



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

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Residential Winter Windrow Opening Service Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2025-35

Department(s): Public Works Services

Author(s): Mark Gregory, Manager, Operations; Jeff Bond, Business Operations Specialist

Meeting Date: June 16, 2025

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Residential Winter Windrow Opening Service dated June 16, 2025 be received; and,
2. That Council select one of the program options for residential windrow clearing services or to not provide residential windrow clearing service; and,
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of potential residential winter windrow opening services for the Town of Newmarket. It examines findings from a municipal scan of 36 municipalities, evaluates service models, and presents six possible options for Council's consideration.

The report outlines current winter maintenance operations, historical weather and service data, and demographic insights to estimate potential program participation. It also details funding and operational considerations, including estimated costs, administrative implications, and service delivery timelines.

Options range from no service, services for seniors and persons with disabilities (with fees, without fees, or with subsidies), pay for service and full residential windrow opening. Key findings indicate that municipalities predominantly provide free windrow services to seniors and persons with disabilities, with some charging fees or offering subsidies. The analysis also highlights financial impacts, anticipated application volumes, and operational challenges associated with implementing such a program.

Staff recommends that Council review the available options and select a preferred approach. If Council chooses to provide a service, staff can implement a limited pilot program prior to the 2025/2027 winter season. Staff will not be able to implement a full program until the 2026/2027 season.

Purpose

This report presents recommendations to Council regarding residential winter windrow opening services. Staff conducted a municipal scan of similar programs and have identified several service options for consideration in Newmarket. The report outlines various windrow opening models, costs and highlights key factors that influence service delivery. Consideration is given to potential service models that could include no service, service to all residents or service targeted to specific groups such as seniors and persons with disabilities.

Background

At the March 3, 2025 Council Meeting, a motion was passed directing staff to investigate and identify options for clearing windrows during winter snow events, including conducting a scan of practices in various Greater Toronto Area (GTA) municipalities. Council also requested an evaluation of the operational and financial implications of implementing these options. This includes consideration of potential funding sources such as the municipal budget, user fees, provincial and federal grants, community partnerships, and volunteer programs. Staff were instructed to report back to Council with findings and recommendations by the end of Q2, with the aim of potentially piloting a solution before the next winter season.

Public Works Services (PWS) staff currently maintain 322 km of centerline roads, equivalent to approximately 644 km of total street lanes. During the 2024/2025 winter season, there were 54 events that required winter maintenance. The Town operates 12 routes: 7 are serviced by Town trucks and staff, while 5 are maintained by contracted service providers. The total cost of winter maintenance services—including both internal staff/equipment and contracted services—for the 2024/2025 season was \$1,616,660.

In Newmarket, there are 23,505 residential driveways located on municipal roads, and an additional 151 residential driveways on regional roads. No residential windrow opening services are currently provided.

Newmarket has historically supported and aided emergency response for situations requiring immediate access. This has included conditions where general snow accumulation or windrows have slowed or impeded emergency vehicle access.

Discussion

Town staff completed a scan with 36 municipalities across York Region, GTA and Canada of similar size or larger. A survey was conducted and received 14 responses and further information from the remaining 22 was gathered by visiting websites to help with providing the various types of windrow removal services and service level detail information. Those municipalities include:

York Region: Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Markham, Aurora, Stouffville, King Township, Geogina, East Gwillimbury, and Region of York.

GTA: Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Milton, Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa, and Clarington.

Ontario: Kitchener, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Guelph, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Kingston, Peterborough, Barrie, Sudbury, Hamilton, and Brantford.

Canada: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Montreal, Red Deer, Quebec City, and Saint John.

Table 1.01 outlines the various types of windrow removal service levels offered by municipalities. The most common service model was the provision of windrow clearing for seniors and persons with disabilities at no cost. The next most common model was to provide no windrow service at all. Notably, staff did not identify any municipality offering a paid windrow removal service available to all residents on a user-pay basis.

