



Our parish community is shaken by the alarming news that all 10 acres of our parish church is being taken away by the Halton District School Board from us for the purpose of building a high school. Ss. Peter and Paul Serbian Orthodox Church, at 1039 Dundas St. W, has been, and still is, the spiritual, cultural, and social gathering place for over 750 (seven hundred fifty!) families in Oakville since 1980. It has been the congregation which shaped the Serbian community's existence in our great town. It is where generations were married, children baptised, and many of our grandparents were given their final prayerful send off.

Having prayed originally at St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church, on 1531 Oakhill Drive, we were so immensely proud to build the FIRST Orthodox place of worship in our region, thus becoming the mother church for the Romanian, Coptic, Russian and Greek Orthodox communities whom sprouted from our facilities. Our parish is immensely engaged in the neighbourhood and community participating in the Fair Trade Food Bank, fundraising for Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, promoting multiculturalism through the Carousel of Nations, actively learning about the history of our surroundings through our membership in the Oakville Historical Society, blood donor drives with the Canadian Blood Donor Clinics, and recently the Adopt-a-Road programme etc...

The Church grounds are also home to several folklore dance groups, our Church choir, and host the single largest gathering of Orthodox Christians in Halton Region in mid-July every year when we celebrate our patron saints. Our elderly parishioners, and their friends and neighbours, gather daily on our grounds to play bocce ball, chess, listen to music and spend quality recreational time every day!

As you can see, the church grounds of our parish are a lot more than a place of worship for Serbs. They are a full out community centre in Oakville and the nucleus of the lives of thousands of your constituents. Having understanding for the needs of our School Board and the town, which we love thoroughly, I strongly propose that the offered plan of splitting the property of our Church in such a way that the school can be built, and we get to keep a portion of the grounds to perpetuate our religious, social, and cultural life, be accepted to the joy of all of us.

Recently we proposed to the HDSB that our church grounds be split, not forcing us to vacate our location, with the School Board so that we can keep at least enough of our property to have a place of worship and gathering. The School Board has more than enough land to the east of our property, or otherwise, to build its facilities without affecting a large group of citizens. Forcing us to sell the property would be the end of our parish because, as the city has made clear to us, there are no viable properties to offer us in exchange.

HDSB - SHARE OUR CITY! SAVE OUR CHURCH OAKVILLE!