



**Forest Hill / Trillium Elementary Schools Boundary Study**  
**Minutes of Working Group Meeting # 1**  
**May 17, 2011**  
**Library, Trillium Public School - 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.**

The first Working Group Meeting of the Forest Hill / Trillium Elementary Schools Boundary Study was held at Trillium Public School on Tuesday, May 17, 2011.

**Attendees:**

Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent, B. Brown, Principal of Trillium P.S., and our host for the evening, Marcia Lubert, Vice Principal of Forest Hill P.S., Carol Fuller, Parent Representative Forest Hill P.S., Shane Hall, Parent Representative Trillium P.S., Jennifer Kroeker, Parent Representative Forest Hill P.S., Jennifer Passy, Parent Representative Trillium P.S., Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner, Andrea Kean (Recording Secretary).

**Regrets:**

Steve Zack, Principal of Forest Hill Public School

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

- Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, welcomed members of the Working Group, and Board staff present for the evening and thanked them for volunteering to be involved in the process and Principal B. Brown for hosting the first meeting. Members introduced themselves to the Group. Mr. Smith also indicated that Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner may sit in on future meetings as well. Mr. Smith Introduced Lauren Manske, Senior Planner as Chair of the Working Group and any future questions could be directed to Lauren through email at: [lauren\\_manske@wrdsb.on.ca](mailto:lauren_manske@wrdsb.on.ca) or via telephone at (519) 570-0003 ext 4596.
- Ms. Manske led the group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/forest-hill-trillium-elementary-schools-boundary-study>) to discuss the role of the Working Group and the Reasons for the Review:

**2. Role of Working Group**

**The Working Group consists of:**

- 2 parents from each school
- The Principal (or designate) from each school
- Board Planning Staff
- The school area Superintendent

**The Role of the Working Group members:**

1. To identify and discuss issues and opportunities of the school communities in the study area, and represent the broader community.
2. To set study objectives.
3. To develop boundary options/scenarios.
4. To evaluate boundary options/scenarios against study objectives.
5. To act as a liaison between the Working Group and the schools, and the broader school community.

**3. Background/Explanation of Boundary Study Process/Timing**

Ms. Manske explained the reasons the Board undertakes a Boundary Study as follows:

1. Opening of a new school and establishing a new boundary area.
2. Changing the grade structure of an elementary school.
3. Balancing enrolment and facilities where one school may be over student capacity and another school may be running below student capacity.
4. When new residential development requires the new area to be assigned to existing schools where capacity exists.

Ms. Manske noted that Reason No. 3 (balancing enrolment and facilities) is the key reason why the Board is undergoing a boundary study at Forest Hill and Trillium Public Schools and this is an opportunity to address the issues of: enrolment decline, facility size and better balancing of enrolment numbers in the study area.

**The following issues were noted:**

Trillium P.S. has an organization of fewer than 200 students and at that size faces challenges of staffing and combined grades, which can result in fewer professional learning opportunities for staff.

Forest Hill P.S. has a larger organization and is to undergo construction of an addition to replace the Porta Pak with permanent Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) rooms; however still has outstanding issues with the office, gym and library as those are undersized for the size of its population. At the same time the Board does not want to overbuild at Forest Hill P.S. if we can bring some students to Trillium P.S. and better balance enrolment between both schools.

Current pupil capacity at Trillium P.S. is 236 students and sits on 8 acres. Enrolment data shows a 33 percent enrolment decline at Trillium P.S. over the 2000-2010 period.

Current pupil capacity at Forest Hill P.S. is 406 but with addition will be 529 pupil places and sits on 7.25 acres. Enrolment data shows a 6 percent decline over the 2000-2010 period.

Forest Hill P.S. getting an addition of 6 full-day kindergarten rooms. Addition to go in the back where the Porta Pak was.

Forest Hill P.S. will have a slight increase in enrolment over the next 10 years due to FDK which begins there in September 2011.

Trillium currently has a portable on site which is used for a special program.

Trillium's FDK program will commence September 2012.

Maps with current school boundaries and draft enrolment projection for 2011-2020 for the study areas were handed out (available on line at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/forest-hill-trillium-elementary-schools-boundary-study> ).