Types of Windrow Services - Municipal Scan	
31%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities No Fees
28%	No Service
14%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities with a Fee
14%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities Subsidy
11%	Full Service
2%	Unknown Service
0%	Pay for Service – All Residents

Municipalities set specific snowfall thresholds to determine when windrow clearing services are initiated. As illustrated in Table 1.02, the two most commonly reported thresholds were 2.5 cm (1") to 5 cm (2") and 6 cm (2¼") to 10+ cm (4"), each cited by 25% of surveyed municipalities. Newmarket begins plowing operations when snow accumulations reach 6 cm (2 ¼").

Table 1.02 Accumulation Thresholds for Deployment – Municipal Scan	
25%	2.5 cm (1") to 5 cm (2") Snow Accumulation on Street
25%	6 cm (2 ¼") to 10+ cm (4") Snow Accumulation on Street
20%	10 cm (4") to 15+ cm (6") Snow Accumulation on Street
15%	20 cm (8") to 30+ cm (12") Snow Accumulation of Windrow
10%	Information Not Available
5%	10+ cm (4") Snow Accumulation of Windrow

Table 1.03 illustrates the timeframe within which various municipalities complete their windrow removal services. The most common timeframe, reported by 45% of municipalities, is within 24 hours after snow plowing has ended.

Table 1.03 Service Complete Times - Municipal Scan	
45%	Completed within 24 hours after Snow Plowing
20%	Completed within 12-14 hours Snow Plowing
15%	Completed within 36 hours after Snow Plowing
15%	Completed within 2-4 hours after Snow Plowing
5%	Completed within 8 hours after Snow Plowing

Table 1.04 illustrates the different driveway widths cleared during windrow removal services. The majority of municipalities clear to a width of 3 m (10 feet) or one vehicle width, while a few municipalities clear the full width of the driveway.

Table 1.04 Width of Driveway Being Opened - Municipal Scan	
65%	3 m (10 feet) and/or 1 Vehicle Width
25%	Total Width of Driveway Cleared
10%	Information Not Available

During the 2024/2025 season, five municipalities offered windrow clearing services for seniors and persons with disabilities on a fee-for-service basis.

- In Aurora, there were 1,100 applicants for the windrow clearing program during the 2023/2024 season when no fees were charged. For the 2024/2025 season, a \$100 fee was introduced, resulting in a decrease in applicants to 600.
- In Clarington, the windrow removal fee was \$103.20 (HST included)

- In Milton, the windrow service fee was \$66 (No Tax)
- In Pickering, windrow service fees are determined based on income tax assessment, ranging from \$0 to \$206 (plus HST), depending on household income. Eligibility for the service may also be restricted based on income level.
- In Mississauga, the windrow clearing fee was \$200, but it could be waived depending on income level. Notably, Mississauga plans to clear all residential windrows during the 2025/2026 season.

Staff identified five municipalities that provide subsidies to seniors and persons with disabilities. Eligibility for the subsidy includes, but is not limited to, factors such as income level, the presence of able-bodied individuals over 15 years of age in the household, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients, and individuals over 65. These residents are allowed to hire a service provider to clear windrows, driveways, sidewalks, and front door walkways.

- East Gwillimbury offers a \$150 financial grant to eligible residents who hire a service provider to clear windrows and other snow-covered areas with a cap of 150 applicants.
- Brampton provides a financial grant ranging from \$300 to \$400, depending on property location and the number of sidewalks in front of the property, to eligible residents who hire a service provider for windrow and snow clearing.
- Thunder Bay offers a \$400 property and water credit program for eligible residents to clear windrows and other snow-covered areas.
- Ottawa provides financial grants ranging from \$250 to \$450 to eligible residents, who then will hire a service provider to clear windrows and other snow-covered areas.
- Hamilton offers financial grants ranging from \$250 to \$450 to eligible residents to hire a service provider to clear windrows and other snow-covered areas.

York Region Municipalities

The windrow clearing details for the eight York Region municipalities and the Region of York are provided in the next section for comparison. Newmarket is the only municipality within York Region that does not have a program or subsidy related to residential windrow clearing.

