

Sidewalks and Shared-Use Paths Policy Options

Temporary Traffic Control Safety and Accessibility

Recommendation:

That Community and Public Services Committee recommend to City Council:
That Construction Hoarding Policy C580A, as set out in Attachment 3 of the July 6, 2017, City Operations report CR_4556, be approved.

Report Summary

This report recommends revisions to the Construction Hoarding Policy C580 and provides improvement options related to the regulation, administration, and enforcement of processes for traffic disruptions on roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 27, 2017, Community and Public Services meeting the following motion was passed:

That Administration engage with relevant stakeholders and prepare a report on improvement options to the policy, regulation, administration, and enforcement of processes for traffic disruptions on roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths including but not limited to the six options identified in the report (CR_4221).

Report

As Edmonton is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, it is timely that temporary traffic control practices associated with the construction and maintenance occurring within road right-of-way be re-evaluated and assessed to ensure they properly address the safety and accessibility of all modes of transportation. Road right-of-way includes public space that is reserved for transportation purposes and includes sidewalks, boulevards, shared-use paths, parking lanes and travel lanes.

Administration proposes amendments to the Construction Hoarding Policy to clearly establish active modes as the first priority within areas of high pedestrian and cyclist activity. This policy currently focuses on longer-term work sites associated with the construction of buildings on private property that require the use of road right-of-way due to constrained work areas. The report also introduces a proposed fee structure for the use of road right-of-way to reduce occupancy times for construction and maintenance activities, while increasing the availability for public use.

This proposed fee structure for the use of road right-of-way, as well as the Procedures associated with the Construction Hoarding Policy, will be provided to Community and Public Services Committee in the first quarter of 2018. Based on the direction of the Community and Public Services Committee, the fee structure may be implemented for the 2018 construction season. Going forward, the fees would follow the Consumer Price Index on an annual basis. If implemented, Administration would provide Council with an update regarding the effectiveness of the fee structure and the lessons learned one-year following its implementation.

The following improvements to reduce the impact of traffic disruptions are being considered in the areas of incentives, processes, and policy revisions related to temporary traffic control.

Incentives and Fees

Re-structuring how fees are implemented for the use of road right-of-way will provide a monetary incentive for contractors to reduce the duration and footprint of traffic disruptions along sidewalks, shared-use paths, roads and bike facilities.

1. On-Street Construction and Maintenance Permit Fee

On Street Construction and Maintenance permits are required for all work that involves excavation, interferes with traffic flows, and/or occurs with a duration of more than four hours at one location. Similar to the City of Calgary, Administration recommends that a fee be applied to the issuance of an On Street Construction and Maintenance permits to provide further incentive to complete work more efficiently and to minimize the impact on road right-of-way. This permit fee will also cover the costs associated with the administration and inspection of the on-street construction and maintenance process. The permit fee will be at a rate of \$25 per day.

2. Fees for Use of Road Right-of-Way (Sidewalks, Boulevards, Parking/Travel lanes)
Currently, due to the Alberta Building Code requirement for public protection from overhead work, a fee is applied for the use of road right-of-way (Attachment 1). A fee is currently not applied to any other construction and maintenance activities impacting road right-of-way.

Administration proposes that the existing fee structure be expanded to include all work impacting road right-of-way, regardless of the type of work or construction activities. A revision to the fee would ensure that all construction that results in traffic disruption will have a related fee. This will help prioritize active modes of transportation and provide incentive to contractors to reduce the duration of their activities on road right-of-way. As shown in Attachment 1, a daily fee could be implemented for work done during the peak traffic periods (6:00-9:00 and 15:30-18:30) along arterial roads and for work done along collector and local roads with a duration of more than eight hours.

3. Detour Plans and Coordination Fees

Currently, Administration designs and develops a number of Traffic Accommodation Plans, free of charge, for on-street construction and maintenance projects.

Administration recommends that a fee be applied for the design of the Traffic Accommodation Plans. The fee would match what other municipalities such as Calgary currently apply, as shown in Attachment 2. Charging fees for this service may see contractors design and implement their own Traffic Accommodation Plans, resulting in less time required for City staff to complete design work and more time to support the inspection of temporary traffic control accommodation.

Temporary Traffic Control Process Improvements

The Procedures for On-Street Construction Safety Manual provides guidance for contractors in defining the specifications and special provisions required to properly accommodate on-street construction. The procedures are currently being amended to include a greater emphasis on the safety and accessibility of pedestrians and cyclists. The amendments will be completed by the fall of 2017. The following improvements were included:

- Plans to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists around work areas through immediately adjacent parking and travel lanes
- Proper channelization and advance signage for pedestrians and cyclists
- Appropriate design and size of signs to minimize obstructions
- Applying Universal Design to better accommodate pedestrians through proper ramps, even surfaces, and other elements

Additional information is now being collected from contractors to specifically identify where and how pedestrians or cyclists are being impacted by traffic disruptions, allowing for more reliable service to be placed on active modes of transportation.

