



Minutes



William Merrifield VC Public School Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Meeting #2

Location: William Merrifield VC Public School

Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2014

Time: 7:00 pm

Present: **Ruby Blue** (Community Representative), **Sherri Dean** (Parent and Chair of the Committee), **Carol Lucio** (Principal), **Elena Palazzi** (Teacher), **Joe Maurice** (Superintendent), **David Ervin** (Supervisor of Plant Department ADSB)

Regrets: **Don McConnell** (Municipal Representative)

Public Attendance: 2

(1) **Introduction of ARC Committee:** Meeting started at 7:05pm and Sherri Dean introduced the members of the committee.

(2) **Purpose of the Public Meeting:** To review the school template and explore options for the students for next year.

(3) **Review Valuation Template (50 min)**

- **School Profile:**

Joe Maurice and Dave Ervin spoke to the overall profile of the school. The school was built in 1946 and is a JK-8 school. It has an On the Ground (OTG) capacity of 291 and a Functional Capacity of 294. The OTG Capacity is what the school was originally built for while the Functional Capacity is the actual capacity of the school. Current enrollment is 129.

Enrollment has been declining steadily over the last 5 years from 200 in 2010-2011. The projected enrollment increases only slightly over the next five years with some students that would have previously attended Etienne Brule, however, even with the slight increases, the school would remain below 50% capacity. In terms of bussing, 66% of students are bussed and 8% have a bus ride longer than 40 minutes. Approximately 18% of students come from out of zone. Grant revenue for the school based on enrolment is \$1,662,026.00 and the cost to operate the school is \$3,106, 252.00 per year. Much of this cost would arise from projected capital upgrades and maintenance averaged over 5 years.

- **Value to Student**

Joe Maurice and Carol Lucio reviewed the Value to the Student section. All students are housed in combined classes, and there is plenty of space for classrooms, meeting rooms etc. However, the opportunities for intramural/extracurricular sports and clubs are limited by the small numbers of students. In addition, there are few parent volunteers and the school has not

had a school council for the past two years. The building is accessible and the playground is large and spacious. Building security can be an issue with blind corners and no clear sight lines in the building. The PA system does not extend outside the building in the event of an emergency. Over 20% of students access the breakfast and lunch programs. Daily, there are both a hot breakfast and hot lunch program available for students.

- **Value to School Board:**

Joe Maurice and David Ervin reviewed the Value to the School Board. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) for William Merrifield is 81.93%. This is considered extremely high as a FCI of 65% or greater is considered Prohibitive to Repair (PTR) by the Ministry of Education. Determining the FCI values of schools is Ministry mandated and kept in a database with the Ministry. These numbers are used for long-term planning and maintenance of buildings. The numbers reflect what the values would be if no repairs or upgrades were made in the next five years. School Boards require Ministry approval to spend \$1,000,000 or more on capital projects – something not usually supported for Prohibitive to Repair structures. The higher the number of repairs that are needed in a school, the higher the FCI. The FCI is calculated by comparing the cost of repairs to a school compared to the cost of replacing the building. The higher the FCI, the less likely funding would be available to repair or replace a building.

David Ervin provided a summary of concerns at William Merrifield that would create the high FCI value. There is a long history of roof repairs and the roof has reached its lifespan. Flooring needs to be replaced, fittings (doors, etc) have work required, the ventilation system needs to be repaired, fencing the yard would need to be done, the parking lot is in need of repair, the entranceway is heaving towards the building, the electrical system would need to be replaced, civil and site components (e.g. gas line, and main electrical connection) need to be replaced, radiator piping is old and difficult to repair, and primary electrical components are outdated and not easy to access. In addition, the boiler is over 30 years old, beyond its 25 year lifespan. There is much that we do not see, hidden behind the walls. For example, all piping to the radiators is old and in need of replacement. A simple failure in a pipe could shut down the school for days and it is not easy finding the replacement parts. All components of a building have a lifespan. Anytime a repair is done, the FCI database gets updated.

A question was asked regarding when the school was first identified as PTR. As Dave Ervin explained this would have been in 2005 during the first assessment by the Ministry when everything from the foundation to the roof and everything in between, including mechanical was assessed. A re-assessment was done in 2010 and 2013 – half of the schools in each year.

