



**Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation
Review
Minutes of Public Meeting # 2
January 28, 2009
Lincoln Avenue Public School 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

The second Public Meeting of the Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review was held at Lincoln Avenue Public School on January 28, 2009.

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Chris Smith, Manager of Planning welcomed members of the public, school communities, ARC members, Trustees, and Board staff present for the evening, and made the following introductions:

Trustee Cindy Watson, Diane DeCoene, Area Superintendent, Marilyn Marklevitz, Executive Superintendent of Business and Financial Services and Treasurer, Margaret Coleman, Manager of Communications, Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, Principal of Alison Park P.S., Allan MacKay, Principal of Manchester P.S., Jan McPhedran-McLeod, Principal (Acting) of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Brian Beney, Vice Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Cindy Benedetti, Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Heather Forman, Vice Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal of Central P.S., Jim Kirchin, Director of Planning Operations – City of Cambridge, Faryal Anwar, Cross Cultural & Immigrant Services – YMCA of Cambridge, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Planner, Mary Hingley, Recording Secretary.

Approximately 66 members of the public were also in attendance.

2. Explanation of the Accommodation Review Process

- An accommodation review is the study of schools in an area of the Board's jurisdiction, to determine the future of a school, or group of schools.
- In this case the seven elementary schools under review are in the south east quadrant of the Galt community. They include: Avenue Road P.S., Manchester P.S., Alison Park P.S., Lincoln Avenue P.S., Central P.S., Stewart Avenue P.S. and Chalmers Street P.S.
- The Board had identified this area of Cambridge for a review in its Capital Plan, and the intent was that the area was going to be addressed within the next couple of years; however the review was accelerated by the loss of Alison Park P.S. in a fire in May of 2008.
- An accommodation review can ultimately result in recommendations to close one or more schools and/or consolidate schools; which means having students from two or more schools at one location. It can also result in changes to attendance boundaries and program changes, such as a JK-6 school becoming a JK-8 school.

- This is the second formal Public Meeting of at least four that we will hold throughout the Review process. The dates for the rest of these meetings are not yet set, as they will depend on the time needed to do the review. We would like to report to the Board and have a decision before the end of this school year, June 2009.

3. Overview of Scenarios

- These scenarios have been developed and refined by the Accommodation Review Committee which includes Principals, other Board staff, parents, community members and municipal representation. We have discussed quite a few options and have narrowed down to 5 scenarios that will be presented tonight.

Scenarios presented by Lauren Manske, Planner

Scenario A:

- This is status quo, so there are no boundary changes. We would be rebuilding Alison Park on Lauris Ave. to accommodate about the same number of students it did before the fire.
- We've done some enrolment projections out to 2018. We are only showing a snapshot here tonight of enrolment numbers for 2011, 2015 and 2018. The percentage capacity demonstrates how everyone will fit into the schools. The reason we are starting at 2011 is because it would take until at least September 2011 for any new construction to be completed. Projecting into the future, we are loading the schools with the anticipation of all day, every day kindergarten. Currently, kindergarten students only occupy the space half of the time, so we are able to squeeze more students into a school; this could change. We are being told by the Ministry to build any new construction with the anticipation of all day learning for JK and SK.
- As you can see in this scenario, enrolment at Avenue Road, Chalmers Street and Manchester are beyond their built capacity. This means these schools may require additions or portables. We are not looking at Elgin Street too closely tonight because it will not be affected by any boundary changes, the reason we have included it is because the Elgin Street area feeds Lincoln Avenue for grades 7 and 8.
- There would be no transportation changes under this scenario.

Scenario B:

- In this scenario, we would not be rebuilding Alison Park; instead we are proposing to build a new JK-8 school around Dundas St. and Myers Rd. The Board does not currently own any sites in this location, so a site purchase would be involved. This scenario also includes the closure of Lincoln Avenue P.S.
- There would be programming changes at Avenue Road, with the addition of grades 7 and 8, which would likely be phased in as the closure of Lincoln Avenue would be a phased process as well.
- In this scenario, Alison Park students go to the new JK-8 school. Boundary changes also affect Chalmers Street and the bussed portion of Avenue Road or (Area M).

