

TO: Mayor J. Lehman and Members of Council

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NOTED: R.J. Forward, MBA, M.Sc., P. Eng.
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RE: School Crossing Guards

DATE: January 4, 2016

This memorandum is to provide an update to Members of General Committee related to questions from Members of Infrastructure, Investment, and Development Services Committee (IIDSC).

On December 17, 2015, IIDSC recommended the following:

"That Staff Report RFP009-15 concerning School Crossing Guards be received for information purposes and staff in the Roads Parks and Fleet Department prepare a memorandum providing updated information concerning the School Crossing Guard Program reflecting the number of guards anticipated to be required based on technical warrants/criteria and the associated budget requirements"

Anticipated number of guards

Staff surveyed 20 peer municipalities and gathered a comprehensive data set of historical criteria and crossing guard programs over the last 40 years. In the early years most crossing guards locations were initiated by resident requests and reviewed based on professional opinion or "gut" feel. Peer municipalities warned that this approach resulted in an exponential increase in crossing guards and they endeavored to create a technical warrant approach similar to the all-way stop or traffic signal warrants. Based on the information from our peer municipalities and the soon to be revised Ontario Traffic Council Crossing Guard Manual staff are suggesting a made in Barrie approach which utilizes a criteria based warrant system to review crossing guard locations. The criteria used in the analysis of the crossing guard study included the following

- Pedestrian Gap Study
 - A technical review of the acceptable gaps in traffic which is then compared to the size and frequency of pedestrian platoons
- Exposure Index
 - A technical warrant system which compares pedestrian volume to conflicting turning movements
- Collision History
 - A technical warrant system which review previous pedestrian related collisions

Staff have identified a program study scope which included 150 locations to be reviewed. These locations were broken into 4 types of study area as follows:

1. Uncontrolled pedestrian crossing at intersections
2. Controlled pedestrian crossing at all-way stop intersections
3. Controlled pedestrian crossing at Intersection Pedestrian Signals
4. Controlled pedestrian crossing at Signalized Intersections

In addition to the technical warrant values of the studies, staff reviewed the travel patterns of the students in comparison to the location of the schools and are able to identify where crossing guards would be most effective. For example, if a crossing guard was warranted at two intersections close to a school on the same road, the expectation would be that students would congregate and cross at the location with the guard. This intent would need to be communicated out to the student community through the school board or signage. The results of the review have identified 25 locations that meet the proposed technical warrants based on the travel patterns of students for consideration of a crossing guard during school travel times, should Council wish to proceed with implementing a program.

Budget Requirements

Based on 25 locations identified as meeting the warrants, the budget impact of implementing a crossing guard program is as follows:

\$360,000 - Total Annual Budget

Attached as Appendix "A" to this memorandum is a copy of a handout provided at the Infrastructure, Investment and Development Services Committee meeting on December 17th, 2015, with responses to questions that had been received regarding the School Crossing Guard Program, Staff Report RPF009-15.

If there are any questions please contact me at extension 4382.

S. Rose
Manager of Traffic & Parking Services

Appendix "A"

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED REGARDING SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM

(Previously distributed at the Infrastructure, Investment and Development Services Committee meeting held on December 17, 2015)

The following information is to provide an update to Members of Committee with respect to questions received from Members of Council regarding school crossing guards.

On November 16, 2015, General Committee referred Staff Report RPF009-15 on School Crossing Guards to the Infrastructure Investment Development Services Committee.

The recommended motion stated that Staff Report RPF009-15 be received for information purposes and that in the event Council wishes to proceed with implementation of a School Crossing Guard Program, the following be approved:

- a) That a School Crossing Guard Program at elementary schools within the City of Barrie commence September 2017 at an estimated annual cost of \$650,000 and subject to approval of a Supervisor of Crossing Guards within the 2016 Business Plan.
- b) That Roads, Parks & Fleet report back to Council in early 2016 with the technical warrant criteria for the determination of crossing guards locations.

