



Report to Council

Department: Office of the CAO

Division: Legal and Legislative Services

Date: August 11, 2025

Prepared by: Shelley Brown, Deputy Clerk and Nacebean Binjamin,
Legislative Intern

Report Number: Legal and Legislative Services-2025-13

Subject: School Crossing Guard Review 2025

Number of Pages: 10

Recommendation(s)

That Legal and Legislative Services Report 2025-13 entitled 2025 Crossing Guard Review 2025 prepared by Shelley Brown, Deputy Clerk and Nacebean Binjamin, Legislative Intern dated August 11, 2025 be received for information.

Purpose

The Ontario Traffic Council School Crossing Guard Guide (“**Guide**”) provides recommendations with regard to school crossing guard placement review by municipalities. This report evaluates whether current crossing guard shift times and locations continue to effectively support safe student crossings to and from school.

Background and Discussion

The Highway Traffic Act (“**HTA**”) outlines Ontario’s road rules, including the responsibilities related to school crossings and the role of school crossing guards. The Ontario Traffic Council

("OTC") is a corporation that represents municipalities and traffic professionals, while providing guidance and resources to enhance road safety. In collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation ("MTO"), the OTC developed the Guide to offer best practices and decision-making tools for municipalities evaluating their school crossing guard programs.

With regard to school crossings, it is the responsibility of the Town of Essex (the "Town") to exercise due diligence and judgment in the best interest of the public and students. In response to the changes in elementary school hours implemented in recent years, the Town has reviewed the accuracy and effectiveness of current crossing guard locations and times.

The role of the school crossing guard is to direct and supervise the movement of people (as defined in the HTA) across a highway by creating necessary gaps in vehicular traffic to provide safe passage at a designated school crossing. A school crossing is a location supervised by a school crossing guard that has been recommended through a combination of a site inspection and an evaluation process. These designated school crossings are identified by pavement markings and signed as defined in the Ontario Traffic Manual Books 6 and 11.

When reviewing school crossing guard placements, there are many things to consider, including heavy traffic, driver behaviour, layout of the intersection, whether there are stop measures such as pedestrian crossings or traffic signals, and volume of students.

Site Inspections

Site inspections are an important component of assessing the need for school crossing guards. It is typically the first step in the evaluation process to identify and assess apparent hazards.

The Town conducted site inspections using the Guide, created by the OTC in collaboration with the MTO, as a reference for the proper procedure and analysis for the current evaluation. Site inspections and data collection were conducted during a typical school day.

Based on the Guide's examples, the Town developed customized site inspection sheets. These included observations of weather conditions, crossing type and control, posted school signage, speed limits, road classification (e.g., local, 2-lane, 4-lane), grade (e.g., flat, incline, decline), geometrics (e.g., straight or curved road), route surveys, and proximity to schools.

In addition, from the examples provided in the Guide, the Town created an evaluation form for each intersection that outlines the time in 5-minute intervals and the number of students that crossed the intersection, how many times cars were stopped and total vehicle volume. The evaluation also categorized vehicle types between cars, buses, large trucks, and vehicles with trailers, to better assess heavy traffic. Driver's behaviour and general intersection conditions were also noted. The minimum student crossing volume the OTC suggests is 40 Students. However, a lower minimum student threshold may be used at the discretion of each municipality.

Evaluation Considerations

1. Types of intersections such as:
 - a. Signalized intersections, which are controlled by traffic lights.
 - b. All-way stop-controlled intersections, where vehicles are required to stop at every approach.
 - c. Minor street stop-controlled intersections which require vehicles on the local roads to stop before entering or crossing the main road.
2. Intersection pedestrian signals, including pedestrian crossing signs at traditional traffic lights.
3. Pedestrian crossovers, which may be located at intersections or mid-block, are designated pedestrian crossing areas marked by specific signs and pavement markings.
4. Roundabouts which are circular intersections designed to improve traffic flow, with designated pedestrian crossing areas indicated by signage and pavement markings.

Other evaluation factors to consider include:

1. minimum student crossing volume,
2. collision hazard reporting frequency,
3. motorist behaviour,
4. posted speed limit and speed adherence,
5. number of lanes on each approach,
6. sightline distance for drivers and students,
7. proximity to school,
8. walking route preference of students,
9. presence of pedestrian facilities, and
10. proximity of students that would require longer reaction times.

