DRAFT FINAL REPORT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY REVIEW

Published November 23, 2026 - Public Comment Closes December 7, 2026



Executive Summary

This Draft Final Report summarizes the analysis, community engagement and recommendations of the West Waterloo Elementary Schools **Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC)**. The review was conducted in accordance with Administrative Procedure 4991 - Boundary Reviews.

The review includes Abraham Erb (JK-6), Edna Staebler (JK-8), Laurelwood (JK-8), and Vista Hills (JK-8) Public Schools, together with the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas** (holding at Edna Staebler Public School).

The review was initiated to:

- Set sustainable long-term boundaries in West Waterloo
- Relieve enrolment pressure at Vista Hills Public School
- Replace temporary **Development Area** Holding School assignments with sustainable long-term attendance boundaries

After evaluating the status quo and two boundary scenarios against school enrolments and facility utilization, technical analysis and community feedback, the **BRSC** recommends that the Board of Trustees approve Scenario 1 for implementation in September 2027. The recommended scenario would:

- Assign Columbia Forest (Affected Area A) to Abraham Erb Public School for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 and Laurelwood Public School for Grade 7 to Grade 8, from Vista Hills Public School.
- Assign Clair Hills (Affected Area B) to Edna Staebler Public School for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8, from Vista Hills Public School.
- Dissolve the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas** and incorporate both areas into the Vista Hills Public School attendance boundary for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

To reduce short-duration placements and repeated transitions, the **BRSC** recommends a time-limited legacy provision for students enrolled and attending the affected schools in Grades 5, 6, or 7 on June 29, 2027. Eligible students may remain at their current school (Edna Staebler Public School or Vista Hills Public School) until completing Grade 8. The provision would apply to both regular track and **French Immersion** students. Younger siblings would attend the newly designated school unless independently eligible for a legacy provision. An eligible older student may choose to attend the newly designated school with a younger sibling.

Scenario 1 reduces enrolment and facility pressure at Vista Hills Public School, assigns both **Development Areas** to a sustainable long-term attendance boundary, and improves proximity for many affected students. Community feedback strongly supported assigning both **Development Areas** to Vista Hills Public School. Feedback was divided on the reassignment of Columbia Forest and Clair Hills, the scope of legacy provisions, sibling continuity, walking route safety and the treatment of currently enrolled and French Immersion students. Based on this feedback, the BRSC modified the implementation plan by extending legacy eligibility to students entering Grades 6 to 8 and applying the same rules to regular track and French Immersion students.

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Public Review of the Draft Final Report

The Boundary Review Steering Committee is publishing the draft recommended solution, supporting analysis and rationale on November 23, 2026. The materials will remain publicly available for at least 21 days before the Final Report is presented to the Board of Trustees on December 14, 2026.

Comments and questions will be accepted until December 7, 2026, in accordance with Administrative Procedure 4991. Feedback received by the deadline will be reviewed and addressed in the Final Report.

Background

Boundary Review Process

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) conducts boundary reviews in accordance with Administrative Procedure 4991 - Boundary Reviews (AP 4991). AP 4991 applies when changes to school attendance boundaries are being considered, and no school closure or consolidation is proposed.

A **Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC)** was established in September 2026. Its membership includes staff representatives from area schools and various internal board departments, consistent with the terms of reference in Schedule B of AP 4991. Input from families, students, staff, school councils and community members helped inform the **BRSC**'s analysis and the development of recommendations. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving any change to an established attendance boundary.

At the September 28, 2026 Board meeting, Trustees received the initial report to launch the boundary review for West Waterloo schools within the WRDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan 2020-2030 (the **LTAP**) Review Area E22 Waterloo West (Clair Hills-Columbia Forest).

Boundary Review Scope

The purpose of the boundary review was to establish sustainable long-term attendance boundaries for the schools in the review area, improve the balance of enrolment and permanent school capacity (utilization), address identified enrolment pressure, and create contiguous geographic boundaries that can incorporate the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas (DAs)** into long-term attendance boundaries, some of which are within 400 metres of the school.

The boundary review includes four schools within **Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP)** Review Area E22 Waterloo West (Clair Hills-Columbia Forest), together with the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas**. All four schools have a **French Immersion (FI)** program.

- Abraham Erb Public School (JK- 6, FI)
- Edna Staebler Public School (JK- 8, FI)
- Laurelwood Public School (JK- 8, FI)
- Vista Hills Public School (JK- 8, FI)

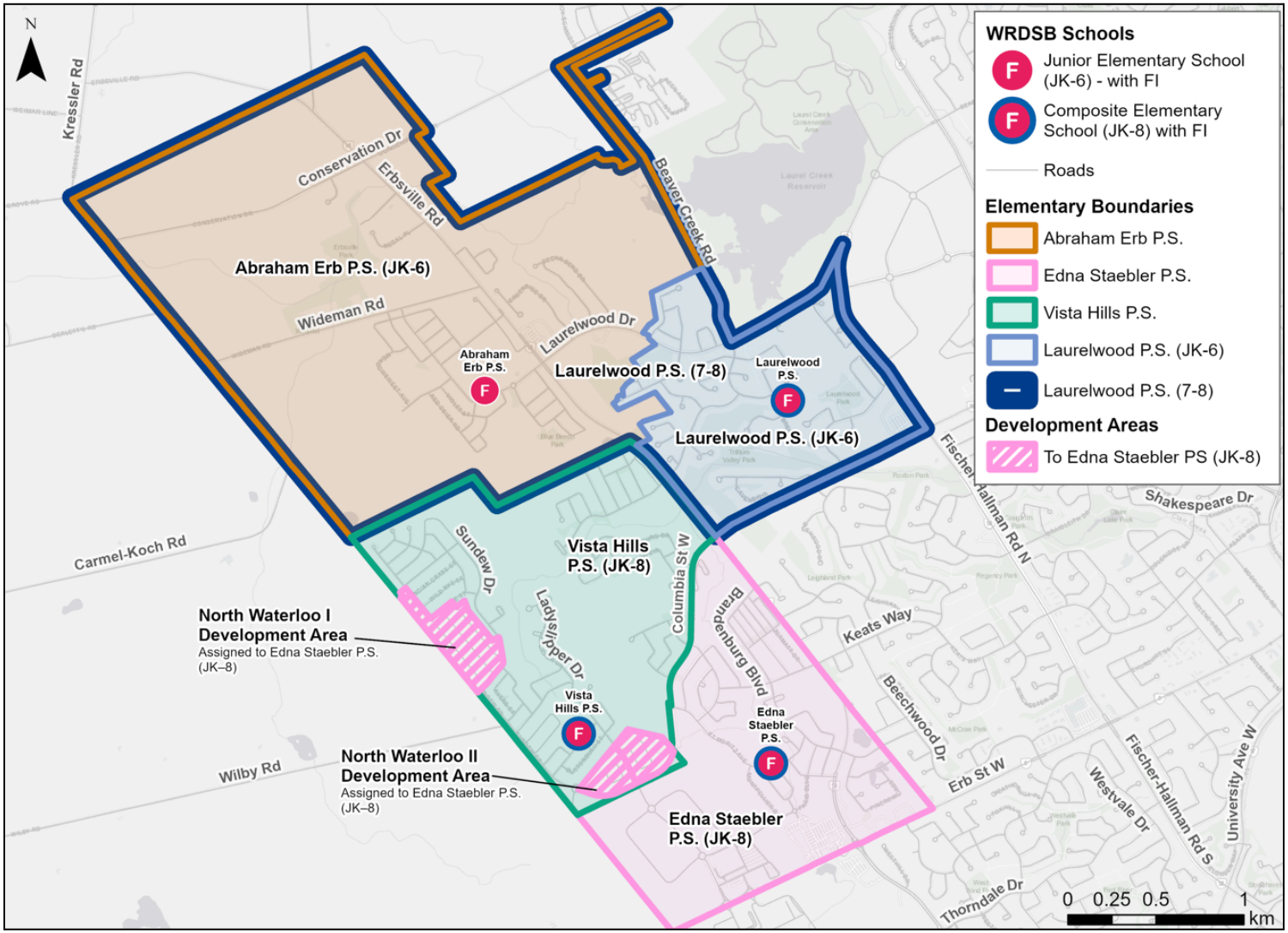
Edna Staebler Public School currently serves as the Holding School for the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas**.