A few questions were received from Members of Council and they were:

- 1. If General Committee were to direct staff to hire the Supervisor immediately and implement a pilot project at a limited number of schools for September of 2016, are there any practical limitations that would prevent that?**

Implementing a phased in approach at a few locations may open the City up for liability. Staff will have a City-wide list identifying potential locations and if a location meets the criteria and it does not have a guard present while other locations do, it could cause the City problems. Determining which warranted locations should be piloted would be a challenge to prioritize.

Assuming staff had the approval to implement the Supervisor and Co-ordinator immediately we would need to develop job descriptions, have the jobs evaluated and posted. The same would have to be done for the crossing guards. The Supervisor and Co-ordinator would also have to develop policies, procedures as well as training programs. The crossing guards would have to be hired prior to the end of July, to begin training on site during the month of August, and the approval of the criteria with recommended locations would also be required in advance.

All potential hires would require a vulnerable sector check, an eight week process and includes a health check for sight and vision. This is required after the individuals have been interviewed and selected as the potential candidates for employment and means the potential guards would need to be interviewed by the beginning of May at the latest.

The next limitation is the selection process of the recommended locations and Council's approval of both the criteria and locations. Staff expects that an early February staff report will recommend the criteria to be used and the locations that meet the criteria

2. **If General Committee were to direct the program be implemented in a phased approach, deploying say one-third of the proposed guards (20) in fall 2016, and the balance in the fall of 2017, would I be correct with the approximate budget impacts below:**
 - a) **2016: Supervisor (12 months), Co-ordinator (8 months), 20 guards (4 months) = approx. \$250,000 (0.10% tax increase)**
 - b) **2017: Supervisor (12 months), Co-ordinator (12 months) 20 guards (12 months), 40 guards (4 months) = approx. \$500,000 total (\$250,000 additional, 0.10% tax increase)**
 - c) **2018 – Full cost of \$650,000 (\$150,000 add'l, 0.06% tax increase)**

Based on your figures above, it is anticipated that the figures above would be within +/-10 %, depending on the equipment costs and requirements at the proposed locations. Staff expects to have a better picture of costs once the recommended locations have been determined as staff may only identify the need for 50 guards, etc.

3. **The report indicates staff are looking at 150 locations, but we will only have sufficient guards for 60 locations. While I strongly agree a merit-based approach using warrants would be best, I also believe there will be concerns expressed at all elementary schools. Is there an intent to ensure that all 39 schools receive at least one guard, with the remaining 21 guards deployed at the highest priority intersections? Or will some schools have say 3 or 4 and some schools none?**

In developing the potential program, staff identified approximately 150 locations throughout the City in the vicinity of schools that have traffic signals, mid-block signals, close intersections, previous concerns from Councillors and trails so that staff could comprehensively address as many potential locations as possible while knowing not all will meet the criteria selected.

It was anticipated that staff would selected locations around each elementary school based on the technical criteria so that staff could create a coordinated approach to implementing future crossings and to match guards at locations with high pedestrian crossings with complex turning movements.

4. **I believe it is extremely likely that parents and parent councils will lobby Council for changes once the list of guarded intersections is developed. Would it be feasible to have a system whereby staff identify a list of intersections then send a letter to the Principal of each elementary school, requesting that they discuss the recommended intersection(s) for each school with the parent council and send a letter supporting the location or recommending an alternative? This engages the school community and also incorporates some responsibility for the school administrations in selecting the locations. I don't believe a Council report selecting the locations is wise.**

Staff understand your question and think it may be best to work with the school boards as it is staff's opinion that the criteria will identify the needs for the guards and the school boards can help with communicating the program to their existing student patrol programs. Leaving the decision on location up to individual schools and not relying on an approved technical warrant may create liabilities for the school and the City as there may be a better location of which the school does not approve, or the school may want two guards at a busy intersection that warrants one, etc.

5. **I notice some municipalities have crossing guards at lunch for those areas where a sufficient number of students go home to eat. I take it that is not something we are considering in Barrie?**

When staff checked with the school boards they told us that students are not permitted to leave the school property without written permission so we were not planning on a lunch time crossing guard unless there were special circumstances.

