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| 1 | 08/18/2020 | Public | Take a close look at this small neighbourhood and our surroundings to be able to visualize our stance against turning 574 Northcliffe Ave into a school.  I.B.I and Columbia have purposely minimized the footprint and impact that will forever change this quiet neighbourhood and “protected” natural environment.  There is only one way in and out on Newman Rd and we have no options if this plan comes to fruition. The gridlock will not just affect our small community (37 homes) but every person who travels on York Rd from Dundas and surrounding areas to access Hwy 6 and the 403. We already experience high volumes and back up on Hwy 6 overpass and the four way stop at Old Guelph Rd and York Rd.  We are not only talking about 40 school buses with 1,000 students (maybe more buses if social distancing is still a factor) but teachers and staff that will include cafeteria, custodians, security (some private) delivery vehicles, property maintenance and all the vehicles, trucks and heavy equipment when construction starts.  We are on septic- we have no sewers and there is no where to bring them in from. The septic is far behind standards and capacity to handle 1,000 plus people on a daily basis. Drastic, intrusive measures will need to be implemented to handle these excessive volumes.  Pleasant View is on of the most protected regions of Ontario for our insects, wild life and plant species. I.B.I and Columbia will try to change laws and amendments so they can carry on with their selfish and intrusive plans all in the name of money!  Please look deep into your conscience and do what is right. | Opposed |
| 2 | 08/20/2020 | Public | We hope this area of Pleasant View will be protected and not be disrupted. | Opposed |
| 3 | 08/21/2020 | public | In complete agreement with your assessment of the impacts that this will create for our neighbourhood if approved. | Opposed |
| 4 | 08/24/2020 | public | This area has been fought for for decades. Founding members of the community fought for some of the best protection in the province. Why?, because it is spectacular and should be preserved city needs greenspace more than ever with so much industry. These hard fought for protections are because the flora and fauna are so special and unique. Columbia college sits on 57 acres of natural splendour, critical water source running through it and is home to at least a hundred different species of wildlife. At risk species, such as the woodcock, arctic bunting, Ermine, fox snakes and brown bats. Home to many mammals and the new Hopkins tract is starting to produce magnificent things. I’ve had in excess of thirty butterflies in my yard which sides Hopkins tract this year. The corridor running through the school is a safe den site for coyotes, foxes, groundhogs and the surrounding is critical for fawning grounds and wild turkey cover to name a few. This area is of special importance and should be thought of as such. 1000 students converging on a wild area that is so important to the health of the ECOPARK and Cootes corridor is irresponsible. Protected habitat should mean protected against anything that is not suitable for a residential, natural area and cherished for generations to come.  I’ve lived here for 15 years. The road is terrifying, always has been but it’s getting worse. To pull out of my driveway is scary at the best of times. Trucks and buses fly by with little or no room to spare. The road is narrow and shoulder less so the bus mirrors miss each other by inches. There is zero room for error. There is never any police presence so excessive speeds are the norm. People speed even though there are hidden driveways as you go into the first dip. I can’t even count the near misses in front of my house. From 4 to 6 pm traffic is backed up for hundreds of meters both ways. It even backs up up highway six hundreds of meters. Soon it will be backed up all the way up the hill to five highway. We have begged for slowing measures for years. A neighbour even took to erecting his own speed limit sign because he is terrified of his mother having to pull out of her driveway in a blind spot with trucks coming barrelling over the hill. For four residents here in the dip, pulling out is saying a prayer at times. Throw in that it is a major wildlife corridor right at the entrance to Newman. It is one of the few areason York road that wildlife can cross the road to forage in the upper escarpment. There is a fifteen acre piece of the corridor that has been tied up with an illegal build. Has entanglement fencing down both sides and has forced crossing wildlife to find an alternate route and many are dead including four deer and who knows how many are injured. We can’t build an Ecopark, encourage wildlife and then throw a thousand kids at it with more traffic and no safer crossing zones. It is cruel and irresponsible and not in keeping with our EcoPark mandate. 12 deer have been hit  in the last decade that I know of and how many injured? in a hundred foot  stretch at Newman and York. Motorcyclists have no idea a 150 buck might jump in front of them. Hazardous area with no shoulders and a lot of traffic congestion. Instead of fixing the dip in the road at Newman after the zillion dollar construction at Six and York Road they never fixed the slope in front of 690. A lot of it has washed way onto the road. Instead of fixing the problem and putting in a proper culvert they bring dozens of truckloads of salt each winter and pour it on a hundred foot stretch as they know the ice buildup on the road (because of improper ditches) is treacherous. This poisons the creek in such an irresponsible fashion. Build a nature sanctuary and regularly salt the only drinking source for our spectacular wildlife. Not acceptable. I’ve been promised a new culvert at my driveway entrance for 7 years. Because no culvert was ever installed as per the massive interchange work years back, winter runoff just runs over my driveway. My driveway entrance ices over and just as you are to do your death defying pull out on to an insanely busy road my tires spin on ice. They keep telling me I’m next on the list for a culvert update. The intersection of Old Guelph Road and York used to be a place for wildlife to cross. Now it has nonstop traffic, a dog that barks incessantly and kids that ride ATVs alongside the corridor. Except in the wee hours in the morning wildlife no longer chooses this path as it has too much disturbance. Newman road is the only place barely suitable for crossing and the last thing it needs is more traffic. For health and genetic reasons the animals need to be able to move freely with suitable, decent size corridors. This is no place for a large business with added traffic. Some folks here lost their retirement income because they couldn’t sever any land when the area was designated special protection and many rules were put in place to curb sprawl and businesses not suitable or sustainable for the area.   Dundas is famous for greenspace and diverse wildlife. This has been a bad year for illegal builds, clearing violations and pollution flowing into the area of Cootes. Pleasantview should remain as it is intended and in keeping with its Ecopark mandate. | Opposed |
| 5 | 08/24/2020 | public | The road system in and around this proposed conversion is insufficient and dangerous right now, let alone when 1,000 more individuals are using it daily.  The downbound exit from Hwy 6 is dangerous, the intersection of it with the very hilly  York Road is dangerous (sightlines are terrible), the left turn into Newman Road is dangerous, with cars speeding along York Road to access the highways (primarily) and to get into Dundas by avoiding higher-order roads. The character of the neighbourhood will be forever altered with this change in use.  The water sources had better be guaranteed, as demands will be much higher; the wastewater to be generated will also be increased significantly, and the ecological risk of that in the precise location is a risk that should not be taken.  I am well familiar with the location, having visited many times over many years while the convent was operational there. | Opposed |
| 6 | 08/24/2020 | public | I have recently moved to Old Guelph Rd. We were very happy to move this way since we were coming from Mississauga which was a hectic and fast paced life. We are retired and decided we needed to live in a relaxing country setting. We would not be happy at all to see it get busy up here, we are against the proposal and all the traffic this will cause. We have been also having issues with high end race car driving on our street ( Old Guelph Rd and York rd). They go by in extremely high speeds that is very dangerous and is very unsafe for all the residents on this street. I would appreciate any information you can provide us with this proposal as we are very disappointed if they approve it. | Opposed |
| 7 | 08/24/2020 | public | I would like to voice a safety concern. The transportation impact study indicates that traffic impacts will be minimal in the area, and that the existing infrastructure is adequate to support the added traffic expected if the proposed plan is approved. The study’s methodology is sound; however, it only examines the expected traffic increases on the roads feeding into the neighborhood where the old convent is located. That neighborhood begins at the intersection of Newman Road with York Road. After that, attention is given to the adequacy of the infrastructure, but not the increase in traffic within the neighborhood. For residents of the neighborhood such as myself, this is of paramount importance.  converting the old convent into a school will generate an expected 120 round trips each day (not counting, special events held on evenings or weekends). How much does an additional 120 round trips increase traffic in the neighborhood? That information was not included in the report, but we can make an educated guess. The neighborhood contains 35 residences. If we assume 2 to 3 round trips per residence per day, that is 70 to 105 round trips per day. An extra 120 round trips more than doubles local traffic. Further, 20 to 40 of those round trips involve large school busses rather than personal vehicles.  Does this increase in neighborhood traffic matter? Yes, I think it does. Many children live in the neighborhood. These children regularly play outside, and go for walks and bike rides along the streets (specifically, along Atkinson Blvd, Northcliffe Ave, Zellens Rd, and Newman Rd). If you carefully study a map of the area, you will see that these streets are the only place they have for these activities. The neighborhood is small and self-enclosed, so there are no other routes they can use. There are no sidewalks in the area, which means the children and their families must walk on the streets.  Timing also matters. Traffic from the proposed school is likely to be concentrated around when the new school starts and ends. These are also likely to be the times when neighborhood children are walking through the neighborhood as they travel to and from their own school bus stops, or perhaps enjoying some time roaming through the neighborhood after sitting in school all day. That means the traffic from the new school will likely be on the streets at the same time our children are. I realize that many schools are located in neighborhoods. But in most cases, those schools serve the local neighborhoods and having them close by is a convenience for parents. That is not the case here. Columbia International College (CIC) is a private boarding school with no ties to the neighborhood. The choice of the old convent is simply one of convenience for CIC. | Opposed |
| 8 | 08/28/2020 | public | The city of Hamilton has a long history of ignoring the environment and the quality of life of its citizens and this is just another example of their lack of insight and mainly looking for tax money which God knows they rarely handle properly. When Mike Harris tried to save money, and amalgamated us that no good would ever come from this idea for the surrounding villages. | Opposed |
| 9 | 08/28/2020 | public | Deeply against this project. Pleasant View must be protected. Please do not be short-sighted. I hope you will do what you can to stop this from happening. | Opposed |
| 10 | 08/30/2020 | public | Resident in the area, just went thru a new build so I'm aware of all the issues in this part of Dundas. I don't see how there can be an allowance for 1000 students at the end of our road? | Opposed |
| 11 | 08/30/2020 | public | Lived a nice quiet life here at my property for 34 1/2 years. It is wonderful to see all the wildlife that roams our area. Chipmunks, 3 varieties of squirrels, racoons, possums, deers, red fox,coyotes, turtles, wild geese, brown bats, and i have 30 varieties of different birds coming to my feeders through out the year. This area is precious! It is a corridor for natural wild life that makes its way up and down the escarpment. Have fought rellentlessly to keep it this way only to have major corporations like columbia college push their way in. No one here minds that they use the property at 574 northcliff to accomodate 96 students as a residence. Built for a residence not a international college. The devastation it will have on our wildlife would be catastrofic at best. Do not have sidewalks ~~so~~ it is unsafe to deal with that much more traffic. Columbia college told us the worst case scenario would be 1000 students my lawyer has highly advised me to reject this as it allows them to go through with their plans saying oh well this is the worst case scenario and you didn't reject it, therefore we go through with it. Have many more younger families with small children who like to ride their bikes. Nearly every household here has dogs. This proposal simply is not a option for us or our wildlife family. We are still protected under the greenbelt plan. We are are strictly residential. Columbia college is a multi million dollar business and does not belong here. Residential yes school no. Just imagine 20-40 school busses a day the amount of deisal fumes. I could go but i think the niagara escarpment commision gets my point. Please consider the consequences this is going to have if it is appoved. | Opposed |
| 12 | 08/31/2020 | public | ~~R~~esidents of the Pleasant View Survey in Dundas ON. Currently, the property is owned by Columbia College and the use is for up to 96 students to reside at the property. The students moved in during the fall of 2019 and there was minimal disruption to the neighbourhood. A few extra taxi’s and Uber drivers were all we witnessed. With the proposal of busing 1000 students daily to and from the property the level of safety for our community is in peril. Our community consists of homeowners, Sisters of the Precious Blood convent and countless wild life. Pleasant View is a protected area. It has taken many decades to ensure that the land in this area is protected. We live in an area that is a key component in the eco system. The amount of devastation in this protected area that will have to happen in order to accommodate the proposal is irresponsible.  We are in a rural area. We must drive into town to get groceries and essentials. There are no sidewalks. We like it that way. That is why we all chose to live here; for the community. Some of us have lived here for over 40 years, others just a couple of years. But we all enjoy the serenity we have here. It has come at a cost. There were years of construction and road closures when they widened highway 6. The roads were not safe during that time, but it was temporary. Transporting 1000 students in and out of this community every day is not safe, or temporary. There is only one way in and out. While the buses themselves will only pass 4 homes directly, it will impact the flow of traffic, and safety for everyone.  The Pleasant View area is of special importance and should be thought of as such. We need to protect the habitat. We need to ensure big business does not destroy what has taken decades to establish. | Opposed |
| 13 | 08/31/2020 | public | I live on York Road and I am against the proposal. The traffic along York Road is awful with people that do not care for the animals or families that live here. They speed constantly and I have never seen a police car with radar along York to make drivers notice that the speed limit was dropped a while ago. Last summer a deer got hit just in front of our home and died. I have been driving at 60 on York since the speed limit has changed and it is crazy how many people get extremely angry with me, hug my bumper and shoot me the finger. I have had to resort to not pulling into my driveway because I am afraid they will do something to my car. Please do not let there be MORE traffic! | Opposed |
| 14 | 09/02/2020 | public | Have been living on a court off York Road for 18 years and are very concerned about the increase in traffic on York over this time and feel that the Columbia School will further add to this problem making it extremely difficult to negotiate, especially in the winter. York Rd. is a beautiful, winding and hilly route through the escarpment and has been used by cyclists and walkers for many years, however, with the increase in traffic it is becoming extremely precarious to walk or ride. We are concerned about the vehicle emissions and noise pollution caused by the increase in traffic and the impact on the many species of wildlife in the area. | Opposed |
| 15 | 09/02/2020 | public | Do not think that using the former Sisters of St. Joseph as a high school would be a good idea. Just the increased traffic congestion will make for stress on the wildlife, not to mention the residents of the immediate area. | Opposed |
| 16 | 09/02/2020 | public | Resided on Hopkins court for 12 years.  We  appreciate and maintain nature in our surrounding area. My husband assists the Royal Botanical Gardens in removing invasive species and planting native plants around the trails in our neighbourhood.  York road is heavily travelled, in the mornings it is severely over utilized.  The nature and the wildlife are very plentiful and are fragile in the area. The road is very narrow and picturesque, expanding it would be very difficult. Introducing 1000 students in the area would bring extra stress on the environment. The infrastructure needs of a large institution would put undue stress on the lovely vast area of fields and forests. The corridor between the escarpment to Cootes paradise is a biosphere recognized area , it is unique and provides vegetation and a vibrant ecosystem.  This area needs to be protected. I support the friends of Pleasant view. | Opposed |
| 17 | 09/03/2020 | public | When my husband and I moved into this neighborhood 16 years ago, we made some assumptions regarding what it means to be in an area designated as: ⦁ Escarpment Natural Area, ⦁ Escarpment Protection Area, and ⦁ Escarpment Rural Area. We assumed this area is protected from any development that would threaten our natural and rural neighbourhood or the environment.   In response to Columbia Northcliffe Campus Inc’s application. How can a 1000-student school not be completely contrary to what is intended by these designations of protection? Will the significant increase in people and traffic represented by a 1000-student school maintain this area as “relatively undisturbed” and in a “relatively natural state”?  The answer is NO. Will the significant increase in people and traffic represented by a 1000-student school “represent the most significant natural and scenic areas of the Escarpment”?  The answer is NO. Will the significant increase in people and traffic represented by a 1000-student school “maintain the remaining natural features and the open, rural landscape character of the Escarpment and lands in its vicinity”?  The answer is NO.  Is a 1000-student school considered “agricultural or forest use”?  The answer is NO. Please answer NO to Columbia Northcliffe Campus Inc’s application to amend the NEP.  What a 1000-student school represents is not a small contradiction to the existing policy, it is completely contrary to what is intended. | Opposed |
| 18 | 09/04/2020 | public | I have serious concerns about the application. With a background in Environmental Engineering, my work as a member of the Conserver Society (a party to the OMB hearing on Pleasant View), and my subsequent role as a town Councillor from ’97-2000, I am keenly aware of this land and the need for its continued protection. The OMB decision directed a continuation of the virtual freeze on development of Pleasant View that was instigated by the Parkway Belt West Plan.  It makes the new plans a direct contradiction of the direction of the OMB. The inclusion of this land into the NEP is intended to uphold the direction of the OMB, the spirit of the Parkway Belt West Plan, and direction of the City of Hamilton Official Plan and policies at every level of government that all point to the continued protection of the ecologically sensitive Pleasant View lands. The over than doubling of septic bed capacity is of great concern. There would likely be serious long term consequences to the ecology of the area, and possibly to the health and well-being of those regularly in the vicinity.  Potential leaks and contamination would impact health of humans, flora and fauna and the groundwater and nearby pond.  The impact of so many buses transporting students and additional staff cars going through this area, that is already strained with an increase in traffic, is untenable as this is a sensitive wildlife corridor between the Escarpment and Cootes Paradise. And lastly, building a large gymnasium in Pleasant View, land that is restricted from additional development, flies in the face of the intention for continued protection of this land. I sincerely suggest rejecting this application for the greater good. | Opposed |
| 19 | 09/04/2020 | public | I disapprove of the proposal. York road is the main eastern route from West Hamilton @ Dundas to Toronto & Niagara the road is very busy with traffic .  I have lived on York road for 33 years , have seen many accidents. this road is not capable of more traffic. If this is a ECO-PARK  please stop this proposal. | Opposed |
