



REPORT FOR ACTION

Update on the School Crossing Guard Program

Date: September 2, 2020

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The 2019-2020 school year marks the first full year since Transportation Services operated the School Crossing Guard Program completely autonomous from the Toronto Police Service. Through direction from Council, Transportation Services contracted the services to two vendors Carraway Inc. and A.S.P. Inc. As anticipated, the measures put in place by Transportation Services through the two contracted vendors resulted in a very high level of service that progressively improved from 98 to 100% coverage consistently. The measures included the requirement for emergency backfilling of vacant guards, mobile supervisors patrolling locations to ensure guards were present and the monitoring system that required guards to use cellular apps to digitally check in when arriving and departing the site.

Staff are now proposing 30 new locations for the 2020-2021 school year that were deemed warranted using the new warrant process. These new locations originated from legacy requests that came in during the transition of the program from Toronto Police Service to Transportation Services. While there was underspending as earlier in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown that will offset these expansion costs for 2020, there will still be a requirement to increase the 2021 Operating Budget to include the expansion of the program to include the 30 additional guards.

In addition, over the years, there has been a growing problem with respect to student drop-off and pick-up around schools and subsequently, a motion was adopted by City Council in June of 2019 for Transportation Services staff to work with the school boards to develop a road map for a safety plan in this regard. With the re-opening of schools following the COVID-19 shutdown comes an even greater need for overall School Travel Planning development which would include the student drop-off and pick up safety plan.

The pandemic has resulted in significant changes in travel habits whereby more parents than usual may elect to walk their children to school in combination with those choosing to drive. To further encourage and facilitate this active transportation and to support safer drop-off and pick-up situations, staff are recommending to provide funding of

\$320,000 per year in total to both school boards for the next three (3) years (2021-2023) for the expansion of their existing school travel planning programs from the Vision Zero 2.0 Road Safety Plan budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to include 30 additional new locations in the School Crossing Guard program for the 2020-2021 school year for consideration in the 2021 Operating Budget submission.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to undertake a warrant review audit of the original 704 locations to determine whether or not the lunch time school crossing guard coverage is required as well as the anticipated cost-savings.
3. City Council authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services, to negotiate, enter into, and execute agreements, as may be required, with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to provide funding of \$320,000 per year in total to both school boards for the next three (3) years (2021-2023) from the existing Vision Zero 2.0 program budget for the expansion of their existing school travel planning programs, on such terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Transportation Services and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no immediate financial impact for the 2020 Operating Budget from the adoption of the recommendations. Funding of approximately \$0.927 M required in 2021 for 30 additional school locations to be included in the 2020-2021 school year will be included for consideration in the 2021 Operating Budget submission. Funding for approximately \$0.32 M required for both school boards for the expansion of their existing school travel planning programs for 2021 is already included in the 2021 Operating Budget submission.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 16, 2019 during the discussion on the Vision Zero 2.0 – Road Safety Plan Update it was discussed that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) had requested \$320,000 in annual funding from the City to increase delivery of their existing school travel planning (STP)

programs to more schools each year. STP is a process for promoting and addressing barriers to active forms of school travel, such as walking and cycling, which has the potential to improve safety by reducing traffic around schools, improve health by increasing daily physical activity and benefit the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.IE6.8>

At its meeting on October 2, 2019, City Council requested the General Manager, Transportation Services to work with crossing guard vendors to provide ongoing training to all crossing guards to ensure that they are fully prepared to perform their duties.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.CC10.1>

At its meeting on June 18, 2019, City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services to award the Request for Proposal 9148-19-0114 for the Provision of School Crossing Guard Service to two vendors, A.S.P. Inc. and Carraway Inc. There was a motion to ensure that crossing guard site-approval criteria not impede the ability of smaller schools, located in residential neighbourhoods, from being approved for a crossing guard. Further, there was an approved motion to have Transportation Services Staff work with both school boards to develop a road map and plan for safe drop-off and pick-up of students. The Council decisions can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.IE5.5>

COMMENTS

Background

In August 2019, the School Crossing Guard program was fully transferred from the Toronto Police Service to Transportation Services. At the direction of City Council, Transportation Services contracted out the school crossing guard program to two vendors: Carraway Inc. and ASP Inc. Since September 2019, the level of service has steadily increased along with the vendors' learning curve from 98.2% coverage to a consistent 100% school crossing guard coverage with zero vacancies experienced in the last month of operation. Attachment 1 provides a detailed summary of the coverage during the 2019-2020 school year.

Challenges in the 2019-2020 School Year Due to COVID-19

The closing of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been in effect since March 2020. Derived of this situation, the vendors had no option but to completely de-mobilize thereby laying off the school crossing guards and the associated mobile supervisory staff. From mid-March to date, neither of the two School Crossing Guard vendors have been compensated as a result of this de-mobilization.

With the anticipated re-opening of the schools in September, Transportation Services worked with both vendors to develop a re-mobilization strategy that would ensure that they are ready to re-deploy guards on time and at all locations. The plan entails the early re-hiring and new COVID-19 health and safety training for all supervisory and

crossing guard staff as well as additional personal protective equipment for the school crossing guards including:

- **Face Masks** - to be worn by all school crossing guards;
- **Hand Sanitizers** - to be carried and used by the school crossing guards as required and;
- **Hand Whistles** - to be used by all school crossing guards that can be triggered by the push of a button rather than blowing air.

School Crossing Guard Program Expenditures

The total combined cost to the program for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year is \$48.0M net of all taxes and charges (\$48.8M net of HST recoveries). Attachment 2 provides an overall summary of the planned forecast and actual spending on the program for 2019 - 2020 and Attachment 3 reviews the forecasted budget expenditures for 2021.

New Warrant Process

In 2017, the Ontario Traffic Council in consultation with a number of surrounding municipalities developed a new School Crossing Guard Guide that contained a new warrant process called the 'Exposure Index' method. This new method looks at the volume of pedestrians crossing in comparison with the volume of vehicles that are coming into conflict with those pedestrians crossing. A performance curve is developed and candidate school crossings are compared against relative thresholds in a manner that ensures that there is no bias against smaller schools. Since Transportation Services took over the program in September 2019, only the new method was used to review requested locations.

New Approved Locations for the 2020-2021 School Year

There were 46 legacy requested school crossing guard locations during the transition of the program from Toronto Police Service to Transportation Services. With the new School Crossing Guard Warrant system implemented by the City, only 30 of these locations were deemed warranted under the new warrant process. Further as a cost containment measure, staff conducted the warrants for all three shifts and found that only 7 of the 30 locations required the lunchtime shift. Essentially, 23 of the locations either did not have enough pedestrian volume or enough vehicles coming into conflict with pedestrians crossing to meet the new warrant.

Staff are recommending to proceed with the 23 AM/PM locations and the 7 full day locations at a total cost of \$927,060 with an estimated savings of \$370,000 as a result of not providing the lunch time shift at these new locations. The cost for these new locations will be absorbed within the above noted budget surplus for 2020; however, additional funding will be required to cover the cost of these 30 new locations from January to December, 2021.

Future Expectations and Potential Expansion

Since the acquisition of the program in 2019, the City has observed a constant demand for adding more locations to the existing School Crossing Guard Program. Attachment 4 describes these requests and their status since the program transitioned to Transportation Services.

There is a backlog of another 97 locations that have been requested since August, 2019 that have yet to be analyzed in terms of whether or not they meet the new warrants. This backlog exists because Transportation Services staff did not have enough time with the COVID-19 service suspension in March to undertake the analysis.

To address and minimize the growing cost of the program, the 97 newly requested locations will be reviewed for all three time periods with the expectation that many will only be warranted for two shifts in the AM and PM, and not the lunch shift.

Staff are also recommending to re-analyze the warrants for the 704 locations inherited by Toronto Police Service. It is anticipated that some locations will no longer be warranted while the majority locations may only require two shifts. Given the nature of the current contracts with the vendors, the City may have to retender the contracts depending on how many locations are being asked to be reduced down to the two shifts.

Expanded School Travel Planning with Safe Drop-Off Pick Up Strategy

With the COVID-19 pandemic still on-going and physical distancing and other safety measures continuing to be maintained, the re-opening of schools in September presents a unique opportunity for the City and school boards to promote active school travel (AST). During this time, it's expected that public transit and school bussing will experience reduced capacity and be less appealing to families as an option for school travel, resulting in a potential increase in traffic congestion and safety risk around schools if parents choose to drive as an alternative. At the same time, many parents are continuing to work from home and may have the opportunity to walk and bike to school with their children on a regular basis. By promoting AST and investing in STP programs, the City could potentially reduce the impacts from COVID-19 on traffic conditions around schools and improve the quality of life for families.