6. Also, do any comparable municipalities contract out crossing guards?

Staff are contacting the two municipalities of which we are aware that contract out the program. They are the City of London and the City of Ottawa, both of which have over 100 crossing guards.

7. Could you give a breakdown of the approximate costs of the program. I'm guessing here so please correct these figures and provide detail:

Guards - \$8,000 each? I noted 60 guards in the staff report, so they must make less than \$10,000 each per year? At that low a salary, have other cities had trouble recruiting responsible people?

**Supervisor - \$75k+benefits/office costs
Co-ordinator - \$50k+benefits/office costs**

Materials, uniforms, etc. - \$50,000?

If the program is approved and warrant criteria is approved staff can provide more accurate estimates but if it was assumed that the Crossing Guards would make between \$13-\$18/hour and they would work less than two hours per day for 39 weeks. When using an average of \$15/hour it works out to approximately \$7,000 annually. Staff recently received survey results from other municipalities and it has been noted that retention is an issue and some municipalities have started to pay for three hours per day even though they work slightly less than two hours per day as this has improved retention.

In addition to Guards at manned locations, backup guards (five to six) will be required to step in if the current guards are sick or quit, etc. and they would likely be on standby pay. Some Cities pay an hour a day or the full two to three hours a day for the standby guards.

The Supervisor is likely closer to \$80-85k+benefits and office costs, etc. I assumed the same number as you for the Coordinator: \$50k+benefits and office costs.

On the material end, staff researched other municipalities it is to cover the costs for:

- a) Stop/Go Paddles, safety gear, uniforms i.e. arm bands, 5-in-1 jackets, whistles, suntan lotion, etc.
- b) Vulnerable Sector check is \$185 per guard, doctor's appointments for sight and hearing is approximately \$100 per guard, if they need cell phones it is approximately \$40/month (TBD) and minor costs for meetings and training allowances.
- c) It is likely that there may be locations without traffic signage and pavement markings and even one-off costs for adding curb cuts if needed, as the location may be in an older area.

8. Do Municipalities with Crossing Guard programs have collision statistics of their locations? And how does that compare to Barrie?

Staff have contacted several municipalities and none of the responding municipalities have statistics pre and post crossing guard implementation to determine the effectiveness of the guards in preventing pedestrian-vehicular collisions. As noted in the Staff Report, all of the municipalities implemented their school crossing guard programs over 30 years ago (or earlier). It is assumed from their responses, that the municipalities did not collect pedestrian-vehicular collision statistics at that time.

Although staff did not receive information on collisions prior to the implementation of the school crossing guards, the following information on pedestrian collisions at school crossing guard locations since the implementation of a crossing guard program, was obtained:

Number of pedestrian collisions at school crossing guard locations since the implementation of a crossing guard program		
Municipality	# of collisions while crossing guard in place	# of crossing guard locations
Hamilton	8 pedestrian collisions in 10 years	235
Milton	4 pedestrian collisions in 11 years	43
Windsor	2 pedestrian collisions in 13 years	64
Kitchener	1 pedestrian collision in 25 years	80
Mississauga	0 pedestrian collisions in 17 years	162
Oakville	0 pedestrian collisions in 25 years	93
Strathroy-Caradoc	0 pedestrian collisions in 5 years	11

In Barrie, over the past 9 years, there have been 5 pedestrian collisions during school hours at locations that would be anticipated to meet technical warrants for the implementation of a school crossing guard.

Note: 17 pedestrian collisions occurred in 9 years during hours that school crossing guards would have been in place. Based on the information available, it is anticipated that a maximum of 12 of the collisions may have been/were correctable if school crossing guards had been in place. However, only 5 of the collisions occurred at locations that would be anticipated to warrant the implementation of a school crossing guard.

The criteria used for crossing guard warrants comes from The Ontario Traffic Council and includes items such as pedestrian counts, vehicle counts , vehicle safe gap analysis and an exposure index analysis which looks at intersection turning conflicts.

If there are any questions please contact Steve Rose, Manager of Traffic and Parking Services at extension 4382.