

February 9, 2015

**DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES REPORT
PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES 2015-16**

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: Sidewalk Snow Clearing for All Sidewalks

ORIGIN: Director of Public Works Services

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Development & Infrastructure Services Report – Public Works Services 2015-16 dated February 9, 2015, regarding Sidewalk Snow Clearing for All Sidewalks be received and the following recommendations be adopted:

- 1. THAT Council consider the proposed enhancement of winter sidewalk maintenance service levels to include all municipally owned sidewalks with priority to be given to schools, Main Street, Regional roads and primary transit locations as part of the 2015 draft budget deliberations.**

PURPOSE

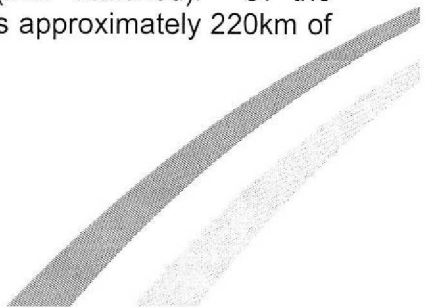
The purpose of this report is to outline our current snow clearing guidelines and service level, and provide details and costing on the enhanced service for delivering winter maintenance for sidewalks on all municipally owned sidewalks with prioritized service to specific areas.

BACKGROUND

In March of 2014 report 2014-21 Sidewalk Snow Clearing Review, was approved by Council and direction was given for staff to proceed with a review for clearing all sidewalks, walkways and primary trails in Town. This approach would see all sidewalks, walkways and paved trails cleared by the Town and a priority would be given to schools, Main Street, regional roads and primary transit locations.

Newmarket currently completes at least one pass to clear approximately 65% of sidewalks, walkways and trails within 24 hours of a snowfall as per the Town guideline NMS-19. The remaining 35% are cleared by the adjacent property owner as outlined in bylaw number 1996-38.

Municipal sidewalks, trails and walkway clearing is carried out in accordance with the current Town of Newmarket Winter Sidewalk & Walkway Maintenance guidelines NMS-19 (see attached). Of the approximately 340 km of sidewalk, walkways and trails, the Town currently clears approximately 220km of them.



The current sidewalk clearing guidelines (NMS-19) were originally issued in November of 2003 and most recently revised in December of 2009. The purpose and intent of this guideline is to ensure the Town can deliver the best winter sidewalk maintenance efforts given the resources available and average weather conditions. The guideline also states that snow removal operations will commence when the new fallen or windblown snow accumulated on the sidewalk surface is 5.0cm (2 inches). Arterial Roads, Primary and Minor Collectors as well as Local roads are to be cleared of snow within 24 hours after any snowfall. According to the guidelines, walkways and the Tom Taylor Trail are intended to be cleared after those priorities are in satisfactory condition.

Over the years, the processes have been streamlined, and often due to implemented efficiencies, service levels have exceeded the stipulations of the guideline. Trails and walkways have regularly been cleared within 24 hours. One of the primary reasons for this is the importance of walkways connecting to schools and the increased dependency on trails to be part of our active transportation system. In addition, there has been greater focus on the environmental and societal value of Transportation Demand Management with respect to walking and/or cycling. This evolution in pedestrian movement and alternative transportation systems requires us to ensure our snow clearing services are in line with the needs of the community.

The Guidelines will be reviewed and appropriate changes made once budget decisions have been finalized.

In 2010 and 2014 the Town undertook a community survey. Sidewalk snowplowing was ranked very low in satisfaction among Town services both times (51% and 43% respectively). The majority of complaints received for winter sidewalk maintenance center on the sidewalks adjacent to schools and regional roads and locations with regular senior pedestrians. The concerns raised often focused on the ability for these areas to be cleared in a reasonable amount of time. Additional inquiries also focus on selection processes for which sidewalks were done and which were not.

There are approximately 30 schools located throughout the Town, but all are not necessarily located on primary roads. While our current guidelines indicate that sidewalks around schools are completed, those guidelines do not give priority to their sequence of clearing. The result is some local roads or curb faced sidewalks are being done prior to a school or transit location. This also creates situations where a sidewalk fronting a school may be done after school has concluded for the day, as it may be at the end of a sidewalk clearing route. Current practices for snow clearing focus on efficiency of routes (shortest route from beginning to end) and do not identify areas that may warrant higher levels of service and increased use.

