

Opposition to Zoning By-Law Amendment
Files B10-26 and C14-26
Community of HOPEVILLE, ON

FORMAL OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT AND CONSENT
112403 Grey Road 14, Hopeville – Part Lot 13, Concession 12
Township of Southgate

Dear Members of the Township of Southgate Council,

We are writing to formally oppose the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and Consent application for 112403 Grey Road 14 in Hopeville.

We believe the proposed development represents a significant change in the nature and intensity of use of this property and raises serious concerns regarding compatibility with the surrounding residential neighbourhood, traffic and access, servicing, drainage, future property values, and the proposed site-specific reduction in the minimum required lot frontage.

We respectfully request that Council refuse the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and associated Consent application.

Residential Character:

Council must consider Section 2(h) of the Ontario Planning Act as it relates to The Orderly Development of Safe and Healthy Communities. Members of the Community of Hopeville do not believe that an amendment of zoning and development on this scale contributes to orderly growth as the subject property is currently zoned for residential use. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with detached dwellings located immediately surrounding the subject property. The proposal would fundamentally change the character and intensity of the property by introducing a private school and church. This is not simply a change in ownership or a modest change in permitted use. A school and church can generate significantly different patterns of vehicle movements, parking demand, pedestrian activity, noise, gatherings and site activity than residential development. Being a potentially permitted land use does not automatically make a specific development appropriate for this particular site. There is further concern over the compatibility of the school with the existing residential community and whether the existing residential community will draw benefits from this significant private development.

Zoning Standards:

The Community Facility zone requires 30m of frontage according to the Township of Southgate Zoning By-Law Section 26.2(b), yet the proposed institutional parcel would have only approximately 11.2m of frontage. This change represents a reduction of approximately 63% from the existing 30m requirement. Had this been a request for a minor variance in the event the subject property was already zoned Community Facility, Council would need to consider this a failure under 1 of the 4 statutory tests for minor variances; in other words this change alone is not minor in nature.

The applicant's report states that the reduced frontage is necessary to allow the residential severance to proceed. The surrounding community should not have to accept a significant relaxation of a zoning standard simply to facilitate the proposed severance. Council should be extremely cautious about establishing a precedent whereby standard lot configuration requirements can be substantially reduced to accommodate a particular development proposal. If the proposed development cannot reasonably satisfy the normal requirements of the Community Facility zone, that should be a reason to reconsider the proposed site configuration and not automatically a reason to amend the zoning requirements.

Section 5.7 (i)(vii)(a) of the Township of Southgate Zoning By-Law states that the combined total width of driveways does not exceed 30% of the lot frontage. In this case the 9m driveway occupies approximately 90% of the 11.2m lot frontage.

Section 5.9 states that additional parking should be added in the event of an addition to the building itself. Council should therefore be aware of the total parking implications in the future for the added church as they relate to other concerns cited within this letter.

Section 5.15(a) indicates a minimum planting strip of 3m when a commercial, institutional, or industrial use is established opposite a Residential Zone or abuts a side or rear lot line. The proposed driveway and parking do not satisfy this zoning requirement to side and rear residential lot lines including the severed lot. Given the unique configuration associated in this proposal driven by the reduced lot frontage, we also ask Council to consider an increase in this minimum side or rear lot line setback to satisfy the requirements in Section 2(h) of the Ontario Planning Act specifically as it relates to buffering from noise, lights and interruption of the rural residential character.

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The following images demonstrate examples of rural institutions within rural communities, residential developments and their lot frontage. This frontage provides better visibility, pedestrian flow, as well as access for students, staff and emergency services. Although lot frontage within the Township requires 30m, these institutions almost meet or clear 100m.

Egremont Community School
392141 Grey County Road 109
Southgate, ON
N0G 2A0

Community school with capacity for 240 students; lot frontage of roughly 190m.