Crossing Guard Removal

The removal of a school crossing guard requires a thorough review of the location to ensure student safety is not compromised. In some cases, such as school closures, significant downsizing, or boundary changes that eliminate the need for students to cross a particular intersection, a guard may be removed without any re-evaluation. Otherwise, the OTC recommends data collection over at least two typical, non-consecutive school days to support the decision. Importantly, the removal process should not be abrupt. It should include sufficient education and communication with staff, students, and parents, as well as the consideration of alternative safety measures. A clear transition period is essential to maintain awareness and ensure continued student safety. There are no recommended removals in this report.

Crossing Guard Candidates

All school crossing guard candidates must submit a favourable police vulnerable sector check once they are hired. The Town provides the required personal protective equipment, including a stop sign and safety vest, and throughout the school year replaces any equipment that is damaged or deficient. The Legal and Legislative Services Department, in collaboration with Human Resources, delivers in-depth, in-person training to all school crossing guards. This training follows the techniques recommended by the OTC and covers the crossing guard's duties and responsibilities, proper use and display of the stop sign, safe positioning at intersections, appropriate responses to traffic conditions, and effective interaction with students.

Crossing Guard Appreciation Week

School Crossing Guard Appreciation Week is held annually to recognize and appreciate the important role school crossing guards play in ensuring the safety of children traveling to and from school. In 2025, Appreciation Week took place from June 2nd to June 6th, during which the Town formally acknowledged and celebrated its school crossing guards.

Existing School Crossing Guard Program

The Town of Essex currently has 11 school crossing guard locations servicing 4 elementary schools in Essex Centre and Harrow. Of these 11 locations, Essex Centre has 6 locations staffed by 6 permanent and 3 alternate crossing guards, while Harrow has 5 locations staffed by 5 permanent and 2 alternate crossing guards.

Prior to the start of the 2022/2023 school year, both the public and catholic school boards made changes to their schedules. Historically, the start and end times for both school boards were less than 30 minutes apart, with a one-hour lunch break at noon. As of 2022/2023, the start and end times for the school boards were increased to 1 hour apart and the 1-hour lunch break was reduced. This negated the need for a school crossing guard during the lunch break.

However, given the large gap in the start and end times for the two school boards, the shifts before and after school were extended. Administration has been monitoring these changes since that time.

The school crossing guard locations are listed below.

Existing School Crossing Guard Locations (Essex)

No.	Crossing Guard Location	Speed Limit	Type of Intersection	Name of School
1	Brien Avenue East & Stanley Street	40 km/hr	4-way stop	Essex Public
2	Brien Avenue East & Talbot Street South	50 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	Essex Public
3	Maidstone Avenue East	50 km/hr	Pedestrian Crossover (PXO)	Essex Public
4	Gosfield Townline East & Arthur Avenue	50 km/hr	Stop Sign (complicated intersection with 3 crossings and 2 stop-signs)	Essex Public
5	Gosfield Townline East & Brien Avenue East	40 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	Essex Public
6	Hanlan St South & Fairview Avenue West	40 km/hr	Intersection Pedestrian Signal (IPS) Traffic Signal (4-way Intersection)	Holy Name of Jesus

Existing Crossing Guard Locations (Harrow)

No.	Crossing Guard Location	Speed Limit	Type of Intersection	Name of School
1	King Street East & Walnut Street North	50 km/hr	Pedestrian Crossover (PXO)	Harrow Public
2	King Street East & Arthur Street North	50 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	Harrow Public
3	Queen Street & Munger Street West	50 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	Harrow Public
4	Queen Street & Centre Street	50 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	Harrow Public
5	King Street West & Erie Street North	50 km/hr	2-way stop (4-way intersection)	St. Anthony's

Evaluation Findings

The evaluations made by the Town demonstrate that the current school crossing guards are appropriately placed in relation to the student volumes and traffic conditions. These placements continue to support the safety of elementary students walking to and from school.

However, the observations identified that a few locations (see chart in Results section of this Report) may benefit from a time adjustment to enhance effectiveness, ensuring that school crossing guards are present when students are actively crossing.

