

PARKING BAN ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Recommendation

That the June 16, 2025, Community Services report CS02945, be received for information.

Requested Action		Information only	
ConnectEdmonton’s Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Urban Places	
City Plan Values	LIVE. ACCESS.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A Community of Communities	Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities	Mobility Network Conditions for Service Success
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snow and Ice Control Policy C409K• Snow and Ice Control Administrative Procedure• Traffic Bylaw 5590		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 25, 2022, City Operations report CO0078, Options to Increase Service Standards• June 27, 2022, City Operations report CO01277, Snow & Ice Control - Programmed Approach for the 2022-2023 Winter Season• November 14, 2022, Community Services report CS01415, Bylaw 20272 Amendment to Traffic Bylaw 5590• June 19, 2023, City Operations report CO01733, Snow and Ice Control 2022-23 Winter Season Results• June 19, 2023, City Operations report CO01824, Bylaw Enforcement & Ticketing during Phase 2 Parking Bans (E. Rutherford)		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 4/5, 2025, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report including an analysis on the parking fine options and a strategy around key locations and return to Committee with options/recommended path outlining additional resources to properly address the needs across Edmonton to remove vehicles on streets during parking bans.

Executive Summary

- The primary goal of enforcement during a parking ban is to promote voluntary compliance by encouraging Edmontonians to remove their vehicles from designated areas, thereby improving safety, minimizing the risk of property damage and enabling efficient maintenance operations.
- Currently, five temporary municipal enforcement officers are deployed citywide during declared winter parking bans. There are no dedicated resources for spring street sweeping enforcement.
- A fine increase from \$100 to \$250 was introduced in 2022 to serve as a stronger deterrent for non-compliance and align with other bylaw infractions.
- Contracted towing services have not been available since the conclusion of the 2022-2023 one-time funding designated to support parking ban enforcement.
- Low compliance areas vary due to neighbourhood design, available off-street parking, weather and other factors. Enforcement efforts are coordinated with roadway operations in real-time to address the most challenging areas.
- Consistent enforcement efforts lead to sustained changes in compliance rates and behaviour by reinforcing expectations, deterring violations and building a culture of accountability over time.

REPORT

Parking bans restrict parking in designated areas during roadway maintenance and are important in maintaining safe travel conditions. When vehicles are left on the street, they delay operational crews and pose safety risks to workers and equipment. Parking bans ensure streets are clear, allowing for faster, more efficient snow clearing and street sweeping, resulting in safer roads that are easier for everyone to navigate.

Enforcement officers work alongside road operations crews throughout declared parking bans. Officers issue tickets and may direct towing before residential blading or sweeping. This coordinated approach ensures that roadway operations can safely clear streets from curb to curb without obstruction.

Parking ban compliance depends on effective communication, public awareness and consistent enforcement. Administration uses various communication methods to notify Edmontonians of parking bans and street maintenance schedules. These include neighbourhood signage (both permanent and temporary), email alerts, news releases/public service announcements, social

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media, web updates, highway digital signs and messages on transit destination signs on ETS buses. Edmontonians are also encouraged to sign up for text message notifications and follow the City's social media channels to learn when a parking ban is in effect.

Permanent "Seasonal No Parking" signs are installed along all Phase 1 routes (major arterial roads) while temporary signage is used for Phase 2 (residential areas). Temporary signage is strategically placed at pre-determined high-visibility locations 24 hours before enforcement and maintenance operations to maximize awareness and compliance. During winter Phase 2 parking bans, bright orange sandwich board signs are deployed, while spring street sweeping bans use white "No Parking" sandwich board signs for clear differentiation. These efforts notify Edmontonians to move their parked vehicles temporarily from designated areas.

Administration conducted a jurisdictional scan to compare snow and ice control practices in other winter cities across Canada (Attachment 1). Cities like Calgary, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg were examined, considering factors such as population, snow removal budgets and winter parking bans. The scan details parking ban restrictions, tow services, enforcement methods and fine amounts for violations. This scan aimed to identify best practices and variations in enforcement strategies related to ticketing and towing vehicles during snow removal operations. The restrictions vary widely, from major arterial road bans to residential zone plowing schedules and seasonal prohibitions. Towing practices, enforcement approaches and fine structures also differ significantly across the municipalities, making it challenging to compare enforcement.