Other complaints are with respect to driving by sidewalks instead of clearing them. There is a significant difference between just driving a tractor past an area and plowing and salting sidewalks. The process to plow/salt is much slower, taking extra time and materials. The overall issue at hand is the fact that there is never just one isolated situation. There are currently many places throughout town that are much the same, and as a result, if staff plowed one area because we were passing by, we should be plowing all areas we are passing by. The sum of all these areas is very significant and unfortunately not within the resources we currently have. In addition, there is a time and material cost to plowing. Plowing occurs at a slower pace, and as a result it would require these additional staff and resources if we were to plow all areas.

ANALYSIS and PROPOSALS

In March of 2014, Council report 2014-21 provided three options for Council to consider regarding winter sidewalk maintenance. Those included:

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. No new sidewalks would be added for winter maintenance.

Option 3: (Clearing of all Town Sidewalks, walkways and primary paved 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.

Option 3 was selected by council for a further review, analysis and requested to be brought forward as part of the 2015 Budget Review Process.

This service level enhancement will see all sidewalks, walkways and paved trails cleared by the Town and priority given to specific priority areas in Town. These primary routes will be established to ensure all schools, Main Street, regional roads and primary transit locations are cleared prior to general residential sidewalks and walkways. Once these primary routes are found to be in good condition, sidewalk snow clearing will commence for all remaining sidewalks in Town. This approach is similar to the approach used on our roadways with primaries being cleared first and then services being extended to all other streets in Town.

This option will require additional resources (above any required to accommodate ongoing growth) in an attempt to maintain our current service level for clearing sidewalks, walkways and trails within 24 hours after a snowfall event.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

It has also been noted that any liabilities associated with a sidewalk, trails or walkway directly impact the Town, regardless of any bylaws outlining clearing requirements for property owners. The ability to clear all sidewalks ensures the Town can maintain and control a standard level of service. Often sidewalks are cleared by property owners, but the quality and timing of the service is inconsistent. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) regulations are also requiring a standard of service that allows for free movement of those with disabilities, thereby increasing responsibilities for compliance.

All sidewalks that are Town owned are the responsibility of the Corporation. Their condition is generally considered the Town's responsibility. How and when they are cleared can provide the Town with a strong defense if we ensure our guidelines are met. Through our bylaw and this proposed enhanced sidewalk clearing process, the Town can better manage the condition of the sidewalks and ultimately improve our defense during litigation processes.

Our by-law will continue to remain in effect requiring property owners to clear and maintain sidewalks. The purpose of maintaining the existing by-law is that sidewalk snow clearing by property owners will be seen as a secondary support to the Town's winter maintenance of sidewalks. This will see value to the community during significant storms where Town and contracted services are focused on maintaining the primaries and there may be a delay in addressing remaining sidewalks in Town.

This proposed service level change would provide a strong balance (approximately 60%:40%) between Town and contracted services for sidewalk snow clearing. One of the benefits to contracted services is the ability to request additional support during significant winter storms. This approach parallels that of the roads and ensures a more uniform and flexible approach to providing services to residents, specifically during peak demand situations.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

Public Works staff will work with Corporate Communications and Customer Service to implement a detailed communication strategy for sidewalk, walkway and trail clearing, if this service enhancement is approved with the 2015 budget is approved. The primary intention of the outreach would be to ensure residents and property owners are educated on the Town's responsibilities as well as property owner obligations pertaining to snow clearing.

Feedback was also received from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Comments received indicated that the proposed enhancements are overdue and if implemented would be a very positive step forward for supporting improved accessibility within the Town.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is estimated that the Town would require an additional 5 routes for sidewalk snow clearing at an approximate cost of \$300,000.

It should be noted that the enhancement of this service level does not include the required additional resources to support ongoing growth, to maintain current levels for 2015. This has been separately included as part of the draft 2015 budget process as the Town has added 20.2 km of sidewalks, walkways and paved trails between the years of 2010 and 2014.

Town staff have reviewed neighbouring municipalities for costing on contracted services for sidewalk snow clearing. There are a number of variables that impact the cost of a contract such as the geographical size of a municipality, the density and the structure of how a contract is structured. These differences can make it difficult to accurately identify a cost. Staff reviewed other municipalities and when reviewed with a local municipality with similar conditions it is estimated that the contracted costs for plowing would be approximately \$300,000 for 5 additional routes. These additional routes would include the proposed prioritized service level for schools, Main Street, regional roads and primary transit locations. These annual costs would also include all aspects of the enhanced services such as standby costs, material and sod repairs.

While the annual operating costs are estimated at \$300,000 this is dependent on the weather, which varies on a season by season basis. Some years with excessive snow accumulation will see higher than average costs, and some years with lower snow accumulations will see lower than average costs. The winter reserve is in place to support years with excessive snow events.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Living Well: Deliver efficient, effective and environmentally sound 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 while ensuring that system capital assets retain their value and are managed and funded according to sustainable, lifecycle based principles and practices.

BUDGET IMPACT

There would be an increase to the annual Public Works Services operating budget of \$300,000.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, contact: Mark Agnoletto, Senior Manager, Public Works Services at extension 2581.

Prepared by:



Mark Agnoletto
Senior Manager, Public Works Services

Reviewed by:



Christopher Kalimootoo, P.Eng. BA
Director, Public Works Services

Approved by:



Peter Noehammer, P.Eng
Commissioner, Development and Infrastructure Services

TOWN OF NEWMARKET
PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MAINTENANCE SERVICES

WINTER SIDEWALK & WALKWAY MAINTENANCE

NMS - 19
(OPPOL-37)

The following TOWN OF NEWMARKET policy is a guideline only, and it is acknowledged that conditions may occur which will prevent the achievement of this level of service and that the Public Works Department must work within available resources such as funds, equipment and manpower

PURPOSE:

To set out the guidelines to be followed by the Public Works and Environmental Services Department for the provision of the best winter sidewalk maintenance efforts given the resources available and weather conditions.

PROCEDURES:

1. The guidelines for Winter Sidewalk & Walkway Maintenance shall be in accordance with the following:
 - Snow removal operations will commence when the maximum new fallen or wind blown snow accumulated on the sidewalk surface is 5.0cm (2 inches) in any one area.
 - PRIORITY #1 for snow removal and sanding/salting operations:

Arterial Roads	Sidewalks cleared on both sides
Primary & Minor Collectors	Sidewalks cleared on both sides
Local Roads	Certain sidewalks fronting Town Parks/Facilities and certain sidewalks near schools as shown on the "Sidewalk Snow Clearing Map"
	Winter Sidewalk Maintenance on sidewalks immediately adjacent to the street curb and/or with a hard surface blvd. of 0.400 meters or less – "Curb Face Sidewalk"
	(Sidewalks on local roads are not generally maintained by the Municipality during the winter)

Sidewalks shall be cleared of snow within twenty-four (24) hours after any snowfall (accumulation greater than 5.0cm) as per Town Bylaw 1996-38 and Bylaw 2001-100.

Original Issue: November, 2003
Revised: 2006-02-28
Revised: 2006-11-28
Revised: 2009-12-15

TOWN OF NEWMARKET
PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MAINTENANCE SERVICES

- **PRIORITY #2** for snow removal and sanding/salting operations:

Walkways (Asphalt & Concrete Only)	Directly connecting two (2) streets (excluding walkways located in the War Camp area)
Walkways (Asphalt & Concrete Only)	Certain walkways leading into parks, as directed by the Director of Public Works & Environmental Services and as identified on the "Sidewalk Snow Clearing Map" (Appendix A).
Tom Taylor Trail	Winter Walkway Maintenance on the asphalt sections only

Priority #2 walkways shall be cleared of snow immediately upon satisfactory completion of sidewalks identified in Priority 1. Walkways leading into parks, which are not maintained, shall be signed accordingly (i.e. "Not Maintained in Winter").

- Sidewalk/Walkway surfaces may not be maintained to a bare surface (asphalt/concrete) during a storm; however, as a minimum, they shall be maintained in a snow packed condition.
- Snow clearing and sanding/salting around Canada Post mailboxes shall be the responsibility of Canada Post.
- Snow clearing and sanding/salting at Transit Stops shall be the responsibility of York Transit
- Sidewalks maintained by the municipality do not relieve property owners of their duty/responsibility to remove snow fronting their property as per Bylaw 1996-38 and Bylaw 2001-100.
- Unless an exception is granted for winter sidewalk maintenance, (as identified on the "Sidewalk Snow Clearing Map"), this policy applies to assumed roads only. For Subdivisions, which are not assumed, the property owner(s) is responsible to maintain the sidewalk fronting their property.

Original Issue: November, 2003

Revised: 2006-02-28

Revised: 2006-11-28

Revised: 2009-12-15