



Report to Council

Department: Infrastructure Services
Division: Operations
Date: February 17, 2026
Prepared by: Norm Nussio Manager of Operations and Drainage
Report Number: Operations-2026-01
Subject: Christmas Streetlight Decorations in Downtown Cores
Number of Pages: 10

Recommendation(s)

That Operations-2026-01 entitled "**Christmas Streetlight Decorations in Downtown Cores**", prepared by Norm Nussio Manager of Operations & Drainage, dated February 17, 2026, be received; and

That Council direct administration to remove the old-style Christmas decorations from Essex Centre until the replacement of streetlight infrastructure is completed in future phases of the Essex Centre Streetscape.

Purpose

As per the December 1, 2025, regular council meeting, council directed administration to provide information on Christmas light decorations in the downtown cores of Essex and Harrow.

Background and Discussion

R25-12-572

That Council direct Administration to provide Council with information regarding the lighted Snowflake Decorations hung by the Town in the urban cores of the Town of Essex and that such information includes the condition of the decorations, the annual cost to repair the decorations and possible costings options for when the decorations need repairs or replacement.

Moved By Mayor Bondy
Seconded By Councillor Matyi

Christmas decorations are hung annually by the Town's Public Works department in the core areas in downtown Essex Centre and Harrow. The decorations have been hung on specific light poles that are supplied with power, facilitate proper separation from pedestrians, utilities, banners, and vehicles to prevent being damaged. The two core areas are outlined under separate headings as follows.

Essex Centre Streetlight Decorations

The decorations in Essex Centre were purchased by the BIA many years ago and have been maintained by Public Works. They have traditionally been hung on Talbot Street from Maidstone Avenue to Gosfield Avenue on both sides of the road. Recently the BIA has purchased new decorations, shown in figure 1 and 2, which have been hung on both sides of Talbot Street from Cameron Avenue to Arthur Avenue in the new section of the recently completed streetscape.

Figure1: Essex Centre Full Snowflakes



Figure 2: Essex Centre Half Snowflakes



The old-style decorations, shown in Figure 3, are being hung from Arthur Avenue to Gosfield Avenue and Cameron Avenue to Maidstone Avenue. The decorations in the older section outside the completed streetscape are starting to show major wear and tear and are becoming more difficult to maintain each year. Also, the structural integrity of the light poles and wiring infrastructure inside these poles are becoming more of an issue each year as wiring is starting to deteriorate – GFI plug boxes not working and fuses in the wiring system are starting to fail.

Figure 3: Essex Christmas Decorations



There are approximately twenty-three (23) of the older-style decorations being installed in Essex Centre. Due to the age of the streetlights and the decorations, the operational cost of maintaining these decorations is increasing and provides diminishing operational efficiency from both a cost and resource perspective. As shown in Figure 4 and 5, the streetlight infrastructure is past its useful life and is becoming difficult to maintain, or in some cases, not possible. In fact, in some locations, decorations cannot be mounted on poles due to the poor integrity of the electrical infrastructure and poles themselves.

Figure 4: Essex Centre Streetlight Electrical



Figure 5: Essex Centre Streetlight Poles



Due to the degradation of the streetlight infrastructure, the constant repairs required to maintain the current decorations, and the safety concerns associated with these issues, the Infrastructure Department is recommending that the old-style decorations in Essex Centre be permanently removed until the final phase of the streetscape is completed, where the electrical infrastructure and decorations are planned to be replaced.

Harrow Streetlight Decorations

The Harrow Christmas decorations, as shown in figure 6, are in the same state of repair as Essex Centre with continued annual repairs, retrofitting new sections of lights, repairing frames, and fixing brackets. However, these decorations are being installed on the new Harrow streetscape poles on King Street from Erie Street to Walnut Street and on Queen Street from King Street to Centre. These decorations were purchased many years ago by the Harrow Chamber and were left with Public Works to maintain and install each year. Currently there are approximately eighteen decorations being installed in Harrow each winter season.

Figure 6: Harrow Christmas Decorations



Financial Impact

Not including internal labour, staff hours, or equipment costs, each year Public Works spends approximately \$4,000 for both Essex Centre and Harrow decorations repairing the metal frames, changing plug connections, and replacing sections of burnt-out lights which is becoming increasingly difficult and will eventually result in the decorations becoming non-functional. These costs do not include major electrical repairs that have been conducted on the Essex Centre Streetlights. Therefore, the removal of the decorations in Essex Centre, as recommended herein, is estimated to be approximately \$3,000 to \$4,000 annually. However, as the streetlights continue to deteriorate, administration is still anticipating continued and increased costs related to repairing and maintaining that infrastructure and the associated electrical components.

Administration has engaged with a supplier to provide estimated pricing for the replacement of the twenty-three (23) decorations in Essex Centre and the eighteen (18) decorations in Harrow to match the new style decorations that have been installed in Essex Centre which is the half and full snowflakes shown in figure 1 and figure 2. The supply and installation of the half snowflakes is approximately \$1,100.00 per fixture and the supply and installation of the full snowflakes would be approximately \$1,400.00 per fixture and all estimates are conditional on the size of the order. Therefore, the total cost to replace the old decorations in Essex Centre and Harrow with half snowflakes is estimated to be \$41,800.00 plus HST and to replace the decorations with the full snowflakes is estimated to be \$53,200.00 plus HST.

Consultations

Kevin Girard, Director, Infrastructure Services

Link to Strategic Priorities

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town's competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.**
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone **who makes Essex "home"**.
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Christmas Lights in Downtown Cores - Operations-2026-01.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Feb 12, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Kevin Girard, Director, Infrastructure Services - Feb 11, 2026 - 3:35 PM



Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Feb 12, 2026 - 9:28 AM