



INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: IS-2025-03

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBMITTED BY: Jeff Molenhuis, P.Eng., Director of Infrastructure Services

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REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: 2025-02-03

SUBJECT: **Veteran's Decorative Crosswalk Motion**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Staff be directed to report back with a policy and draft agreement terms related to decorative crosswalk installations in the Township of Wilmot.

SUMMARY:

This report outlines the feasibility of installing a decorative Veteran's crosswalk on Huron Street near the New Hamburg Cenotaph. The Region of Waterloo (Region) has noted they have not been amenable to using decorative crosswalks on Regional Roads. As such, they are not currently in a position to move forward with this request. However, the Region acknowledged that the popularity of these decorative crosswalks has been growing around the province and they are looking into the feasibility of developing a policy around using decorative crosswalks on Regional roads, starting first with legal/risk implications of non-standard crosswalk markings, but also include a component of corporate direction about what causes/matters/movements the Region is amenable to supporting with a crosswalk.

Further, consultations with municipalities, including the City of Hamilton, Town of Lincoln, and City of Kitchener, have provided insights into installation methods, maintenance requirements and associated costs of such decorative crosswalks.

BACKGROUND:

Decorative crosswalks are gaining popularity among surrounding municipalities as an innovative way to enhance urban spaces. By integrating unique designs, patterns, and colours, these crosswalks not only improve aesthetics but also foster community identity.

At the November 4, 2024, Council meeting, Council approved a motion directing staff to present a report at the February 3, 2024, meeting with additional details regarding the potential installation of a Veteran's decorative crosswalk. The proposed location for the crosswalk is on Huron Street in New Hamburg, approximately 40 meters east of the Union Street and Huron Street intersection and approximately 95 meters east of the New Hamburg Cenotaph. This site is the closest crosswalk to the Cenotaph that spans across the main downtown roadway. The motion reads as follows:

WHEREAS generations of Canadians have served our country and the world during times of war, military conflict, and peace. Through their courage and sacrifice, these men and women have helped to ensure that we live in freedom and peace, while also fostering freedom and peace around the world; and,

WHEREAS every year on November 11, Canadians pause in a silent moment of remembrance for the men and women who have served, and continue to serve our country during times of war, conflict, and peace; and,

WHEREAS the Royal Canadian Legion's mission to promote remembrance is a year-long commitment, they endeavour to promote it through programs, services, and resources; and,

WHEREAS the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 New Hamburg has locally promoted the objectives of the Royal Canadian Legion's mission since 1952; and,

WHEREAS the Township of Wilmot has previously partnered with the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 New Hamburg on their Memorial Banner Programme which displays 125 memorial banners to honour veterans, past and present, that served to protect our peace and freedom; and,

WHEREAS municipalities such as Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, City of Calgary, City of Belleville and Municipality of Chatham-Kent have installed Veteran's Crosswalk to provide a year-round reminder of the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to keep our communities safe.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Staff be directed to report back on February 3, 2025 with more information on the potential installation of a permanent Veterans Crosswalk to be installed before November 2025 at the pedestrian crossing located on Huron Street in New Hamburg across from the New Hamburg Cenotaph; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Staff Report include information on the cost of the installation and maintenance of the Veteran's Crosswalk, including information on partnering with the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 New Hamburg for funding; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Staff Report includes information on the feasibility of the Veteran's Crosswalk being located on the Regional Municipality of Waterloo road known as Huron Street in New Hamburg.

As part of the initiative, Township staff have reached out to nearby municipalities that have implemented decorative crosswalk installations to gather insights on the processes involved and their potential implications. In addition, the Township met with representatives of the New Hamburg Legion, as well as exchanged correspondence with the Region on the matter of installation with Region right of way.

REPORT:

Initial Research

As part of the research phase, Township staff consulted with representatives from the City of Hamilton, the Town of Lincoln, and the City of Kitchener, to gain insights from their experiences with decorative crosswalk installations. Through these discussions staff obtained insight regarding installation and maintenance requirements.

