn't approved the town's final operating budget for 2023, but found \$94,622 in savings during a special meeting on Tuesday.

The operating budget was proposed at \$43,920,434 for 2023, with the capital budget having been approved at \$9,695,042 last week.

About \$15 million of the proposed operating budget will come from the town's tax levy, with another \$952,110 being funded through areas where the town charges a special storm levy.

In the latest in a long series of debates, councillors were hoping Tuesday to finalize the operations budgets and were largely focused in on cost-saving, particularly surrounding town hires and contract workers.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita made a series of motions, many of them asking the

Continued on Page 2

## Gaio performance rocks Legion



Ryan Gaio and his band rock a crowd of about 150 people at the Legion on Saturday during his album release show. RICHARD HARLEY

Richard Harley  
The Lake Report

Ryan Gaio wanted local music in Niagara-on-the-Lake and that's exactly what he brought to the Legion on Saturday.

And people were there for it — about 150 of them, dancing the night away.

It was a surprise for Gaio, who would have been happy with a

crowd of 50.

"I think it went amazing, I'm just like so stoked and thrilled with how it all went," he said in an interview.

"It just blew me away beyond my wildest dreams and (I'm) already dreaming about the next

Continued on Page 17

## Special Report: Advocate pushes for affordable secondary units in NOTL

Somer Slobodian  
Local Journalism Initiative  
The Lake Report

Last in a three-part series  
Housing advocate Scott Robinson foresees a future

in Niagara-on-the-Lake in which scores of existing homes sprout new, secondary units to provide living space for seniors, singles and anyone else in need of an affordable place to call home.

Simply put, NOTL needs to build more affordable and attainable housing options — and soon, he says.

And he thinks the most efficient way to increase housing density is for

existing homes to add more secondary suites and accessory dwelling units.

An accessory dwelling unit is a separate living space, such as a basement apartment or converted


garage, with essential amenities.

"We can build attainable housing everywhere. Because we need to build attainable housing everywhere," Robinson told The

Lake Report.

He isn't backing down and hopes to push NOTL council to encourage more such housing alternatives.

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# Existing homes can add basement and other living spaces, advocate says

*Continued from Front Page*

Living in areas like the heritage district and Chautauqua is expensive because those neighbourhoods are unique and special, he said.

“So Niagara-on-the-Lake will remain expensive compared to other Ontario places, unless we add (more) housing (in) special places,” he said.

Adding secondary dwelling units would give young adults or aging-in-place seniors a lower-cost option.

Dan Romanko, managing partner at Better Neighbourhoods Inc., agrees.

“I think the issue is that there’s not a lot of choices or diversity of housing typologies in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” he told The Lake Report.

Such units could allow residents to downsize without moving.

“If they had to live in a suite on-site, they could actually rent out the house” and live in the secondary unit, Romanko said.

Robinson stressed that if developments such as secondary dwellings or duplexes do not get built, then much larger projects, like six-storey buildings, will be required to meet people’s housing needs.

Secondary suites can’t be short-term rentals

He noted that if someone in your neighbourhood builds a secondary suite, it cannot automatically be turned into a short-term rental.

Town spokesperson Lauren Kruitbosch confirmed that.

The town’s bylaw says, “Only buildings that have been occupied as a single-detached dwelling for a minimum of four years shall be eligible for a licence” as a short-term rental.

Robinson grew up in NOTL and now works as a development co-ordinator at British Columbia builder Ledingham McAllister.

He previously worked for John Hawley’s Traditional Neighbourhood Developments Inc., which developed the Village in NOTL.

Last year, before Bill 23 came out, Robinson made a plea to councillors, urging them to legalize basement apartments.

Council unanimously

voted to send Robinson’s recommendations to staff for review and for the ideas to be considered as the town reviews its zoning bylaw.

However, the passage of Ontario’s Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, helped make Robinson’s request a reality.

Now, residents don’t need to apply for zoning amendments to build an accessory dwelling or secondary suite.