| 20 | 09/04/2020 | public | 574 Northcliffe Avenue is in the Escarpment Natural Area and the Escarpment Rural Area, and  it is intended to permit urban use as a 1000-student school.  Although the proposed amendment is not for a change in land use designation in the NEP, it is a request to amend the NEP to permit urban use. Although the building is an existing building, “existing use” refers to the use of the subject lands.  Use of the subject lands is limited to the following within the existing building: i. A Place of Worship; ii. A Convent; iii. A residential care facility for a maximum of 35 residents; and  iv. A dormitory for 36 students and accessory uses for an educational establishment provided it is located in conjunction with the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph.  Item iv above relates to accessory uses for an educational establishment and not an educational establishment itself. A 1000-student school is not an existing use case.  Therefore, this application is a violation of Section 6.1(2.2) of the NEPDA, item b), and as such must be rejected.  Policy Reference: “Section 6.1(2.2) of the NEPDA requires that no person or public body shall make an application or request to amend the NEP if the application or request relates to land that is within the land use designation of Escarpment Natural Area, Escarpment Protection Area, Mineral Resource Extraction Area or Escarpment Rural Area of the NEP and the application or request seeks to: a. Re-designate the land to the land use designation of Minor Urban Centre, Urban Area Centre, Urban Area or Escarpment Recreation Are of the NEP; or. b. Make any other amendment to permit urban uses, unless it is during the time of a Plan Review.” | Opposed |
| 21 | 09/05/2020 | Hamilton Naturalists' Club | On behalf of the 600 member Hamilton Naturalists' Club, we are writing to advise you that we do not support the application. We share the concerns expressed by a growing number of Dundas residents, who believe the project is much too large for this environmentally sensitive area. There will almost certainly be detrimental consequences for the ecology and the community if a project of this size is approved. The area is an ecological and wildlife corridor between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise. As noted in the initial NEC staff report, the valley lands along the western border of the site are designated Escarpment Natural Area, the most sensitive resources of the Escarpment.  Key natural features on the property include wetlands, significant woodlands and significant valleylands. The lands in question are in the vicinity of several Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System parks, including Pleasant View and Cootes Paradise.  The HNC places much importance on the value of this sensitive area, as our 46-acre Cartwright Nature Sanctuary is within Pleasant View. This year, we were delighted to add the 53-acre Sheelah Dunn Dooley Nature Sanctuary in Pleasant View to our sanctuaries.  This new sanctuary, will strengthen our efforts to protect the area from large projects that are best directed to areas more compatible with urban development.  In our view, the parks and open spaces in this vicinity have provided invaluable opportunities for citizens to enjoy unspoiled nature just minutes from the city. Wildlife corridors provide diverse habitat for many species including White-tailed Deer, Coyote and Wild Turkey, in addition to rare species of wildflowers including a large colony of American Columbo.  The Cartwright Sanctuary features a well-established forest community. It is also an important groundwater discharge area, feeding streams such as Hickory Brook that flow into Cootes Paradise.  Preservation of the natural resources in this area is essential to ensuring that the Ontario government will protect the Niagara Escarpment from excessive development to the benefit of present and future generations. In our view, a project on the scale proposed is incompatible with sustainable best practices to preserve and enhance the Niagara Escarpment and Greenbelt.  The proposed development also would entail much-increased car and school bus traffic on York Road. This significant increase in traffic would not only raise safety issues, it would also increase habitat fragmentation, believed by many researchers to have by far the greatest detrimental impact of all impacts on nature.  We also have concerns that a considerable expansion of the septic system would be required. The site drains toward the Long Pond on the property of the Royal Botanical Gardens.  In conclusion, the Club cannot support the application and we urge the NEC to reject it as inconsistent with the goals of the NEP and the Greenbelt. | Opposed |
| 22 | 09/06/2020 | public | This plan fills me with dismay. I have observed and supported, the efforts far-sighted people have made to prevent the 'development' of Pleasantview and more recently to establish the Eco Park, for the benefit of our environment and our lives. Suddenly, this outrageous p!an is presented. Such construction, volume of traffic on a daily basis, influx of population into a tiny neighbourhood reached by a narrow road is destructive of the land, the vegetation and wildlife, and the neighbourhood. Other people are, I am sure, sending detailed examinations of the various levels of destruction. My intention here is simply to express my disbelief and horror that such a p!an should ever have been considered, in light of its intended location. | Opposed |
| 23 | 09/07/2020 | public | The property is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. Section 2.10 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan addresses cultural heritage and contains the following policies: 3. Reconstruction, alterations and consideration of a second dwelling under Part 2.2.7 should be compatible with the area’s community character.  In regard to number 3 above, I would like to submit that the nature of the use of the property and the proposed gym construction do not fit with the area’s community character. There has never been a school in the Pleasantview area of Dundas and the only other institutional use buildings in the area are for churches, not schools. The existing churches are not large and could not accommodate more than 250 people at maximum. There is no other institutional use building in the area that accommodates the proposed 1100 people that is part of this proposal. Although the existing convent and monastery were build to accommodate more than 250 people, they were never used to their full capacity. Hence the community character was never used or exposed to large institutional use. Therefore construction of a gym facility for a large institution would also not be in the community character. As a side note, the now demolished Nigel Charlong Community Centre that was located on Old Guelph Road did not have a capacity of more than 150 people. This size was sufficient for the holding of community meetings for the area.  The peak travel times to and from campus for students and staff are expected to be between 7:45 – 8:40 am, and 4:15 pm – 5:15 pm. However, CIC notes clearly that these travel times may be adjusted for student arrival flexibility, which could avoid peak am and pm travel time periods. Further, there is expected shuttle bus operation to accommodate students participating in clubs and sports, and these may depart as late as 9:00 pm during normal school operating season. It is my belief that the proposed use of the Convent as a High School will have a significant impact on traffic in the area. The first fact that should be noted is that there is NO public transportation that currently or has ever serviced the Pleasantview area. The nearest City of Hamilton bus stop in Dundas is located 2-3 kilometers from the address. There are no side walks in the area and walking access would be confined to the shoulders of York Road, York Road is a 60 km, 2 lane road that has narrow shoulders as it traverses two ravines that are enclosed by guard rails. As the only access to the 403 highway in Dundas, it is subject to significant traffic volume during rush hour times. The closest bus stop from the Burlington side is also located approximately 2 km away on Plains Road. There are limited side walks and pedestrians would be required to cross the bridge and ramps to Highway 6 and the 403. There are no sidewalks or pedestrian walkways in this area. Access could also be made via Old Guelph road, again a narrow 2 lane roadway with guard rails on a steep slope overlooking the 403 highway.  The nature of the Columbia College school is that the large majority of students are from outside of Canada. They therefore require living accommodations to be available in the form of dormitories or apartments. A fact that should be noted about 574 Northcliffe Avenue is that it is located in a rural area of Dundas and there are no suitable accommodations for the students with 5-10 km of the site. Therefore all students must be bussed to and from the facility on a daily basis.  If one assumes that the 80 or so staff will travel by personal vehicle to the site, the existing infrastructure of York Road could accommodate this increase in traffic. If the average bus capacity is 40 students, to accommodate 1000 students would require an additional 50 bus trips at a minimum, to and from the site each day, and possibly many more. Currently there is only 1 GO Transit bus every day that uses York Road to access the highway. This large increase in bus traffic on the existing roads, either through Dundas or Burlington, during rush hour times and/or later at night, I believe will put a significant strain on the existing infrastructure. Access via Plains road through Burlington is also only a 2 lane road until it becomes York Boulevard in Hamilton. Using the Plains road route requires the buses to cross bridges over Highway 6 and Highway 403, both of which are access points to these highways. Traffic tie ups on the highways multiply the number of cars using these access points and road accesses, and the students could face significant delays and increase in safety risk by being bussed along these routes.  The report states that upgrades to the wastewater system will be required to accommodate the large increase in usage. I cannot argue against this. My concern is that any failure of the existing or upgraded infrastructure would impact both the Cootes Paradise and Hamilton Harbour water systems. The facility at 574 Northcliffe Road is in close proximity to both of these significant ecosystems and any failure in their wastewater infrastructure will have an impact.  Although the usage of the convent for a high school in my mind represents a fairly benign impact on the site, I am concerned about the nature of the use as it fits with the community. This community is rural by nature, and has no experience with this kind of usage. The influx of bus traffic to the area will be genuinely felt by the community. I also feel that it is the wrong place for a school, due to its rural nature. There are no commercial or residential developments in the area and there never will be. Students wanting to leave the school at irregular hours, as high school students are known to do, and do not want to wait for a bus, will be forced to walk a fair distance along roads not designed for pedestrian access. This by it’s nature creates safety concerns. All public high schools are designed and required to have full and safe pedestrian access. Columbia College will not have to meet this standard. It could be argued that these students are essentially trapped or imprisoned on this site until transportation is provided. The rural nature also raises concerns about access for community services, such as fire, police and ambulance. We will have a large institution with a large population that now has longer wait times for these essential emergency services. I believe the inherent increase in risk factors for this proposed usage makes this site inappropriate for a large institution such as a high school. Parents, even non resident ones, are entrusting us to provide high standard of safety and care the most valuable of resources, their children.  resident of Dundas, having lived here on and off since 1961. I have owned a home in the Pleasant Valley area of Dundas for almost 27 years. I have been involved in the Pleasantview area, as a treasurer to the group that opposed development at the OMB hearing in 1995. I am also involved in a land holding in the Pleasantview area. This 44 acre property was acquired jointly by Conservation Halton and the Hamilton Naturalists Club(HNC) in 2007 and is managed by the HNC as a nature sanctuary. I am a volunteer on the HNC committee that manages the property, located north of York road. | Opposed |
| 24 | 09/07/2020 | public | It is our understanding that the NEC is the governing body that will decide if the proposal will be accepted or denied in the first step of the process. A stoplight is being considered at the corner of York Road and Old Guelph Road.  This will still not alleviate the problem of traffic on York Road and Newman.  This is a rural area never intended for such a large influx of people and vehicles.  We would suggest that someone in your office visit this area between the hours of 3:30 and 6:30 to see the amount of traffic coming through here and the backups to the stop sign. The wildlife will disappear.  We were given to understand that the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Conservation Authority were designating the Pleasantview  area as a wildlife corridor.  We think the College would be better looking for another place in a suburban area where they can access stores, etc. York Road in itself, coming in and out of Dundas, is an old country road never intended for this much traffic especially the number of buses that will be using York Road.   Another problem is the septic system.  It would have to be a large system to be able to accommodate that many people. | Opposed |
| 25 | 09/08/2020 | public | In the “justification” document it is claimed that the impact of the proposed developments would be minimal and indeed that they should be seen as a “continued use” that is already in place. The theme that the proposal is really not a significant change is carried on to page 37 and reaches the conclusion that: “The 2011 minor variance and OMB decision” that permitted 38 dormitory students and teaching facilities” can be used to justify their claim that their latest proposal is “an evolution and modification of existing uses....”  The selectivity in the reading of the Plan is well exposed in the second paragraph of page 37 where they quote from the NEP so as to make their proposal seem to meet the requirements but conveniently ignore the critical import of the last phrase in the Plan wording that says the uses must be “to serve the immediate community.” Perhaps one of the applicant’s readers noticed this so a further claim is added in which they say that because this school is like other schools in the province in some respects they will substitute for the “to serve the immediate community” the criterion “in accordance with the established site-specific provisions applicable to the subject lands.”  The issue of whether something is an “existing use” often comes up in attempts to circumvent the restrictions of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. A notable portion of the “Planning Comment” from the proponent goes as follows:  “Further, the proposal maintains the existing site development pattern consisting of the Motherhouse, long-term care wing, and parking driveway areas and modifies it slightly through the addition of the proposed gymnasium and private sewage works.” (p. 40) (I have added the emphasis to draw attention to the wording.) If we take seriously the claim that the change involved in their proposal is slight, their felt need to commission so many studies is inexplicable.  Another thread of the claim that the proposal involves very modest changes can be seen in the references to the City’s Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Some facts on what that involves are needed to understand what significance if any the inclusion on that list has for the development proposed. It does not appear to even come to up to the requirements for “Designated” buildings, which itself provides only limited protection. We need to know: what are the criteria for getting on the Register list; what restrictions on alterations to the building are imposed on the owner of a building on the list; who asked to have it included and when was it included. In fact the only thing in the proposal that seems to represent a commitment on preservation of the buildings is: “the proposed conversion [of the Motherhouse} to a proposed secondary school use does not include alterations to the existing facade.” (p. 36). A reading of the documents dealing with wastewater suggests to me that some important general features of the site are not addressed.  First is the point that the site has City water but no sewage services. Although the policy of providing water without sewage services is supposed to be discouraged in this province, it does happen in Hamilton. I have seen quite a number of applications to the NEC for private residences under these conditions. A concise explanation of the possible unwanted consequences and responsibility for them can be seen in comments submitted to the NEC by the City. An example is as follows:  Note (to be included in development permit) if approved:  The supply of a municipal water service to a property or residence may result in an increase in the usage of water over the usage from a private water supply. Any increase in water usage above what can normally be expected from a private well at the said property/residence may negatively impact the septic system resulting in possible diminished performance or system failure. By reading this notice and applying for a connection to the municipal water service, the owner/occupant hereby holds the City of Hamilton harmless of all liability and responsibility for any cost or damage resulting from any diminished performance or failure of said septic system due to the availability and use of municipal water service at their property. Further, the owner/occupant also acknowledges that the City of Hamilton has no obligation to provide municipal sanitary sewer services to mitigate the direct or indirect consequences of any diminished performance or failure of a private septic system which may result from the supply of municipal water service to their property and the usage thereof.  The proposed development would entail more hard surfaces (roof and pavement) that will increase runoff water volumes. Add to that the increasing number of major rainstorms due to Climate Change and it is surely clear that the traditional tables on the storm water flows and their effects on onsite septic and treatment systems no longer are reliable as the basis for projections on their efficacy.  With regard to tables used to make calculations, it seems that in the Wastewater Review submitted and included in the submission to the NEC by IBI, rely upon the “values published in the Ontario Building Code. It is stated that “The OBC design criteria for students are 30L/day) which accounts for their teacher as well) and 50 L/day for non-teaching employees.” Are these figures derived from urban schools or remote schools to which all students are bussed in and out? If the former, they may be irrelevant to the latter. Since in the case of the Columbia school the students will be on the premises all day, and using the cafeteria and gymnasium facilities since they are remote from alternatives, the allotted very small input to wastewater volumes in the MTE calculations seems unreliable. Also, I believe the wastewater figures for an urban school of a comparable population would be much lower and thus not a suitable guide for this site in predicting the capacity needed for their wastewater systems.  It should be noted that the comparison of the figures in Tables 1 and 2 on page 3 of the report show that the 138 ove3rnight students and staff would produce 42,600 L/d and the 1000 students proposed in the application would produce 63,550 L/d. That shows they are calculating that an increase from 138 to 1000, which is 7 times as many students, is predicted to produce an increase amounting to half of the total produced by 138. For the septic tanks, the study proposes 3 times the sewage flow to make a capacity of 195,000 litres necessary; how this figure is justified is not explained and current capacity is not specified.  The other later document on wastewater, “Tertiary Treatment System Design Report." It introduces some new information. On page 3, section 3.1.2 a discussion of the “Monastery Wastewater System Information” is provided. It reveals that “There is limited information about the existing system and the existing bed is not contained within the existing ECA for the site. Additional investigations will be completed into the design, capacity conditions of the existing wastewater system. “  Given that only about 6 months ago it was reported by neighbours that sewage smells were emanating from the Columbia College premises and no information has been provided as to the cause and extent of the apparent leakages/spills, it seems clear that this extremely important dimensions of the proposed development of the site is still to be revealed. So a reliable description of a credible proposal has is not available.  Reassurances about seepages of contaminated water into the ground water and ultimately leakages downhill into Long Pond and Cootes Paradise may be occurring. This possibility must be studied to give a better picture of the consequences of approving the proposed development. | Opposed |
| 26 | 09/08/2020 | Public | I am deeply concerned about an Application currently before the Commission. 1.   I am certainly in favour of there being a suitable adaptive for the Convent building in question. However,  the Convent was built for 100 (one hundred) nuns and converting the use to a school for 1000 teenagers, plus at least 80 staff, is not a suitable use. The nuns lived a life of quiet contemplation in a natural setting.  There was no damage to the environment and no problems with their septic system.  Restrictions have tightened considerably since the building of the convent and yet this extraordinary proposal is being considered. 2.  We live in a post-Covid world.  Likely travel will be much more restricted in the future than in the past.  It is possible that wealthy parents from overseas will likely no longer be able to send their children to Canada for an education.   With Global warming becoming a harsh reality there will be an increasing need to preserve and enhance open space, and to make sure there is sufficient habitat for other species.  This proposal flies in the face of all this.   3.  The proposed new septic bed will cause major environmental destruction, with the  removal of trees and damage to important habitat.  Septic systems fail easily and that is the reason why they are actively discouraged in Hamilton. There was already a failure of the current system earlier this year when the building was being used as a dormitory for a few Columbia College students.  4.  The addition of a massive new structure, a  gymnasium  with seating 1,300  (thirteen hundred) people with an underground connecting passageway would be yet another potential blow to an area that should be protected.  Any future use of the old Convent should be confined to the existing building  Columbia College is a private school, which operates to generate revenue for the owner(s). This project is one of the most major proposals to be considered  the old Town of Dundas, now called Ward 13.   The proposal is not in the best interests of Ward 13, nor of the Hamilton community. Yet the development is  being proposed in one of the most environmentally sensitive and important areas, Pleasant View, which is worthy of the highest levels of protection.  I urge the NEC to turn down this proposal. | Opposed |