Figure 1 illustrates the existing review area, school attendance, and **Development Area** boundaries. The **Development Areas** are hatched and coloured based on their existing Holding School assignment.

This boundary review does not consider school closure or consolidation, changes to established school grade configurations, or changes to the location or delivery model of **French Immersion**. Suggestions involving these matters were recorded and considered as community input but cannot be implemented through this boundary review without separate program, accommodation, operational and, where applicable, capital analysis.

Boundary review recommendations may differ across WRDSB communities because enrolment, facility capacity, geography, transportation, programs and development conditions differ. AP 4991 provides a consistent evaluation framework, while each **BRSC** applies that framework to local evidence.

Figure 1: Existing attendance boundaries and Development Area assignments in the West Waterloo review area



(For complete boundary context, visit the online map)

Community Engagement

The **BRSC** conducted a multi-phase engagement process to inform the development of recommendations. Community input informed scenario comparison, the rejection of Scenario 2, and the recommended legacy provisions. The BRSC assessed feedback alongside enrolment, facility, transportation, program, and transition evidence.

Engagement Activities

To ensure broad participation, the following engagement methods were used:

- Online feedback form for all families and community members
- In-person public open house
- Interactive mapping tools to help the community visualize the proposed changes
- School-based communication (website, School-Day)
- Plain-language materials designed to support translation
- Information on how participants can request accessibility, interpretation or accommodation supports for public engagement activities.

Engagement activities are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Public Engagement

Engagement Activity	Date	How the input affected the analysis or recommendation
Online Feedback	June 2026 - present	Informed Scenarios 1 and 2, identified themes and considerations used to refine the scenarios and implementation provisions.
Public Information Session	October 20, 2026	Identified transition, French Immersion and walkability concerns
Draft Final Report Published	November 23, 2026	Began 21-day review period
Emails and telephone discussions	June 2026 - present	Included in thematic analysis

Public Information Session

A public information session was held on October 20, 2026, at Vista Hills Public School. Approximately 125 people attended the open house session. This session:

- Introduced the process
- Shared the current context
- Gathered input on Scenarios 1 & 2

Staff heard from families both supportive of the boundary changes and those opposed to changes for the Columbia Forest and Clair Hills neighbourhoods.

Feedback

An online feedback form was created in June 2026 to gather written feedback on the proposed boundary changes. As of November 20, 2026, the WRDSB had received over 360 submissions through the form. Submissions received through the form are posted on the West Waterloo Boundary Review webpage, subject to the notice and consent provided through the feedback process.

The WRDSB also received approximately 40 emails through planning@wrdsb.ca. These emails have not been published because consent for public disclosure was not obtained. The **BRSC** reviewed the emails and incorporated the issues and themes raised into its analysis. Staff were also made aware of an independently organized petition supporting the assignment of the North Waterloo I and North Waterloo II **Development Areas** to Vista Hills Public School. The WRDSB did not administer or verify the petition. The position expressed through the petition was considered alongside other feedback received during the review.

All feedback was considered as qualitative evidence rather than a statistically representative survey or vote. The feedback was reviewed alongside enrolment, capacity, transportation, program, and transition information.

Feedback received up to, and including November 20, 2026, was reviewed and considered in this Draft Final Report.

Feedback Themes

Several themes consistently emerged in the feedback received through the online form and in conversations at the public information session. Feedback was coded thematically. Similar or repeated submissions were considered evidence of a concern's strength and recurrence, but submissions were not treated as a statistically representative survey or a vote. The **BRSC** considered both the frequency of a theme and the planning evidence relevant to that theme. These included:

- **Theme 1: Walkability, student safety and transportation**

  Respondents frequently identified walkability, travel distance, and student safety as key considerations in evaluating potential boundary changes. Many families supported school assignments that align more closely with neighbourhood geography and provide shorter, more direct walking routes. Concerns were also raised regarding busy road crossings, transportation eligibility, and maintaining safe active transportation options for elementary-aged students. Overall, feedback reflected a strong interest in boundaries that support neighbourhood-based school access and reduce reliance on bussing where practical.

- **Theme 2: Student transitions, legacy provisions and stability**

  One of the most common themes was a desire to minimize disruption for students currently attending their schools. Respondents frequently requested legacy (grandfathering) provisions, particularly for senior elementary students, siblings, and students with established educational or social supports. Feedback emphasized the importance of continuity, existing peer relationships, and maintaining stable learning environments during key developmental years. Many participants supported long-term boundary adjustments and provided implementation strategies to reduce impacts on currently enrolled students.

- **Theme 3: Neighbourhood cohesion and access to proximate schools**

  A significant portion of feedback focused on maintaining strong links between neighbourhoods and their local schools. Respondents commonly expressed that students benefit socially and emotionally when attending school alongside peers from their immediate community. Many participants indicated that neighbourhood-based school assignments strengthen community identity, family engagement, and opportunities for students to build relationships both inside and outside of school.

- **Theme 4: Capacity planning, utilization and long-term accommodation**

  Many submissions acknowledged the need for accommodation planning to address enrolment growth and capacity pressures across the review area. Respondents generally supported efforts to balance enrolment and improve utilization, though some questioned whether specific boundary options represented the most effective long-term solution. Feedback also included suggestions related to future accommodation planning, utilization of available capacity at neighbouring schools, and the exploration of alternative implementation options. Overall, participants showed strong interest in ensuring that any boundary changes provide sustainable, long-term attendance boundary outcomes.

