

West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review

Accommodation Report and Recommendations of the Accommodation Review Committee

DRAFT V.3

June 5, 2012

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Executive Summary

This report is intended to advise and inform the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Board of Trustees of the information gathered and consultation conducted by the West Galt Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) in order to develop the final recommendations provided in this report.

The final decision on outcome of the pupil accommodation review is to be made by the elected Board of Trustees.

The ARC agreed upon Scenario 23 as the recommended strategy for pupil accommodation in the West Galt review area.

The following is a brief outline of the ARC's recommendations provided in this report.

The ARC recommends:

1. To close Dickson P.S.
2. To construct a new JK-6 facility
3. To modify the boundary for Blair Road P.S.
4. To modify the boundary and add Grade 6 to Highland P.S.
5. To modify the boundary for Tait Street P.S.
6. To offer only Grades 7 and 8 at St. Andrew's P.S.

An approximate timeline of the implementation of these recommendations is attached as Appendix B.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide to the Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB) Board of Trustees the recommendations of the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) on pupil accommodation within the West Galt Review Area of Cambridge and North Dumfries.

Background

In June 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education released a revised version of the [Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline](#). The *Guideline* provides direction to school boards regarding public accommodation reviews undertaken to determine the future of a school or group of schools.

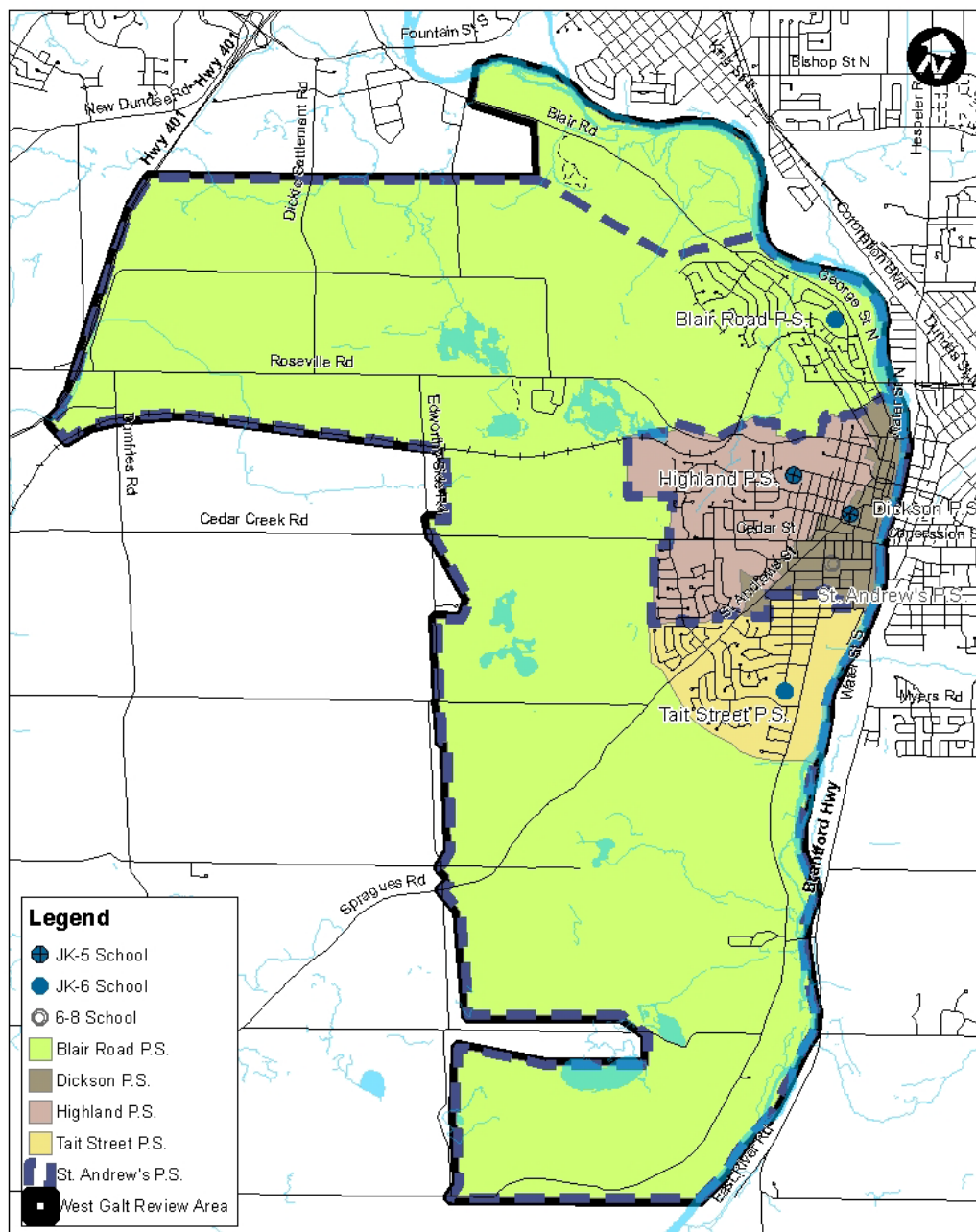
The *Guideline* ensures that where a decision is taken by a school board regarding the future of a school, that decision is made with the full involvement of an informed local community and it is based on a broad range of criteria regarding the quality of learning experience for students.

In November 2009, the WRDSB approved its own policy, [Board Policy 4000](#), following the provincial *Guideline*. This policy establishes the process for undertaking pupil accommodation reviews.

On February 14, 2011, a report titled [Report on Elementary Boundary Studies and Accommodation Reviews 2010-2011](#) was presented at the Committee of the Whole Meeting. Based on the recommendations of this report, the WRDSB (Board) approved a motion to initiate a pupil accommodation review in the West Galt area of Cambridge. The schools identified in the review area include: Blair Road, Dickson, Highland, St. Andrew's and Tait Street Public Schools.

West Galt Accommodation Review

The West Galt review area is made up of 5 schools (see Figure 1), that serve the student populations west of the Grand River in the southern portion of Cambridge, historically known as Galt. The review area also reaches into the Township of North Dumfries, including the Township settlement areas known as Brown, Dickie One, Dickie Two, Innanen, and Riverview. Overall, the review area is defined by the St. Andrew's P.S. Grade 7/8 boundary. The review area generally contains older (30 plus years) established neighbourhoods; however, pockets of new and planned residential development are expected to place localized pressure on facilities.

Figure 1: West Galt Accommodation Review Area

West Galt Review Area Schools

The schools in the review area include:

1. Blair Road Public School (JK-6)
2. Dickson Public School (JK-5)
3. Highland Public School (JK-5)
4. St. Andrew's Public School (6-8)
5. Tait Street Public School (JK-6)

Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)

The purpose of the ARC, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, was to conduct a review of the West Galt elementary schools of the WRDSB in order to advise and provide recommendations that will inform the final decision made by the Board of Trustees on whether a school or schools should be either closed or consolidated.

Membership

The ARC membership was composed of both community members and WRDSB staff as outlined in [Board Policy 4000](#).

Blair Road P.S.

Principal: Jodie Meyer

Parents: Kelly Deml, Lynn Robb

Dickson P.S.

Principal: Barry Frame

Parents: Vanessa Meal (until February 1, 2012), Al Potma (as of February 1, 2012), Rebecca Raineault (until March 20, 2012), Dianne Ray (as of March 20, 2012)

Highland P.S.

Principal: Wendy Bowker

Parents: Paula Ouellet, Hayley Orman

St. Andrew's P.S.

Principal: Karen Tomlin

Parents: Beverley Fox, Roy Roethel (alternate representative Terri Peach)

Tait Street P.S.

Principal: Marcia Lubert

Parents: Karen Destun, Maura Fuller

Area Superintendent

Superintendent of Education: Lila Read

Municipal Representation

City of Cambridge: Trevor McWilliams

Facilities Staff (Planning)

Manager of Planning: Dennis Cuomo

Manager of Capital Projects: Ronald Dallan

Senior Planners: Nathan Hercanuck, Lauren Manske

Recording Secretary: Andrea Kean

Other Board Staff (who attended meetings):

Vice-Principals: Nick Chiarelli (Highland P.S.), Michelle Schmid (St. Andrew's P.S.)

Manager of Communications: Abigail Dancey
 Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services (Special Education): Jim Berry
 Facility Manager: Tony Puim

It is important to note that board staff were non-voting members of the ARC. Representation from the broader community was sought; however, no interest was expressed from an individual without a conflict of interest.

Timelines and Activities

The ARC ensured that the minimum timelines as established by both the Ministry of Education [Guideline](#) and [Board Policy 4000](#) for the accommodation review process were met.

Throughout the review, a total of four public meetings were held to provide opportunity for a wide range of school and community groups to participate in the consultation. Public meetings were advertised in two area newspapers (the *Waterloo Region Record*, and the *Cambridge Times*), on the WRDSB main website and school websites, the WRDSB twitter feed, in school newsletters/emails and school signs (e.g. St. Andrew's P.S. readerboard and flyers posted in schools) and in notices sent home with each student in the review area.

The following is a summary of the activities of the ARC prior to submission of this report.

ACTIVITY	DATE	LOCATION
Board approval to commence review	February 14, 2011	Education Centre
ARC Meeting #1	September 27, 2011	Highland P.S.
Public Meeting #1	October 5, 2011	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #2	October 25, 2011	Highland P.S.
ARC Meeting #3	November 15, 2011	Highland P.S.
School Tours	November 19, 2011	All schools
ARC Meeting #4	November 29, 2011	Highland P.S.
ARC Meeting #5	January 11, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #6	February 1, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #7	February 15, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
Public Meeting #2	March 1, 2012	Blair Road P.S.
ARC Meeting #8	March 7, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #9	March 20, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
Public Meeting #3	March 27, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #10	April 10, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #11	May 2, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
ARC Meeting #12	May 22, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.
Public Meeting #4	June 5, 2012	St. Andrew's P.S.

Public Information and Access

In addition to the four public meetings, all relevant accommodation review information was posted on the WRDSB website and available in hard copy in binders kept at each of the schools in the review area and at the Education Centre.

Minutes of the ARC meetings and public meetings where a formal presentation was conducted were posted on the WRDSB website for public access. Information provided at public meeting open houses and other requested information was also posted on the WRDSB website and made available in hard copy.

Rationale for a Pupil Accommodation Review

There were several key reasons the WRDSB initiated an accommodation review for the West Galt area. These reasons included:

- ***School size and configuration***

In June 2010, the WRDSB passed a new policy ([Board Policy 3002](#)) related to elementary school size and configuration, which relates to the research presented in the Good Schools Standing Committee [Report](#) of the same name dated May 17, 2007. This policy states that when considering Pupil Accommodation Reviews, the following guiding principles are to be used:

- *JK-8 facilities will ideally have a built capacity of between 500 and 650 students;*
- *JK-6 facilities will ideally have a built capacity of between 350 and 400 students;*
- *JK-6 facilities will be designed to accommodate future expansion to accommodate a JK-8 configuration where practical;*
- *That planning for elementary school configurations consider the following:*
 - *Have at least 2 classes per grade in JK-6 to support professional learning communities;*
 - *Have more than 2 classes per grade in Grades 7 and 8 to support program;*
 - *Minimize the number of schools with FTE enrolments over 650 students, including the Full-Day Kindergarten program, wherever possible;*
 - *Be sensitive to the impact on elementary students transitioning between schools*

The schools in the West Galt review area do not currently meet the majority of these criteria.

Table 1 outlines the size and configuration of each of the facilities.