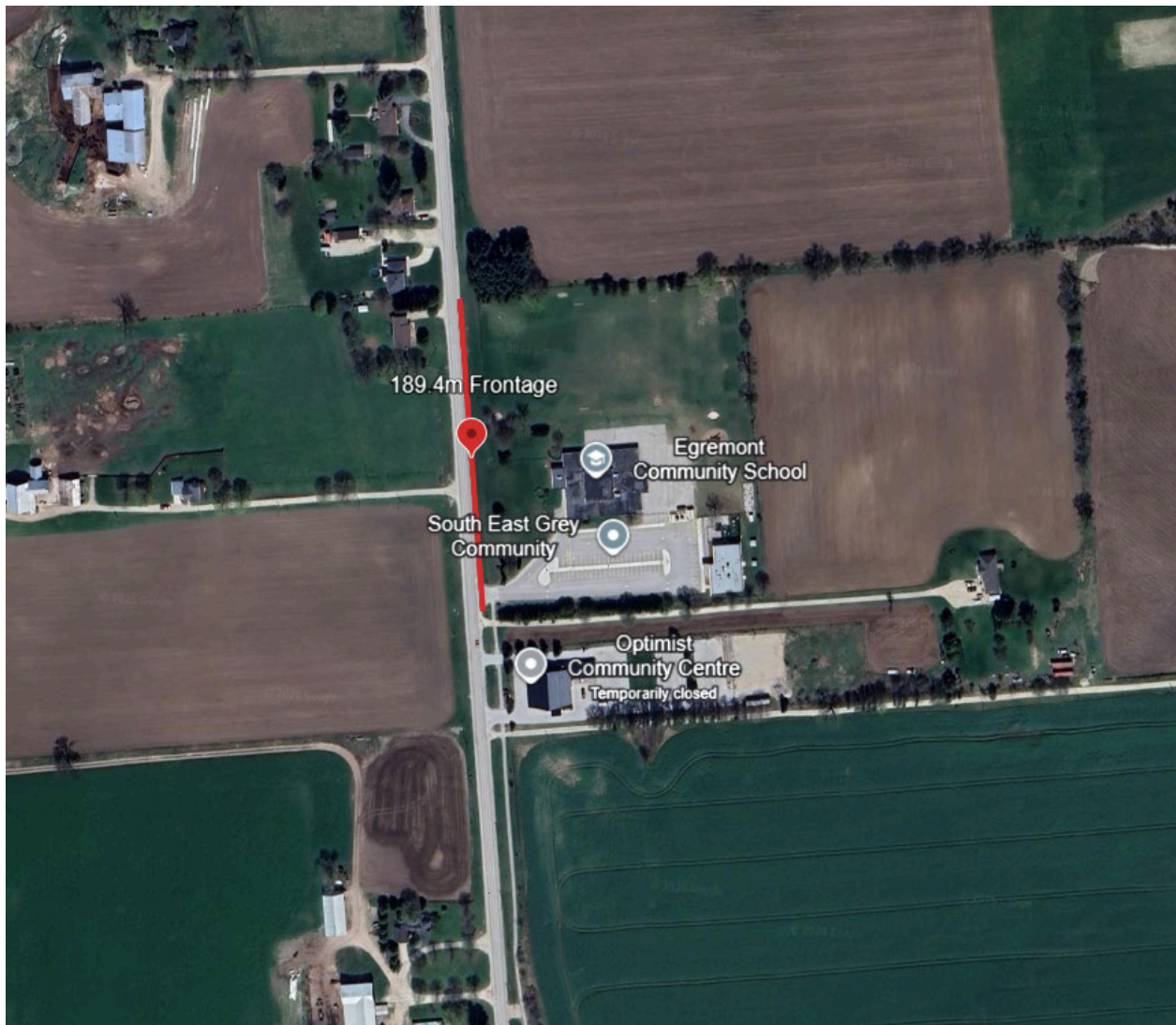


Figure 1: Egremont Community School

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Macphail Memorial Elementary School
49 Campbell Street
Flesherton, ON
N0C 1E0

Elementary school with capacity for 600 students; lot frontage of roughly 211m.

Grey Highlands Secondary School
100 Toronto Road
Flesherton, ON
N0C 1E0

High school with capacity for 950 students; lot frontage of roughly 179m.



Figure 2: Macphail Elementary and Grey Highlands Secondary

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Highpoint Community School
351 Main Street W
Southgate, ON
N0C 1B0

Community school with capacity for 420 students; lot frontage of 172.3m.