- **Theme 5: Program continuity and child care access**

  Feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining stable pathways for French Immersion students, supporting students who rely on established educational accommodations, and considering how boundary changes affect child care arrangements. Participants generally encouraged the WRDSB to consider transition supports in implementation planning.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was also created and posted on the boundary review webpage before the first public information session and updated before this report's release.

Communication

The Communications Department developed a communications plan that guided the boundary review. It included a boundary review webpage, a schedule of communication and social media notices, and the promotion of the public information session.

The boundary review webpage was updated throughout the process with relevant information, including meeting dates, maps, videos and scenario information.

Notification of the public information session was provided via School-Day message and was posted on the review area schools' webpages.

Notification of the new considerations for the final report was sent via School-Day message on November 17, 2026. Notification regarding the Draft Final Report was sent via School-Day message on November 23, 2026.

Existing Conditions (Status Quo)

Table 2 provides status quo (no change) enrolment projections for the review area schools. This illustrates the current situation, assuming no changes to existing attendance boundaries or **Development Area** holding assignments.

Table 2: Status Quo Enrolment Projections

		ACTUAL		PROJECTED				*Utilization*		
School	**OTG**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2030**	**2033**	**2036**	***2027***	***2033***	***2036***
Abraham Erb Public School	487	400	400	370	330	380	390	*76%*	*78%*	*80%*
Edna Staebler Public School	720	550	535	550	480	440	425	*76%*	*61%*	*59%*
Laurelwood Public School	550	695	665	625	560	535	510	*114%*	*97%*	*93%*
Vista Hills Public School	643	775	785	775	740	715	720	*121%*	*111%*	*112%*
Review Area Total	**2400**	**2420**	**2385**	**2320**	**2110**	**2070**	**2045**	**97%**	**86%**	**85%**

Notes:

1. Utilization is calculated using Ministry-rated on-the-ground (OTG) capacity.
2. Development Area enrolment is assigned to Edna Staebler Public School under the status quo.

Enrolment projections are planning estimates based on available development, housing, student yield and enrolment data as of September 2026. Actual enrolment may vary depending on development timing, servicing capacity, housing occupancy, program participation and community enrolment choices.

If attendance boundaries remain status quo, Vista Hills Public School is projected to remain above permanent capacity throughout the projection period. Laurelwood Public School is projected to remain above capacity in the earlier years of the projection before declining just below 100% utilization. Abraham Erb Public School has available capacity, while Edna Staebler Public School is projected to decline to 59% utilization by 2036. Therefore, maintaining the status quo does not address the uneven distribution of enrolment and permanent capacity or provide long-term sustainable assignments for the two **Development Areas.**

Scenarios

The **Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC)** developed and evaluated two boundary scenarios against established criteria. Based on technical analysis and community feedback, the **BRSC recommends Scenario 1 for Board of Trustees approval**.

The BRSC evaluated each scenario using the following criteria:

- Balancing utilization between schools
- Improving walkability for students
- Reducing reliance on transportation
- Creating contiguous attendance boundaries that provide clear student pathways
- Replacing **Development Area** temporary assignments with sustainable long-term attendance boundaries

Scenario Comparison

Table 3 compares the scenarios considered by the **BRSC**, using the established evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria were not assigned equal numerical weights. The **BRSC** used professional judgment to select the option with the strongest overall result, while documenting material disadvantages and implementation risks.

Table 3: Comparison of the boundary review scenarios

Criterion	Status Quo (Baseline)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	BRSC Assessment
Balancing utilization between schools	**2033 Utilization** Abraham Erb Public School - **78%** Edna Staebler Public School - **61%** Laurelwood Public School - **97%** Vista Hills Public School - **111%**	**2033 Utilization** Abraham Erb Public School - **100%** Edna Staebler Public School - **49%** Laurelwood Public School - **102%** Vista Hills Public School - **110%**	**2033 Utilization** Abraham Erb Public School - **78%** Edna Staebler Public School -**63%** Laurelwood Public School -**97%** Vista Hills Public School -**106%**	Scenario 2 performs better

Criterion	Status Quo (Baseline)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	BRSC Assessment
Improving walkability for students	**% of students within walking distance of their assigned school** Abraham Erb Public School: **94**% Edna Staebler Public School: **86**% Laurelwood Public School: **71**% Vista Hills Public School: **57**%	**% of students (estimated) within walking distance of their assigned school** (assumed future White Birch Ave & Royal Fern St connection) Abraham Erb Public School: **83**% (**91**%) Edna Staebler Public School: **85**% Laurelwood Public School: **72**% Vista Hills Public School: **77**%	**% of students (estimated) within walking distance of their assigned school** Abraham Erb Public School: **94**% Edna Staebler Public School: **66**% Laurelwood Public School: **71**-% Vista Hills Public School: **77**%	Scenario 1 preferred

Criterion	Status Quo (Baseline)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	BRSC Assessment
Reducing reliance on transportation	**% of students eligible for transportation to their assigned school** Abraham Erb Public School: **4**% Edna Staebler Public School:**10**% Laurelwood Public School:**19**% Vista Hills Public School:**41**%	**% of students (estimated) eligible for transportation to their assigned school** (assumed future White Birch Ave & Royal Fern St connection) Abraham Erb Public School: **15**% (**9**%) Edna Staebler Public School:**10**% Laurelwood Public School:**19**% Vista Hills Public School:**20**%	**% of students (estimated) eligible for transportation to their assigned school** Abraham Erb Public School: **4**% Edna Staebler Public School:**30**% Laurelwood Public School:**19**% Vista Hills Public School:**20**%	Scenario 1 preferred

Criterion	Status Quo (Baseline)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	BRSC Assessment
Creating contiguous attendance boundaries that provide clear student pathways (JK-12)	Abraham Erb PS → Laurelwood PS → Laurel Heights SS Edna Staebler PS → Laurel Heights SS Laurelwood PS → Laurel Heights SS Vista Hills PS → Laurel Heights SS	Boundaries are contiguous and connect proximate neighbourhoods Potential two-school elementary pathway for Columbia Forest, no change for other areas	Single JK-8 pathway for Columbia Forest, no change for other areas	Scenario 2 creates contiguous boundaries and avoids a split pathway for Columbia Forest
Replacing Development Area temporary assignments with sustainable long-term attendance boundaries	North Waterloo I and North Waterloo II Development Areas assigned to Edna Staebler PS	Development Areas dissolved and assigned to Vista Hills Public School	Development Areas dissolved and assigned to Vista Hills Public School	Both replace temporary assignments

Recommended Scenario

Scenario 1 was introduced in the Initial Report as a preliminary option for analysis and community engagement. Scenario 2 was developed in response to **BRSC** discussion and feedback from trustees and the community. Both Scenario 1 and

Scenario 2 were presented at the Public Information Session on October 20, 2026 and tested against enrolment information, transportation analysis and community feedback. The **BRSC** recommends Scenario 1 (shown visually in Figure 2 or interactively in an online map) because it performs better on proximity and anticipated walkability while establishing long-term sustainable boundaries for both Development Areas. Scenario 2 performs more strongly on utilization balance and elementary pathway continuity. The BRSC concluded that Scenario 1's proximity and transportation benefits outweigh those disadvantages, subject to the recommended legacy and transition provisions.