Table 1: West Galt School Size and Configuration

	On-the Ground Capacity (2011/12)	On-the Ground Capacity (2012/13)*	2011/12 Enrolment	JK-5	JK-6	6-8
Blair Road P.S.	279	276	245		•	
Dickson P.S.	161	161	115	•		
Highland P.S.	348	431	532	•		
St. Andrew's P.S.	424	401	446			•
Tait Street P.S.	348	348	304		•	
Total	1560	1617	1642	2	2	1

* updated to reflect changes to the room types/usages in the Ministry of Education School Facilities Inventory System

- **Capacity issues**

This year both Highland P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S. are over capacity and have portable classrooms on site to accommodate students. The WRDSB was allocated funding in January 2012 to construct 4 classrooms to implement the Full-Day Kindergarten program at Highland P.S. for September 2012. These 4 classrooms will be replacing 6 classrooms that were in a porta-pack that has been demolished. This addition will change the school's built capacity to 431 (using current Ministry Kindergarten classroom loading of 20); however, it is anticipated that portables will still be required to accommodate students.

- **Facility and site issues**

The most recent school to be built in the West Galt Review Area was Blair Road P.S. almost 50 years ago. Although there have been more recent additions and renovations to some of the facilities, the majority of the classroom and ancillary spaces in the West Galt schools are older and the facilities are experiencing higher maintenance cost than newer facilities in the Board. Table 2 summarizes the original year of construction of the facility as well as the years any additions were constructed. It also provides a summary of the site size and the gross floor area of the buildings.

Table 2: West Galt Facility and Site Information

School	Original Year of Construction	Additions	Site Size (acres)	Gross Floor Area (m ²)
Blair Road P.S.	1963	1978	5.9	2620
Dickson P.S.	1877	N/A	0.96	1512
Highland P.S.	1950	1960, 1992, 2012	6.83	2949
St. Andrew's P.S.	1913	1921, 1956, 1965, 1982	4.03	4880
Tait Street P.S.	1958	1964, 1971	4.66	3118

As Table 2 shows, the Dickson P.S. facility is situated on less than an acre of land (0.96 acres). It is the smallest elementary school site in the Board. When it was built in the

late 1800s, gymnasiums, libraries, kindergarten rooms and large open play spaces were not an essential part of an elementary school facility. These facilities still do not exist at Dickson P.S. Since the site is constrained with respect to size, and the building has been designated by the City of Cambridge as a property of historical and architectural significance, there is little opportunity to remedy these issues.

As a guideline, the Board will consider constructing double gymnasiums for schools over 400 pupil places. With school enrolments exceeding 400 students, it becomes challenging to schedule classes for quality daily physical activity (QDPA) in a single gymnasium. The current enrolment at Highland P.S. (532 total students) suggests that its single gymnasium may not provide the gymnasium space required for all students/classes to have access to the facility for QDPA.

The Tait Street P.S. site has no frontage; therefore, it has no formally designated location for buses to pick up/drop off students. There is currently only one bus bringing students to the school; however, with the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten in 2014, it is anticipated that an additional bus will be required.

In 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed. This legislation dictates that all public facilities, including schools, need to be accessible on or before January 1, 2025. Older, multi-storey facilities are also often inaccessible under the Act. Table 3 summarizes the accessibility requirements for the facilities in the West Galt Review Area. Specifically there are accessibility issues at Dickson P.S., St. Andrew's P.S. and Tait Street P.S. that will need to be addressed prior to 2025.

Table 3: West Galt Accessibility Summary (2008)

School	Access to Areas of Instruction	# Floors	% Accessible	Possible Solutions
Blair Road P.S.	Yes	1	98.9%	N/A
Dickson P.S.	No	3	0%	Elevator or stair lift
Highland P.S.	Yes	1	96.9%	N/A
St. Andrew's P.S.	Partial	3	43%	Elevator or stair lift
Tait Street P.S.	Partial	2	83.4%	Elevator or stair lift

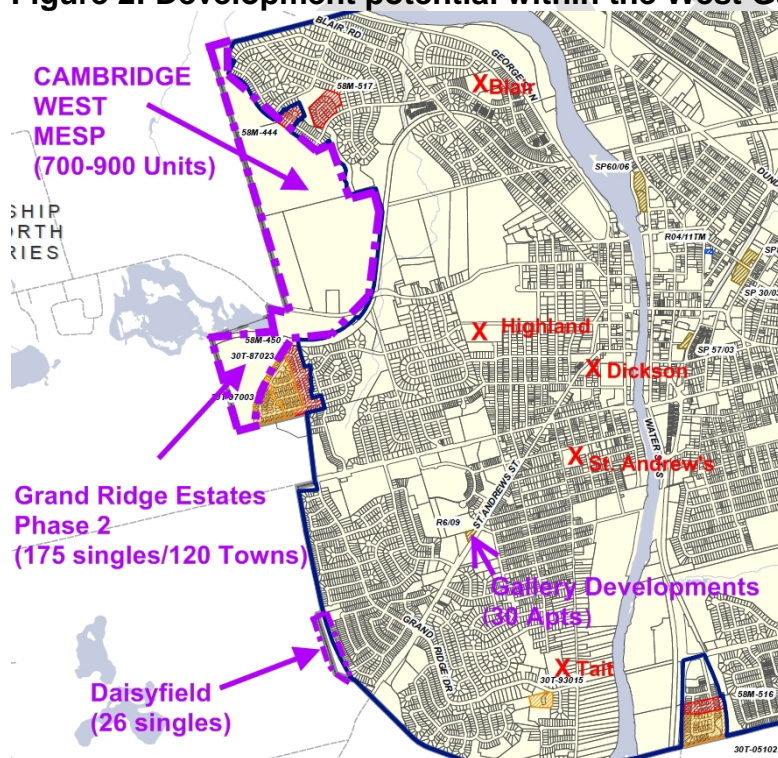
- **Localized residential development**

In more mature communities there is an expectation that the peak enrolments have subsided. As Table 4 shows, the majority of the housing stock in the West Galt community predates the 1970s; however, there are a few areas with plans of subdivision that have started building in recent years. Currently there are plans to add approximately 440 additional homes to the Highland P.S. boundary (some of these homes are already being built). These plans are expected to reach full build out within the next 10 years. This may supplement localized enrolment in that boundary.

Table 4: West Galt Review Area Age of Dwellings, 2006¹

Period of Construction	Number of Occupied Dwellings	% of Total
Pre 1946	1725	21%
1946 to 1960	1240	15%
1961 to 1970	1285	16%
1971 to 1980	1735	21%
1981 to 1985	535	7%
1986 to 1990	605	7%
1991 to 1995	330	4%
1996 to 2000	485	6%
2001 to 2006	285	3%

Another area with growth potential is known as the Cambridge West Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) study area. This study area falls within the Blair Road P.S. boundary. As of this date no formal application has been submitted to the City of Cambridge for development on these lands; however, there is a projected potential for 700-900 homes to be built in this area. Given the uncertainty and timing of this development, it is premature to include these homes in the 10 year enrolment projections for the West Galt review area. These and other development proposals within the West Galt Review Area are shown on Figure 2.

Figure 2: Development potential within the West Galt Review Area²

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census Profile

² Source: City of Cambridge, 2011

- **Enrolment changes/shifts**

One of the major challenges the board faces is accommodating a mobile population in stationary facilities built at the time for the programs and enrolment of the day. Due to demographic and population changes, some schools in the review area (Tait Street P.S. specifically) had experienced enrolment decline; whereas others had experienced growth (Highland P.S., St. Andrew's P.S.) over the past 5 years. Table 5 and Table 6 illustrate the historic and projected enrolment (with status quo boundaries) at each of the facilities in the review area.

Table 5: West Galt Historic Enrolment (2006-2011)

School	Total Students by Year						% change
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Blair Road P.S.	255	254	237	239	236	245	-4.1
Dickson P.S.	117	125	118	125	101	115	-1.7
Highland P.S.*	530	508	523	490	510	532	0.4
St. Andrew's P.S.*	441	441	437	432	432	446	1.1
Tait Street P.S.	367	342	331	333	319	304	-20.7
Total	1710	1670	1646	1619	1598	1642	-4.1

*Partial French Immersion program

Table 6: West Galt Projected Enrolment with Status Quo Boundaries (2012-2017)³

School	Projected Total Students by Year						% change
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Blair Road P.S.	230	237	244	255	262	268	14.2
Dickson P.S.	110	107	111	115	118	119	7.6
Highland P.S.	559	574	580	572	582	575	2.8
St. Andrew's P.S.	459	426	395	395	407	428	-7.2
Tait Street P.S.	302	286	285	277	291	287	-5.2
Total	1660	1630	1615	1614	1660	1677	1.0

- **Evolving curriculum direction/school organization**

In this review area, the WRDSB operates two JK-5, two JK-6 schools and one 6-8 facility. There are currently no opportunities for students to attend a JK-8 facility in the review area.

On October 27, 2009, the Ministry of Education announced its intentions to implement the Early Learning Program (ELP), now known as Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) starting in September 2010 with the goal to have FDK fully implemented in all schools across the province by 2014-15. As a result of implementation of this initiative, the current requirement for kindergarten classrooms in most of the facilities across the board will increase. Table 7 indicates the year of implementation of the FDK program at each of the schools in review area.

³ Revised May 25, 2012 using 2012/13 pre-registration data and staffing projections

Table 7: West Galt Full-Day Kindergarten Program Implementation Dates

School	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Blair Road P.S.			•		
Dickson P.S.	•				
Highland P.S.			•		
Tait Street P.S.					•

School Information Profiles

The ARC customized the generic School Information Profile template and Board administration completed a School Information Profile for each of the schools in the review area. These School Information Profiles, along with other relevant information were made available to the public on the WRDSB website and in hard copy at each of the schools in the review area.

The School Information Profiles consider four perspectives: value to the student, the Board, the community and the local economy. The ARC took the position that all the schools were *equal* in value in providing its respective elementary education program. The School Information Profiles provided the foundation for discussion and analysis of accommodation options.

Accommodation Review Committee Terms of Reference

Mission

The overall purpose of the West Galt ARC *“is to conduct an accommodation review of the West Galt Elementary Schools to advise and provide recommendations that will inform the final decision made by the Board of Trustees about the future of student accommodation in the West Galt community of Cambridge.”*

Vision

The ARC’s vision was *“to strengthen the quality of learning experience for students.”*

Goals

The goals established by the ARC explain what the ARC intends to achieve through the accommodation review process. The six goals are:

- To establish grade configurations that provide the best learning opportunities for students and staff
- To establish sustainable/long-term enrolments that provide equitable learning opportunities for students and staff
- To increase equity of facilities necessary to deliver curriculum and support student achievement
- To establish/maintain facilities and boundaries that are long-term (approx. 10 years), and consider:

- *Walking distances (community/neighbourhood-level schools)*
 - *Efficiency of transportation*
 - *Capacity of schools*
 - *Current and future population density and demographics*
 - *Proximity to other schools*
 - *Impact on feeder and surrounding schools*
- To minimize the impact on students where changes are proposed (consideration for grandparenting, phasing, transitions, etc.)
- To improve the long-term opportunity for the Board to make a solid business case for additional capacity funding as residential development plans progress in Cambridge West

Objectives

Prior to developing accommodation options, or scenarios, the ARC set the following review objectives, which aim to address the issues identified by the Board, the ARC and members of the public. These objectives are more specific and measureable statements of the goals. They also provide the criteria to evaluate the accommodation options.

