

Region of Queens Municipality Staff Report

To: Mayor and Council

From: Adam Grant, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works

Date: April 23, 2024

Re: Crosswalk Safety Society Engagement

Background


At the January 13, 2024, Regular meeting, the Council directed staff to “explore a partnership with Crosswalk Safety Society respecting buckets and flags specific to the 3-way intersection in Liverpool.”

Details

Staff understand Council is seeking to address public safety concerns at the Main and Market Intersection. The question has been will pedestrian crossing flags improve pedestrian safety? According to Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia (CSSNS) and HRM's pedestrian crossing flags implementation guidelines, flags at this intersection are unlikely to achieve that goal. That said if Council makes a motion to fund \$1050 from the accumulated surplus for flags at this intersection, they can be provided to the community group that will administer the program locally, which is typically how this program works.

The Traffic Authority held a meeting with Norm Collins, President and Treasurer of the Crosswalk Safety Society (CSSNS) on March 22, 2024. The CSSNS was created in 2008 following the death of a teenage pedestrian at a crosswalk in Dartmouth as a means to raise awareness of the danger's pedestrians face at crosswalks in Nova Scotia.

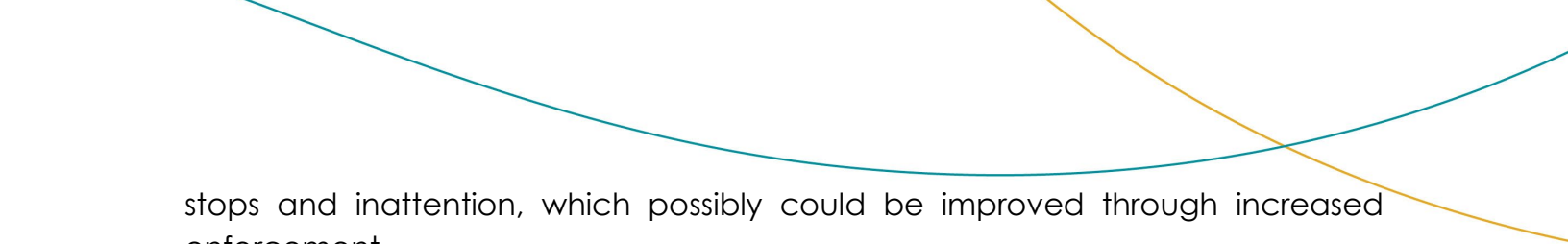
Discussion centered on why these hazards exist, who the fault belongs to, education, societal attitudes as well as the success they have observed with the flag program.



The group acknowledges that there is a significant problem with both distracted walking and driving that has had the greatest impact on the perceived rising number of incidents. Social media and technology is also increasing frequency detection, meaning it is possible that incidents several decades ago that went unreported are being reported today but the actual risk has not changed. Their independent research determined that while the use of the flags is low (at around only 10% of all pedestrians which are mostly young and elderly) they have been observed to improve the yielding of motorists to pedestrians at crosswalks. They attributed the success to several two-dimensional factors including the improved visibility of pedestrians holding a flag out from their body as they cross as well as the time-lapse offered to an approaching motorist to react while a pedestrian picks up the flag before entering the roadway. In addition the action of getting the flag before crossing forces the pedestrian to pause and consciously attempt the crossing as opposed to 'wandering' into the roadway vulnerable. They also acknowledge that while the flags have reduced incidents, they have not been successful in eliminating them, but rather the flags offer the pedestrian an additional tool to enhance their visibility. They have assisted with several hundred flag deployments while only having to remove a 'handful' due to vandalism.

Finally, they also shared that there is a significant degree of mixed acceptance of the flag program. Some jurisdictions have rapidly deployed the installations, while others have reluctantly allowed varied levels of installations and others have adamantly prohibited them. They referred to the Administrative Order adopted by the Halifax Regional Municipal (HRM) (where they have focused their intention primarily) Council respecting the placement of crosswalk flags. The HRM Traffic Authority does not approve the installation but does allow them. Following a review of "Administrative Order 2022-006-OP Respecting the placement of crosswalk flags", the intersection of Main and Market would not meet the HRM criteria for installation because it is a stop-controlled intersection with official traffic signs in place.

Additional research indicates that the installation of flags at stop-controlled intersections, such as Main and Market intersection, has not been shown to demonstrate improvement in pedestrian safety as motorists are already required to come to a complete stop before advancing through the intersection and pedestrian visibility is not the issue whereas the issue is related to vehicle rolling



stops and inattention, which possibly could be improved through increased enforcement.

Although it is not the recommendation of staff, if Council wished to proceed, the motion (#2) could read as:

(2) THAT the Council of the Region of Queens fund a pedestrian flag program for the Main and Market Intersection from by accumulated surplus.

Budget Impacts

There is no cost to become a Supporter of the Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia, whereas the cost to acquire the flags for per crosswalk is \$350 totalling approximately \$1,050 for the Main and Market locations.

Recommendation

(1) **THAT** Council of the Region of Queens Municipality receive the report titled Crosswalk Safety Society Engagement for information.