



Elmira Elementary Schools Boundary Study
Minutes of Public Meeting #2
October 22, 2013
Park Manor Public School 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

The second Public Meeting of the Elmira Elementary Schools Boundary Study was held at Park Manor Public School on Tuesday, October 22, 2013.

Approximately 43 members of the community were in attendance.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board welcomed those in attendance and gave the following introductions:

Board Planning Staff:

Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning
Lauren Manske, Senior Planner
Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary

Principals:

Brent Hatcher, Principal, Riverside PS
Fran Oppertshauser, Acting, Principal, John Mahood PS
James Bond, Principal, Park Manor PS (Regrets)

Trustees

Harold Paisley, Vice Chairperson of the Board and Trustee for Wellesley/Woolwich

Superintendent of Education:

Elaine Ranney (Regrets)

Mr. Hercanuck led the audience through tonight's presentation available online at:
<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/elmira-boundary-study/>

Purpose of Meeting:

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide an update on the status of the Elmira Elementary Schools Boundary Study; and to share the preferred scenario developed by the Boundary Study Working Group.

2. Existing Situation – Study Area

The Elmira Boundary Study involves all three of the elementary schools in the town.

Referring to the maps on slide 3 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck noted the following:

- Riverside Public School (JK-5) attendance area boundary is depicted in blue.
- John Mahood Public School (JK-5) attendance area boundary is depicted in purple
- Park Manor Public School (6-8) attendance area boundary encompasses the entire town (inside the red hatched line)

Existing Situation – Enrolment and Capacity (slide 4 of the online presentation)

Mr. Hercanuck noted that over the past few years development in the town has placed pressure on Elmira's elementary schools. As of 2013 the Board is utilizing 23 non-permanent classroom spaces (including portapaks) to accommodate students across the three schools. We are 136 percent over capacity, serving over one thousand students with 747 permanent pupil places.

Existing Situation – Development Outlook (slide 5 of the online presentation)

Referring to the Map outlining Elmira's anticipated residential development from 2014-2025, Mr. Hercanuck noted the following:

- Further enrolment increases are expected with new planned development in the town.
- Woolwich Township Planning staff has supplied the anticipated locations and amounts of residential development within the town; highlighted in red.
- This increase in enrolment for the town is expected to come from 2 developments. One in the South end and one in the North end.
- The development in the North (referred to as Lunor) is the larger of the two representing approximately 1400 residential units. Registration of the initial phases is expected by late fall.
- The development in the South (referred to as Birdland) represents approximately 350 units and is currently in John Mahood PS's boundary. It is anticipated that occupied housing from this development will occur within a couple of years.
- With respect to the larger subdivision the Board recognized that the current Riverside PS site and facility would not be able to handle the anticipated enrolment from this development. The Board has an agreement to purchase a new school site within the Lunor subdivision to allow for the reconstruction of a new Riverside PS.

Existing Situation – Enrolment Projections (Slide 6 of the online presentation)

Mr. Hercanuck noted that over the next 10 years, the Lunor and Birdland developments are expected to increase the elementary enrolment in the town over 1350 students.

With this in mind and a new site for a replacement Riverside PS, the Board initiated a boundary study to look at the options for the accommodation of elementary students in the Town of Elmira. A Working Group was formed, consisting of:

- Parent representatives from the three schools, and
- Board staff (Principals from the three schools and Planning Staff)

This group has been meeting since April 2013.

3. Study Objectives

Boundary Study Objectives: (slides 7 and 8 of the online presentation)

The Working Group has discussed the issues within the study area and developed a set of objectives we hope to achieve through this study in order to address the issues.

Objectives:

- ***To determine the size and program configuration of the replacement Riverside PS, having regard for [Board Policy 3002: Elementary School Size and Configuration](#).***

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the rebuilt Riverside PS is important but how big do we build it and for what elementary organization (that is to say for which grades).

This objective refers to Board Policy 3002 which is a guideline that outlines the preferred size and configuration for Elementary schools of the Board and is always taken into account when contemplating new schools or large additions.

The policy recommends sizes based on a minimum number of classes per grade (at least 2 each in grades JK-6) and 2 or more in the intermediate Grades (7-8). This ends up being approximately 350-450 pupil places for a JK-6; and 500 – 650 for a JK-8 school. Research shows that student achievement benefits from teachers being able to team teach and collaborate with another teacher teaching the same grade in the same facility.

Also JK-6 and JK-8 organizations are preferred as it lines up better with the curriculum and the manner in which it is delivered and provides for fewer transitions for students.

- ***To develop a transitional accommodation plan for elementary school enrolment in the Town of Elmira while awaiting the completion of the replacement Riverside PS.***

Mr. Hercanuck noted that because the current Riverside PS facility is pressured, and even more so now that Full Day Kindergarten has been implemented. He advised that it will take about 2 years, from the time we get approval and funding (from the Ministry of Education) to the opening of a new school. *(He advised that no funding has been granted at this point. However, the Board has approved a replacement Riverside PS as its #1 Capital Priority to be submitted to the Ministry of Education for funding; which would allow a school to built in time for a 2016-17 opening.)*

This means that current Riverside PS will face further pressure until the new facility is built. So once we have determined what our plan is for the area the Working Group felt it important to also develop a strategy on how we are going to support the current Riverside PS in the meantime.

