

WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY BOUNDARY STUDY PHASE 2



The first Working Group meeting of the West Waterloo Elementary Boundary Study Phase 2, involving, Abraham Erb, Laurelwood and Vista Hills Public Schools, was held at Laurelwood PS on Tuesday, December 4, 2018 from 4:00 to 5:30 PM.

ATTENDEES:

Heather Schumann, Principal, Abraham Erb PS; Peter Berndt, Principal, Laurelwood PS; Shemira Sheriff, Vice-Principal, Vista Hills PS (substitute); Deb Bergey, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS; Jennifer Kennedy, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS; Ryan Barnett-Cowan, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS; Tony Shaughnessy, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS (substitute); Bhaleka Persaud, Parent Representative, Vista Hills PS; Greg James, Parent Representative, Vista Hills PS; Elaine Ranney, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being; Matthew Gerard, Superintendent of Business Services & Treasurer of the Board Nathan Hercanuck, Manager of Planning; Sarah Galliher, Senior Planner; Emily Bumbaco, Senior Planner; Shelby Selig, Recording Secretary

REGRETS:

Nicole Shaughnessy, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS; Don Oberle, Principal, Vista Hills PS

1. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Nathan Hercanuck, Manager of Planning, welcomed members of the Working Group and Board staff at 4:05 PM.

The Working Group members did a round of introductions.

Mr. Hercanuck went through some housekeeping items and then handed off to Ms. Bumbaco who led the group through the presentation, available online at <https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/westwaterloophase2/>.

2. BOUNDARY STUDY PROCESS

What is a Boundary Study?

Referring to slide 3 of the online presentation, Ms. Bumbaco explained the reasons the Board undertakes a Boundary Study. Ms. Bumbaco also noted that any change to school boundaries or grade configurations require the approval of the Board of Trustees and advised that the report will be presented at a Committee of the Whole (Board) Meeting for a final decision.

Role of the Committee

Referring to slides 4 & 5 of the online presentation, Ms. Bumbaco identified the composition and roles of the Working Group. Ms. Bumbaco noted that Working Group meetings are not public meetings, however agendas and minutes will be posted on the boundary study webpage once they have been approved by the committee. Working Group members are asked to act as liaisons between the Working Group and the school communities; they can share Boundary Study information with their school community and bring any raised concerns or feedback from the community to the Working Group.

Referring to the diagram on slide 6 of the online presentation, Ms. Bumbaco went through the Boundary Study process. It was noted that for this Boundary Study process the Board is considering a 2019 implementation so a Board decision is needed by the end of March 2019 in order to align with the staffing process. There is a possibility, if the Working Group comes up with scenarios before the first public meeting, that we may be able to combine the agendas and present those scenarios at the first public meeting, reducing the need for a second public meeting.

Study area map (slide 8)

Ms. Bumbaco shared a map of the study area, noting the yellow boundary is the JK-6 Abraham Erb PS boundary, the purple area is the JK-6 Vista Hills PS boundary, and the blue is the JK-8 Laurelwood PS boundary. The hatching around the boundaries identifies the grade 7 & 8 boundaries; currently Vista Hills PS includes Abraham Erb PS in their grade 7 & 8 boundary.

3. WEST WATERLOO PHASE 1 BACKGROUND

Ms. Bumbaco shared the background on [Phase 1](#) of this Boundary Study on slides 9 and 10 of the online presentation. The Board approved the first phase of this boundary study in November 2015 which established the boundary for Vista Hills PS. A second phase of the study was recommended between 2018 and 2020 to consider redirecting Abraham Erb PS area grade 7 & 8 students to Laurelwood PS to reduce enrolment pressure at Vista Hills PS.

- Q: *Is there a way to connect with the City to ensure developers are developing on a pace so that schools and resources are available in those neighbourhoods?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that Planning staff does communicate with the Municipalities, however the Board is identifying the need for school sites up to 20 years in advance of any development beginning. Once all municipal development approvals are received the main driver for the development pace is the real estate market. In the last 2 to 3 years our region has seen significant increases in housing starts, our Board is growing by approximately one elementary school worth of students per year. Due to Ministry funding restraints the Board is not able to keep up with this rate, and this brings on the need for boundary studies to address enrolment/capacity concerns.*

4. PHASE 2 INITIAL REPORT

Projected Enrolment - Status Quo

Ms. Bumbaco shared the status quo - no change enrolment projections on slide 11. She noted to better reflect the true capacity at Laurelwood PS the six classroom portapak was included in the capacity numbers as it is not functionally considered a temporary accommodation like a portable.

Projected Enrolment – Scenario 1

Ms. Bumbaco shared the scenario 1 enrolment projections on slide 12 of the online presentation, which would include moving the Abraham Erb students to Laurelwood PS for grade 7 & 8 starting in September 2019.

- Q: *Looking at the enrolment numbers between the status quo projections and scenario 1 projections, it looks like you are expecting the grade 7 & 8 population to grow, is that correct?*
- R: *Ms. Bumbaco responded that in order to minimize transitions for students, the enrolment projections for scenario 1 are modelled to reflect only grade 7's moving to Laurelwood PS, allowing the grade 8's to finish out at Vista Hills PS.*

Ms. Bumbaco shared the Vista Hills PS JK-6 boundary on slide 13, which shows the areas that are still yet to be developed in orange. The chart includes the number of units that are expected to be developed in each of the development plan areas.

