



# COBOURG POLICE SERVICE

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## BOARD REPORT

<b>Report to:</b>	Cobourg Police Services Board (CPSB)	
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Chief Paul VandeGraaf	<b>Meeting Type:</b> Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	August 29, 2023	
<b>Report Type:</b>	Information Only Report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Required Report <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Previous Related Reports:</b>		
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	High Visibility Police Vehicle Pilot Project	

### RECOMMENDED MOTION:

THAT the Board receive the following report for informational purposes.

### BACKGROUND







The role and legitimacy of police is constantly being re-evaluated and re-imagined. Police operational and strategic actions must embrace innovation using evidence-based methods while considering how appearance and presentation may impact public perceptions and trust in police. Research has shown that the look and design of a police vehicle can impact how officers and police services are perceived. The design of our vehicles that are seen throughout the community every hour of the day, every day of the year contribute to the overall perception of the police organization.

The Cobourg Police Service has launched a pilot initiative to increase our visibility and approachability as a police service as well as enhancing police legitimacy, police-community relations and improving officer safety. The Cobourg Police Service has adopted a new graphic

design which substantially changes the visual identity of one new uniform police vehicle. The vehicle is a Ford Explorer SUV and it features a full Battenburg decal design.



**Battenburg markings** or **Battenberg markings** are a pattern of high-visibility markings developed in the United Kingdom in the 1990s and currently seen on many types of emergency service vehicles in the UK, Crown dependencies, British Overseas Territories and several other European countries such as the Czech Republic, Iceland, Sweden, Germany, Romania, Spain, Ireland, and Belgium as well as in New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Trinidad and Tobago, and more recently, Canada. The name comes from its similarity in appearance to the cross-section of a Battenberg cake.

Battenburg	Service	Colours	Example
	<u>Police Forces</u>	Yellow and blue	
	<u>Ambulance and Doctors</u>	Yellow and green	
	<u>Fire and Rescue</u>	Yellow and red	

The Battenburg pattern was specifically created to maximize the visibility of police vehicles; however, further studies are working to explore how it is perceived in a North American context. There is a volume of research that indicates that these standardized markings are the most visible to the human eye. Research shows that conspicuous vehicle markings increase officer safety. The research done by Solomon (2019) found lime-yellow firetrucks and bright coloured emergency vehicles had 50% fewer accidents. Insurance studies also found fewer accidents with white and yellow cars (Allen, 1970); therefore, our new vehicle has the potential to be safer for officers and our community.

The greenish yellow colour selected on the vehicle is the most visible to the human eye (Sebitosi & Pillay, 2003). The research confirms that this wavelength is at the middle of our visible spectrum and stimulates the most cones in the eye (Sharpe, 2005). This colour is most often used in other applications such as school crossing signs, tennis balls, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machines due to its visible properties. The blue colour in the Battenburg pattern serves as a contrasting colour and is generally associated with police vehicles.

**What other materials (e.g., reflective material) were used to make this design unique?**

To maximize visibility, the Battenburg pattern is made from retro-reflective wrap. Retroreflective markings are shown to be extremely effective at increasing visibility based on Canadian research on transport trucks, and United Kingdom (UK) research on emergency vehicles (Hildebrand & Fullarton, 1997; Harrison, 2004). Research conducted examining retro-reflective patterns indicates that they can be seen from 601 meters distance in clear conditions, 333 meters in snow, and 284 meters in rain (Hildebrand & Fullarton, 1997). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) report confirmed indicating that solid retroreflective material enhancing the conspicuity of emergency vehicles as one of their key findings (FEMA, 2009). CPS's current black and gold design, and many other services, have yet to adopt data-driven and research informed design elements, such as leveraging retroreflective material to maximize visibility and safety.

### **What makes these graphics unique, functional, and professional?**

The design implemented on the Cobourg Police Service (CPS) vehicle is the third application of its kind in Ontario that strictly follows the Battenburg design guidelines as outlined by the research conducted by the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office. The Barrie Police Service was the first to implement this in Ontario followed by St. Thomas Police Service. We have chosen to implement the full-Battenburg pattern to ensure the vehicles still stand out in a busy semi-urban environment. The changes made to the vehicle have all been with the goal of making the vehicle more unique and functional, while remaining professional. The design choices have been driven solely by research, rather than trying to create a car that presents a stereotypical or more traditional image of the Service to the community. The CPS vehicle design is about the perception and increased visibility of the car, and how that impacts our relationship with our community members. The introduction of the Battenburg, along with conspicuous components such as retro reflective markings, all contribute to making the vehicle highly visible, and quickly recognizable in the community. We are no longer trying to blend in and are actively looking to stand out.

### **Pilot Project Summary**

The primary objectives of this vehicle design are to:

- Make officers and vehicles more conspicuous (e.g., to prevent collisions when stopped).
- Make police vehicles recognisable at a distance of up to 500 metres (1,600 ft) in daylight.
- Assist in high-visibility policing for public reassurance and deterrence of traffic violations.
- Make police vehicles universally recognisable.

The new Cobourg Police Service vehicle design will be tested for a period of 24 months. This vehicle design is a marked departure from our current design, and most other police vehicles in Ontario. Similar to other Barrie and St. Thomas Police Services, Cobourg aims to increase its visibility and approachability in alignment of Ontario's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. Our principal objective is to enhance service delivery by making the CPS more efficient, effective, and sustainable, and contribute to growing volume of police science that has a Canadian context. During the pilot period there will be an opportunity for members and the public to provide input.