All that’s needed is a building permit.

Residents can have “up to three units per lot in most existing urban residential areas,” said Kirsten McCauley, NOTL’s director of community and development services.

The process is a bit different if residents want to make changes in the heritage district.

Properties still must have a heritage permit, McCauley said.

Robinson expects that if an owner does “renovations on the interior that don’t change the designation of why it was a heritage property, then it would go through the heritage review and would likely be approved.”

There are some exceptions, such as buildings that have heritage designation for specific use reasons and therefore must remain unchanged, he said.

This could help create more housing options in Old Town, without affecting the appearance or heritage designation, he added.

Since Bill 23 became law in November, McCauley said the town has received a number of inquiries about accessory dwelling units, but none have been approved yet.

Robinson would like to see the town and council embrace secondary suites and accessory dwellings.

“Council also needs to set the tone that they want this,” he said.

He plans to go before council in April and express his concerns.

More options than secondary units

Other municipalities have information pages on their websites dedicated to additional dwelling units and that’s something Robinson would like to see in NOTL.

McCauley said that’s coming. “We are going to look at putting together some information up on our website about different residential units,” she said.

“Kind of like an FAQ of information for people who are looking for more detail about that,” she added.

Romanko said NOTL has “a number of underdeveloped properties that could be severed off or renovated to provide additional housing units.”

He realizes there are concerns surrounding intensification and density in NOTL, but there’s also an opportunity to transform underutilized spaces, like old schools.

“With respect to Niagara-on-the-Lake, I can appreciate the sensitivity around good urban design,” he said.

“And from our perspective, you can have density and still have very good attractive, walkable streets and neighbourhoods,” he added.

Jeffrey Sinclair, the homelessness action plan adviser for the Region of Niagara, said that while secondary suites are good options, they aren’t the only ones and won’t replace the need for purpose-built rentals.

“It’s one of a number of options,” he said.

The region often works with local municipalities when non-profits or private developers want to look at affordable housing options, he said.

When that happens, municipal staff will talk to the region to see how they can work together.

“Those kinds of conversations are really, really important for any community that’s looking to build affordable housing,” he said.

There are also some communities that have a designated group looking at affordable housing or attainable housing, he said.

He believes that if there is a need for affordable housing, municipalities must take that into consideration and follow the necessary steps to address it.

Core housing need exists, even in affluent NOTL

Though the need in Niagara-on-the-Lake is small, there is a need.

As of 2021, there were



## Affordable Housing Need in Niagara-on-the-Lake 2021

Source: Statistics Canada; Niagara Region; Niagara Regional Housing; Projections from Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA)



Scott Robinson. Middle: A chart of 2021 core housing needs based on annual income.

Bottom: Dan Romanko stands in the kitchen of the basement suite he’s constructing at his St. Catharines home. FILE/STATISTICS CANADA/SOMER SLOBODIAN

26,000 households across Niagara experiencing core housing needs, Sinclair said.

According to Statistics Canada, renters were more likely than owners to be in need of core housing.

NOTL has about 460 households in need, which represents fewer than 2 per cent of the households across Niagara, Sinclair said.

NOTL has about 460 households in need of core housing.

A household with housing needs could be spending 30 per cent or more

of its pre-tax income on shelter, according to Bethlehem Housing and Support Services.

Out of the 460 households, about 337 are home to one person.

These people would benefit from studio or one-bedroom options, like accessory dwelling units, Sinclair said in an email to The Lake Report.

There also were 446 households earning less than \$40,000 per year and unable to afford more than \$995 per month in rent.

“Deeply affordable units that are well below the

average market rate for Niagara-on-the-Lake would be required to meet the need for this population,” he said.

Compared to some municipalities, NOTL is fairing well, but there’s a need in every community, says Sinclair.

“Another big piece is just all of us being open to the various partnerships and relying on each other,” he said.

“Because no one group or municipality is going to sort out our affordable housing crisis on their own,” he added.