



# HURON VILLAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY STUDY

## Minutes of Working Group Meeting #1

October 2, 2012 from 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Education Centre, Planning Dept. Meeting Room

The first Working Group Meeting of the Huron Village Boundary Study Working Group, involving [Alpine](#), [Country Hills](#), [Laurentian](#) and [Jean Steckle](#) Public Schools, was held at the Waterloo Region District School Board, Education Centre on Tuesday, October 2, 2012.

### Attendees:

Brian Burnley, Principal, Courtland Avenue PS and future Principal of Jean Steckle PS, Sandy Dawson, Principal, Laurentian PS, Pam Kaur, Principal, Alpine PS, Evelyn Giannopoulos, Principal, Country Hills PS, Sherri Davidson, Vice Principal, Country Hills PS, Stephanie Brasseur, Parent Representative, Alpine PS and Laurentian PS, Cinnamon Abdallah, Parent Representative, Alpine PS, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary.

### Regrets:

Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent of Education, Monica Nickel, Parent Representative, Laurentian PS.

## 1. Welcome/Introductions

Lauren Manske, Senior Planner welcomed members of the Working Group, and Board staff present and thanked them for volunteering to be involved in the process and advised them that she would be the lead planner for the boundary study.

Ms. Manske led the group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/huron-village-boundary-study/>)

## 2. Explanation of Boundary Study Process

### **What is a Boundary Study?**

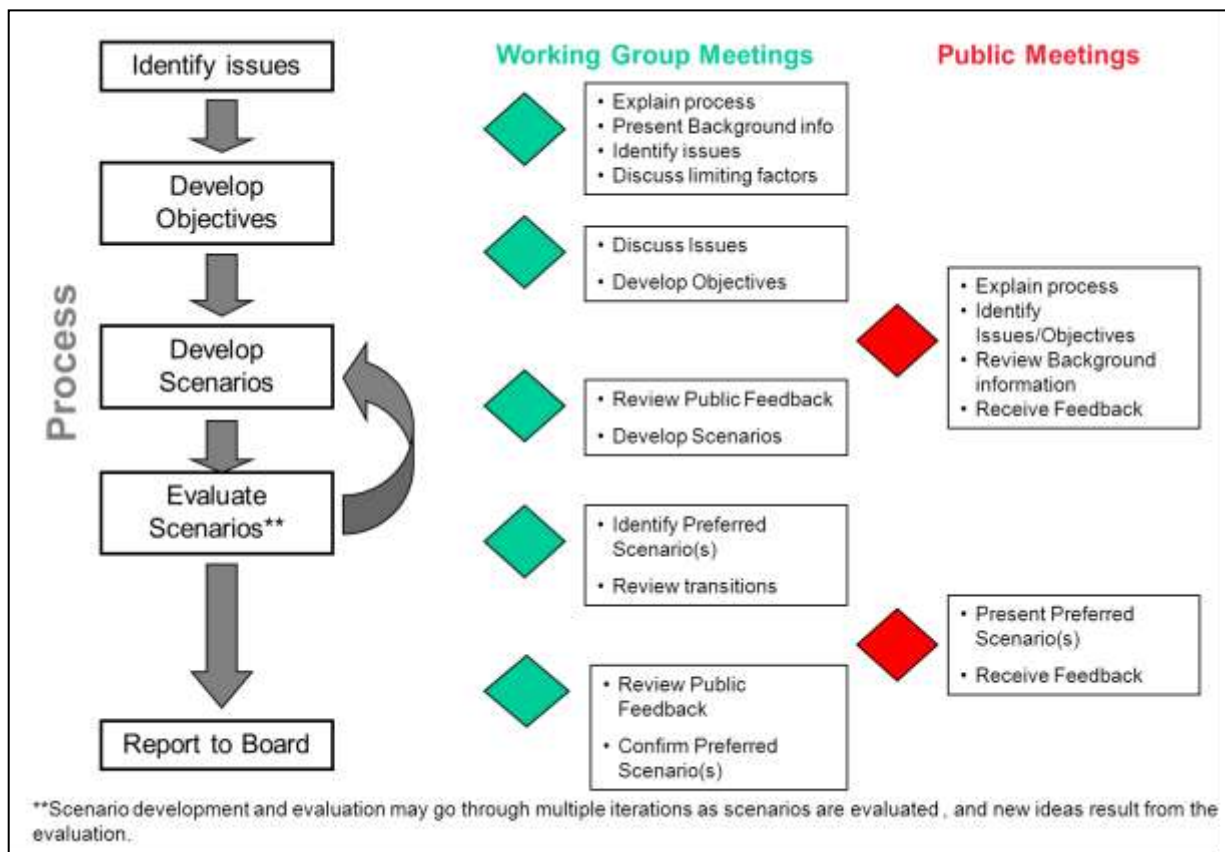
Ms. Manske explained the reasons the Board undertakes a Boundary Study as follows:

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

Ms. Manske noted that reason number 4 (Opening of the new school Jean Steckle Public School) and establishing a new boundary area is the key reason why the Board is undergoing the Huron Village Boundary Study involving Alpine (JK-6), Country Hills (JK-6), Laurentian Senior Elementary (7-8) and Jean Steckle (JK-8) Public Schools.