- Q: *When you supplied the enrolment projection numbers earlier in the presentation, did they include these future developments in the numbers, and do you anticipate that these areas will all be built within 10 years?*
- R: *Ms. Bumbaco responded that the projections include the development and that these units are expected to be built within the next 10 years. Overall, the speed of development is driven by multiple factors including market forces, but we have projected the development fairly aggressively based on the recent observed pace of development. These anticipated numbers have been included in the status quo enrolment projections as well as in scenario 1. Mr. Hercanuck added that on average a house in a new residential development will reach its maximum elementary school yield at 10 or 11 years old. This is a challenge with new schools as there tends to be a peak in enrolment within that 10 year range and then it will begin to taper off. This is why there are often portables at new schools as we do not want to build schools that will be partially empty after the subdivision has matured.*

5. ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

Referring to slide 14 Ms. Bumbaco asked the Working Group to think about potential issues at each school involved that may be able to be addressed through this boundary study, in addition to relieving enrolment pressure at Vista Hills PS.

6. DRAFT GOALS/OBJECTIVES

On slide 15 Ms. Bumbaco provided goals and objectives that have been used in previous boundary studies which are used to evaluate any scenarios that are brought forward.

Q: *Could you provide us with the walking distance benchmarks?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that grades 1-8 the distance is 1.6 kilometres and Kindergarten the walking distance is 800 metres.*

7. MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Bumbaco reviewed the timelines for the boundary study. The goal is for the Working Group to have a recommendation by the end of February 2019. Planning staff will submit a report to the Board of Trustees in early March 2019, with the hopes of having a final decision by end of March 2019.

Q: *When will the public meeting occur?*

R: *Ms. Bumbaco responded that depending on what is accomplished in the next couple Working Group meetings, the Public Meeting could potentially be the end of January or beginning of February. The Working Group will review the feedback from the public meeting before providing their final recommendation.*

Q: *Are we able to bring feedback from our school communities, parent groups or parent councils?*

R: *Ms. Bumbaco replied that yes, Working Group members are liaisons for their school communities. The Working Group welcomes all feedback, issues, or concerns.*

Communication

- Parent representatives are asked to share this information with their communities.
- An email address has been established for the public to share concerns or ask questions about the boundary study (boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.ca) which Planning staff monitor and Trustees have access to. We ask that the subject line be West Waterloo Boundary Study as we currently have two boundary studies in progress.
- A boundary study webpage has been published: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/westwaterloophase2/>
- The boundary study webpage posts are also posted on study area schools webpages

Ms. Bumbaco noted that you are able to subscribe to the [Planning website](#) for updates when new content is posted. Working Group meeting minutes will also be shared online once they are approved.

8. ROUNDTABLE

Q: *Even with the boundary change how do you expect to handle the over population at Vista Hills PS, including the units that have yet to be developed around the school?*

R: *Ms. Bumbaco and Mr. Hercanuck responded that part of the solution will be to allocate more portables to this school. Another option the Board could consider would be designating some of the future developments as Development Areas. A Development Area is a temporary designation to new subdivisions or new housing developments within an existing boundary that do not yet have anyone living within them. Planning can procedurally carve out these areas and assign them to a 'holding school', this is intended to be a temporary solution until the home school enrolment reduces and is able to accommodate the students from those areas.*

Q: *What happens to the holding school after it is done holding those students?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that holding schools are usually schools that have extra space within the building or have larger sites to allow for temporary capacity (portables). Once the students are returned to their home schools the enrolment at the holding school would go back down.*

Q: *So you don't make these temporary holding schools permanent placements for the students because it would be inconvenient to the Board?*

R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that we don't make these holding schools permanent because students should be able to attend a school within their community when the capacity in the school allows it, as well as the long term transportation costs for the Board.*

- Q: *Is expanding Abraham Erb PS to have grade 7 & 8 an option?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that it is not impossible, however intermediate programs require infrastructure such as art rooms, science rooms and music rooms which Abraham Erb PS cannot currently accommodate. The Ministry of Education does not have a capital program available to apply for an addition to accommodate that infrastructure.*
- R: *Ms. Bumbaco also noted that this was considered in phase 1 of the West Waterloo Boundary Study, although it was determined that since there was space available for grade 7 & 8's at the other study schools, those spaces should be utilized before building additional space at Abraham Erb PS.*
- Q: *What are the chances that you would have to change all of the elementary boundaries in West Waterloo to rebalance enrolment at Vista Hills PS?*
- R: *Mr. Hercanuck responded that with the Beavercreek Meadows development, the Board has identified the potential need for a school site to accommodate students from this new development. There would need to be a boundary established for that school, which could potentially involve some of the schools that are taking part in this boundary study.*

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Ms. Bumbaco to provide walking webs for scenarios**
- **Planning staff to mock up possible portable placement for Vista Hills PS**
- **Planning staff to supply Development Area scenarios**
- **Mr. Hercanuck asked the Working Group to reflect on the presentation and scenarios provided and think of any issues or implications members may want to address through this boundary study. He asked members to bring their ideas and concerns back to the next Working Group meeting**

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Working Group Meetings:

- **Working Group #2:** Tuesday, January 15, 2018 from 5:00-6:30 pm at Vista Hills PS
- **Working Group #3:** Tuesday, January 29, 2018 from 5:00-6:30 pm at Abraham Erb PS
- **Working Group #4:** Tuesday, February 12, 2018 from 5:00-6:30 at Laurelwood PS
- **Working Group #5:** Tuesday, February 26, 2018 from 5:00-6:30 at Vista Hills PS

Public Meetings:

- Public Meeting: TBD
- Committee of the Whole Meeting: TBD