



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Public Works & Engineering Services

To: Policies and Priorities Committee

From: Phil Bartnik, Director Public Works & Engineering Services

Date to Council: March 26, 2024

Report Number: PWES-2024-22

Subject: School Crossing Guard Program

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report PWES-2024-22 School Crossing Guard Program **be received;**

And that Administration **be directed** to bring a report to the April 23, 2024 Regular Council Meeting regarding the discontinuation of the current School Crossing Guard Program, should the following pedestrian crossover and traffic control measures be approved through the adoption of the:

- Community Safety Zone Policy 123
- Controlled Pedestrian Crossing Policy 124
- School Safety Zone Policy 125
- Speed Management and Traffic Calming Policy 126

And furthermore that, subject to Council's decision on the School Crossing Guard Program in April, Administration **coordinate information sessions** with the local schools and boards affected by this change in approach to Crossing Guards prior to the end of the current school year in June 2024.

Background

At the December 11, 2018 Regular Council Meeting, Council approved the recommendations within report [PWES-2018-08](#), titled “2019-2023 Public Works & Environmental Services Five Year Capital Works Plan” that authorized Administration to complete a traffic calming study (Motion: RCM-361/18). The study intended to review the general policies on traffic calming, outline the process for determining if a problem exists and the process for addressing inquiries from the public in an efficient and consistent manner.

As the study progressed, and as public inquiries were received on a variety of traffic-related issues, Administration identified several traffic-related policies and programs required to assist in handling those inquiries, which include the following:

- Speed Management and Traffic Calming Policy
- School Safety Zone Policy
- Community Safety Zone Policy
- Controlled Pedestrian Crossing Policy
- School Crossing Guard Program

This Administrative report provides key technical information and regulations relating to School Crossing Guards (SCG) and recommends the elimination of the current School Crossing Guard Program in favour of pedestrian crossover and traffic control measures proposed through the above-noted new policies.

Comments

Existing Crossing Guard Program

The Town currently has seven (7) crossing guard locations for six (6) of the eleven (11) Elementary Schools, that were established prior to amalgamation. It is unknown how these crossing guard locations were established or whether any analysis for the need of a crossing guard was undertaken at any of them. The locations of the current crossing guards are listed in Attachment 2 and depicted on a map in Attachment 3. The map also depicts all school facilities in Tecumseh, indicating the very narrow application of this service across the whole community.

The existing seven (7) Crossing Guard locations have been grandfathered since amalgamation with morning, lunch and afternoon services. The lunch service was recently removed through report [CAO-PC-2023-04](#) at the September 12, 2023 Regular Council Meeting (Motion: RCM-241/23). The locations require the Town to employ seven (7) regular Crossing Guards and an additional four (4) alternates to ensure all corners and shifts are covered.

Historically, requests for additional crossing guards were managed through the Clerk's Office with assistance from the Public Works & Engineering Services Department. Individual requests were received, reviewed and responded to, which was found to be extremely time-consuming and an inefficient use of staff resources, particularly in the absence of a policy framework for addressing requests for Crossing Guards or other pedestrian crossover facilities.

Technical Information

In 2006 the Ontario Traffic Council (OTC), in coordination with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), completed a School Crossing Guard Guide (SCGG) to provide guidance to municipalities in establishing school crossing guard locations. The guidance is not a requirement or a standard but rather a compendium of best practices. While the SCGG covers a broad range of best practices, no one document can cover all situations involving a school crossing guard. It is therefore the practitioner's responsibility to exercise good engineering judgement and experience on technical matters in the best interests of the public and students.

Since the original publication of the guidance, new technology has evolved for crossing locations, such as a wider range of automated pedestrian crossovers. New Ontario Traffic Manuals have been produced while others have been updated, and the Highway Traffic Act has been amended. The SCGG was updated in 2017 to reflect these changes in policy and best practices. These updated methods from the OTM for safer pedestrian crossings provide permanent automated controls that operate at all times of the day for all age groups, in contrast to the limited coverage of School Crossing Guards.

The SCGG is clear that "a school crossing guard should not be considered the only or first tool to improve safety of students as they cross roadways to and from school". The guidance document outlines several alternative solutions to safe crossing at intersections, including all way stop intersections, public education on safe crossing practices and safe routes to school, installation of traffic-calming devices such as curb extensions, medians or refuge islands, or modifications to parking regulations depending on parking practices in the area.

School crossing guards are single purpose and do not address the safety of all pedestrians in crossing streets. Alternative approaches may be beneficial for greater application to a broader range of pedestrians, of all ages and abilities as well as time of day/days of week coverage and a broader geographic scope of coverage.

October 2023 - Pedestrian Crossing Treatment Review

In October 2023, Administration retained the services of an engineering consultant to undertake a pedestrian crossing treatment review in accordance with Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 15 at all seven (7) locations where School Crossing Guards are

currently located. The results of the pedestrian crossing treatment review and Administration’s recommendations are summarized as follows:

Locations	Existing Intersection Control	Recommended Intersection Control
Lesperance / Arbour	Signalized Intersection	No Change. Highest form of pedestrian control.
Tecumseh / Arlington	All-Way Stop Controlled	No Change. Higher form of pedestrian control than a pedestrian crossover (PXO).
Tecumseh / Estate Park	Minor Street Stop Controlled	A PXO will not be warranted with the relocation of D.M. Eagle Elementary School in 2024.
Lesperance / St. Thomas	Minor Street Stop Controlled	Installation of a Level 2 Type B PXO warranted.
Lacasse / St. Thomas	All-Way Stop Controlled	No Change. Higher form of pedestrian control than a PXO.
Lacasse / Clapp	All-Way Stop Controlled	No Change. Higher form of pedestrian control than a PXO.
St. Thomas / Michael	All-Way Stop Controlled	No Change. Higher form of pedestrian control than a PXO.

