



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 12.1.3
Transportation Standing Committee
January 27, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 14, 2021

SUBJECT: Potential Expansion of Rainbow Crosswalk Program

ORIGIN

April 6, 2021 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 12.1)

MOVED by Councillor Purdy, seconded by Councillor Stoddard

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report that assesses the feasibility of expanding the current Rainbow Crosswalk Program, using the same design as the current rainbow crosswalks, to include the painting of Pan-African colours on existing crosswalks in historic African Nova Scotia communities.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Motor Vehicle Act, subsections 89(1) and 89(2) provide:

89(1), Subject to such authority as may be vested in the Minister, the Registrar or the Department, traffic authorities in regard to highways under their respective authority may cause appropriate signs to be erected and maintained designating business and residence districts and railway grade crossings and such other signs, markings and traffic control signals as may be deemed necessary to direct and regulate traffic and to carry out the provisions of this Act.

89(2) The Department shall have general supervision with respect to the erection by traffic authorities of official traffic signs and signals, for the purpose of obtaining, so far as practicable, uniformity as to type and location of official traffic signs and signals throughout the Province, and no traffic authority shall place or erect any traffic signs, signals or markings unless of a type or conforming to specifications approved by the Department.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part XII, subsection 322(1) provides:

Subsection 322(1) "The Council may design, lay out, open, expand, construct, maintain, improve, alter, repair, light, water, clean and clear streets in the Municipality."

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to allocate funding from the current Transportation and Public Works operating budget to be used for a special installation, and on-going maintenance, of Pan-African crosswalk art at the marked crosswalk at Cherry Brook Road and Highway 7 and at Maclaughlin Road and Highway 7 as per the financial implications section of this report; and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to explore expanding the current Rainbow Crosswalk Program, using the same design as the rainbow crosswalks, into a pilot program that will enable the painting of Pan-African colours on existing marked crosswalks in historic African Nova Scotian communities.

BACKGROUND

Installation of regulatory pavement markings, including crosswalks, is governed by the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act (MVA) and falls under the responsibility of the Traffic Authority. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada (MUTCDC) produced by the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) outlines the size, colour, shape, etc. of pavement markings used to manage, control and guide road users. This document is a nationally accepted guideline and is used by jurisdictions across Canada to provide consistency in the appearance and use of pavement markings. The Traffic Signs Regulations under the Motor Vehicle Act require all “official traffic signs” to comply with the MUTCDC or be approved by the Provincial Traffic Authority. The definition of “official traffic sign” under the MVA includes “markings”.

Application of regulatory pavement markings in a standard and consistent manner ensures all road users can recognize and understand them regardless of where they are encountered. Section 94(1) of the MVA effectively prohibits the placement of non-standard regulatory pavement markings in streets, including crosswalks. The importance of consistency in regulatory pavement markings is supported through the new provincial Traffic Safety Act (TSA), the legislation that will replace the existing MVA, in that the regulations associated with the TSA specify sizes, colors and configurations for the appearance of regulatory pavement markings, including crosswalks.

In 2016, Transportation and Public Works (TPW) established a pilot project to install rainbow artwork at specific signalized intersections throughout the municipality. Four intersections received the rainbow artwork and the installs generated positive public response. Due to its success TPW has continued with the Pride Crosswalk initiative annually, except for 2020 due to Covid, funding four installations from the operating budget while supporting BIDs and Council with additional installations. When the program was implemented, staff wanted to ensure safety was paramount in the design and chose a rainbow design centered in the intersection with sections of asphalt separating the colours from existing crosswalk markings. The goal was to maintain the integrity of the standard traffic control and to increase friction/reduce risk of slipping.

In the summer of 2018, the communities of North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook/Lake Loon began planning for the Preston Township Homecoming Celebration slated for August 2019. This celebration was the first time, in recent memory, that the three Preston Area communities would come together to celebrate the culture, history and achievements of these historic Black communities. Some community members from Cherry Brook/Lake Loon requested the painting of the colours of Pan-African flag in identified crosswalks within their community. This request was submitted to the area Community Developer for consideration under Parks and Recreation’s [Neighbourhood Placemaking Project](#). The Community Developer for the area reached out to the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), Road Operations, and Traffic Management for support given that crosswalk art would not qualify under a Neighbourhood Placemaking Project.

