

Council supports motion requesting LifeLabs expands hours, capacity

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Shelburne council recently supported a motion asking LifeLabs to extend its operating hours and explore expanding its service capacity in town, citing population growth and increasing demand for diagnostic testing.

Councillor Lindsay Wegener brought the motion forward during council's Aug. 24 meeting.

?The Town of Shelburne was named the fastest-growing town in Ontario and the second-fastest-growing municipality in all of Canada between 2011 and 2016, population surged by 39.1 per cent and the Town of Shelburne is expected to grow to a population of over 15,100 by 2051,? Wegener's motion read. ?Demand for accessible healthcare services, including laboratory and diagnostic testing, has increased with this population growth.?

?Current LifeLabs operational hours and facility capacity are insufficient to meet the needs of residents, often requiring travel to neighbouring communities for required testing.?

Wegener said LifeLabs had previously operated from approximately 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., but reduced its hours to 8 a.m. to noon.

She also raised concerns about lengthy waits at the Shelburne location, and said residents can sometimes face difficulty accessing testing at convenient times.

The motion asks LifeLabs to review and extend its operating hours to better accommodate working families, seniors and students. It also asks the company to explore opportunities to expand the Shelburne location or increase its service capacity.

The request comes as another diagnostic office is preparing to open in Shelburne.

The motion says the additional service, alongside the town's continued population growth, makes it important to ensure local diagnostic capacity keeps pace with demand.

Wegener said she had contacted LifeLabs' regional management regarding the issue and was told the company was already advocating for additional hours but needed community support and evidence of demand.

Council supported the motion, and Mayor Wade Mills said that it would be shared with surrounding municipalities in the coming days.

The motion does not require LifeLabs to make any changes, but formally asks the company to review its hours and capacity at the Shelburne location.