| 27 | 09/09/2020 | public | What a dreadful outcome it would be, if the proposal were approved. It will be devastating for all of us now and for the future generations for many years to come. I sincerely hope that NEC will take this matter very seriously for the environment and our own wellbeing. This is a matter of grave importance. | Opposed |
| 28 | 09/09/2020 | public | Our family is very concerned about the impact of this proposed development.  Living on York Rd. we strongly oppose the use of this property, as envisioned. Our road is already very heavily travelled and was never designed for the volume of traffic it sees, even now at times is heavily congested.  Access to the Northcliffe can ONLY be gotten on two substandard and sensitive roads – York Rd. and Old Guelph Rd.  The intersection of those two roads is, at times, critically choked – and every single vehicle has to stop and start up again at the four way stop. Pollution of many kinds will increase. Noise pollution, sometimes overlooked, is in the news almost every day – a major cause of sickness in people living near roads.  Air pollution’s devastation is undeniable – and diesel exhaust, which most school buses emit, is one of the worst culprits.  Re-suspension of road dust is another serious element in the mix of our air pollution – especially insidious on roads with large vehicles like buses. Bear in mid that York Rd is a major cycling route too – giving access to the wonderful back road and escarpment riding so cherished by cyclists who come from near and far. In places York Rd (never mind Old Guelph Rd) is dangerously twisty and narrow, creating a nightmare for motor vehicle operators (especially large vehicles operators) and cyclists being overtaken.  It certainly wouldn’t meet standards if it were being built today.  more people will die (some immediately, some longer term with health complications), more animals will succumb to the pollution and further damage and loss to their environment, which so many are fighting to protect. Undoubtedly many more creatures will be added to the already high numbers of road kill one sees daily. If the Convent property needs development, now is the only time we have to do the best job of it.  Development has to have a countervailing force for the good of its citizens and the NEC is one of those mechanisms we have in place. | Opposed |
| 29 | 09/10/2020 | public | The NEP may only use the terms “Permitted Uses” and “Existing Uses”, however, the NEPDA uses the term “Urban Uses”.  The application is intended to make an amendment to permit urban use in an area designated both Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Rural Area, and as such should not have been considered, in accordance with Section 6.1(2.2) b) of the NEPDA.  I have read the NEPDA and I see no exceptions (“existing uses” or otherwise) other than considering the application during the time of a Plan Review. Respectfully, I think it was a mistake that the application has been circulated and I suggest that NEP consider having legal counsel review Section 6.1(2.2) b) of the NEPDA.  Not having legal counsel review Section 6.1(2.2) b) of the NEPDA regarding this application, would constitute a willful and wanton disregard for the NEPDA in my opinion. | Opposed |
| 30 | 09/13/2020 | Public | Strong opposition to this proposal. Conversion of the old convent will be devastating to the environment. This area is a wildlife corridor and the animals need to be able to travel to the escarpment without the stress of added traffic, humans and pollution. The increased traffic on York Rd. will create many problems as cars are already backed up to Hwy.6 every day. York Rd. will become more dangerous than ever with the extra cars and the addition of school busses as well. Also there are no sewers in the area and how are they going to manage a septic system with that many students. We have lived in this area for over 50 years and are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful nature friendly and peaceful area. Hopefully the NEC will see fit to retain this bit of paradise as it is for our future generations. | Opposed |
| 31 | 09/23/2020 | Public | In opposition to the new campus proposed. I take York Road daily during the week and it is a critical artery to get Dundas residents from the Valley Town to Highway 403 and beyond. This road is already quite congested daily and adding 60 some school buses would cause traffic chaos in this quite area. That road is not meant for large vehicles to be driven on. There are currently a number of school buses that already traverse this roadway, for both the Public and Catholic school boards, in addition to Hillfield-Strathallan College. The addition of 60 school buses would make this roadway unsafe with excessive usage. | Opposed |
| 32 | 09/28/2020 | public | I moved to Pleasant View in July 2009. I quickly grew to appreciate the uniqueness and beauty of this area, and being an environmentalist at heart, loved the abundance of wildlife that populates this naturally shielded area. One way in; one way out - a little-known hideaway for a few people and lots of animals. I’ve been surprised and gratified by encountering natural wildlife as it moves through the area - on one occasion, a fawn and its mother in my backyard. I saw a large buck standing on the front lawn. There are rabbits; the odd fox too. I’m still trying to identify all the bird species that come to the Pleasant View neighbourhood on a daily basis to feed, communicate and thrive. Once, an Osprey flew overhead with a large fish in its beak. On another, a falcon landed in a tree by the garage and preened itself as I observed. The biggest adversaries this neighbourhood could face would be more people, more noise, more activity, more traffic and more congestion. We consistently move in and take over natural areas to “develop” them - with no thought to what happens to all the species we displace. I don’t want that to happen here. I like it the way it is. I’m sure all forms of life in the area would agree. Keep it quiet. Keep it unique. Keep it tranquil. Keep it protected. Keep it safe for all. Keep this wildlife corridor from being ruined. On the other hand of course, I don’t necessarily want to see buildings stand idle and empty. Other less impactful and more “sympathetic” scenarios exist (long term care facility for one). I encourage all involved with this decision to look more ardently at such alternative scenarios, and to consider denying the disruptive proposal. | Opposed |
| 33 | 10/21/2020 | public | I strongly oppose. It would be better if they were in Hamilton with access to a bus route and other facilities needed. I live off of York Road and the traffic has increased in the last 3 or 4 years making it very hard to pull out onto York Rd. Please...We don’t need any more traffic! | Opposed |
| 34 | 11/18/2020 | public | Traffic is already dangerous there - it would become infinitely worse.  As a biologist, the strongest reason to oppose the conversion is the ecologically sensitive area the convent is situated in.  I am strongly against it, but would be happy to see such a development in Westdale or downtown Hamilton where intensification would be more appropriate, local businesses would benefit and future students can rely on public transportation. | Opposed |
| 35 | 11/20/2020 | public | The proposal to develop this site contradicts many environmental and development standards. Although re-purposing this amazing property, is certainly desirable, it's location in a eco-sensitive area of the Niagara Escarpment does not support a 1000 student school. A college of this size would logically be situated in an urban area, close to transit, amenities, and existing infrastructure, which agrees with current densification models for Southern Ontario.  If we have hope of halting climate change and conserving our precious green spaces, it is imperative that large development projects are not permitted in rural, ecologically sensitive, green belt or wetland locations. | Opposed |
| 36 | 11/20/2020 | public | Resident of Dundas in opposition to the redevelopment of this property. Opposition stems from this property being located in an environmentally sensitive area which was not designed for the increase of vehicles and traffic the redevelopment would create. It would also be totally out of place in its close proximity to the Cootes to Escarpment Eco Park. An updated septic system would be required to service the increased amount of students, faculty, and staff in this redeveloped property - not a good idea in such an environmentally-sensitive location. | Opposed |
| 37 | 11/20/2020 | public | It is a radical departure from any environmental protection. There must be other options. | Opposed |
| 38 | 11/21/2020 | public | When I first heard about this application I thought, 'what a great way to re-purpose a beautiful building in a beautiful location.' I am from Dundas but not from the Pleasant View area. Are these students and teachers new, or are they just moving to a new location? If new, this will be great for the economy, as the students will be well off and will be spending freely in the Hamilton area. I would like to know what the school's tax assessment will be. | For |
| 39 | 11/21/2020 | public | A school would be a wonderful repurposing of a treasured and historical building. The NEC can require whatever upgrades and renewals needed for water and septic, and its proposed use as an educational building is good for society as a whole. It will also provide students for McMaster and Mohawk College. This is just the type of project that the NEC was meant guide and advise on. The NEC can provide an answer other than " not allowed" | For |
| 40 | 11/21/2020 | public | Show support for STOPPING further development in the Pleasant View area. I cannot support the intended use by converting it to a school. The increased traffic, addition of stop lights, septic issues, etc., you may as well remove our environmental sensitive designation. We are eagerly awaiting the interchange at #6 and #5 to remove the increased traffic created by the new housing in Dundas, only to have this traffic redirected to within. | Opposed |
| 41 | 11/22/2020 | public | I believe in finding the highest and best use to repurpose this property and building but I do not believe the proposal is the right fit. A school needs to be in the heart of a community that can support it.  I would much rather see a surplus high school in the City of Hamilton repurposed for Columbia College, with access to housing, public transportation and spinoff business.  If set in a more rural area, the students become isolated, they would lose their independence and benefits that an urban city can provide.  Education is not only about learning subjects in a school but the quality of life experiences generated from community interaction. If the plan is for a regular dependence on and continual reliance on vehicular traffic, the existing road infrastructure is not designed to handle this increase.  This proposal is not a win- win for all of the parties involved and likely a loss in quality of life not only for the students but also for the natural environment and the adjacent neighbourhoods. | Opposed |
| 42 | 11/23/2020 | public | I wanted to express my concerns which have been aggravated by the news that the city is proposing an interchange at York and Newman Rd. This will add to the congestion on York and make the road even more dangerous to travel. I urge all concerned to turn down this application. | Opposed |
| 43 | 11/23/2020 | public | Disagree with the decision to redevelop the convent. We think that there is already to much natural habitat being taken away. Most of the time it's all about making money. Not thinking that if we keep building we will have no natural habitat left. There is so many places around us where agricultural land is taken. Money makers don't think about the future. With climate change and problems all over the world. We need it now more than ever. Food will run out..if we have no place to plant!! Also York road is not "strong"enough to support all the traffic. So we hope that they use there brains and not their greed??? | Opposed |
| 44 | 11/24/2020 | Public | I oppose the proposed development.  As a long term resident of Dundas I realize fully the detrimental impact it will have on the area.  This area is ecologically diverse and fragile. It must not be impacted any further.  To amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan to accommodate an International College would be shameful. Many a local resident has had to change their plans to comply withe the NEC rules, to have a much larger application with huge subsequent negative consequences granted would be insulting to the average hard working, tax paying, local Canadian. Everyone I know, and everyone who uses York Rd agrees, do not change  the existing face of the area. | Opposed |
| 45 | 11/25/2020 | Public | I am writing to you to express my opposition. Have lived in Dundas for over forty years, and have driven by this area many, many times, usually along York Road. I have also driven in along Newman Road to see what a wonderful building this is. It was perfect as a convent, and deserves to be preserved as a living building. I can see that a residential use might be ideal. My understanding is that, when it was built, it was designed for over 200 nuns. But it is not designed for over 1,000 students. This is a more intense use than was ever intended. The septic system would not suffice for it; the area around it would be good for a nature school perhaps, but not be helpful in educating the Columbia students in the ways of Canadian urban life. And the roads in and out of this building are not designed, nor can they withstand, the traffic involved with this number of students. Surely a more creative and environmentally-sensitive use can be found for this important building. | Opposed |
| 46 | 11/25/2020 | Pleasant View Protection Association (PVPA) | •The Pleasant View Protection Association (PVPA) was established in September 2020, in response to a long and challenging history of attempts to weaken existing protections that are in place on the Pleasant View lands.  • We strongly advocate that the NEC deny the proposed Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) Amendment application by Columbia International College (CIC) to: 1) use the Convent as a day-use private school with up to 1000 students and 80 staff; 2) expand the existing septic system; and, 3) build a large gymnasium.  • The Proposed Amendment by CIC contradicts the planning policies of The City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. These planning policies have been developed over the last 40 years to protect this ecologically-sensitive land, which is a key wildlife corridor between Cootes Paradise and the Niagara Escarpment.  • No matter how much this proposed project were to be “engineered” to mitigate damage, it is inevitable that such a drastic modification of the site, with the significant addition of a gymnasium and a massive expansion of the septic tank, plus the ecological footprint of transporting and schooling 1000 students and 80 staff, would create unacceptable environmental damage to Pleasant View and the adjoining significant ecological features of the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise.  •The current proposal for a private secondary school with 1000 students and 80 staff, is an institutional use. However, the applicant’s suggestion that this new use “does not result in a substantial change of land use or the introduction of urban uses” is incorrect, as the proposed amendment is a substantial change in land use, which will have significant adverse effects on the environment and the surrounding area.  •The proposed amendment suggests a **new urban use** that of a new and different institutional use; and as the City of Hamilton Zoning By-Laws make clear, not all institutional uses are the same.  • There would be no institutional use whatsoever in this area, were it not for the “grandfathering” of the very specific convent use. Thus, the CIC’s proposal ignores the specific and nuanced historical context around use in this area.  • The proponent has been attempting to achieve the end objective by what one could call ‘mission creep’, one step at a time.  Incompatibility with NEP Objectives:  • The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA) requires that the proposed NEP amendment must be looked at in the context of the objectives of the NEP (stated below);  • The NEPDA has much stronger wording than that in 1.1 Summary Planning Opinion of the Planning Justification Report (from IBI, CIC’s Planning consultant): which states that the proposed NEP amendment should be looked at in the context of the history of the subject lands, including previous uses and planning approvals, and facilitating adaptive reuse.  Contradictions of Proposal with NEPDA Objectives:   * 1. • Regarding the NEP objective to ensure that all new development is compatible with the purpose of the NEPDA: to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment, and to ensure only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment.• The proposed development is not compatible with the natural environment and it would interrupt the connectivity between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise.   2. • It is important to note that as prescribed by NEPDA, development “includes a change in the use of any land, building or structure”. The proposed change to the NEP is indeed a change in land use, and the addition of a large building, a private secondary school with 1000 students and 80 staff, new large new gymnasium structure, and vastly expandedseptic system, new parking lot and sports fields. None of these uses are compatible with the natural environment of the site.   3. • Regarding the NEP objective to support municipalities within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area in their exercise of the planning functions conferred upon them by the Planning Act, the proposed development is in in direct contradiction to the City of Hamilton and former Town of Dundas Official Plans. In addition City staff have been consistent in their official negative comments about any proposed changes to the area.   • The proposal also violates the NEP objective: to protect unique ecologic and historic areas as:  • The proposed development would cause significant adverse impact on the unique ecological area of Pleasant View which is a key wildlife corridor between the significant ecosystems of the Niagara Escarpment, an internationally recognized biosphere reserve, and Cootes Paradise, a provincially significant Class 1 Wetland.  • Pleasant View includes RBG’s Berry Tract, which forms the headwaters of Cootes Paradise's Hickory Brook, as well as the Cartwright Nature Sanctuary, a nature preserve that is a key part of the ecological corridor.  The EIS for the Sisters of St. Joseph’s Convent, Gymnasium acknowledges the ecological importance of the subject property:  • The property is located in Ecoregion 7E. “The flora and fauna of this ecoregion are the most diverse in Canada…This ecoregion is the most imperiled in Canada because of the amount of natural habitat that has been drained, cut, and converted into agricultural and suburban land used. Many of Ontario’s species at risk occur here”(https://www.ontario.ca/page/ecosystems-ontario-part-1-ecozones-and-ecoregions)]  • The NEC has a sacred trust to support the ecoregion and surely would not wish to be seen as causing even greater damage?  • Special Concern and Rare Wildlife Species confirmed within the subject property, including a sizeable population of Rue-anemone. 3 bat species known from the area are listed as Endangered provincially. Numerous Species at Risk are known to occur within the study area based on background information sources.  • Environmentally Significant Areas are present. Suitable wooded habitat present within the subject property and adjacent lands for bat maternity colonies; Suitable habitat for reptile hibernaculum may exist within the natural habitats of the subject property; Limited suitable habitat combination is present on the subject property for migratory butterfly stopover; Suitable (marginal) woodland amphibian breeding habitat is present with the subject property and study area; Suitable land bird migration stop-over habitat is present; Springs and seeps have been observed within the western ravine feature, and wetland feature east of subject property; Suitable treed habitat exists within the subject property for bald eagle and osprey nesting, foraging and perching; Suitable habitat features for terrestrial crayfish exist within the study area.  • Mature treed features occur contiguously off-property, west of the subject property are considered a Core Area according to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan.  •The entire subject property falls within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, including the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Rural Area land use designations.  • Watercourse features that are Conservation Halton-regulated tributaries of Grindstone Creek traverse the subject property. The subject property is within the Grindstone Creek watershed. A wetland feature exists on the subject property and 3 additional wetland features exist on adjacent lands including Class 1 Wetlands. The lower portion of Tributary 1 provides direct fish habitat. Significant Woodlands are present. The ravine features have been identified as Erosional Hazard Lands.  The combination of the features and attributes listed above strongly confirms that the area of the subject property is a unique ecological area.  •The EIS is limited in addressing the question “Does the proposed development align with the objectives to protect this unique ecological area?”  • As indicated in Section 7.1 of the EIS, Description of the Proposed Undertaking, the EIS describes the proponent’s proposed undertaking as: “to construct a new gymnasium building with connection to the existing motherhouse building, as well as additional surface parking areas.” The description of the proposed undertaking also includes “An improved wastewater treatment and disposal system is proposed to support the change in land use into a private secondary school.”  • The proponent takes the position that the proposed development is the gymnasium, parking and wastewater system, and that the private secondary school is the reason for the development, not the development in its entirety, which should include its use as a large school.  • In fact, the EIS makes no mention of specific details regarding the new use of the property as a secondary school, or that the school will be used by 1000 secondary school students and 80 staff; nor does it make any reference to a significant activity related to operating the school which would have a significant adverse effect on the environment, with a vastly enlarged septic system, and transportation of 1080 people into and out of the area each weekday during the school year.  • Although section 7.0 of the EIS, Impact Analysis and Recommendations, addresses direct, indirect and induced impacts and possible mitigation, it is section 7.2 Approach to Impact Analysis of the EIS that confirms the very limited scope of the analysis, and that the EIS cannot be relied on to identify potential environmental impacts related to using and operating the property as a secondary school with 1,000 students and 80 staff. Section 7.2 reads:  • “The following is a description of the types of impacts which will be analyzed and discussed:  • “Direct impacts to the natural features associated with disruption or displacement caused by the actual proposed ‘footprint’ of the undertaking.” Since the undertaking has been described as construction of the gymnasium, parking and wastewater treatment system, this definition of direct impacts excludes the analysis of impacts related to using and operating the existing building as a school with 1000 secondary school students and 80 staff.  • “Indirect impacts to the natural features associated with changes in site conditions such as drainage and water quantity/quality.” This definition of indirect impacts is limited to site conditions, by definition, excluding operating conditions; thus, excluding the analysis of impacts related to using and operating the property and existing building as a school with 1000 students and 80 staff.  • “Induced impacts to the natural features associated with impacts after the development is constructed such as subsequent demand on the resources created by increased habitation/use of the area and vicinity over time.”  • Although this statement suggests that induced impacts would include a comprehensive investigation of long-term impacts related to using and operating the subject property as a school with 1000 student and 80 staff, it does not appear to be so.  • Section 7.5 Induced Impacts and Mitigation defines induced impacts:   * 1. • “Induced impacts are described as those that are not directly related to the construction or operation of the facilities in question, but rather arise from the use of the natural areas as a result of development.” • Section 7.5 also states “Within the context of the proposed change in land use to a secondary school, induced impacts are limited to student/faculty intrusion and/or disturbance to the adjacent high-quality forested habitats which also pose a potential health and safety hazard due to the presence of extremely steep sloped ravines.”   • Therefore, the EIS ONLY concerns itself with the construction/addition of a gymnasium, parking and wastewater treatment system and induced impacts only related to use of the natural areas by students and staff, and NOT the full use and operation of the facility as a secondary school with 1,000 students and 80 staff. Note the name of the EIS is referred to as “Gymnasium EIS,” which is further evidence of the limited scope of the EIS.  •Since the EIS can only be relied on regarding the construction/addition of a gymnasium, parking and wastewater treatment system and use of natural areas, we contend the following:• Ground water quality and quantity would be placed at serious riskwithout having conducted a comprehensive investigation of the current state of the entire site and preparing mitigation plans in response. The ground water that would be placed at serious risk is related to an ecologically significant wetland.  • “Effluent from the proposed north and south septic bed expansion have the potential to impact surface and groundwater functions of wetland features identified within the study area.”  • The Mineral Meadow Marsh wetland (MAM2) fed by a large groundwater upwelling, is deemed ecologically significant according to municipal and provincial guidance documents. This wetland flows discharge into a tributary to Grindstone Creek supporting hydrophytic vegetation and common wildlife and plant species. This significant wetland will be placed at risk.  • The proposed expanded north and south septic bed sizesare 6,100m2 and 2,700m2. Combined, this can be represented by the area of 33.7 regulation tennis courts.  • The Preliminary Wastewater Treatment System Capacity Reviewstates “the proposed private secondary school will generate daily sewage flows of approximately 65,000 L/day.”  • On-site wastewater systems with a capacity greater than 10,000 L/day are classified as LargeSubsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (LSSDS). The size of the proposed expanded septic system disposal bed can be interpreted as larger than 6 large disposal systems -a very significant size.  • Consider that septic systems installed in unsuitable soilusually malfunction by leaking raw, untreated sewage to the surface of the ground or a roadside ditch, or by contaminating the groundwater, the potential for significant adverse effects to the environment and wetlands is significant and of very real concern.  • Although the Preliminary Wastewater Treatment System Capacity Review states there is sufficient space available on the site to accommodate an expanded system, itdoes not provide confirmation that the site conditions are suitable, nor take into account the great disruption to flora and fauna.  • It is the objective of the Hydrogeological Investigation“to characterize the geologic and hydrogeological conditions at the Site and to determine the suitability of the Site for the proposed development.” (Hydrogeological InvestigationSeptember 13, 2019 pg 1). However, this investigation was limited to “the south portion of the 574 Northcliffe Avenue property (i.e. south of the Precious Blood Monastery).”  • The Hydrogeological Investigation(September 13, 2019) is not a complete picture, and as stated on page 32 of the report “A supplementary Hydrogeological Investigation will be completed to incorporate the north portionof the Site in order to include the additional features of the 574 Northcliffe Avenue property (i.e. the Precious Blood Monastery). A supplemental report summarizing the findings of both hydrogeological investigations will be prepared for the entire Siteand is planned to be made available within the 2019 calendar year.”  • Additionally, as stated in the Tertiary Treatment System Design Reportdated September 25, 2019 on page 3, “The second existing on-site wastewater system services the Sisters of the Precious Blood Monastery located at the north portion of the site. There is limited information about the existing system and the existing bed is not contained within the existing ECA for the site. Additional investigations will be completed into the design, capacity and condition of the existing wastewater system.” and on page 4, “The current design and occupation of the Monastery is unknown at the present time. Additional work is underway to determine the current and future sanitary needs of the Monastery.”  • Assessing the expansion of one of the wastewater treatment systems should have been done in context of the entire site, both south and north portions, and understanding the design, capacity, conditions and needs of both existing wastewater systems.  • Therefore, the information provided by the Hydrogeological Investigationand theTertiary Treatment System Design Reportdoes not provide the complete picture. There is the potential for significant adverse effects to the environment.  • A large number of mature trees (45 of them) in fair to excellent condition, representing well over 1,000 years of growth would be lost. These trees are irreplaceable.  • The mature trees lost would be replaced with building and parking structures. Regardless of the Tree Protection Plan and related compensation, the proposed development represents further loss of natural features and natural habitat for Ecoregion E7, the Ecoregion currently the most imperiled in Canada.  • Adverse impacts on the ecology are very likely, such as pollution of wetlands and groundwater and habitat fragmentation affecting wildlife and vegetation. These ecological impacts from the development will be further exacerbated by road safety and traffic congestion issues, from having so many more people entering and exiting the area, as outlined in the following section.  •As indicated by the Transportation Impact Study(TIS) supporting documentation, the York Road and Old Guelph Road intersection is presently experiencing capacity issues and is operating at or above its theoretical capacity. The TIS suggests that only with the introduction of signals, would the intersection operate at an acceptable level.  • Recommendations in the TIS (Section7 on page 46) include “implement traffic signals”, however, the required information related to proposed signals, has not been provided in accordance with the City of Hamilton’s Traffic Study Guidelines.  • Given this lack of information, appropriateness ofsignals cannot be assessed and therefore, should not be considered a feasible solution to the existing traffic safety concerns. Based on current conditions, and an acknowledgement in the TIS that the intersection will be impacted by traffic from the Columbia College proposal, there is a risk that application approval will tip current conditions into an unsafe and unacceptable operating level.  •There is a very good possibility that a reduction of speed on the road in addition to regular enforcement would greatly improve the situation and encourage drivers not to use the road as a 'short cut'.  • As indicated by the TIS, Appendix F –York Road Safety Review, the recommended time gap for a single unit heavy vehicle (e.g., a school bus) to make a safe left turn from a major road (York Road) is 6.5 seconds, and the recommended time gap for a school bus to make a safe right turn from a stop (Newman Road) is 8.5 seconds. Headway data provided by the City of Hamilton indicates a current 5.0 second eastbound average headway during the AM peak, indicating the intersection at York Road and Newman Road provides less than the recommended time gap between oncoming vehicles for a school bus to make a safe right turn during the AM peak.  • Contradiction in the TIS: Although the TIS, Appendix F suggests the school buses would be scheduled to avoid peak traffic times, section 4.4.1 of the report indicates “based on discussions with Columbia International College (CIC)”,“all students are bused into the school during the weekday morning peak hour;”… “all buses enter and exit during the same peak hour”.  • The safety regarding school buses turning at the York Road and Newman Road intersection remains an unaddressed concern. | Opposed |
| 47 | 11/26/2020 | Public | The impact this will have on this area will be overwhelming. I do not believe anyone has truly taken into consideration the impact it will have not only of the residents the wildlife the traffic it needs to be stopped. If this was done for monetary gains we need to re-evaluate what is important to the residence of Dundas and the surrounding areas. Please seriously think twice before allowing this to go through. | Opposed |
| 48 | 11/26/2020 | public | Protest the plan to allow a private school. The Pleasant View area is unique and requires protection from further development and unsuitable uses. The change to a private for profit school is totally out of character for this area. The number of students and staff will outnumber the residents. The future repercussions on the environment will not be easily reversed or corrected. I have always thought of the NEC as an agency to protect the escarpment area. A house was recently torn down on Northcliffe because it didn’t meet the requirements. I don’t think a large private school in the area meets them either. Unnecessary improvements to the Highway 6 interchanges are being studied along with widening York Road and adding a left turn lane at Newman Road. We have a small delay at Old Guelph and York Road during the afternoon rush hour. It is fine at most other times. It seems that we are going to spend millions of taxpayer funds dollars to destroy a beautiful area and help a private enterprise conduct their business. Columbia school could find a place in the urban area near their other schooling. Then none of the improvements will necessary. | Opposed |
| 49 | 11/26/2020 | public | Dundas resident, urges to maintain the ecological integrity of the Pleasantview and surrounding areas. Columbia College should not be permitted to amend, expand or alter any designated zoning to convert what is designated as rural area to an essentially urban use. The corollary water, sewage and traffic density impacts are not in keeping with it's current designation. The carbon footprint alone is not in keeping with the 21st century philosophy of reducing emissions. There are areas within Hamilton's urban sections that would accommodate Columbia's intentions and also provide services with walkability- such as convenient stores, restaurants, grocery stores etc. The location has none of the urban amenities which students or staff can avail themselves to, and just adds more cars and buses and more congestion while the urban city core has vacancies and blight and is begging for revitilization. Rejuvinate the City and stop paving over greenspace!  There are enough wildlife fatalities with deer, opossum, raccoons etc. along York Road already. It's unfair to threaten wildlife even further in an area that was meant to be a sanctuary from urban pressures.   The Escarpment requires protection and preservation.  There are multitudes of building blocks that are boarded, vacant and need a facility like Columbia College to rejuvinate Hamilton's urban zone. | Opposed |
| 50 | 11/27/2020 | Public | I urge you to not allow this expansion. The extra traffic, congestion and loss of natural habitat would change the area forever. You can only pave paradise once. | Opposed |
| 51 | 11/27/2020 | public | I would like you to hear my voice and many others concerned with the so called forward thinking of our little town. We still consider Dundas our little town Almagomation or not we still think to urbanize our little town diminishes the draw of its hidden nooks and crannies . We’ve already seen the on slot of advertising our beautiful falls and trails. Bigger and more is not always better. Please try to think why most of us moved here , the beauty that surrounds us keeps us all humble. | Opposed |
| 52 | 11/28/2020 | public | Resident of Dundas since 2000.   Colombia College accommodates in excess of 1800 international students in two locations. The application is only for 1000 students, presumably the other 800 students would remain in their current housing.  Concern is: 1. Pleasant View has been a protected area of environmental significance for decades.  The proposed changes will affect the protected lands. Other options might be more suitable for the building than an isolated campus.  2. The changes would require major upgrading of the roads in the vicinity. While some of these changes will likely occur anyway, a new site may result in significant road construction costs for York Road, a City access road to Dundas.  3. It is conceivable that Columbia College, once established here, would transfer all their operations to this site and make it their future campus and boarding school for all  students now and in the future.  This would have a cumulative impact on the physical and natural environment. Incidentally, this is a strategy often planned by developers. For example, proposing  additional parking for students at a later date.  4. The students will be among each other as a close community, at least some 5 km away from activity centres. The TDM report indicates that traveling by bus is the only possible option for students to get away from the site. | Opposed |
| 53 | 11/29/2020 | Conserver Society of Hamilton & District Inc. | Opposition to the application for a site-specific policy amendment. The proposed amendment and development will significantly negatively impact the Niagara Escarpment natural environment and are not compatible with Escarpment Natural Area permitted uses, the neighbourhoods’ rural character and existing infrastructure.  The proposed site-specific policy change and construction, and the addition of 1000 students in the proposed facility will have a negative impact on Niagara Escarpment natural heritage features and connectivity. This change of use will result in increased access and pressure on the adjacent natural areas, yard waste and trash dumping, and unauthorized trail and pathway construction or other forms of unauthorized use in sensitive areas including significant woodlands, significant valleylands and wetlands. It will be impossible to fully mitigate these impacts and the negative impacts will likely increase over time. The proposed expansion of the septic system required to accommodate the school use is a significant change which may also impact groundwater quality and character of natural streams and water supplies. Groundwater impacts from the proposed septic system effluent on wetland features were not assessed in the consultants Hydrogeological Investigation. The proposed additional parking lot and construction of the gym will also significantly increase the area of impermeable surfaces on this rural site, and result in increased runoff and pollutants (chlorine, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and silt) leaving the property and impacting local streams and water bodies. The proposed change in use will result in much more traffic in the area, including a marked increase in daily trips to and from the site in single occupancy vehicles and school buses. There is no suitable active transportation access to the site and no transit service in the vicinity. This combination of many students and visitors attending the site daily, queuing buses, and no transit or safe active transportation network and increased vehicle and school bus traffic poses a risk for public safety in and around the property, the rural character of the area, and air quality, and will add a significant strain on existing and planned transportation infrastructure. | Opposed |
| 54 | 11/29/2020 | Environment Hamilton | It is our understanding that the property is part of the Pleasantview Survey Lands and, as such, is subject to the restrictions set out in Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) Amendment No 179. More specifically, subsection (f) of Amendment No 179, states: (20)(f) The existing institutional building on lands located at No. 574 Northcliffe Avenue may be used for the following institutionally related uses provided the uses are contained within the existing building only: -A Place of Worship;  -A Convent;  -A residential care facility for a maximum of 35 residents; and,  -A dormitory with a maximum of 36 students and accessory uses for an educational establishment provided it is located in conjunction with the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph’s.  Further, we understand that the proponent has applied for an NEP amendment. We have reviewed the extensive history of efforts by the proponent to secure private school related uses at this property. Our understanding is that the most current change secured was a temporary use by-law – approved in 2019 – with a holding provision permitting only 96 students to reside in the motherhouse until the proponent demonstrated adequate service provision for 138 students. The temporary use by-law was put in place for a maximum three-year period with the expectation that the proponent would seek the necessary planning approvals – including this NEP amendment - during that period of time. Our review of the history of the proponent’s efforts to transition 574 Northcliffe Avenue into a private secondary school for 1000 students and 80 staff only confirms for us that a use this intensive was never envisioned for this property. The property is located within the Pleasantview Special Policy Area of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area and includes both Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Rural Area lands. The repeated efforts of the proponent to extend the number of students living in residence on site have been met each time with careful review and response from the municipality and other agencies including the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and each time only temporary approval for limited occupancy has been granted. According to the NEP, Escarpment Rural Areas: ‘…are an essential component of the Escarpment corridor, including portions of the Escarpment and lands in its vicinity. They provide a buffer to the more ecologically sensitive areas of the Escarpment.’. (NEP, page 25) Further, the Escarpment Rural Area designation has the objective ‘to provide for compatible rural land uses’ (NEP, p.25). We contend that a large private high school to support a student body the majority of which does not live in or near this Escarpment Rural Area address is not an example of a compatible rural land use as intended in the NEP. The Escarpment Natural Area designation includes ‘(E)scarpment features which are in a relatively natural state and associated stream valleys, wetlands and forests which are relatively undisturbed are included within this designation’ (NEP p.15). The main objective of this land designation is to ‘maintain these natural features’. While we understand that the land designated Escarpment Natural Area is not the area where the site’s buildings are located (these buildings are on Escarpment Rural Area lands), these sensitive natural lands are still adjacent to the Escarpment Rural Area lands on which the proponent is seeking a far more intensive land use than has historically been permitted at this address. The NEP envisions the careful protection of Escarpment Natural Area lands, with Escarpment Rural Area lands serving as a critical buffer. We contend that a proposal to establish a large private school within buffer lands represents an intensity of land use far greater than envisioned by the NEP. It is also important to note that this parcel is within the Pleasantview Lands – which are also an integral part of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark – an area rich with biodiversity that faces increasing pressures with growing human population in the surrounding area. It must also be recognized that the primary purpose of the proposed school is not to provide service to the surrounding rural community. Our understanding is that the majority of students that would be attending this facility will be bussed in from urban Hamilton. Rural residents in the area have raised concerns about increased traffic that will result from staff and students travelling to and from the school each school day. Assuming a school bus is able to accommodate up to 48 students (in non-COVID circumstances), there will be at least 21 buses travelling in and out of the area each day – and potentially in and out twice assuming that the buses and drivers do not remain on site all day. This, combined with 80 vehicles for staff in and out of the area each day, is a substantial increase in weekday traffic in and out of this area. These concerns are all challenges that emerge when an institutional use like a large high school is proposed within the NEP area. The challenges are amplified when the proposal involves accommodating a student body that is not predominantly from the surrounding rural community. The situation begs the question – Why is this use being pursued in this location? Would it not make better sense, from a land use planning point of view, to establish this institutional use outside of the NEP area and, ideally, within an urban area where full servicing – including public transit, and connection to municipal water/wastewater services – are available? Current Servicing Limitations: Currently, the property does not have wastewater servicing capacity to accommodate 1000+ people for day use. The property is not connected to municipal wastewater services; it is serviced by a septic field. The proposal is to expand the septic field in order to provide adequate wastewater servicing to accommodate 1000+ people. This introduces the possibility of challenges in the future  with septic field failure and subsequent negative impacts on the natural environment; particularly vulnerable are any sensitive aquatic ecosystems on and near the property or downstream of the property. While arguments can be made that an expanded septic field could provide the necessary wastewater servicing on-site there is no way to guarantee that such a large septic field will not fail at some point in the future and the larger the septic field, the greater the potential for negative impacts on the surrounding ecosystem. Conclusions: Based on the above concerns, Environment Hamilton does not support the approval of this application to amend the NEP. This location is not appropriate for the proposed intensive use. We contend that the NEP Escarpment Rural Area designation does not support an institutional use of this nature – especially when it is adjacent to Escarpment Natural Area. Finally, the required changes to the property, especially the expansion to the septic field that would be required to accommodate an institutional use of this magnitude on this site, pose unacceptable risks to the health of adjacent Escarpment Natural Area lands. | Opposed |
