

SOUTHWEST KITCHENER SECONDARY BOUNDARY STUDY



The first Public Meeting of the Southwest Kitchener Secondary Boundary Study, involving Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute, Forest Heights Collegiate Institute and Huron Heights Secondary School on Thursday February 7, 2019.

Approximately 65 people attended including members of the community, Board staff, members of the Working Group and Board Trustees.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Galliher, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board, welcomed those in attendance at 7:09 pm and introduced Waterloo Region District School Board Representatives,

- Joanne Weston, Vice Chair, Kitchener
- Carol Millar, Trustee, Waterloo/Wilmot
- Scott Piatkowski, Trustee, Waterloo/Wilmot
- Kathleen Woodcock, Trustee, Waterloo/Wilmot
- Natalie Waddell, Trustee, Kitchener
- Ray Teed, Principal, Cameron Heights CI
- Jeff Klinck, Principal, Huron Heights SS
- Tina Rowe, Principal, Forest Heights CI
- Ron DeBoer, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being
- Graham Shantz, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being
- Bill Lemon, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-being
- Matthew Gerard, Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board
- Nathan Hercanuck, Manager of Planning
- Emily Bumbaco, Senior Planner
- Shelby Selig, Recording Secretary

Ms. Galliher informed the group that there is no recommended or preferred scenario, the options being shared tonight have been contemplated and generated through Working Group meetings. The feedback received tonight will be used moving forward in scenario development. Ms. Galliher explained that the Working Group provides their recommendation to the Board of Trustees for a final decision.

Q: If we already submitted feedback through the boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.ca website do we need to reiterate it tonight?

A: Ms. Galliher responded that all emails received through boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.ca are shared with the Working Group. There are multiple ways feedback can be shared tonight including a Town Hall style question and answer period after the presentation, sticky notes at each scenario station, as well as comment cards provided at the sign in table. There will also be members of staff available at each of the scenario stations for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Galliher led the group through the presentation (available online at <https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/southwest-kitchener-secondary-boundary-study/>)

2. BOUNDARY STUDY PROCESS/OVERVIEW

The purpose of this boundary study is to balance the enrolment utilization throughout the secondary schools involved in this study area and alleviate the current enrolment pressure that Huron Heights SS is currently experiencing. See slides for Working Group composition.

Study Objectives

Draft objectives of this boundary study were shared, after receiving the feedback from this meeting the objectives will be finalized (slide 4).

Implementation of any boundary change is planned for September 2020. The Working Group has developed 4 scenarios (shared tonight) and is continuing to work through additional scenario development.

Ms. Galliher spoke to the study area map, noting that Huron Heights is situated in the green hatching which is an industrial area; there is no residential in the hatched area.

[Development areas](#) were defined.

Status Quo (No change)

On slides 9 to 11 of the online presentation Ms. Galliher shared the enrolment projections, current situation and implications of the status quo (no change) scenario. Ms. Galliher defined OTG (on-the-ground) Capacity as a Ministry of Education measure describing school capacity. Portable capacity is how many portables can be added to a site without significant additional upgrades such as electrical service upgrades, this number could potentially be exceeded but there would be a cost.

Two Accommodation Options from Initial Report

Scenario 1 - Reassign Glencairn PS and Country Hills PS areas (shown in pink hatching on the map on slide 12) from Huron Heights SS to Forest Heights CI.

Ms. Galliher shared the enrolment projections and transportation implications for scenario 1 on slides 13 and 14 of the online presentation.

Scenario 2 - Reassign Glencairn PS and Country Hills PS areas (shown in purple hatching on the map on slide 15) from Huron Heights to Cameron Heights and reassign W.T. Townshend PS and Williamsburg PS areas (shown in pink hatching on the map on slide 15) from Cameron Heights CI to Forest Heights CI. Ms. Galliher shared the enrolment projections and transportation implications for scenario 2 on slides 16 and 17 of the online presentation.

On slide 18 of the online presentation Ms. Galliher shared the feeder school implications for scenario 1 and 2. A split feed means that a grade 8 class attends more than one secondary school. In general, it is an objective to reduce split feeds, or not create additional split feeds, when completing a boundary study. Ms. Galliher noted that the Huron Heights SS feed is eliminated for Laurentian PS for scenario 1 and 2 and scenario 2 eliminates the Cameron Heights CI feed for Queensmount PS.

Two Accommodation Options from Working Group

Scenario 3 - Reassign Groh PS and Brigadoon East areas (shown in pink hatching on slide 19 of the online presentation) from Huron Heights SS to Forest Heights CI.

Ms. Galliher shared the enrolment projections, impacts and transportation implications for scenario 3 on slides 20, 21 and 22 of the online presentation.

Scenario 4 – Reassign Jean Steckle and Huron Woods areas (shown in pink hatching on slide 23 of the online presentation) from Huron Heights SS to Forest Heights CI.

