



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Parking and By-law Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 11, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	School Crossing Guard Program (PED15129) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	William Young (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2469 Gary Bishop (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3177
SUBMITTED BY:	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That staff be authorized to hire up to five additional school crossing guards for the 2015 / 2016 school year (September 2015 to June 2016), and that the required funding (estimated at \$30,000) be funded from within the Parking and By-Law Services Operating Budget;
- (b) That staff be directed to report back to the Planning Committee on possible operational efficiencies with respect to the management of school crossing guard resources before the beginning of the 2016 / 2017 school year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many years, the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) has supported the City's School Crossing Guard Program by assigning Police Officers to cross children at locations approved by City Council under emergency circumstances when school crossing guards are not available to attend to assist children crossing the roadway.

The HPS has advised that they will no longer provide emergency back-up for school crossing guards effective September 2015. Therefore, in order to continue to provide school children with safe crossings of public highways at Council-approved locations, staff is recommending the hiring of additional resources on a temporary basis while the program is examined to determine the most efficient and effective way to manage emergency situations without Police assistance.

Alternatives for Consideration – N/A

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial/Staffing: Hiring up to five additional school crossing guards for the 2015 / 2016 school year (September 2015 to June 2016) is estimated to cost \$30,000, and the required funding can be absorbed within the Parking and By-Law Services Operating Budget, obtained through efficiencies acquired through vacancies.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Management of the City's School Crossing Guard Program was transferred from the former Hamilton Regional Police Service to the City of Hamilton in 1990. Hamilton Police Officers have always been utilized to support crossing guards at Council-approved locations under emergency situations (i.e. when the spare crossing guard pool is depleted and no crossing guards are available to attend).

By correspondence dated May 11, 2015, the HPS advised that, effective September 2015, they will no longer provide this service.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The *Ontario Highway Traffic Act Section 176* defines a school crossing guard as, "a person 16 years of age or older who is directing the movement of persons across a highway, and who is either an employee of the City and / or employed under contract to the City."

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Finance and Administration Division, Corporate Services Department and Legal Services, City Manager's Office were consulted, as were the Chief and Deputy Chief of the Hamilton Police Service.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The School Crossing Guard Program consists of 203 guards at 208 Council-approved locations, as well as 21 spare guards dedicated to backing up school crossing guards when they cannot attend assigned locations or short-term temporary assignments while new hires are being recruited for a location. Of the 203 guards, three are currently on sick leave, reducing the available number to 200. Of the 21 spares, three are currently on sick leave, leaving 18 available. All of these sick leaves occurred to date in 2015. There are currently requests for the addition of two more school crossing locations. These locations are to be determined in September, 2015.

The available guards, when deployed, fail to provide an acceptable cushion to meet 100% coverage. The attrition rate of school crossing guards since 2013 is in excess of 15%.

The hiring of additional school crossing guards will provide public safety to the community by ensuring the safety of our children to and from school through high or intense vehicular traffic locations.

With the Police advising that they will no longer be backing up the Program, staff recommends a comprehensive review of the Program to ensure optimal use of the current complement of guards. This review would include, but would not be limited to, such things as:

- practices for approving vacation requests and leaves of absence;
- improved recruiting methods to minimize vacancies due to staff shortages;
- guard retention and absenteeism rates; and,
- using other City staff for emergency back-up to school crossing guards.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None

WY/GB/st