DISCUSSION

The Pan-African Colours

It is generally believed that Pan-African colours have their origin in the red, yellow, and green in the Ethiopian Flag and the red, black and green in the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) flag. These colours have been adopted into the national flags of several African and Caribbean countries, and they are similarly used as a symbol by many Pan-African organizations and movements.¹

Figure 1. Ethiopian Flag



Figure 2: Pan-African Flag



The proposed artwork leverages existing Rainbow Crosswalk design but with colour variation. The design (Attachment 1) consists of a sequence of red, black, green, and yellow to make a block of four colours rather than the six in the original rainbow crosswalk pattern. The group views the installation of the Pan African crosswalk art as a focal point in celebrating and telling the story of the area as a historic African Nova Scotian community.

It is also worth mentioning that the Pan-African flag has garnered support across institutions, nationwide, as a symbol of global solidarity for people of African descent. In 2019, HRM became one of the first municipalities in our region to raise the Pan-African flag in celebration of African Heritage Month.²

Key Considerations

At the conclusion of the Preston Township Homecoming celebration, the community renewed its request to have the proposed Pan African crosswalk art painted at identified crosswalks within the community. The area Community Developer, TPW and ANSAIO has been working with the community to identify a path forward. In addressing this request, it is important that the following factors provide a lens from which the request is given due consideration:

- **History of African Nova Scotians:** African Nova Scotians are considered one of the founding communities of Nova Scotia. With history going back to over 400 years, the story of African Nova Scotians is deeply rooted in their arrival, settlement, struggle and dispersion, as much as it is connected to the experience of discrimination and the stories of survival and ongoing contribution to the Nova Scotian society. In the 21st century, African Nova Scotians form a distinct community which is unique in the context of African descent communities in Canada.
- **Lake Loon/Cherry Brook Community:** Lake Loon/Cherry Brook is considered one of the oldest African Nova Scotian community in the Preston area. Landmarks of historic significance within the community include the Cherry Brook United Baptist Church, which is a focal point for many in the community. The community is also home to a building that once housed a segregated school for

¹ [Pan-African colours - Wikipedia](#)

² [Halifax City Hall hosts Pan African flag-raising ceremony - Halifax | Globalnews.ca](#)

Black children. The building was a segregated school until 1964. In the late 1960s, after the relocation of students, the former school functioned as the Lake Loon Community Centre until its closure in 1990. The community is also home to the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia which was established in 1983 to protect, preserve and promote the history and culture of African Nova Scotians.³

- **Council Priorities:** The [2021-25 Strategic Priority Plan](#) identifies Community as a priority. This priority envisions a municipality that fosters “strong social equity through meaningful engagement to build safer and more inclusive communities for all”. The request can be filter through the lens of Involved and Inclusive Communities – two of the outcomes of these priority.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Framework:** Inclusive Public Service is one of the goals of the municipality’s Diversity and Inclusion Framework. The intent of this goal is to “ensure inclusive and equitable access to and benefit of, municipal services, programs and facilities”. The municipality, in particular the business units involved, can leverage this request as an example of inclusive public service delivery to one of its historic communities.
- **UN International Decade for People of African Descent:** In 2014, the United Nation’s General Assembly passed a motion declaring 2015 – 2024 as International Decade for People of African Descent (the Decade). Through this proclamation, the United Nations is affirming the responsibility of global community in recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. The Decade provides opportunity for governments and organizations around the world to adopt and act on the pillars of the decade: Recognition⁴, Justice and Development. According to the UN, an objective of Recognition as a pillar of the decade is to “promote greater knowledge and recognition of and respect for the culture, history and heritage of people of African descent”, an objective that aligns with this request.

Alignment with other municipal Initiatives

- **Neighbourhood Placemaking Program**
The Neighbourhood Placemaking Program provides an opportunity for residents to celebrate and explore a unique identity of their neighbourhood while fostering connections among neighbours through the project. An outcome of the Placemaking program is to create welcoming and livable communities where neighbours have more opportunities to get to know one another. While the community’s request under the Neighbourhood Placemaking Program aligns to the program’s overarching objectives, crosswalk art is not permitted under Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Placemaking Application Guide⁵.
- **Rainbow Crosswalk Program and the Pan-African Artwork**
Consideration of the interactions between various road users has an important impact on safety outcomes. Thus, the needs related to perception and cognitive function of road users must be taken into account when introducing new devices and markings within the right of way because it places a high demand on road users in terms of visual search, object recognition, gap estimation and decision making.

