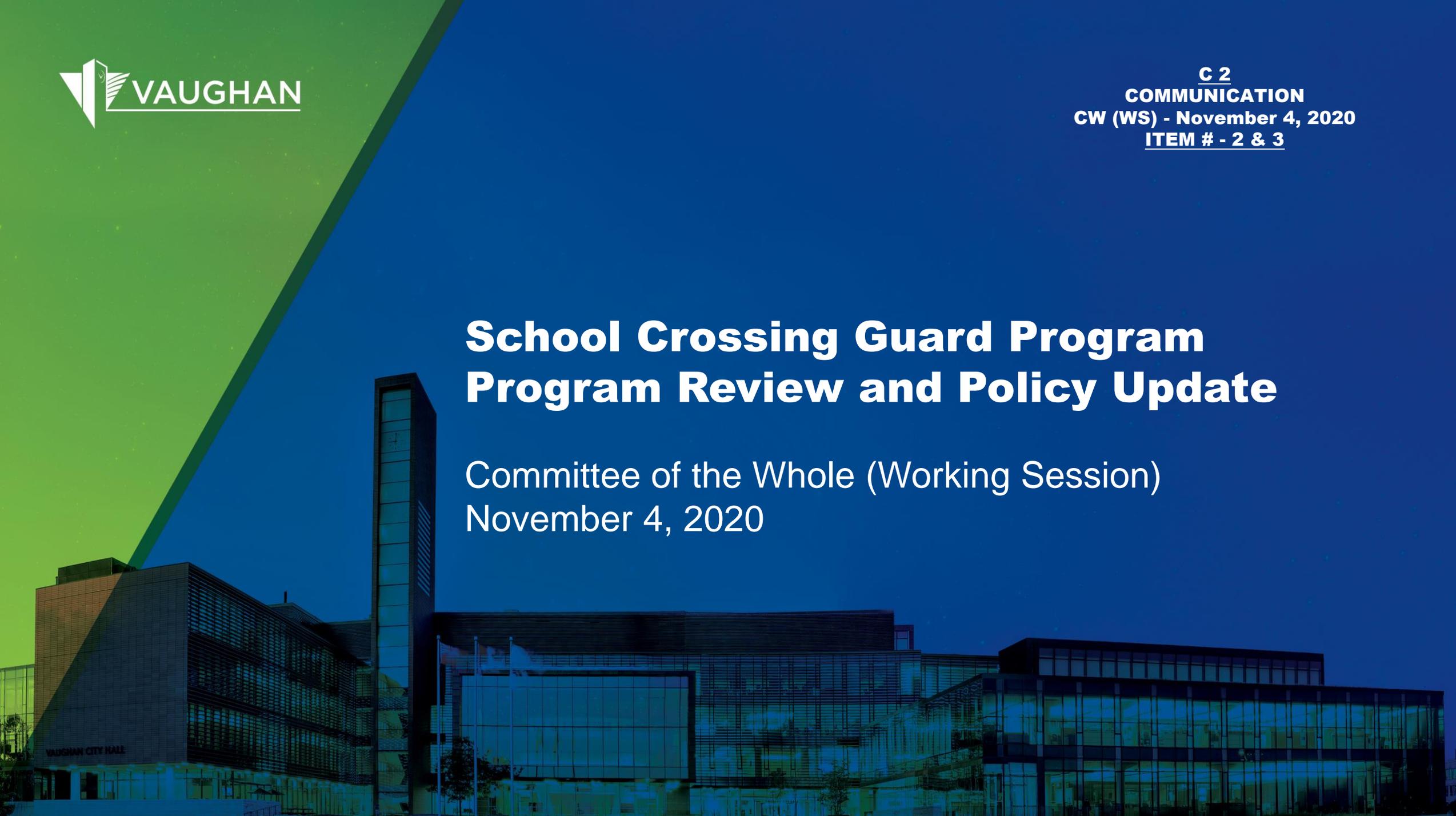


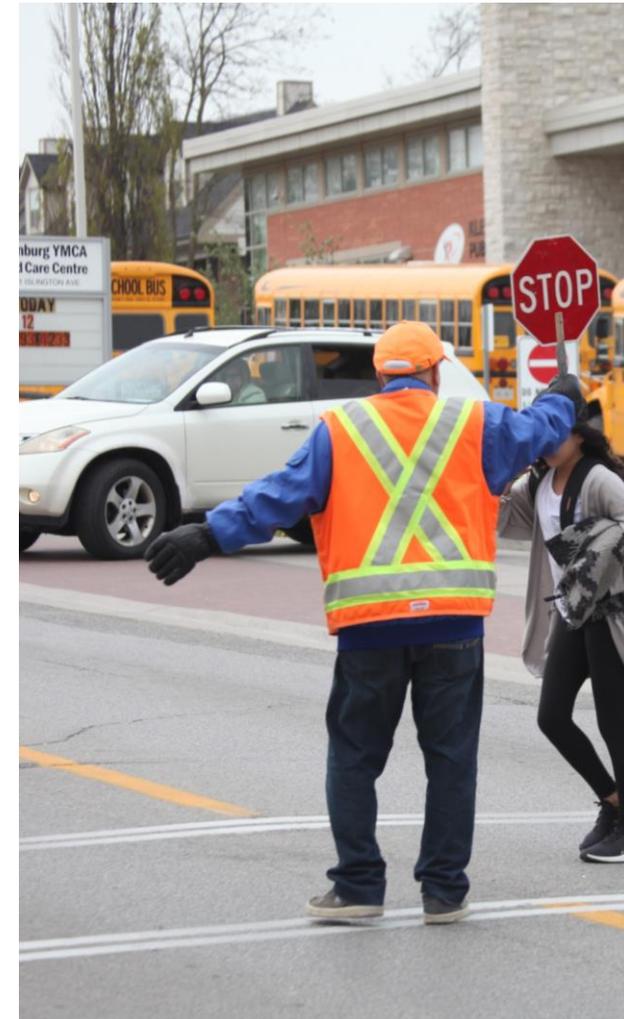
School Crossing Guard Program Program Review and Policy Update

Committee of the Whole (Working Session)
November 4, 2020



Committee Reports

- School Crossing Guard Program Review
- School Crossing Guard Policy



Overview

The City has provided School Crossing Guard (SCG) Services for over 30 years, an important service for families in Vaughan.

Active, Safe and Diverse Communities - Strategic Goal Initiative T-04.3.5: Implement Recommendations from the School Crossing Guard Program (SCGP)

- Three (3) related studies were conducted:
 1. Comprehensive SCGP review by independent consultant
 2. Benchmarking study of 12 Ontario municipalities
 3. Employee engagement survey
- Key findings and updates:
 1. Policy
 2. Procedures
 3. Organizational structure

Foundations

Safety

- Safety of the children is the top priority
- Safety and compliance of staff

Manage Growth

- Maintain program sustainability

Policy Development

- Enable continuous program improvement
- Alignment with current legislation and best practices





Existing Program

History & Growth

- 2-3 locations per year have been added over past 10 years
- 114 locations at 67 schools currently

Policy

- Last updated June 2011
- Ontario Traffic Council (OTC) updated the SCG Guide in 2017 to enable uniformity in program implementation

Structure

- 1 supervisor for 114 SCGs
- Zero standby guards
- 85% of SCGs are older adults over age 65



Program Review: Number of SCGs

What we are doing right:

Review found that the recruitment activities were extensive

What is consistent with other municipalities:

Problems with recruitment and retention, aging workforce

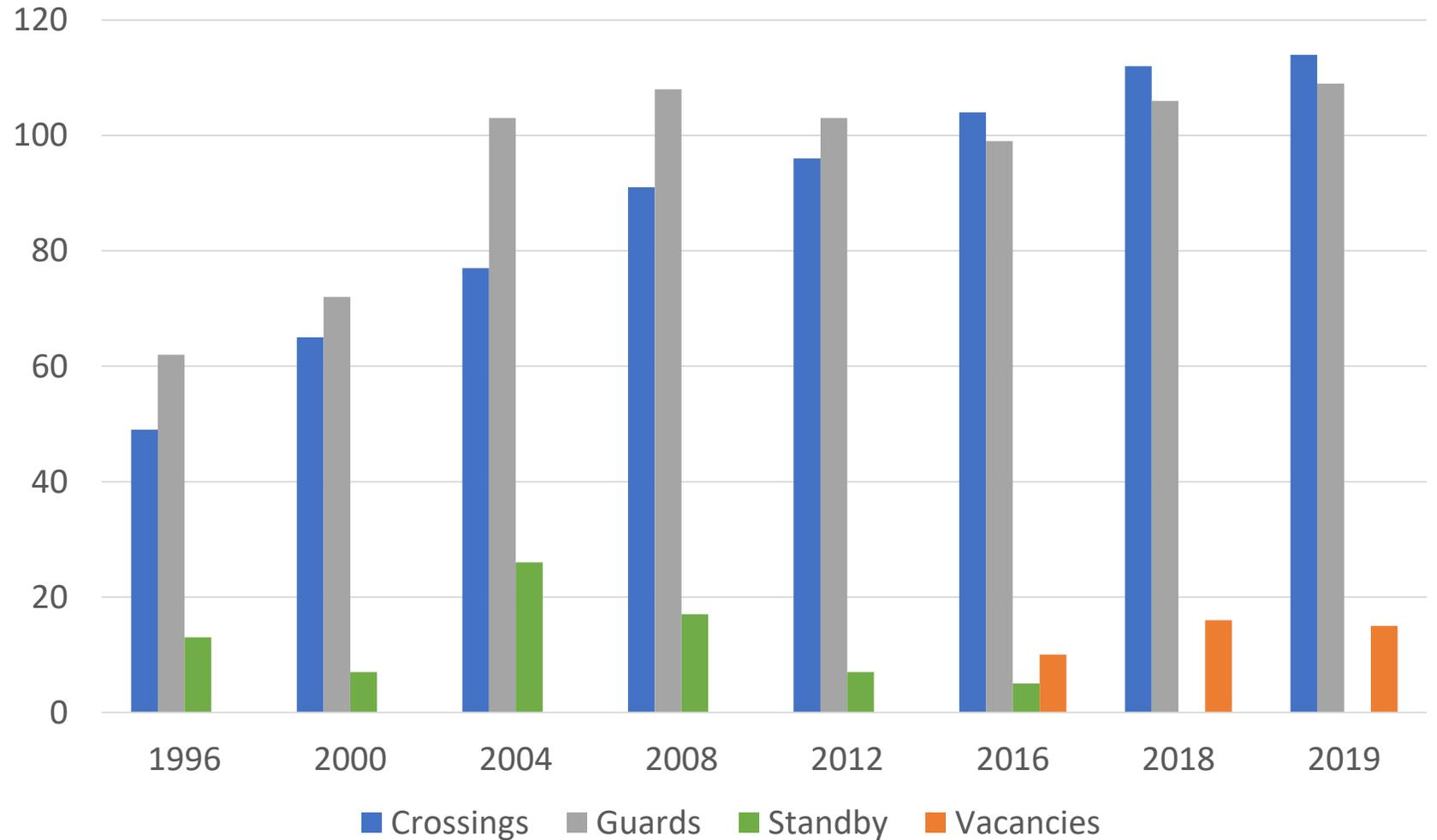
Finding: There is a significant shortfall of SCGs

- Vaughan's vacancy rate last year was 17%: Ontario municipalities surveyed ranged from 1.5% to 3.0%

Program Review: Number of SCGs



School Crossing Guard Staffing Over Time



Program Review: Supervision

What we are doing right:

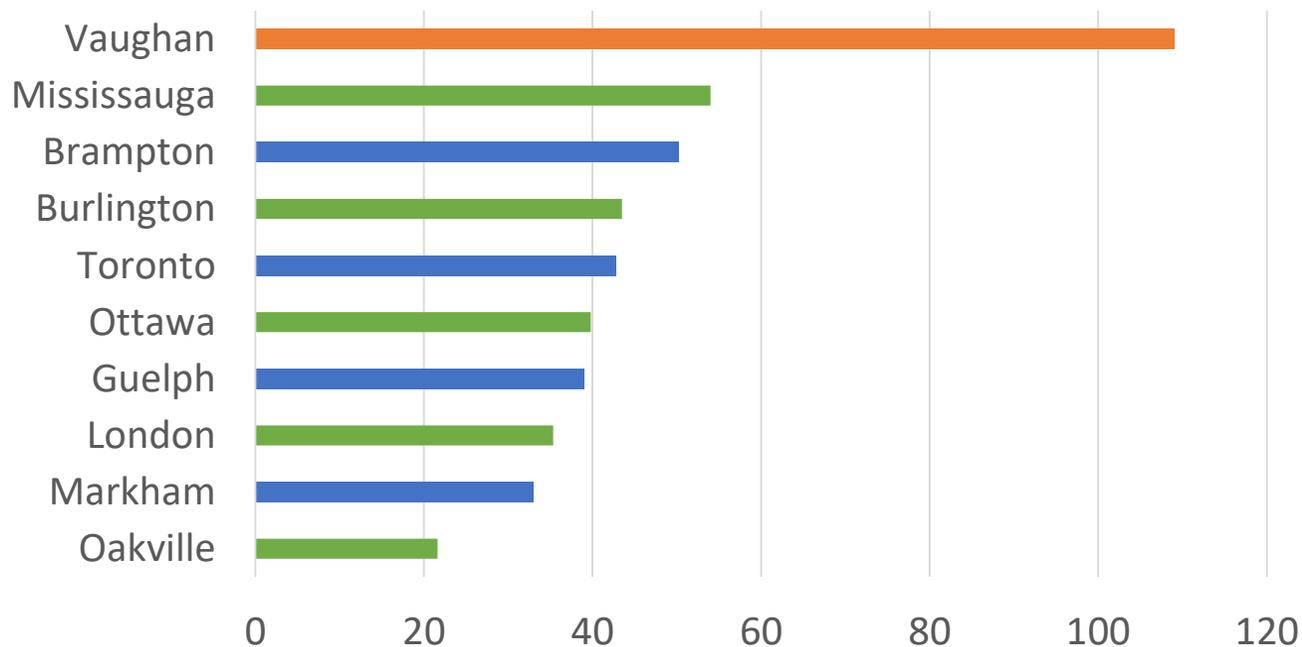
Training, recruitment initiatives, operating procedures, OTC involvement

What is consistent with other municipalities:

Policy of periodic inspections

Finding: constrained administrative capacity, inconsistent health and safety inspections, generally fewer inspections performed than at surveyed municipalities

School Crossing Guards Per Supervisor



Program Review: Stakeholder Engagement

What we are doing right:

Engagement of internal stakeholders, alignment with Vaughan's vision

What is consistent with other municipalities:

Liability concerns regarding SCGP

Findings:

- Legal and public reputation risk
- Program growth and sustainability
- New OTC SCG guideline alignment, with ability to remove/allocate SCGs
- Challenges with vacancies and daily absenteeism
- Need for inspections
- Administration pressures
- Public awareness and communications
- Collaboration with stakeholders



Benchmarking Study Results

12 municipalities surveyed including Brampton, Markham, Richmond Hill, Mississauga, Oakville, Ottawa, Toronto

Majority of surveyed municipalities using warrants based on OTC guidance

Recruitment and Retention

- No other municipality surveyed has zero standby guards to cover absences
- Recruitment and retention was a concern for most; hourly wage was cited as the number one factor in improving recruitment

SCG Compensation

- Similar maximum hours per week, equipment provision and holiday/ P.A. day pay
- Average SCG wage was \$16.40

Supervision

- Supervisor to staff ratio ranged from 1:22 to 1:54



Engagement Survey Results

Survey in Spring 2019, 79% completion rate

Findings

- 89% of SCGs are satisfied with their job
- Most identified having a routine and being involved in the community as motivations for the job
- The majority responded that more competitive pay and improved benefits would increase satisfaction
- Traffic is the biggest challenge

Actions Taken

- Increased pay from \$14.00 to \$16.40 in 2020
- 2020 school year began with only 1 position unfilled, down from 13 last year
- Initiated collaboration with key stakeholders on school zone safety, active school travel
- Planning to expand program under the Traffic Management Strategy
- Recruitment Plan and Inspection Plan
- Policy refresh

