



**ELMIRA BOUNDARY STUDY**  
**Minutes of Working Group Meeting #1**  
**April 9, 2013**  
**1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**  
**Park Manor Public School**

The first Working Group Meeting of the Elmira Boundary Study Working Group, involving [John Mahood](#), [Park Manor](#) and [Riverside](#) Public Schools, was held at Park Manor Public School on Tuesday, April 9, 2013.

**Attendees:**

James Bond, Principal, Park Manor PS, Sabrina Windatt, Parent Representative, Park Manor PS, Brent Hatcher, Principal, Riverside PS, R. Playford, Parent Representative, Riverside PS, Tracey Williams, Parent Representative, Riverside PS, Liz Robinson, Parent Representative, John Mahood PS, D. Sinclair, Parent Representative, John Mahood PS, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary.

**Regrets:**

Diane DeCoene, Area Superintendent of Education, Tracy Tait, Principal John Mahood PS, Becky Riddle, Parent Representative, Park Manor PS, Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects, John Scarfone, Manager of Planning, Township of Woolwich, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner.

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, welcomed members of the Working Group, and Board staff present at 1:05 PM.

Mr. Hercanuck led the group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/elmira-boundary-study/>)

**2. Explanation of Boundary Study Process**

**What is a Boundary Study?**

Mr. Hercanuck explained the reasons why the Board undertakes a Boundary Study when considering a change to one or more school attendance areas, including:

- Changing the grade structure of an elementary school (including changing an elementary school from a JK-6 format to a composite with JK-8)
- Balancing enrolment and facilities where one school may have too many students for its capacity and another may have too few.
- When municipalities approve new residential development and the new area needs to be assigned to existing schools where capacity exists.
- Opening of a new school and establishing a new boundary area and adjusting boundaries of the existing schools in the area.

### **Key Reason(s) for this Boundary Study?**

Mr. Hercanuck noted the Elmira Boundary Study touches on all these points to some degree.

### **What is the Role of the Working Group Members?**

#### **The Working Group will:**

- Identify and discuss issues and opportunities of the individual school communities and the broader community
- Set study objectives
- Develop boundary options
- Evaluate boundary options against study objectives
- Act as a liaison between the Working Group and the school communities

A boundary study is accomplished through the collaboration of the Board's Planning Department in conjunction with a Boundary Study Working Group (School Principals and Parent Representatives) and with input from the broader public. He noted that together we will craft a report to the Board of Trustees that recommends a course of action that can include any or all or the following:

- Boundary changes,
- School grade organization changes, and
- New construction in the form of additions/renovations and new facilities.

#### **The Working Group Consists of:**

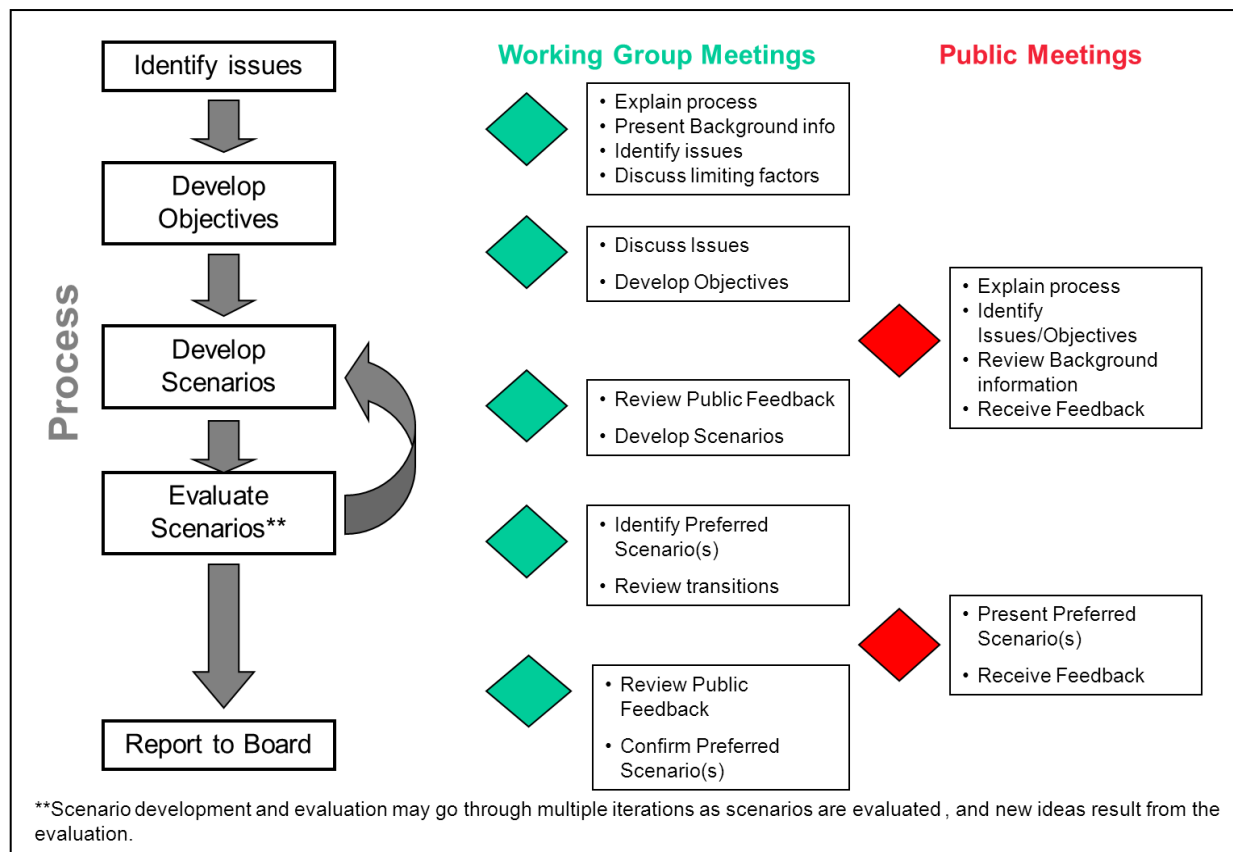
- Up to 2 parents from each study area school
- The Principal (or designate) from each study area school
- Board Planning Staff
- The school area Superintendent of Education
- Local Municipal representation (Township of Woolwich)