- ***To establish boundaries that are long-term (approx. 10 years) that 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.).***

4. Preferred Option – [Scenario 1](#): (slide 9 of the online presentation)

Mr. Hercanuck noted that after discussing the issues and setting the objectives, the Working Group developed nine scenarios and have selected one (Scenario 1) of those nine to bring to you this evening as the preferred option that addresses the issues while minimizing the impact on students.

Mr. Hercanuck advised that all nine Scenarios that had been considered can be viewed on the [Board's website](#) and are located in the presentations and minutes of the Working Group meetings.

[Scenario 1](#)

Scenario 1 represents the least amount of change of all the Scenarios developed.

- JK-6 Boundaries remain the same
- New Riverside PS (JK-6; built at 550 pupil places) constructed in 'Lunor Subdivision' to open September 2016.
- In 2016 (to coincide with new Riverside PS opening) School organizations change to:
 - JK-6 (Riverside PS, John Mahood PS),
 - 7-8 (Park Manor PS).
- 6 classroom addition at John Mahood PS.
- New Lunor Subdivision temporarily assigned to John Mahood PS until new Riverside PS opens.

Preferred Option – [Scenario 1 versus the Objectives:](#)

(Slides 10 and 11 of the online presentation)

Objective 1

To determine the size and configuration of the new Riverside PS.

The New Riverside PS would be built at 550 pupil places.

With respect to [Board Policy 3002](#) – both Riverside and John Mahood are expected to have approximately 2.5 to 3 classes per grade and Park Manor would have approximately 4 classes per grade. *This meets the intent of Board Policy 3002 in that the school are organized with 2 or more classes per grade level.*

Objective 2

To determine a transitional accommodation plan to handle elementary enrolment in the town until the new facility is built.

After evaluating a number of options the Working Group decided that directing students from the Lunor subdivision to John Mahood PS temporarily, until the new school is constructed was the least disruptive option. John Mahood PS will require 2 additional portables by September 2015 to handle this additional enrolment.

Objective 3

***To establish boundaries that are long-term (approx. 10 years) that 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***

Based on the current student distribution the new Riverside PS location offers a slight reduction in number of students that would require transportation to school.

John Mahood PS would require an addition of approximately 6 classrooms to handle the enrolment from the addition of Grade 6 (in September 2016) and the new Birdland development in the south end of town.

With the relocation of the school, some areas previously ineligible by distance for transportation to Riverside PS would now need transportation; however there would also be some areas that currently receive transportation that would now be able to walk to the New Riverside PS.

Objective 4

To minimize the impact on students where changes are proposed.

Scenario 1 minimizes the overall change in that the boundaries remain the same except with an additional grade in the case of new Riverside PS and John Mahood PS and one less grade at Park Manor PS.

There are also proposed 'grandparenting' allowances to minimize transitions for the students from the Lunor development who will be temporarily accommodated at John Mahood PS until the new school is built.

For example, we are proposing that the 2015-2016 Grade 5 students from the Lunor subdivision are offered the choice (grandparented) to remain at John Mahood PS so they do not have to change schools twice in two years (from John Mahood PS to Riverside PS for Grade 6, when the new school opens); and then again the following year when they graduate to Park Manor PS for Grade 7. Instead they can remain at John Mahood PS for Grade 6 and graduate to Park Manor PS from there.

5. Next Steps:

- Working Group to review feedback from tonight's meeting.
- Staff to provide recommendations in a report to Trustees.
- Report to the Board of Trustees to be presented in November 2013 (if possible) or January 2014 where Trustees will vote on the recommendations.

Mr. Hercanuck invited those in attendance to visit the [Elmira Boundary Study website](#), to view additional information for those that may be interested, including the presentations and minutes of the Working Group meetings and all of the Scenarios that have been developed including those not presented tonight. He also advised that hardcopies can be provided for those without access to the internet and can be requested through their school Principal.

6. Questions/Other

Mr. Hercanuck opened the floor to questions/comments at 7:15 pm.

Q: When you say 2016, do you mean September? Would this be the date for the new Riverside PS opening and the 6 classroom addition at John Mahood PS?

R: Yes, September 2016 is the target for the new Riverside PS to open and the addition for John Mahood PS; Grade 6 will not be implemented at Riverside PS and John Mahood PS before the opening of the new Riverside PS.