| 55 | 11/30/2020 | public | Dundas resident with property backing onto conservation land and trails. Proud to call this beautiful area home and thrilled to be able to share this special place with visitors.  Social media has driven visitor interest in Dundas to the point where local residents can no longer freely enjoy attractions such as Webster's Falls. The fact that I must take a shuttle bus to go for a picnic is disheartening. Trail use has become overwhelming on weekends. One example is Spring Creek Trail (behind my house) which now teems with hikers and mountain bikers on weekends. I expect the trails will have to be closed again as the volume of foot traffic makes social distancing problematic.  I appreciate that the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, the Environmental Impact Study and Transportation Impact Study all find no problem with the Convent property use being changed. I note that none of these studies address the impact on existing human residents. Adding a stop light here and a traffic circle there will "accommodate" the added traffic in the immediate area. And so would adding a divided highway. But what about the existing residents' right to quiet enjoyment? I admit I am not well versed in the NEC's mandate, but even if the impact on existing Pleasant View's human residents falls outside of the mandate, I suggest the impact on neighbouring NEP areas be considered. Visiting students are by definition visiting. Adding a thousand visitors will certainly add to the pressure on neighbouring NEC lands. | Opposed |
| 56 | 11/30/2020 | public | Support to NOT allow the conversion due to environmental and lifestyle concerns. | Opposed |
| 57 | 11/30/2020 | public | The proposal to develop this site contradicts many environmental and development standards.  Although re-purposing this amazing property, is certainly desirable, it's location in a eco-sensitive area of the Niagara Escarpment does not support a 1000 student school.  A college of this size should be situated in an urban area, close to transit, amenities, and existing infrastructure, which agrees with current densification models for Southern Ontario. If we have any hope of halting climate change and conserving our precious green spaces, it is imperative that large development projects are not permitted in rural, ecologically sensitive, green belt or wetland locations. | Opposed |
| 58 | 11/30/2020 | public | Opposed to any amendment of the area regarding the convent conversion near York Road in Dundas, Ontario. Among a multitude of problems that would destroy the ecosystem and environment, this particular route and road access in York Road in Dundas would also create enormous traffic congestion and problems. It would be a shame for this designated protected area to be disrupted in anyway. | Opposed |
| 59 | 12/07/2020 | public | Lived in a survey off York Road for 39 years.  In the last years, I have noticed an inordinate increase of traffic along the road in both directions. It is very difficult to make a left hand turn towards Highway Six with wait times becoming longer and drivers becoming impatient. As a driver and cyclist, the amount of traffic and the types of traffic makes it more dangerous. Huge eight  wheel  trucks, Go Train Buses and other business trucks are putting enormous amount of pressure on York Road. York Road is not built to withstand the number and weight of these vehicles travelling on it.  York Road is requiring on-going maintenance because of the extent of the traffic. Furthermore, as a cyclist who does come down York Road from Valley Road, very few of the vehicles obey the stated speed limits. It is becoming more and more dangerous. Added to this are the deer who cross especially during sunset. Drivers have been killed by the deer and vehicles have been badly damaged having hit a deer. Columbia College wants to add forty school buses to the already overloaded York Road. This, I think not will only degrade the road further but will I think eventually cause a major accident where possible deaths may occur. This does not examine the environmental cost to the area with  additional traffic. Along York Road there are designated areas which The Royal Botanical Gardens operates. This allows them to restore areas back to their original landscape. The RBG offers hiking trails for the population of Dundas and Hamilton. The additional traffic will only degrade these areas which RBG has spent money to restore. Those residents who live near the Residence will be exposed to the noise, influx of a large population of students  and additional traffic. All of us who live in this area brought our houses because of the ability to live and enjoy nature in a healthy and safe environment. With addition of the student residence, it will only  pose additional problems for home owners, degrade York Road further which will include extra expense to fix and may eventually lead to increase possibility of accidents. Therefore, for all of the above reasons, I oppose. | Opposed |
| 60 | 01/04/2021 | Hamitlon Naturalists' Club | Hamilton Naturalists’ Club (HNC) once again urges the Niagara Escarpment Commission to not permit the proposal for a site specific policy amendment. HNC is concerned about the ecological impacts to the site, the surrounding natural lands and Cootes Paradise which lies downstream.  HNC is a charitable organization, founded in 1919, with over 600 members dedicated to the study, appreciation and conservation of our wild plants and animals. We have been advocating for the conservation of this Pleasant View area of Dundas for over 25 years. We purchased the Cartwright Nature Sanctuary in 2004 in partnership with Conservation Halton. The nature sanctuary is situated close to this site. HNC has also worked with Conservation Halton and other partners in the ongoing and highly regarded Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System to protect additional lands in the area, including a 54 acre property adjacent to the proposed project. All of these lands were identified as important to acquire for permanent protection in the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System due to their important role in the north-south natural corridor between Cootes Paradise and the Niagara Escarpment. The properties are also important groundwater discharge areas, feeding streams that flow into Cootes Paradise, an internationally significant coastal marsh wetland.  As stated in our October 27, 2020 submission we are concerned with the ecological impacts to this ecologically significant area as well as impacts to the surrounding community. We feel the scale of the project is too large for this environmentally significant area. The Pleasant View area of Dundas is a critical north-south connection between Cootes Paradise and the Niagara Escarpment. There are numerous species at risk in the area, and the area is already stressed by stormwater and septic systems.  The proposed project lies within these ecologically sensitive areas and we are concerned the potential detrimental impacts will go beyond the site into adjacent natural areas and downstream into Cootes Paradise. The proposal would increase the impervious surface, reducing the amount of natural lands able to capture and clean stormwater before it enters Cootes Paradise. The enlarged septic system would add an additional burden to these important lands.  HNC members were involved in the Ontario Municipal Board hearing in the early 1990s that resulted in development applications being rejected due to the inability of the area to sustain the increase in septic beds. This is why lots are only built for single families. We are concerned that the septic bed that would be required to meet the needs of the proposed development would be too large for the surrounding natural area to manage.  The protection of the natural features in the area is critical to ensuring that the Niagara Escarpment remains protected from excessive development for present and future generations. HNC also shares reservations expressed by the Royal Botanical Gardens and concerns of Dundas residents about the negative transportation impacts of the proposal on the limited road system in the area. We feel that the large scale of the proposed project in this area is incompatible with best practices to sustain the Niagara Escarpment.  HNC does not support the Columbia College application and we urge NEC to reject it as inconsistent with the goals of Niagara Escarpment Plan. | Opposed |
| 61 | 11/25/2021 | public | Opposition to the above amendment. It is very ill-advised to permit a day use private school to operate in this location. This is an environmentally-sensitive area. The density and intensification of this school will be detrimental to the entire area. It will lead to additional traffic, noise, air pollution, and strain on the local infrastructure. As we Canadians struggle increasingly with the effects of climate change across the country, it is more important than ever that we preserve the integrity of environmentally-sensitive areas like the Niagara Escarpment. This is not an area in which a private school should be permitted to operate. | Opposed |
| 62 | 11/25/2021 | public | Involved in the Conserver Society effort to protect the Pleasant View Lands over the last 30 years, I am emphatically against the proposal to allow a private secondary school with an overwhelming number of students as well as staff to use the convent property.  This is not in keeping with the intent of the OMB decision to maintain the rural character of the land, preserve its significant ecology and exemplify good planning.  1000 students would overwhelm this property and have an impact on the flora, fauna as well as water quality in the area.  They would add to traffic woes in the area, which will also affect wildlife who use this as a corridor between Cootes Paradise/Hamilton Harbour and the escarpment.   No matter how much the septic tank is expanded and engineered, there will very likely be problems of contamination of ground water and tributaries.  Back in the late 1980s the health department found that the septic tanks in Pleasant View were contaminating the wells that had been the source of drinking water, indicating the less than ideal soil that exists in this area for septic tanks.  The addition of such a large the gymnasium will also be a blow to the integrity and ecology of this site. | Opposed |
| 63 | 12/07/2021 | public | I have concerns about the Campus which relates to the transportation of students to the main campus by school buses. There are suggestions to make adjustments to York Road to lessen the congestion by including stop signs , stoplight and a roundabout. These changes will not be available by the time the campus is open. I am not convinced that these adjustments will deal with the congestion. There will be 1000 students and 80 teachers who potentially will need to go back and forth between the two campuses. Apparently this means 120 trips totally for the morning and afternoon. The plan is to use Highways 6 and 403 for the majority of the trips and use York Road for the remaining ones. Presently, there is congestion both in the mornings and afternoons on York Road. With the addition of 120 buses, this results in additional congestion and increase negative impact on the environment. I have lived in this area for thirty years and the traffic has increase exponentially and resulted in further deterioration of York Road. Moreover, most of the trucks, buses and cars do not follow the speed limit. There is also the hazard of white tail deer crossing the road in the early mornings and evenings. In summary, if York Road is used by Northcliffe Campus, it will impact the environment , degrade York Road, increase the potential of serious accidents and negatively affect the community within this area. | Opposed |
| 64 | 01/03/2022 | public | Complaint of the school. Lived in the area for over 63 years. Last time the school had students in, there was an abundance of school buses coming and going at all hours of the day. There was a continuous noise and the odor of Diesel coming from the buses. My back yard is in line with the road that comes into the neighbourhood. And the front of the house is in line with their Drive way. I am not going to get to enjoy yards at all. I am against the school going in. They say over 40 buses are to come into the area throughout the day. | Opposed |
| 65 | 01/03/2022 | public | What is being proposed should not even be considered or debated. Can't believe this is our third go around since 2018 that we have to constantly stand up and voice our reasons and concerns why this should not happen. You know the truth - there is no bending it! I don't understand how money can vary or dismiss long standing amendments and protections we have here in Pleasant View that were fought over many decades. The resubmission of the application has no significant changes - and 40 diesel buses making four trips in and out daily on Newman Rd. which is the only access in and out for 37 homes and approximately 90 residents. In an article it was stated that the revised traffic study concluded that traffic generated by the proposal "Can be adequately accommodated by the road network." Really - who documented that nonsense? That amount of traffic will cripple the area and a proposed stop light at York Rd. and Old Guelph Rd. would only make it worse. Look at the article in the Dundas News when our community was closed for 9 hours - no way in and no way out. Of course included in our opposition to this application is about protecting and preserving our wildlife and plant species that are special to Pleasant View. | Opposed |
| 66 | 01/04/2022 | public | I cannot imagine a worse use for this land and building. Traffic in this environmentally sensitive area is bumper to bumper on Old York Rd at rush hour now and the narrow winding hilly road is particularly dangerous in the winter. Wild Turkey, deer, fox are abundant and road kills frequent. Adding an additional population to this area would make the situation far worse. Quality of life for people of Pleasantview will deteriorate further. | Opposed |
| 67 | 01/04/2022 | public | I have read through the document put together and specifically, the commentary on the traffic and travel options are laughable. The conclusion that the area is "well suited to provide sustainable transportation options" for staff and students is absurd, given that they state the area is not pedestrian friendly (no side walks and not within walking distance of any amenities), there is no public transit and there are no bike lanes. How is every single member of the staff and student body arriving by motor vehicle a sustainable travel option? They can recommend people carpool all they like, but that is obviously not how the staff will arrive to work.  Since the Columbia College officials have assured the residents that no students will have vehicles, it can only be assumed that they may bus in, but more likely a great many of them will Uber in one at a time.  In the traffic study the buses that will service the school are deemed reasonable because there is existing bus service to the neighbourhood. Two buses in the morning and two in the afternoon. The school expects 1000 students, which, if packed to maximum capacity (and they won't be) is at least 30 buses a day. A 750%+ increase in bus traffic is not comparable; I often wait several minutes before being able to turn on to York Rd, without a parade of buses in front of me. Given the recent shooting incident where our entire neighbourhood was locked from going on or out for nearly 10 hours, this amount of stress on a neighbourhood with one entrance and one exit is irresponsible.   The effect on just the traffic of the neighbourhood has already been felt as the staff vehicle speed in and out of the area, already making it unsafe for the many children (mine included) who play outside. I am very concerned about not only the environmental impacts that Columbia College has shrugged off, but the safety of the current residents and our quiet enjoyment of our neighbourhood which has clearly not been considered in the slightest. If someone can not build a new single family home on my street, why is expansion of this school, that Hamilton children won't even be able to attend, deemed acceptable? Additionally, after explicitly saying in a townhall that they would not use the grounds for anything other then the stated use they had told us (a dorm for 96 students), Columbia has rented the grounds out to every movie crew that will pay.  These crews block off our roads, film at all hours and leave litter all over the area. Given their disregard for the area and residents in the short time they have owned this property, I do not have high hopes that Columbia College will do anything but what helps their bottom line, regardless of the impact to the environment or neighbourhood. Please recommend that Columbia College's outrageous demands to stress our neighboorhood further be denied. Their request, regardless of what their application says, is not "in the public interest". | Opposed |
| 68 | 01/05/2022 | public | Opposition to the amount of bus and vehicular traffic in and out of Columbia School that will occur if this proposal is allowed. This area’s environmentally sensitive area and the area roads are not set up for this type of traffic. | Opposed |
| 69 | 01/05/2022 | public | The proposal in a sensitive environmental area is ridiculous!! The traffic esp. busses (estimates of minimum of 40 busses per day then staff vehicles)  in and out will cause major traffic, noise and congestion issues in the area  as well!! This cannot be allowed ! | Opposed |
| 70 | 01/07/2022 | public | Opposition to the application to use the existing property as a school of this proportion.  ⦁ I do not believe a septic system in this area could accommodate the capacity ⦁ I object to public funding to upgrade roadways to accommodate a private entity ⦁ An Eco-park should not have this type of density housing located within  ⦁ Existing roadways accommodate local traffic and are a minimal imposition on the local environment | Opposed |
| 71 | 01/08/2022 | public | I am a resident living next to the convent and I am against converting the Sisters of St. Joseph as a day use private school. The neighborhood is not equipped to handle such a large student population. There will be a lot of traffic created as a result. We chose to live here because of its seclusion, quietness, safety, and closeness to the highway.  The most important matter is the traffic; this area is not designed to handle such a huge population coming in and out on a daily basis. | Opposed |
| 72 | 01/09/2022 | public | Looking at all the studies done, I don't see one done on the impact of the residents. This greatly affects us. Why should the residents have to change their daily lives to accommodate the College? This will greatly increase traffic pollution and noise. Where are these being considered? | Opposed |