Mr. Hercanuck advised the Working Group that Mr. John Scarfone, Director of Planning for the Township of Woolwich has volunteered to represent the local municipality and will be receiving regular updates on the process. Mr. Scarfone has indicated that he would be available to meet with the Working Group should they require any information from the Township. He will likely not attend every meeting but will be kept informed and updated via the meeting minutes.

### **Boundary Study Process**

Referring to the following chart, which outlines the boundary study process, Mr. Hercanuck noted that Working Group will begin by identifying the issues in the study area and using those issues to develop 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.

## Boundary Study Process



### 3. Study Purpose and Issues Identification

The purpose of the Elmira Boundary Study is to address the long-term elementary school accommodation needs of the Elmira community; through the reconstruction/relocation of Riverside Public School.

The issues to be examined in this area include:

- Elementary program model (JK-5, 6-8)
- Enrolment/Capacity of existing schools
- School boundaries/walking distances
- Transition plan for existing students

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the reason the Board is undertaking the Elmira Boundary Study is due to growth over the past 10 years resulting in an increase in elementary student enrolment which has placed pressure on our school facilities such that the use of portables is necessary to accommodate students.

There also been a number of Provincial initiatives that have reduced the number of students our schools can hold including:

- The Primary class size initiative which capped our Kindergarten and primary classes resulting in schools being able to hold less students; and
- Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) will also put further pressure on our schools because all Kindergarten students will be housed in the building at the same time instead of alternating half days.

It is anticipated that enrolment will continue to increase in Elmira with the construction of an approved subdivision in the northwest corner of the study area, off of Church Street (of up to 1400 residential units). He noted that the Board has secured the purchase of a 6.83 acre site located next to a municipal park and our plan is to reconstruct Riverside Public School in the new subdivision pending approval from the Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education.

Reconstruction is our strategy here because the existing Riverside Public School is an older facility located on a small site which we believe will be unable to accommodate the additional enrolment anticipated from the new development.

### Study Area:

Referring to the map on Slide 8 of the online presentation which shows:

- Riverside PS (JK-5) attendance boundary in blue
- John Mahood PS (JK-5) attendance boundary in purple
- Park Manor PS (Grades 6-8) attendance boundary inside the red hatched boundary line (encompassing both attendance areas of Riverside and John Mahood Public Schools)
- New Residential Development area in NW corner of study area (expected to add up to 1400 residential units)

Through this process the Working Group will have the opportunity to look at the elementary program model in the area; which is currently a JK-5 feeding a grade 6-8 model. In other boundary studies with a junior to senior elementary model we have shifted to JK-6 feeding a 7-8 which is preferred by our Learning Services staff as it aligns better with the curriculum and EQAO testing. The Boundary Study can also look at the possibility of the new school becoming a JK-8.