- To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8 or 7-8
- To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity
- To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from Board Policy 3002):
 - *JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade)*
 - *JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8)*
- To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school
- To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation
- To reduce the unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)
- To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)
- To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025

The ARC agreed at the outset that these objectives would be the measure used to evaluate the various scenarios developed as preferred accommodation options for the West Galt review area.

Accommodation Review Committee Recommendations

Looking at the entire review area and consulting with key stakeholders, the ARC explored over twenty-three (23) accommodation scenarios for the West Galt Review Area. Due to identified constraints with existing sites and buildings, it became apparent early on in the process that a new facility would be a reasonable long-term solution to accommodate student enrolment in the West Galt area.

By the third public meeting of the process, the ARC had settled on a two-stage plan to accommodate students within the West Galt Review Area. Stage 1 consisted of boundary changes to alleviate the immediate enrolment pressures at Highland P.S. until a more comprehensive plan could be put in place. Scenarios 16 and 20 (see Appendix C and D) were presented as the preferred boundary scenarios for Stage 1 at the third public meeting. Scenario 14 (see Appendix E) was presented as Stage 2 or the preferred long-term accommodation solution for the West Galt Review Area.

After the third public meeting, further details were sought regarding the feasibility of a JK-8 school of 650 pupil places on a site described in this report as the Beechwood Road site. Although it was considered feasible, the potential constraints on the site were such that it made more sense to look at a smaller school organization. Upon further discussion, the ARC opted to discontinue its discussions about a short-term solution in favor of fast-tracking a variation on the previously proposed long-term solution. The rationale for this decision was a result of the inappropriateness of moving of students to multiple schools over multiple years, and the lack of existing classrooms (capacity) at any of the potential receiving schools within the Review Area.

The ARC is therefore recommending Scenario 23 as the accommodation solution for the West Galt Review Area. The boundaries for Scenario 23 are shown on Figure 3 and the enrolment projections can be found in Table 8. Table 9 demonstrates how well the space (classrooms) in the facilities will be used based on the projected enrolment by grade.

Further details of Scenario 23 are shown on Appendix A.

With particular regard for the review objectives, the ARC agreed that Scenario 23 provided the best solution to address the major issues and concerns in the review area with respect to student accommodation. This conclusion was reached by a majority vote (6-2 in favour; Dianne Ray and Al Potma opposed, Trevor McWilliams abstained) at the May 2, 2012 ARC meeting.

Figure 3: Scenario 23 proposed boundaries

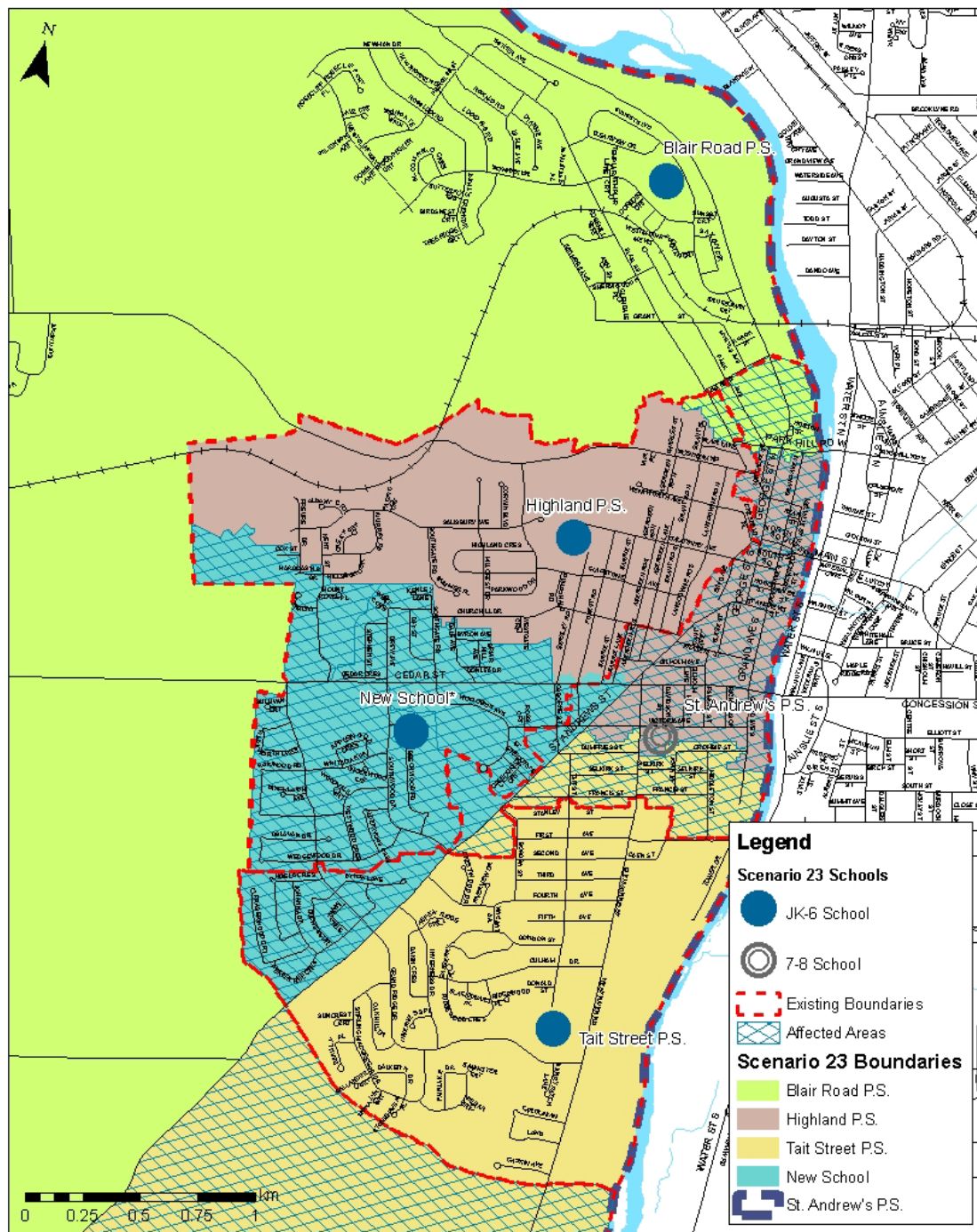


Table 8: Scenario 23 enrolment projections⁴

School	Capacity ⁵	Projected Total Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blair Road P.S.	276	235	240	244	243	242	242	241
Highland P.S.	431	493	500	505	488	479	475	477
St. Andrew's P.S.	401	296	308	317	346	364	351	332
Tait Street P.S.	348	288	297	297	299	313	323	336
New School	350	302	315	314	326	333	338	342
Total	1806	1614	1660	1677	1702	1731	1729	1728

Table 9: Scenario 23 classrooms required to accommodate enrolment

School	# classrooms ⁶	Estimated Number of Classrooms Required			
		2015	2016	2017	2018
Blair Road P.S.	11	11	11	11	11
Highland P.S.	19	22	22	23	21
St. Andrew's P.S.	15	11	12	12	14
Tait Street P.S.	13	14	14	15	15
New School	15	15	15	15	16
Total	73	73	74	76	77

Listed below with details and rationale, are the 6 key recommendations the ARC for the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review makes to the WRDSB Board of Trustees. It is important to note that all of the following recommendations are connected, and the ARC recommends that the Board consider the recommendations and chronology (as shown on Appendix B) as a complete solution.

Recommendation #1: Close Dickson Public School

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

Dickson Public School be closed and that the JK-5 program be consolidated into Blair Road, Highland, Tait Street and a new school; and that

Students enrolled at Dickson P.S. in Grades 3, 4 and 5 the school year prior to its closure be given the option to enrol at either Blair Road, Highland, or Tait Street Public Schools, or at the new school for Grades 4-6; and that

Transportation be extended to those Dickson P.S. students to the school of their choosing based on transportation eligibility; and that

⁴ Revised May 25, 2012 using 2012/13 pre-registration data and staffing projections

⁵ 2012/13 Ministry of Education School Facilities Inventory System on-the-ground capacities

⁶ Does not include rooms used for Special Education or Computer Labs. Calculated based on average loading of classes per grade (FDK = 26, Gr. 1-3 = 20 and Gr. 4-8 = 23)

New Kindergarten registrants the year prior to the closure of Dickson P.S. be given the option to enrol at either Dickson P.S. or the future receiving school.

The ARC struggled with the decision to recommend closing Dickson P.S. It became apparent when developing the issues list in the initial meetings of the ARC that there were challenges at Dickson P.S. both in terms of the facility (site and building) and program (low enrolment). The decision by the ARC to close Dickson P.S. should in no way be seen as a reflection on the quality of past and present staff and students. The school has been operating well with the constraints of the facility and number of students. The community support shown for the school throughout the accommodation review process speaks to the creativity and adaptability of this school community.

Due to its site size (0.96 acres) and historical designation, it is not feasible to expand Dickson P.S. (add classrooms) to accommodate additional students. As a result, Dickson P.S. cannot provide any assistance in accommodating enrolment growth in the review area. It is also not feasible to add a gymnasium, expand the library and/or retrofit the Kindergarten rooms, key features that are missing at the school. It is for these reasons, as well as the low enrolment (less than 120 students) that the ARC developed an accommodation solution that does not utilize the Dickson P.S. facility.

Concerns were expressed over splitting up the Dickson P.S. students amongst four different schools during the third Public Meeting, especially the older students who have established friendships with classmates. It is for this reason that the ARC is recommending the existing junior elementary students (at the time of the closure) have the option to choose which school they will attend for Grades 4 to 6. This provides the opportunity/choice for friends to remain together regardless of their new home school boundary. This option would not be extended to siblings (families have the option of attending the home school together), and once the decision has been made as to which school the student will attend, that becomes their home school. There would be no option to change again at a later date. Further, the option for new registrants to enrol a year prior to the closure of Dickson P.S. at the receiving school reduces the transitions faced by younger students.

The boundaries for the receiving schools have been drawn to maximize the potential for walking, biking, etc. ("active transportation") to school. This is important as the current Dickson P.S. boundary is entirely walk-in. The Board will need to coordinate with municipal traffic staff to ensure safe routes and crossings to receiving schools.

There were also several concerns expressed by community members about what would happen to the Dickson P.S. property once the school closes. The ARC suggests that in order to alleviate concerns about future uses and potential impact on property values, an adaptive reuse study be conducted by the Board in partnership with the City and community members. An adaptive reuse study is a community process to identify suitable options for adapting old structures to new purposes.

Recommendation #2: Construct a new Junior Kindergarten to Grade Six Facility

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

A new Junior Kindergarten to Grade Six (JK-6) facility of approximately 350 pupil places be constructed on Beechwood Road, Cambridge, to open as soon as possible; and that

The boundary for the new facility include portions of the Dickson, Highland and Tait Street Public School boundaries, as illustrated in Figure 5 ; and that

Students entering Grade 5 the year of the change in the affected area be given the option to enrol at either Highland or Tait Street Public Schools, or at the new school for Grades 5-6; and that

Transportation be extended to those Grade 5 and 6 students based on transportation eligibility.

The property, located at approximately 111 Beechwood Road, Cambridge is currently owned by the WRDSB. It is a 4.7 acre site with a 5.2 acre adjacent municipal park and a Region of Waterloo child care centre (see Figure 4). Currently the WRDSB is using this property as a practice field for Southwood Secondary School; however, historic records indicate this property was originally purchased by the Board for an elementary school. The City of Cambridge Zoning By-Law identifies this site as having N1R5 (institutional and residential) zoning; therefore an elementary school is a permitted use.

