SUBJECT: Temporary Relocation of the School Crossing Guard from Hunter and Walnut Streets to Hess Street and York Boulevard (Ward 2) (PED07133)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the temporary relocation of the school crossing guard from Hunter and Walnut Streets to Hess Street and York Boulevard be approved.

(b) That staff continue to monitor the intersection of Hess Street and York Boulevard, as well as the intersection of Hunter and Walnut Streets when Queen Victoria School re-opens, and report back with any further changes to school crossing guard assignments if necessary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Councillor Bob Bratina requested that a second school crossing guard be assigned to the intersection of Hess and York to assist children crossing York Boulevard. A guard is being recommended on a temporary basis while further study is being undertaken and was assigned to the intersection under the Manager’s delegated authority on April 10, 2007. No additional funding is required as the school crossing guard at Hunter and Walnut is not required for at least the remainder of the 2006/2007 school year as Queen Victoria School is temporarily closed.
BACKGROUND:

Councillor Bob Bratina has requested an investigation into the need for a second school crossing guard at the signalized intersection of Hess and York. The current school crossing guard crosses children east/west on the north side of the intersection and the request is for a school crossing guard to cross children north/south across York on the west side of the intersection. It is not practical to have the current guard serve both crosswalks and to also cross the children north/south because York Boulevard is too wide.

Staff conducted studies during both the morning and afternoon school crossing periods on March 5, 2007. Thirty crossings of York were observed during each morning and evening crossing period. The children had no problems crossing at the intersection during the observation. However, several unsafe mid-block crossings by children were observed. Also, the Traffic Section of the Public Works Department reports a high violation rate of “running” the red lights at this intersection. Therefore, staff and the school are arranging for safety training to be provided to students, and a school crossing guard is recommended, at least temporarily, to try to encourage children to cross at the intersection.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Currently, during school crossing periods, children were observed crossing at this location confidently and without assistance such that safe crossings could continue without the use of a school crossing guard. However, some children were observed crossing mid-block without the use of the traffic signal. Staff hope that through school safety training and the placement of a school crossing guard children will be encouraged to cross safely at the intersection.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

As children are currently not experiencing any difficulty in crossing the road, safe crossings could continue without assigning a school crossing guard but unsafe mid-block crossings would continue.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There would be no additional cost in assigning a school crossing guard to this location during the morning/afternoon crossing periods, since the temporary closure of Queen Victoria School has allowed the school crossing guard at Hunter and Walnut to be relocated to Hess and York.
POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

The recommendation is consistent with long-standing practice of assigning school crossing guards to locations where there are documented safety concerns and/or children experiencing difficulties crossing public highways.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Councillor Bob Bratina, the Principal of Hess Street School and the Public Works Department (Traffic Section) were consulted in the preparation of this report.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Quality services are provided which residents can rely on in support of the community’s quality of life.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
The recommendation for a school crossing guard is consistent with the City’s goal of maintaining a healthy, safe and green city under Section 3(f) of the Strategic Plan.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Service quality and community priorities are reflected in the recommendation.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

☐ Yes ☑ No

WY/kag