### **Boundary Study Process:**

May evaluate a scenario or set of scenarios and use piece of each. Results may include construction/renovation proposals for either school going forward. Can also look at modifying building capacity. But will not result in any school closure.

Once Working Group has agreed on a preferred scenario, staff will take it to the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision.

### **Timing:**

The process will likely take no less than 5 Working Group meetings. If several options, may take more time. We have no predetermined plan going into the review. We work with you on solutions.

We will take options to the public via Public Meetings to get feedback and use that feedback to develop/refine scenarios.

So the process includes no less than 2 public meetings to provide an opportunity for community members to be involved. This is an open process and all meeting information is available on the Board Website at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/forest-hill-trillium-elementary-schools-boundary-study>

Q: Where will the Public Meetings be held?

R: Typically the Public Meetings will be held at the study schools or can be held at a neighborhood community centre, whichever works best for the community.

It would be beneficial to have another Working Group meeting before the end of this school year to get well into the process as we would like to take solution to the Board by December/January for decision. This is so that if a decision is made, it will be known prior to working on staffing for the following year. It also allows the results to be implemented for September 2012, because kindergarten sign up is in February 2012. But we are not limited; we can have more time if we feel it is needed for the process. No changes will take place for September 2011, nor will we implement changes mid-year as we operate on the full school year to give families time to transition.

#### 4. Discussion of Issues/Setting Study Objectives

Process may involve grand-parenting (phasing) once we know where we are going.

**Action Item: Working Group members to come up with list of issues/objectives for next meeting.**

#### Discussion around Boundary Map handouts

Areas I and D have kids across the street attending different schools.

Ms. Manske to provide Working Group with copy of the presentation which is also available on the Board Website at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/forest-hill-trillium-elementary-schools-boundary-study>

Everything discussed is for the public and members of the group should feel free to share with your school community as they will be relying on you to communicate out to them.

Some of the objectives of the Boundary Study may be:

- To provide students with equitable program opportunities to ensure their success.
- To make the best use of capital and operating resources.
- To develop a solution that is long-term (approximately 10 years).

The Waterloo Region District School Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size Configuration which outlines desired school capacity and class sizes needs to be kept in mind but we do not always have the capacity/resources to achieve. Special Programs (Special Education, English-as-a-Second-Language, and French Immersion) also influence enrolment numbers.

Q: Does Trillium P.S. have a special program housed in a portable?

R: No, it is a “homeroom” for itinerant Special Education staff.

We will also endeavor to maximize the number of students within walking distance to their school. As a note in this regard, the Board as just passed an Active Transportation Charter to recognize the trip to and from school.

We try to eliminate under utilized space by balancing enrolment through boundary adjustment. And keep in mind accessibility issues for future construction (i.e., layout of building, security, access where main office is located).

We will look at long-term demographics (10 years) which will be key and also try to minimize transition to students, given that there could well be a change in boundary.

It was noted that Forest Hill P.S. has a split feed to Laurentian & Queensmount Senior Public Schools which may be an issue to keep in mind. Planning will supply boundary maps for senior schools in study area for next meeting.

### **Next Steps:**

At the next meeting we will start talking about boundary scenarios. The Working Group were given a boundary map of the study area divided into sections and an Enrolment Projection Summary with number of students that live in each of the lettered sub-areas. The Working Group was asked as their homework to study the information and come up with some suggested solutions to balance enrolment that we can discuss at the next meeting. They were also asked to forward their solutions to Ms. Manske so she can make changes to the maps for the next meeting.

Q: The group requested an electronic version of the map.

R: Ms. Manske will send out via email.

Q: Why the areas don't align with boundaries? i.e., Area D and I are not separated by a major road way but attend different schools.

R: Result of past development activity; eg: Area D was a new development added later.

C: Distinct demographic pockets need to be addressed and balanced.

C: It may be difficult to drill down deeper into demographic information as there are confidentiality issues.

C: Areas D and I have a high population of kids.

C: Both areas D and E attend Forest Hill P.S. but are across Highway 7/8 from that school.

Ms. Manske – referring to the Enrolment handout, stated that the numbers are a rough estimate and she will do a more detailed map which may change the numbers. All kids on the table are Public School students but some may go to other schools for special programs such as French Immersion as it is not offered at either school.

Q: Why where some areas like Blackhorne Crescent (outside area L) excluded from Trillium P.S. catchment area?