## Boundary Study Process

Ms. Manske, referring to the following chart which outlines the boundary study process, noted that Working Group will begin by developing study objectives which will be used to evaluate scenarios (different boundary situations that might work) which the group will also develop. The process will involve a number of working group meetings and no less than two public meetings to share information and ask for public feedback after which the working group will develop a report with recommendations for the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision.



### The Role of the Working Group members:

#### The Working Group will:

- Identify and discuss issues and opportunities of the school communities in the study area, and represent the broader community.
- Set study objectives.
- Develop boundary options/scenarios.
- Evaluate boundary options/scenarios against study objectives.
- Parent Representative to be a liaison between the Working Group and the schools, and the broader school community.

#### The Working Group Consists of:

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

### 3. Study Purpose and Issues Identification

Ms. Manske noted that the Huron Village Boundary Study's purpose is to address the long-term program and accommodation needs of the Huron Village community keeping in mind the area's residential development activity (student density & where to accommodate while new facilities are being built).

The issues to be examined in this area include:

- Overpopulation at holding schools (Alpine and Country Hills Public Schools)
- Walk-in boundaries (reduction in transportation requirements)
- Transition plan for existing students

Q: Ms. Manske asked the working group if they were aware of any other issues that may exist in the study area.

Q: Sandy Dawson, Principal of Laurentian Public School asked if the Board is interested in reducing the amount it spends on transportation by increasing the number of students within walking distances to school which can be reduced by redirecting students from Queensmount Senior Public School that has feeds from W.T. Townshend and Williamsburg Public Schools, to Laurentian Senior Public School. She noted that it is not in the Board or public's best interest to be paying more to bus students that are within walking distance to another school. She also noted that enrolment at Laurentian PS will likely be reduced by 150 students with any proposed boundary changes because Jean Steckle PS will be offering the 7-8 program.

R: Ms. Manske responded that the decision to bus the W.T. Townshend and Williamsburg PS's (Laurentian West community) Grade 7-8 Students to Queensmount Public School which requires them to be bussed past Laurentian PS was decided in a boundary study less than 5 years ago and at the time provided good numbers for Queensmount PS. Ms. Manske advised that Queensmount PS is not included in this boundary study therefore this issue is beyond the scope of our present study, but perhaps could be revisited in the future. Ms. Manske advised that she will discuss the issue with Planning staff.

#### Study Area:

Referring to the map on Slide 8 of the online presentation outlining current attendance boundaries for boundary study schools: Alpine, Country Hills and Laurentian Public Schools as well as other public schools located in the vicinity: Glencairn and Trillium Public Schools, and depicts the location for the new Jean Steckle Public School slated for opening in September 2013; Ms., Manske noted that the large attendance boundary for Country Hills PS consists of mostly an unpopulated industrial area, and future plans of subdivision. One of the areas, known as the Rosenberg Secondary Plan, will be developed in the next 10-15 years and will include very dense residential development areas. The Board currently has designated 3 additional elementary school sites (in addition to Jean Steckle PS) to accommodate this anticipated future intensification. This area will likely be studied again in the future to deal with this increased development activity as we will likely be looking at a few 'holding school' situations as the area develops.

The Working Group discussed the new development areas in Huron Village and speculated that this type of development would normally attract young families and the current trend of older homeowners to stay in their homes longer in established neighbourhoods. They questioned if building 4 new future schools would be serving a population that would be moving from other areas within the Region, and could result in a decrease in enrolment in other areas across the Region which could result in school closures.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that based on available data Waterloo Region is growing and it is anticipated that the Waterloo Region's student enrolment will continue to increase for the next 10 or so years; he also noted that the Board is experiencing a slight decline in secondary enrolment but the numbers are expected to increase as the higher elementary student enrolment bubble progresses to the secondary system.