A question was asked regarding why the building was still in use with this PTR status. It was discussed that in the long term the Capital Plan would look at schools in the West End. However, some significant concerns came to light in the past year at William Merrifield, including roof leaks, issues with the boiler and heating, and water concerns, that would require extensive renovations and investments to keep the school open beyond this year. The building is safe, however, if a significant problem emerges during the school year, the school will be relocated.

The FCI scores for neighbouring schools were also shared: HM Robbins (30.02%), Isabel Fletcher (22.08%), Northern Heights (32.04%), Kiwedin (29.52%), and Greenwood (39.63%). These numbers do not reflect renovations over the past year, current renovations, or planned upgrades in the next few years – which will result in lower FCI scores for these schools.

The Current Enrolment, Functional Capacity, Functional Occupancy, and Available Capacity for William Merrifield and neighbouring elementary schools was shared, as outlined in the chart below:

School	Current Enrolment	Functional Capacity	Functional Occupancy (%)	Available Capacity
HM Robbins PS	206	263	78.33	57
Isabel Fletcher PS	173	265	65.28	92
Northern Heights PS	200	263	76.05	63
Kiwedin PS	126	153	82.35	27
Greenwood PS	200	312	64.10	112
William Merrifield VC PS	129	294	43.88	165
TOTAL	1034	1550	66.71	

Of note, the Functional Occupancy of this cluster of schools is only 66.71% and there is available space in all neighbouring schools. Without considering the Intermediate Programs at Korah CVS and Superior Heights CVS, there is space for 351 students in neighbouring elementary schools.

The distance between William Merrifield and surrounding schools was determined to be acceptable. The chart below was shared. It outlines the driving distance and driving time from William Merrifield, as calculated by www.googlemaps.ca for each surrounding school.

School	Driving Distance (km)	Driving Time (min)
HM Robbins	3.4 km	6 min
Isabel Fletcher	4.1 km	8 min
Northern Heights	2.8 km	7 min
Kiwedin	2.4 km	5 min
Greenwood	4.1 km	7 min

It was noted that 5 neighbouring schools were within a 4.1 km and 8 minute drive of William Merrifield.

- **Value to Community**

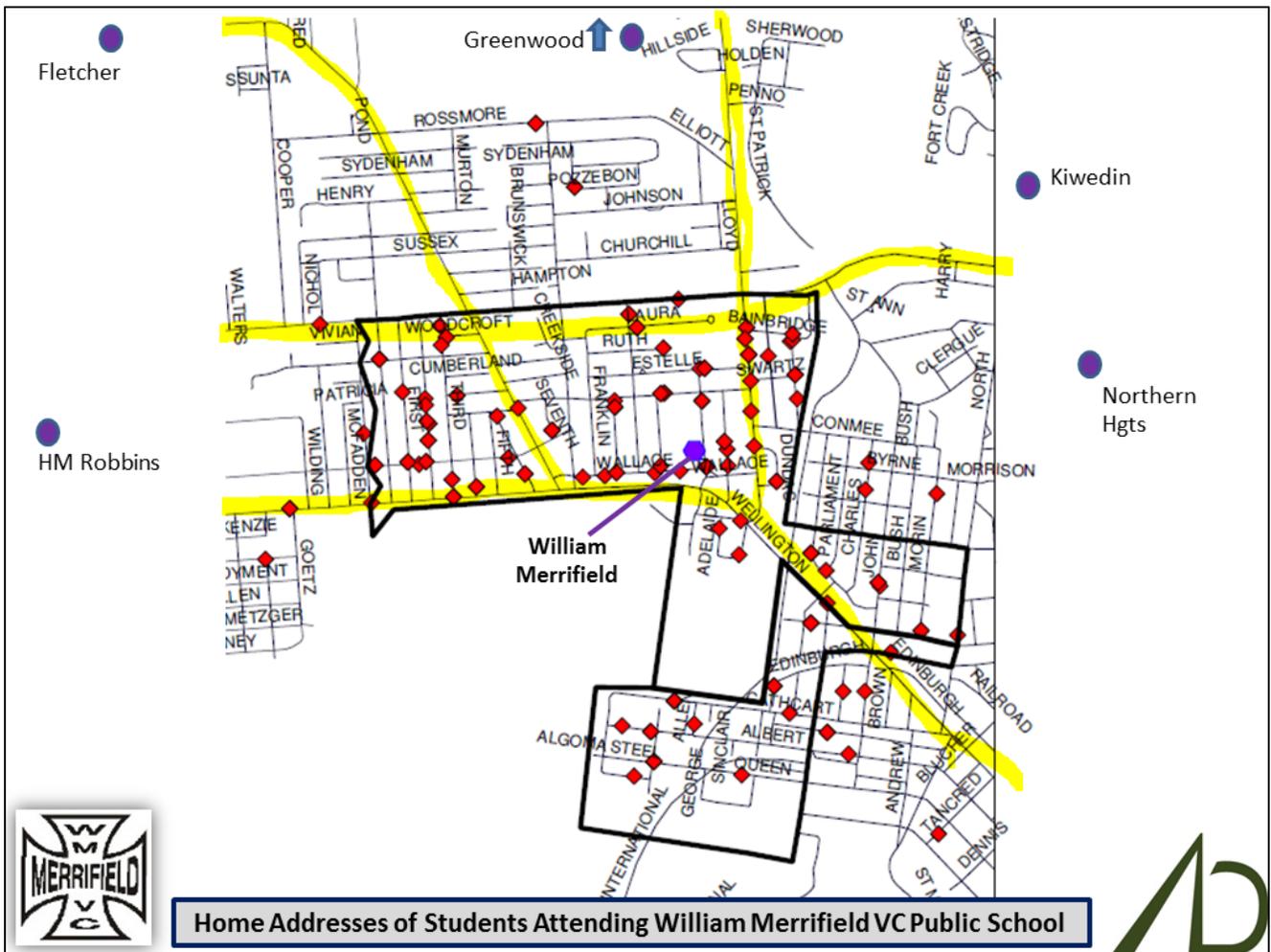
Carol Lucio and Joe Maurice outlined the Value to the Community. There are some community use groups in the evening at the school. Community use does not exceed 5 hours per week. The school grounds have a soccer field, basketball courts and a baseball field, play structures are minimal, and there are no significant green spaces.