| 73 | 01/09/2022 | public | Against the proposed NEP Amendment.  I am a biologist with deep knowledge of the Niagara Escarpment who uses Escarpment land on a daily basis.  I appreciate the enormous effort and expense devoted to the voluminous documents submitted. I should emphasize that the documents present a costly lobbying exercise rather than an objective assessment by an unbiased party. They paint a rosy picture of the proposed development while glossing over numerous adverse effects and playing down chances of environmental damage.  Examples include the dismissive responses by IBI to comments received from stake holders and residents in fall 2020, contained in IBI’s Comment Response Matrix (which IBI, inappropriately, failed to post on its web site by January 9, 2022!).  1. Environment Hamilton noted that bussing students from Main St in Hamilton to a Niagara Escarpment Rural Area is not compatible with the NEP. The response that institutional uses had existed in the past fails to mention the dramatic increase in occupancy and traffic, including daily bus and automobile and truck travel, involved in construction and massive renovations that will be necessary to accommodate over 1000 students and a large number support staff.  2. The Conserver Society was concerned about the septic expansion and its negative impacts on nearby aquatic features. The dismissive response that there are no nearby wetland features does not agree with my reading of the map, which indicates that the site is less than 100 m from a creek flowing within a few hundred meters into Long Pond.  3. Several comments from fall 2020 addressed the issue of a dramatic increase in traffic for which IBI responded that the increase is small and can be accommodated by the road. IBI, however, has not provided a justification for what I argue is an underestimate of the increase in traffic. I think an objective agency should provide such a realistic estimate as well as its effect on the rural area.  Overall, while I am a strong supporter of development, I think that it should follow Provincial plans. The clear directive in the Provincial Places to Grow Act, 2005 is that “with respect to a matter relating to the natural environment or human health, the direction that provides more protection to the natural environment or human health prevails.” (section 14(4)). The current location on Main St. W. in Hamilton is an excellent one with ample opportunities to grow either at its vicinity or further east along Main St. W. Such local growth on Main St. will instantly accommodate two major benefits. First, it will eliminate unnecessary damage to the natural environment. Second, it will allow students and staff to travel by foot, bike or public transportation. Notably, the Main St. corridor is the prime transportation corridor in Hamilton and the focus of future growth and further improvement in rapid transit. In short, the expansion of CIC within the urban area will provide both more protection to the natural environment and lesser negative impact on human health than the proposed development within Niagara Escarpment Land.  In its highly biased lobbying document, Planning Addendum Justification Report, IBI selectively uses the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement to justify the unnecessary placement of an urban institution in the heart of a Niagara Escarpment rural area. I can readily use the same document to justify why placing the school is highly inappropriate, especially given the more suitable option of placing it in urban Hamilton within biking, biking and public transportation from CIC’s residences. Section 1.1.5.4. states that “Development that is compatible with the rural landscape and can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted”. Furthermore, section 1.1.5.5 notes that “Development shall be appropriate to the infrastructure, which is planned or available, and avoid the need for the unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion of this infrastructure.”  It is clear, however, that placing the CIC school in the rural area will require multiple, costly modifications to the road system, effectively converting the rural area into urban area. This is neither well justified nor economical, as alternatives on Main St near CIC residences would provide numerous benefits while avoiding unjustified and uneconomical expansion of infrastructure, to be paid by taxpayers rather than by CIC.  While I see some logic in occupying the heritage buildings at 574 Northcliffe Ave., the only compromise that I can see is to limit it to its intended low occupancy of 100-200 people.  In sum, there are certainly many benefits from a development bringing 1000 additional students to the City of Hamilton and I thus strongly support it. Such development, however, belongs in the heart of Hamilton’s urban area, where CIC is appropriately located now and where the ratio of benefits to costs to nature and human health is much larger than on Niagara Escarpment Land. Converting a scarce rural natural area into an urban development is neither necessary nor in accordance with Provincial and NEC policies. | Opposed |
| 74 | 01/10/2022 | public | Resident in the Pleasant View and I'm writing to you again on the issue of intention of converting the former convent into a student facility. Pleasant View hosts a diverse ecosystem and is next to important wetlands that are inhabited by many species of wild lives and plants. I am afraid that the College's  proposed development, will disturb the natural environment from increased traffic and human activities. The impact on the natural environment is hard to know even with the various environmental studies. Many times, once the damage is done, it will take years to rehabilitate or worse, impossible to reverse. The introduction of 1000+ additional people in any part of the city is no small matter, let alone it being in a sensitive geological environment like Pleasant View. I believe there are other locations in the city that are more suitable to host this quantity of students (and related logistic support) than here in Pleasant View. Thus, I again STRONGLY OPPOSE the plan converting the former convent into a campus. | Opposed |
| 75 | 01/10/2022 | public | This is further to my previous notice of objection to the plan. I live in the Pleasant View area on York Road and I do not support any change in the current use of the property nor the impact that any changes in their original plan or amendments will have on the local community. | Opposed |
| 76 | 01/10/2022 | public | I oppose the proposed development for the following reasons: 1. Bad for environment 2. Will lead to heavy traffic in area which is already bad, there has already been a bad episode with these students racing their cars in the dark of the night 3. Lots of space in east Hamilton were the shops could use new customers 4. This man who runs the ‘school’ is just lazy and is trying to take advantage of the area and grab a select spot so he can sell his school to rich overseas students’ families | Opposed |
| 77 | 01/11/2022 | public | I wish to register my concern regarding the detrimental impact to the character and safety of my neighbourhood, the surrounding environment, and wildlife due to the planned Columbia College. | Opposed |
| 78 | 01/11/2022 | public | Lived here for more than 30 years. We bought a house in Pleasant View because it was and is such a rare and unique area. The people of Pleasant View worked hard all those years ago to keep urban development from our area. Culminating in the OMB hearing that limited one house to 25 acres, done deliberately to keep Pleasant View rural.  The conversion of the open tracts of land in Pleasant View to intensive urban development was seen by some as advantageous, namely the speculators and developers hoping to make a lot of money from such a scheme. Now we move to the present day, 30 years later. The open spaces in Pleasant View are no longer seen as land to be developed and exploited. They are a natural area unique in the Golden Horseshoe, a biosphere reserve, an Eco Park, to be protected. But there are attempts being made to urbanize Pleasant View in a way the developers of 30 years ago would have understood. The idea of a traffic light at York Road and Old Guelph Road is beyond ridiculous.  As is the straightening of York Road , between Old Guelph and Hwy 6,and a traffic circle for Northcliffe Ave? How will that work when the new traffic light backs up cars to the traffic circle at rush hour morning and evening? Why is all this even being considered? The York Road is one of the few remaining scenic roads in the Dundas area, why destroy it?  Developers and investors would like to make money by converting a Convent into a massive Private school. This school would be totally out of place in Pleasant View, as would the traffic light and roundabout. The increase in traffic, school buses, staff vehicles and the road alterations will have a terrible effect on what is supposed to be one of the most unique areas in the Golden Horseshoe. Just like the developers of 30 years ago, they too wanted the infrastructure to support their money making development plans for Pleasant view. Is this ever going to end? Either we have an Eco Park ,a unique area in the midst of encroaching urbanization or we don’t. It’s time planners realized what we have here, this is not the City of Hamilton, it does not need another traffic light. The Pleasant View Area is going to become more special as time goes on. It is worth saving, let’s do the job properly, and save it. Piecemeal development is not the way to go about doing that.   It does not matter how many reports the developer can produce.  The development is just simply the wrong project in the wrong place. Please ensure that I am recorded as totally opposed to the proposal. | Opposed |
| 79 | 01/11/2022 | public | Resident of the Pleasant View survey and I do NOT agree that Columbia College should be allowed to expand to their proposed.  The original  sandstone “ mansion “building was built in the 1950’s to house some 200 nuns, giving them a place to pray and receive peace, quiet and tranquility with others. Traffic is a huge point of discussion, the intersection of York Road and Newman is already congressed to due poor road design. The blind hill coming in from Dundas makes it tricky in the awful weather to turn into the survey. Adding  1000 students, 80 staff, involves numerous vehicles and buses in and out of the survey at all times of day, leading even more of a traffic congestion. A lot of the “ old time “ residents of Pleasant View chose  this area for it’ s LACK of noise and vehicular traffic among other things.  Should Columbia College be allowed to expand, we will  be dealing with not only construction vehicles, but also the mass influx of school buses shuttling the children back and forth. As you are aware, we do NOT have public transportation in and out of this area, and we wish it to remain that way. All of this excess traffic will not only create noise, it  is a safety hazard  for those smaller children that currently reside in Pleasant View.  Safety for young children is paramount . Expansion will put a large stress on our local water system, not to mention the environmental impact,  it will almost destroy the physical beauty and tranquility that this area offers.  This area is home to a number of birds, and animals, deer come to birth there young. 10 Newman  has now been replanted with rare fruit trees in the hopes to attract various different species of animals back into this area that they called “ home”.  Should Columbia be allowed to expand  this all becomes a mute  point.  The City of Hamilton has already made a few “ blunders” in this area, 10 Newman ( building permit) 711 and 715 York Road, let’s stand up and protect ourselves from these grave errors in judgement.  I stand firm , along with my neighbours that Columbia College  should NOT be allowed to move forward with this proposal. It appears that they are waving a fist full of money at the City to permit this expansion. My answer is NO, have them somewhere else, not Pleasant View. | Opposed |
| 80 | 01/13/2022 | public | I submitted comments on the initial Plan Amendment proposal. Now a new document has been submitted by this Group.  I see no need to change the comments I made in my submission of September 8, 2020. However, I will here add comments upon the relevant new material from IBI in what they identify as an “Addendum to Planning Justification Report”. The new document is essentially an attempt - failed in my view - to make it appear that the proposal of CIC does satisfy all planning regulations and provisions. I will focus on issues of wastewater and stormwater.  MTI’s “Onsite Wastewater System Design Report, June 11, 2021”  Without reliable information on all wastewater that would be produced on the site, the adequacy of the private septic system proposed has not been demonstrated. The use of the Monastery building apparently is not to continue, judging by 3.2.2 on page 4. Table 2 on page 4 is an account of daily flows produced by the Monastery when it was used as long care home; it is simply asserted that “There are no proposed changes to the Monastery building use or occupancy with the proposed changes to the Covent Building.” So what is the anticipated use under the ownership of CIC? Is it to sit empty? If not, then the future use must be identified to generate an appropriate figure for a wastewater flow.  With regard to the Convent Building, there are some problems with the figures provided. In Table 1 on page 3 there is a chart with wastewater flow calculations said to rely on a table from the Ontario Building Code, Section 8.2.1.3. The relevant entry of the Code is #18 for Schools, under the broad heading “Establishments”. It states that for a day school per day student use is 30 litres with an additional 30 litres if there are showers and another 30 if there is a cafeteria. That makes a total of 90 litres per day per student. For employees per 8 hour shift it says to provide 50 litres per day. By contrast Table 2 in the MTI report only allows for 100 students to use a shower per day. It allows for 35 Non-Teaching Staff at 50 litres per day. Thus they reach an estimate of 65,000 litres per day total. However, if the OBC is followed the student output is 90,000 and if the IBI Group Addendum figure of “85 support staff, including licensed teachers” (Section 4, Conclusion, p. 15) is correct, they would have an ouput of 4250 litres. The total for an 8 hour day of operations would be 94,250 litres per day. The discrepancy between the two figures then is 29,250 litres per day. That is, the MTI report underestimates the volume by about half of the total for which they have planned.  One must suppose that at times there would be other people besides students and teachers coming into the school and using the facilities that produce wastewater. So, additional capacity would be needed for that demand.  It is worth noting that a “Sewage Flow Rate Estimating Guide” that I found on the Internet proposes for a day school per “typical” student a usage of 25 gallons per day if the school has a cafeteria, gym and showers. That is equivalent to 94.64 litres per day per student.  The need to take account of recent dramatic increases in rainfall events does not appear to be considered. Add in the numerous physical constraints of the site with respect to drainage, and the sheer magnitude of the reduction of permeable surfaces due to the proposed development and the shortfall would be significant. Consider, for example, the gymnasium roof, the wastewater disposal beds, paved areas for parking and road access, and indeed the 272 cubic meter “dry pond” described in Section 2.5 of the Addendum (page 4).  Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS) (Section 3.3 to 3.1.2 – pages 6-13 of the Addendum)  The discussion in these pages seems to be a result of willful misunderstanding. The format is to quote from the PPS and then offer an interpretation that will appear to demonstrate that the proposal meets the criteria set forth in the most recent version of this planning document. I will provide one example to illustrate this.  Policy 1.1.1 g is quoted as saying that “Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by a number of conditions.” Item (g) says there is “an obligation to ensure that necessary infrastructure and public service facilities are or will be available to meet current and projected need.” Then ICI offers as their “Planning Comment. “ It is: “the [ICI Group/CIC] proposal makes efficient use of existing municipal water services and will be serviced by appropriate private sewage works.” But the PPS is surely saying it wants public infrastructure for water and sewage and such things as public transportation.  Since ICI Group is acting as an agent for CIC, one cannot count on them to offer an “independent” and disinterested interpretation of policy documents. It is up to our decision-making systems to ensure that those who seek development approvals have provided reliable and well documented evidence for their claims. I hope they have the requisite resources to do so. | Opposed |
| 81 | 01/13/2022 | public | Strong objection to the proposed amendment. We are in true disbelief that businesses and corporations feel they have the right to disrespect regulations that have been put in place to protect Pleasant View Survey and the Escarpment Region from potentially harmful development that has been proposed. The regulations that have been put in place are designed to protect the flora and fauna of this environmentally sensitive area for many generations to come.  An area that is rare in most communities today.  And it needs to be protected!   We are appalled that plans have gone as far as they have and feel that this is a very dangerous direction to continue with.  The sale of the property was initially detailed to accommodate 35 student residents.  As time rolls on, the business has announced that it will be using the unique property to accommodate 1000 students.  We feel the wording in the proposals have left it too vague as to the actual number and types of vehicles that will be seeking access to this unique property. It is also very unclear from the proposals what the actual uses Columbia College will have for the facility and feel that they will be able to negotiate these arrangements if we allow the plans to go forward. As a resident of this community, we feel that the NEC should be protecting the lands with specific regulations so residents would not have to fight large businesses and corporations over each proposal that is announced.  Everyone needs to follow the regulations that are in place. They are in place to protect our environment! | Opposed |
| 82 | 01/13/2022 | Pleasant View Protection Association (PVPA) | Objection to the proposed amendment:  1. The plan including remediation via the Tree Compensation Plan (See Tree Protection Plan), would demonstratively reduce existing flora, reduce natural habitat for fauna, and thereby negatively impact the ecosystem.  2. The property would see green space replaced with man-made structures, and natural habitat would be converted to urban land use.  3. The plan would introduce new potential threat to natural steams and water supplies in the form of potential wastewater treatment system failure of a significantly larger system. Regardless of the proponent’s plans to mitigate the potential harm of sewage system failure (via monitoring), the first and most effective way to mitigate risk in the hierarchy of hazard control is to eliminate the risk, not introduce new risk.  4. A 1000-student school in this location would introduce new and unnecessary vehicle exhaust pollution to the property, area and environment. This pollution would be significantly reduced by locating the school in an urban setting where students and staff would have less distance to travel, and have the options of walking, riding bikes and using existing city buses to commute.  5. Vehicle traffic associated with the school would increase the risk of wildlife habitat fragmentation, degradation, and destruction. Numerous subject matter experts and studies prove out the connection between road traffic and negative effects on wildlife habit. (See A Guide to Road Ecology in Ontario as one source).  6. Vehicle traffic associated with a 1,000-students school is not in keeping with the quiet nature and current state of the area and would negatively impact the ability of residences to enjoy their homes. Generally speaking, people who choose to live in rural areas expect to have fresh air, wide open space, connection with nature, and peace and quiet, while people who choose to live in urban centers expect to have conveniences such hospitals, secondary schools and mass transit. These expectations are justifiable as they are anchored in existing plans and by-laws.  7. Road safety concerns affirmed in the Transportation Impact Study specific to Old York Road and Plains Road West, remain unaddressed since the proponent’s current proposed mitigation measures are “Signalize the intersection (fully-actuated), Signalize the intersection (semi-actuated)” while the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has no plans of installing traffic signals in this location now or in the future, as evidenced by its Highway 403 and Highway 6 Interchange Improvements Preliminary Design Study date June 25, 2020.  8. Allowing a Community Institution in an area generally zoned Rural Area (RA) by the City of Hamilton, is directly contrary to the city’s zoning efforts and the city’s recent decision to densify urban areas rather than allow urban sprawl into rural areas, and does not support the City of Hamilton (a municipalities within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area) in its exercise of the planning function conferred upon them by the Planning Act. | Opposed |
| 83 | 01/14/2022 | public | Resided here for the past 35 years. We love our neighbourhood. Purchased here because of the nature of it and now the owner of Columbia college would have this destroyed is despicable. 1000 students means approximately 40 school busses in and out on roads not built to accommodate such traffic. There are many of us who walk these streets and this COMPROMISES our safety. The increase in traffic from educational staff, delivery trucks, maintenance staff and visitors just adds to the problem. Not to mention what it does to our natural wild life but as I have mentioned in the past the powers that be do not care about this. We are only hoping and praying that the Niagara escarpment commission will abide by what is already in place and not cave to the demands of a rich gentleman and stand by what we have fought year after year to protect. There are 4 high schools in Hamilton which can easily accommodate such a school, with the added bonus of the students being able to use public transit and or walk.  I can only state one thing  and that is if this is to be allowed to go through and a accident should happen as a result of this Columbia college being allowed here there will be some serious consequences for all who allow this to happen. It should not have to come to this. | Opposed |
| 84 | 01/14/2022 | public | I am not a resident of Pleasant View, however, if I drove a car I would be!  Pleasant View has long been my favourite part of the whole region - even before I moved to Dundas about 40 years ago.  The convent was always special  - I was even invited inside once and loved the building.  Naturally I was saddened when the building ceased to operate as a convent, but initially happy to see what  seemed like a not unsuitable adaptive use of an important landmark.  I have watched with increasing horror as the initial proposal for a small dormitory was used to piggy-back into a monstrous proposal.  The very best planners and consultants were  hired to make the case for the proposal.  'He who pays the piper calls the tune', so  all the consultants' documents support expansion plans.  The plans have quietly jogged along and no one in authority has stood up and said that this is a totally unsuitable proposal for Pleasant View.  The school and 'gymnasium' belong in an urban setting, not in a rural area with virtually no services.  I find it very hard to accept that the proposal has got this far.  There seems little point in refuting most individual points in the many reports, contained in not one but two submissions to the NEC.  The one point which I will pull out is the gymnasium.  McMaster University has over 33,000 students, however seating in the gymnasium is for 2,200.  McMaster has many athletic and sports programmes and yet the space in the gym is considered sufficient. The reason being that not all programmes occur at the same time.  The proposal for a gym is for seating that far exceeds the number of proposed students.  it would appear not to be a gymnasium at all but an auditorium suitable for rental.  Why else would there need to be such a large space?  Unless of course there are plans for an even larger student population.  The new building would not be on 'cleared table land' it would be on land that currently is very suitable for many local birds and other wildlife.  The grassed areas in Pleasant View are ideal for Meadow Larks, a species  which we should be trying to protect by ensuring  suitable habitat.  The proposal for both the school and the auditorium would require additional  parking, so in a precious rural area concrete and asphalt would replace grass, wildflowers and trees to provide parking for cars and other vehicles.  There would also be a great deal of air pollution created by the daily trips.  I would be supportive of a much smaller school contained in the present buildings, with minimum parking.   I would never support the new auditorium structure. | Opposed |
