

MEETING NOTES
Centretown, Glebe, Old Ottawa South Accommodation
Study
Working Group Meeting
Monday June 13th, 2011
7:30 pm - 9:45 pm
Hopewell Public School Library

The meeting was brought to order at 7:35

Welcome and Opening Remarks – Gisele

Presentation of the Themes Rubric

The group was introduced to the Themes Rubric and any clarifications or additions of themes was sought from the group. There was discussion of the interpretation of some of the concepts, of note;

- The WG agreed to define neighbourhood school as one that could be walked to, and
- Agreed to use the board definition of walkability. So younger children can walk shorter distances than older children.

Generally the themes outlined in the rubric appeared to resonate with the WG. There were comments that the themes may not be equally weighted or quantifiable (apples v. oranges) but in the end, the WG left the rubric as outlined.

Major themes of discussion centred on:

Quality education should be a priority, although it was noted that the themes may express a means to get there

There was some discussion regarding school size and capacity.

Neighbourhood and community school discussion. Can we have strong programs and neighbourhood schools (i.e.: walking) access. This may be difficult to achieve given the nature of the schools, neighbourhood, and program choice.

There was a question regarding the Gifted program. The program should be considered like any other program within the study area.

In the context of discussion around single/dual and multi track schools, there was discussion around the need to address the declining English program numbers and how this factored into program location/co-location

A solution with the greatest staying power as a theme was discussed. The current forecasts have the study area at 100% of capacity in 2015. Most of the excess capacity is located north of the Queensway. The WG asked that staff address capacity in the Glebe neighbourhood. The CCCA proposed that rather than adding capacity in the Glebe, to use McNabb as a site hence strengthening Centretown offerings. Centennial was concerned that enhancing McNabb would have a negative impact on enrolment at Centennial. Centennial would like the WG to remember that centennial has space and would welcome more children.

Snapshot of the votes for Themes

Access to neighbourhood schools (13)
Strong program enrolment (9)
Solution with the greatest staying power (8)
Fewest Children bused (2)
Access to gifted program (1)
Minimize transitions (1)

The WG members were then asked to express a priority in the factors by choosing, by importance, their top two:

Keeping cohorts together which was expressed as an early concern was not weighted highly in this exercise. When results were discussed the WG indicated that this was still important in the synthesis of all factors but not an individual theme to support.

Coming to a solution with the greatest staying power was seen as important, but the WG acknowledged that it was difficult to reconcile the population v. capacity numbers north and south of the Queensway.

The WG acknowledged that perhaps, rather than being constrained by current capacity, there should be a request of the OCDSB to add more space; particularly in the Glebe. If additional capacity is needed, it was requested that other options be considered first before reopening McNabb

When asked to rank the themes themselves in order of importance, two emerged: Maintaining Access to Neighbourhood Schools and Program Viability.

In discussion, it was noted that the themes that resonated the most strongly with the working group were the themes that were recognized as being the most difficult to achieve together:

Discussion did not permit a fulsome discussion of the scenarios and potential culling of the number of possible outcomes

In addition, time did not permit the small group exercise which would have had the groups consider how the scenarios could be improved if additional capacity was added.

Note:

The group had made a parking lot list of issues that needed to be considered further – as follows:

- Impact of size of school
- Challenge in maintaining a community school
- Expand capacity in the Glebe, 2 classrooms at First Ave, 4 @ Mutchmor
- McNabb
- Elgin rebuild
- Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
- Choice

The committee directed staff to develop additional scenarios over the summer months which could

- Take into consideration the results from the themes rubric exercise.
- Incorporate into the scenarios, the possibility of additional capacity in the Glebe;
- For each new scenario, outline transition plans and grandfathering of existing children where possible.

Public Question/Comment

- A member of the public indicated that communication regarding the process needs to be improved.
- If we take all of the students and look at the capacity of the schools, we're at 100%. What are we doing to create capacity?

The meeting adjourned at 9:40