There are other facilities in the area that could support community use. There are no child care or social services operating out of the school

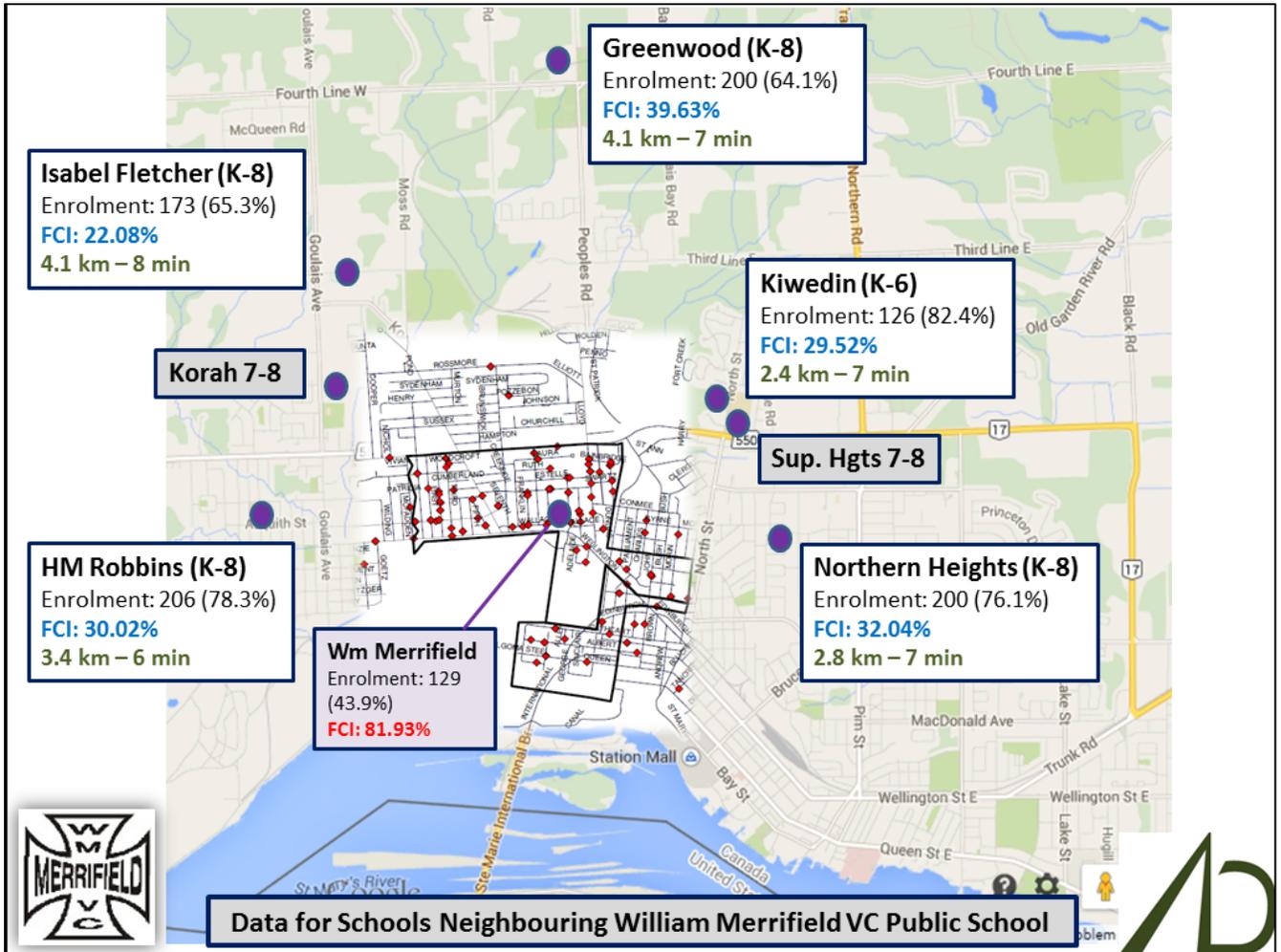
- **Value to Economy**

Joe Maurice outlined the Value to the Economy. The school is not a significant employer in the community. Staff would be relocated to other sites. While the building itself is in poor shape, the property does have potential for redevelopment.

Joe Maurice shared a map of the area showing where students from William Merrifield are currently residing. See below.



Joe Maurice shared a map infographic outlining the location of Merrifield and current students, in relation to neighbouring schools. This map included the following information for each school: FCI, current enrolment, Functional Occupancy, and driving distance and time from William Merrifield. See below.



Joe Maurice shared a slide with options that will be reviewed for the Committee's recommendation. The Committee does not consider keeping William Merrifield open to be a consideration due to its high FCI (81.93%), low enrolment and Functional Occupancy (129 students, 43.9%), and the amount of available space in neighbouring schools (space for 351+ students within 4.1 km of the school). Under these conditions, Ministry funding would not be available to upgrade or replace the school.

Some options to be considered include:

- Move all/some students to HM Robbins
- Move all/some students to Isabel Fletcher
- Move all/some students to Greenwood
- Move all/some students to Kiwedin
- Move all/some students to Northern Heights
- Move all/some of the grade 7/8s to Korah or Superior Heights Intermediate Program

At the moment, there are no neighbouring schools that could accommodate all 129 students from William Merrifield without major capital expansion and construction. With the amount of existing available space in these neighbouring schools, Ministry funding for a major capital expansion of one