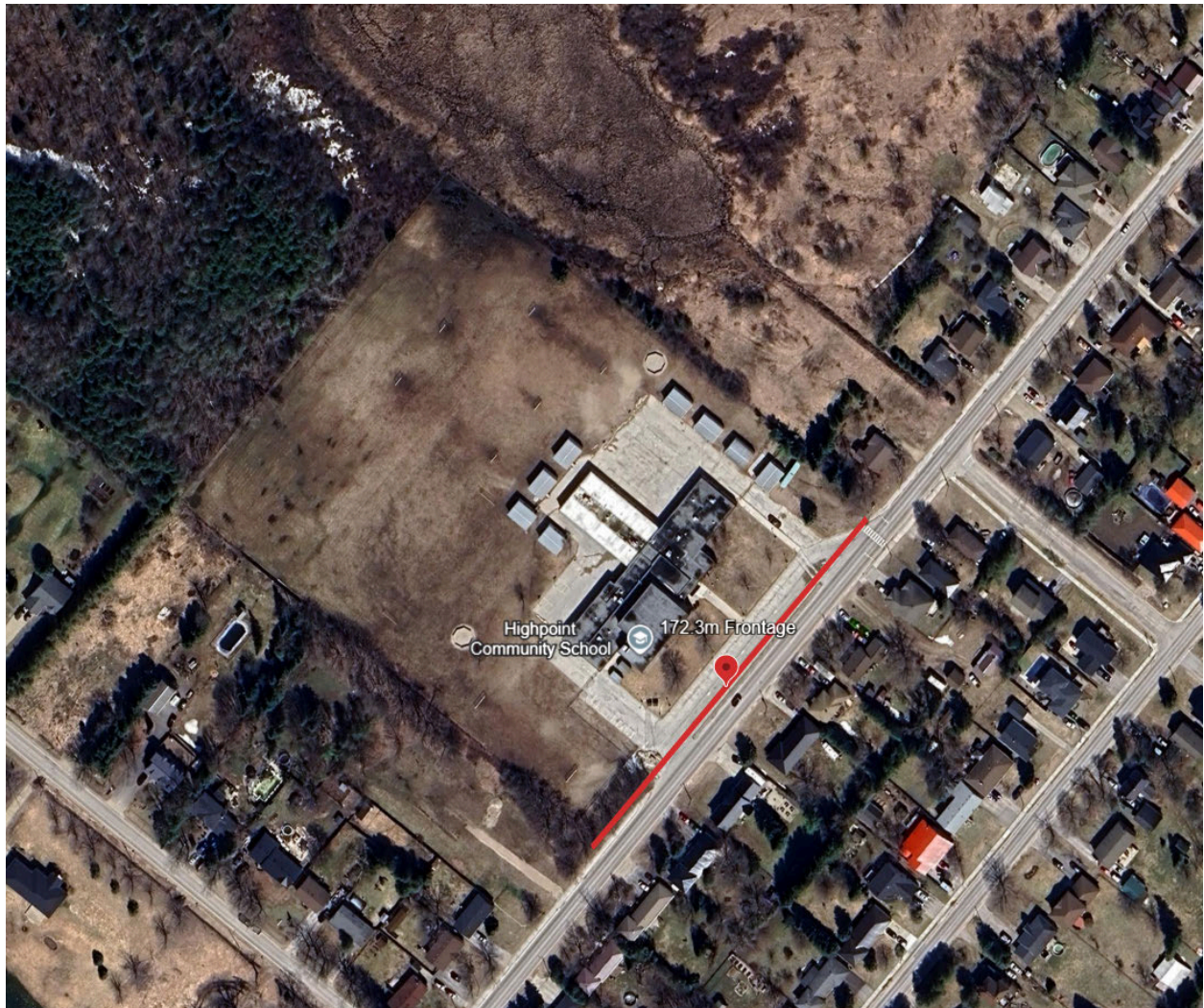


Figure 3: Highpoint Community School

Dundalk and Proton Community School
215 Young Street
Southgate, ON
N0C 1B0

Community school with capacity for 265 students; lot frontage of roughly 85m.