The MVA provides the legal authority to HRM’s Traffic Authority related to the installation of regulatory pavement markings, such as marked crosswalks. The use of standardized pavement

³ It’s Our Time: Honouring the African Nova Scotian Communities of East Preston, North Preston, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook by Wanda Thomas; and <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/diversity-inclusion/african-nova-scotian-affairs/african-nova-scotian-community>

⁴ [Recognition | United Nations](#)

⁵ [NeighbourhoodPlaemaking_Application_2020.pdf \(halifax.ca\)](#) – Section 6: Requirements for Street Painting under Painting Location states that “No paintings in crosswalk will be considered”.

markings at crosswalks is important for consistent indication of pedestrian crossings which helps to ensure crosswalks are easily identified and avoid potential misinterpretation by both pedestrians and drivers.

There has been some limited allowance for art at marked crosswalks through the Pride Rainbow Crosswalk Art program approved by Regional Council. Under this program, rainbow flag graphics have been installed within the crosswalks at several signalized intersections. The graphics were designed and installed so that they covered only a limited amount of the crosswalk area and fit completely within the crosswalk without covering or modifying the standard crosswalk lines. This approach ensured the crosswalk remained substantially unaltered and maintained the typical appearance of a marked crosswalk. Excessive, nonstandard patterning and inconsistent markings applied to the pedestrian through zone at a marked crosswalk can be an impediment to accessibility for those with low vision who rely on consistency and contrast for recognition and guidance at marked crossings.

Since its inception in 2016, the rainbow artwork at the crosswalk continues to demonstrate HRM's support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community and its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Over the past five years, the rainbow artwork has been placed at several locations across the municipality and has received positive recognition.

With the prohibition of crosswalk art within the Neighbourhood Placemaking Program, the community group was requested to consider a community led street art project that would not be within a crosswalk. The community insisted on a street art project similar to the standard rainbow crosswalk. Through the support of area Community Developer, the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office, conversation continued with the community to further explore options that will enable the placement of this art safely in light of traffic concerns and respectfully in acknowledgement of the desire of the community. These conversations have resulted in the recommendations within this report in response to the motion of Regional Council.

- **Black Lives Matter Street Art**

As the conversation with Cherry Brook/Lake Loon continued, HRM, in the fall of 2020, painted the words "Black Lives Matter" on Alderney Drive between Ochterloney and Queen, and on Brunswick Street between Carmichael and Prince. This installation was the Municipality's way of supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and was an addition to the ongoing efforts to help address anti-Black racism and foster better relationships with communities of African descent. It is currently intended that these street markings be temporary, but maintained, until HRM's work with the Anti-Black Racism taskforce identifies alternate ways to permanently, and appropriately, acknowledge the Black Lives Matter movement.

Jurisdictional Scan

Although, there are no known instances of Pan-African Crosswalk art in our region nor across the country, there have been cases in the United States and outside of North America where government has worked with the community to endorse and implement their installation. There have also been some instances, around Canada, where crosswalk painting has been implemented using a cultural lens:

- **Seattle Central District:** In the summer of 2015, the officials from the city of Seattle responded to an unauthorized spray-paint job of four crosswalks in the city's central district community. The red, black, and green stripes of the Pan-African flag were painted at different crosswalks within the community during an important community cultural festival. Response to the unauthorized painting was mixed. Some community members were concerned about safety for both pedestrians and motorists. There were, however, other community members who felt that "as long as the rainbows are still there, there's no reason a cultural [crosswalk] shouldn't be here". The city of Seattle responded by working with the community to endorse and permanently paint the crosswalks to

honour the history of the community. In addition, the city also began looking into developing a process that would enable communities to request the non-standard crosswalk design.⁶

Figure 3: Pan-African Crosswalk, Seattle Central District



- **Durham, North Carolina:** In November 2019, three vibrant [Art-Deco](#) inspired pedestrian crosswalk designs were installed in downtown Durham. The city approved project was sponsored by the Durham SmART Vision Plan whose mission is “connecting the cultural hubs/districts in downtown Durham through creative placemaking”. In response⁷ to this installation, a leader from the local Black community expressed their frustration that they had been unsuccessful to get an approval for the installation of the colours of the Pan-African in crosswalk in their neighbourhood as a way to help deter violent activities in the neighbourhood. As a follow up to this concern, city officials are beginning to explore the possibility of installing the proposed Pan-African crosswalk art.

