

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – JUNE 21, 2011

SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works in consultation with the Director of Human Resources recommend:

That the existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure not be revised.

Contribution to Sustainability

Regular reviews and where necessary, updates of the City's practices ensure that the City is in a position to be able to achieve its goals and objectives leading to a sustainable forward thinking organization.

Economic Impact

There is no direct economic impact as a result of this report. The existing school crossing guard complement is fully funded in the approved 2011 Operating Budget. Should Council wish to implement any of the options identified in this report, the funding requirements should be brought forward for submission and consideration as part of the 2012 Budget deliberations.

Communications Plan

Staff will inform the School Boards regarding Council's direction on this matter.

Purpose

To review the City's existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure to determine if any changes are required.

Background - Analysis and Options

At its meeting on December 14, 2010, Council directed:

“That due to safety concerns a temporary school crossing guard be implemented at the intersection of Via Romano Boulevard and Lady Valentina Avenue pending a review of the school crossing guard policy and procedures; and

That staff, in consultation with the Pedestrian Safety Task Force, review the school crossing guard policy and procedures”

Existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure

The existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure, approved by Council, was last revised in July 2010 in order to add a lunch period warrant requirement. The existing Policy and Procedure is based on the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guidelines and uses a well defined and quantitative methodology of both pedestrian and vehicular volumes in the crossing area.

Guidelines/Criteria for Placement of a School Crossing Guard were first approved in 2004 with criteria requirements to warrant the implementation of a School Crossing Guard, including the requirement of 50 or more unassisted school crossings.

The Guidelines/Criteria were then revised in 2005 to include the guidelines that crossing guards be allowed to cross children on more than one leg of an intersection, and that an annual review of 25 pre-selected school crossing guard locations be conducted to determine the appropriateness of the crossing location for the subsequent school year.

In 2007, the Guidelines/Criteria were revised to include that a Committee composed of City Staff, School Board Transportation Staff, Principal, Local Councillor and the School Trustee be established to review school crossing locations and that new procedures for new schools be incorporated into the Guidelines/Criteria.

A school crossing guard is warranted at a location if there are a minimum of 50 unassisted crossings during peak time periods and at least one traffic volume criteria is met. In addition, a school crossing guard will be warranted during the lunch time period if there are a minimum of 10 unassisted crossings. The existing Policy and Procedure is shown as Attachment No. 1.

Of the 93 school crossing guards in the City of Vaughan, 14 are at signalized intersections, 56 are at intersections under all-way stop control, 14 are at uncontrolled intersections, 7 are at pedestrian signals and 2 are at traffic circles. The breakdown of the school crossing guard locations per Ward are as shown below.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Number of Locations</u>
Ward 1	25
Ward 2	24
Ward 3	14
Ward 4	10
Ward 5	20

Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Section

The City of Vaughan's existing Policy and Procedure is based on the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guidelines which defines a methodology of reviewing both pedestrian and vehicular volumes in the crossing area.

The TAC guidelines recommend a requirement of 40 or more school children crossings. The guidelines also have traffic volume criteria depending on the proposed location (uncontrolled crossings, stop sign controlled crossings, traffic signal controlled crossings), and an urban setting versus a rural setting.

Ontario Traffic Conference (OTC) School Crossing Guard Guide

The Ontario Traffic Conference published its 'School Crossing Guard Guide' in 2006. The suggested warrant process is two-fold, consisting of a site inspection followed by a gap study undertaken if a school crossing appears to be a solution.

The site inspection report is used to record information about site conditions that form a basis for recommended changes including presence of traffic control devices, speed limits, parking patterns, visibility of crossing pedestrians, sidewalks, obstructions, etc.

The Gap Study is the objective measurement used in the guidelines to determine if warrants are met for implementing a school crossing guard. The gap study records the following information:

- The number of safe gaps in traffic.
- The volume of traffic.
- The number of students crossing.
- Pedestrian/vehicle conflicts observed.

The OTC guidelines may be appropriate for municipalities that have no current approved warrants or criteria for the implementation of a school crossing guard, however, they are much more subjective than the existing TAC guidelines.

Staff contacted several nearby municipalities; Brampton, Burlington, Richmond Hill, Markham, Oakville and Mississauga. These municipalities all use some variation of the Ontario Traffic Conference guidelines.

The following chart summarizes some criteria and requirements from the City's existing Policy and Procedure, the Transportation Association of Canada guidelines and the Ontario Traffic Conference School Crossing Guard Guide.

Warrant Description	Existing Policy & Procedure (City)	TAC Guidelines	OTC School Crossing Guide
# of school children crossing requirement	50	40	n/a
Traffic volume criteria	Yes (criteria for local, feeder/primary, collector roadways. Also for uncontrolled, stop sign controlled and traffic signal controlled)	Yes (criteria for uncontrolled, stop sign controlled, and traffic signal controlled)	n/a
Site inspection	Yes (existing conditions, potential conflicts, etc.)	No (no written criteria)	Yes (existing conditions, potential conflicts, etc)
Sight distance	Yes (maintain minimum sight distance)	No (no written criteria)	No (no written criteria)
Lunch period criteria	Yes (minimum 10 crossings)	No (no written criteria)	n/a

Staff also requested from the municipalities how they initiate their respective procedures to implement a school crossing guard. The municipalities replied that their studies originate from a number of sources:

- Parents and/or area residents
- Council offices
- School Boards
- Staff initiatives (new schools, or for developing areas with changing traffic patterns)

Pedestrian/Street Safety Task Force Review

Engineering Services staff consulted with the Pedestrian/Street Safety Task Force to review the existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure.