Ms. Galliher shared the enrolment projections, impacts and transportation implications for scenario 4 on slides 24, 25 and 26 of the online presentation.

3. FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

On slide 27 of the online presentation Ms. Galliher shared the communication tools the Board has used to share information with the impacted schools regarding the boundary study, noting that parents can subscribe the Planning website to receive notifications when new information is posted. The boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.ca is monitored by planning staff and any feedback shared through this avenue is brought to the Working Group for scenario development.

4. NEXT STEPS

On slide 28 of the online presentation Ms. Galliher reviewed the next steps for the boundary study.

5. QUESTIONS

Ms. Galliher welcomed individuals to ask questions in a Town Hall style Q&A and introduced Nathan Hercanuck, Manager of Planning to respond to questions.

- Q: *I can see that in 10 years from now we are going to be over 130% utilization in all of the scenarios, what is going to be done at that point to address those numbers?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that the long term solution is to build an additional secondary school in Southwest Kitchener. It could take approximately 10 years until we are able to acquire the land for this site and construct the school.*
- Q: *Regarding scenario 2, the walk to Forest Heights can take approximately 30-45 minutes and requires students to cross a highway access ramp, how are safety concerns being addressed?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that similar concerns were identified by the Working Group. Currently, there is a marked bike lane but no signalized crossing, secondary school aged students should be able to cross this safely. Additionally, transportation experts at Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) can assist us in looking into this further.*
- Q: *Will specialized programs such MSIP be made available to the students that are redirected to other schools?*
- R: *Superintendent Shantz replied that within the WRDSB we provide a full slate of programming within all of our secondary schools. With the core programming we offer in all of our buildings, our goal is to make sure that a student can enter and graduate with the programming they are looking for. Some programs are magnet based, which allows students, through an application process, to attend an out-of-boundary school for specialized programs, for example, Eastwood Collegiate's arts programs. MSIP is not a program but is a multi-instructional period where students have a fifth period scheduled into their day to complete assignments, homework, projects, etc. MSIP is a different approach to scheduling at a school rather than a program offering.*
- Q: *Has there been any thought about sending the Doon South neighbourhood to Southwood SS? All of the scenarios shared tonight have all of the schools over their utilization capacity, when you have a school like Southwood that continues to decline in enrolment numbers.*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that we are limited to the schools that are currently involved in this boundary study. These schools were selected as Board staff believes that these schools offer a solution to the current enrolment at Huron Heights SS. Southwood SS being a further distance would provide transportation implications, we believe that Forest Heights CI and Cameron Heights CI can offer a solution to the challenges we are experiencing in Southwest Kitchener.*
- Q: *Why are we redirecting the neighbourhoods that this school was built to accommodate originally (Country Hills, Glencairn, Pioneer Park and Doon), rather than redirecting the new neighbourhoods?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that we have a number of scenarios on the table; we understand that none of these options are perfect, we are dealing with challenges of enrolment pressure in Southwest Kitchener and we believe that these can be accommodated by the schools involved in this boundary study.*

Q: *Why is such a small isolated pocket such as Dodge Drive near Groh PS being considered for redirection in scenario 3 when there are such small numbers of houses in this area which would not make a significant impact on enrolment numbers?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that the thought process behind scenario 3 was to make a more cohesive group that would be redirected, so the Development Area and surrounding boundaries would be redirected together, rather than having a small patch of students redirected from the Development Areas.*

Q: *Is there special accommodation circumstances for a student to be able to stay or go to a specific school and not be redirected?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that there is an opportunity to evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis.*

Q: *How is the Working Group membership broken down, what schools are represented in the Working Group? Is there parent representation from the feeder schools?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that there is parent representation from each of the secondary schools in the Boundary Study; we sought up to three parent representatives from each of the schools. The parent representatives have at least one student in one of the secondary schools within the boundary study but could also have students in the elementary track.*

Q: *With the original scenarios, Jean Steckle, Huron Village and Doon were not involved in the redirection, and parents may not be aware that they could potentially be impacted by this boundary study. How are you making sure that everyone is getting this information?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that we have done our best to communicate that the scenarios provided with the initial report were built to spark discussion only, and further scenarios would be developed. We have pushed all information regarding the boundary study to all JK-6 and 7/8 feeder schools; we also publish Working Group minutes on the Planning website.*

Q: *What do you do with fifth year students at Huron Heights SS; it is a possibility to redirect fifth year students to another school since it is their preference to come back for another year? Do we have statistics on how many fifth year students we anticipate yearly?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that approximately 20% of grade 12 students return for a fifth year and they attend their boundary school.*

Q: *What are the grandparenting options for Huron Heights SS students?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that grandparenting is part of the Working Group discussion. Once the group identifies a preferred scenario we discuss how the change will be facilitated, there is always a consideration for grandparenting. However, as stated earlier the Trustees do have the final decision on scenario as well as grandparenting implementation.*

Q: *What kind of notification will parents receive when a boundary decision is made and when is this anticipated to occur?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck replied that we are aiming to have the Working Group decision and report to the Board of Trustees by June 2019. When a decision has been made a transition committee will be struck to work out how information on the changes will be communicated. The implementation date for this study is September 2020.*

Q: *Why are we not utilizing Cameron Heights CI as much as we are planning on using Forest Heights CI in the scenarios that have been provided?*

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board only owns the land that Cameron Heights CI sits on, the fields surrounding Cameron Heights are all owned by the City of Kitchener. This makes our ability to place portables at Cameron Heights challenging.