Figure 4: Vibrant Art-Deco inspired crosswalk, Durham, North Carolina



- **Wilmington, Delaware:** In August 2020, as part of its support for the Black Lives Matter Movement, and commitment to racial justice, the city of Wilmington, Delaware, approved the installation of

⁶ [Rogue Pan-African makeover sparks new Central District crosswalk design - The Seattle Globalist](#) and [Crosswalks marked with colors of Pan-African flag | The Seattle Times](#)

⁷ [Durham resident upset thousands of dollars spent on vibrant crosswalks | CBS 17](#)

African colour palette in identified crosswalk across the city. The city also committed to expanding this to more locations as a way of spreading Black cultural art across the city.⁸

- **Cultural Crosswalk, Windsor, Ontario:** In 2018, the city of Windsor approved painted crosswalks across the city as a way to encourage neighbourhood beautification and promote its cultural identity. Although the scope of the Windsor initiative extends beyond the parameters of the rainbow crosswalk design, it nevertheless offers a potential framework for considering other crosswalk art designs while still following the guidelines Rainbow Crosswalk guidelines.⁹

Next Steps

- **A Special Crosswalk Art Project Consideration**

The request by Cherry Brook/Lake Loon community was made approximately three years ago. Existing municipal programs, including the Neighbourhood Placemaking and the rainbow crosswalk programs, do not have provisions for meeting this request. Recognizing this limitation, the municipality has been working with members of the community to explore viable alternatives in consideration of the cultural significance of the request and the municipality's commitment to building better relationship with the African Nova Scotian communities. Through this ongoing engagement, two potential locations – Cherry Brook Road at Highway 7 and McLaughlin Road at Highway 7 – have been identified for the placement of the artwork once an acceptable process is determined and approved (Attachment 2). Moreover, and as previously discussed, the community has also proposed an artwork design that conforms to the existing Rainbow Crosswalk pattern thereby allowing Traffic Authority to remain within the parameters of the existing program with minimal deviation.

In light of the original intent of this request; the historic significance of Cherry Brook/Lake Loon; and efforts that have been invested by both the municipality and the community, this request should be considered and implemented as a special crosswalk art project using the existing rainbow crosswalk guidelines. Through this special project, the Traffic Authority should continue to work with the area Community Developer and ANSAIO to engage the community throughout the process of installing the design in Attachment 1 and at locations identified in Attachment 2.

- **Consideration for other African Nova Scotian Communities:**

Once the Cherry Brook/Lake Loon requested has been completed, the Traffic Authority will begin considering similar requests from historic African Nova Scotian Communities. The Traffic Authority will work very closely with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO to ascertain that the requests being received are indeed from historic African Nova Scotian communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that approximately \$2,000 will be required to paint artwork at the two noted locations. Funding is available in R747-6399 (Traffic Signs – Contract Services).

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks are considered rate low.

⁸ [Pan African Flag Raising Ceremony And Street Cultural Art Program Support Black Lives And The Racial Justice Reform Movement In Wilmington | Wilmington, DE Patch](#)

⁹ [Painted crosswalk proposal approved by city council | CBC News](#)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been ongoing engagement with a group within Cherry Brook/Lake Loon community since community members first submitted their request in 2018 through the Neighbourhood Placemaking Program. The area Community Developer and the Senior Advisor of the ANSAIO, in collaboration with the Community, have been working with TPW staff to address the request. TPW staff will continue to work with D&I/ANSAIO and area Community Developer to ensure that community members are fully aware of the program and are also engaged through the process once an application has been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee could choose not to recommend that Regional Council direct the CAO to paint Pan-African crosswalk art at the marked crosswalk at Cherry Brook Road and Highway 7 and at Maclaughlin Road and Highway 7.

