

**Municipality of Chatham-Kent**  
**Infrastructure and Engineering Services**  
**Engineering Division**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Jeff Hagan, Manager, Transportation  
**Date:** September 12, 2023  
**Subject:** Decorative Crosswalk Guideline

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**Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. The Decorative Crosswalk Guideline, attached as Appendix A, be adopted.
2. The General Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services, be authorized to approve the installation of decorative crosswalks in accordance with the Decorative Crosswalk Guideline, attached as Appendix A, subject to purchasing by-law requirements.
3. The General Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services, be authorized to enter into cost-sharing agreements for the installation of decorative crosswalks in accordance with the Decorative Crosswalk Guideline, attached as Appendix A, subject to purchasing by-law requirements and such agreements being satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services.

**Background**

The Public Art Policy, adopted by Council at its November 21, 2022, meeting, recognizes the role of public art in fostering vibrant communities and as a force for place-making.

By area, roadway rights-of-way represent the largest category of municipally owned land, larger than parks, community centres, or other land categories. As such, the right-of-way represents a significant opportunity for public art and its benefits to the community; however, there are special safety, legal, and logistical issues at play with public art in roadways that do not apply in other contexts.

When standard crosswalk markings are incorporated (either transverse lines or “ladder” markings, depending on the application), decorative crosswalks can increase the conspicuity of a pedestrian crossing for drivers. Decorative crosswalks can also serve

as one element of a comprehensive place-making approach that can improve livability, pedestrian comfort, and pedestrian safety.

Decorative crosswalks are a type of art in the public right-of-way that have grown in popularity in recent years. In recognition an expected increase in requests for decorative crosswalks, the need for a decorative crosswalk guideline was identified.

### **Comments**

To date, the limited number of decorative crosswalks that have been installed in Chatham-Kent have been approved on a one-off basis.

A Decorative Crosswalk Guideline will:

- Facilitate and streamline the review, approval, and installation of decorative crosswalks.
- Ensure a consistent and transparent approach in responding to requests for decorative crosswalks.
- Provide clarity to external organizations and internal departments to assist with planning of decorative crosswalk applications; and
- Ensure that accessibility concerns, road safety concerns, and legal requirements are addressed properly in the planning and design of decorative crosswalks.

Key points of the proposed Decorative Crosswalk Guideline are summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1: Key Features of the Proposed Decorative Crosswalk Guideline*

<b>Feature of the Proposed Guideline</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Location:</b> decorative crosswalks are allowed only at controlled crossings (i.e., locations where vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians)	Providing pavement markings for uncontrolled crossings can create a false impression for pedestrians that they have right of way, resulting in safety risks.
<b>Location:</b> without special permission, decorative crosswalks should not be installed across roadways with high volumes of traffic or high numbers of trucks.	High volumes of traffic – or significant amounts of truck traffic – cause premature wear and damage to decorative crosswalks.
<b>Design:</b> decorative elements must stay within the crosswalk lines, provide visual contrast, and not create issues for users of the crosswalk, particularly visually impaired people.	Legal requirements for crosswalks and accessibility considerations.

Feature of the Proposed Guideline	Rationale
<b>Design:</b> artwork must respect community standards. Advertising elements are not permitted without special consideration.	Consistency with the Public Art Policy.
<b>Materials:</b> decorative crosswalks must be durable plastic meeting specifications for slip and skid resistance.	Safe usage of the crosswalk for all road users, and durability to maintain the appearance of the decorative crosswalk over time.
<b>Cost-sharing:</b> when new crosswalk markings will be needed within 2 years at an existing crosswalk, Infrastructure and Engineering Services will contribute the expected cost for standard crosswalk markings; the applicant would pay for the remainder.	The Decorative Crosswalk Program is not intended to be revenue-generating. A properly designed decorative crosswalk fulfills the requirements for pavement markings that the Municipality would normally provide.

This guideline will allow requests for additional decorative crosswalks to be addressed in a consistent and transparent way, reflecting the goals of the Municipality’s Public Art Program as well as operational concerns.

**Areas of Strategic Focus**

This report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

			
<b>Economic Prosperity</b>	<b>Healthy &amp; Safe Community</b>	<b>People &amp; Culture</b>	<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>
		3.1, 3.3	

**Consultation**

The Decorative Crosswalk Guideline was prepared jointly with Corporate Initiatives & Communications, and the Legal Services and Public Works Divisions were consulted in the development of this Guideline and report.

## **Communication**

Once adopted by Council, the Decorative Crosswalk Guideline will be posted on the Municipality website.

Community organizations that may be interested in applying for a decorative crosswalk will be notified of the program and the guidelines.

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ)**

Decorative crosswalks provide an opportunity to call attention to equity-deserving groups and issues of importance to them; examples of this are Every Child Matters and Pride decorative crosswalks that have been recently installed in the municipality.

Subject to the requirements of the Public Art Policy, decorative crosswalks also provide an opportunity for paid work and publicity for artists who belong to equity-deserving groups.

Poorly designed or poorly implemented decorative crosswalks have the potential to negatively impact people with disabilities, particularly people with low vision or using mobility aids. To address this concern, the decorative crosswalk specifications in the proposed guideline include requirements for visual contrast, reflectivity, slip resistance, and durability.

## **Financial Implications**

The cost of installing and maintaining decorative crosswalks would be cost shared by the Municipality and the person or agency requesting decorative crosswalks as per the cost sharing allocation table in the Decorative Crosswalk Guideline. The cost-sharing arrangement in the proposed Decorative Crosswalk Guideline will result in cases where a decorative crosswalk is installed when the existing standard crosswalk markings are approaching, but have not yet reached, the end of their service life. The associated budgetary impacts are expected to be minor and can be accommodated in the pavement marking lifecycle budget.

In the case of decorative crosswalks that are internal municipal initiatives, the associated costs would be addressed by their own approval processes (e.g., as part of the annual budget or through their own approvals by Council).

The estimated cost of a decorative crosswalk is \$5,000 to \$15,000, depending on roadway width and specifics of the design. In normal conditions, a decorative crosswalk would be expected to last 5 years.

Prepared by:

Jeff Hagan, P.Eng., PTOE, RSP1, Manager, Transportation

Reviewed by:

Amy Wilcox, Manager, Corporate Initiatives

Marissa Mascaro, P. Eng., Director, Engineering

Ryan Brown, P.Eng., Director, Public Works

Edward Soldo, P. Eng., General Manager, Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Emily Crawford, Solicitor, Legal

Attachment: Appendix A – Decorative Crosswalk Guideline (proposed)