Table 1.05 outlines the types of windrow services offered across York Region. It is important to note that the Region of York does not provide any windrow clearing services, either in rural or urban areas.

Table 1.05 York Region Windrow Clearing Service	
45%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities No Fees
22%	Full Service

11%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities Subsidy
11%	Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities with a Fee
11%	No Service
0%	Pay for Service

Table 1.06 summarizes key windrow clearing details for seven York Region municipalities, including snow accumulation thresholds, service completion times, and driveway clearing widths. It is important to note that East Gwillimbury does not provide direct windrow clearing services but instead offers a \$150 subsidy to up to 150 eligible seniors and/or persons with disabilities who hire their own service provider.

Table 1.06 York Region Windrow Clearing Service Information			
Municipality	Accumulation Thresholds	Completion Time	Width of Clearing
Markham	7.5 cm/3" Street	4 hrs	1 Vehicle
Vaughan	5 cm/2" Street	4 hrs	1 Vehicle
Richmond Hill	5 cm/2" Street	24 hrs	1 Vehicle
Aurora	8 cm/3" Street	24 hrs	3 m Min.
Stouffville	5 cm/2" Street	12 hrs	1 Vehicle
Township of King	10 cm/4" Street	24 hrs (Mon-Fri only)	1 Vehicle
Georgina	7.5 cm/3" Street	24 hrs	1 Vehicle
East Gwillimbury	Subsidy	Subsidy	Subsidy

Seven municipalities in York Region offer some form of windrow clearing service. Of these, only one municipality provides windrow clearing for residential driveways on both municipal and regional roads; the remaining six provide service only on municipal roads. In Newmarket, there are 23,505 residential driveways located on municipal roads, and an additional 151 residential driveways on regional roads. The total excludes residential properties located on private roads, laneways, unassumed roads, apartment buildings, multi-residential buildings with six or more self-contained units, high-rise condominiums, townhouse condominiums on private roads, and cooperative housing.

Historical Weather Data

Historical winter road maintenance, weather data, and CRM ticket volumes are summarized in Table 1.07. Staff have included data from the past six winter seasons, highlighting total winter events, the number of events where plows were deployed, the number of snow events with accumulations of 5 cm (2") or more, 10 cm (4") or more, and the number of windrow-related CRM tickets. In Newmarket, plowing operations

typically begin when snow accumulation reaches 6 cm (2¼”), although this may vary based on current and forecasted weather conditions.

Table 1.07 Historical Winter Road Maintenance, Weather, and CRM Data					
Year	Total Winter Events	Total of Salt Events	Total Plowing Events	Total Snow Accumulation	Windrow Related CRM Tickets
2024/2025	54	44	10	161.5 cm (63.5”)	172
2023/2024	29	22	7	97.1 cm (38.25”)	38
2022/2023	41	25	16	173 cm (68”)	98
2021/2022	59	40	11	167.5 cm (66”)	115
2020/2021	41	29	12	146 cm (57.5”)	111
2019/2020	61	41	20	177 cm (70”)	77

Data reported during the 2024/2025 winter season provides additional insight into two major snow events with above-average snow accumulation. A significant number of CRM tickets were submitted related to windrow issues, the majority concerning roads, with a smaller portion related to sidewalks.

- February 12 & 13, 2025, Newmarket had a snow event that received 25 cm (10”) of snow that brought in 60 CRM tickets regarding various issues with windrows.
- February 16, 2025, Newmarket had a snow event that received 35 cm (13 ¾”) of snow that brought in 39 CRM tickets regarding various issues with windrows.

Newmarket Demographics

Using data sources such as the municipal scan and Statistics Canada Census data, staff estimate Newmarket’s population at approximately 94,000 residents. As previously noted, there are 23,505 residential driveways on municipal roads that receive winter maintenance. Of the total population, an estimated 14,000 residents are over the age of 65. Based on current provincial and regional disability rates, approximately 19,000 residents in Newmarket are estimated to have one or more disabilities. Drawing on trends and ratios observed in the municipal scan, if Newmarket were to implement a windrow opening program for seniors and persons with disabilities, staff estimate that approximately 2,000 to 3,000 residents may apply for the service. If a fee was being introduced, the estimated number could likely drop to between 1,000 to 1,500.