ATTACHMENTS

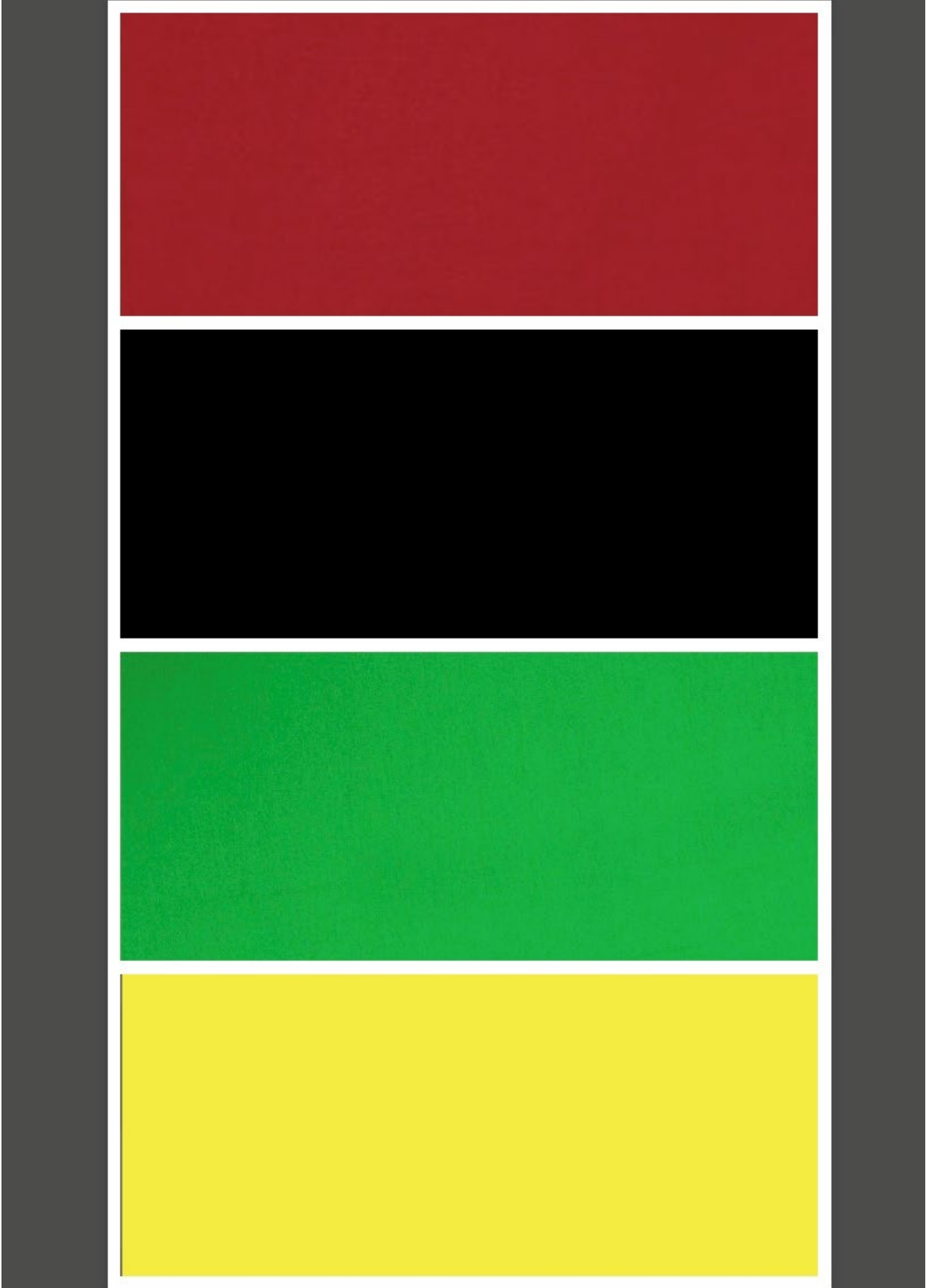
Attachment 1 – Proposed Pan-African Crosswalk Design

Attachment 2 – Proposed Locations for the installation of Pan-African Crosswalk Art in Cherry Brook/Lake Loon

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Taso Koutroulakis, P. Eng., PTOE, Director, Traffic Management - 902.490.4816

Attachment 1 – Proposed Pan-African Crosswalk Design



Attachment 2 – Proposed Locations for the installation of Pan-African Crosswalk Art in Cherry Brook/Lake Loon

Location 1

Cherry Brook Road @ Highway 7 (By the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia)



Location 2

McLaughlin Road @ Highway 7