Originally the ARC looked at using this site to house a JK-8 facility of approximately 650 pupil places. Upon further investigation and discussions with the Board's Facilities Services Department and City of Cambridge staff, it was determined that although a school of this size could work on the site, it would not be ideal. As a result, the ARC opted to reduce the size of the school to one that would be more appropriate for the site by eliminating the senior elementary program (Grades 7 and 8) as originally discussed.

Building a JK-6 elementary school at this location provides needed accommodation to serve the student enrolment coming from the new growth in this area of Cambridge as well as the student population currently transported to Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S. This location and proposed boundary would maximize the potential for active transportation to school. The Board will need to coordinate with municipal traffic staff to ensure safe routes and crossings to this site.

Construction of a new school will be subject to a capital funding request from the Ministry of Education. Using the Ministry's revised capital funding benchmarks (outlined in [Memo 2011:B6](#)), construction costs for the new school would be estimated at \$6.5M.

Table 10 shows the projected enrolment at the new JK-6 facility.

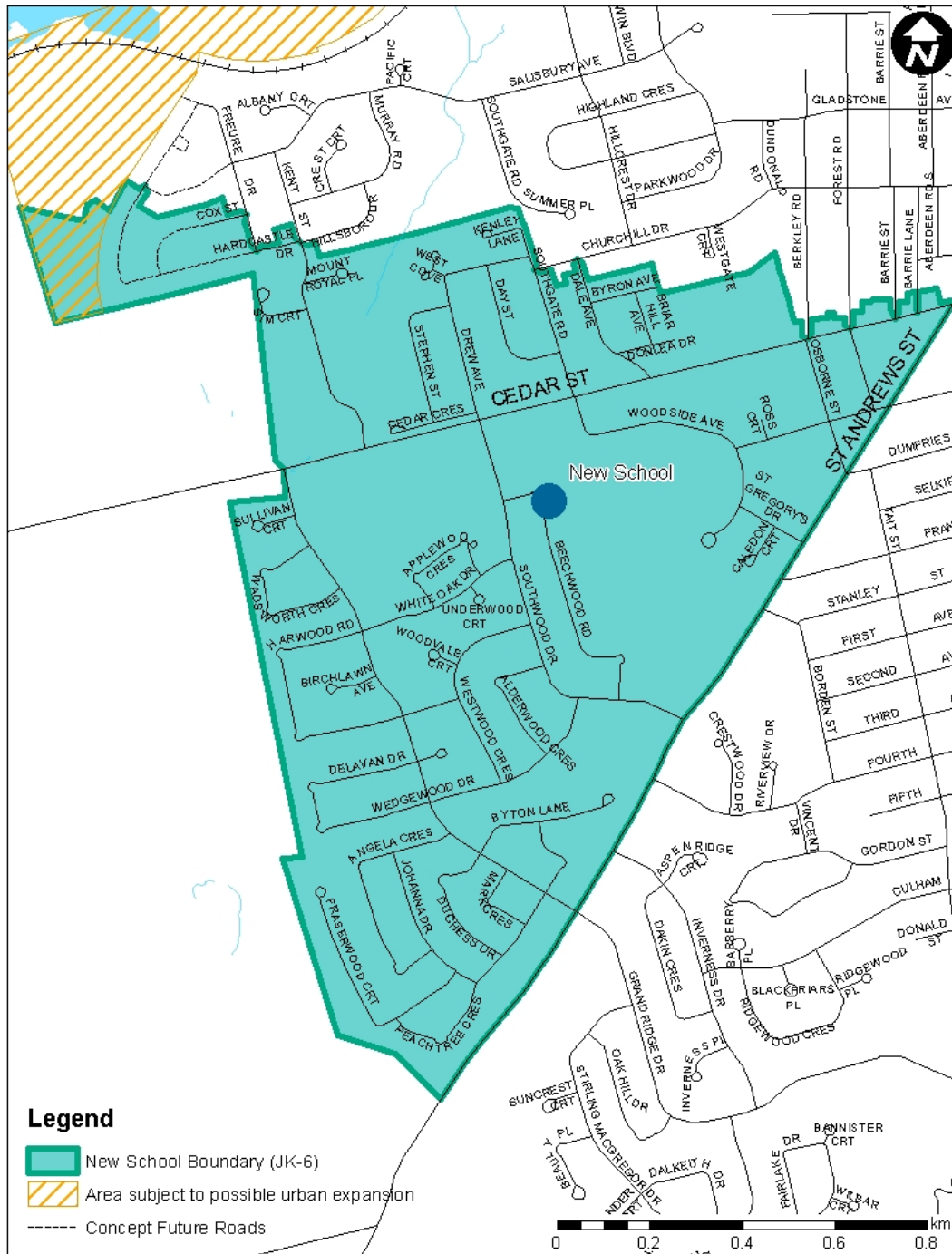
Table 10: Projected enrolment at the proposed new JK-6 facility

School	Capacity	Projected Total Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
New School	350	302	315	314	326	333	338	342

To alleviate potential concerns over the loss of the Southwood S.S. practice field (as it exists today), the ARC suggests that prior to approving the construction of this JK-6 facility, the WRDSB consult with Southwood S.S. to address any issues that may arise.

Figure 4: Beechwood Road site in context

Figure 5: New School (Beechwood Road) Boundary Recommendation



Recommendation #3: New boundary for Blair Road Public School

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

The Blair Road Public School Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 boundary be modified as illustrated in Figure 6; and that

New Kindergarten registrants in the affected area (as identified in Figure 6) the year prior to the change be given the option to enrol at either Blair Road P.S. or Dickson P.S. for that school year; and that

Transportation be extended to those new JK/SK registrants choosing to attend Blair Road P.S. based on transportation eligibility.

With the closure of Dickson P.S. and the opening of a new school on Beechwood Road, Blair Road P.S. would expand to include areas currently in the Dickson P.S. and Highland P.S. boundaries. Currently there are no students living in the affected area. The new Blair Road P.S. boundary maximizes the potential for active transportation to school because all streets within the affected area are within 1.6 kilometers of Blair Road P.S.

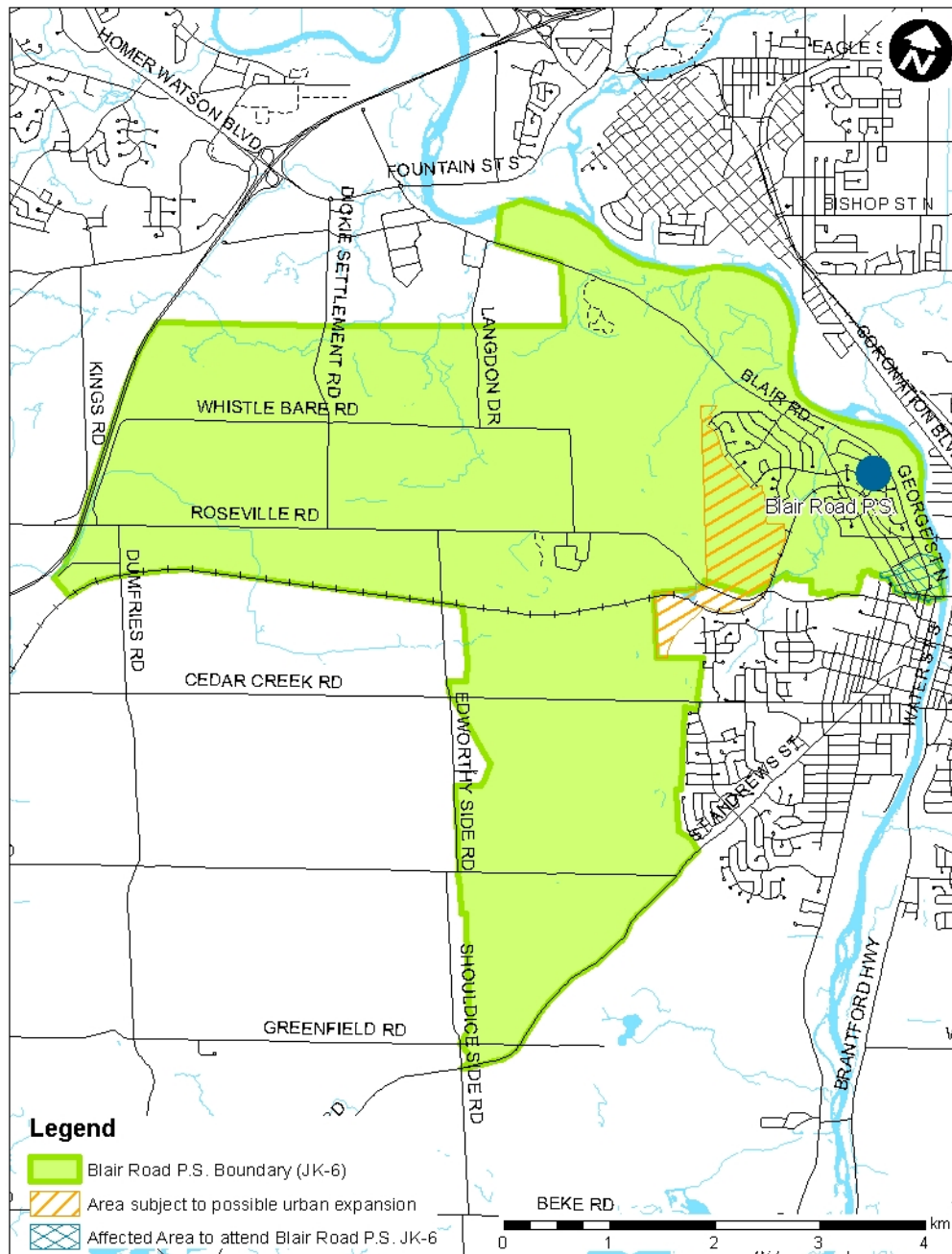
Potential enrolment from the possible future development area, identified on Figure 6 as the “area subject to possible urban expansion” has not been included in the enrolment projections. This area is the identified study area for the Cambridge West Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP). Information provided to the ARC by the City representative indicates there is still uncertainty around when this development could take place and the number of units that may be generated. As a result, potential future enrolment from this area has not been incorporated into the ARC’s recommendations. The ARC agreed that given its isolation to the remainder of the West Galt community, excluding Blair Road P.S., it would be recommended for the Board to consider future student accommodation for this area at a later date, once plans for development materialize. Future changes in this area will have little to no impact on the recommendations being brought forward by the ARC at this time.

Table 11 shows the projected enrolment at Blair Road P.S. with the proposed boundary changes. These projections include the students attend Blair Road P.S. for the Special Education area classes (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Learning Disabilities). The capacity of Blair Road P.S. offers some room for any enrolment growth remaining in its boundary.

Table 11: Projected enrolment at Blair Road P.S. with boundary change

School	Capacity	Projected Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Blair Road P.S.	276	235	240	244	243	242	242	241

Figure 6: Blair Road Public School Boundary Recommendation



Recommendation #4: Grade 6 and new boundary for Highland Public School

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

A Grade 6 program be added to Highland Public School; and that

The Highland Public School Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 boundary be modified as illustrated in Figure 7; and that

New Kindergarten registrants in the affected area (as illustrated in Figure 7) be given the option to enrol at either Dickson P.S. or Highland P.S. the year prior to the boundary change taking place;

Transportation be extended to those new JK/SK registrants choosing to attend Highland P.S. based on transportation eligibility.

