



Corporate Report

Report from Transportation & Environmental Services, Operations

Date of Report: July 23, 2013

Date of Meeting: August 12, 2013

Report Number: TES-222-2013

File: 68.26.7

Subject: Review of Existing School Crossing Locations

Recommendation

That school crossing guards be removed from the following locations due to lack of usage:

1. Lakeshore Road and Lock 1 (Welland Canal) bridge
2. Ontario Street at Juliana Crescent; and

That school crossing guards be removed from the following locations due to the presence of intersection pedestrian signals:

1. Scott Street at Beacon Christian School
2. Scott Street at Lincoln Centennial School
3. Glendale Avenue at Caroline Street
4. Glendale Avenue at Marsdale Drive; and

That the school crossing guard at Burleigh Hill Drive and Dalecrest Avenue be relocated to Burleigh Hill Drive and St. David's Road; and

That noon / lunch period school crossing guards be removed where no children are observed to cross during the lunch period; and

Further, that the Clerk be directed to make the necessary notifications. FORTHWITH

Summary

Crossing guard reviews are conducted periodically to review if existing locations are necessary or whether crossing guards should be relocated. City staff perform observations, speak with crossing guards and liaise with appropriate school contacts to evaluate crossing locations. The review has resulted in recommendations to remove six guards due to low usage and policy, and redeploy one guard to a more suitable location.

Background

City staff periodically review the need for school crossing guards at existing locations in light of changing enrolment and school closures. Results of these reviews are then presented to Council so recommended changes can be evaluated.

Report

The hiring, training and supervision of school crossing guards at 71 locations across the City is a major undertaking. The annual cost of this program is approximately \$700,000. As this is a significant expense, City staff perform periodic reviews to evaluate the need and effectiveness of the program. City staff have reviewed existing school crossing locations over the past few months. Consultation with Niagara School Transportation Systems (NSTS) has been vital as this agency has data on school catchment areas, student bussing and walking patterns.

Removal due to Low Usage

The review revealed that no children were using the crossings at Ontario Street at Juliana Crescent and Lakeshore Road at Lock 1. Given the lack of usage, the crossing guards should be removed from these locations.

Both intersections are under the jurisdiction of Niagara Region, and as such, City staff will advise Regional staff of the crossing guard removal. Ontario Street at Juliana Crescent currently has flashing beacons which are activated during times when the school crossing is active. City staff have noted that seniors from the nearby Linhaven Home for the Aged and Hospice Niagara use the crossing. For this reason, City staff will request that Regional staff evaluate the location for a potential intersection pedestrian signal.

Lakeshore Road at Lock 1 (Welland Canal) is a school crossing location at a signalized intersection. Staff have confirmed with NSTS that any students living in Port Weller East attending Parnell School are bussed in, thus removing the need for a crossing guard.

Policy Removal

City policy generally recommends that crossing guards are not necessary at intersections controlled by traffic signals. This is specifically the case when dedicated intersection pedestrian signals (IPS) have been installed at school crossing locations. There are currently several school crossing guards located at intersections with IPS's, including:

1. Scott Street at Beacon Christian School
2. Scott Street at Lincoln Centennial School
3. Glendale Avenue at Caroline Street
4. Glendale Avenue at Marsdale Drive

Staff recommend the removal of crossing guards at these four locations.

The intersection of Welland Avenue and Queen Street is also an IPS location. Staff recommend that the crossing guards remain at this location due to historical

concerns of vehicle / pedestrian conflicts, as well as heavy left turn volume from Queen Street.

Crossing Guard Relocation

One crossing location, Burleigh Hill Drive at Dalecrest Avenue, has no children crossing on a regular basis. The children in the neighbourhood bounded by Woodmount Drive, Burleigh Hill Drive and St. David's Road are within the catchment area of Westmount School in Thorold. These children could potentially use the sidewalks on St. David's Road to walk to school. However, due to a lack of pedestrian signal heads, a crossing guard at the signalized intersection of Burleigh Hill Drive and St. David's Road would be useful. It is recommended to move the crossing guard to the Burleigh Hill / St. David's Road intersection.

Lunch Time Operations

The provision of school crossing guards at lunch time is an issue that City staff have reviewed with NSTS and District School Board of Niagara staff. Research indicates that fewer children are travelling home for lunch due to both parents often working and more children being driven to school. The provision of full day kindergarten also lessens pedestrian activity at lunch time. Crossing guards have notified City staff that no children were observed to utilize the crossings during lunch hours at many locations. As a result, City staff recommend the monitoring of school crossing locations during lunch hours to see if removal or redeployment of crossing guards is necessary.

Financial Implications

The cost of a crossing guard per year is approximately \$7,000. The removal of six crossing guards as recommended by this report would result in savings of \$42,000. The removal of signs at school crossings on City roads would cost approximately \$200. This amount will be covered by the Annual Operating Budget (Traffic Safety Devices).

Conclusion

The result of the crossing guard review is to recommend the removal of six crossing guards and the relocation of one crossing guard. Staff believe these changes will not adversely impact the safety of pedestrians, while some cost savings will also be realized. An annual review of school crossings will become future practice for staff.

Notifications

That the City Clerk forward this report to the following agencies:

- District School Board of Niagara, 191 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P4
- Niagara District Catholic School Board, 427 Rice Road, Welland, ON, L3C 7C1
- Niagara School Transportation Services, 3350 Merrittville Hwy., Suite 12, Thorold, ON, L2V 4Y6

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