As signalized intersections and all-way stop controlled intersections are a higher form of pedestrian controls, OTM Book 15 does not recommend the installation of PXOs at those locations. A figure depicting the Level 2 Type B PXO from OTM Book 15 is found in Attachment 4. It is important to note that traffic signals or all-way stop controlled intersections, or the installation of a PXO, have been identified in the SCGG as alternative solutions to Crossing Guards.

What are other Municipalities Doing?

Local municipalities have continued to struggle with the recruitment and retention of Crossing Guards and in at least one case have moved to outsourcing as a (higher cost) solution that removes the responsibility of staffing from the municipality.

In 2016, Chatham-Kent phased out their School Guards program affecting twelve school zones and implemented enhanced pedestrian crossing measures after conducting engineering reviews of the affected areas. As of January 2024, Chatham-Kent has not revisited their decision to eliminate the School Guard program and has continued enhanced pedestrian crossover measures to provide safety to all pedestrians.

Change in Approach to the School Crossing Guard Program

In keeping with the changes in best practice and in an effort to provide broader coverage for safe pedestrian crossovers, including students, Administration recommends that the current School Crossing Guard Program be discontinued in favour of reliance on the following:

- The use of existing pedestrian crossover measures that are a higher form of control at the current crossing Guard locations (as set out in the table above); and
- Reliance on pedestrian crossover and traffic control measures proposed through the following new policies, including:
 - Community Safety Zone Policy 123
 - Controlled Pedestrian Crossing Policy 124
 - School Safety Zone Policy 125
 - Speed Management and Traffic Calming Policy 126

Accordingly, School crossing Guards would be phased out gradually and not before:

- Council has adopted the suite of traffic-related policies listed above;
- The end of a school year;
- Designated School Safety Zones have been assessed in accordance with the School Safety Zone Policy and any recommendations being implemented; and
- Implementation of the recommendations from the October 2023 Pedestrian Crossing Treatment Review.

Further, it is proposed that Administration hold information sessions with the local schools and boards affected by this change in approach to Crossing Guards prior to the end of the current school year in June 2024.

Consultations

Chief Administrative Officer and People & Culture
Financial Services
SSL Project Services Inc.

Financial Implications

The existing crossing guard locations require the Town to employ seven (7) regular crossing guards and an additional four (4) alternates to ensure all corners and shifts are covered. These positions are extremely difficult to recruit and retain due to the schedule and limited hours of work. Scheduling is complicated and causes significant administrative burden. The cost of the current school crossing guard program is in the range of \$80,000 to \$100,000 per annum to staff seven (7) intersections for two (2) hours per school day. It is estimated that ten (10) hours per week for an additional annual cost of \$27,000 are required to support the administration of the crossing guards. Support includes coverage, timesheet review, recruitment, onboarding and general support to the guards. The total cost of approximately \$127,000 annually represents a very limited scope of coverage relative to all schools in the community as well as all pedestrians.

The current and projected annual costs for the existing seven (7) School Crossing Guards are (not including Administrative Staff costs estimated at \$27,000 annually):

- 2023 - \$95,084
- 2024 - \$85,460 (reduction in lunch service at 4 corners)
- 2025 - \$87,964 (will be impacted by negotiations)
- 2026 - \$90,544 (will be impacted by negotiations)

Estimated costs to install alternative pedestrian crossing treatments are dependent on the Level and Type of the treatment and could range anywhere between \$3,000 to \$100,000 per location.

Level 2 Type B PXO – Lesperance Road @ St. Thomas Street

The pedestrian crossing treatment review conducted in October 2023 identified a warrant for the installation of a Level 2 Type B PXO across Lesperance Road at St. Thomas Street.

Estimated costs for its installation (as a stand-alone project) vary anywhere between \$60,000-\$100,000. Integration of this infrastructure into a larger capital works tender has previously generated lower costs due to project and construction efficiencies. The Manning Road Improvement Project (Phase 2) is a good example of this, with the installation of two PXOs as part of that larger infrastructure project.

Administration is recommending the installation of the Level 2 Type B PXO across Lesperance Road at St. Thomas Street as part of the Town's current capital project "Multi-Use Recreational Pathways: Lesperance Road (Riverside Drive to First Street) & Little River Boulevard (Gauthier Street to Lesperance Road)". This project has been approved by Council for design in 2024 and construction in 2025. The project budget

carried contingencies and accounted for a minimum of two PXOs crossing Lesperance Road for connectivity to the multi-use pathway.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	<u>2023-2026 Strategic Priorities</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Phil Bartnik, P.Eng.
Director Public Works & Engineering Services

Reviewed by:

Michelle Drouillard, BA Hons., CHRL
Director People & Culture

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Existing School Crossing Guard Locations – List
2	Existing School Crossing Guard Locations – Map
3	Level 2 Type B PXO – Figure