Community Partnerships/Grants

Several programs are available in Newmarket to assist residents, particularly seniors with snow clearing during the winter season. Unfortunately, these programs are very limited in resources and scope.

- CHATS (Community & Home Assistance to Seniors) offer a snow clearing service for registered clients in Newmarket. The program focuses on clearing driveways and walkways to ensure safe and accessible entry to the front door. The service operates from November 15 to April 15 each year.
- Snow Angels is a volunteer-based initiative that connects residents needing help with volunteers such as students seeking community service hours or individuals with available time, who provide snow shoveling assistance at no cost. Residents can sign up for help through the Snow Angels website.
- Bridges of Love (York Region), This free snow removal service is available for seniors aged 65 and older who meet income eligibility criteria:
 - Single seniors must have an income of \$32,300 or less
 - Senior couples must have a combined income of \$47,100 or less
 - Services include clearing sidewalks and driveways. After a snowfall of 2 inches (5 cm) or more, staff are dispatched within 8 to 12 hours to perform snow removal.

Staff conducted a comprehensive review of grant opportunities at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels but were unable to identify any applicable funding.

Additional Considerations

Should Council implement a residential windrow opening program, the following factors could impact any of the services and/or levels of service.

1. Regional roads with residential driveways would not have windrow removal service.
2. Sidewalk windrows would not be removed.
3. A restoration program will be needed to repair sod/driveway damage.
4. Windrow removal service could be impacted/delayed on recycling & waste pick up days.
5. Curb-faced sidewalks and streets with over-curb parking (ex. Bondi Ave.) may not receive service.
6. There may be an increase in claims for property/vehicle damage.

7. Snow storage capacity limitations in higher density communities may become an issue.
8. Roadway snow lifts may be required if windrow accumulation begins to impede into roadway.
9. Increased snow lifts may impact future needs for snow storage.
10. Residential driveway types that would be excluded are private roads, laneways, unassumed, apartment buildings, multi-residential with 6 or more self-contained units, high rise condo, townhouse condo on private roads, and cooperative housing.

Community Survey Results

Corporate Communications developed and implemented a communications plan for the proposed windrow opening program, which resulted in 1,539 survey respondents and more than 835 public comments between May 23, 2025 and June 6, 2025. A media release was issued on May 23, 2025, with coverage from Newmarket Today, York Region Media Group, and an interview with the Mayor on 105.9 The Region radio station. Communications staff promoted the initiative across multiple platforms, including social media (May 23 to June 6, 2025), the *Newmarket Now* e-newsletter (week of June 2, 2025), and internal and external LCD screens at Town facilities.

Table 1.08 illustrates the various age groups that completed the survey with the majority being the age of 55 and up.

Table 1.08 Survey Results - Age Group		
Age Group	Percentage	Respondents
Under 18	0.13%	2
18-24	0.71%	11
25-34	4.55%	70
35-44	19.36%	298
45-54	17.48%	269
55-64	21.25%	327
65+	36.52%	562

Table 1.09 represents if the respondents or persons living in their household have an accessible need. Top response was no, I do have an individual within my household has an accessibility need.

Table 1.09 Survey Results - Accessible Needs		
Question	Percentage	Respondents
No, I Do Not Have an Accessibility Need	56.21%	865
Yes, I Have an Accessibility Need	21.57%	332
No, However an Individual Within my Household has an Accessibility Need	12.93%	199
Prefer Not to Say	9.29%	143

Table 1.10 illustrates the leading option being windrow opening services for seniors and persons with disabilities at no cost, receiving 37% of responses.