COVID-19 Impacts

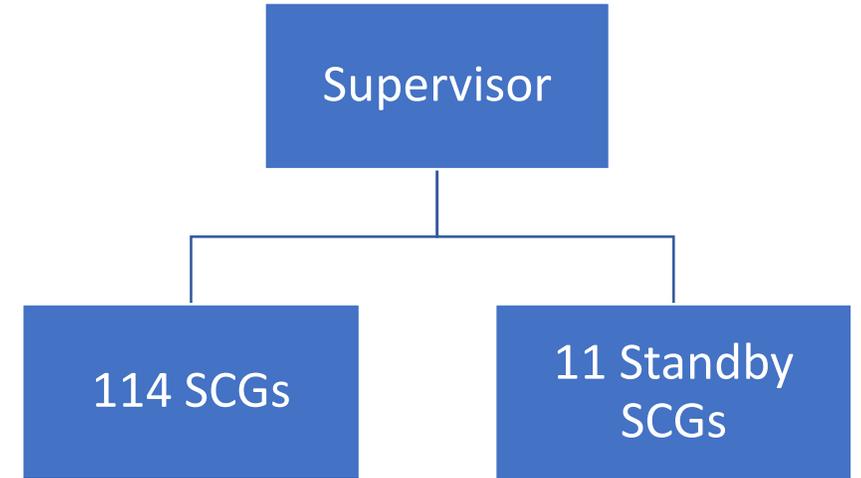
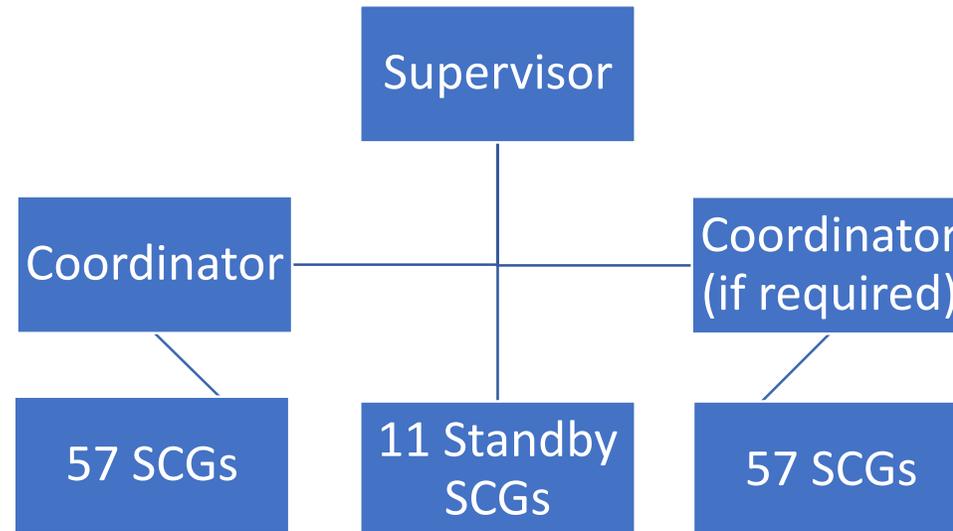
- Additional Health & Safety training requirements
- Provision of PPE masks
- Piloting of new whistle masks /handhelds



SCGP Organizational Change



Recommended Organization



Current Organization

Policy Update: Warrants

Ontario Traffic Council Guidelines

- OTC updated SCG guidelines for operation and evaluation in 2017, based on best practice and research
- Over 60% of Ontario municipalities have adopted the warrants
- Policy update aligns with OTC guidelines, with Vaughan-specific context

Policy Update: Warrants

Change to Policy & Procedures

- New OTC **Exposure Index** warrant which measures risk to children based on conflicting traffic and traffic control at each location, and **Gap** warrant which identifies safe opportunities at mid-block locations
- Screening includes a new threshold of forty (40) assisted (i.e. with a parent/guardian) and unassisted (walking alone) elementary school children, from current fifty (50) unassisted elementary school children
- May cross two legs (an 'L') even if warrant for second leg is not met

Maintain in Policy & Procedures

- New schools will continue to receive an SCG temporarily for one (1) year



Policy Update: Reassessments

Ontario Traffic Council Guidelines

- OTC recommends that reassessments should utilize same warrants and screening methodology as for new SCG locations

Change to Policy & Procedures

- Annual SCG location reassessments to align with new OTC warrant guidelines (lower threshold)
- Data gathered on two non-consecutive school days
- Consider alternative traffic control and safety measures when reallocating a SCG
- Extensive communication requirements with community, school and Council for reallocation
- Reallocate SCGs to warranted locations and to provide standbys for absentees

Policy Update: Reassessments



Maintain in Policy & Procedures

- Existing SCG locations remain in place until reassessed with new warrant
- Reassess 25 locations per year
- SCG removal occurs at beginning of subsequent school year

Conclusion

- ✓ **Align** Policy and Procedures with 2017 OTC SCG Guide
- ✓ **Prioritize** placement of SCGs at warranted locations to improve operational efficiency and mitigate risk and the ability to remove or reallocate SCGs
- ✓ **Resource** the SCGP's administration to meet program objectives and fulfill health and safety requirements, minimize risk (inclusive of 2 Program Coordinators starting with 1 coordinator in 2021)
- ✓ **Engage** Stakeholders and build capacity for (education, outreach, communication)
- ✓ **Support** safer school zone initiatives



Report Recommendations

School Crossing Guard Program Review

- That Council receive the report

School Crossing Guard Policy

- That Council repeal the 2011 SCG policy and procedure;
- That Council approve the updated SCG policy and procedures on an interim basis for up to two (2) years;
- That staff be authorized to administer the updated SCG policy and procedures on an interim basis for up to two (2) years; and
- That the City Clerk forward a copy of the reports to the Region of York, York Regional Police, York Region District School Board and York Region Catholic District School Board.



Thank You.