Scenario 1 Highlights

- Reassign the Columbia Forest neighbourhood, north of Clair Creek (identified on Figure 2), from Vista Hills Public School to Abraham Erb Public School for JK-6 and Laurelwood Public School for Grades 7-8
- Reassign the portion of the Clair Hills neighbourhood, south of Clair Creek (identified on Figure 2), including Munich Circle and Salzburg Drive, from Vista Hills Public School to Edna Staebler Public School for JK-8.
- Incorporate the North Waterloo **Development Area** into the Vista Hills Public School attendance boundary for JK-8.
- Incorporate the North Waterloo II **Development Area** into the Vista Hills Public School attendance boundary for JK-8.

Table 4 shows the enrolment projections for Scenario 1 with the recommended implementation provisions.

Table 4: Scenario 1 Enrolment Projections with Legacy Provisions

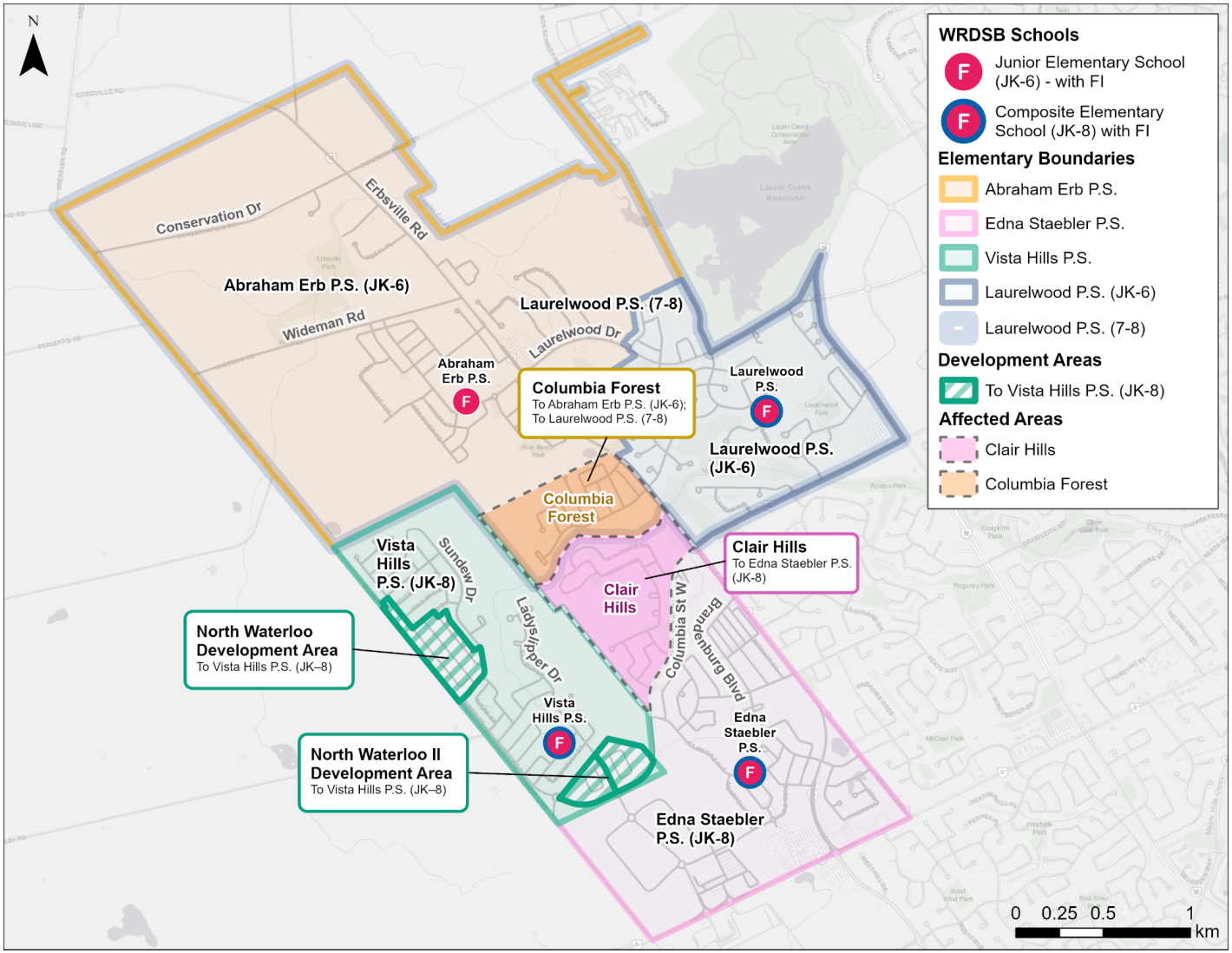
		ACTUAL		PROJECTED				*Utilization*		
School	**OTG**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2030**	**2033**	**2036**	***2027***	***2033***	***2036***
Abraham Erb Public School	487	400	400	450	420	485	495	92%	100%	102%
Edna Staebler Public School	720	550	535	530	390	350	340	74%	49%	47%
Laurelwood Public School	550	695	665	625	590	560	540	114%	102%	98%
Vista Hills Public School	643	775	785	715	710	680	680	110%	106%	106%
Review Area Total	**2400**	**2420**	**2385**	**2320**	**2110**	**2075**	**2055**	**96%**	**86%**	**86%**

Notes:

1. Enrolment projections are estimates based on September 2026 enrolment
2. Utilization is calculated using Ministry-rated on-the-ground capacity (OTG).
3. Totals may differ slightly between the status quo and scenario projections because of rounding and how projected students are assigned across school boundaries.
4. Scenario 1 projections reflect the recommended boundary and legacy provisions. Students in Grades 5, 6 or 7 on June 29, 2027, are assumed to remain at their current school until completing Grade 8. Younger students, including French Immersion students, are assigned according to the recommended boundary. Actual enrolment will vary based on family choice and future French Immersion admissions.

The projected long-term underutilization at Edna Staebler Public School will require continued monitoring through the Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) and future accommodation planning processes.

Figure 2: Recommended attendance boundaries effective September 2027 (Scenario 1)



Legacy Provisions

Based on feedback from parents, families and caregivers, the **BRSC** recommends legacy provisions to minimize transitions for students whose new attendance boundaries would result in multiple transitions over the next couple of years.

The Initial Report assumed, for projection purposes, that students currently enrolled in **French Immersion** would remain at their current school. During community engagement, parents, families, and caregivers raised questions about whether treating **French Immersion** and regular track students differently would be equitable.

Recognizing that **French Immersion** is offered at all four review area schools, the **BRSC** assessed the enrolment, class organization, staffing, sibling and transportation impacts of applying the recommended boundary and legacy provisions to both regular track and **French Immersion** students.

