

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2013**

Item 8, Report No. 14, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on April 23, 2013.

**8**

**SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD  
ANNUAL REVIEW  
ALL WARDS**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, and the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services, dated April 9, 2013:**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, and the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services, recommend:

1. That the Annual Review of the School Crossing Guard Program be deferred until spring 2015;
2. That staff promote the Active Routes are the Way to Go program targeted at creating safer, healthier conditions for students, staff and families, and reducing traffic congestion near schools; and
3. That staff be authorized to administer the Council approved School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

Not Applicable.

**Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact as a result of this report at this time.

The current annualized cost of the school crossing guard program is approximately \$1,000,000, while the annual cost of one crossing guard is approximately \$9,000. There are 93 guards, including 1 temporary guard assigned to approved locations, within the budget complement for the 2013 School Crossing Guard Program.

**Communications Plan**

Not Applicable.

**Purpose**

To seek approval to modify the School Crossing Guard Annual Review Program, and refocus staff efforts on the promotion of the Active Routes are the Way to Go program.

**Background – Analysis and Options**

**In 2005, Council directed that staff review a minimum of 25 locations each year in order to optimize the return on Council's allocation of staff resources by ensuring that crossing guards continue to be deployed at locations where the criteria are met.**

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The City of Vaughan provides funding and crossing guard services at locations throughout the City, where the Council approved criteria for unassisted crossings of City and Regional roads are met. This service is provided to assist with the safe crossing of children at intersection throughout the City, and to promote pedestrian activity.

At its meeting on June 27, 2005, Council approved:

“That an annual program be established to conduct a 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.”

On this basis, recommendations are made to remove crossing guards at locations that do not meet warrant. However, consideration is given to redeploying the crossing guard at a new school (that is opening) or an additional approved location request. Locations where the warrant is not met are confirmed by more than one study, carried out in the spring and fall.

At the commencement of the 2011/ 2012 school year, the City discontinued providing crossing guards at 10 locations where the warrant was not met, while 10 new locations were added. Since then, staff has conducted follow-up pedestrian studies at two locations, where the crossing guard was removed. The warrant criteria were not met during the follow-up studies at these locations.

**In 2012, Council directed staff to promote children walking to and from school, as a healthy alternative**

The 2012 School Crossing Guard Annual Review Report recommended the removal of 15 crossing guards, and the addition of one temporary guard at a new school.

At its meeting on May 29, 2012, Council deferred approval of staff's recommendations to remove any crossing guards. Instead, Council directed staff to promote children walking to and from school, as a healthy alternative to their being driven. Refer to Attachment No. 1.

**The Active Routes are the Way to Go program can be used to promote pedestrian activity and increase the number of children walking to and from school**

The Active Routes are the Way to Go program was established to encourage more children to walk to school. This program encourages physical activity by teaching students the skills to walk safely and how to identify safe routes to school. Other benefits of this Program include:

- Reduced traffic congestion;
- Improved traffic operations along adjacent roadways;
- Increased physical activity levels; and
- Environmental benefits such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The program is a collaborative effort by many including various City Departments, the York Catholic District School Board, York Region Planning, and Community Services, Green Communities Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and York Regional Police.

On October 10, 2012, the City of Vaughan launched its first “active route focused” school. St. Michael the Archangel Catholic School, located at 161 Via Campanile in Woodbridge, has been designated an “active route focused” school because of the implementation of the Active and Safe Routes to School comprehensive action plan which overcomes barriers to children's active school travel by mobilizing children and families one step at a time.

At its meeting on March 19, 2013, Council approved the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth. The Active Routes are the Way to Go program supports this Charter.

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#### **In spring 2013, schools will be invited to participate in the 2013-14 Active Routes are the Way to Go program**

Building on the success of St. Michael the Archangel, in collaboration with the York Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board, the City of Vaughan will be asking schools to submit an application in the spring of 2013, to solicit interest and readiness to participate in the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. All schools will be able to access an online toolkit to get started, including checklists, samples, and resource materials.

Staff will focus on promoting the Active Routes are the Way to Go program, initially targeting the 15 schools where crossing guards were recommended for removal in 2012 (Refer to Attachment No. 1). It is unknown at this time how many schools will participate in the program. Notwithstanding, in collaboration with York Region Transportation & Community Planning, York Region Public Health, and York Regional Police staff will promote the Active Routes are the Way to Go program with the intent to increase the number of children walking to and from school, which may increase the total number of students that benefit from the School Crossing Guard Program.

#### **Staff propose to develop measures to evaluate the effectiveness of promoting the Active Routes are the Way to Go program and to report back in spring 2015**

In reflection of Council's 2012 direction, staff will develop measures to evaluate the effectiveness of refocusing staff resources to promote the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. Staff will report the findings back to Council in spring 2015. This will ensure sufficient time is allocated to implement the Active Routes are the Way to Go program, measure the effectiveness, and synthesize the study results.

Staff will also review and compare the City's crossing guard service to other services within the Greater Toronto Area for future consideration.

#### **New crossing guard requests are proposed to be administered by the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services, as part of the annual budget process**

At its meeting on June 28, 2011 Council approved the following revision to the City's School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure:

**"That all new schools since September 2010 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."**

As a simplification to the existing approval process and until the proposed 2015 review is completed and reported to Council, it is recommended that staff be authorized to administer the Council approved School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure. A crossing guard will be provided at new locations where the Council approved criteria for unassisted crossings are met. However, any additional funding requirements will continue to be submitted as an Additional Resource Request for Council's consideration, through the Budget deliberation process.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

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

- Promote Community Safety, Health & Wellness; and
- Lead & Promote Environmental Sustainability.

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

**Regional Implications**

Not Applicable.

**Conclusion**

Based on preliminary analysis, a temporary refocusing of staff resources from administering the Annual Review of the School Crossing Guard Program until 2015, to promoting the Active Routes are the Way to Go program, may assist in promoting more children walking to and from school.

**Attachments**

1. Extract from Council Meeting Minutes of May 29, 2012, Item 13, Report No. 21 of the Committee of the Whole
2. School Crossing Guard Policy and Procedure

**Report prepared by:**

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)