Administration will take steps prior to school commencing this fall to work with the principals of the affected schools to ensure that the proper notifications are made to parents and students.

Results

The results of the school crossing guard site inspections and recommendations for time adjustments are summarized as follows:

Essex Centre (Ward 1)

Location (Essex) and Intersection Type	Current Time	Proposed Time	Impact	Observations
Brien Avenue East & Stanley Street 4-way stop	7:35 - 8:20 a.m. 2:20 - 2:50 p.m.	7:40 – 8:25 a.m. 2:20 - 2:50 p.m.	Start and End +5 Minutes No change resulted	High traffic volume Congested street- very busy intersection
Brien Avenue & Talbot Street South 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	7:30 – 8:15 a.m. 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	Start and End -5 Minutes No change resulted	High traffic volume Regulated for large vehicles Travelling fast – slowed when they observed the school crossing guard
Maidstone Avenue East Pedestrian Crossover (PXO)	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.	7:45 – 8:15 a.m. 2:25 – 2:55 p.m.	Reduced from 45 to 30 Minutes with time shift Start and End -5 Minutes	High traffic volume Poor visibility of PXO Fast drivers
Gosfield Townline East & Arthur Avenue Stop Sign (3-way intersection)	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.	7:45 – 8:15 a.m. 2:25 – 2:55 p.m.	Reduced from 45 to 30 Minutes with time shift Start and End -5 Minutes	High traffic volume during picks up and drop off
Gosfield Townline East & Brien Avenue East 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	No change resulted No change resulted	Moderate traffic Traffic slowed itself
Hanlan Street South & Fairview Avenue West (IPS) Traffic Signal (4-way Intersection)	8:45 – 9:15 a.m. 3:15 – 3:45 p.m.	8:45 – 9:15 a.m. 3:10 – 3:40 p.m.	No change resulted Start and End -5 Minutes	High traffic volume Regulated for larger vehicles Driver impatience – honking and pressuring traffic

Harrow (Ward 4)

Location (Harrow)	Current Time	Proposed Time	Impact	Observations
King Street East & Walnut Street North Pedestrian Crossover (PXO)	7:35 – 9:15 a.m. 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	7:45 – 9:00 a.m. 2:35 – 4:05 p.m.	Reduced from 1:40 to 1:15 with time shift Start and End +5 Minutes	Busy intersection Cars slow down here
King Street East & Arthur Street North 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 9:15 a.m. 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	7:45 – 9:15 a.m. 2: 35 – 3:50 p.m.	Reduced from 1:40 to 1:30 with time shift Reduced from 1:30 to 1:15 with time shift	Although this is a busy intersection where cars do not slow down, time shift and reduction is required to better reflect usual child crossing times
Queen Street & Munger Street West 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 9:15 a.m. 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	7:50 – 9:20 a.m. 2:45 – 4:00 p.m.	Reduced from 1:40 to 1:30 with time shift Reduced from 1:30 to 1:15 with time shift	Moderate Traffic
Queen Street & Centre Street 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 9:15 a.m. 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	8:05 – 9:20 a.m. 2:35 – 4:05 p.m.	Reduced from 1:40 to 1:15 with time shift Start and End +5 Minutes	Moderate Traffic
King Street West & Erie Street North 2-way stop (4-way intersection)	7:35 – 8:20 a.m. 2:20 – 2:50 p.m.	7:30 – 8:15 a.m. 2:25 – 2:55 p.m.	Start and End -5 Minutes Start and End +5 Minutes	High volume of traffic Fast cars Busy intersection

Financial Impact

Modifications to the current school crossing guards shifts at various intersections in both Harrow and Essex Centre that are proposed in this report result in a 2025 cost savings of approximately \$3,200, with 2026 cost savings being reflected in the Town's 2026 Budget.

Consultations

Joe Malandrucolo, Director, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk


Link to Strategic Priorities

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town's competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex "home".
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	School Crossing Guard Review 2025 - Legal and Legislative Services-2025-13.docx
Attachments:	- Crossing Guard Study_Review of Intersections 2025 Merged.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 5, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Joseph Malandrucolo, Director, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk - Aug 1, 2025 - 11:57 AM



Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Aug 5, 2025 - 9:44 AM