of these schools is highly unlikely. As a result, the option of having one school accommodate all students from William Merrifield will likely not be consideration.

The Committee will collect additional information about each of these neighbouring schools before making a recommendation. The question was asked of those in attendance:

- What additional information would you like to have to assist in making a recommendation?

(4) Questions from the Public

- If the neighbouring schools end up with more buses because of the arriving Merrifield students, will there be a need for additional money to accommodate more buses at these sites?

Dave Ervin - Neighbouring schools have had work done on their bus bays and could probably handle the increased traffic flow of new buses. Isabel Fletcher was re-done this year, HM Robbins and Greenwood were re-done last year, and Kiwedin and Northern Heights were re-done in the last 3-5 years.

- Wouldn't the easiest thing be to just change the school boundaries and send the students to the new schools?

This is a consideration that the committee will discuss

- Sherri Dean questioned whether or not breakfast and lunch programs would be available at the receiving schools. If over 20% of students from Merrifield access the breakfast and lunch programs, will similar programs be available in the surrounding schools. Will students continue to be fed?
- What happens to things like the graduation pictures in the halls? What happens to the William Merrifield name? There is lots of history in the school. Many people in the community are linked to this school.

(5) Confirmation of Third Public Meeting Date:

- Thursday, November 27, 2014, 7:00 pm

(6) Wrap and Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm