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**DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES
INFORMATIONAL REPORT 2015 - 65**

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: Sidewalk Snow Clearing Update

ORIGIN: Development and Infrastructure Services – Public Works Services

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of Whole Agenda for discussion through the Clerk.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline how Public Works Services intend to initiate the first year of the 3 year phase in of the Town wide Sidewalk Snow Clearing Service Level.

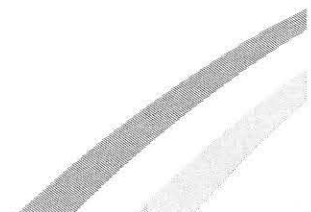
Per Development and Infrastructure Services Report PWS 2015-16, which was approved during the 2015 budget process, Council selected 'Option 3' of the report. This includes the clearing of all Town sidewalks, walkways and paved trails, with a priority given to specific areas outlined as schools, Main Street, regional roads, and primary transit locations.

BACKGROUND

The Town's snow clearing guidelines and service level are outlined in Town guideline NMS-19. Town staff clear approximately 65% of sidewalks, walkways and trails. The remaining 35% were cleared by adjacent property owners, as outlined in bylaw number 1996-38.

The current sidewalk clearing Guidelines (NMS-19) were originally issued in November of 2003. These were most recently revised in December of 2009. The purpose of this guideline is to deliver the best winter sidewalk maintenance efforts, given the resources available, during average weather conditions. Briefly summarized, the guideline states that Arterial Roads, Primary and Minor Collectors as well as Local roads will be cleared of snow within 24 hours *after* any new fallen or windblown snow has accumulated on the sidewalk surface and totals 5.0cm (2 inches) or more. According to the Guideline, walkways and trails are to be cleared only after these areas are in satisfactory condition.

Over the years the processes have evolved and have been modified. Service levels have been streamlined to exceed the stipulations laid out in the guideline. This is primarily based on a focus on efficiency of routes (shortest route from beginning to end), the importance of walkways connecting to schools and the increased dependency on trails to be part of our active transportation system.



The 2013-2014 winter season and ice storm was among the most difficult winters on record and challenged our current process for clearing of sidewalks, walkways and trails. The difficulties experienced helped to illustrate the strengths and weakness of the current system. This provided staff with an opportunity to identify gaps for improvement to provide optimal snow clearing for sidewalks, walkways and trails. The Guidelines will be updated to reflect the changes described in this Report from these experiences.

Over the next year detailed analysis was conducted and council was presented with 3 options for how clearing of sidewalks, walkways and trails could be performed.

OPTION 1: Maintain Current Service Levels

No change in current level of sidewalk snow clearing standards as per the guidelines NMS-19.

OPTION 2: Improved Priority Service to Specific Areas

A specific priority approach would provide a higher level of service to schools, Main Street, regional roads and primary transit locations.

OPTION 3: (Clearing of all Town Sidewalks, walkways and primary trails)

All sidewalks, walkways and paved trails would be cleared by the Town, and priority would be given to specific areas such as schools, Main Street, Regional roads and primary transit locations.

During the budget deliberations, Option 3 was approved by Council. It was decided that the implementation of this new service level would take place as a 3 year phase in. Ultimately at the end of the 3 years (2017/2018 winter season) the Town would clear 100% of sidewalks, walkways and paved trails. The goal within the first year is to assign priority to certain areas, reduce the size of routes, to make them more manageable in length and to introduce the combination of 'in-house' and contracted services to perform the work. In other words, 2016/2017 would move into Option 2 with full implementation of Option 3 in 2017/2018, pending budget approval.

ANALYSIS

Implementation Year 1

Upon the approval of the budget, staff reviewed the approximate 220 km of sidewalks, walkways and trails that are currently maintained. Staff identified the priority locations and assigned them as 'primary' sidewalks, as directed by Council (Main Street, Regional Roads, Arterial Roads, school locations, major transit locations and the Tom Taylor Trail). The remaining sidewalks, walkways and trails were then assigned a 'secondary' status.

In order to reduce the length of each route, to ensure the priority status could be met, three new routes were created (1 in-house and 2 contracted). The new routes were constructed in order to make them a more manageable length. In the 2014/2015 season routes had grown to an average size of approximately 26 km. With the addition of the three new routes the size of each route was reduced to an average of 19.5 km. This is approximately a 25% reduction in length. This will allow

staff the time to respond to the priority locations first, and then return to clear the secondary locations later. This will address the issue of providing service at a more appropriate time (i.e. school zones completed before or shortly after school begins).

The introduction of contracted services to complete sidewalk snow clearing will begin in the 2015/2016 season with two routes. Careful consideration was taken when deciding which areas of town would be contracted. Staff wanted to maintain in-house control for some of the high profile areas of town, such as the Viva Rapid Transit Corridor, Main Street and Regional Roads. Staff felt that this would give the ability to be more flexible with services as these areas evolve. It was decided that from an efficiency standpoint the two furthest routes away from the Operations Centre would be contracted. The Contract was written to ensure that the residents on the far side of town will still receive the same service level with respect to response time and that all other goals and methods of performing the work, mirrored the Town's standard. Staff have also ensured that Contract equipment be seven years old or newer with specifications which match the Town's equipment. Town GPS systems will also be in place and all contract staff will be trained to the same standard that Town staff receives.

YEARS 2 AND 3

In year 2 of the contract, pending budget approval, an additional contracted route and a contracted chaser truck will be added to the fleet of winter sidewalk maintenance resources. In keeping with a consistent service, staff have instructed the contractor to provide a supervisor or Lead operator to operate the Chaser truck. *A Chaser Truck is a mobile unit that delivers sand and salt to the sidewalk tractors as they travel throughout town.* Currently this is how the Town in-house staff operates. For year 1 of the contract, staff decided to use an in-house Leadhand to service the contracted tractors. This allows our own Leadhands to visit the contracted areas of Town multiple times a shift. Leadhands will then be able to report back to Management regarding status of routes, operator performance, etc.

Upon the addition of the third route the percentage of maintained sidewalks will increase from 65% to 85% as an approximate 20 more kilometres of sidewalks will be added. Additional sidewalks will be selected using a fair and equitable approach, to ensure that residents from each ward receive the same service. This will obviously impact each of the routes causing another reconfiguration.

In year 3 (2017/2018 Winter Season), pending budget approval, another contracted route will be added and the remaining 15% of unmaintained sidewalks will be added. At this point the Town will be responsible for the winter maintenance of 100% of the sidewalks.

It should be noted that any growth areas would have to be considered separately and should not be included as part of this implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS

Staff will work with Corporate Communications and Customer Service to implement a detailed communication strategy for sidewalk, walkway and trail clearing. The primary intention of the program will be to ensure residents and property owners are educated on the Town's responsibilities as well as property owner obligations pertaining to snow clearing.

Although at the end of the phase in, the Town will be clearing 100% of the Sidewalks, property owners can aid the Town in clearing sidewalks adjacent to their property. Sidewalk snow clearing by property owners will be a support to the Town's winter maintenance.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Living Well: Deliver efficient, effective maintenance services to an appropriate level that achieves Council and/or Provincially mandated services levels, which meet public health and safety requirements and enhances quality of life

BUDGET IMPACT

In the 2015 Budget, Council approved \$100,000 increase to annual operating budget to be implemented over the 2015 & 2016 budget years (40/60 split). These funds have been incorporated as part of the base budget. Additional funds will be requested in future year budgets to implement the increase to 100% sidewalk snow clearing.

In the future, additional funds may be required to accommodate growth that would be in addition to the budget impact noted above.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, contact: Gail Akins, Acting Manager, Parks & Property Services at extension 2581.



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