### Current Enrolment and Capacity:

Referring to Slide 9 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck noted that:

- Riverside PS has a built capacity of 112; and capacity of 227 students with the Portapak; and is currently at 113 percent capacity.
- John Mahood PS has a built capacity of 271 and is currently at 145 percent capacity.
- All three schools currently have portables to accommodate the current enrolment, and the use of portables is expected to increase.
- The Total Enrolment (for the 3 schools) is at 128 % of capacity; not including the 4 classroom addition at John Mahood PS or the renovations at Riverside PS (3 classrooms being converted to 2 FDK classrooms for Sept. 2013).

School	Built Capacity (2012)	Built Capacity with Portapak (2012)	Portables	Enrolment - Sept, 2012 Unofficial		% Capacity (FTE)	% Capacity (Total)
				Total	FTE*		
John Mahood PS.	271	271	6	393	344.5	127%	145%
Park Manor PS	271	271	4	292	292	108%	108%
Riverside PS	112	227	4	303	252	111%	133%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>888.5</b>	<b>115%</b>	<b>128%</b>

\* FTE refers to Full Time Enrolment with Kindergarten students counted as half a student because they only use the facilities half the time. Starting September 2014 both Riverside and John Mahood Public Schools will be Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) sites.

- **Nathan to correct FTE and % Capacity numbers for Park Manor (FTE) no JK-K (correct numbers are included in chart above)**

#### **Historic Enrolment:**

Slide 10 of the online presentation illustrates the change in enrolment experienced between years 2002-2012 for the Elmira Boundary Study schools. Elementary Student enrolment has increased by an average of 24 percent for the area over the past 10 years; with Riverside PS showing the most growth at 38 percent.

#### **Projected Future Enrolment:**

Slide 11 of the online presentation illustrates the expected trend in projected elementary school enrolment from 2012-2022. Mr. Hercanuck noted that this trend is expected to increase beyond 2022 and these numbers include the anticipated enrolment from the new subdivision as it builds out over the 10 year period.

#### **4. Draft Goals/Objectives:**

Mr. Hercanuck advised that there are a few standard considerations the Board likes to address through the Boundary Study Process; including 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.) i.e., *Board has historically been supportive of allowing the oldest grade to finish out at their current school to reduce transitions.*

#### **Next Steps:**

1. Discuss issues faced by the individual school communities and the Board
2. Craft objectives to address those issues
3. Develop scenarios to meet the objectives
4. Public Consultation - take scenarios to the broader public for feedback

Mr. Hercanuck advised that with past boundary studies, Planning staff have brought sample draft issues/objectives/scenarios to the Working Group to spark discussion; and asked if the Working Group would like to do the same or if they would prefer a more organic process.

The Working Group advised Mr. Hercanuck that they would like him to provide the sample draft issues/objectives/scenarios at the next meeting to aid discussion.

Q: When was the last time the Board did a Boundary Study of the Elmira Area?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that there hasn't been one in his time at the Board (6 years). Not exactly sure when last study was done.

C: Mr. Cuomo advised that there can be a strong attachment to a school when it is being considered for closing; the neighbourhood may also have concerns with what will happen with the property once it has closed.

C: Mr. Hercanuck advised that the Board follows a more formal process when considering school closures ([Accommodation Review](#)) but can undergo a less formal process ([Boundary Study](#)) when it will be rebuilding a school within its current boundary; which is the case here for Riverside Public School.

## **5. Meeting Schedule and Location(s)**

### **Working Group Meetings:**

Mr. Hercanuck advised that the Boundary Study Process requires a time commitment noting that the Working Group will meet every 2 weeks for approximately 90 minutes during the school day.

### **Public Meetings:**

Mr. Hercanuck advised that in the past Planning staff has chaired the Working Group and Public Meetings but noted that any of the Working Group can be Chair and asked the Working Group members present if anyone would like to Chair. No interest was expressed by those present; therefore Mr. Hercanuck will act as Chair.

Public Meetings (at least 2 Public Meetings are required) will be hosted in the evenings by the Planning Dept. and while the Working Group members are welcome and encouraged to attend, they are not required to do so.

Mr. Hercanuck suggested the week of May 6 for the first possible Public Meeting but noted that it would be dependent on the progress of the Working Group.

### **School Tour of Study Area Schools:**

The Working Group is also encouraged to do a tour of the Study Area Schools which could be done on a weekend or during the week. Mr. Hercanuck offered to coordinate at the request of the Group.

Q: How much information can we share with our school communities about this process and should we be proactive in our communication with the school community?