- As you can see from the enrolment numbers, the new school would be over 600 students, and Avenue Road would gain about 200 students.
- All urban grade 7 and 8 transportation would be eliminated in this scenario, but Alison Park students would be bussed permanently.

Scenario C:

- This scenario involves the closure of 2 schools: Alison Park and Manchester. It also requires the conversion of Lincoln Avenue from a 7/8 school to a JK-6 school.
- A new school would be built in the same area as discussed in the previous scenario, and the same addition to Avenue Road would be required.
- This is a walk-in solution for Alison Park students as well as students south of Myers Road who would attend the new school. It also eliminates all urban grade 7 and 8 bussing.
- In this scenario, Avenue Road's enrolment numbers get up into the high 600's, and Chalmers Street, as well as Lincoln Avenue are being under utilized (the Board tries to fill schools to above 80% capacity).

Scenario D:

- We are calling this scenario the partnership approach. The proposal here is to have Alison Park students attend a joint school with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board at St. Anne. The Alison Park and St Anne properties abut. We would likely be looking at keeping part of the Alison Park property (the lower field, as well as access off of Lauris Ave.) and build an addition on to St. Anne (office space, classrooms, etc.). Essentially this would be 2 distinct schools within one building. It is important to note on this scenario that at this time the Catholic Board has not given us any firm indication that they would be willing partners if this scenario was the chosen option favoured by the community.
- In this scenario, Lincoln Avenue would close, and Avenue Road would take on the northern area's 7/8 program.
- This scenario also involves building a new JK-8 school to alleviate some of the enrolment pressures on Chalmers Street and Stewart Avenue schools. As you can see by the numbers, this scenario does a good job at balancing enrolment across the area.

Scenario E:

- In this scenario, we would not rebuild Alison Park. These students would move to Lincoln Avenue, which would become a JK-6 school. Both Chalmers Street and Avenue Road would require additions to accommodate grades 7 and 8. These additions would mean a second gymnasium, specialized classrooms, additional washrooms, etc.
- The enrolment projections here show Chalmers Street growing to over 700 students, and Central under 200, which is not ideal; one being too big and the other on the small side. This organization would eliminate the majority of urban grade 7 and 8 bussing.

4. Role of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) and Scenario Discussion

- Mr. Smith discussed the role of the Accommodation Review Committee, which we shorten to “ARC”. It is a structured working group established under the Waterloo Region District School Board’s Accommodation Review policy that works with Planning and other Board staff as well as community members in looking at the situation, the available information and developing scenarios, which will lead to possible recommendations.
- Tonight the ARC wants to share the 5 scenarios that have been developed. Mr. Smith noted that we would like feedback on the 5 scenarios presented. Share with us any positives, (things you like/support) and the things that you feel are not so good. Is there a piece that you would like to see included/changed?
- Mr. Smith noted that our goal for the third and next, Public Meeting is to have 2 or 3 scenarios to present with some detailed costing (i.e. transportation costs, construction costs, program changes, accessibility upgrades). So the purpose tonight is to see if the ARC has come up with some scenarios that resolve the issues.
- Mr. Smith advised that we will provide 6 break-out rooms for smaller group discussion of each scenario, and explained how their information package already pre-selected their room. A facilitator will lead the group through each scenario, and have someone scribe any comments/questions. Faryal Anwar from the YMCA, Cambridge will be in break-out room #1 to provide Urdu translation if needed. The Planning Staff will circulate and help with any questions or clarification. Approximately one hour was given to this portion of the meeting.
- Mr. Smith reconvened the group after an hour, thanked the facilitators, and noted that from what he, Ms. Manske and Mr. Hercanuck saw, good conversations took place and positive feedback was given for the format.

5. Questions/Other

- Mr. Smith advised that the discussion of a new school in south east Cambridge, which includes a joint land purchase with the City, Library Board and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board featured recently in the paper, is not the same new school that is proposed in these scenarios. The joint land purchase has been secured by the City on behalf of all the parties, but development approval is contingent on completion of the Moffat Creek sewer project – it does represent approximately 4,000 units and will require at least one new school when it opens up for development.
- Mr. Smith asked for any questions/comments.