There were several issues identified by the Highland P.S. community throughout this process. Some of the key points they ARC discussed included the following:

- Too many portables on site – students are not being accommodated within the school and the portables are reducing the available space on the play field
- Single gymnasium cannot accommodate all classes for daily physical activity
- Students make a transition to St. Andrew's P.S. at Grade 6, which is not consistent with the Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.S. students who make their transition at Grade 7

Further adding to the enrolment situation is the fact that Highland P.S. is the only school in the review area that offers the Partial French Immersion program, drawing over 100 students a year from outside its local boundary. It is recommended that the Partial French Immersion program remain at Highland P.S., including the addition of Grade 6. Enrolment projections shown on Table 12 assume the continuation of Partial French Immersion at Highland P.S. The ARC also recommends that until the boundary changes take place, the Board cap the number of Grade 1 Partial French Immersion classes to 2, restricting the number out of boundary students from enrolling at Highland P.S. to reduce additional unnecessary pressure placed on the facility. It is also recommended that the Board explore an additional location to offer Partial French Immersion in the south end of Cambridge to reduce the enrolment pressure generated by the program at a single site.

The School Information Profile identifies that 34% of the students attending Highland P.S. are eligible for transportation. With the new recommended boundary, only Kindergarten students would be eligible for transportation based on distance according to Board policy because all homes within the boundary are within 1.6 kilometers of the school.

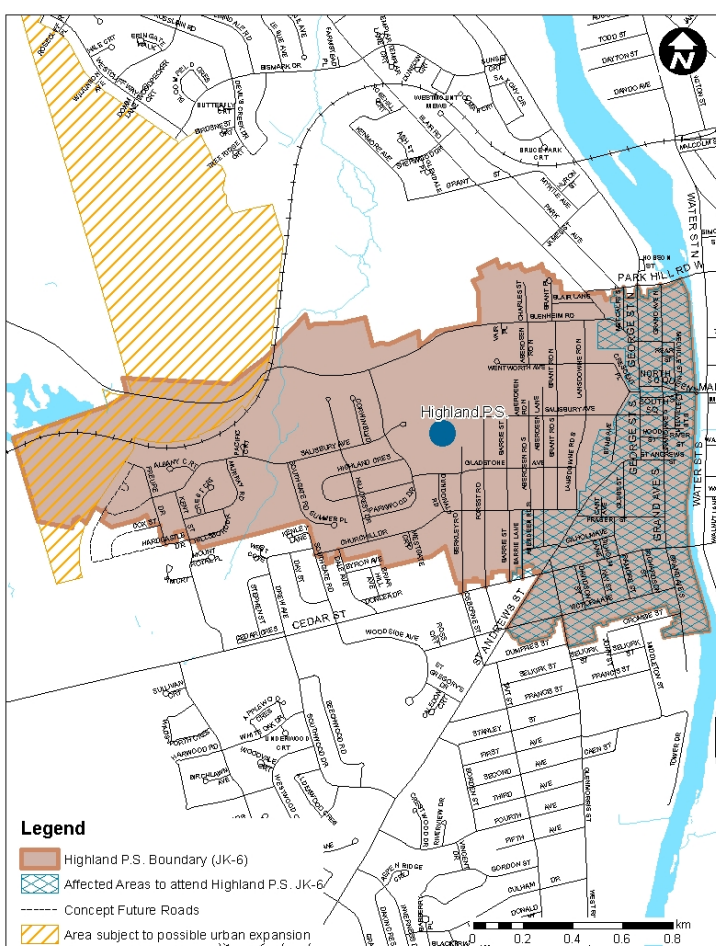
Given the facility will continue to be constrained until the implementation of these recommendations, the ARC suggests that the Board consider temporarily assigning the development area on the west side of the boundary (development known as Grand Ridge or Highland Ridge Estates) to another school that has space to accommodate this growth.

Highland P.S. is currently undergoing an addition for the implementation of the FDK program in September 2012. With the addition the school will have 5 purpose-built Kindergarten rooms and 14 regular classrooms, or an on-the-ground capacity of 431 pupil places. Table 12 shows the enrolment projections for the new Highland P.S. boundary.

Table 12: Projected enrolment at Highland P.S. with boundary change

School	Capacity	Projected Total Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Highland P.S.	431	493	500	505	488	479	475	477

Figure 7: Highland Public School Boundary Recommendation



Recommendation #5: New boundary for Tait Street Public School

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

The Tait Street Public School Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 boundary be modified as illustrated in Figure 8; and that

Students enrolled at Blair Road P.S. entering Grade 6 the year of the change in the affected area (as identified in Figure 8) be given the option to enrol at either Blair Road P.S. or Tait Street P.S. for that school year; and that

Transportation be extended to those Grade 6 students choosing to attend Blair Road P.S. based on transportation eligibility; and that

New Kindergarten registrants in the affected area (as identified in Figure 8) the year prior to the change be given the option to enrol at either Blair Road P.S., Dickson P.S. or Tait Street P.S. for that school year; and that

Transportation be extended to those new JK/SK registrants choosing to attend Tait Street P.S. based on transportation eligibility.

With the closure of Dickson P.S. and opening of a new school on Beechwood Road, the Tait Street P.S. boundary would expand to include areas currently in the Dickson P.S. and Blair Road P.S. boundaries. The new boundary maximizes the potential for active transportation to school because all streets within the City of Cambridge limits are within 1.6 kilometers of Tait Street P.S. The area currently transported to Tait Street P.S. due to distance and safety will be directed to the new school on Beechwood Road. There will be transportation required for the affected area currently in the Blair Road P.S. boundary (including the area known as the Shep's subdivision or Riverview Settlement area). The length of time on bus may be reduced for these students as Tait Street P.S. is closer (approximately 20 students).

The School Information Profile identifies transportation to Tait Street P.S. as an issue. Since the site does not have any street frontage, there is no designated loading zone for buses. Students require adult supervision to walk out to/from Grand Ridge Drive and West River Road where the bus loads. The ARC recommends that the Board work with Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) and the City of Cambridge to explore alternative options and develop a more appropriate long-term solution for transportation to and from Tait Street P.S.

Tait Street P.S. is the last school in the review area to implement the Full-Day Kindergarten program. Since there is likely to be classroom construction or conversion required for implementation of this program in 2014, the ARC recommends that the Board take advantage of this opportunity to address the physical accessibility issues at the facility in order to achieve economies of scale in the construction.

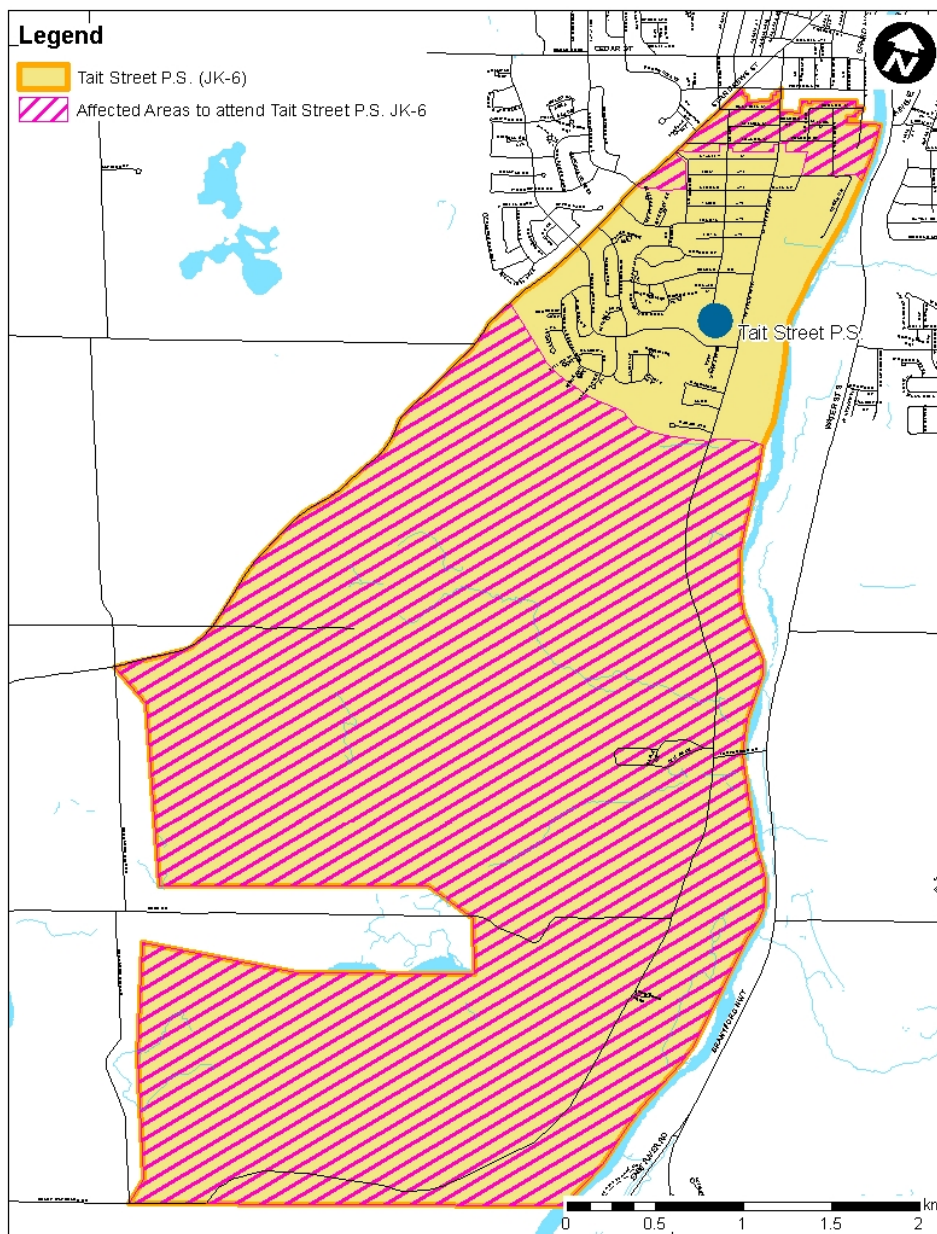
Figure 8: Tait Street Public School Boundary Recommendation

Table 13 shows the enrolment projections for Tait Street P.S.

Table 13: Projected enrolment at Tait Street P.S. with boundary change

School	Capacity	Projected Total Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Tait Street P.S.	348	288	297	297	299	313	323	336

Recommendation #6: Grade 7 and 8 only at St. Andrew's Public School

The West Galt ARC recommends to the WRDSB that:

St. Andrew's Public School offer the Grade 7 and 8 program for the review area, with a boundary as shown on Figure 9.

The ARC had several discussions around the intermediate/senior elementary school model (Grade 6-8/7-8 schools) understanding that [Board Policy 3002](#) states:

- 1.3 The Waterloo Region District School Board believes that an elementary JK-8 school configuration represents a program preference to meet curriculum and developmental needs but that consideration must also be given to:*
- 1.3.1 existing facilities, community connections and distance;*
 - 1.3.2 existing facilities;*
 - 1.3.3 student learning opportunities;*
 - 1.3.4 needs of the community;*
 - 1.3.5 community growth patterns;*
 - 1.3.6 funding, including partnering opportunities.*

Initially the ARC explored the possibility of adding Grade 7-8 programs at existing West Galt schools. Given program size considerations and required facility modifications (additions, renovations, etc.), it was not viable to convert one of the existing facilities to a JK-8 school configuration. As a result, the only other option was to build a new facility that could offer JK-8. Since, as previously mentioned in this report, the only available site could not support the size of school required to accommodate the entire Grade 7-8 program for the area, the ARC determined it was necessary to maintain St. Andrew's P.S.

