



**Subject: Future of Healthcare in Port Colborne: Complete Public Engagement Results**

**To: Council**

**From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer**

Report Number: 2025-148

Meeting Date: July 8, 2025

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### **Recommendation:**

That Chief Administrative Officer Report 2025-148 be received; and

That Council direct staff to provide the full public engagement and survey results related to the future of healthcare in Port Colborne to the Healthcare Advisory Committee for further analysis and consideration.

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### **Purpose:**

This report presents Council with a comprehensive summary of public engagement activities and feedback gathered between January 29 and April 30, 2025, regarding the future of healthcare in Port Colborne.

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### **Background:**

On December 3, 2024, Council considered Report 2024-255 regarding the future of the Niagara Health Port Colborne Site, including a request from Niagara Health for a \$6.2-million local share contribution to the South Niagara Hospital and a proposal from the Lockview Medical Group to expand primary care services in Port Colborne. At that meeting, Council requested that staff bring back a comprehensive public engagement plan to gather feedback from the community regarding the primary care proposal, the local share contribution, and the future of the Niagara Health site in Port Colborne.

On January 28, 2025, Council considered report 2025-19 regarding a proposed community engagement plan aimed at gathering this important feedback. With Council's approval, the following day staff launched the public engagement campaign, which

formally closed on April 30, 2025. On March 25, 2025, Council received a mid-point results review, which provided a view into the results that had been received through the survey and engagement activities up to March 10, 2025.

This report, 2025-148, provides a complete summary of the engagement activities and feedback received from the public regarding the future of healthcare in Port Colborne from January 29 through to April 30, 2025.

In that initial round ending March 10, 2025, 1,863 online and paper surveys were completed. Between March 10 and April 30, an additional 149 online and paper surveys were completed.

Overall, the engagement plan aimed to gather feedback from the community through various in-person and virtual channels. It sought input from the community about the future of healthcare in Port Colborne, focusing on key issues such as the expected closure of the Urgent Care Centre in 2028, the future use of Niagara Health's Port Colborne site after Niagara Health leaves, potentially providing funding to Niagara Health to support the build of the new South Niagara Hospital, and the proposal from Lockview Medical Group to expand primary care services in Port Colborne.

The engagement campaign included a variety of channels and mediums to ensure all key audiences were aware of the opportunity to provide feedback and could do so in a way that works best for them. The plan included:

1. Online survey
2. Paper survey
3. In-person open houses
4. In-person town hall
5. Virtual town hall
6. Pop-up engagement opportunities
7. Meetings with various City committees and working groups

The detailed results and findings from each of these activities are provided in Appendix A of this report. In the interest of transparency, a full list of open-ended responses received in both the online and paper surveys will also be posted on [www.portcolborne.ca/healthcare](http://www.portcolborne.ca/healthcare).

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## Discussion:

Public engagement activities related to the future of healthcare in Port Colborne launched on January 29, 2025.

Quick stats about the engagement activities to date:

- 2,012 people completed the survey (1,669 online and 343 on paper)
  - +10,000 open-field comments to analyze and categorize
  - Average time to complete the survey: 13 minutes (online survey)
  - Estimated completion rate: 72.5% (online survey) – this is the number of people who started and finished the survey. Long surveys with more than 15 questions typically have a completion rate of 40-42%
- 87 people attended the in-person open houses
  - 58 people attended the in-person town hall, while 38 tuned into the livestream
  - 22 people joined the virtual town hall, while 4 watched the recording on YouTube

Additionally, staff held meetings with City committees and working groups, including the Seniors Advisory Committee, Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, Social Determinants of Health Advisory Committee.

Detailed results from the surveys and a summary of feedback collected at the town halls and open houses is available in Appendix A of this report.

Overall, participants reported that the closure of the Urgent Care Centre is a major issue for them, with 83% of respondents believing a 24-hour facility is necessary. Many residents have used the centre in the past year and are concerned about travel difficulties, long wait times at other hospitals, and the impact on vulnerable populations.

Additionally, while the proposed \$6.2-million contribution to Niagara Health for the South Niagara Hospital is largely opposed, some respondents may support making the contribution if urgent care centres in Port Colborne and Fort Erie remain open. There is also a strong demand for more family doctors, as only half of respondents reported they have a family doctor in Port Colborne. Long wait times for appointments to see their family doctor further exacerbate frustrations.

The community strongly supports expanding healthcare services locally, including more walk-in clinics, and access to diagnostic imaging and urgent care. The Lockview Medical Group proposal is seen as a potential benefit by 46% of respondents, with supporters citing improved local healthcare access, job creation, and economic growth.

The results identified 28% of respondents were not sure about the proposal. However, concerns remain about the lack of clear information regarding the proposal.

The idea of pursuing a housing development with a medical centre at the Niagara Health Port Colborne site received 85% support, though respondents questioned infrastructure capacity and the affordability of housing. Meanwhile, 55% of respondents support the City pursuing a primary care facility at another location, provided it does not impact taxpayers.

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### **Internal Consultations:**

City staff from Corporate Communications, Corporate Services, Development and Government Relations, and the Office of the Mayor and CAO have been working collaboratively with external partners to gather feedback from the community regarding the future of healthcare in Port Colborne, develop a draft terms of reference for a new Healthcare Advisory Committee, and provide suggestions on the best way to move the issue of healthcare forward in the best interest of the community.

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### **Financial Implications:**

This report is focused primarily on reporting results from the public engagement activities related to expanding primary care in Port Colborne, the future of Niagara Health's Port Colborne site, and the local share contribution towards the new South Niagara Hospital. All costs related to the public engagement activities are captured in the 2025 operating budget.

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### **Public Engagement:**

This report provides a detailed summary of the public engagement campaign aimed at gathering feedback from residents about the future of healthcare in Port Colborne. It covers the period of January 29 through April 30, 2025.

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### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community

- Economic Prosperity
  - Increased Housing Options
  - Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
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## **Conclusion:**

The feedback gathered through the City's healthcare public engagement efforts to date underscores the community's concerns and priorities regarding the future of healthcare in Port Colborne.

Residents have expressed strong support for maintaining access to urgent care, expanding primary care services, and ensuring that healthcare facilities remain available within Port Colborne. The responses indicate a clear preference for a local healthcare strategy that prioritizes accessibility, sustainability, and transparency.

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## **Appendices:**

- a. Future of Healthcare Public Engagement Results Report

Respectfully submitted,

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## **Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.