ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

- This Office of Traffic Safety & Mobility Instruction (TSMI) is effective immediately.
- This TSMI supersedes TSMI 14-01.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this TSMI is to update the Department’s policy on the use of high-visibility crosswalk markings.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

High-visibility crosswalks shall be used at all uncontrolled pedestrian crossing locations and approaches to roundabouts, where it has been determined that a marked crosswalk is appropriate.

Crosswalks at uncontrolled crossing locations shall be established only after the need has been determined through an engineering study and with the recommendation of the Regional Traffic Engineer.

Signalized Intersections with an urban functional classification shall be marked with high-visibility crosswalks, both across the State highway, and on a cross street or commercial driveway with at least three lanes.

High-visibility crosswalks consist of three major styles: continental, ladder, or bar pair. If used, the preferred style is the “ladder”. Other approved styles may be authorized by the Regional Traffic Engineer.

High-visibility crosswalks may also be used at controlled crossing locations with the recommendation of the Regional Traffic Engineer for the following conditions:

- Crosswalks within 1000’ of a school building where children walk or bike to school.
- Crosswalks that have or will have very high pedestrian volumes (e.g., amusement park entrances, entrances to civic centers, large shopping malls, near bus stops).
- Where lighting and/or shade tend to obscure basic crosswalks from motorists and low vision pedestrians.
- Unexpected crossing locations.
- On roads with a posted speed limit of 40 mph or greater.
- At intersections or along corridors where a high incidence of pedestrian crashes has occurred.
High-visibility crosswalks may be used at other controlled crossings with justification through completion of an engineering study and recommendation of the Regional Traffic Engineer. Factors to be considered include vehicular volumes and speed; pedestrian crossing volumes; roadway width (number of lanes), turning radii configuration and grade; crash patterns and history; stopping and intersection sight distances; and nighttime visibility.

BACKGROUND: Pedestrian safety is a high priority for the Department. Marked crosswalks are an essential tool for helping pedestrians move safely, conveniently, and predictably across roadways. Marked crosswalks also help to alert drivers where to expect pedestrians in the roadway.

Basic crosswalks (two parallel lines each one foot wide or more) should be the normal treatment for controlled pedestrian crossings where it has been determined that a marked crosswalk is appropriate. Basic crosswalk markings may be supplemented with non-retroreflective ornamental or subdued/aesthetic color-contrasting crosswalk surfaces when desired by the municipality. Surface friction and maintenance of the ornamental or colored surface should be factored in the decision to install these features. Basic crosswalk markings should conform to the details in the current Standard Sheets.

Section 1151 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk, regardless of whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked. Unmarked crosswalks exist at every intersection unless specifically prohibited, whereas crosswalks not at intersections exist only where there are crosswalk markings. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) instructs that “At locations controlled by traffic control signals or on approaches controlled by STOP or YIELD signs, crosswalk lines should be installed where engineering judgment indicates they are needed to direct pedestrians to the proper crossing path(s).” While it is not necessary to mark crosswalks at every intersection, there are circumstances where crosswalks should be marked.

The decision to install a marked crosswalk at an uncontrolled location can be made only after completion of an engineering study. Because there is no form of traffic control (e.g., signal, stop, or yield sign), it should be understood that marking a crosswalk at an uncontrolled location without making any other improvements is unlikely to increase pedestrian crossing safety. The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) should be consulted to determine appropriate supplemental treatments for different types of uncontrolled crossings.

Once a decision has been made to install a marked crosswalk, there are two types (basic and high-visibility) that can be considered. High-visibility crosswalks have been shown to increase motorist yielding at uncontrolled pedestrian crossing locations, leading the Federal Highway Administration to recommend that they be used at all uncontrolled crossings.

CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this TSMI to the Office of Traffic Safety and Mobility at (518) 457-1793.