Q: What weight is given on number of transitions elementary students have already made?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that it is always a goal of the boundary study to reduce or at least not create any additional split feeds.

Q: Does Cameron Heights CI offer the level of tech courses that Huron Heights SS does?

R: Mr. Teed, Principal of Cameron Heights CI responded that Cameron CI has one of the largest tech programs within the board. The school has approximately 6 blocks of grade 9 tech courses available supported by 6 full time tech teachers.

Q: Do you have any graphs which contemplate the utilization against the total capacity including portable capacity? Are any portables currently at Forest Heights SS?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that we currently do not have graphs showing the numbers including the portable capacity for each school. In general one portable can accommodate 21 students, however this statistic can be misleading as it does not take into account specialized classrooms such as science labs, tech rooms or gymnasiums which cannot be accommodated in portables. It is the specialized spaces that inevitably have scheduling conflicts when we reach high enrolment numbers like the ones we are seeing at Huron Heights SS. There are currently no portables at Forest Heights CI, and Forest Heights also is a school that has a large number of science labs and specialty spaces, this is why we believe that Forest Heights CI has the capability to offer a solution for the enrolment challenges we are facing in Southwest Kitchener.

Q: The Development Areas around Groh PS, are assigned to Brigadoon and Doon PS for elementary grades so I don't believe that keeping these students together for secondary school assignment, as suggested in scenario 3, should be a driving factor. Also, since the students at Groh PS are involved in project based learning, how will this be addressed if students are directed to a secondary school that does not have project based learning (pbl)?

R: Mr. Hercanuck thanked the speaker for the feedback on scenario 3 and project based learning.

Q: Are we limited to the fact that we are not going to get a new high school in Southwest Kitchener the next 10 years? Why isn't an addition at Huron Heights being considered?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the process of purchasing land and building a facility are two different processes. To purchase land for a school site, the board collects Education Development Charges on residential and non-residential development in the Region, this money can only be used towards purchasing sites. The funds for building a school are applied for through a Capital program. Historically, there was an annual call for the Board's eight top Capital Projects (new school, addition, or a major renovation) and we would submit a business case in support of the request. In past years, this submission occurred in the spring and by late summer the Board would be notified of which projects received funding approval. The Ministry of Education selects which projects they will fund, the number of projects is not consistent, commonly no more than a quarter of projects submitted are approved for funding each application cycle, and the projects selected are not necessarily the top priorities requested by the Board. The current Provincial Government has put a pause on the Ministry Capital program, so there is no method to access new capital at this time and it is unknown when there will be another opportunity to apply for Capital funding. An addition is considered a capital project, so we are not able to apply for the funds for an addition at this time.

Q: *In regards to scenario 3, the amount of time spent on a bus being transported to and from Forest Heights CI would be very long. If students would like to take part in extracurricular activities, this would put a huge burden on families as these areas are not serviced well by public transportation. How much time would it take students to get to and from the Doon South area the bus in scenario 3?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that this issue has been raised in the Working Group as well as received through our [boundary feedback](#) email. This will continue to be a consideration for future scenario development. Ms. Gallier responded that STSWR has given an estimated time of 20-25 minutes however, after receiving feedback regarding this commute we believe this estimate may have been conservative. The Working Group has agreed that it does not wish to create excessive travel times.*

Q: *At what point do you begin to look at students that are attending Huron Heights SS from out-of-boundary and send them back to their neighbourhood schools?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that he is not aware of a large number of out-of-boundary students attending Huron Heights; Mr. Klinck agreed and added that Huron Heights SS has not accepted any out-of-boundary requests this school year.*

Q: *Are we able to use the money that we collect through Education Development Charges to fund for a school addition?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded no, it is in legislation that EDC's can only be used to purchase sites and prepare the land on which a school will be built.*

Q: *Who can we lobby to, to stop the freeze on Capital Funding for this growing community?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Capital program resides with the Ministry of Education, if people would like to speak to someone regarding funding or programs under provincial jurisdiction he would suggest speaking to your local representative of provincial parliament; however he is not advocating to do so.*

Mr. Hercanuck thanked those in attendance and welcomed everyone to view the presentation boards and provide feedback regarding preferred scenarios.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Planning staff to connect with STSWR regarding crossing at on/off ramp for scenario 2 and bring back information to next Public Consultation**

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Public Meeting #2: TBD

Working Group Meeting #5: Tuesday February 19, 2019