

What's Wrong With This Picture?

Manor Park Public School is projected to expand to over 800 children in the next three years -- adding 25% more children.

Because the school, built in the 1950s and expanded in the 1990s, is inadequate for this number of these children, 12 portables have been planned for the playing fields between the play structures and the Manor Park Community Centre.

To accommodate teacher parking – and to attract French immersion teachers from Quebec – the east end of the sports fields will be paved into a new parking lot. This new parking lot will provide better access to the additional busses needed each day.

Parents and residents are asking whether there aren't better options.

Why increase the Manor Park Public School beyond its built capacity when other local schools are not close to full? For example, Robert E. Wilson School has 187 students (68% of its capacity); Queen Mary School has 144 students (39% of its capacity). Some 70% of students are bussed to Manor Park Public School!

The Ottawa Carleton-District School Board (OCDSB) says that enrolment is growing at Manor Park because there is a lack of early French immersion programs at other schools, as well as new developments such as Wateridge Village. **If families want early French immersion education, shouldn't the OCDSB provide it in their local school?**

Building a new parking lot on the sports fields would result in the loss of approximately one-third of very well used greenspace by the students themselves and by local recreation programs. It would jeopardize the outdoor rinks, eliminate the swings, eliminate one baseball diamond, and make it tough to run local sports tournaments. Snow removed from the parking lot would be dumped on the sports fields degrading the grass turf and delaying the use of the fields in the spring. **Is this best for school children and the greater community?**

The parking lot proposal runs counter to the Ontario Ministry of Education's own environmental policy for modeling good corporate responsibility for the environment and community engagement. It runs against current approaches by employers to encourage car pooling, public transport and other car alternatives. **Shouldn't we expect better from our school board?**

The entire property bounded by Hemlock Road / Thornwood Road / Eastbourne Avenue and Braemar Street is owned by the Ottawa Carleton-District School Board. In the past, the city has held an agreement to maintain the sports fields and program recreation on them. **Is it OK for the OCDSB to say that consultation with the community is not needed because it is their property? Doesn't the property belong to the taxpayers and the families who use it?**

If these questions make you think, consider:

Some children have a 40-minute bus ride to get to Manor Park Public School. **Wouldn't it be better to walk to a local school?**

Manor Park Public School cannot accommodate the current enrolment with its infrastructure. New schools being are being built to accommodate 800 children. **But with aged infrastructure, for example 6 toilets were broken, and no money to enhance and expand, is it reasonable to grow the school by another 25%?**

Children attend OCDSB school according to where they live. It is 'hoped' that a school boundary review will take place in 2022. **Does that mean that permanently paving sports fields is a response to a temporary problem?**

Our OCDSB School Board Trustee, Chris Ellis, is clear that he does not support one-off boundary changes – and would not support changes to school boundaries without the full review. **Isn't a temporary boundary change what is really needed? Why is Trustee Chris Ellis not advocating for that as a solution to help all three local schools?**

Manor Park and Ward 13 include some of the city's highest levels of child poverty. **Who are we hurting by packing them into aging schools and taking away greenspace? Are OCDSB savings more important?**

Schools are both places for education but also important places in our community. **Don't we all deserve schools that are not over-crowded, schools in good repair, schools within walking distance – and offering the French immersion programming families want? Doesn't each child need to play outdoors and enjoy greenspace? Don't recreation programs build strong communities?**

Manor Park Community Association on behalf of concerned residents and parents

More information:

Manor Park Community Association (MPCA)

<https://manorparkcommunity.ca>

Email: info@manorparkcommunity.ca

What can you do?

Tell OCDSB Trustee Chris Ellis what you think

Email: chris.ellis@ocdsb.ca

Phone: (613) 818-7350

Tell the Manor Park Public School principal what you think

Ms Marnie Patterson

100 Braemar Street

Ottawa, ON K1K 3C9

Phone: (613) 746-8131

Email: marnie.patterson@ocdsb.ca

Tell city Councillor Rawlson King what you think

Address: 110 Laurier Avenue West

Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Email: rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca

Phone: (613) 580-2483

Tell the Manor Park School Council what you think

Email: manorparkschoolcouncil@gmail.com