Based on that assessment, the **BRSC** recommends that the approved boundary changes and legacy provisions for students enrolled and attending the affected schools in Grades 5, 6 or 7 on June 29, 2027, apply to both regular track and **French Immersion** students. This approach provides consistent treatment for current students residing in the same affected area while maintaining a time-limited transition option for older students.

The following legacy provisions are recommended:

- A student is eligible for the legacy provision if, on June 29, 2027, the student:
    a. Resides at an address in the affected area (see Table 6);
    b. Is enrolled and attending the school from which the address is being reassigned; and
    c. Is in Grade 5, 6, or 7 (regular track and **French Immersion**).
- An eligible student may remain at that school until completing Grade 8.

- A younger sibling who is not independently eligible for the legacy provision will attend the newly designated school.
- Any eligible student may waive the legacy provision.
- Families may choose to have siblings attend the newly designated school together.

Table 5 illustrates the phased-in boundary change for the affected areas.

Students eligible for legacy provisions who, as of June 29, 2027, reside at an address within an affected area and qualify for transportation to their current school under Board Policy 4009 - Student Transportation and Administrative Procedure 4260 - Student Transportation may continue to receive transportation to that school until the student completes Grade 8.

The transportation exception will:

- Apply only while the student remains at the qualifying address;
- End if the student changes schools or moves outside of the qualifying address;
- Not extend to younger siblings who are required to attend the newly designated school;
- Remain subject to established transportation safety and operational requirements; and
- Expire no later than June 30, 2030.

The transportation exception applies equally to eligible regular track and **French Immersion** students covered by the approved legacy provision.

Table 5: Legacy Provisions (Regular Track and French Immersion)

School Year	Grade									
2026-2027	JK	SK	GR1	GR2	GR3	GR4	GR5	GR6	GR7	GR8
2027-2028	JK	SK	GR1	GR2	GR3	GR4	GR5	**GR6**	**GR7**	**GR8**
2028-2029	JK	SK	GR1	GR2	GR3	GR4	GR5	GR6	**GR7**	**GR8**
2029-2030	JK	SK	GR1	GR2	GR3	GR4	GR5	GR6	GR7	**GR8**

Legend	Current Boundary	New Boundary	**Exception through legacy provision**

All students, except those with legacy provisions, are required to attend based on the new boundaries. Students eligible for legacy provisions may choose to attend the same school as their **younger sibling(s).** For example, a student in Affected Area A (Columbia Forest) entering Grade 6 in September 2027 has a sibling entering Grade 3 who would be directed to Abraham Erb Public School. The Grade 6 student qualifies for a legacy provision at Vista Hills Public School, but the family wants the siblings to remain together. The Grade 6 student may attend Abraham Erb Public School instead of remaining at Vista Hills Public School. The Grade 3 student will not have the option to attend Vista Hills Public School.

Evaluation of the Recommended Scenario

The **BRSC** recommends Scenario 1 because it provides the most reasonable overall balance of the evaluation criteria:

- **Attendance boundary continuity:** Scenario 1 establishes connected attendance boundaries and long-term assignments for the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas**. The recommended boundaries provide clear pathways for all affected areas.

- **Development Area assignments:** Both **Development Areas** would become part of the Vista Hills Public School attendance boundary. This replaces the temporary holding school assignments at Edna Staebler Public School and assigns students to a school within their immediate neighbourhood, some within 400 metres of Vista Hills Public School.
- **Walkability and transportation**: Scenario 1 is expected to increase the number of students within walking distance overall, primarily by assigning the North Waterloo **Development Area** to Vista Hills Public School and through potential future connections between Columbia Forest and Abraham Erb Public School.
    - Some Clair Hills students may continue to require transportation, subject to address-level eligibility and confirmation of walking routes by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).
- **Facility utilization**: Scenario 1 reduces projected utilization at Vista Hills Public School compared to the status quo and directs additional enrolment to Abraham Erb and Laurelwood Public Schools. Vista Hills Public School, however, remains above its permanent capacity, Laurelwood Public School experiences near-term overutilization, and Edna Staebler Public School becomes increasingly underutilized. These conditions will require continued monitoring through the Long-term Accommodation Plan.
- **Student transitions**: While Scenario 1 may create more than one elementary school transition for some Columbia Forest students, the recommended legacy provisions for students enrolled and attending the affected school in Grades 5, 6, or 7 on June 29, 2027, are intended to reduce repeated moves and short-duration placements.

Overall, Scenario 1 received considerable support from **Development Area** families and many Columbia Forest respondents. Feedback demonstrated substantial support for assigning the North Waterloo and North Waterloo II **Development Areas** to Vista Hills Public School. Views were more divided regarding the reassignment of Columbia Forest and Clair Hills and the treatment of currently enrolled and **French Immersion** students. The **BRSC** considered the feedback together with enrolment, facility, transportation, walking routes, program and transition information. The **BRSC**

responded by recommending expanded legacy provisions and by including **French Immersion** students within the same boundary and legacy framework as regular track students.

Table 6: Scenario 1 Impacted Students by Area and Grade

Affected Area	Current Regular track (JK-8)	Current French Immersion (Gr. 2-8)	Total Current Students (JK-8)	Total Legacy Eligible (current Gr.5-7)	Total Reassigned 2027 (current JK-4)
A - Columbia Forest	128	27	155	58	81
B - Clair Hills	46	29	75	28	36
North Waterloo	21	1	22	6	14
North Waterloo II	53	10	63	20	37

Notes:

1. Counts are based on student address and enrolment information as of October 31, 2026.
2. Total Reassigned column does not include incoming JK students in 2027.

Transportation Impacts

Preliminary routing for Scenario 1 indicates a reduction of four routes at Vista Hills Public School and the possible addition of one route at Abraham Erb Public School and one at Edna Staebler Public School, for a potential net reduction of two routes. Based on current mapping and analysis, 100% of students in the North Waterloo I **Development Area** and 81% of students in the North Waterloo II **Development Area** are expected to be within walking distance of Vista Hills Public School, subject to confirmation of transportation eligibility and a suitable walking route.

Some families from the Clair Hills neighbourhood have expressed concern about the requirement to cross Columbia Street to walk to Edna Staebler Public School. Students from the North Waterloo II **Development Area** currently assigned to Edna Staebler Public School cross Columbia Street at St. Moritz Avenue. There is currently an existing pedestrian crossing that provides access across the roadway. The crossing is designed so pedestrians only need to cross one lane of traffic at a time, as a pedestrian refuge area with a sidewalk is located within the median. This allows pedestrians to stop in the median before crossing the remaining lane.

The City of Waterloo has completed a design for a pedestrian crossover at Columbia Street West and St. Moritz Avenue. Construction was expected to begin in 2027; however, the project is not currently funded. The WRDSB is working closely with the City of Waterloo to advance the project before the fall of 2027.

Implementation of the recommended boundary for Clair Hills is not conditional on construction of the proposed pedestrian crossover. Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region will assess the available walking route and determine transportation eligibility before September 2027.

A development proposal for 515 Erbsville Road currently includes an extension of Royal Fern St to White Birch Avenue to the North. If the proposed road connection is constructed and an appropriate walking route is confirmed, it may affect future transportation eligibility for some students travelling from Columbia Forest to Abraham Erb Public School. The timing and suitability of this potential route have not yet been confirmed.

Child Care Impacts

Boundary changes may affect access to before- and after-school care for some families. Existing programs in the affected area are at or near licensed capacity, and some maintain waitlists. The WRDSB and the YMCA of Three Rivers (provider at Edna Staebler Public School) will give priority consideration, subject to licensed capacity, to affected students currently

enrolled in an Extended Day program. Priority consideration does not guarantee placement. Families will receive information about available programs, application requirements and placement decisions by May 14, 2027.

What We Heard and How the BRSC Responded

Table 7 summarizes the **BRSC**'s responses to feedback from parents, families, and caregivers through the community engagement in the final recommendations.

Table 7: BRSC response to feedback

What the community told us	BRSC Response
Development Area families strongly supported Vista Hills	Both Development Areas are recommended for inclusion in the Vista Hills boundary
Families opposed multiple short-duration school transitions	Legacy eligibility was expanded to students entering Grades 6-8 in 2027
Families questioned different treatment of regular track and **French Immersion** students	The boundary and legacy provisions are recommended to apply to both programs
Columbia Forest families opposed assignment to Edna Staebler Public School	For a variety of reasons, Scenario 2 is not being recommended. As such, Columbia Forest students will not be directed to Edna Staebler.
Families requested sibling continuity	Extending legacy options to include all Grade 6-8 students and their siblings would contravene many of the underlying reasons for initiating the boundary review in the first place (distribution, utilization). If families want their children to attend the same school, the option for older students to attend the newly assigned school will be available to them.

What the community told us	BRSC Response
Families raised Columbia Street safety concerns	The report documents existing and proposed crossing infrastructure and requires transportation review
Families raised child care concerns	The WRDSB and the YMCA of Three Rivers will give priority consideration to affected students currently enrolled in a before- or after-school program, subject to licensed capacity.
Families raised special education and well-being concerns	Students will be supported through the transition process and special education needs will continue to be met at the receiving school.
Families questioned low utilization at Edna Staebler Public School	The report acknowledges the issue and commits to LTAP monitoring.

Recommendations

The recommended scenario (Scenario 1) proposes implementing the following boundaries (shown visually in Figure 2 of this report or interactively in this online map) starting in September 2027.

1. Establish a **revised attendance area boundary for Abraham Erb Public School**, as shown in Figure 2, which includes the following:

    a. Affected Area A (Figure 3), Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 from Vista Hills Public School to Abraham Erb Public School, effective September 2027.

    b. Affected Area A (Figure 3), Grade 7 to Grade 8 from Vista Hills Public School to Laurelwood Public School, effective September 2027.

c. Allow an exception for students enrolled and attending Vista Hills Public School in Grades 5, 6, or 7 on June 29, 2027, to remain at Vista Hills Public School until they complete Grade 8.

2. Establish a **revised attendance area boundary for Edna Staebler Public School**, as shown in Figure 2, which includes the following:

    a. Affected Area B (Figure 4), Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 from Vista Hills Public School to Edna Staebler Public School, effective September 2027.

    b. Allow an exception for students enrolled and attending Vista Hills Public School in Grades 5, 6, or 7 on June 29, 2027, to remain at Vista Hills Public School until they complete Grade 8.

3. **Dissolve the North Waterloo I and North Waterloo II Development Area boundaries** for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 into the Vista Hills Public School boundary as shown in Figure 5.

    a. Allow an exception for students enrolled and attending Edna Staebler Public School in Grades 5, 6, or 7 on June 29, 2027, to remain at Edna Staebler Public School until they complete Grade 8.

Note for clarity on implementation: All students, except those with legacy provisions, are required to attend based on the new boundaries. Students eligible for legacy provisions may choose to attend the same school as their younger sibling(s). For example, a student in Affected Area A (Columbia Forest) entering Grade 6 in September 2027 has a sibling entering Grade 3 who would be directed to Abraham Erb Public School. The Grade 6 student qualifies for a legacy provision at Vista Hills Public School, but the family wants the siblings to remain together. The Grade 6 student may attend Abraham Erb Public School instead of remaining at Vista Hills Public School. The Grade 3 student will not have the option to attend Vista Hills Public School.

Figure 3: Affected Area A (Columbia Forest)

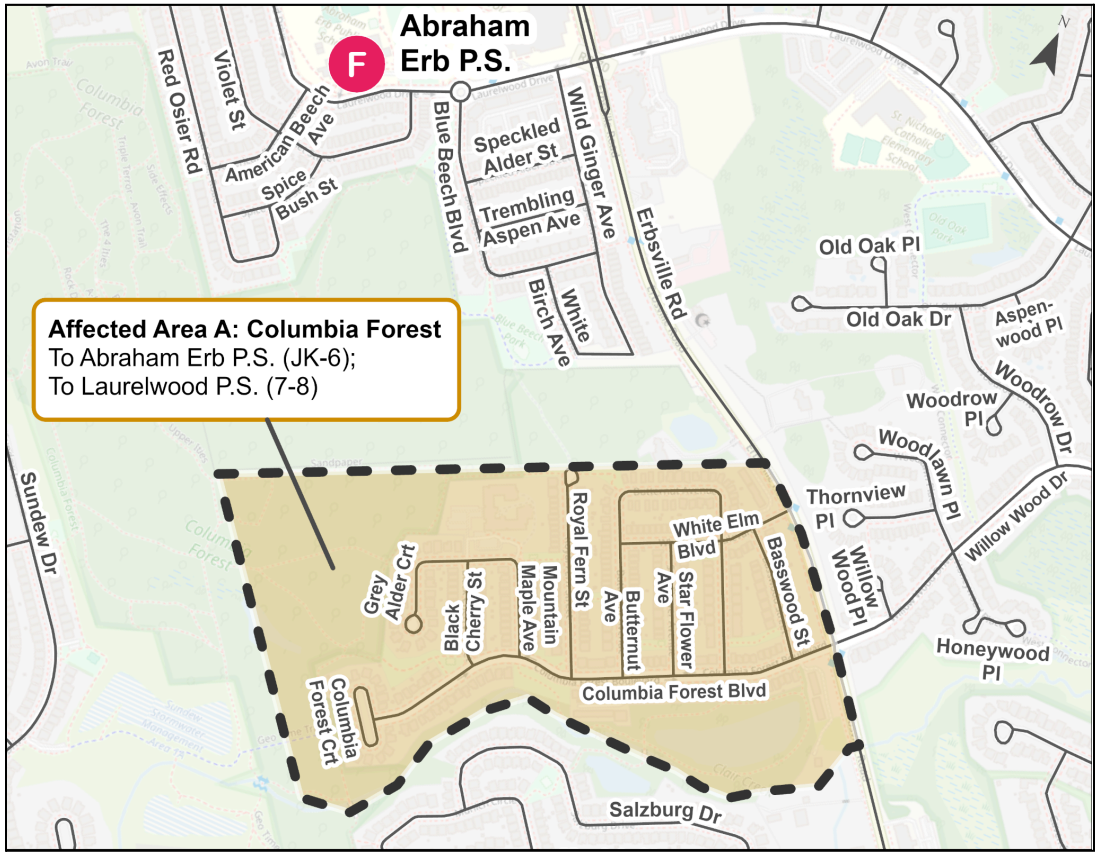


Figure 4: Affected Area B (Clair Hills)