By realigning the school organizations to JK-6 schools feeding to a central Grade 7-8 program at St. Andrew's P.S. thereby allowing the Grade 6 students to remain at their initial school for one more year better aligns the schools to the divisions and supports student success. Elementary schools are typically organized into divisions – primary, junior and intermediate. The junior division is Grades 4-6 and intermediate Grades 7-8. Teachers from each division work together on Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments and school success plans. When these divisions are broken up between schools, it is more challenging to maintain these success plans.

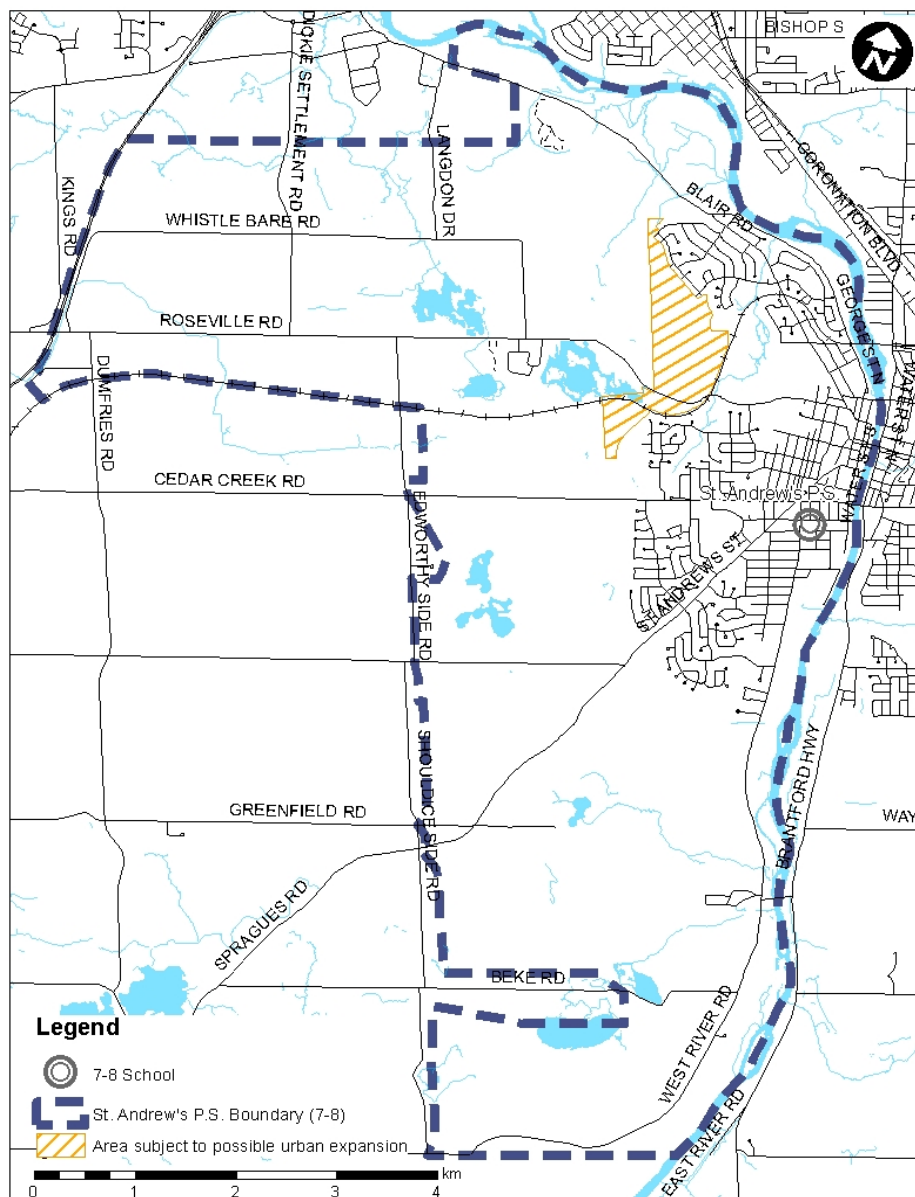
The School Information Profile identifies this facility as requiring some retrofits to bring it up to Association of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards by 2025. Further investigation needs to take place to determine if an elevator is required, or if additional stair lifts can be installed to meet the requirements. The ARC also recognizes that any modifications required to the facility to meet the AODA requirements will be prioritized through the Board's Accessibility Committee.

It is also recommended that St. Andrew's P.S. continue to offer the Partial French Immersion program for Grades 7-8. Enrolment projections shown on Table 14 assume the continuation of Grade 7 and 8 Partial French Immersion at St. Andrew's P.S.

Table 14: Projected enrolment at St. Andrew's P.S. with boundary change

School	Capacity	Projected Total Enrolment by Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
St. Andrew's P.S.	401	296	308	317	346	364	351	332

Figure 9: St. Andrew's P.S. Boundary Recommendation



Achieving the Review Objectives

As Table 15 shows, Scenario 23 meets all but one of the review objectives. Although the criteria in the objective related to school size is not fully met, the proposed accommodation solution does reduce the possibility of triple combined grades by eliminating school enrolments under 240 students.

Table 15: Scenario 23 versus the review objectives

Objective	Meets	Doesn't Meet
To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8 or 7-8	X	
To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity	X	
To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from Board Policy 3002): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade) • JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8) 	X*	X*
To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school	X	
To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation	X	
To reduce unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)	X	
To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)	X	
To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025	X	

* Although this objective is not completely met, it is an improvement from the existing situation

Conclusion

After nine months of consultation and careful deliberation, the ARC has developed final recommendations that meet the majority of the review objectives. In developing the recommendations, the ARC had a strong focus on what it felt will be the best accommodation solution for current and future students in the review area. The addition of a new school on the Beechwood Road site provides a community school for the growing western portion of the Review Area. The ARC's recommendations provide the Board with the ability to move forward and address the issues identified at the outset of the review.

If the Board does not receive the necessary capital from the Ministry of Education to complete the recommended construction project, the Board will have to determine interim measures to address the overcrowding at Highland P.S. which could include a boundary study at a future date.

In closing, the ARC would like to thank the parents and community members who attended the public meetings and expressed their concerns and provided input and feedback throughout the accommodation review process.

DRAFT

BOUNDARIES

Appendix A

West Galt Elementary Schools Accommodation Review

Scenario 23

DESCRIPTION

- Dickson P.S. closes
- A new JK-6 school is built on Beechwood Rd
- Boundary changes for Blair Road P.S., Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S.
- St. Andrew's offers only Gr. 7 & 8
- Highland P.S. adds Gr. 6

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

School	OTG Capacity	Grades	Projected Total Enrolment by Year							FI	Spec. Ed.
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Blair Road PS	276	JK-6	235	240	244	243	242	242	241		ASD, LD
Dickson PS	CLOSED										
Highland PS	431	JK-6	493	500	505	488	479	475	477	1-6	
St. Andrew's PS	401	7-8	296	308	317	346	364	351	332	7-8	
Tait Street PS	348	JK-6	288	297	297	299	313	323	336		
New School	350	JK-6	302	315	314	326	333	338	342		
TOTAL	1806		1614	1660	1677	1702	1731	1729	1728		

COSTS

Capital Construction Costs

- New 350 pupil place school estimated cost = \$6.5M
 - Based on Ministry of Education funding calculation

pupil places x area benchmark x construction cost

350 pupils x 10.02 m² x 1847.53/m²

- Full-Day Kindergarten addition/renovations at Tait Street P.S. – 2014/15 (subject to Ministry funding)

Accessibility

- Accessibility requirements - Tait Street P.S., St. Andrew's P.S.

SAVINGS

Revenue/Proceeds of Disposition

- Potential sale of Dickson P.S. building + property (0.96 acres)

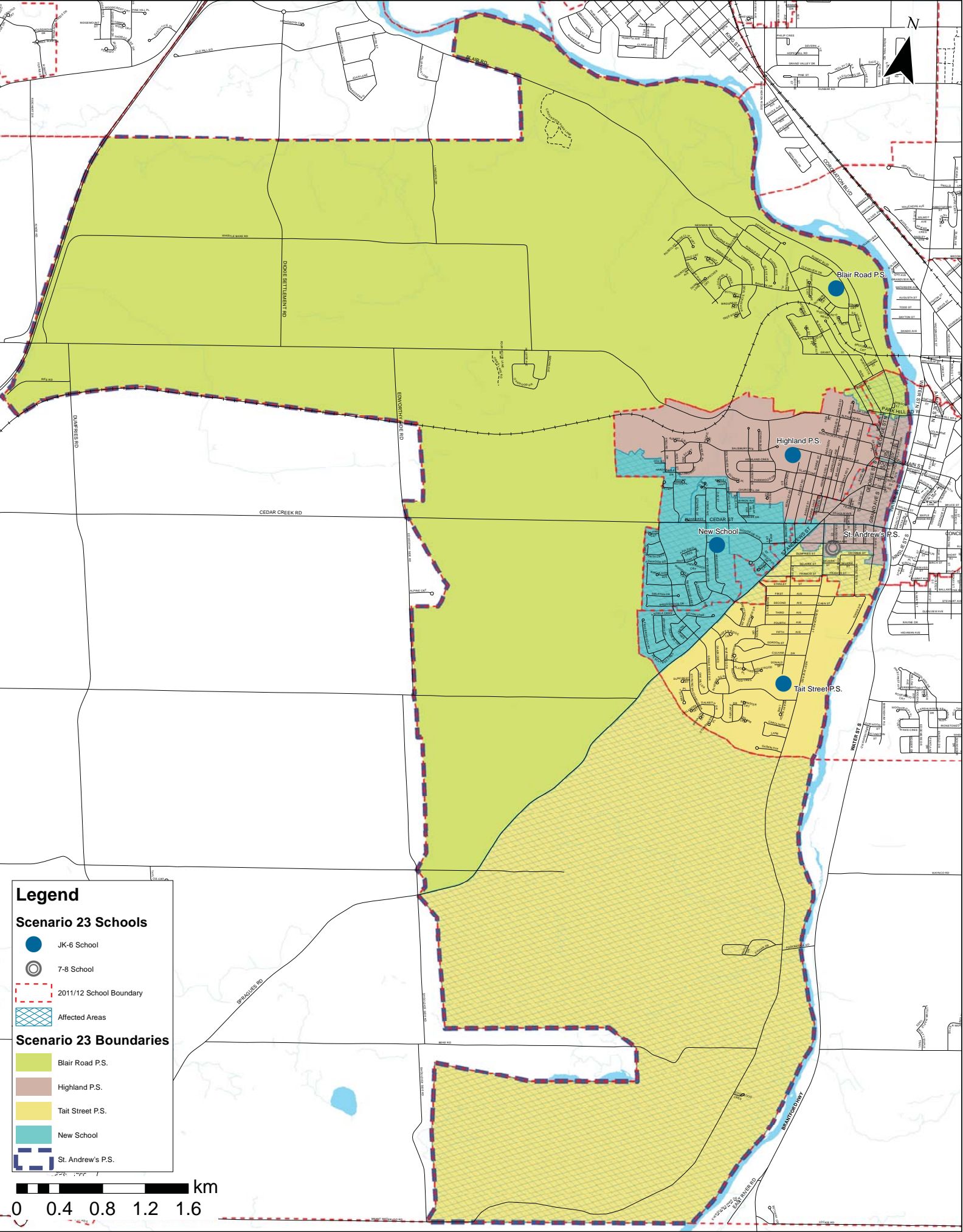
Operations

- Decrease in number of students requiring transportation
 - Elimination of approximately 2-3 urban runs because more students live closer to a JK-6 school (average cost of 72 passenger bus is \$32,720/year – urban run estimated at \$16,000/year)


