

## **School Crossing Guard Program Update 2021-2022**

**Date:** August 31, 2021

**To:** Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**From:** General Manager, Transportation Services

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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The 2020-2021 school year marked the second full year since Transportation Services operated the School Crossing Guard Program completely autonomous from the Toronto Police Service. Transportation Services contracted the school crossing guard services to two vendors, Carraway Inc. and A.S.P Inc., in 2019 for two years ending July 31, 2021. The contract included the option for two additional years to continue providing crossing guard services until June 2023. Despite the challenges the program faced due to the sporadic COVID-19 lockdown and resumption periods, both vendors continued to maintain a high level of service ranging from 98-100% coverage when required. To ensure continuity of service and a successful school year, both contracts have been renewed through option year one for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

Over the past year, the number of requested new school crossing guard locations has continued to increase. As traffic data collection was suspended over various periods of the previous year due to the pandemic, the number of requested locations increased to 216 from adoption of the program to January 31, 2021. Despite the pandemic pause, City staff were still able to conduct warrant reviews at 134 locations, resulting in a total of 61 additional locations, 30 of which were approved through a previous City Council report but not yet installed due to school closures. These 30 locations will be implemented starting September 2021.

This report seeks approval to fund and install the 31 new locations that met warrants for the 2021-2022 school year. Funding for these 31 new locations will be absorbed into the existing 2021 Operating Budget which is underspent due to the COVID-related school closures. Transportation Services will require an increase in the 2022 Operating Budget to accommodate the 31 additional crossing guards.

Both vendors have spent the summer rehiring guards for the 2021-2022 school year, as well as conducting security clearances, training and equipping the school crossing guards with the necessary COVID-19 related PPEs so that they are fully prepared to begin the deployment of 765 school crossing guards in September.

As previously directed, staff will continue their review of the crossing guard lunch period shifts to determine if a reduction in lunch time coverage would reduce overall costs while still providing a high level of safety. Given the inconsistent school closures as a result of COVID, more research is required before a recommendation on the lunch shift coverage can be made.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to include an additional 31 locations, as listed in attachment 1, in the School Crossing Guard Program for the 2021-2022 school year, for which the operational costs of these 31 locations will be put to City Council for consideration in the 2022 Operating Budget submission.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Funding of \$0.436 M is required for remainder of 2021 for 31 locations can be accommodated within the approved 2021 Operating Budget for Transportation Services.

Funding of \$1.098 M is required for 2022 for the 31 locations and will be included for consideration in the 2022 Operating Budget submission for Transportation Services.

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to include the 30 additional new locations, and 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. The Council decisions can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.IE15.7>

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**

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### Extension of the Current Contracts

Through direction from Council, Transportation Services contracted the school crossing guard services to two vendors, Carraway Inc. and A.S.P Inc. in 2019 for two years ending this past June 2021 with two separate option years allowing for coverage to continue through to June 2023. Given the successful performance of both vendors, and to ensure a successful continuity of service, both contracts have been renewed for the first option year to continue providing service from September 2021 to June 2022.

### School Crossing Guard Program Expenditures

In-class learning within schools was closed in line with the province's COVID-19 regulations periodically throughout the 2020-2021 school year resulting in a significant impact to the City's school crossing guard program. Schools were closed to in-class learning for a few days in September 2020, again from January 4, 2021 until February 11, 2021, and then again starting from April 7, 2021 until end of the school year in June 2021. As school crossing guards were not required during these periods of closure, this resulted in underspending on both vendor contracts.

The table below shows the actual spending (excluding all taxes) for the 2020-2021 school year.

	2020	2021
	Sept – Dec (4 months)	Jan – June (5 months)
Number of School Crossing Guards	734	734
Initial Forecasted Spending	\$10,385,210.00	\$14,945,693.00
Actual Spending	\$8,674,094.44	\$5,082,016.00

The cost for the additional 31 new locations set to commence in September 2021 as part of the 2021-2022 school year can be absorbed in the 2021 budget however, there is a requirement to increase the 2022 Operating Budget by \$1.1M to accommodate the 31 new locations seeking approval through this report.

**Review of New Applications**

The City has observed a constant demand for more locations to the existing school crossing guard program. Due to the pandemic and the inability to collect representative traffic and pedestrian count data to inform the warrant process, the City is experiencing a delay in processing new applications. The number of school crossing guard requests received since Transportation Services took over the program in 2019\_ through to January 31, 2021 is 216 locations. The warrant process involves making a comparison of the volume of pedestrians crossing with the volume of vehicles that are coming into conflict with those pedestrians crossing.

To date, staff have conducted warrant investigations for 134 locations with 82 locations not yet investigated. Of the 134 locations investigated, 61 met the warrants for a school crossing guard. The results are summarized in the table below.

	Analyzed	Not Meeting the Warrant	Meeting the Warrant (2-shifts)	Meeting the Warrant (3-shifts)
Total Locations	134	73	52	9
Total as a Percentage	100%	54%	39%	7%

Of the 61 locations meeting the warrants, 30 locations have already been approved in September 2020 and 31 new locations are being recommended for approval in this report bringing the overall total of school crossing guards to 765 in September.

With the additional locations the new total number of warranted locations is 765.

With the resumption of in-class learning in September, it is anticipated that staff will be able to continue warrant investigations on the remaining 82 locations.

### **Status of the Review of Lunch Shift Warrant for Existing Locations**

Transportation Services staff intend to conduct warrant review audits of the 704 total adopted school crossing guard locations, citywide. As part of this review, staff will determine if there are locations that no longer meet the warrant for school crossing guard service during the lunch period. This investigation was deferred over the previous year as traffic and pedestrian volumes were far from representative given the sporadic open and closing of schools to in-class learning.

### **Preparation for 2021-2022 School Year and COVID-19 Safety Measures**

Transportation Service staff are working closely with the both vendors to ensure school crossing guards are ready to go on first day of school in September. Both vendors have been actively recruiting new crossing guards and contacting guards to ensure coverage. New hires have been completing an interview process which includes criminal record checks for increased safety.

As per the previous year, all school crossing guards will have undergone security background checks, full training that includes COVID-19 health and safety training and will be equipped with the necessary COVID-19 personal protective equipment and handheld whistles. Staff are confident that both vendors are ready to assist school children to cross our streets safely starting in September.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Barbara Gray  
General Manager, Transportation Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: List of New Locations