- Q: How confident are you that the new school will be opened by 2016?
- R: It takes about 2 years from the time we engage an architect to the opening of a new school. The Board will be submitting the [Riverside Public School rebuild as its number one priority](#) in its October 31, 2013 Capital Priorities Submission (request for funding) to the Ministry of Education. It is expected that we will know in the spring of 2014 if we have been funded for this project. That means a September 2016 opening date is achievable.
- Q: The Report going to the Board, in November or January will include Scenario 1 and the recommendation that Lunor subdivision be temporarily accommodated at John Mahood PS until the new Riverside PS opens? What will happen if Trustees do not accept these recommendations?
- R: If the Trustees do not approve the recommendations; we would have to go back to the Working Group to develop a new solution and the Lunor subdivision would have to be accommodated at the current Riverside PS in the interim.
- Q: How would this even be possible to accommodate these students at Riverside PS?
- R: It would mean a loss of the play area. We have a contingency plan to place more portables on the site if needed.
- C: It is too difficult now at Riverside PS for both staff and students; especially on rainy days, there isn't enough room inside or outside the school for the current population.
- R: The Report to the Board will make clear the enrolment pressure that will result at Riverside PS should the Lunor subdivision not be accommodated elsewhere.
- Q: Under Policy 3002, what will the new Riverside PS look like in terms of configuration? Will there be a bigger gym for school concerts?
- R: The new school will be mainly designed by the architects and has to comply with the Ministry's benchmark funding model. Schools with 500+ pupil places are usually built with 2 stories, a double gym, purpose built Full Day Kindergarten classrooms; will likely have 1 dedicated Spec Ed room, generous size library, much larger site (6.83 acres with adjacent 2-3 acres Municipal Park). The Board also has a [Facility Partnerships Policy](#) – and will put out a RFP (Request for Proposals). Often childcare providers will partner with us on new schools (only if there is a provider interested and can pay their share of capital costs).
- Q: Will you consider expanding the gym at John Mahood PS as well?
- R: Yes, it will be considered for a gym expansion, but there are no guarantees of funding and timing.
- Q: Having grown up in Elmira, just past First Street, I was bused to Floradale PS. Did the Working Group consider busing students to Floradale PS (where I hear they may have space) instead of putting the pressure on John Mahood PS?
- R: There is some space right now at Floradale PS; however, Floradale PS is involved in an [Accommodation Review](#) (a more formal process than a Boundary Study) that has yet to be resolved; and we cannot introduce any changes to the school from outside of the accommodation review area until there is conclusion to the review.
- Q: If JK-6 will not happen at John Mahood PS until new Riverside PS is constructed; does that mean that we will be adding Grade 6 at John Mahood PS in 2016 even if the 6 classroom addition there is not complete?

- R: Yes. JK-6 will begin at John Mahood and new Riverside; and 7-8 at Park Manor will coincide with the new school opening.
- Q: Will French Immersion (FI) be introduced elsewhere?
- R: FI is included in the enrolment projections at John Mahood PS and Park Manor PS; Learning Services can start at another location later if there is sufficient parent interest.
- Q: If Grade 6 is added to John Mahood PS, would it also have Grade 6 FI?
- R: Yes.
- Q: If FI is introduced at new Riverside PS, would a student who is currently attending John Mahood PS for the program have to switch?
- R: Not likely, we typically introduce FI at a school in Grade 1 and move up from there.
- Q: If John Mahood PS already has a lottery for FI, why not introduce FI at new Riverside PS right from the start?
- R: Only 8 students from Riverside PS applied for FI this past year, which is not enough to start a class – need a minimum of 18 and must not be in detriment to the regular track Grade 1 program.
- Q: Where did the additional ½ class in Grade 1 come from at John Mahood PS?
- R: Complicated – We had to add spaces because a French Immersion student moved into the area from Toronto and pushed the class over the class size cap.
- Q: What is the process to determine enough demand for FI at Riverside PS? Parents don't register because they don't want to send their children to another school and would prefer to have the program offered here.
- R: Parents can indicate interest in having the FI program at the home school by [registering online](#) and indicating the home school as their first choice and not indicating a second choice. You are not forced to accept a placement in the FI program if you are given a space at a site you do not want to go to.
- Q: What would happen if you already have a child at John Mahood PS in FI, and Riverside PS also gets the program; would you have to move your older child from John Mahood to Riverside because the younger student now has to go to Riverside?
- R: Siblings can attend the same school as their FI enrolled sibling.

Mr. Hercanuck thanked everyone for coming out, and asked those in attendance to provide their feedback on the comment sheets provided. The contact numbers and Board website information were shared. The formal presentation and question period concluded at 7:30 pm.

7. Open House

Mr. Hercanuck invited those in attendance to take a look at the display boards outlining the Preferred Option (Scenario 1); and Mr. Hercanuck, Mr. Cuomo, Ms. Manske, Trustee Paisley, and Principal Hatcher were available to answer questions one-on-one until 8:00 pm.

Contact Information:

Website: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/elmira-boundary-study/>

Email: boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca *(please indicate Elmira in the subject line)*

Phone: 519-570-0003 ext. 4419

Fax: 519-570-2172

How to be a Delegation

Individuals, organizations and groups are welcome to speak to the Board as a [delegation](#). In accordance with Board Bylaws, at regular [Board meetings](#), delegations speak only to matters relevant to items listed on the agenda. All other presentations will be scheduled at Committee of the Whole Meetings.

You may register as a delegation by calling Jayne Herring, Manager of Corporate Services, at 519-570-0003, ext. 4336, during business hours. You should register by noon on the Thursday prior to the meeting.