

# Council says no to Mexican kids' camp

**LISA TALLYN**  
Staff Writer

Halton Hills council gave the thumbs down recently to an application for a seasonal educational and recreational facility on a Clayhill Rd. property.

Council members supported the Town staff recommendation that the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which has final say on the application, be advised the Town doesn't support it.

The 27-acre property, which used to be home to a seniors' residence, is owned by Jose Leopoldo Enrique Reyes Oliva. The application is for a seasonal educational and recreational facility for students aged 8 to 13 years from Mexico City.

Joel Farber, lawyer for the applicant, Juan Jorge Castro Soto, said the students would only be on the property approximately 15 weeks per year—through July and August—Easter

vacation and two weeks at Christmas.

He said the students would spend more time off the property than on it as they will be doing extensive sight-seeing in the Greater Toronto Area.

He called it a "fairly innocuous use."

"I certainly know I face an uphill political battle," said Farber, who asked council members to "consider expanding your decision-making criteria."

Councillor Joan Robson raised concerns about noise for the neighbours in the area. She said when the children have come to the property in the past, (when the property was being used unlawfully) it has caused "considerable disruption for the people living in the area."



**JOAN ROBSON**

Councillor Jane Fogal asked, if not the proposed application, what could go on the property?

Farber said a kennel could be an option.

"It could have barking dogs 24 hours a day," said Farber.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said the application does not adhere to the regional plan.

Area resident Robert Stanley said a petition opposing the application has been signed by 29 of the 31 area residents.

"This application will only put additional stress on the area," said Barbara Halsall of Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (P.O.W.E.R.).

All council members, except for Mike O'Leary who wasn't present for the vote, voted not to support the application.

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# Track improvements would cost \$58M

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Hills, and then on to Union Station. Three VIA trains currently run each way on this corridor daily. GEXR also runs daily freight trains.

The business report suggests an enhanced service using one or two linked, self-propelled passenger units called Diesel Multiple Units or "Budd Cars".

From Kitchener to Georgetown, four of these trains/per day are proposed, but only one a day from London to Kitchener. This is in addition to the existing VIA trains. A

similar technology is being looked at to link Cambridge with Milton.

Total cost of improving the tracks amount to \$58 million (\$19 million for the Kitchener to Georgetown stretch), \$20 million for the Budd Cars and \$3.5 million for annual operating costs. Improvements include upgrading the track to allow for consistent 80 m.p.h. speed with safe public crossings as well as changes at the Georgetown station to allow for a proposed connection to the existing GO service and a new Acton station with parking.

Annual revenue of the service is

estimated between \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million.

In its endorsement council, through the Alliance, will request the federal and provincial governments fund the upgrades plus the capital cost outlay, since train service is their responsibility (the federal government looks after intercity movement and the provincial government, commuter rail service). Discussions will also be held with the Province about funding the annual operating costs.

(Cynthia Gamble can be reached at [cgamble@independentfreepress.com](mailto:cgamble@independentfreepress.com))

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