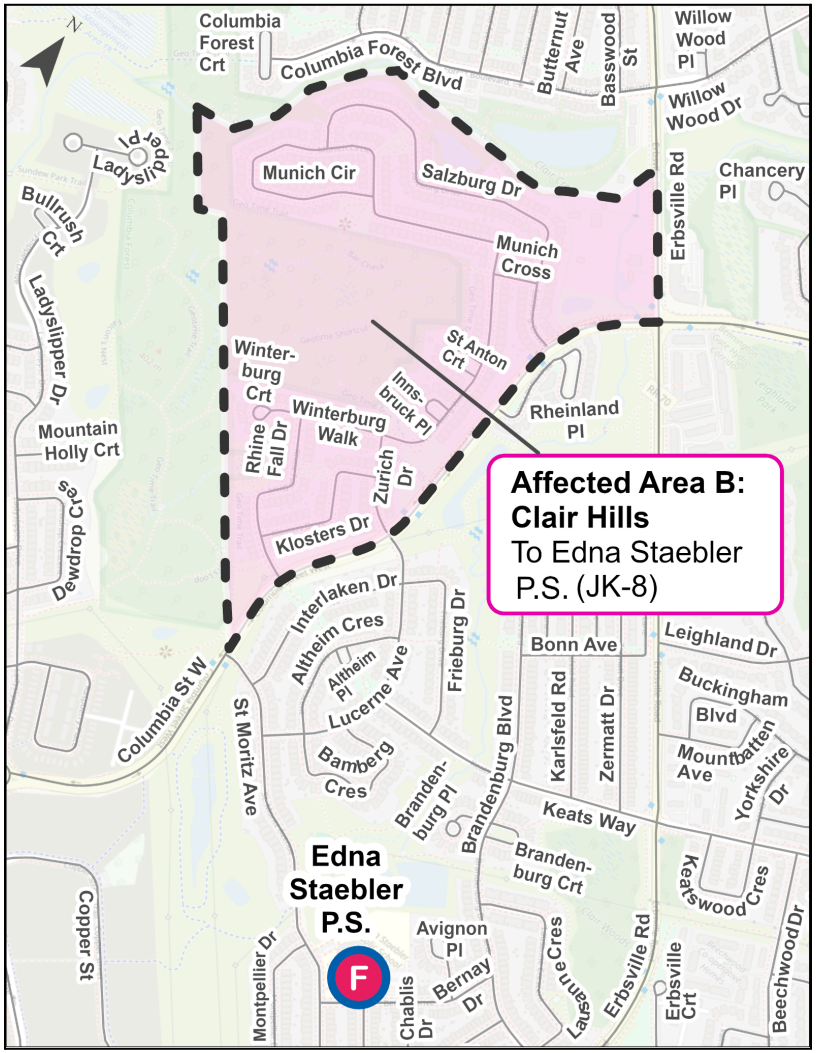
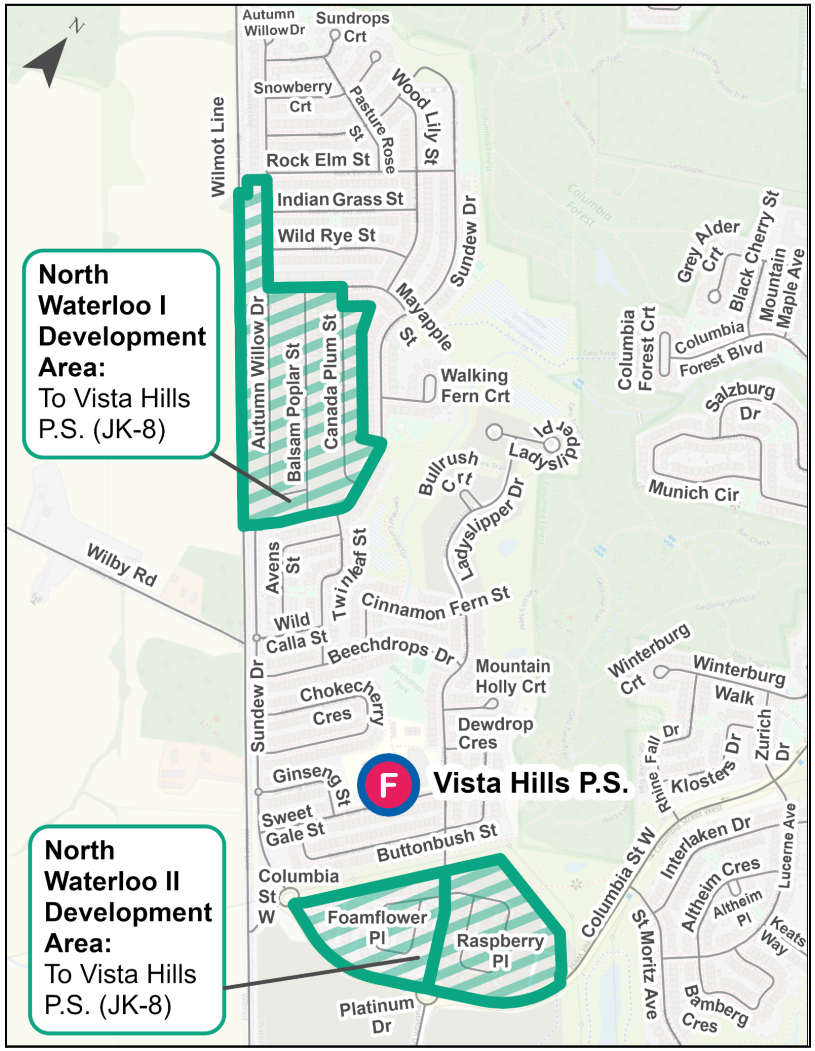