**Current Enrolment and Capacity:**

School	Grades	Enrolment Oct 1, 2012		Capacity (based on Ministry loading)	Portables	Year Built	Site Size (acres)
		Total	FTE*				
Alpine P.S.	JK-6	313	261	279	2	1974	6.00
Country Hills P.S.	JK-6	592	494.5	279	12	1976	6.00
Laurentian P.S.	7-8	464	464	412	3	1968	9.74

\* FTE refers to Full Time Enrolment with Kindergarten students counted as half a student because they only use the facilities half the time

Referring to slide 9 of the online presentation, Ms. Manske noted that the Ministry of Education assigns each school's capacity based on room usage. The Ministry currently loads each room as follows:

- Standard classrooms are loaded at 23 students
- Kindergarten rooms are loaded at 20 students
- Computer rooms are loaded at 23 students

Ms. Manske noted that these capacity numbers do not always show a true picture of a school's capacity and noted that depending on how the enrolment is spread out over the grades it is possible for a school with a capacity of 279 to require a portable to be able to accommodate a total enrolment of 279 students.

Ms. Manske noted that when these schools were built in the 1960-1970s their capacity would have been calculated as much higher because class sizes would have been larger in that time. Today the Board builds new JK-6 schools with a capacity for approximately 400 students; JK-8 schools are built for 500-650 students. The Board has not built a new senior elementary school since Westheights PS in 1977.

**Historic Enrolment:**

Slide 10 of the online presentation illustrates the change in enrolment experienced between years 2002-2012 for the Huron Village Boundary Study schools. Ms. Manske noted that the large increases and decreases in enrolment indicate periods when Alpine, Laurentian and Country Hills PS which are used as holding schools for new and developing communities experienced boundary changes that transitioned new development area students into the school or out to newly built facilities (i.e., W.T. Townshend (2002) and Williamsburg (2007) Public Schools).

#### 4. Draft Goals/Objectives:

Ms. Manske noted that she had pulled together examples of draft goals and objectives from past [boundary studies](#) which include the following:

- To reduce the potential for combined grade classes at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from [Board Policy 3002 - Elementary School Size and Configuration](#))
  - JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes per grade)
  - JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes per grade)
- To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school
- To establish 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 (High Schools)
- To minimize the impact on students where changes are proposed (consideration for grandparenting, phasing, transitions, etc.)

Ms. Manske noted that the new Jean Steckle PS which is expected to open in September of 2013 is being built as a JK-8 facility with a built capacity of 650 pupil places and noted that this study will decide if that facility will operate in its first year as a JK-8 or JK-7 allowing the Grade 8 class to finish out at Laurentian PS as part of the transition piece that attempts to minimize the impact on students where changes are proposed.

It was noted that the study area schools feed into two secondary schools: Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute and Huron Heights Secondary School.

Q: Stephanie Brasseur, parent representative for both Alpine and Laurentian PSs asked if the Board builds all new elementary schools as JK-8 facilities and why the Board includes the 7-8 program in new schools when it would disrupt the 7-8 program in any already existing senior elementary school.

R: Ms. Manske responded that not all new schools have been built as JK-8; the Board has built 2 recent schools as JK-6. The size of a new school is determined by the projected numbers which drives the funding from the Ministry of Education. Jean Steckle PS is being built as a JK-8 because of the expected future of enrolment. When the Board builds a JK-8 school it is typically fed by other JK-6 feeder schools as there are student and teacher benefits such as rotary and specialist teachers for larger 7-8 programs that cannot be achieved with lower class numbers at the 7-8 level.

R: Mr. Hercanuck, Board Senior Planner, noted that JK-8 schools reduce transitions for students which many consider a positive for students; he noted that there are others that argue the benefits of the middle 7-8 schools. A JK-8 school would allow students to attend the same school for 10 years. He advised that the Board operates and supports both programs.

Ms. Manske asked the working group if they were aware of any other objectives or goals they would like to consider in this study.

Q: Principal Dawson asked if there might be the possibility to convert Laurentian PS to a JK-8 facility to help house the expected growth for the area.

R: Ms. Manske responded that could be something the working group could look at but noted that Boundary Study criteria dictates that the process cannot change more than 50 percent of a school's grade structure; and noted that it might warrant direction from the Ministry of Education to determine whether a boundary study would be able to consider a program change of that extent; otherwise it might require the more formal process of an accommodation review which would also look at school closures.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that for Laurentian PS to offer the JK-6 program it may involve taking students away from the other area schools (Alpine and Country Hills PSs) and possibly reducing enrolments there; such changes would be best reviewed under an Accommodation Review which would have the ability to consider school closures.

## 5. Initial Scenario Development

At the request of the Study Group Principals, Ms. Manske put together some initial sample scenarios a break-down of enrolments for each school if the change were to take place in the present school year. These 4 scenarios are included in this afternoon's presentation (available online at: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/huron-village-boundary-study/>) on slides 12-19 and include coloured boundary maps depicting various options for attendance boundaries for each school in the study area and enrolments for each. Ms. Manske noted, because of the complexity of the development in the study area, it will take her a little more time to quantify the enrolment projections for the area 10 years into the future. These projections will be included in future discussions.

