
REPORT NUMBER 215-2022-Infrastructure & Operations-Engineering & Operations

**DATE
PREPARED** November 24, 2022

FILE 215-2022

MEETING DATE 2022-12-05

SUBJECT School Bus Stop Arm Cameras

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 215-2022 (Infrastructure & Operations - Engineering & Operations), we recommend that Outstanding Item No. 2021-111-INO-School Bus Stop Arm Camera be removed from the Outstanding List for Operations.

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to Council for ratification.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This report supports the ‘Renew’ strategy of the 2019-2022 One City, Growing Together Corporate Strategic Plan and supports the priority area of cost effective and quality services to citizens through improvements to road safety.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the December 6, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council passed a resolution directing Administration to explore the implementation of a school bus stop arm camera program in the City and provide a report to Council inclusive of a review of existing stop arm camera programs in the province, potential partnerships with private sector service providers, and operational impacts. Also that the report include benefits and costs associated with a stop arm camera program.

Administration has reviewed the regulations of the School Bus Stop Arm Camera program in Ontario and completed an analysis of the available resources that are required to institute the program. Administration explored the program with the Thunder Bay Police Services and with Thunder Bay Bus Consortium - Student Transportation Services. Administration also consulted with the regional/provincial participants such as, camera system vendors, other municipal police forces, local court services, external court services, and the provincial evidence processing center.

At this time, it is not feasible for the City of Thunder Bay to enter the program due to the lack of a provincial evidence processing centre, and significant resources needed, including Police resources, to set up a processing centre in Thunder Bay. Administration is recommending that a report back be provided once required resources are in place as identified in this report.

DISCUSSION

School Bus Stop Arm Cameras (SBSAC) have been active throughout the United States for many years and recently in select Canadian provinces. SBSAC fall under a fairly new regulation after being enacted in Ontario in 2017, however regulations and standards concerning the camera use, evidence, and privacy continue to develop. Currently, one municipality is fully participating in Ontario since the establishment of SBSAC.

SBSAC systems capture images to be used as evidence against drivers violating the stop requirement at buses with their overhead red signal lights activated and stop arm extended who are actively dropping off or picking up students. SBSAC technology provides images stamped with location data, verification of the extended stop arm and that the flashing red bus lights have been activated. The images are flagged if a vehicle is ignoring the stop requirement and the captured images are stored securely for review.

Administration explored the program with Thunder Bay Police Services and with Thunder Bay Bus Consortium - Student Transportation Services. Administration also contacted regional/provincial participants such as, camera system vendors, other municipal police forces, local court services, external court services, and the provincial evidence processing.

Thunder Bay Bus Consortium – Student Transportation Services is supportive of the program and willing to have the required equipment installed in their buses. They also have information collected voluntarily by some school bus drivers that indicate that vehicles are currently disobeying school bus stop arms.

SBSAC program participant municipalities are able to secure any hardware vendor to capture and store all evidence with the precondition that they have met the evidence classification, secure transfer and privacy requirements set by the Ontario Regulation and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Some vendors are in discussion with the Ministry of Transportation to obtain vehicle licensing information which would make the data processing a much more automated and streamlined process. To date, the Ministry has not committed to providing this data to SBSAC vendors. Vendors that are supplying cameras now require the municipality to look after the secure data transfer and storage which would require significant resources during the school year and lengthy processing time to determine license and vehicle owner information.

The images captured by Ontario Automated Enforcement programs such as Red Light Cameras and Automated Speed Enforcement are sent to the Joint Processing Center in Toronto for review by Provincial Offenses Officers. If a determination is made that an offense has been committed, Provincial Court Services locally processes a ticket that is mailed to the registered vehicle license holder. The provincial Joint Processing Center is not accepting School Bus Stop Arm Camera evidence for review at this time.

Ottawa is the only municipality in Ontario that has an existing SBSAC program. Ottawa established their own processing centre staffed by local Police to process tickets. Ottawa Police stated they had pre-existing capacity to develop the program. The City of Thunder Bay proposed a joint agreement with Ottawa for the review of SBSAC evidence. Ottawa is currently not willing to process other municipality's evidence.

Thunder Bay Police Services were contacted to determine their support for and ability to resource the program. They indicated support for the program seeing the safety benefits, but do not have Police Officers available to resource the evidence processing required to issue tickets. Police do attend school zones to enforce school bus stop arm, speeding, and other violations during the school year to promote student safety.

The absence of an evidence processing center presents a crucial gap in the required framework to establish a SBSAC program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Implementation of a SBSAC program would require significant investment and ongoing resources including the purchase and installation of a school bus camera system, establishment of secure external evidence storage, and secure transfer to the evidence processing center. If a local processing center is established, a records management software specific to evidence review would be needed as well as customization of existing police and court services ticket record programs. All evidence review and the majority of the document preparation must be completed by a sworn Police Officer.

CONCLUSION

Due to the absence of an available evidence processing center involved in the provincial School Bus Stop Arm Camera program, Administration has determined that entering the program is not feasible for the City at this time.

Administration will continue to review developments of options for implementing a SBSAC program. Administration will report to Council when current issues surrounding

the implementation of a School Bus Stop Arm Camera program are resolved and benefits and costs can be properly quantified.

BACKGROUND

At the December ⁶, 2021 Committee of the Whole Committee of the Whole – Infrastructure & Operations Session meeting, Council passed a resolution directing Administration to explore the implementation of a school bus stop arm camera program in the City, and to provide a report to Council inclusive of a review of existing stop arm camera programs in the province, potential partnerships with private sector service providers, and operational impacts, benefits and costs.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

None.

REPORT PREPARED BY

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REPORT VERIFIED AND SIGNED BY

Kerri Marshall, General Manager – Infrastructure & Operations
Date 11/28/2022