Table 1.10 Survey Results - Type of Service		
Type of Service Option Description	Percentage	Respondents
Windrow Clearing for Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities (Free)	37.6%	579
Windrow Clearing for all Residential Households (Tax Funded)	32.5%	500
Windrow Clearing for Interested Residential Households (User-Pay)	18.9%	291
No Change to Current Service	11.0%	169

Table 1.11 survey question was Would You be Open to a Windrow Opening Program for Residential Homes that Clears 3 Meters (One Car Width) of the Driveway to Allow for One Vehicle to Pass if the Town Were to Implement a Windrow Clearing Program, the response was very close with a slight edge to “Yes”.

Table 1.11 Survey Results - Would You be Open to a Windrow Opening Program for Residential Homes that Clears 3 Meters (One Car Width) of the Driveway to Allow for One Vehicle to Pass if the Town Were to Implement a Windrow Clearing Program		
Question	Percentage	Respondents
Yes	53.22%	819
No	46.78%	720

Summary of the respondent's comments are the following:

- **Concerns About Tax Increases** - Many respondents are opposed to the program if it leads to higher property taxes. Some suggest a user-pay system instead of a universal tax-funded service.
- **Support for Seniors and Residents with Disabilities** - A significant number of comments advocate for free windrow clearing for seniors and those with disabilities. Many believe this service is essential for residents who may struggle with heavy snow removal.
- **Mixed Views on Coverage Scope**
 - Some residents want full driveway clearing rather than only one car width.
 - Others argue that clearing only a portion would still leave homeowners with a challenging burden.
 - Some suggest a threshold for snowfall levels, ensuring the program is only implemented when necessary.
- **Timing and Efficiency Concerns** - Several respondents note that windrow clearing should happen immediately after plowing, not hours or days later, which would render the service ineffective for those needing to leave home early.
- **Alternative Funding Suggestions**
 - Exploring contracting out the service to private companies to lower costs.
 - Implementing a seasonal opt-in program for residents willing to pay.
- **Skepticism About Need and Value** - Some argue that snow removal should remain the responsibility of homeowners, and that the town should avoid unnecessary expenses.
- **Examples from Other Municipalities** - Many residents reference Aurora, Vaughan, Toronto, and Markham, which have implemented windrow clearing programs, urging Newmarket to follow suit.

Residential Winter Windrow Opening Service Options

Listed below are six (6) options for residential windrow opening service, including no service. These services and estimated costs are based on the following:

- Windrow opening provided when snow plowing of streets is initiated.
- Windrow opening to be completed in 24 hours or less.
- Opening of 75% of the driveway windrow.
- Pilot programs limited to 300 driveways/applications.
- Costs are estimated and are based on an average of 10 plowing events per year.

Option 1

No Residential Windrow Opening Service

No residential windrow opening service. This option would present the following:

- Costs
 - No budget required
- Pros
 - No administrative burden for review/process windrow applications
 - No contract administration for windrow service tender
- Cons
 - Resident dissatisfaction
 - Potential complaints with increase in severe weather events and snow accumulation due climate change
 - Changing demographics, new residents and changing expectations

Option 2

Full Residential Windrow Opening Service

A full residential windrow opening service would be provided to all municipal driveways that are eligible for this type of program. Exclusions may include, but not limited to curb-faced sidewalks, over-curb parking, multi-residentials, private roads, condos, cooperative housing, laneways or unassumed roads. This option would present the following:

- Costs
 - Estimated full program costs: \$1,400,000 – \$1,600,000 operating tax increase
 - Operational costs \$1,000,000
 - (\$800,000 for standby + \$200,000 for windrow opening)
 - Internal Administrative costs \$500,000
 - Administrative staff support, application processes, contract administration, communication plan, snow lifts and snow storage, restoration program, legal services etc.
- Pros
 - High resident satisfaction with new service
 - Equality of service level
- Cons
 - Complaints regarding the quality of service, including response time.
 - Administrative costs to run the program
 - Increased costs of related items such as claims, property damage, and insurance
 - Increased costs for snow lifts in areas with limited snow storage capacity due to density
 - Not all windrows can be opened due to driveway location, regional roads, recycle/waste collection day, sidewalk windrows.