R: Yes, as school representatives we hope that you let the community know what is happening; the Board has [a webpage for the Boundary Study](#) and all of the minutes from our meetings will be posted online once the Working Group has approved them (will be posted online approximately two weeks after the meeting).

The Public Meetings will also be opportunities for community involvement. For those wishing to contact the Board (including Trustees) we also have an email address: [boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca](mailto:boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca) (please indicate Elmira Boundary Study in the subject line).

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

- Working Group #2: Tuesday April 23, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm at Riverside PS
- Working Group #3: Tuesday May 7, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm at John Mahood PS
- Public Meeting #1: Tentative for Week of May 6-10, Date/ Time TBD.

## **6. Roundtable**

Q: R. Playford asked if there is a set timeline for the study to be completed.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that there is no set timeframe, but the sooner the better to have a recommendation for the rebuild; noting that approval from the Board of Trustees is required as is approval and funding from the Ministry of Education.

He advised that having a recommendation from the Working Group and Board approval will be supportive of a business case to the Ministry of Education and help position the project on the Board's Capital Priorities List which is submitted to the Ministry once a year.

A recommendation to the Board of Trustees by the end of the school year could be achievable but is not an obligation.

Q: R. Playford asked if the Ministry of Education works on a calendar year or a school year.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the Ministry has been changing the way it funds school board capital projects and do not seem to be on a set schedule; boards may be asked at the end of May to submit their capital priorities lists. He noted that the last submission in May 2012 did not receive a response from the Ministry until January 2013; the Ministry approved 3 projects which were not necessarily the Board's highest priorities as submitted.

He noted however that boards have advised the Ministry that the May submission does not line up with receiving a response in time for construction season and have asked the Ministry to consider submission in February instead; and stated his hope that the Board will not have to wait until February 2014 to submit its next list of requests.

Q: S. Windatt asked if the rebuild of Riverside PS is currently on the Board's list of Capital Priorities.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the rebuild of Riverside PS has been on the [Board's list of Capital Priorities](#) for at least two rounds but has not been developed enough for consideration. He noted that the Board submits a list of 18 to 20 projects and are required to identify the top 10 and to develop business cases for the top 5. He noted every year the priorities are ranked by the Board and may move up and down the list according to current needs.

Q: Tracey Williams asked what priority number the Riverside PS rebuild has currently.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board's capital priorities list is constantly changing and projects are shifted around every year based on a variety of factors which could influence its priority.

- R: Mr. Cuomo added that sometimes a community partnership on a new school could influence the Ministry to approve funding of a project.
- Q: Tracey Williams asked how long after Ministry approval will it take to open the new school.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that depending on the timing of the funding announcement it generally takes 18 months to build a school.
- Q: R. Playford asked what happens if the Ministry does not approve the rebuild.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that if the Board's business case doesn't meet Ministry requirements staff can bring forward ideas on how to fund our own projects through the Board's Proceeds of Disposition funds (POD) but would still require Ministry approval to use these funds.
- Q: Liz Robinson commented that the new school could be a long time coming and asked if there is a backup plan to address the enrolment pressures in the meantime.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the mandate of the Working Group is to make a long-term recommendation and to develop the transitional strategy to address the best means of addressing the study area issues in the interim until the new school can be built.
- C: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the role of the Working Group is to bring forward the issues from the school communities and address the issues within the recommendations to the Board.

The Working Group members discussed the Lunor Subdivision Development noting the ambiguity around date when the development will start selling; however the website has publicized "coming soon" for some time.

- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the Board has identified a block in the subdivision and as soon as the subdivision is registered the Board can legally purchase the site without having to seek approval from the Ministry. He noted that the new school site will be purchased using money the Board has collected as [Education Development Charges](#) (EDC's). EDC's are a surcharge on new residential and commercial buildings collected to pay for new school sites.

Mr. Cuomo advised that the Board will be notified as soon as the subdivision is registered and will notify the Working Group accordingly. The hope is that they will be in the ground soon and we can talk about how quickly we can get a school on site.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the timeline for new school construction from the time the Board hires an architect to the opening of the school is typically 18 months.

- Q: Brent Hatcher asked if there is a certain amount of development required in the new subdivision before the new school can begin construction.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that servicing is required (roads, hydro, water etc.) and advised that the Board has requested to be in phase 1 of development. He advised that sometimes developers have to sell a certain number of lots to afford road construction.