R: Again, related to timing of development; McLennan Park was a “no go” area for walkers, etc. Do we need to add other schools to study – i.e, Glenciarn? Is this a bused area if so it may not be an issue?

C: If it makes sense we should include the other schools/communities sooner rather than later.

Q: Does Trillium P.S. have out-of-boundary kids from that neighbourhood?

R: We can find this out.

Ms. Manske will provide where our walking distances get you to. That would be another consideration.

If there are strays from the boundary we should add these people as soon as possible.

Planning Department will determine schools and add to study as necessary.

Q: Are 2011 numbers a head count?

R: Yes, but they are from December count and do not include new registrations.

Ms. Manske can do a breakdown on children from particular type of development (high rise, condo, single family) The enrollment might hold in some areas as in the case of starter housing.

There will be higher number in the high density pockets along the expressway.

Mr. Smith asked if there were any questions around the process.

B. Brown just wanted reiterate that we need to have the approach of doing what is best for the kids and that we are all coming to the table to develop a best possible solution for all families, and to keep vulnerable families in mind during the process.

Q: How do we identify the special groups and notify them of the process?

R: We can do flyers in other languages; as well we are relying on the parent community to help notify us of the groups.

Process is designed to be as open as possible, and our track record is that the Board is very receptive to the recommendation of the community-based Working Groups.

## **5. Set Future Meeting Dates**

Need to set a consistent day and time for future meetings. Meeting will be held about every 2 weeks, or less when there is a public meeting and depending on what needs to be done to prepare for the next meeting. Meeting will run for 1 ½ hours and if we know the agenda is full we will let you know ahead of time so you can make arrangements.

Mr. Smith offered up homework to the Group to make sure we captured the issues and to think about rebalancing.

Planning Department leads the Public Meetings and the Working Group members are not obligated to attend. Planning will bring back information gathered at the Public Meeting to share with the Working Group.

Marcia Lubert offered to host the second meeting of the Working Group at Forest Hill Public School.

**Next Meeting set for: Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at Forest Hill Library.**

**6. Roundtable**

Need to look at demographic issues and to get in touch with and include those parents who might not normally attend school meetings.

Outline what you would like to achieve / what works for families.

Look at split feed and take a look at boundary for Laurentian and Queensmount Public School for the senior feed.

Schools generally prefer grade 6 feed to be consistent – Can we address?

To Split Area D on map as 158 kids in area - only half of area is residential – other half is industrial. Is it a potential site for redevelopment – not pre-zoned and is offered for sale, so could be an area of increasing enrollment.

Mr. Smith to speak with City staff regarding development area.

McLennan Park for residential infill.

Ms. Manske: can split the areas differently on Projection Areas Map and do a distribution map and plot kids with breakdown for housing type.

Q: Can we look at unit types and acreage for development area? Could proximity to former landfill be an issue for development?

R: Mr. Smith will contact realtor Tim Ingold at Coldwell Banker. If you want specific information Ms. Manske will provide if we have it. i.e., Special Planning.

Q: What Languages are spoken at both school communities?

R: Forest Hill P.S. community speaks approximately 31 languages and has been noted as one of the highest poverty rates.

Q: How do we make sure we are fairly representing them & how do we get info out to them?

C: Trillium P.S. has moved to a website for notification for school information.

Q: If Planning provided a Binder to be kept in each schools main office on the Boundary Study Process, would parents refer to it?

R: Yes, binder would be a good idea as we would need both electronic and hard copy as not everyone is online.

The Planning Department will make binders for each school office and the principals will be responsible for keeping the binder up to date with inserts provided by Planning.

C: Can also advertise meetings on school sign for neighbourhood, folk driving by.

Q: Should we use social media like Facebook? Do we want to get into that? The Board has Twitter and notifies followers of Board events.

C: No, but we should set up an email distribution list?

R: Both schools could do a “send home” with a request for parents who are interested to provide their emails to be included in an update list.

It was agreed that each school would send home a single page flyer with request for parents interested to provide emails.

Mr. Smith reminded the group to think about the objectives which initially will remain fluid, and be taken out to the Public Meetings to ensure public agrees.

Ms. Manske will send out link to past reviews so members can look over past objectives which might be useful for this study as well. Past reviews available at: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies>

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.