

Greater Victoria Crossing Guards Association



1225 Glyn Oak Place, Victoria, BC V8Z 5J4
email: gvcga@mail.com phone: 250-744-1506

July 24, 2018

Mayor and Council, City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Honourable Mayor Helps and Esteemed City Council,

I would like to introduce the non-profit association formed to provide crossing guard service for student pedestrian safety. Greater Victoria Crossing Guards Association, GVCGA, has been formed to assume the management role Beacon Community Services has been providing for the past 10-15 years.

We have been working with Beacon Community Services personnel, crossing guards and Greater Victoria School District senior administration to ensure a smooth transition of this important program. We recognize it instills confidence in parents that there are safe, carbon neutral pedestrian routes to school in Victoria.

We are registered as a society and incorporated. We are working through setting the infrastructure for running the program efficiently.

We recognize that the process we are going through is outside the budget cycle for Victoria. We find ourselves in a difficult position due to the transition timing from Beacon Community Services to a new management provider mid-fiscal year for municipalities like yours. We have been informed by Victoria staff that there is no funding available to pay for crossing guards at the 11 intersections identified as hazardous and requiring trained adult crossing guards. That list is attached. As a new society the GVCGA has no funds of its own and no financial records to use in the corporate grant application process for this first year of operation. We under the impression that the municipalities of Greater Victoria recognized road safety to be a municipal responsibility as defined in a 1998 letter from then Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh. Specifically he said, "...generally speaking, municipalities have the responsibility for the creation and governance of their streets, including the provision of crossing guards services. Certainly other municipalities have found the ability to provide funding for their intersections because they have a line item in their budget, a contingency fund they can access or have incorporated crossing guards into the transportation funding envelop.

The crossing guards that were posted at those intersections in June are ready to fill their posts again in September but will need to receive compensation for their services. The job pays minimum wage for 2 hours of service split in two one hours shifts 5 hours apart. The jobs are usually filled by people with extremely open schedules, looking to top up their fixed income from either retirement or disability cheques. In many cases they depend on this small pay cheque to make ends meet.

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To meet payroll commitments, cover insurance and supervisor costs associated with City of Victoria intersections for the rest of 2018 the association will need \$27,725. In order to meet those commitments in early 2019 prior to your grant process completion a further \$27,725 would be needed. This funding will ensure the continuation of the important supervision points for the safe routes to school that have been established in your neighbourhood communities. It will help to keep children walking to school. It will show you are committed to road safety for all users.

Many of the schools in the City of Victoria are on or near main arteries and are considered inner city schools. They do not have the funds to put toward traffic control to ensure pedestrian safety.

We know Victoria council is making great efforts to encourage an active population. Walking to school encourages the building of relationships with others in the community through a shared route. Crossing guards are part of that community, often they live in the area as well. Crossing guards posted at busy intersections during the rush hours before and after school contribute to the message that walking is a safe alternative to driving children to school. The crossing guard is often the gate keeper for the final challenge of arriving safely.

Please consider alternative methods of funding within your stewardship to support this important program to retain the established, experienced adults that know the intersections and the children that come through them. A familiar face can brighten the morning trek to school. Being greeted by that familiar person can go a long way toward helping increase the feeling that your community is safe for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Without your support the services will have to be suspended as there is no other possible source of funding at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Audrey Smith", is written over a horizontal line.

Audrey Smith
GVCGA President

cc Susanne Thompson City of Victoria Director of Finance
Trustee Edith Loring-Kuhanga, Board Chair
Trustee Ann Whiteaker SD#61 City of Victoria Liaison
SD#61 Superintendent's Office
Norm Tandberg, GVCGA Director
Caroline Simister, GVCGA Director