Accessibility

- Accessibility issues at Dickson P.S eliminated

Notes:
OTG Capacity = On the Ground Capacity – 2012/13 Ministry of Education assigned loading of students in permanent space in a facility
A factor has been applied to each school's enrolment to account for out of boundary student gains and loses due to magnet programs such as French Immersion (FI) and Special Education Area Classes (SpecEd)
Enrolment projections are approximations calculated based on the most current information available



West Galt Timeline of ARC's Scenario 23 Recommendations

Scenario 23	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Recommendation #1: Close Dickson P.S.	September – June JK option to attend receiving school June Last day of classes	September (Yr. 2) – June (Yr. 4) Gr. 4 & Gr. 5 option to attend Blair Road, Highland, Tait Street or the new school		
Recommendation #2: Construct a new JK-6 facility	 School construction	September - School opens September (Yr. 2) – June (Yr. 3) Gr. 5 & Gr. 6 option to stay at Highland P.S. or Tait Street P.S.		
Recommendation #3: Modify Blair Road P.S. Boundary	September – June JK option to attend Blair Road P.S. or Dickson P.S.	September – June Gr. 6 option to stay at Blair Road P.S.		
Recommendation #4: Modify Highland P.S. Boundary and add Gr. 6	September – June JK option to attend Highland P.S. or Dickson P.S.	September – Gr. 6 classes begin (including Gr. 6 FI) September (Yr. 2) – June (Yr. 3) Gr. 5 & 6 option to stay at Highland P.S.		
Recommendation #5: Modify Tait Street P.S. Boundary	September – June JK option to attend Tait Street P.S., Blair Road P.S. or Dickson P.S.	September (Yr. 2) – June (Yr. 3) Gr. 5 & 6 option to stay at Tait Street P.S.		
Recommendation #6: Offer only Gr. 7-8 at St. Andrew's P.S.		September - Gr. 7 & 8 only at St. Andrew's P.S.		

BOUNDARIES

Appendix C

West Galt Elementary Schools Accommodation Review

Scenario 16

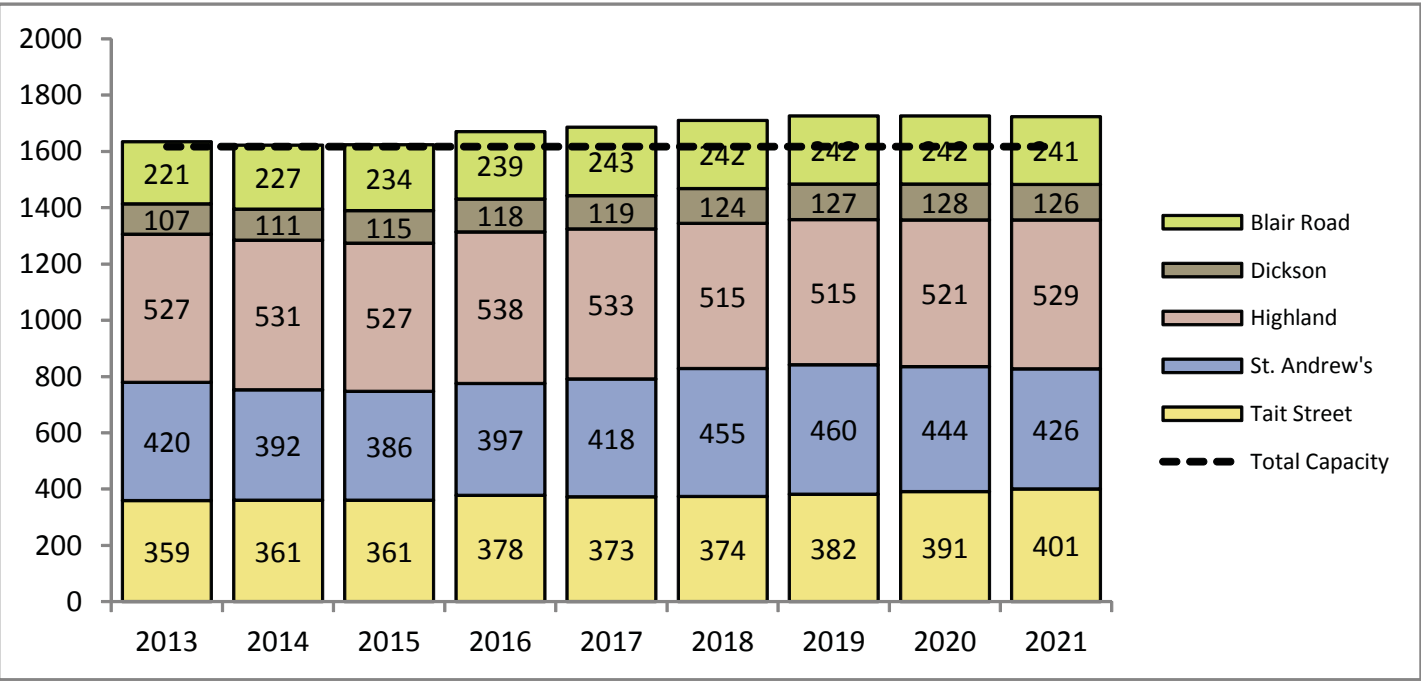
DESCRIPTION

- Boundary changes for all schools
- Dickson P.S. and Highland P.S. students attend St. Andrew’s P.S. for 6-8
- Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.S. students attend St. Andrew’s P.S. for 7-8

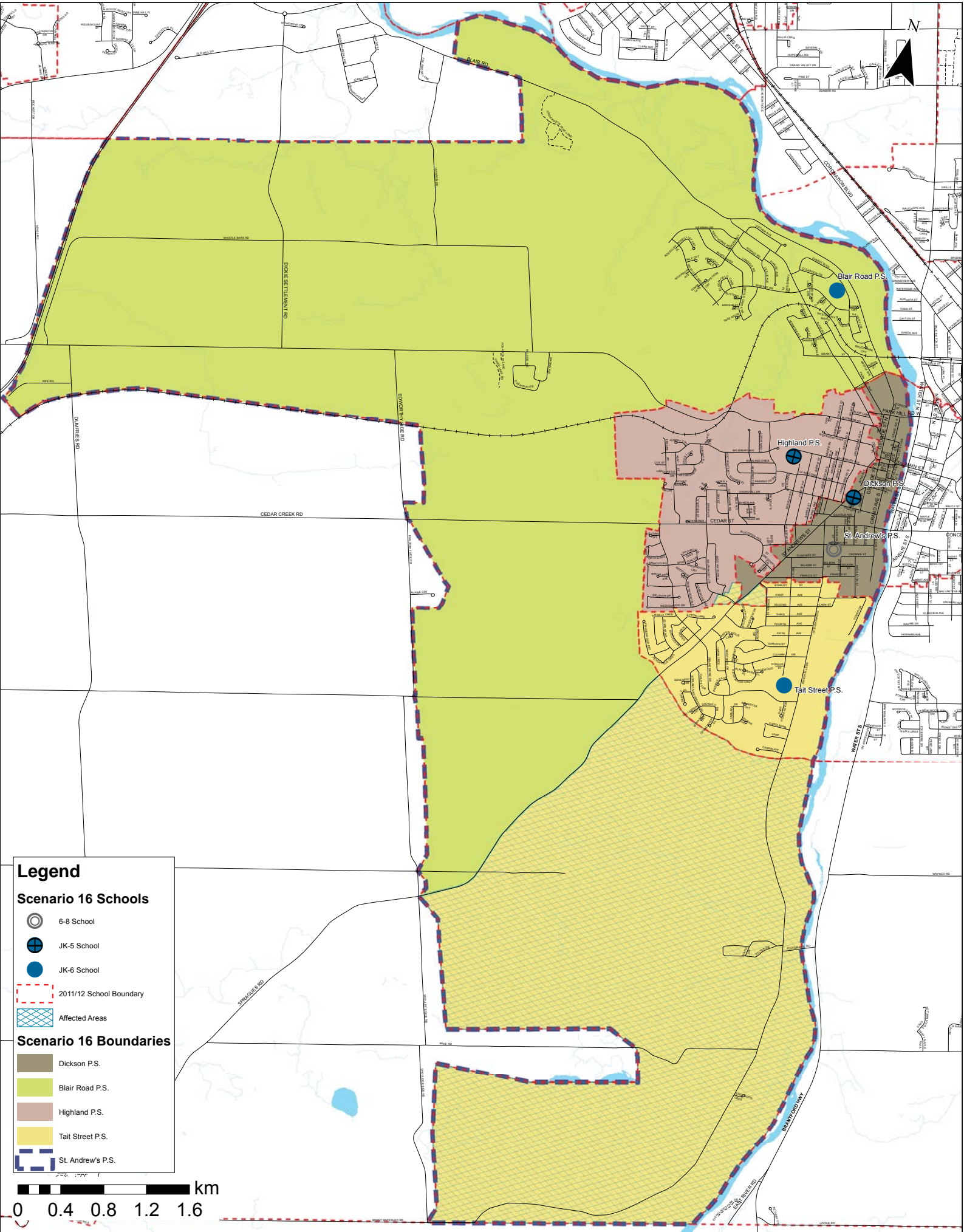
ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