| 85 | 01/09/2022 | public | Against the proposed NEP Amendment.  I am a biologist with deep knowledge of the Niagara Escarpment who uses Escarpment land on a daily basis.  While I appreciate the enormous effort and expense devoted to the voluminous documents submitted, I have numerous objections to their content. I will focus on three major ones.  First, while I am a strong supporter of development, I think that it should follow Provincial plans. The clear directive in the Provincial Places to Grow Act, 2005 is that “with respect to a matter relating to the natural environment or human health, the direction that provides more protection to the natural environment or human health prevails.” (section 14(4)). The current location on Main St. W. in Hamilton is an excellent one with ample opportunities to grow either at its vicinity or further east along Main St. W. Such local growth on Main St. will instantly accommodate two major benefits. First, it will eliminate unnecessary damage to the natural environment. Second, it will allow students and staff to travel by foot, bike or public transportation. The Main St. corridor is the prime transportation corridor in Hamilton and the focus of future growth and further improvement in rapid transit. In short, the expansion of CIC within the urban area will provide both more protection to the natural environment and lesser negative impact on human health than the proposed development within Niagara Escarpment Land.  Second, although IBI prepared an admirable Transportation Impact Study, I think that it paints an optimistic assessment of the future impact on the local wildlife and rural human community. By splitting the analyses of transportation and environmental impacts into two independent documents prepared by distinct companies, the submission omits obvious negative impacts of the proposed development.  Prior to CIC’s temporary move, the vehicular traffic on Newman and Northcliffe Ave. was primarily limited to a small rural community of 37 families. The proposal calls for additional traffic generated by 1000 students, teachers and support staff. The estimate of 120 2-way vehicular trips, which is not justified, is unrealistic and I expect it to be much higher primarily owing to construction traffic for the proposed gym and extensive required renovation to the old buildings over many years. The estimate does not include driving by the wealthy students and their visiting family members. I expect such realistic expected vehicular traffic to be highly disturbing to the local wildlife and 37 families. In short, the proposal calls for a dramatic increase of perhaps 200% in local traffic within a region designated as Escarpment Rural Area. I find this two-fold increase in traffic incompatible with the land use designation. I think that the proposal, though not explicit about it, is actually a proposed amendment to convert a rural to urban area because a 1000-student school plus a few hundred staff and construction / renovation crews do not fit the rural land designation under the Niagara Escarpment Act.  The environmental impact study fails to address two major issues. It fully neglects the enormous negative impact of the high traffic volume on wildlife within the natural area. It glosses over the severe environmental damage that would be caused by over 1000 teenagers trampling  on wild land that currently experiences negligible human impact. That is, it is unrealistic to expect that 1000 teenagers would not use the surrounding natural land as a playground, and that by doing so, they will not damage the vegetation and scare away wildlife.  While I see some logic in occupying the heritage buildings at 574 Northcliffe Ave., the only compromise that I can see is to limit it to its intended low occupancy of 100-200 people.  In sum, there are certainly many benefits from a development bringing 1000 additional students to the City of Hamilton and I thus strongly support it. Such development, however, belongs in the heart of Hamilton’s urban area, where CIC is appropriately located now and where the ratio of benefits to costs to nature and human health is much larger than on Niagara Escarpment Land. Converting a scarce rural natural area into an urban development is neither necessary nor in accordance with Provincial and NEC policies. | Opposed |
| 86 | 01/13/2022 | Public | Please consider this a written objection to the proposed amendment.  Here is the main reason the application should be rejected:  The applicant (and application) is in violation of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, Section 6.1 (2.2).  According to the proponent’s [Niagara Escarpment Development Permit Application](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fibigroup-574northcliffeavedundas.ca%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F10%2FREVISED-PROPOSED-NIAGARA-ESCARPMENT-PLAN-AMENDMENT-2021-10-12.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Camaraine.laven%40ontario.ca%7C5f4f2d65815f44c62e5408dac435791b%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C0%7C638038031308111611%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jC79HNdVYwazZozZkI%2BvSCWvukn21K8c9r30C2LMcfE%3D&reserved=0) document, the application is submitted on the basis that *“Under Section 6.1(2) of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA), an application may be made to the NEC for amendment to the NEP, with appropriate justification provided.”*  However, the proponent’s stated basis fails to consider NEPDA’s subsection to section 6.1(2), 6.1 (2.2), whereby restrictions are enacted regarding applications or requests to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). See Figure 1.  **Figure 1 Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, Section 6.1 (2)**  Given the land is designated as Escarpment Rural Area (and Escarpment Natural Area) and the application is requesting an amendment to permit an urban use, the application must not be made at this time.  In accordance with NEPDA section 6.1 (2.3) any such application may be made during the review set out in subsection 17 (1), however, such a review is not currently underway.  Regarding any counterarguments which suggest the application is not requesting a redesignation of the land to the land use designation of Minor Urban Centre, Urban Area or Escarpment Recreation:  Section 6.1 (2.2) does not state (a) and (b), rather it states (a) **or** (b), therefore, whether a redesignation of the land is requested is irrelevant if the application is requesting an amendment to permit an urban use.  Regarding any counterarguments which suggest the application is requesting “only a small change from one urban use to another” or the application is requesting “a site-specific policy change that would not impact any other land”: If the Act intended these or any other exceptions to be permitted, the Act would indicate so as exceptions, as demonstrated throughout the Act and by the Exception section  Figure 1:  (2.3).  Regarding any counterarguments which suggest a secondary school is not an urban use: Refer to NEC’s Policy for Urban Uses Made to Administer Section 6.1 (2.2) of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act dated June 16, 2005 (See [Appendix 1](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fescarpment.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F05%2FNEP-Amendment-Guidelines.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Camaraine.laven%40ontario.ca%7C5f4f2d65815f44c62e5408dac435791b%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C0%7C638038031308111611%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uRp0s0aitCcWA%2FH7FKecBBvOiDKjJBJgiSDcKJiU4YE%3D&reserved=0)) that defines urban uses to include institutional land uses and refer to the City of Hamilton’s [Zoning By-law 05-200](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hamilton.ca%2Fcity-planning%2Fofficial-plan-zoning-by-law%2Fzoning-by-law-no-05-200&data=05%7C01%7Camaraine.laven%40ontario.ca%7C5f4f2d65815f44c62e5408dac435791b%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C0%7C638038031308111611%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=8ZxY6sZel6yEP7aDXFbue2lKN96AxXUp9tr2%2F5bbVmg%3D&reserved=0) that defines institutional land use to include use of the land as educational establishments, “a Provincially approved institution for academic instruction and shall include a public, private or separate school, college or university”.  A secondary school is an urban use.  Regarding any counterarguments which suggest institutional land uses are currently permitted for the property, or any other counterarguments that suggest 6.1 (2.2) does not apply: Refer to NEC’s [Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendment Guidelines](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fescarpment.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F05%2FNEP-Amendment-Guidelines.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Camaraine.laven%40ontario.ca%7C5f4f2d65815f44c62e5408dac435791b%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C0%7C638038031308111611%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uRp0s0aitCcWA%2FH7FKecBBvOiDKjJBJgiSDcKJiU4YE%3D&reserved=0) and Policy for Urban Uses Made to Administer Section 6.1 (2.2) of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (Appendix 1 of the [guidelines](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fescarpment.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F05%2FNEP-Amendment-Guidelines.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Camaraine.laven%40ontario.ca%7C5f4f2d65815f44c62e5408dac435791b%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C0%7C638038031308111611%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uRp0s0aitCcWA%2FH7FKecBBvOiDKjJBJgiSDcKJiU4YE%3D&reserved=0)) for clarity:  **Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendment Guidelines**  **A.**   **Urban Uses Prohibited**  *“Plan Amendments involving urban expansions, including expansions to Escarpment Recreation Areas* ***and urban uses*** *are prohibited until the Niagara Escarpment Plan is reviewed in 2015 (Section 6.1(2.2) and 6.1(2.3) of the NEPDA). The urban uses affected by these sections of the NEPDA are outlined in the attached Appendix 1 - Policy Paper “Policies For Urban Uses” dated June 16, 2005.”* (Note: Regarding reference to 2015, the guidelines predate the previous NEP review.)    **POLICY FOR URBAN USES MADE TO ADMINSTER SECTION 6.1 (2.2) OF THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT**  *“This policy applies in the absence of a Regulation made by the Minister of Natural Resources under Section 23(e) of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act defining urban uses.*  *Section 6.1(2.2) prevents the consideration of any request to amend the Niagara Escarpment for an "urban use" in the Escarpment Natural Area, Escarpment Protection Area, Escarpment Rural Area and Mineral Resource Extraction Area designations, where such an amendment is required to permit the "urban use".*  *The definition, as set out below, is therefore intended to address those "urban uses" not already identified by the Niagara Escarpment Plan as permitted uses in the Escarpment Natural Area, Escarpment Protection Area, Escarpment Rural Area and Mineral Resource Extraction Area designations. Urban uses already identified in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are not affected by this definition, since they do not require an amendment to the Plan; therefore the policy will have no effect on those urban uses.*  *…*  *“Urban Uses” includes the following,*  *…*  *(b) Institutional land uses, and*  *…”* | Opposed |
| 87 | 01/24/2022 | Pleasant View Protection Association (PVPA) | REGARDING INCONSISTENCY WITH THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN (NEP)  1. NEP OBJECTIVE 1 states “To protect unique ecological and historic areas”. 48 mature trees in fair to excellent condition, representing well over 500 years of growth, would be lost. Based on the criteria in the Tree Compensation Plan (See Excerpts from Tree Compensation Plan and Comments attached), the tree inventory after development would be significantly reduced in overall average age and size compared to what exists today. The proponent’s plan including remediation via the Tree Compensation Plan, would demonstratively reduce existing flora, reduce natural habitat for fauna, and thereby negatively impact the ecosystem. Existing green space of over 2,000 m2 (an area equivalent to 7.5 regulation size tennis courts) would be replaced with: a 9 m high above grade (and 3.6 m below grade), 1716 m2 1,370-person gymnasium, a mechanical pit and concrete and/or asphalt parking structures. Rather than protect ecological features of the property, green space would be replaced with man-made structures and natural habitat would be converted to urban land use.  2. NEP OBJECTIVE 2 states “To maintain and enhance the quality and character of natural stream and water supplies”. The proposed expansion of the existing wastewater treatment system of the former convent building would increase sewage treatment capacity from 30,000 L/d to 65,000 L/day. According to the Ontario government, a large subsurface sewage disposal system is defined as a sewage disposal system with design flow greater than 10,000 L/d. The location of the onsite wastewater treatment system is within the Grindstone Creek Watershed. The proponent’s plan is to add the equivalent of 3.5 large onsite wastewater treatment systems to Grindstone Creek Watershed land. Failure of onsite wastewater treatment systems poses a real and serious threat to ground and surface water quality. This significant risk is made clear in the Environmental Impact Study Addendum (EIAS) that states “Effluent from the proposed north and south septic bed expansions have the potential to impact surface and groundwater functions of wetland features identified within the study area.” Rather than maintain and enhance the quality and character of natural steams and water supplies, the proponent’s plan would introduce a larger potential threat to natural steams and water supplies (i.e. potential wastewater treatment system failure). Regardless of the proponent’s plans to mitigate the potential harm of sewage system failure (via monthly effluent monitoring at the former convent building, quarterly groundwater monitoring, no monitoring of the Monastery system and no  monitoring of surface water), the first and most effective way to mitigate risk in the hierarchy of hazard control is to eliminate the risk, not introduce new risk.  3. NEP OBJECTIVE 4 states “To maintain and enhance the open landscape character of the Niagara Escarpment”. NEP defines open landscape character as “The system of rural features, both natural and human-made, that makes up the rural environment, including forests, slopes, streams, valleylands, hedgerows, agricultural fields, agricultural buildings and other features of similar character and scale.” A 9 m high (above grade) 1,716 m2 gymnasium, rather than maintain and enhance the open landscape character, would be a significant obstruction, degrading the open landscape.  4. NEP OBJECTIVE 5 states “To ensure that all new development is compatible with the purpose of the Plan”. NEP’s purpose is “to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment, and to ensure only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment.” In 2005 the City of Hamilton performed a significant amount of research regarding institutional uses and determined that secondary schools are “not compatible” and “intrusive in small scale environments” largely due to their size (ex. 1,000+ occupancy) and draw on resources and infrastructure (ex. transportation for 1,000+ people). The rural area of Pleasant View with approximately 800 residents is indeed a small-scale rural environment. Using the City of Hamilton’s 3 institutional zone categories and the city’s rationale for creating these 3 distinct categories, as reference only (it is not suggested that city zoning applies in this case), changing permitted uses for the subject property (a place of worship, a convent, a residential care facility for a maximum of 35 residents and a dormitory with a maximum of 36 student) to a secondary school, is an unnecessary escalation of intuitional use. As outlined in City of Hamilton Planning & Economic Development Department report to the Chair and Members of Economic Development and Planning Committee dated January 19, 2007, “based on extensive background research during 2005 to define the direction of Institutional Zoning”, 3 distinct institutional use categories were established [i.e. Neighbourhood Institutional (I1), Community Institutional (I2) and Major Institutional (I3)]. The city initiative that focused on new institutional zoning in response to issues and trends including “multi-functional Places of Worship, capacity ranges within Residential Care Facilities and residential redevelopment of vacant institutional facilities e.g. schools” established the 3 institutional categories recognizing that ALL INSTITUTIONAL USES ARE NOT EQUAL, stating in the report: “The main consideration and difference between the Neighbourhood Institutional (I1) Zone, Community Institutional (I2) Zone and Major Institutional (I3) Zone is the compatibility and impact each of the permitted uses would have on the surrounding area. The proposed zoning recognizes the different types of permitted uses and regulates them appropriately based on their impact.” As a result of this effort and subsequent institutional zoning in place today, the City of Hamilton classifies all the permitted uses for the subject property as (I1), whereas the City prohibits secondary schools from (I1) areas deeming them “not compatible” and “intrusive in small scale environments”. Secondary schools in Hamilton are restricted to (I2) where “larger facilities that draw from a larger area and, therefore, have a higher impact on the surrounding community are most appropriate” or (I3) where “larger facilities that serve the entire City and beyond and are viewed as potentially having significant impacts on parking, traffic and building form” are appropriate.  Regarding institutional uses, the proponent makes an incorrect and harmful conclusion that the proponent uses as its basis for arguing that a secondary school should be permitted. Bottom of page 12 of the Planning Justification Report states “The inclusion of the uses to the Special Provision and the implementation of the uses provides the basis that existing and permitted uses of the subject lands includes institutional (religious organization, school with classrooms) and institutionally-related (dormitory and accessory uses), in conjunction with an private educational establishment (commercial school).” The Special Provision in the NEP for the Pleasant View Survey Lands, specifically for lands located at No. 574 Northcliffe Avenue, permits very specific institutional uses. It permits “a Place of Worship; ii. a Convent; iii. a residential care facility for a maximum of 35 residents; and iv. a dormitory with a maximum of 36 students and accessory uses for an educational establishment provided it is located in conjunction with the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph.” Accessory use means “use of any land, building, structure or facility that is naturally and normally incidental, subordinate, and exclusivity devoted to the principal use located on the same lot.” Accessory uses for an educational established does not translate to a school as a principal use nor does allowing very specific institutional uses translate to categorizing all institutional and institutionally-related uses as existing and permitted uses. This is incorrect and potentially very harmful to this and other proposed plan amendments. If the NEC believed all institutional uses are equal and occupancy limits are of no consequence, it could simply list Institutional use as a permitted use for this property, whereby any institutional use and any occupancy would be permitted. Rather, to date the NEC has deliberately identified very specific institutional uses along with occupancy limits for very good reason – acknowledgment that all institutional uses are not equal. The proponent is correct that the proposed purpose of the property is an evolution, evolution meaning cumulative change over time, and the proposed amendment would be a change in the direction of urbanization. The objectives of the NEP are not related to evolving the Niagara escarpment lands towards urbanization. The NEP objectives are about protecting, maintaining and enhancing the NATURAL landscape. It is our position that any change in property use (i.e. development), institutional or otherwise, with an occupancy of 1,000+ would be intrusive and not compatible with Pleasant View, a small-scale rural and natural environment home to approximately 800 residents. Furthermore, any new buildings the scale of the proposed gymnasium, would be an obstruction to the continuous natural environment. This development would contradict the stated purpose of the NEP.  5. NEP OBJECITVE 7 states “To support municipalities within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area in their exercise of the planning functions conferred upon them by the Planning Act.” In November 2021, Hamilton City Council voted against urban boundary expansion. This decision represents the City’s plan to intensify the urban areas of Hamilton rather than allow urban sprawl into rural areas. The City has stated that this plan will be incorporated into the City’s land-use plan that will be in effect for the next 30 years. The City’s land-use plan is a requirement of the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Allowing the subject property to be used as a secondary school, is not only contrary to City efforts represented by zoning bylaws (regardless whether