To improve the quality of temporary traffic control along major bike facilities, with appropriate resourcing, City staff will take ownership of the design, implementation, and regular inspection of temporary traffic control on major bike facilities over the next 12 to 24 months. Once desired service levels are established, contractors and third party service providers would again be eligible to provide temporary traffic control services.

Public Information

Work is underway with 311 to provide the public with a better opportunity to identify and/or raise awareness of obstructions on road right-of-way. Enhancements to processes such as the 311 App and online requests through edmonton.ca will allow the City to more effectively track and respond to these concerns. The App is already available to the public, but Administration will add more specific categories related to sidewalk and bike facility obstructions.

The City's online traffic disruption map currently issues notices for major traffic disruptions impacting roads and sidewalks. In addition, the online traffic disruption

map now includes bike route disruptions for both top of bank and River Valley closures.

Integration

Staff from City Operations, Sustainable Development and Citizen Services have partnered to educate and raise awareness of the temporary traffic control measures required to address the safety and accessibility of infill development sites. Contractors will be required to acknowledge the temporary traffic control requirements associated with their sites as part of the development permit process. Further educational materials will be developed in coordination with the City's Infill Liaison Team.

When Construction and maintenance activity impacting River Valley trails is identified to Citizen Services, the information allows Administration to take an overall role in leading the operations. Information is collected through a variety of ways including, but not limited to, an internal environmental review circulation process (as per North Saskatchewan Area Redevelopment Plan). Citizen Services then works with each individual proponent to develop and communicate trail closure and detour plans. Staff from City Operations and Citizen Services have developed key contacts to properly identify and accommodate disruptions within the River Valley trail system.

Construction Hoarding Policy and Procedures

Construction Hoarding Policy C580, approved by City Council in February 2015, focuses on longer-term work sites associated with the construction of buildings on private property that require the use of public space due to constrained work areas. The policy generally addresses the balance of all forms of transportation, protects streetscape elements, considers the visual treatment of a work area, and involves community through notification.

As shown in Attachment 3 and 4, Administration proposes revisions to the Construction Hoarding Policy to provide a focus on both walking and cycling, broaden the scope to include development activity along with the construction and maintenance of roadways, and show a commitment to ranking active modes as the top priority within areas of high pedestrian and cyclist activity.

In addition, Administration has developed Procedures associated with the Construction Hoarding Policy, as shown in Attachment 5. The procedures clearly define the permitting requirements, the costs of a permit, and the costs associated with the use of road right-of-way. The new procedures also establish a Permit Zone A in areas of high pedestrian and cyclist activity, which generally includes Business Improvement Areas, arterial roadways, and areas of post secondary institutions. Here, pedestrians and cyclists are considered the top priority, followed by public transit and the private vehicle. Within other areas of the City, a balanced modal priority will be established to accommodate typical pedestrian and cyclist activity.

Pavement and Sidewalk Degradation Fees

Administration is in the initial stages of developing new Pavement and Sidewalk Degradation fees that may be applied to all roadway utility cuts. The fee revenue would be utilized to reinvest in the life of roads and sidewalks to maintain their condition, but it would also create a monetary incentive to reduce the number of open cut road repairs incurred through utility work that causes traffic disruption. A fee would minimize cuts, which would, in effect, reduce traffic disruptions and improve accessibility to road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. The development of the fee will include stakeholder engagement and may be prepared for Council's consideration in 2018.

Policy

The Way We Move, Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan

- Strategic Action 6.1(d): Designing all pedestrian facilities to support safe, direct, and convenient routes for people of varying abilities using barrier-free, age-friendly and Crime prevention through environmental Design principles.
- Strategic Action 6.3 (d): Providing safe and secure multi-use trails designed and constructed in accordance to Crime prevention through environmental Design, barrier-free and age-friendly principles.

The Way We Live, Edmonton's People Plan

Strategic Action 3.3: The City of Edmonton reduces physical and financial barriers to housing, transportation, libraries, recreation, social and leisure opportunities for residents.

The Way We Grow, Municipal Development Plan

- Strategic Action 4.0: Complete, Healthy, and Liveable Communities
- Strategic Action 4.6: Active Transportation
- Active Transportation Policy (C544)
- Vision Zero, Edmonton's Road Safety Strategy

Corporate Outcomes

Improving the policy, regulation, administration, and enforcement of processes for traffic disruptions on roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths supports the corporate outcomes of "The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure," "Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation," "Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play," "Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living," "Edmonton is a safe city," and "Edmonton is an environmentally sustainable and resilient city."

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
Public Perception	Edmontonians using active modes of transportation will hold the City to a higher level of service, resulting in an increase in citizen inquiries.	4 - Likely	2 - Moderate	8 - Medium		Changes to temporary traffic control procedures to raise the priority of active modes and create incentives for contractors to reduce occupancy times for construction and maintenance activities, while increasing the availability for public use.
Regulatory	There may be some stakeholders who feel underrepresented with the stakeholder consultation associated with the proposed fee structure.	4 - Likely	2 - Moderate	8 - Medium		The proposed fee structure may be provided to Community and Public Services Committee in Q1 2018, which may allow for further stakeholder engagement.