Option 3

Pay-for-Service - Residential Windrow Opening Service

A Pay-for-Service option would allow residents to request this service for a set fee. An administrative process would be established for residents to register for the service and a payment process would be implemented.

This model of service is not provided in any other municipality in our municipal scan. There are a number of operational challenges in administering a program to random homes. The administrative portion of processing thousands of requests as well as providing that service on an address-by-address basis in the field, would be intensive and an inconsistent service. Further, a pay-for-service will likely come with higher expectations for service quality and delivery. While the logic of a pay-for-service model has some merit, staff are not recommending this option. This service is available privately and will likely provide better service and better value.

This option would present the following:

- Costs
 - Full cost recovery with no tax impact
 - Estimated costs of \$450 - \$550 per applicant
 - Costs could fluctuate each year based on applicant participation rate and contract costs
- Pros
 - Options for residents that would like windrow removal service
 - No tax impact for residents who do not want the service
- Cons
 - Complaints regarding the quality of service, including response time
 - Dissatisfaction with service or years of low snowfall, may lead to request for refunds
 - Administrative costs to run the program.
 - Increased costs of related items such as claims, property damage, and insurance
 - Difficulty delivering this service to specific addresses in the field during poor visibility
 - Variability from year to year with different service routes, different participation rates and costs incurred
 - Cost savings from economies of scale are often negated with administrative costs to run the program.

Option 4

Seniors & Persons with Disabilities Residential Windrow Opening Service – No Fees (note: qualified residents incur no fee due to program costs covered by overall tax base via a tax increase)

Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Residential Windrow Opening Service with No Fees would allow individuals who are eligible, to apply for the service. An application process with specific eligibility requirements would be implemented. Staff would review

applications and provide service to those who meet the criteria. Service would be provided for the winter season, and the process would be repeated annually.

Based on the data from the municipal scan, staff estimate that the Town would receive between 2,000 to 3,000 applications. This option would present the following.

- Costs
 - Estimated Full Program Costs: \$550,000 – \$650,000 (operating tax increase)
 - For 2,500 driveways
 - Operational Costs: \$400,000 (\$300,000 for standby + \$100,000 windrow opening)
 - Internal Administrative costs \$200,000
 - Administrative staff support, application processes, contract administration, communication plan, snow lifts and snow storage, restoration program, legal services etc.
- Pros
 - Targets specific individuals and groups that are in need of support
- Cons
 - Complaints regarding the quality of service, including response time
 - Administrative costs to run the program
 - Increased costs of related items such as claims, property damage, insurance
 - Difficulty delivering this service to specific addresses in the field during poor visibility
 - Managing late requests after routes have been established
 - Variability from year to year with different service routes, different participation rates and costs incurred
 - Cost savings from economies of scale are often negated with administrative costs to run the program.

Option 5

Seniors & Persons with Disabilities Residential Windrow Opening Service – with Fees

Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Residential Windrow Opening Service with Fees would allow individuals who are eligible, to apply for the service. An application process with specific eligibility requirements would be implemented. Staff would review applications and provide service to those who meet the criteria. A payment process would also be established. Service would be provided for the winter season, and the process would be repeated annually.

Based on the data from the municipal scan, staff estimate that the Town would receive between 1,000 to 1,500 applications. This option would present the following:

- Costs
 - Full cost recovery with no tax impact
 - Estimated cost of \$300 - \$350 per applicant
 - Costs could fluctuate each year based on applicant participation rate and contract costs.
- Pros
 - Targets specific individuals and groups that are in need of support and can pay for this service.
- Cons
 - Complaints regarding the quality of service, including response time
 - Dissatisfaction with service or years of low snowfall, may lead to requests for refunds
 - Administrative costs to run the program
 - Managing late requests after routes have been established
 - Increased costs of related items such as claims, property damage, insurance
 - Difficulty delivering this service to specific addresses in the field during poor visibility
 - Variability from year to year with different service routes, different participation rates and costs incurred
 - Cost savings from economies of scale are often negated with administrative costs to run the program.

Option 6

Seniors & Persons with Disabilities - Subsidy

Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Residential Windrow Opening Service receiving a subsidy would allow individuals who are eligible, to apply for the subsidy. An application process with specific eligibility requirements would be implemented. Staff would review applications and provide a subsidy to those who meet the criteria. The subsidy would be provided for the winter season, and the process would be repeated annually.

Based on the data from the municipal scan, staff estimate that the Town would receive between 2,000 to 3,000 applications. This option would present the following:

- Costs
 - Estimated Full Program Costs: \$550,000 (operating tax increase)
 - For 2,500 driveways
 - Proposed subsidy of \$200
 - Subsidy Payments: \$500,000
 - Internal Administrative costs \$50,000
 - Administrative staff support, application processes, communication plan.
- Pros
 - Targets specific individuals and groups that are in need of support
 - No contract and contract administration required by the Town

- Service is provided by the private sector or individuals who could help support
- This service is available privately and will likely provide better service, response times and overall value.
- Cons
 - Vulnerable individuals are left to acquire and manage these services on their own
 - Administrative processes are still required for application reviews and subsidy payment.

Residential Winter Windrow Opening Service - Pilot Program Options

If Council chooses to proceed with a pilot program, Council will need to choose one of the options above that includes a type of windrow opening service. A pilot program can be implemented for the 2025/2026 winter season to test the program operationally before expanding the numbers for the full program in the 2026/2027 winter season. The program would be limited to 300 driveways and it is recommended that the 2025/2026 pilot program expenditures be covered by the Winter Control Reserves. One of the following options can be implemented:

- Full Residential Windrow Opening Service
 - 300 driveways at an estimated cost of \$150,000
- Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities – No User Fees
 - 300 driveways at an estimated cost of \$150,000
- Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities - with fees
 - 300 driveways at a fee of \$300-\$350
- Seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities - Subsidies
 - 300 applicants with a \$200 subsidy, at an estimated cost of \$60,000
- Staff Do Not Recommend a Pay-for-Service pilot.

Staff have reviewed the feasibility of implementing any of these programs as a full program. Due to time constraints, a complete Town wide program could not be implemented in 2025, but could be implemented for the start of the 2026/2027 winter season.

Consultation

A number of internal departments were consulted during this review. Town staff worked collaboratively with Public Works Services, Community and Economic Innovation, Corporate Communications, Customer Service, Finance, and Legislative Services.

Furthermore, external consultation included numerous municipalities and industry contractors regarding current municipal programs and operational processes. In addition, BFL Canada (Insurance adjuster) as well as Dolden Wallace Folick LLP

(external legal consultant) provided consultation regarding insurance litigation, risk management of road allowance issues and other related considerations.

Conclusion

In response to Council's direction, staff have conducted a comprehensive review of residential windrow clearing programs across comparable municipalities and have identified a range of service delivery options, each with unique financial, operational, and community implications. Should Council wish to proceed with a windrow opening service, staff recommend a limited pilot program for the 2025/2026 winter season, funded through the Winter Control Reserves, with the goal of informing Council with more detailed and accurate data, specific to Newmarket, to consider a complete program in 2026/2027.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Customer-First Way of Life.

Human Resource Considerations

If Council chooses to proceed with a Pilot Program, no additional staffing is required currently. If a complete program is implemented in 2026-2027, additional staffing will be required depending on the program selected.

Budget Impact

If Council chooses to deliver a residential windrow opening service, a pilot project is recommended for the 2025/2026 winter season. It is being recommended that the associated expenditures are funded by the Winter Control Reserves.

If a full program is implemented, the associated expenditures would be funded by a operational tax increase.

Attachments

None

Approval for Submission

Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Services

Sepideh Majdi, Acting Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Ian McDougall, Chief Administrative Officer

Report Contact

For more information on this report, please contact Jeff Bond, Business Operations Specialist, Public Works Services at jbond@newmarket.ca, (905) 953-5300 x 2568.