



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: February 16, 2021

SUBJECT: School Crossing Guard Program Contract Extension (City Wide)

PREPARED BY: David Porretta, Manager, Traffic Engineering, Ext. 2040
Justin Chin, Senior Traffic Engineer, Ext. 4020
Tony Casale, Senior Construction Buyer, Ext. 3190

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled “ School Crossing Guard Program Contract Extension (City Wide)” be received; and
- 2) That the contract for school crossing guard services be extended for one (1) year with Staffing Services Inc. from September 2021 to June 2022 in the amount of \$718,753.65 (inclusive of HST); and
- 3) That the tendering process be waived in accordance with the City’s Purchasing By-law # 2017-8, Part II, Section 11.1(c), Non Competitive Procurement which states, “when the extension of an existing Contract would prove more cost-effective or beneficial”; and
- 4) That the award in the amount of \$718,753.65 inclusive of HST be funded from Operating Budget #740-998-5642 “School Crossing Guards”; and further
- 5) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

To obtain approval to extend the contract for school crossing guard services with Staffing Services Inc. for one (1) year from September 2021 to June 22, 2022 at the same (2020/2021) itemized pricing.

BACKGROUND:

The School Crossing Guard program provides an important service to the community as it improves safety for elementary school children, encourages students and parents to walk to school, and promotes active transportation. The program helps reduce traffic congestion around schools while improving the physical health of children and the environment.

There are currently 93 supervised school crossings located throughout the City, servicing approximately 75 schools. The existing contract includes all aspects of administering the program; recruitment, training, payroll and day-to-day supervisory activities of crossing guards. City staff provides overall contract management to ensure service level requirements are met.

The City has been contracting the school crossing guard program for the past 30 years with Staffing Services Inc. The City issued a bid to the market in 2001 and 2005, and both times Staffing Services Inc. was the sole bidder. The existing contract was awarded to Staffing Services Inc. on a non-competitive basis, effective September 2014 and is set to expire on June 30, 2021.

Staff contacted other municipalities to understand how their programs are managed and also explored the market place to determine if there were new staffing vendors prior to determining next steps. Most municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”) that have a school crossing guard program use dedicated municipal staff to administer the program internally including recruitment, payroll, training and supervisory duties, and with the crossing guards hired as part-time municipal staff. Over the past few years, a small group of staffing vendors have emerged with an interest in administering the school crossing guard program. While preparing to issue a bid to the market, Staff identified benefits in extending the existing contract with Staffing Services Inc. for an additional year (2021/2022).

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Ongoing pandemic creates uncertainties on school schedule and recruitment of crossing guards

As is already occurring, the school schedule is susceptible to changes in Provincial response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had significant impacts to school schedules as some schools are shifting between an in-class learning model and on-line virtual classrooms. As well, it is possible that individual schools may close in the event of an infection outbreak. These unpredictable events have created uncertainties and have affected how the school crossing guard program is delivered.

The ability to recruit new crossing guards has always been challenging. Guards are exposed to adverse weather and traffic conditions, are required to be at their designated locations at very specific timeframes for their shifts, ranging from 1 to 2 hours per day, depending on location. The pandemic has exacerbated difficulties during the recruitment process due to health concerns that come with the highly social contact nature of the work.

There is a lack of qualified and experienced crossing guard vendors

There is a lack of qualified vendors that can administer school crossing guard programs for municipalities in the GTA. In the past few years, additional vendors have emerged, however, they lack experience and many have less than one-year experience. The City has a large crossing guard program (93 locations) and Staff is concerned that a new contractor will be challenged in preparing all program requirements, including recruitment of new crossing guards, during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and prior to the commencement of the 2021/2022 school year.

Staff investigated the feasibility of administering the program in-house

Administering the crossing guard program in-house would require the following:
Two (2) full-time staff members with access to a vehicle if service levels were to be consistent with the current program; one (1) coordinator would be required to manage the

various aspects of the program including service coordination, deployment, training and recruitment; one (1) field supervisor would be required to conduct daily patrols across the City, assist with ongoing training and acting as a back-up crossing guard, if necessary. Staff would be required to be on-call after normal business hours in case of sudden absences and ensuring the timely deployment of back-up guards. Moreover, by administering the contract internally, the City would have to absorb indirect costs, such as Human Resources / Payroll, related to the hiring of part-time personnel. Staff has concluded that it will be more costly to administer the program in-house.

Extending the existing contract for an additional year is recommended

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic impacts, Staff believes the 2021/2022 school year is not an appropriate time to transition the program to a new vendor. Staffing Services Inc. has a proven track record that they have the staffing resources available to deploy stand-by crossing guards in the event of unexpected absences. The extension of the current contract will ensure the continuity / interoperability of existing services, and will ensure that the risk of staffing vacancies is mitigated that may otherwise come with the transition to a new vendor. Staffing Services Inc. has the experience to respond quickly to changing service needs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Staffing Services Inc. was contacted regarding a possible one-year extension and, subject to Council approval, have agreed to continue managing the program at the current 2020/2021 price. In addition, they have agreed to cease all services at no charge, upon written notice from the City, should schools not reopen in September, or if schools are to be closed for an extended period during the course of the 2021/2022 school year.

The following table shows the negotiated cost of the crossing guard program for the 2021/2022 school year.

Year	Jan-Jun	Sep-Dec	Total
2021	-	\$288,270.18	\$288,270.18
2022	\$430,483.47	-	\$430,483.47
Total Award			\$718,753.65

Note: The award amount is based on 187 school days in a year, 113 billable hours per day and 93 supervised school crossing locations.

The following table summarizes the financial impact of this award for 2021:

2021 Operating Budget # 740 998 5642	\$ 718,753.65	School Crossing Guards
Current Budget Available for this Project	\$ 288,270.18	Amount allocated for Sept. 2021 – Dec. 2021
Less : Cost of Award	\$ 288,270.18	Award (Incl. of HST)
Budget Remaining	0.00	

Sufficient 2022 budget will need to be approved for the services from January 2022 to June 2022 award of \$430,483.47.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Staffing Services Inc. expends significant effort each year in the recruitment, training and deployment of Guards and assumes responsibility for payroll, insurance, workplace safety and other employer requirements, thereby alleviating much of the responsibility that would otherwise be assumed by the City.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The City is subject to the following trade agreements, which apply to public sector procurements above a certain dollar threshold: the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), and the Ontario-Quebec Trade and Cooperation Agreement (OQTCA). The recommended contract extension complies with the trade agreements.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The School Crossing Guard Program achieves the requirements defined in the Transportation & Transit strategic priority.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Corporate Services – Purchasing and Financial Services Departments and Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Brian Lee, P.Eng.
Director, Engineering

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Development Services