Public Engagement

In preparing the original report, Obstructions on Sidewalks and Shared-Use Paths, CR_4221, Administration consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Paths for People, and the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Society to discuss public feedback regarding concerns for detour areas related to the accessibility of sidewalks and shared-use paths. These groups were chosen because the original inquiry was focussed on the safety and accessibility of pedestrians and cyclists. The feedback focused on:

1. A desire to improve on the advanced guidance of pedestrians through detour areas
2. The ongoing safety, accessibility and maintenance of a detour (eg. trip hazards, ramps).

On May 8, 2017, Administration further consulted with the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The committee provided constructive input into design elements such as wheelchair ramps and offered to assist Administration in notifying the public of disruptions to sidewalks and shared-use paths through their social media avenues.

On May 17, 2017, Administration hosted a Temporary Traffic Control Safety and Accessibility Workshop with relevant stakeholders from various user groups, utility companies and the development industry. The main topics of discussion included:

- Amendments to the existing Construction Hoarding Policy C580
- Proposed Fee Structure for the use of public space
- Improvements to the City's Procedures for On-Street Construction Safety Manual

With regards to the amendments to the existing Construction Hoarding Policy C580, the stakeholders understood that placing a higher priority on pedestrians and cyclists would support more vibrant and liveable communities. However, some stakeholders were concerned that applying a higher priority on the active modes may lead to driver frustration, as a result of increased driver delay. Some stakeholders felt that a certain level of frustration may be mitigated through public education of the temporary traffic control changes. Certain stakeholders were also concerned that supporting the active modes as the top priority may be a challenge for smaller projects and emergency closures.

In terms of a proposed fee structure, the stakeholders recognized that this approach would encourage contractors to complete their work more efficiently, and it may even lead to more innovative solutions to reduce work on road right-of-way (eg. provide conduits for utilities). However, they felt the fees would lead to higher contractor/developer/owner costs that may consequently result in increased costs to citizens. Stakeholders stressed caution in implementing fees and suggested that a phased approach be considered. Some stakeholders indicated that certain franchise agreements would need to be taken into consideration relative to a fee structure.

In general, the stakeholders emphasized the importance of having strong communication between City staff and contractors to establish clear expectations and share input in order for these approaches to be successful.

Budget/Financial Implications

Based on the 2016 construction activity level, the proposed fees associated with On-Street Construction and Maintenance Permit Fees permits and the occupancy of road right-of-way would equate to approximately \$18.6 million, as shown below:

- On-Street Construction and Maintenance Permit Fees: \$6.6 million
- Fees for use of Road Right-of-Way:
 - Arterial Roads: \$9.2 million
 - Residential Roads: \$2.6 million
- Preparation of Traffic Accommodation Plans: \$200,000

Given the monetary incentive to reduce the occupancy of road right-of-way, this revenue will potentially decrease over time. Based upon 30 days of consecutive work on the road right-of-way, the cost associated with an On-Street Construction and Maintenance Permit fee would be \$750. Occupancy of an arterial road would be \$8,250 and occupancy of a residential road would be \$555.

Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	Targets	Outcomes
Based on 2016, an average OSCAM permit was 33 days	Reduce the occupancy of road right-of-way by 15% (28 days)	Reduce impact to pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and motorists
Average time a typical utility repair occupies road right-of-way	To be determined	Reduce impact to pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and motorists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Commercial Final permits processed in 2016 = 2,432 • Number requiring hoarding agreements under the Safety Codes Permit Bylaw = 62 of the 2,432 permits • Number of On Street Construction and Maintenance permits 	Continue to match service level with permit requests.	Ensures that Administration knows what work is being done and that contractors comply with City regulations.

processed in 2016 = 9710.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of dispatched 'obstruction on sidewalk / roadway' complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2016 - 648 ○ 2015 - 618 ○ 2014 - 566 • Number of warnings issued for 'obstructions on sidewalks / roadways' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2016 - 535 ○ 2015 - 367 ○ 2014 - 374 • Number of tickets issued for 'obstruction on sidewalk / roadway' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2016 - 82 ○ 2015 - 22 ○ 2014 - 31 	Compliance = 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access for all modes. • Ultimately, Administration aims to achieve better traffic control for all modes and fewer lane closures. Metrics will be further developed as more detailed information is gathered.
<p>Number of inquiries regarding sidewalk /shared-use path obstructions on social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ April 2016 - 12 ○ May 2016 - 9 ○ June 2016 - 10 ○ July 2016 - 14 ○ August 2016 - 18 ○ September 2016 - 5 ○ October 2016 - 24 	To be determined.	Improved access for all modes of transportation.

Justification of Recommendation:

Approving the amendments to the Construction Hoarding Policy C580 provides a sustained plan to reduce traffic disruptions for active transportation on roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use paths.

Attachments

1. Proposed Fee Structure for Use of Road Right-of-Way
2. City of Calgary Traffic Accommodation Plan Fees
3. Policy C580A
4. Side by Side Comparison of Policy C580 and C580A
5. Proposed Construction Hoarding Policy Procedures – Policy C580A

Others Reviewing this Report

- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- R. G. Klassen, Deputy City Manager, Sustainable Development
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- C. Campbell, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement