

# Parents disappointed, say new plan doesn't offer more

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

A special education draft plan has some parents fearing the Halton District School Board cooked a fancy dinner but forgot to add the meat.

Parents are looking for guarantees, not wish lists, said Milton's Linda Norton.

Ms Norton has a 14-year-old daughter who suffers from a learning disability and attention deficit disorder.

"The plan looked really good but they have no guarantees they'll have the resources," she said. "I don't know how much to believe at this point."

The purpose of the board's draft plan is to make more efficient use of existing funds by dividing Halton into three areas.

These areas — which translate into Oakville, Burlington and north Halton — would each have their own special services teams. These would include a senior psychologist, psycho-educational consultant, child and youth counsellor and social worker.

The aim is to have consistent care throughout Halton while allowing students to access a program close to home.

The plan allows for a single point of access into special needs services, through the Singleton Education Centre on Guelph Line in Burlington.

Currently, Halton has almost 42,000 full time students. About 3,700 of these have been identified as having special needs.

A final plan must be handed to the Ministry of Education by May 15.

At present, Ms Norton's daughter splits her time between a self-contained classroom with other special needs kids and an integrated classroom, where she's helped by an instructional assistant (IA) at her

Brookville school.

IAs work with special needs kids to help them cope in a regular classroom environment.

It's a good system, but one Ms Norton had to battle for herself.

"I went and fought for what we wanted for our child," said Ms Norton. "We went in and demanded she had a classroom where she could learn."

Ms Norton said she launched her attack after her daughter reached Grade 5 without learning to read.

Without built-in guarantees, Ms Norton worried that the board's plan is mostly smoke and mirrors.

"The plan looked good but it wasn't necessarily believable," she said. "They couldn't guarantee that the resources would be there for the kids who need them."

Sharon Gross, the mother of a 12-year-old developmentally delayed child, left the meeting where the new plan was outlined feeling that parents may have just witnessed a card trick.

"I guess we were dreaming. We were looking for some kind of magic," she said. "What we saw with this report was just a shuffling of boundaries."

Instead of satellite teams, schools need more IAs in the classroom, said Ms Gross.

Past budget cuts drastically whittled down the number of IAs in the system. Since then, many parents have been lobbying to bring them back, said Ms Gross.

"The assistance in the classroom just isn't there anymore. What we once had, we don't."

Her own son learned in an integrated classroom with the support of an IA right up until Grade 4, said

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LINDA NORTON

## REGION OF HALTON NOTICE OF A PUBLIC MEETING Proposed Amendment No. 6 to the Official Plan for the Region of Halton

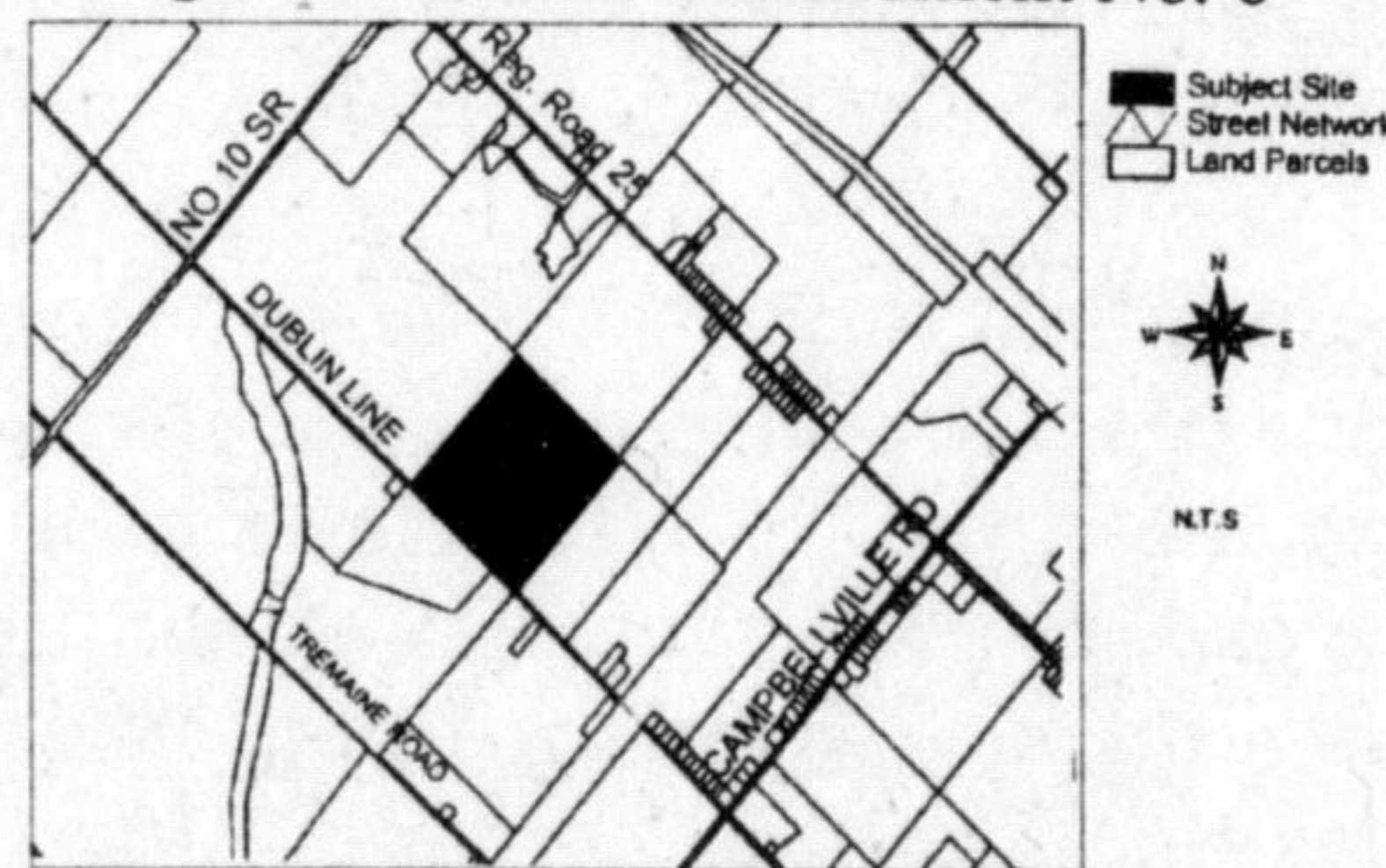
The Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton, through its Planning and Public Works Committee, is holding a Public Meeting to provide interested individuals an opportunity to comment on proposed Halton Region Official Plan Amendment No. 6:

**Date:** Wednesday, March 24, 1999

**Time:** 9:30 A.M.

**Place:** Halton Room  
Halton Regional Centre  
1151 Bronte Road  
Oakville ON L6M 3L1

Region of Halton Amendment No. 6



To Get More Information: Proposed Amendment No. 6 may be viewed at the Office of the Regional Clerk, between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. weekdays, or a copy may be obtained by calling Susan O'Brien, Ext. 7180 at one of the numbers below. Those wishing to address the Committee are requested to telephone the Regional Clerk, Joan Eaglesham, at Ext. 7237, prior to Wednesday, March 17, 1999, 4:30 P.M.

**Purpose Of Amendment:** The purpose is to permit an expansion to an existing golf course. The site, which is the subject of this amendment is approximately 38 ha and located east of Regional Road 25, north of No. 5 Side Road. The property is legally described as Part of Lot 7, Concession 2, 9503 Dublin Line, Town of Halton Hills.

**Note:** If you wish to be notified of the adoption of the proposed Official Plan Amendment, you must make a written request to the Regional Clerk at the address noted above. If a person or public body that files a notice of appeal of a decision of the Regional Municipality of Halton in respect of the proposed Official Plan Amendment does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submission to the Regional Municipality of Halton before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted, the Ontario Municipal Board may dismiss all or part of the appeal.

To phone the Region of Halton from:

Aldershot (905) 639-4540  
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Georgetown (905) 878-8113  
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Web Site: [www.region.halton.on.ca](http://www.region.halton.on.ca)



Legislated Notice has been provided to those neighbours affected by the proposal, as required under the Planning Act. This is provided for any other interested parties.

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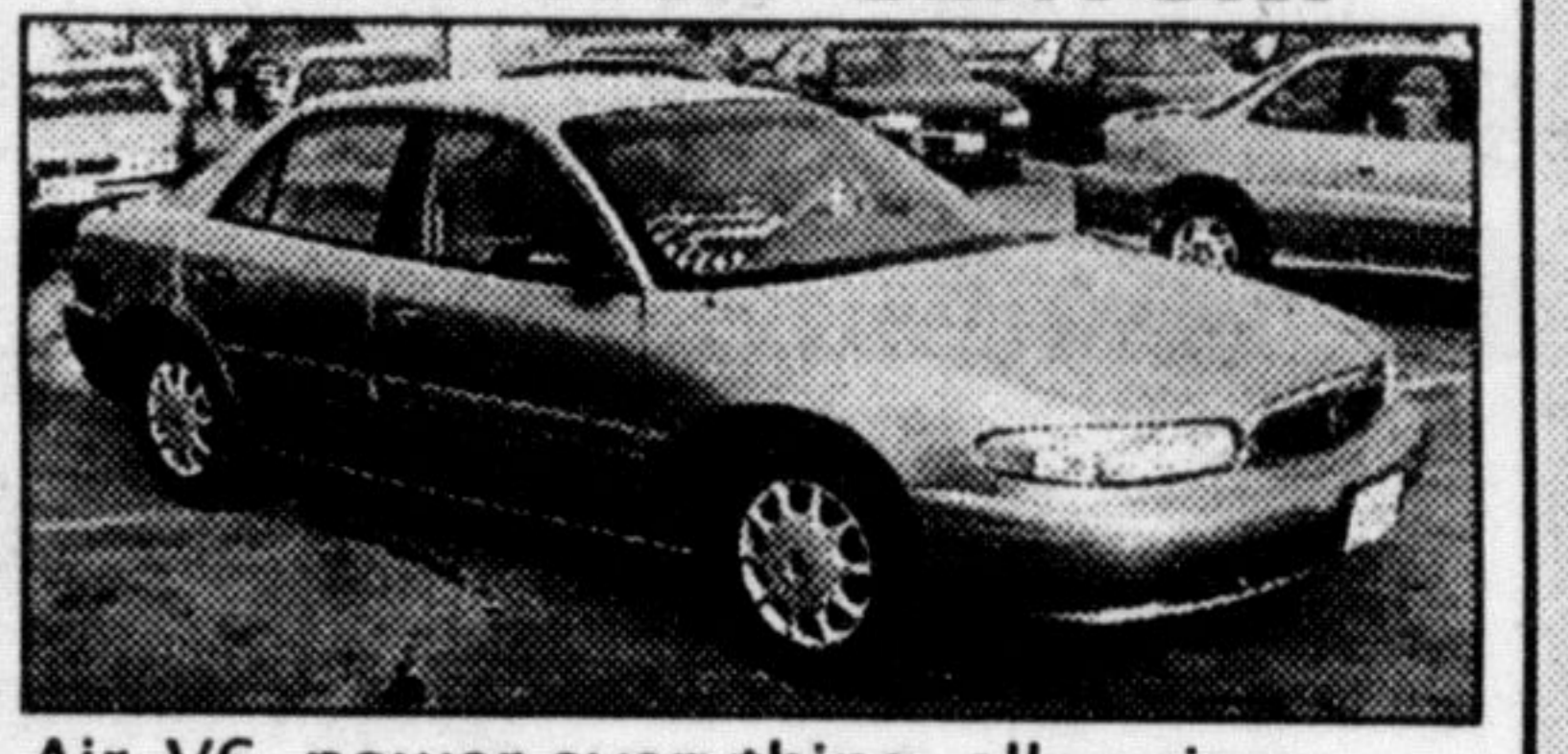
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