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MEMORANDUM

TO: Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee
FROM: Supt. Sean Auld, O.I.C. Operational Support, Halifax Regional Police
DATE: September 10, 2014
SUBJECT: **Staffing of Crosswalks**

Given the recent media coverage regarding the removal of the eight crosswalk guards I wanted to give members of the Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee a brief overview as to how the decision was made. While jurisdictions across the country use a variety of criteria in the staffing of crosswalks, much of the criteria is similar in nature. As you know, within HRM, the criteria is contained within the council report titled "School Crossing Guard Criteria" dated November 5, 1996. Within this report there are numerous criteria that are outlined in relation to the staffing of a crosswalk including:

- *Geographical conditions, number of traffic lanes, visibility of intersection, etc.*
- *Accident experience and traffic enforcement statistics pertaining to the location being considered*
- *Overall traffic flow*
- *Age and volume of students*
- *Existing traffic signage*
- *Traffic speeds*
- *If appropriate, local police concerns of locations*
- *Input from Traffic and Planning or Department of Transportation*
- *Budget availability*

Two of the quantitative minimums outlined include

- *Minimum traffic volumes may range from 300 to 500 vehicles / hour during peak pedestrian periods*
- *Minimum school crossing flows may vary from 20 - 60 children per peak hour*

Surveys were conducted at 21 crosswalks which were believed to be underutilized. Two surveys were conducted for each location and after reviewing the results; all 21 locations were found not to meet the established minimum pedestrian crossing criteria. Each of these locations was reviewed using all other criteria which resulted in the decision to keep staff at 13 of the locations and remove staff at the remaining eight locations. With regard to the crosswalks surveys, there were valid suggestions that some of the surveys taken in the colder months would not be representative of true utilization. Additionally one school had two release times and the initial survey did not capture the earlier release time. The Union requested that we conduct our surveys as soon as the school year began and we made a commitment to them and the affected councillors to conduct the surveys as soon as possible. We further committed that if the observed numbers were markedly different from those previously collected, we would certainly staff those locations.

Halifax Regional Police

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The attached data was collected September 5th through the September 9th inclusive. Each of the surveys was conducted during favourable weather conditions as noted on the document. In two locations no children were observed crossing, while the other locations saw between 1 and 5 children (each of them accompanied by the parent) crossing. The collision rates were between 0 to a maximum of 3 per year, this being for Kearney Lake Rd at Wedgewood, which in the latest survey shows no children utilizing the crosswalk. To give you some perspective we experience between 6000-6500 motor vehicle accidents each year, region wide.

Given the most recent data, re-instatement of the eight crossing guards is not supported by the established criteria at this time. Halifax Regional Police remain committed to conducting surveys and introducing new positions wherever required. On a go forward basis, we will conduct future surveys prior to the end of November and after April 1st to ensure that colder weather doesn't result in lower pedestrian counts. I will be meeting with Traffic and Right of Way staff to review the latest information available to determine if the current criteria should be changed and I will communicate the results of those meetings to the Committee. Perhaps of note is the fact that a number of Provinces and other jurisdictions do not utilize adult crosswalk guards, for example;

- Edmonton and Calgary report that the Alberta Motor Association works with the schools to train students to act as crossing guards.
- Regina and Saskatoon report the CAA has sponsored the School Safety Patrol since 1951. Some 3200 students in 68 communities act as crossing guards.
- Vancouver reports no hired crossing guards are utilized in British Columbia where students act as crossing guards.
- Winnipeg reports utilizing no adult crossing guards as older students act as crossing guards.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at [REDACTED]

Sincerely;

Original Signed

Supt. Sean Auld
O.I.C Operational Support
Halifax Regional Police

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Date	Location	Hours	Total # Children	# Vehicles	Conditions/Weather	Notable Information
Sept 8/14	Kearney Lake Rd and Wedgewood Dr	08:45 to 09:00	0	664	Sunny 13C	No children present
		12:00 to 12:15	0	234	Sunny 18C	
		12:45 to 13:00	0	266	Sunny 18C	
		14:45 to 15:45	0	1060	Sunny 19C	
Sept 9/14	Riverside Dr and Candlewood Court	07:45 to 08:45	5	192	Sunny 12C	Also 5 High School Students All Elementary Students crossed with a parent.
		11:15 to 11:30	0	105	Sunny 16C	
		12:00 to 12:15	0	180	Sunny 16C	
		13:45 to 14:45	4	309	Sunny 20C	All children crossed with a parent.
5 Sept 2014	MOUNT EDWARD SCHOOL Mount Edward/Brigadoon	8:15 – 8:45	1	310	26 degrees C	1 elementary & parent
		11:55 – 12:10	0	110	Dry, Clear & Sunny	
		12:30 – 12:45	0	99		
		2:20 – 3:05	0	335		
8 Sept, 2014	Michael Wallace School Waverly/ Montebello	8:25 – 8:55	0	428	20 C, dry , clear and sunny	No children
		12:00 – 12:15	0	128		
		12:45 – 1:00	0	145		
		2:50 – 3:40	0	451		
8 Sept, 2014/ 4 th shift on Sept 5 th	Colby Village School Delta/Colby Drive	7:55 – 8:25	2	290	13 degrees C	2 children crossed with an adult
		11:30 – 11:45	0	53	20 degrees C	
		12:15 – 12:30	0	45	20 degrees C	
		2:10-3:00	1	411	26 C, Dry, clear and sunny	1 child crossed with an adult