- Q: Tracey Williams asked which school any new development area students would attend while waiting for the new school to open.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that again, that is part of the role of the Working Group to develop the best way to address these issues.
- C: James Bond commented that the Boundary Study is two-part, with consideration needed for both the:
1. Riverside PS rebuild; and
  2. How best to accommodate students in the meantime.
- Q: S. Windatt noted that the [May 14, 2012 Board Report](#) indicates that the new school site is 7.8 acres yet today's presentation shows the new school site at 6.83 acres; and asked why the discrepancy.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the 7.8 acres may have included the municipal park or could have been based on earlier information; he noted that the 6.83 acres is based on the most current information.
- Q: Brent Hatcher asked if the new school site would be able to accommodate a JK-8 school.
- R: Yes. Schools are generally now being built two storied with a more efficient use of sites and adjacent to municipal parks.
- Q: S. Windatt noted that the majority of the new enrolment is in the Kindergarten grades with the majority being bussed and asked if the Board would consider a school for just the Kindergartens until the new school could be built.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that is something the Working Group could consider after we have looked at all the issues for each site.
- Q: R. Playford asked if the Working Group could get the Board's guideline for bussing.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck promised to send the bussing guidelines out with the agenda for the next meeting.
- C: Mr. Hercanuck advised that he will provide detailed maps of the study; breaking down each area into sub areas with enrolments for each which would be useful for looking at boundary change options to determine how many students are within walking distance and how many could be effected should boundary changes be considered.
- Q: R. Playford asked if the new school will offer the Partial French Immersion Program (FI).
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that an Accommodation Review could be needed to look at changing programs at each school, depending on the number of students in the program(s). He advised that if there is enough interest expressed for the program at the new school (23 students) – through the French Immersion registration process, the program may be offered there.

He also noted that depending on the home school of the FI students it might be possible to phase-out the program at one school and implement it at the new school.

Q: Brent Hatcher asked how any FI students that have to move to the new school will be accommodated.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the accommodation of any affected FI students would be addressed in the Working Group's transition plan details.

The Working Group further discussed the FI program noting that John Mahood and Park Manor Public School's FI program also draws from schools outside of the Elmira study area which includes St. Jacobs and noted that there may be other options to house the program. Mr. Hercanuck will provide statistical FI information for each of the study area schools.

Q: R. Playford asked if there is a limit to the number of portables that a school can have.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that each school is unique; the site size and layout, electrical and water/sewer capacity are determining factors of how many portables a school can have.

Q: R. Playford noted that the use of portables does not provide a quality of access for children with mobility issues and noted that the schools is dealing with accommodation issues for those children. She suggested that Special Education accommodations need to be addressed and asked if that could play into how quickly the new school should be in operation.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the Boundary Study Report will be based on the work of the Working Group, and noted that they can include that direction in the Report if desired.

Q: D. Sinclair asked if it would be possible to build a second storey on the current Riverside PS.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that, that type of construction is usually prohibitive because it would require the costly reinforcement of the current structure; he noted that we want to replace the school and not have to spend a lot of money on the current facility.

C: Mr. Cuomo noted that it is preferable not to put a lot of money into a school that needs to be replaced; which could be a general theme of the report as well as the School's less than equitable condition while waiting.

Q: Mr. Hercanuck asked if there is any further information needed for the next meeting; he also advised the group that they could let him know via email.

Q: Tracey Williams asked if Mr. John Scarfone, Manager of Planning for Woolwich Township could be invited to our next meeting to discuss the new development area.

R: Mr. Hercanuck agreed to contact Mr. Scarfone with request to attend next meeting.

Mr. Hercanuck advised that he would provide relevant Board policy and procedure information for the next meeting including out-of-boundary request, French Immersion, transportation and walking distances).

Mr. Hercanuck thanked the working group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm

**Action Items:**

- *Mr. Hercanuck to provide the sample draft issues/objectives and scenarios for the April 25, 2013 meeting to spark further discussion.*
  - *Working Group to consider school tour of Park Manor, John Mahood & Riverside PS.*
  - *Bussing guidelines to be included with the agenda for Working Group Meeting #2.*
  - *Mr. Hercanuck to provide detailed projection area maps for the study area.*
  - *Mr. Hercanuck to provide FI information.*
  - *Mr. Hercanuck to contact Mr. Scarfone with request to attend next meeting.*
  - *Mr. Hercanuck to provide relevant policy information.*
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**Future Meetings:****Working Group Meetings:**

- Working Group #2: Tuesday April 23, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm at Riverside PS
- Working Group #3: Tuesday May 7, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm at John Mahood PS

**Public Meetings:**

- Public Meeting #1: Tentative for Week of May 6-10, Date/ Time TBD.