With City Council's authorization, the General Manager, Transportation Services will enter into a Schedule A agreement with the school boards to provide \$320,000 per year in total to both school boards for the next three (3) years (2021-2023) through the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan budget.

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SIGNATURE

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Attachments

Attachment 1 - Level of Service in terms of School Crossing Guard Coverage
Attachment 2 - 2019-2020 Planned Forecast versus Actual Budget Expenditures
Attachment 3 - 2021 Planned Forecast
Attachment 4 - Request Status since the Acquisition of the Program in 2019

Attachment 1 - Level of Service in terms of School Crossing Guard Coverage

Table 1. Coverage in 2019

Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Locations X Days*	14,079	14,793	14,088	9,870
% Coverage	98.2%	99.0%	99.1%	99.6%
Locations X Days X Shifts**	41,937	44,057	41,957	29,393
% Coverage	98.4%	99.4%	99.5%	99.8%

Note: * 704 locations X School days in the month

** 704 locations X School days in the month X AM/Lunch/PM Shifts

Table 2. Coverage in 2020

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	*Apr	*May	*Jun
Locations X Days	12,970	10,488	7,080	-	-	-
% Coverage	99.8%	99.9%	100.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Locations X Days X Shifts	38,633	30,695	21,080	-	-	-
% Coverage	99.8%	99.9%	100.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: *School crossing guard service was only provided until March 13, 2020, due to COVID-19 school closures.

Attachment 2 - 2019-2020 Planned Forecast versus Actual Budget Expenditures

Table 1. Planned and Actual Expenditure During 2019

Month	Sep (20 days)	Oct (21 days)	Nov (20 days)	Dec (14 days)
Actual Expenditure*	\$ 2,418,246.97	\$ 2,595,146.82	\$ 2,408,236.83	\$ 1,731,704.71
Additional Expected Cost				
# Served Locations	704	704	704	704

Note: * After liquidating damages and missed shifts are discounted

Table 2. Planned and Actual Expenditure During 2020

Month	Jan (19 days)	Feb (18 days)	**Mar (17 days)	**Apr (20 days)	**May (20 days)	**Jun (18 days)
Actual Expenditure	\$2,250,731	\$1,840,884	\$1,241,112	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additional Expected Cost						
# Served Locations	704	704	704	704	704	704
Month	**Jul	Aug	Sep (17 days)	Oct (21 days)	Nov (20 days)	Dec (14 days)
Initial Forecast			\$2,217,378	\$2,739,114	\$2,608,680	\$1,826,076
Actual Expenditure	\$0	\$0				
Additional Expected Cost			\$732,939	\$99,663	\$94,918	\$66,442
# Served Locations			734	734	734	734

**School crossing guard service was only provided until March 13, 2020 due to COVID-19

Attachment 3 - 2021 Forecasted Budget Expenditures

Table 1. Forecast Expenditure for the Year 2021

Month	Jan (19 days)	Feb (18 days)	Mar (17 days)	Apr (20 days)	May (20 days)	Jun (18 days)
Initial Forecast	\$2,379,116	\$2,253,900	\$2,253,900	\$2,504,333	\$2,504,333	\$2,504,333
Actual Expenditure						
Additional Expected Cost	\$90,172	\$85,426	\$85,426	\$94,918	\$94,918	\$94,918
# Served Locations	734	734	734	734	734	734
Month	Jul	Aug	Sep (20 days)	Oct (20 days)	Nov (20 days)	Dec (15 days)
Initial Forecast *	\$215,602	\$0	\$2,283,899	\$2,821,287	\$2,686,940	\$1,880,858
Actual Expenditure						
Additional Expected Cost			\$87,989	\$97,765	\$107,542	\$87,989
# Served Locations			734	734	734	734

* The period from September to December includes an increase of 3% to cover for inflation.

Attachment 4 - Request Status since the Acquisition of the Program in 2019

Table 1. Request Status since Acquisition of the Program

	From Program Start to Jul 31, 2019	From Aug 1, 2019 To Jan 31, 2020	From Feb 1, 2020 To Jul 14, 2020*
Requested	46	103	30
Duplicate Location Request from Previous Analysis Period	-	3	2
To be Analyzed	0	70	27
Analyzed and not Warranted	23	23	1
Analyzed and Warranted for all three shift periods	6	1	0
Analyzed and Warranted for only two shift periods (AM/PM)	17	6	0

*Request period still opened. Total requests as of July 14, 2020.