Date	Location	Hours	Total # Children	# Vehicles	Conditions/Weather	Notable Information
5 Sept 2014	Rockingham School Flamingo / Oriole	8:05 – 8:50	4	572	18 degrees to	3 of the children were with parent
		11:40 – 12:00	0	105	28 degrees	3 way stop
		12:30 – 12:45	0	89	Clear / Sunny	
		2:15 – 3:15	4	340		3 of the children were with parent
8 Sept, 2014	St. Stephens School Agricola/ Duffus	8:15-9:00	3	453	13 degrees to 20 degrees , sunny and clear	2 children were with parents
		11:55-12:20	0	242		Overhead lights and walk signal
		12:40-1:00	0	118		
		2:15-3:315	2	335		1 child crossed with parent
9 Sept 2014	Inglis St. School Inglis / South Park	8:15 – 9:00	3	306	11 Degrees to	2 children were with parents
		12:00 – 12:15	0	87	20 Degrees	4 Way Stop
		12:45 – 1:00	0	99	Clear / Sunny	
		2:55 – 3:35	3	327		2 children with parents


TO: Mayor Fitzgerald and Members of Regional Council

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

 K. R. Meech, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed

 Vincent J. MacDonald, Chief of Police

DATE: October 31, 1996

SUBJECT: SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD CRITERIA

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The original request for this information was raised during the 1996/97 Operating Budget review by Councillor Hendsbee on August 23, 1996.

DISCUSSION

The criteria used for the establishment of a school crossing guard assignment is drawn heavily from a **Working Paper of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control** and, more specifically, from that section of the document dealing with "Pedestrian Crossing Control". The following are excerpts from that document which enunciates the concerns and considerations in this regard:

"School crossing protection is a very sensitive topic; parents frequently demand various protection measures that are not warranted and that tend to lessen the respect for controls that are warranted. One way to avoid serious complaints is to develop a uniform procedure for studying and analyzing apparent hazards at school crossings. This procedure can be used to determine the best type of protection and traffic controls required to meet the particular crossing situation.

Factors to be considered for the adult crossing guard program include traffic volume, turning movement patterns and volume, pedestrian volume, traffic control at the crossing location, urban or rural surroundings, speed limits, roadway class, accident history, number of lanes, divided or undivided highway, crosswalk width, proportion of heavy commercial vehicles, horizontal or vertical curves, environmental conditions and lighting conditions (ambient and artificial).

Generally, pedestrian delay time between adequate gaps may be considered excessive when they are less frequent than one per minute. Fewer gaps than this represent an unsatisfactory situation.

Adult crossing guards are typically considered for use on arterial roadways at uncontrolled crossings, at stop sign controlled intersections and at traffic signal controlled intersections. The minimum traffic volumes may range from 300 to 500 vehicles per hour during the peak pedestrian periods, whereas minimum school crossing flows may vary from 20 to 60 children per hour.

The following criteria are suggested by the **Institute of Transportation Engineers** to determine if a particular location requires the use of an adult crossing guard. If a particular location needs control, the use of an adult crossing guard should be considered if:

1. Adult crossing guard is more feasible and economical than either a pedestrian grade separation structure or a traffic control signal specifically installed to handle the problem.
2. There are special hazards at certain signalized locations that can be properly handled only by adult supervision. These hazards include unusual conditions such as extreme fog, complicated intersections, heavy vehicular turning movements or high vehicular approach speeds.
3. A change in school routes or school districts is imminent, thus requiring protection at the location for a limited time.

When this form of control is selected to provide adequate gaps at school crossing, the following procedures could be adopted by responsible officials:

4. Adult crossing guards should be assigned to school crossings only after a study has indicated a need. The great demand for this type of control makes it essential that this procedure be strictly followed if crossing guard assignments are to be held to a minimum according to need.
5. The local traffic enforcement agency may be available for the training of adult crossing guards.

6. Adult crossing guards should not relieve children of full responsibility at school crossings. It is essential that crossing guards take advantage of their assignment to properly instruct and develop in children the ability to take care of themselves at any pedestrian crossing.

7. A police officer should protect school crossings only when no other suitable means can be employed. In most cases, police officers are in short supply, and their use for school crossing protection diverts them from other important assignments. If police officers must be used, such use should be only temporary until another solution to the problem can be developed.

Traffic signal control for school crossings is not the only remedy nor is it necessarily a safe solution. While traffic signals can effectively assign intersection right-of-way and promote the safe, orderly movement of both pedestrians and vehicles, they may not be practical in all situations, moreover, the response of various young pedestrians (kindergarten to third grade) to traffic signals is frequently so inadequate that it creates a hazard rather than a solution. In these cases, adult crossing guards should be used with the traffic signal control. Although adult guards are primarily assigned to assist elementary age children going to and from school, this should not preclude the use of adult guards for junior high or high school where dangerous traffic situations exist or where the criteria for the adult guard is met.”

The following criteria is utilized in making a decision in establishing a school crossing guard point:

- ▶ geographical conditions, number of traffic lanes, visibility of intersection, etc
- ▶ accident experience and traffic enforcement statistics pertaining to location being considered
- ▶ overall general traffic flow
- ▶ traffic volume
- ▶ age and volume of students
- ▶ existing traffic signage
- ▶ traffic speeds
- ▶ if appropriate, local police concerns of location (R.C.M.P. and HRPS)
- ▶ input from Traffic and Planning or Department of Transportation
- ▶ budget availability

As can be noted in the document, there are a number of variables involved in the assessment of any requests for a crossing guard and, although they are varied, it is the opinion of staff that, if each location is properly reviewed, a clear recommendation can be forwarded.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

If the numbers of school crossing guards remain at their existing level there would be no impact on the budget; however, it should be noted that, if there are future requests for additional guards, those costs can vary throughout the various communities within the Region in amounts between \$4,000 to \$8,200 per additional guard.

Further information regarding the contents of this report may be obtained by contacting Inspector David C. Murphy, Police Services, at 490-5042. For additional copies or for information on the report's status, please contact the office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210 (Tel) or 490-4208 (Fax).