zoning bylaws are binding), it is an intensification of urban activity in a rural area, in other words urban sprawl, and does not support the City’s planning effort but instead would directly act contrary to the City’s intentions and planning activities associated with its 30-year land use plan.  6. NEC’s NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT GUIDELINES (NEPAG), SECTION 3. TESTS FOR JUSTIFICATION states “All amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Plan, including those initiated by the NEC, are subject to the following justification tests. … the proposed amendment is in the public interest and there is a need to accommodate the proposed use within the Plan area given the availability of alternatives both within and outside the NEP within the market area, where the proposed use may be located”. In the Addendum to Planning Justification Report, the proponent states: “, the timing is appropriate to consider an evolution of the use and adaptive re-development of the institutional building to an alternative institutionally-related use.” However, this justification is significantly inadequate. Adaptive reuse is indeed in the public interest. However, the subject property is not vacant, abandoned, or unused, rather the property is owned and maintained by CIC and currently has an existing use as a dormitory with a maximum of 36 student in services to the needs of CIC. Since the subject property is under NEC area development control, it is not bound by the temporary use provision of Section 39 of the Planning Act and can continue to operate as a dormitory with a maximum of 36 student as permitted in the NEP. We do acknowledge from the perspective that CIC should be permitted reasonable enjoyment of the property, that occupancy of 36 is low, however, We are strongly opposed to the notion that occupancy of 1,000+ is reasonable. An appropriate benchmark for occupancy is that of the former convent. According to the proponent’s documentation, the Sisters of St. Joseph motherhouse was built with a planned occupancy of 100 people. It is important to note that the sisters used the property both as their residence and as their primary place of vocations. Residents who live on Northcliffe Avenue today and whose family history pre-date the convent, will tell you that the convent generated little traffic over the years as many of the sisters rarely left the property. Given any use other than a convent or place of worship would likely generate more traffic than what was generated by the motherhouse, it is reasonable to establish an occupancy maximum of something close to 100 people. Given CIC applied for and was granted a temporary provision in the Town of Dundas Zoning By-law No. 3581-86 allowing a dormitory having a maximum occupancy of 138 occupants, it is surmised that CIC has a business need for such a use. We asserts that a dormitory having a maximum occupancy of 138 is similar to the original use of the motherhouse building and a dormitory for 138 students is an appropriate adaptive reuse of the property, whereas permitting the property to be used as a secondary school is an escalation of institutional use and would evolve the property away from a natural setting and towards a setting with more urban characteristics. Regarding the appropriate location for CIC’s 1,000+ occupancy secondary school, we strongly asserts that based on City of Hamilton research and the sentiment of the vast majority of Hamiltonians (see justification for this assertion that follows), the school should be in an urban area of Hamilton. However, it is not NEC’s responsibility to find a location for the 1,000+ occupancy school, rather it is NEC’s responsibility to protect, maintain and enhance the natural landscape of the subject land. In accordance with NEC’s Test for Justification, it is the proponent’s responsibility to prove a need to accommodate the proposed use within the Plan area given the availability of alternatives both within and outside the NEP area, and the proponent has failed to do so. In addition regarding public interest, virtually all governing documents that relate to the consideration of this proposed amendment (NEP, Provincial Policy Statement, Greenbelt Plan, Rural Hamilton Official Plan, Urban Hamilton Official Plan etc.) include objectives and/or policy statements that prioritize public health and encourage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It is a universal truth that clean air and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions are in the public’s interest. This proposed amendment would see 80 one-way NEW school bus trips from Hamilton’s urban area through Hamilton communities to the subject property on the outskirts of Hamilton each school day, adding new and unnecessary pollution to our neighborhoods and greenhouse gas emissions to the environment. These school bus trips, and their associated pollution and greenhouse gas emissions can and should be easily avoided by locating the school appropriately in an urban area of Hamilton where students can walk, ride their bikes and take existing public transit. Since there is no mention of using electric buses in the application and 95% of school buses on the roads today use diesel fuel, it is assumed buses used would be powered by diesel. Diesel exhaust is a chemically complex mixture of components. In addition to containing the toxic gas compounds: carbon monoxide (CO), nitric oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and sulfuric dioxide (SO2), diesel exhaust directly contributes ambient, on-road and in-cabin concentration of NO2 (a gaseous air pollutant), O3 (ground-level ozone pollution) and PM2.5 (fine particular matter capable of travelling deeply into the respiratory tract, reaching the lungs). According to the Government of Canada exposure to diesel exhaust poses significant risk to health. There is only one way to view the newly-generated pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that would be created by this proposed amendment, and that is NOT in the public’s interest. Furthermore, NEC’s test for justification requires the proposed amendment be both in the public interest and there is a need to accommodate the proposed use within the Plan area. It must be pointed out that public interest is not the same as private interest. The Planning Justification Report and its addendum make numerous statements suggesting why the property is suitable for the secondary school but nowhere in this justification report is it explained why there is a need to accommodate the school within the Plan area and specifically on Escarpment Rural Area land when there is a very viable alternative to locate the school appropriately in an urban area in or outside the NEP area. Many of the statements made in the Planning Justification Report and addendum which are intended to address public interest, relate to private interest, not public interest. The statements made in the report and addendum that do indeed relate to public interest (ex. hiring of teachers and staff and adding a mix of institutional used to the City of Hamilton) are contributions that can also be made and should be made by locating the school in an urban area of Hamilton. Public interest must consider public opinion. When Hamiltonians were surveyed (See Urban Growth Survey – Results) and asked for opinions about how the City of Hamilton should grow to the year 2051, they overwhelming expressed their sentiment against urban sprawl into urban areas (90.4%). Expanding or escalating institutional uses is urban sprawl. The proposed amendment is UNJUSTIFIED given it: would unnecessarily escalate the type of institutional use (in effect creating urban sprawl) - development diametrically opposed to public interest (as expressed through the City of Hamilton’s Urban Growth Survey); would add new and unnecessary pollution to our communities with negative impacts on public health; and add new and unnecessary greenhouse emissions to the environment. In addition, there is no evidence that a secondary school needs to be accommodated in the Plan area. A very viable and appropriate alternative exists – locate the school in an urban area of Hamilton.  7. NEP 1.5.1 OBJECTIVE 1, specific to Escarpment Rural Area, state “To maintain the scenic resources of lands in the vicinity of the Escarpment and the open landscape character of the Escarpment.” As stated in Reason 3, the gymnasium building removes open landscape character of the Escarpment; it does not maintain it. The proposed amendment contradicts objective 1 related to Escarpment Rural Area.  8. NEP 1.5.1 OBJECTIVE 6, specific to Escarpment Rural Area, states “To provide a buffer for ecologically sensitive areas of the Escarpment.” The buffer is the Escarpment Rural Area itself and as described by NEP 1.5.2 is comprised of natural lands, not buildings such as the proposed gymnasium. The proposed gymnasium would replace the intended natural buffer with an urban feature. The proposed amendment contradicts objective 6 related to Escarpment Rural Area.  9. NEP 2.2 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA 2 c) states “Any development permitted should be designed and located in such a manner as to promote design and orientation that: reduces greenhouse gas emissions so that the development is contributing to the goal of low-carbon communities and net-zero communities in Minor Urban Centres, Urban Areas, and Escarpment Recreation Areas.” See Reason 6 comments regarding greenhouse gas emissions.  10. NEP 2.2 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA 9 regarding institutional uses states “The gross floor area of buildings and related structures used for institutional uses shall not exceed 500 square metres, unless a larger size can be demonstrated to be compatible with the site and the surrounding landscape.” On page 38 of the Planning Justification Report, the proponent writes “As outlined earlier in this report, existing building statistic information states that the main Motherhouse building alone has an approximately 8,712 m2 GFA, which is greater than the 500 m2 referenced above. The proposed gymnasium addition is approximately 1700 m2. The Motherhouse has historically been utilized for institutional and institutionally-related purposes, and is deemed as an existing institutional building within the site-specific NEC policies. However, it is demonstrated through the use history, the supporting studies, and the planning analysis in this PJR that even if the compatibility test for a larger size is applied, the proposal can be accommodated on the subject lands without negative impacts, and would be fully compatible with the existing and proposed site development patterns and neighbourhood context. Thus, the larger size of the facility still complies with the above-noted policy, which states that consideration of a larger size may be permitted if deemed appropriate and compatible.”  It must be pointed out that the motherhouse building predates the NEP and was grandfathered in as an existing use. It is our hope that if NEC was presented with an application proposing to amend the NEP to allow a new 8,712 m2 GFA institutional building on land designated Escarpment Rural Area today, it would consider the proposal objectionable. Since the gross floor area maximum of 500 m2 is a general criterion applying to all land use designations including that of Urban Area, the specific land use designation for the subject land must be considered when applying the 500 m2 restriction. The subject land is designated Escarpment Rural Area and as demonstrated by criteria for designating land Escarpment Rural Area, the land and its characteristics are intended to be natural and small scale. NEP Special Provisions for the Pleasant View Survey Lands further demonstrate that the intent is to keep the area small-scale. Furthermore, the City of Hamilton research and practices described in Reason 4, provide evidence that moderate to large institutional buildings are not compatible and intrusive in small scale environments. The proponent’s argument seems to suggest “in for a penny, in for a pound” when it comes to adding more urban features to Escarpment Rural Area land. A new 1716 m2 gymnasium is not only a violation of general development criteria 9, it does not respect the intent of Special Provisions for the Pleasant View Survey lands – to keep land use small-scale and does not respect the intent of the Escarpment Rural Area land designation – that of NATURAL land (minor escarpment slopes, escarpment related landforms, lands in the vicinity of the Escarpment necessary to provide an open landscape, lands in the vicinity of the Escarpment which are of ecological importance to the Escarpment environment, and lands that have the potential for enhanced ecological values through natural succession processes or due to their proximity to other ecologically sensitive lands, areas or features).  11. NEP 2.6 DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING WATER RESOURCES item 2 states “Development is not permitted in key hydrologic features with the exception of the following, which may be permitted subject to compliance with all other relevant policies of this Plan:” As describe in the EIAS, section 7.4.2, MAM2 (Mineral Meadow Marsh Ecosite) is a wetland feature deemed significant (meeting the definition of key hydrologic feature) located on the subject property and adjacent land. MAM2 is fed by a large groundwater upwelling and is associated with tributaries to Grindstone Creek. MAM2 is in the general area of the proposed gymnasium. There are exceptions to NEP 2.6 item 2, however, the proposed amendment does not meet any of the exceptions. Based on the information provided in the EISA, the proposed amendment is in violation of NEP 2.6 item 2.  12. NEP 2.6 DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING WATER RESOURCES item 9 states “Development shall protect the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water.” The EISA states that “Effluent from the proposed north and south septic bed expansions have the potential to impact surface and groundwater functions of wetland features identified within the study area.” and the “Groundwater quality and quantity impacts from the proposed septic system effluent on wetland features within the study area were not assessed in the Hydrogeological Investigation (MTE 2019a) or the Tertiary Treatment System Design (MTE 2019b). MTE’s septic system expansion assessment was limited to impacts to the closest off-site PSW feature (i.e. Cootes Paradise PSW Complex, or ‘Long Pond’ per MTE) as per MECP pre-consultation guidance.”. The EISA’s determination that effluent from the proposed sewage system expansion has the potential to impact the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water. This confirmed risk exposure combined with an absence of a satisfactory impact assessment, is a violation of NEP 2.6 item 9.  13. NEP 2.10 CULTURAL HERITAGE item 1 states “Development shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources are conserved.” According to the Archaeology Report section 3.1, there is “archeological potential” within the study area. Although a stage 2 inspection was conducted that “did not result in the recovery of any cultural material”, a stage 2 inspection with such findings is not an exception to NEP 2.10 item 1. Since the subject property has been determined to have “archaeological potential” and there is no evidence that significant archeological resources are conserved, the proposed amendment is in violation of NEP 2.10 item 1.  REGARDING INCONSISTENCY WITH THE PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS)  14. PPS 1.1.3.1 states “Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development.” According to PPS’s definition of settlement area, the subject property is not in a settlement area, and therefore should not be developed or contribute to growth. Construction of a new 1,716 m2 gymnasium is a significant development activity and increasing the former mother house building occupancy to 1,000+ people represents significant growth in the Pleasant View area with a population of approximately 800 people. The proposed amendment contradicts the intentions of PPS 1.1.3.1.  15. PPS 1.6.3 states “Before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities: a) the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized; and b) opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible”. The proposed amendment which meets the definition of infrastructure, would see significant new school bus traffic and construction of a new gymnasium, both of which should be avoided by using existing infrastructure and public service facilities (a gymnasium and transportation which currently exist within urban Hamilton) that can be achieved by locating the school in urban Hamilton. As pointed out previously, an adaptive re-use scenario already exists for the former motherhouse building. The proposed amendment contradicts the intentions of PPS 1.6.3.  16. PPS 1.6.4 states “Infrastructure and public service facilities should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services, and to ensure the protection of public health and safety in accordance with the policies in Section 3.0: Protecting Public Health and Safety”. In addition to the detriment to public health associated with new pollutions that would be created as described in Reason 6, emergency services such as police and ambulances would be unnecessarily taxed by requiring them to travel to the remote location of the subject property, when locating the school in an urban area would most assuredly reduce the commute distance. The proposed amendment contradicts the intentions of PPS 1.6.4.  17. PPS 1.6.5 states “Public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.” This policy statement speaks directly to one of the core issues regarding locating a secondary school in a remote, small-scale, and rural environment. The school should be co-located in the urban hub where: the students reside, gymnasiums and public transit exist, municipal services such and emergency and other municipal services are closer in proximity. The proposed amendment is in violation of PPS 1.6.4.  18. PPS 1.6.6. regarding sewage, water and stormwater, provides a servicing hierarchy that indicates municipal sewage services are preferred over private communal sewage services. PPS 1.6.6.3 states “Where municipal sewage services and municipal water services are not available, planned or feasible, private communal sewage services and private communal water services are the preferred form of servicing for multi-unit/lot development to support protection of the environment and minimize potential risks to human health and safety.” As is the theme with the proposed amendment, violation of the intention of this policy statement, can and should be avoided my locating the school in an urban area that can leverage municipal sewage treatment as opposed to expanding the onsite sewage treatment system located on Escarpment Rural Area land.  19. PPS 1.6.7.2 states “Efficient use should be made of existing and planned infrastructure, including through the use of transportation demand management strategies, where feasible.” Again, the recommendation provided by this policy statement could and should be adhered to by locating the school in an urban area and leveraging existing city buses. In addition, leveraging existing bus transportation services would address newly created road safety concerns for Pleasant View. Road safety concerns affirmed in the Transportation Impact Study specific to Old York Road and Plains Road West, remain unaddressed since the proponent’s current proposed mitigation measures are “Signalize the intersection (fully-actuated), Signalize the intersection (semi-actuated)” while the MTO has no plans of installing traffic signals in this location now or in the future (See MTO Design Study Link). By locating the school in an urban area, not only would existing transportation be leveraged, road safety concerns related to the proposed amendment would be eliminated.  Considering the 19 items above, the proposed amendment must be rejected.  **Epilogue**  The property is in Ecoregion 7E. According to the Ontario government, the flora and fauna of this ecoregion are the most diverse in Canada. At the same time, this ecoregion is **the most imperiled in Canada** because of the amount of natural habitat that has been drained, cut, and converted into suburban land use (https://www.ontario.ca/page/ecosystems-ontario-part-1-ecozones-and-ecoregions).  How has this happened? How is it continuing to happen? It has not happened as the result of one or a handful of large developments. It has not happened because of mass land draining or mass land clearing. It has not happened at the hands of a few people or a small select group of companies. This is how it happens:  *“We’re only cutting down a few trees and we’ll replace the trees we’re cutting down.”* They don’t tell you that replacing mature trees, many as old as 30 or 40 years old, with young trees, usually around 2 years old, has a dramatic effect on the ecosystem. They don’t tell you that the trees they will plant may go on a property having nothing to do with the property being developed.  *“Traffic will only increase slightly, and we have a plan to address road safety concerns.”* They don’t tell you that each vehicle will add pollution and require more road maintenance (use of salt, more frequent asphalt replacement, etc.). They don’t tell you that by adding streetlights to address safety concerns, vehicles that stop at the lights will add more pollution than if they passed through the area without stopping. They don’t talk about road ecology or how increase in traffic causes habitat fragmentation.  *“The people we’re bringing into the area are wonderful people.”* They don’t tell you that each additional person using a property, brings with them additional demand on utilities, services and infrastructure – more water/wastewater treatment needs, more garbage management needs, more parking needs, more vehicle traffic, more foot traffic, more noise and more pollution and that is why city planners create urban area plans and rural area plans – to appropriately address these needs.  *“This is a great example of adaptive reuse for the property.”* They don’t tell you that the proposed use is significantly different compared to the original use or the current use. They don’t tell you that there are other viable uses of the property that are similar to how the property was previously used and these other viable uses are much less harmful to the environment and neighbourhood.  How does the most diverse and sensitive ecoregion in Canada become the most imperiled? The answer is as simple as the expression **death by a thousand cuts** – Whereby a major negative change happens slowly in many unnoticed increments not perceived as objectionable at the time. We consider this proposed amendment objectionable and draws to NEC’s attention the reasons why. | Opposed |
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