Figure 5: North Waterloo I and North Waterloo II Development Areas



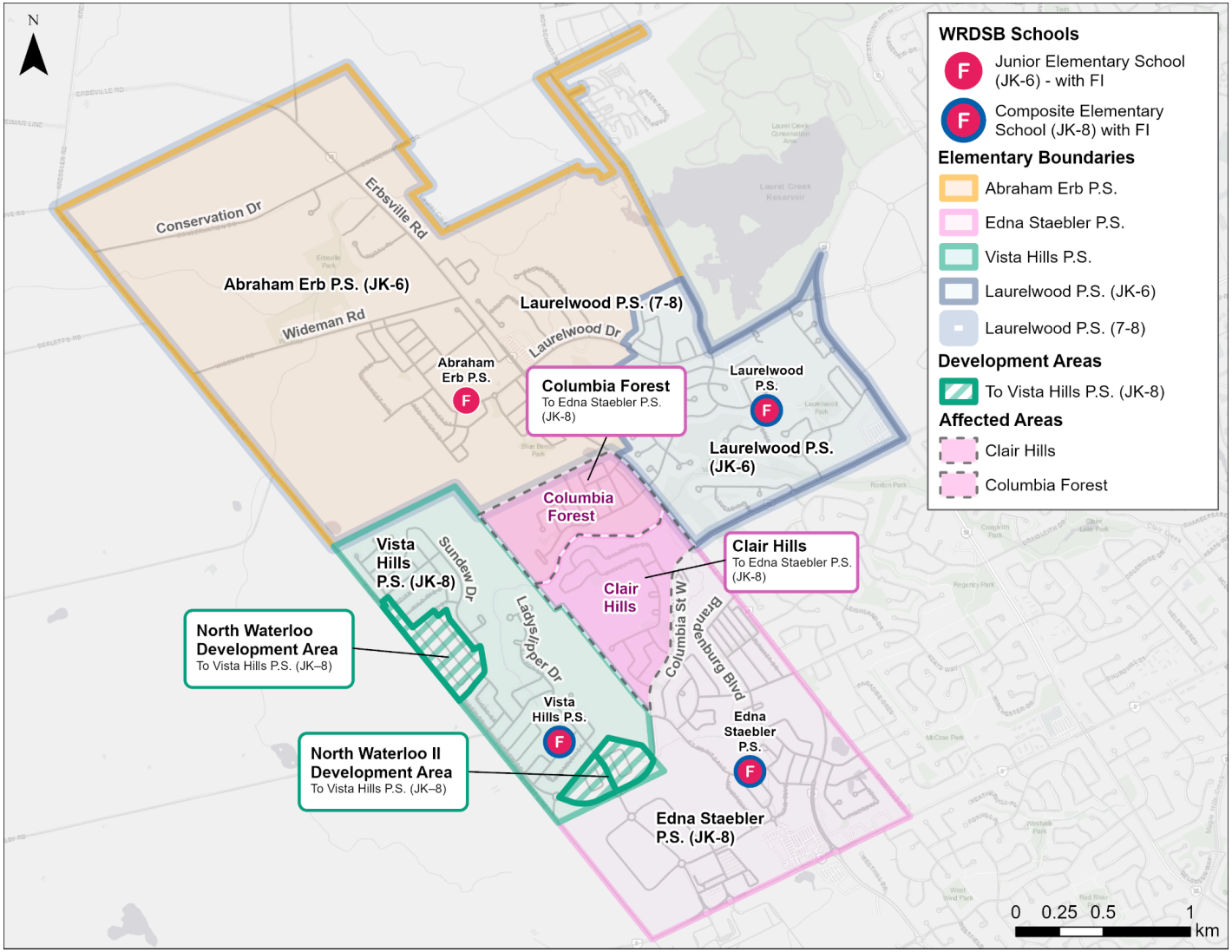
Eliminated Scenario

The **BRSC** developed Scenario 2 and presented it at the Public Information Session in October. This scenario reassigned all of Columbia Forest and Clair Hills to Edna Staebler Public School for JK-8, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

Scenario 2 improved projected utilization at Edna Staebler Public School and provided a single Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 pathway for Affected Area A (Columbia Forest); however, it placed Columbia Forest farther from its designated school, increasing long-term reliance on transportation. Scenario 2 was not recommended because its improved utilization and single JK-8 pathway did not outweigh its boundary proximity, walkability and transportation results for Columbia Forest. Community opposition reinforced, but did not determine this conclusion.

Overall, the BRSC concluded that Scenario 1 better supports neighbourhood proximity and long-term boundary continuity, despite Scenario 2 performing better on Edna Staebler Public School utilization and avoidance of a split elementary pathway.

Figure 6: Scenario 2 considered by the BRSC but not recommended



Next Steps

Notification of Final Decision

If trustees approve the **BRSC**'s recommendations, staff will implement the changes and notify affected families by email by early January 2027. Those without an email address will receive a letter by mail. Furthermore, a School-Day notification and a school webpage post will announce the final decision. The broader public will be aware of the outcome through posts on the boundary review webpage and board webpage. The Communications team will identify any additional opportunities to communicate the review's conclusion as required.

Transition Committee

If the recommendations are approved, a Transition Committee, composed of the administrators and superintendents of the affected schools, will collaborate to identify opportunities to ensure a smooth transition for all affected students and families. The Transition Committee may consult with staff, students, parents and caregivers as needed. Updates will be shared with the community as appropriate.

Conclusion

Following public engagement and technical analysis, the **BRSC** concluded that Scenario 1 provides the most reasonable overall balance of the review objectives. Scenario 1 provides the strongest available balance of proximity, transportation efficiency, transition mitigation and long-term attendance boundary clarity within the approved scope of this review. It assigns both **Development Areas** to an attendance boundary and reduces projected pressure at Vista Hills Public School. It does not eliminate overutilization at Vista Hills, fully balance permanent capacity, or avoid every transition. The **BRSC** has therefore paired the recommendation with time-limited legacy provisions, transition planning and continued

Long-term Accommodation Plan monitoring. Overall, the **BRSC** recommends that the Board of Trustees approve Scenario 1 for implementation on September 1, 2027.

Glossary of Terms

Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC)
A staff committee established under AP 4991 to review planning information, assess boundary options, consider community input, and prepare recommendations for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Development Area (DA)
A geographically defined area that is temporarily excluded from an established school attendance boundary, typically created in new residential developments when a local school cannot yet accommodate students. Students in a DA attend a "**Holding School**" until a long-term solution (e.g., new school or boundary change) is implemented.

French Immersion (FI)
An optional program in which students learn in French for a prescribed portion of the school day in accordance with WRDSB program requirements.

Holding School
A school to which students residing in a Development Area are temporarily assigned under Administrative Procedure 4992 until a long-term accommodation solution is approved and implemented.

Legacy Provision
A time-limited arrangement that allows an eligible student to remain at the student's current school after an attendance boundary change, subject to stated eligibility, duration and transportation conditions.

On-the-Ground Capacity (OTG)

The Ministry-approved number of students a school building is designed to accommodate in permanent classrooms (excluding portables or temporary structures).

Portables and Portapaks

Relocatable classroom buildings used to temporarily increase a school's capacity when enrolment exceeds available space. Portable classrooms are standalone buildings, whereas portapaks are physically attached to the school building.

Scenario

A proposed option or model for new school boundaries developed as part of the boundary review process.

Utilization Rate

The percentage of a school's permanent capacity that is being used. A rate over 100% indicates that the school is over capacity.

Walking Distance

The distance threshold used to determine transportation eligibility under Board Policy 4009. The existence of a suitable walking route is assessed separately by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region.