

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 17, 2002

STANDING SUB-COMMITTEE – COUNCIL SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON COMMITTEE

Recommendation

The Director of Legal Services, in consultation with the Senior Manager of Bylaw Enforcement, recommends that Council endorse the recommendation of Council/School Board Liaison Committee to develop a Standing Sub-Committee to address parking and traffic problems in the area of schools in Vaughan.

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek Council endorsement of the recommendation of the Liaison Committee.

Background - Analysis and Options

On February 6, 2002 the Council/School Board Liaison Committee struck a Sub-Committee to review issues regarding the parking and traffic flows surrounding schools in the City of Vaughan.

On May 22, 2002, the report was presented to the Council/School Board Liaison Committee. In the report which is Attachment # 1, the Parking Sub-Committee recommended that a Standing Committee made up of staff from By-law Enforcement, Engineering, York Regional Police, and the School Boards be struck to address parking and traffic concerns on a case by case basis.

The Council/School Board Liaison Committee adopted the recommendation and requested that Council and the School Boards endorse the proposal.

This recommendation is also to be presented to both the Public and Catholic School Boards for their endorsement.

Conclusion

The endorsement of this proposal will allow for increased cooperation between the parties, and service delivery to the public who use the schools and to the residents in the areas surrounding the schools.

Attachments

Report of Council/School Board Liaison Committee dated May 22, 2002.

Report prepared by:

Tony Thompson, Senior Manager, By-law Enforcement

Respectfully submitted,

Heather A. Wilson
Director of Legal Services

COUNCIL / SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON COMMITTEE

Recommendation

The Parking Sub-Committee recommends that the Council/School Board Liaison Committee develop a standing committee to review parking problems in relation to individual schools, said Committee to be made up of City of Vaughan staff, School Board representatives and York Regional Police.

And that this report be forwarded to Council and the School Boards for endorsement.

Purpose

This report is provided as directed by the Council/School Board Liaison Committee, from the Parking Sub-Committee struck on February 6, 2002.

Background - Analysis and Options

On February 6, 2002 the Council/School Board Liaison Committee struck a sub-Committee to:

1. Review the study conducted in 1999 by York Region and the City of Vaughan Engineering Dept.
2. Review existing difficulties with parking and traffic flows at schools.
3. Come up with steps and solutions for these problems taking into account such things as the use of loops, on street parking, and the design of new and old schools.
4. Report back to the Committee on May 22, 2002.

The Sub-Committee was made up of representatives from By-law Enforcement, Engineering, School Board staff and York Regional Police.

The study mentioned in #1 above was conducted by the consultants, Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan in conjunction with York Region and all nine municipalities in York Region as well as the Public and Catholic school boards in the Region in response to concerns for the safety of children.

The main issues identified in the study were concerns about children's safety relating to speeding, congestion, parking, abduction and assaults. Other issues identified were that even with bussing provided, more parents are choosing to drive their children to school, which creates congestion and parking problems. It was also identified that school sites were not being used as designed or intended in relation to the flow of traffic.

There were a number of suggestions that were made in the study as potential solutions to the safety concerns. These included the use of traffic calming measures, a safe route to school program, increased signage, walking school bus program, kiss and ride, and walk a block program.

The parking, congestion and traffic movement concerns that were identified in 1999 are still present today.

At the present time the By-law Enforcement Division has 52 active investigations relating to 25 individual schools from both school boards. Not all complaints are generated from the school staff. Some complaints are from area residents who are being adversely affected by congestion in their area. Some schools are the subject of complaints from both school staff and local citizens.

While the By-law Enforcement Division is actively enforcing parking by-laws at schools, the high volume of calls means that on average officers can only attend schools once or twice per month. An alternative problem solving method is required to minimize the parking and congestion issues at schools.

The Sub-Committee discussed the potential solutions in the study and for the most part these suggestions were not implemented. The school boards have indicated that they have liability issues and concerns for organizing or sanctioning any alternative programs.

There is no School Board policy governing the use of turn arounds or loops designed for student drop off. As a result, this potentially viable solution is being not being utilized as designed as individual principals are interested in increased safety on school property. The unfortunate result of this action is shuffling the congestion problem onto City streets and out of school board jurisdiction.

There are a number of school designs generally across the City. These include differences in size of the site and layout. New schools are using an inventory of 5 acre sites now in an attempt to incorporate potential solutions into the site plan. In the future 6 acre sites may be utilized. Some sites are only 4 acres.

The police responsibility is to ensure compliance of traffic laws on public roads. Both police and By-law Officers cannot enforce on private property without permission from the owner. Some schools have provided the By-law Enforcement Division with that permission while others have not.

In order to establish a data pool regarding each school in relation to the use or blocking of loops, student drop off zones, special programs or procedures in use, and what problems they have on site, staff from both school boards have developed a survey that has been sent to all schools.

Results from the survey are expected to be compiled by the end of the 2002 school year and the results will be shared with the City of Vaughan staff.

Following extensive discussions of the problems encountered by schools and the surrounding neighbourhoods, it was apparent that while the problems encountered have a common theme, being that of traffic congestion brought about by influx of vehicles at school start and end times, a blanket solution would not adequately resolve issues at all of them.

The recommendation of the Sub-Committee is to establish a standing committee that would take individual problems and design or suggest solutions to the principal. This standing group would foster cooperation and therefore enforcement would not be the only response. Each school would have a tailor made solution taking into account their individual circumstances. Schools will be encouraged to work with this group by their respective Board.

The process for this group would be that when By-law Enforcement receives a complaint related to a school where there is no simple solution, the standing group will be called together to research the issues, review data compiled from the survey and review the site plan. City staff, the police, and the applicable schools board staff would then offer to work with the school principal in order to develop viable solutions to the problem. Those schools where the principal chooses to work with the standing group will be given a priority at that location by staff to emphasize compliance with the proposed solutions.

The By-law Enforcement Division will be the lead on this initiative and as such will maintain the records associated with each school using this process.

Conclusion

The demand on By-law Enforcement for action at schools now far exceeds the resources available. The issuance of tickets will not resolve problems that can be better addressed through design review or alternative solutions. This proposal for a working group addresses the need for developing safer and efficient areas for students and parents, while promoting a partnership for issue resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Thompson
Senior Manager, By-law Enforcement
Chair, Parking Sub-Committee