Installation Methods and Maintenance Requirements

The City of Hamilton has implemented several decorative crosswalks, utilizing contractor services for the installation. The standard cost with their contractor for a 3-meter-wide by 20-meter-long (four-lane) crosswalk was approximately \$5,000. The pricing included a warranty, during which the contractor would address any damage at no additional cost to the City. Hamilton also contracts out maintenance responsibilities to address instances where graffiti and vandalism is incurred. While the level of graffiti related vandalism in Hamilton may not directly translate to the Township of Wilmot, it remains a factor to consider. The Town of Lincoln follows a very similar approach to Hamilton's.

The City of Kitchener employs thermoplastic paint for crosswalk installations, a method comparable to Hamilton's approach. The thermoplastic paint has demonstrated a lifespan of up to seven years before requiring maintenance, excluding repairs necessitated by vandalism.

Approvals

Township staff consulted with the Region regarding their approval for the potential installation of a decorative Veteran's crosswalk on Huron Street, a regional road located within New Hamburg. Currently, the Region does not have a policy for implementing decorative crosswalks on roadways under their jurisdiction and as such has advised that they are not in a position to proceed with the request for a decorative crosswalk to be installed.

However, recognizing the growing popularity of decorative crosswalks across the province, the Region intends to explore the feasibility of developing a policy to guide their potential use on Regional roads.

Popular Installation Types

Decorative crosswalk designs encompass a range of styles and designs that enhance both aesthetic appeal and community support. In addition to installations honoring veterans, common designs include rainbow flag patterns to support LGBTQ+ communities and orange Every Child Matters crosswalks, which often feature symbolic elements such as feathers to convey their message. These installations not only contribute to the visual landscape but also promote inclusivity and social awareness. In relation to the motion, staff met with representatives of the Legion to discuss the motion, anticipated future process, as well as to determine the crosswalk feature that would be proposed for installation. In some cases, decorative crosswalks have undergone broad community consultation to ensure adequate and appropriate input into the location and style of the installations.

Legal Perspective

The cost of installing and maintaining decorative crosswalks would impact the Township's capital and operational budgets. To address this, it is recommended that the community group initiating the request assume all related installation and maintenance costs. In this scenario, the community group would be responsible to cover the costs of maintaining the crosswalk in good condition by addressing damage, deterioration, or vandalism. Under this arrangement, if the group fails to meet these responsibilities or if damages exceed their capacity to address, the Township would reserve the right to remove the decorative crosswalk. Advance notice would be given when feasible, except in cases of immediate safety hazards. This arrangement would be proposed to be fair and equitable to the potential different community groups that could be making such requests.

Transferring liability to the community group reduces the Township's legal and financial risks, and places non-standard installation operating impacts as the responsibility of the community group making the request, rather than the general tax base. To ensure clarity and accountability, a Council approved policy would be recommended, which is anticipated to include a legal agreement between the user group and the Township. This policy will outline the group's responsibilities, including installation methods, maintenance standards, financial obligations, and procedures for addressing issues while maintaining Township standards and safety.

Public Engagement

Township staff met with representatives Robert Neubauer and Marie Voisin of the Canadian Legion Branch 532 located in New Hamburg on December 9, 2024, to discuss their request. Initial information was shared, and design considerations were discussed. See *Attachment 1: Proposed Veteran's Decorative Crosswalk Design*. In addition to the design included in attachment 1, the representatives hope to incorporate poppies throughout the decorative

crosswalk. The Township also shared that, at the Staff level, it is anticipated the Legion would be responsible for fronting costs pertaining to the project.

Township staff continue to engage with members noted, exploring alternative locations and discussing the possibility of awaiting the outcome of the Region's internal review regarding decorative crosswalks on their rights-of-way.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

This initiative supports the goals and strategies of enhancing Responsible Governance through Active Communications, Fiscal Responsibility, and Infrastructure Investments.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The cost of installing and maintaining the decorative crosswalk would be fronted by the community group requesting the crosswalk installation. The development of a policy would be required to define the installation, maintenance, and financial responsibilities of the community group, which will require Council approval. It is anticipated that there would be legal costs to establish a template agreement as part of the policy development, which would need to be considered in operating budget costs.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Proposed Veteran's Decorative Crosswalk Design