



Date: June 24, 2024

To: Mayor and Council

Author: Jennifer Galea, Manager of Human Resources

RE: Crossing Guard Program

Report No.: HR-2024-01

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. As a result of the closure of Kingsville Public School, Council **APPROVES** the removal of the four crossings at the following locations: Water Street and Division Road, King Street and Division Road, King Street and Chestnut Street and Chestnut and Main Street West, effective September 1, 2024.
2. As a result of lunch schedule change for students at John de Brebeuf, Council **APPROVES** the removal of crossing guard services during lunch hour only at the following locations: Division Road South and Mill Street, and Main Street West at Spruce Street, effective September 1, 2024 (for clarity, crossing guards will continue their services at this location before and after school);
3. Council **APPROVES** that the crossing guard program at all locations, including Division Road South and Mill Street, and Main Street West at Spruce Street, be phased out and replaced with pedestrian crossovers (PXOs) by September 2025; and
4. Council **DIRECTS** Administration to hold a public information meeting to provide information to parents and school board officials on this phase-out change in crossing guard services and the alternative approach of providing pedestrian crossovers (PXOs) by September 2025.

BACKGROUND

Opening of the new Erie Migration District School and closure of Kingsville Public School has caused Administration to do a review of the locations of the crossing guards and evaluate the effectiveness of the entire program.

The Town of Kingsville currently employs six crossing guards. Four of the crossing guards are assigned to students walking to Kingsville Public School and crossing the street at Water Street and Division Road, King Street and Division Road, King Street

and Chestnut Street and Chestnut and Main Street West. Two of the crossing guards are assigned to students walking to St. John de Brebeuf Catholic Elementary School at Division Road South and Mill Street and Main Street West at Spruce Street. The Town also employs three alternate crossing guards, which cover the absences of the permanent crossing guards.

Kingsville Public School will be permanently closing at the end of June 2024. In September 2024, Erie Migration District School will be opening and the four crossing guards for Kingsville Public School will no longer be required.

Additionally, St. John de Brebeuf School was contacted in May 2024 and confirmed that children are not able to leave during the lunch hour. The two crossing guards for the catholic school have been working through the lunch hour but this service is no longer needed. The two catholic school crossing guards will only be needed before and after school.

DISCUSSION

The Town of Kingsville has had many recruitment challenges in hiring and retaining crossing guards. This has caused some of the crossings not to be filled on occasion or to be filled by full-time Town of Kingsville staff, including public works, parks and recreation, by law enforcement, fire department and management staff. This has taken full-time staff away from their regular duties. The Town is grateful for the many excellent individuals who serve and have served, as crossing guards presently and in the past.

In decades past, crossing guard programs across Ontario were operated by schools and the school boards utilized older students to assist younger students with street crossings. The school boards, at some point, decided that this created liability for the school boards and stopped providing this service. Municipalities across Ontario were pressured years ago, often by the very school boards that previously provided the service, to take on this responsibility. However, the same liability that concerns school boards applies equally to a Municipality providing the service. There is nothing in the *Municipal Act* that requires a municipality to have crossing guards and this is not traditionally a service that municipalities provided.

In November 2023, the Town retained RC Spencer and Associates to complete a review of Jasperson Drive as it relates to the new Erie Migration District School. The report states, *“For both controlled and uncontrolled crossings, School Crossing Guards are considered an “optional component” in the OTM Book 15 reference; however, if implemented, only the uncontrolled crossing should be treated with accompanying “school crossing” signage and pavement markings”*. The various provincial crossing guard references suggest that guards are only intended for elementary school-aged children, as they *“generally have not yet developed good judgement related to traffic”*.

At the intersection of Woodycrest Avenue and Jasperson Drive, there is no expectation for elementary-aged students to cross at this location; therefore, it is the engineer's

opinion that the subject location does not require a crossing guard or higher-degree crossing treatment.

Regarding the existing pedestrian crossovers (PXOs), the Ontario Traffic Council (OTC) 2023 School Crossing Guard Guide, Section 6.4, clearly states that *“As per OTM Book 6 – Warning Signs, Section 7, signed school crossing must not be located at a pedestrian crossover or at any signalized intersections. Thus, no school-related signs or pavement markings should be placed... Any deviation from the OTM requirements should be supported by a well-documented rationale.”*. “

On May 13, 2024, the Town of Tecumseh made a recommendation to provide broader coverage for safe pedestrian crossovers. Tecumseh Council received a report regarding the current School Crossing Guard Program (Appendix 'A') relative to new pedestrian crossover and traffic control measures. These measures include utilizing pedestrian crossover treatments with higher control levels at current crossing guard locations. Tecumseh Council approved recommendations directing Administration to coordinate information sessions with the local schools affected by a change in approach to crossing guards. Tecumseh council further directed the phasing out or further assessment of current Crossing Guard Program locations. Crossing Guards at the DM Eagle school will be discontinued after June 2024 due to the closure of that school. For other locations, further assessments will be undertaken over the next few years, with results reported to Council prior to any decisions on the implementation of safety measures and the Crossing Guard Program.

On April 5, 2024, Martin Gallant, from Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services confirmed that students in all grades who live under 1.0 kilometres from the school are not provided bus transportation to school. Students in JK/SK who live between 1 and 1.6 kilometres from the school and students in JK to Grade 8 who live over 1.6 kilometres from the school are provided transportation.

Appendix 'B' outlines the current walk zones for both the public and catholic schools. Noted in the black outline section is the overlap between the public and catholic schools. Administration is not recommending increasing crossing guard coverage in this area.

Administration is suggesting eliminating the two crossing guards at St. John de Brebeuf Catholic Elementary School in September 2025. The crossing at Main Street West and Spruce Street is currently a lighted intersection and does not require any changes. The crossing guard currently located at Division Road South and Mill Street would be replaced with a pedestrian crossover (PXO). Administration could coordinate information sessions with St. John de Brebeuf and boards affected by this change in approach to Crossing Guards prior to the end of the current school year in June 2025.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The average cost for one crossing guard during the school year is approximately \$10,000 plus uniform and safety personal protective equipment. The total cost of crossing guards is based on the number of crossing guards employed.

A pedestrian crossover is estimated to be \$40,000 to \$50,000 and would be included in the operational budget for 2025.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Senior Management Team
Senior Manager, Capital Projects
RC Spencer and Associates
Martin Gallant, Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services

PREPARED BY:

Jennifer Galea

Jennifer Galea, CHRL
Manager of Human Resources

REVIEWED BY:



John Norton
CAO