Options

The Pedestrian/Street Safety Task Force recommended the following options based on their review of the existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure:

1. That all new schools are provided a temporary crossing guard for a period of one school year. A study will be carried out during the school year to determine if the warrant is met. If the warrant is not met, the crossing guard will be removed at the end of the school year,
2. That assisted and unassisted crossings continue to be reported separately, but the warrant be based on the total of crossings both assisted and unassisted, and
3. That the current warrant of 50 crossings be reviewed and consideration given to reduce it to 40 crossings.

Both Engineering Services staff and the Pedestrian/Street Safety Task Force recommend that the existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure, based on the Transportation Association of Canada guidelines, remain in effect. The Ontario Traffic Conference School Crossing Guard Guide is subjective and open to interpretation in comparison to the City's existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure.

The current warrant of 50 crossings provides an appropriate number of school crossing guards throughout the City, however, should Council wish to increase the level of service, program funding levels must be increased accordingly.

Analysis

Option #1

Staff have reviewed and analyzed the provision of a temporary crossing guard at new schools. The temporary guard would provide a safe location for crossings, and the one-year term will provide sufficient opportunity for the school, parents and students to get familiar with using the designated crossing location, and promote its use. In consultation with both York Region District School Board and the York Catholic School Board, 3 new schools are proposed by 2014. The additional cost of providing these temporary crossing guards would be approximately \$27,000.

The three new schools and their opening dates are as follows:

- Pierre Burton Public School, 470 Via Campanile, opening September 2011.
- Nellie McClung Public School, 360 Thomas Cook Avenue, opening September 2011.
- Unnamed Elementary School, Block 18, Peter Rupert Avenue, proposed to open September 2014.

Option #2

Staff have reviewed the option to combine assisted and unassisted crossings in meeting the existing warrant of 50. Based on studies undertaken in 2009 and 2010, it is projected that an additional 9 crossing guards would be needed if this change was implemented. The additional cost of providing the 9 crossing guards would be approximately \$81,000 per year.

Option #3

The option to consider reducing the current warrant requirement of 50 unassisted crossings to 40 was reviewed. Based on studies undertaken in 2009 and 2010, it is projected that an additional 8 crossing guards would be needed if this change was implemented. The additional cost of providing the 8 crossing guards would be approximately \$72,000 per year.

Should Council direct the implementation of both Options #2 and #3 the projected cost increases to \$180,000 per year based on the previous studies undertaken.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan 2020, the recommendations of this report will assist to:

- Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery;
- Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness; and
- Lead and Promote to Environmental Sustainability.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

Regional Implications

Not Applicable.

Conclusion

The Pedestrian/Street Safety Task Force and City staff reviewed all of the information available from previous years as well as the various guidelines that are in place in other municipalities. Staff do not recommend any changes to the existing School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure at this time. However, based on the review undertaken, a number of options were developed and the analysis was completed. All of the information is being provided for Council's consideration.

Attachments

1. City of Vaughan School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure (Revised July 2010)

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Respectfully submitted,

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SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

REVISED July 2010

APPLICABILITY

The School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure applies to all School Crossing Locations in the City of Vaughan. Under this policy and procedure, Engineering Services Department staff in consultation with the Human Resources Department will conduct/review/develop/administer a School Crossing Guard Plan proposal.

PURPOSE

To determine criteria for the appropriate location of a School Crossing Guard Locations.

CRITERIA

1. At a location where there are 50 or more (unassisted) crossings during peak time periods, AND at least ONE of the following required traffic volume criteria is met:
 - a. At an uncontrolled intersection or mid-block crossing where the daily traffic volume on a local roadway exceeds 1,000 vehicles.
 - b. At an uncontrolled intersection or mid-block crossing where the daily traffic volume on a local/feeder roadway exceeds 3,000 vehicles.
 - c. At an uncontrolled intersection or mid-block crossing where the daily traffic volume on a collector roadway exceeds 8,000 vehicles.
 - d. At a side street only where the peak traffic volume rate exceeds 120 vehicles/hour.
 - e. At a location where the minimum sight distance is below 65 metres.
 - f. At an existing all-way stop controlled intersection where the total traffic volume exceeds 350 vehicles for local and feeder/primary intersections.

ANNUAL REVIEW

In addition, the following Guidelines shall be maintained in managing the School Crossing Guard Program:

1. That an annual review of 25 pre-selected school crossing guard locations in the field to determine the appropriateness of the crossing location for the subsequent school year.
2. That Engineering Services staff and Human Resources staff meet with the School Boards annually, in February of each year, to discuss school crossing guard matters.