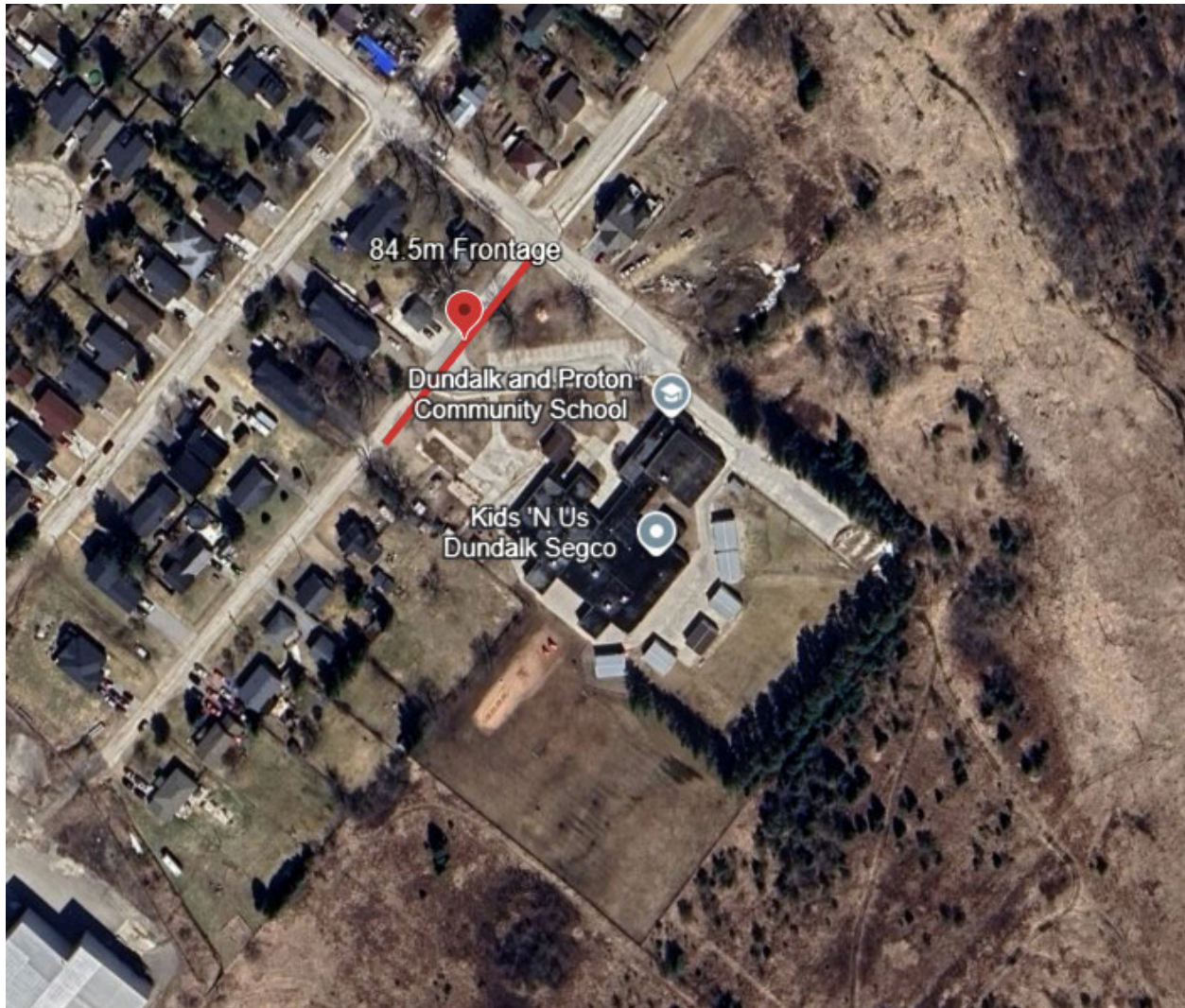


Figure 4: Dundalk and Proton Community School

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Countryside Christian School
3745 Herrgott Road
Wellesley, ON
N0B 2S0

Private school, lot frontage of roughly 233m. Although this particular example falls outside of the Township of Southgate it is still a valid example for comparison as it is a very similar layout between the school, church and parking lot as the development in question in C14-26.

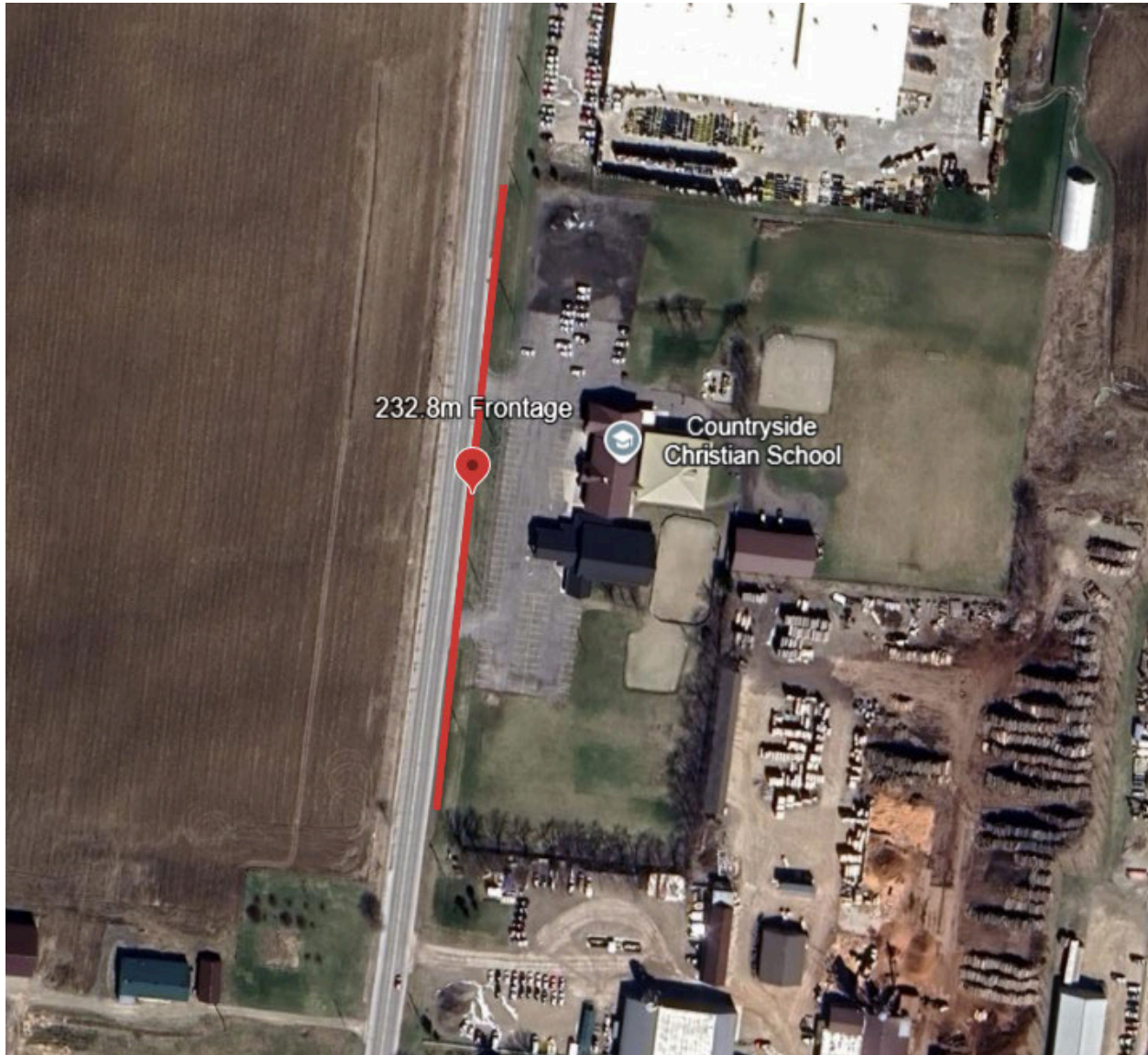


Figure 5: Countryside Christian School

Traffic and Road Safety:

The proposed development includes a school and church which will generate traffic associated with school drop-off and pick-up, staff, parents, visitors, church services, events and other activities. The Planning Justification Report confirms that a new entrance will be required on Grey Road 14 and that a larger culvert will be necessary. The report states that County Transportation did not require a Traffic Brief during pre-consultation. However, that should not be interpreted as establishing that the development will have no traffic or safety impacts. A school operation is fundamentally different from the residential use currently contemplated by the zoning. This lack of traffic study does not support Section 2(o) of the Ontario Planning Act as it relates to The Protection of Public Health and Safety.

Given the conceptual drawing of the proposed school and church contained within the Planning Justification Report parking is estimated at over 100 parking spaces which places this proposal on a similar scale to the examples above which clear 100m frontage. Estimates could be greater than 100 students and associated traffic to be funnelled through approximately 11m of frontage onto Grey Road 14 as the only entrance/exit point. The rest of the subject property is surrounded by private property with no access to the school grounds. Additionally the proposal does not include any walkways to Grey Road 14 indicating a heavier reliance on buses and auto transportation. Council should be aware of total expected capacity as they relate to traffic safety and require a traffic study prior to the approval of the zoning amendment including but limited to modal split (estimating students arriving by bus vs. parent drop-off), sightline analysis on 11m of frontage on Grey Road 14, and the inevitable requirement for speed management devices within the community of Hopeville itself.

Council should require sufficient information to establish the following:

- School drop-off and pick-up can occur safely on the property;
- Vehicles will not queue onto Grey Road 14;
- Pedestrian movements can be accommodated safely;
- Emergency vehicles will have adequate access;
- Church and school traffic can operate without creating unacceptable conflicts;
- The proposed entrance is appropriate for the anticipated volume and type of traffic;
- The narrow frontage does not compromise safe access to the institutional property;

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The image below demonstrates a potential situation where traffic queues onto Grey Road 14. Grey Road 14 is a high traffic County road with significant heavy traffic serving industry with tractor trailers and agriculture equipment. Grey Road 14 also does not have infrastructure for safe passage of pedestrians and no shoulder for vehicles to safely stop or queue. There is a potential scenario where traffic backs onto Grey Road 14 where no other option to safely pass through exists. This can also impact Grey Road 9 which is another important high traffic road linking Hwy 10 and Hwy 6. This will limit the ability of not only regular traffic but also the ability of emergency vehicles to traverse Grey Road 14, Grey Road 9 or respond to emergencies within the proposed development all together. These issues will be exacerbated during the winter months where the small shoulder can become completely covered in snow until properly cleared and graded.



Figure 6: Visual mock up of potential traffic issues at peak traffic times

Well and Septic Servicing Capacity:

The proposed school and church will rely on private wells and septic systems. The report confirms that private servicing will be required. A school and church can result in substantially different occupancy and water/sewage demands than the residential development currently permitted on the property. Council should require clear evidence that the proposed institutional use can be appropriately serviced without creating adverse impacts on neighbouring properties or the surrounding area.

Additional concerns include the following:

- Consideration for total capacity of school, church, kitchen and future developments;
- Well and septic are able to accommodate daily surges during school day or events;
- Long term care of septic system and drain field during longer breaks of no use, ie. summer break;

The Planning Justification Report also fails to highlight the potential requirement for the involvement of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) should the required septic tank volume and drain field need to support more than 10,000L/day. Council should be satisfied with accurate capacity forecasting as it pertains to septic sizing and soil condition before the approval of this Zoning By-Law Amendment.

Drainage Issues:

The Planning Justification Report acknowledges that the engineered site plan must address drainage and ensure that no new surface water flows are directed toward the County road, into the County stormwater management system or existing residential properties. It proposes that these matters be dealt with later through a Stormwater Management Brief and Site Plan process. We do not believe that potentially significant drainage matters should be treated as something that can simply be resolved after the zoning amendment has already been approved. Council should be satisfied that the proposed development can be appropriately designed and serviced before granting the zoning permission that enables the development.

Under the Ontario Planning Act post-development flow must be maintained or lessened when compared to pre-development flow. There is concern that almost 50% of pre-development permeable ground will be built over in close proximity to existing residential properties. This will not only limit options for directing water away from the new impermeable surfaces such as parking, walk ways and buildings but also have potential issues on the local water table. This implication puts neighbouring properties at risk of increased post-development flows without proper engineering studies to justify the position of the parking surfaces and buildings regardless of limitations caused by By-Law Zoning setbacks for those particular features.

Potential drainage issues from parking lot runoff, snow clearing, snow melt and other construction features can directly impact multiple existing properties if not determined prior to approval of the zoning amendment.

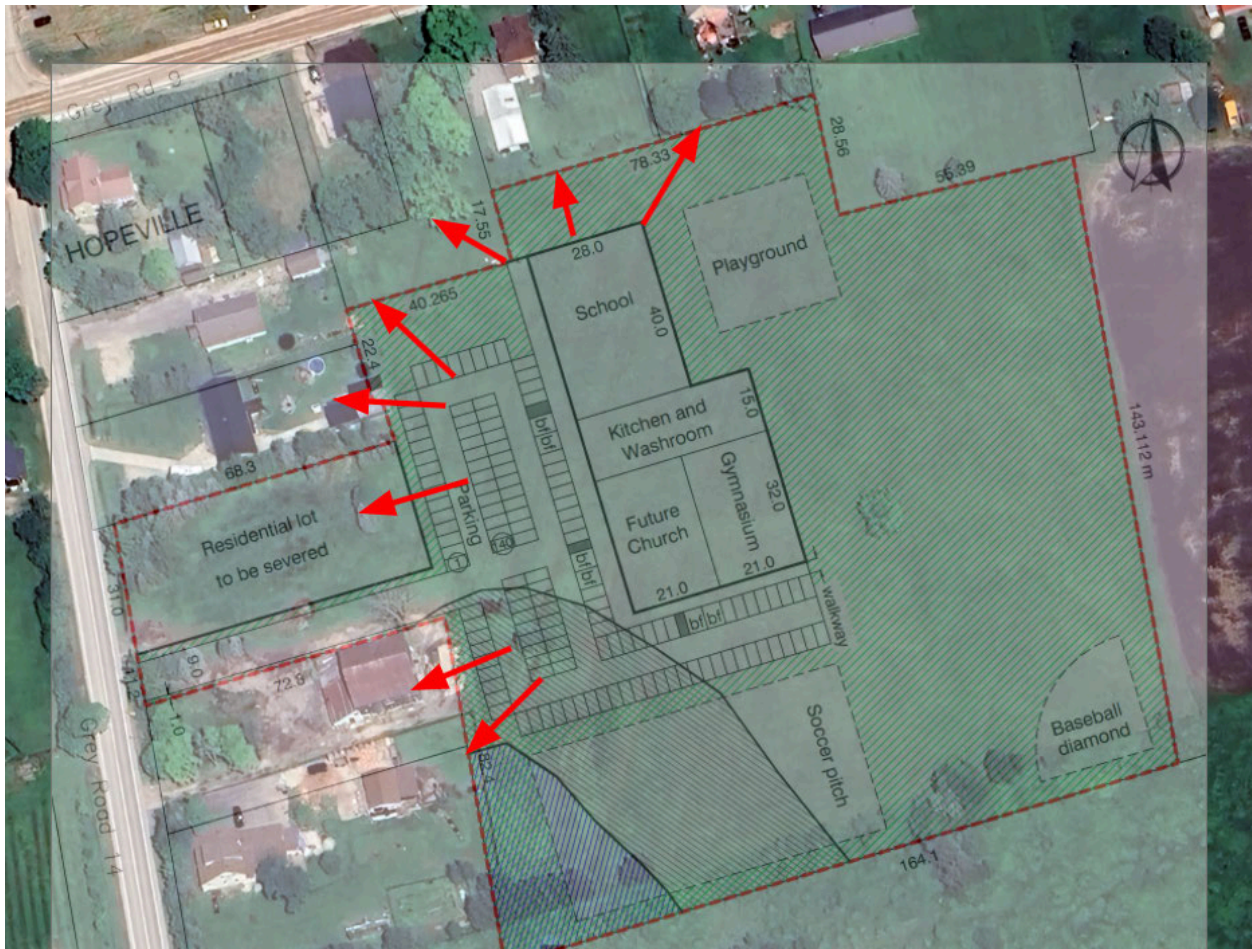


Figure 7: Impermeable surfaces in close proximity to existing residential properties

Property Value:

The proposed development could have implications for the future desirability and marketability of surrounding residential properties. The existing neighbourhood is predominantly composed of detached residential dwellings and the subject property is zoned to match this community growth plan. Introducing a private school and church immediately adjacent to residential properties would change the nature of the surrounding environment and could introduce additional traffic, activity, noise, lighting, parking and pedestrian movements. Even if the applicant ultimately satisfies all technical planning requirements, these changes may affect the factors that prospective purchasers consider when evaluating a residential property. For existing homeowners, this creates legitimate concern regarding the future resale value and marketability of their properties.

We recognize that it would be inappropriate to claim that the development will necessarily reduce property values. However, Council should not disregard the potential economic impact on neighbouring homeowners when considering a substantial change from the existing residential character of the area. At a minimum, affected residents should not be expected to assume the potential financial consequences associated with a significant change in the permitted use of neighbouring land without the impacts being properly considered.

Construction Timeline:

The Planning Justification Report states that the school is intended to be constructed in spring 2027, with the church to be constructed at a later time. Given the scope of the proposal including a zoning amendment, consent application, site planning, engineering, servicing, access, drainage considerations and the involvement of multiple reviewing agencies, the proposed spring 2027 construction start represents an extremely expedited schedule. The report itself confirms that this additional work remains to be completed. Council should therefore be cautious about allowing the applicant's proposed construction timeline to create pressure for an accelerated approval process. The community should not be expected to accept a rushed planning process simply because the applicant has identified a spring 2027 construction target.

Other Considerations:

The following presents an alternative configuration to the Council of the Township of Southgate. The priority is to maintain green space buffering between existing residential properties, tree barriers and other hard fences should be implemented for further buffering in excess of the minimum provided by the Township of Southgate's Bylaw Section 5.15(a). Existing residential properties should be protected from added noise, lighting and traffic. Note, the following proposal does not solve many of the concerns highlighted earlier in this letter, rather it is provided should the need for further discussion arise.



Figure 8: Development counter proposal

Summary:

We recognize that the Planning Justification Report concludes that the proposed school, church and residential lot conform to the County and Township Official Plans. However, conformity with a general land-use designation does not eliminate the need for Council to consider whether the specific development proposal is appropriate, compatible and properly designed for this particular property and neighbourhood. The question before Council is not simply whether a school or church can exist somewhere within a settlement area. The question is whether this proposed school and church, with this site configuration, access arrangement, reduced frontage and intensity of use, should be permitted at this particular location.

For the reasons outlined above, we respectfully but firmly request that Township Council refuse the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and associated Consent application.

At a minimum, we request that Council not approve the amendment until the following matters have been fully demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Township and affected agencies:

1. Compatibility of the proposed institutional use with surrounding residential properties;
2. A compelling justification for reducing the required institutional lot frontage;
3. Safe and appropriate access to Grey Road 14;
4. Adequate traffic management for school drop-off, pick-up and church activities;
5. Safe pedestrian circulation;
6. Adequate emergency access;
7. Adequate private water and septic servicing;
8. A comprehensive assessment of stormwater and drainage;
9. The potential impact on the future desirability and marketability of surrounding residential properties;
10. Adequate time to properly assess the proposal, regardless of the applicant's proposed spring 2027 construction schedule.

We also ask Council to carefully consider whether the proposed residential severance in file B10-26 is driving an unnecessarily constrained institutional lot configuration and whether the resulting development represents sound planning for the community. Council should consider options for this land as currently zoned in order to preserve the rural residential nature of the surrounding community, rather than introducing a potentially incompatible service which would increase demand on local infrastructure including roads, well water and septic resources. **This application should not be approved simply because the proposed use can be accommodated within the broader settlement-area policies. The specific site design, intensity of use, requested zoning exceptions and impacts on existing residents must also be appropriate.**

The interests of existing residents and property owners should receive the same careful consideration as the interests of the applicant.

We respectfully ask Council to protect the **existing character, safety, livability and long-term value** of the surrounding community and to reject the proposed amendment.

We the undersigned thank you for considering our concerns.

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