Q – Do you have any land purchased in SE Galt?

R – No, the Board does not at this time.

Q – Can you buy land?

R – Yes.

Q – Is the area zoned for school or residential?

R – Residential.

- Mr. Smith also clarified that the partnering approach set out in Scenario D would be a joint use facility. The class organization, administration, teaching staff, etc., would still be done independently by the Catholic & Public Boards. It would require an addition, there is land to use however, some of the existing Alison Park site could be added to the St. Anne site. There is also a community centre funded by the City at St. Anne.

Q – Why is Elgin Street P.S. not in the scenarios? they will be affected.

R – The school is not included in the study area, but they do feed their grades 6's to Lincoln Avenue. If Lincoln Avenue is closed those students will have a new 7/8 program in the north area and geographically, Avenue Road is the more central site to do this at. Elgin Street was also recently involved in a boundary study.

Q – Renovations at Chalmers Street – would they build up or out with portapacks?

R – Under the scenario where Chalmers Street becomes a JK-8 program, the numbers would support a two-storey addition because that is a more compact and efficient use of land. Today, all new buildings must be fully accessible; this means a two-storey addition would have an elevator. Portapack or one-storey additions are used for smaller capacity needs.

Q – Why does Central feed Lincoln Avenue not Stewart Avenue for 7/8?

R – For secondary school boundary consistency.

Q – Schools that close – what happens to the property?

R – If we use Alison Park as an example; under the scenario where it is closed the land is surplus and we would dispose of it. With the partnership approach (Scenario D) some of the land could be kept to add playfield space to the St. Anne site. There is a process for disposing of land. It is offered to other publicly supported boards and post secondary institutions, then municipalities/government, then goes on the open market. The money from any sale goes to the Board.

- Mr. Smith asked that anyone who had a comment sheet to please hand them in, and invited the public to continue to follow the process online and/or with subsequent public meetings.

Mr. Smith thanked all for coming, and gave the contact numbers and Board website information for the public to access with any questions or comments:

Website:

www.wrdsb.on.ca

- Under: Boundary Studies and Accommodation Reviews, follow link to: Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Accommodation Review

Email:

boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca

Phone:

519-570-0003 ext. 4419

- Group 3 submitted a written list of comments and questions and these are repeated below as part of the public record of this meeting:

- **Scenario A:** No questions.
- Built capacity does not include portables.
- **Scenario B:** What's the logic of Avenue Road vs. Elgin Street? It still affects those students.
- What is the eligible walking distance? 1.6 km for JK-3, 2 km for 4-6, and 3.5 km for grades 7-8.
- Does Chalmers include a portapack? two-storey and replacing portapack?
- How could above be done with students? Summer construction, sealing it off, this has been done elsewhere before.
- **Scenario C:** Central currently feeds Lincoln Avenue, but wouldn't it make sense to feed Stewart Avenue since eventually they go on to Glenview? This is the only one that does that.
- **Scenario D:** Has there been communication with Catholic Board? Yes, just briefly but they have not committed. If we favour it – more dialogue. We already share transportation but never before in our Board has it been done.
- Size – is it smaller for Alison Park than wanted at 150? Yes, ideally you'd want over that, probably 300.
- In this scenario why would they close Lincoln? A new school would be built, JK-8, which is a model they're moving toward.
- What about having JK's, grade 1's etc. with 7 & 8? They would have separate sections, breaks etc., also it's beneficial to have younger ones with seniors – empathy, etc. But also happens with JK-6.
- Would small built capacity here be because doubling up with St. Anne? Yes.
- What is St. Anne population? 130
- **Scenario D:** What are some accessibility items? Ramps, elevators, etc.
- Is it building or playground? Example: Central has upper and lower playground. Would both be accessible? Probably.
- Why make Chalmers two-storey? Could they add on? They have so many portables they could use that space. Seems at odds with accessibility philosophy. A two-storey addition would have an elevator.