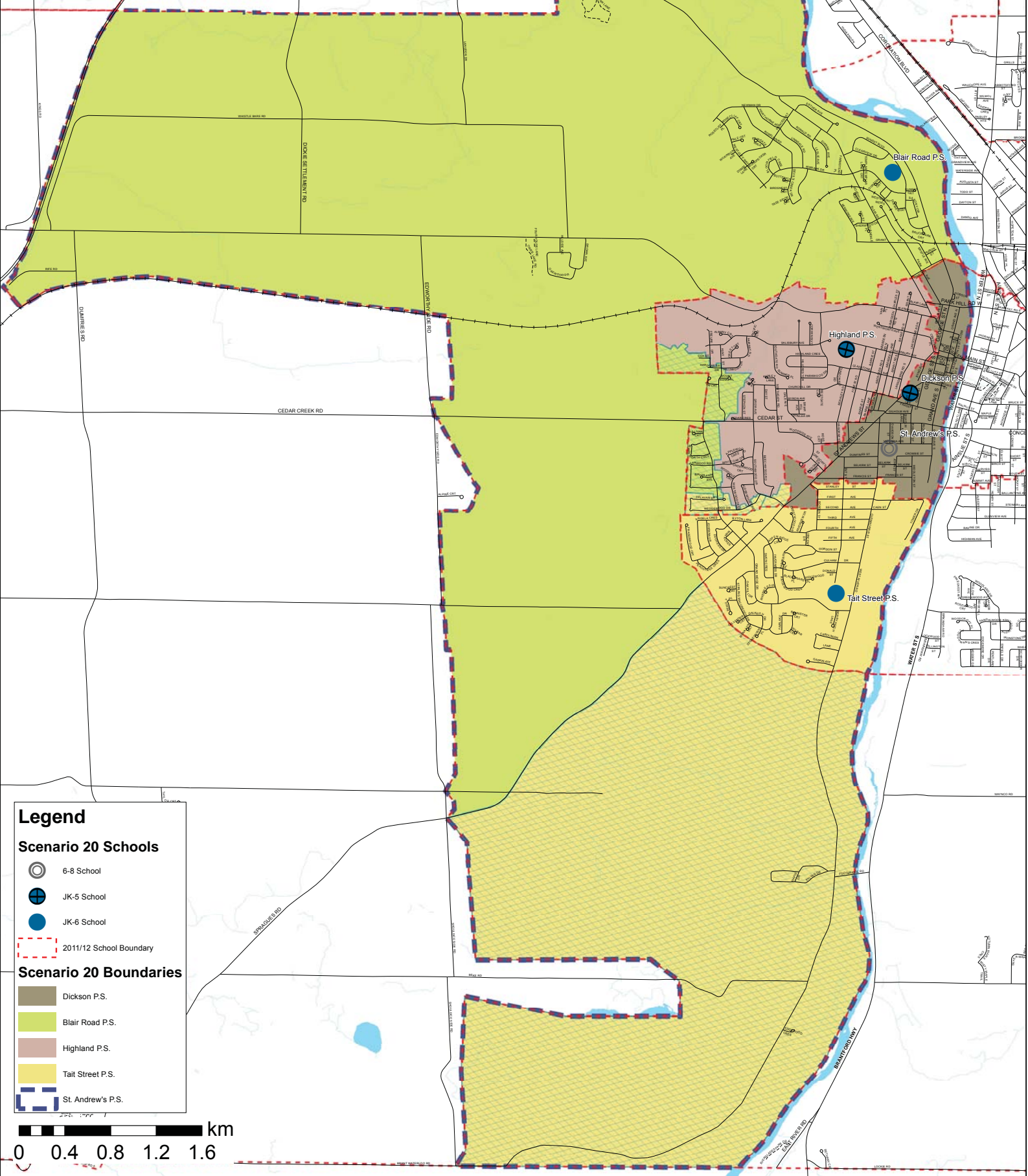
School	OTG Capacity	Grades	Projected Total Enrolment by Year					FI	Spec. Ed.
			2013	2015	2017	2019	2021		
Blair Road PS	276	JK-6	221	234	243	242	241		●
Dickson PS	161	JK-5	107	115	119	127	126		
Highland PS	431	JK-5	527	527	533	515	529	●	
St. Andrew’s PS	401	6-8	420	386	418	460	426	●	
Tait Street PS	348	JK-6	359	361	373	382	401		
TOTAL	1617		1634	1623	1686	1726	1723		

PROJECTED ENROLMENT



Notes:
OTG Capacity = On the Ground Capacity – Ministry of Education assigned loading of students in permanent space in a facility
A factor has been applied to each school's enrolment to account for out of boundary student gains and loses due to magnet programs such as French Immersion (FI) and Special Education Area Classes (SpecEd)
Enrolment projections are approximations calculated based on the most current information available





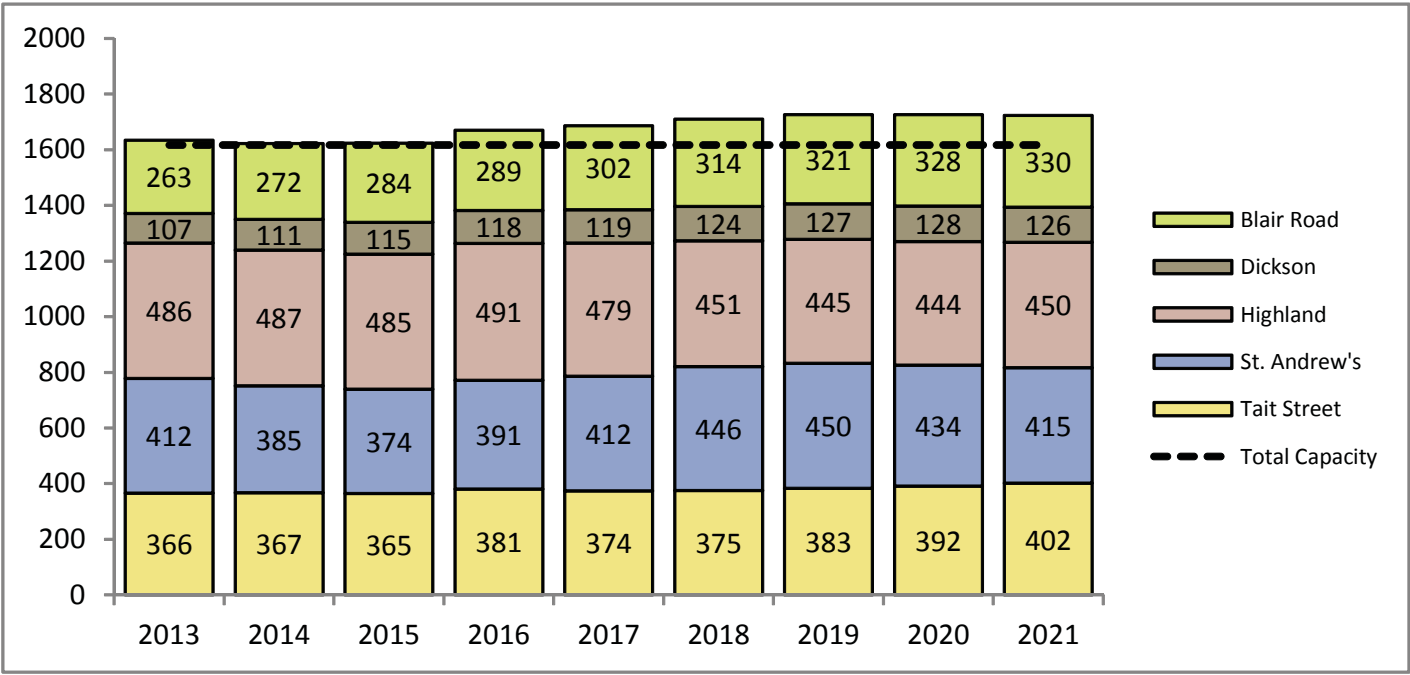
DESCRIPTION

- Boundary changes for all schools except Dickson P.S.
- Dickson P.S. and Highland P.S. students attend St. Andrew's P.S. for 6-8
- Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.S. students attend St. Andrew's P.S. for 7-8

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

School	OTG Capacity	Grades	Projected Total Enrolment by Year					FI	Spec. Ed.
			2013	2015	2017	2019	2021		
Blair Road PS	276	JK-6	263	284	302	321	330		●
Dickson PS	161	JK-5	107	115	119	127	126		
Highland PS	431	JK-5	486	485	479	445	450	●	
St. Andrew's PS	401	6-8	412	374	412	450	415	●	
Tait Street PS	348	JK-6	366	365	347	383	402		
TOTAL	1617		1634	1623	1686	1726	1723		

PROJECTED ENROLMENT



Notes:

OTG Capacity = On the Ground Capacity – Ministry of Education assigned loading of students in permanent space in a facility

A factor has been applied to each school's enrolment to account for out of boundary student gains and loses due to magnet programs such as French Immersion (FI) and Special Education Area Classes (SpecEd)

Enrolment projections are approximations calculated based on the most current information available

West Galt Elementary Schools Accommodation Review

Scenario 14

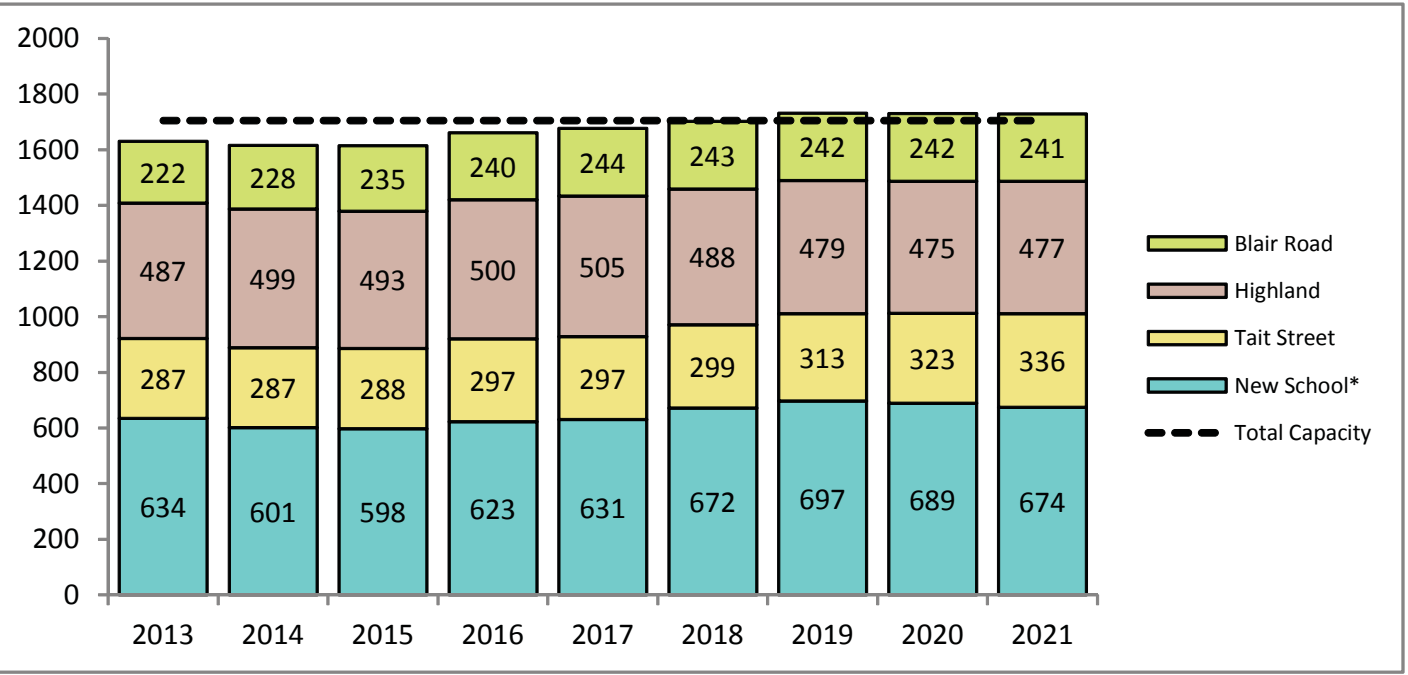
DESCRIPTION

- Dickson P.S. closes
- St. Andrew’s P.S. closes
- A new JK-8 school is built on Beechwood Rd*, offers 7-8 program for the area
- Highland P.S. adds Gr. 6 to become a JK-6 school
- Boundary changes

ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

School	OTG Capacity	Grades	Projected Total Enrolment by Year					FI	Spec. Ed.
			2013	2015	2017	2019	2021		
Blair Road PS	276	JK-6	222	235	244	242	241		•
Dickson PS	CLOSED								
Highland PS	431	JK-6	487	493	505	479	477	• (1-6)	
St. Andrew’s PS	CLOSED								
Tait Street PS	348	JK-6	287	288	297	313	336		
New School *	650	JK-8	364	598	631	697	674	• (7-8)	
TOTAL	1705		1630	1614	1677	1731	1728		

PROJECTED ENROLMENT



Notes:
OTG Capacity = On the Ground Capacity – Ministry of Education assigned loading of students in permanent space in a facility
A factor has been applied to each school’s enrolment to account for out of boundary student gains and loses due to magnet programs such as French Immersion (FI) and Special Education Area Classes (SpecEd)
Enrolment projections are approximations calculated based on the most current information available
* Location subject to site feasibility study

BOUNDARIES