The working group discussed the following issues:

- The need for secondary school attendance boundaries with feeds to be included on the current situation and scenario maps.
- Directing new development areas enrolments to Jean Steckle PS while waiting for the other 3 new schools to be built in the area; instead of continuing to use Alpine or Country Hills PS as 'holding schools'; could be better on student morale as they will not have to be the ones left behind again while others move on to a brand new school.
- The consequences for Laurentian PS's senior elementary program when Jean Steckle PS opens the first year (September 2013) if offering Grade 8.
- When to transition the Grade 8 program to the new Jean Steckle PS; should the Grade 8s be allowed to finish out at Laurentian PS or should they be moved to Jean Steckle PS to complete Grade 8 there? Possibility of gathering feedback (from administrators in similar situations) on the Pros/Cons for both students and staff in each situation.
- Consideration needed for special needs students and their families when developing student transitions strategies.
- How staff will be affected when the new school opens.
- Consideration for the facility's ability to accommodate students.
- Area population density and housing turnover rate effects on student enrolments in the study area. The new development areas (of which 3 more schools sites are designated) is

estimated to be higher density, with mostly townhomes and stacked townhomes and some single family, exceeding 50 persons and jobs per hectare.

- The Board's typical student yield from a mature neighbourhood is 0.3 students per unit; for every 10 homes we get 3 students. For newer developments the Board has been receiving a higher share, ranging from 0.4 to 0.6 per unit. This peak will move through the system and level off at the 0.3 as the development matures.
- New development area schools have to be 80% filled within 5 years of occupancy to ensure the school is not overbuilt.
- W.T. Townshend PS originally built as a JK-6, later addition to included 7-8 program and now due to the number of enrolment in lower grades is now a JK-6 again with its 7-8 program going to Queensmount PS.
- If the new development areas not yet under construction (at least 5 years away from construction) from the Huron Village Boundary Study could be removed, allowing the Board to decide where to send those students once development date is closer and based on school enrolments at that time.

Q: Ms. Manske asked if there were any other scenarios the working group would like to see.

R: Principal Dawson asked to see a scenario with 7-8s from Williamsburg PS directed to Laurentian PS and how this scenario would affect enrolments at both Laurentian and Queensmount PSs.

C: Ms. Manske noted that this review will not affect secondary schools boundaries.

#### **Action Items:**

- **Working Group members to come up with list of issues/objectives for next meeting.**
- **Ms. Manske to discuss the possibility of including Queensmount PS in study.**
- **Ms. Manske to send out link to the presentation to the working group members.**
- **Ms. Manske to develop 10 year enrolment projections for study area to include new development areas.**
- **Ms. Manske to include secondary school attendance boundaries on scenario maps and current situation map.**
- **Ms. Manske to get feedback from Principals on the pros/cons of opening school JK-7 vs JK-8 on students and staff.**
- **Ms. Manske to setup meeting with HR to determine the effect on staffing.**
- **Working Group to further discuss Scenario 3.**
- **Ms. Manske to illustrate development areas with dates for developments and new schools and planned roads included.**
- **Ms. Manske to development scenario with Williamsburg 7-8 directed to Laurentian PS with projected enrolments for Laurentian and Queensmount PS.**
- **Planning to send out electronic boundary study information to post on school's website.**
- **Planning to have the Boundary Study link included on the home page of the Board's website.**

**6. Meeting Schedule and Location(s):**

The working group agreed to use the Planning Meeting Room for all working group meetings and to keep the all working group meeting times from 2:00 – 4:00 pm.

**Working Group Meetings:**

#2 - October 16, 2012 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Ed. Centre, Planning Meeting Room

#3 - November 5, 2012 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Ed. Centre, Planning Meeting Room

#4 - November 19, 2012 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Ed. Centre, Planning Meeting Room

#5 - tentative dependent on need

**Public Meetings: (2 meetings required)**

#1 - October 30, 2012 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Country Hills Public School

#2 - November 28, 2012 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Country Hills Public School

Ms. Manske noted that following the above schedule would allow the working group to bring its recommendations to the Board's first Committee of the Whole meeting in January 2013. We absolutely have to establish a boundary before Kindergarten registration in February to allow students to be registered for the correct school. The boundary changes will be implemented in September 2013.

**7. Roundtable**

Ms. Manske noted that at the next meeting (Oct 16<sup>th</sup>) the working group will discuss information to be shared at the Public Meeting on Oct 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Manske thanked the working group for attending and the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.