

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 14, 2021**

Page 1 of 2

SUBJECT: SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD**Purpose and Summary**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to explain the nature of the School Crossing Guard service in the City of Fort Worth.

Composition and Management of School Crossing Guards

According to the Local Government Code Chapter 343, section 343.014. PROVISION OF SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS (a), it is a duty of "the governing body of the municipality" to "...determine the number of school crossing guards needed by the municipality and shall provide for the use of school crossing guards to facilitate the safe crossing of streets in the municipality by children going to or leaving a public, parochial, or private elementary or secondary school."

The City of Fort Worth has designed its program over several years to provide services for elementary children as required and by providing services at other locations where school aged children are crossing busy streets. The program is currently managed by a private vendor that is supervised by the Fort Worth Police Department (FWPD) and falls under the Youth Unit in the Youth Services Section. The vendor currently employs up to 272 school crossing guard positions when fully staffed. The vendor used by the City is All City Managing Services (ACMS). Fort Worth is the only major city in Texas with the crossing guard program residing within the police department. This practice has been the standard practice in Fort Worth for many decades and how cities manage their programs is mainly based on local practices. Below is a summary of how other cities manage crossing guard programs.

- The City of Houston utilizes a child safety fund which is allocated to the Independent School Districts (ISDs) within the Houston City limits.
- The City of San Antonio has a Crossing Guard Department which is funded by a child safety fund. The Department is managed by five civilians who supervise about 60 guards apiece.
- The City of Dallas employs All City Management services, as does Fort Worth. An employee with the Department of Transportation for the City of Dallas supervises their crossing guards.
- The City of Austin maintains a School Crossing Guard Program which is supervised by an employee of the Safe Routes to School Program in their Public Works Department.
- The City of Arlington manages the school crossing guard program through the Public Works and Transportation department.

The Fort Worth City contract specifies coverage from ACMS for "137 schools with elementary aged children" in the City of Fort Worth from 11 ISDs at 235 intersections. Staffing and retaining crossing guards has proven to be difficult because of the part time nature of the positions that include morning and afternoon shifts. Consequently, even though 235 intersections are identified, the number of guard positions provided in the contract is 272 to allow for the vendor to constantly recruit guards. Additionally, to help combat the staffing issue, the City of Fort Worth recently raised the pay for school crossing guards. The City of Fort Worth pays ACMS \$16.82 per hour per guard and they, in turn, pay the guard \$11.50 per hour. The remainder covers administrative costs and profit for the company. As of May 2020, ACMS was

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Page 2 of 2

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being paid \$14.28 an hour per guard by the City of Fort Worth and the guards were being paid \$9.00 an hour Below is the wage comparison for major Texas cities:

<u>City</u>	<u>School Crossing Guard Pay</u>
Houston	\$17.00 per hour
San Antonio	\$15.45 per hour
Dallas	\$10.87 per hour
Austin	\$15.00 per hour
Fort Worth	\$11.50 per hour
Arlington	\$13.00 per hour

Both Dallas and Fort Worth are managed by All City Managing Services (ACMS).

Staffing Middle Schools

As outlined, the current contract with ACMS applies to guard services for “elementary age children”. Full coverage for middle school aged children is not included in the contract. There are currently 41 middle schools in the City of Fort Worth from 7 different ISDs. Based on the elementary school data, a rough estimate is that another 82 crossing guards would be needed to staff the middle schools; hence, this would increase the contract by approximately 30 percent or approximately \$700,000. Changes to the current program would require negotiations with the vendor and time to recruit additional staff.

If you have any questions please contact Assistant Chief Joseph Sparrow at 817-392-4231 or Joseph.Sparrow@fortworthtexas.gov.

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City Manager