History

Winter Parking Bans

Before 2022, contracted Parking Enforcement Services enforced winter parking bans. Parking enforcement resources were diverted from regular calls for service to support roadway operations when a parking ban was in effect for major arterial roads, limiting overall response capacity. Towing services were requested where needed, but their availability was often limited, impacting the ability to respond during major snow events. Vehicles found in violation could be seized and stored in the Police Seized Vehicle Storage Lot. The vehicle's registered owner had to pay for the towing service and storage fee before the vehicle's release.

In 2020-2021, Administration introduced a two-phased parking ban system, with major arterial roads cleared in Phase 1 and residential areas cleared in Phase 2. However, no additional resources were allocated to support this expansion. The Parking Enforcement Services contract already faced ongoing staffing challenges and increased service calls, making the model unsustainable.

On July 4, 2022, City Council approved a one-time funding increase of \$4.7 million from the Financial Stabilization Reserve to initiate snow and ice control service improvements as outlined in the CO01277 Snow and Ice Control - Programmed Approach for the 2022-2023 Winter Season Council Report. As part of this investment, \$1.19 million was allocated to enhance enforcement for the 2022-2023 winter season and support winter parking bans. This funding allowed for new dedicated parking ban enforcement staff, including 15 seasonal temporary municipal

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enforcement officers and two temporary support clerks, along with a budget allocated for towing services for that season. During this period, vehicles violating the parking ban could be towed to the nearest available street location at no additional cost to the vehicle owner. In addition, the fine amount was increased from \$100 to \$250 to serve as an additional deterrent to non-compliance.

This additional capacity and program oversight shifted the City's response-based approach to proactive enforcement. When parking bans were not in effect, the temporary officers conducted proactive snow on sidewalk enforcement in areas identified as high-priority for pedestrian safety. These priority areas included sidewalks along major bus routes, Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS) pick-up zones, hospitals, senior centres and living facilities, school zones, recreation areas and commercial/business districts.

In December 2022, City Council funded ongoing enhanced snow and ice control services; however, enforcement funding was reduced from \$1.19 million to \$274,000 annually. This reduction impacted staffing and towing resources starting in January 2023. Staffing was reduced from 15 dedicated temporary municipal enforcement officers and two temporary clerks to five municipal enforcement officers and one clerk. No budget was allocated to support towing services. Winter parking ban enforcement and proactive snow on walk enforcement continued for this season, but due to these reductions, a limited enforcement model was implemented and continues to be used today.

Spring Parking Bans

Prior to 2024, there was no enforcement of spring street sweeping parking bans for over a decade. In the spring of 2024, municipal enforcement officers were reassigned to provide enforcement. During this period, regular calls for service were paused and/or diverted to prioritize spring sweep operations. Due to limited resources and previous impacts on calls for service, enforcement shifted to contracted parking enforcement officers in 2025 to allow municipal enforcement officers to return to their regular duties.

Efforts have been exclusively focused on winter maintenance operations. Spring sweep enforcement has been left unaddressed or managed inconsistently, and no budget has been allocated to support its implementation.

Current Enforcement Approach

Currently, five temporary municipal enforcement officers are funded and deployed across the city to assist in enforcing winter parking bans; however, there are no provisions for towing and no dedicated resources or budget allocated for spring sweep maintenance activities.

In recent years, several strategies have been implemented in an attempt to improve compliance rates, including the following:

- the introduction of email alerts and text message notifications
- live maps indicating dates when areas are being plowed
- increase in temporary signage and introduction of brighter sign colour
- an increase in the number of dedicated enforcement officers
- changing the fine for non-compliance from \$100 to \$250

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- towing vehicles in violation of the parking ban

Due to frequent changes to the implementation strategy each year, there has not been enough time to evaluate the impact of any specific approach, fines or collect data on its effectiveness (Attachment 2). Sustained enforcement and public education are key to changing behaviour. Consistent data collection over multiple seasons is needed to properly assess the effectiveness of enforcement strategies.

Location Strategy

The City maintains more than 12,000 linear kilometres of roadways, so enforcement teams cannot reach all areas during a parking ban. Enforcement efforts must adapt daily, following road operations crews through various neighbourhoods and deploying limited resources to observe low-compliance sites in real-time. Ongoing communication between enforcement and operations crews occurs and is essential to prioritize areas where resources can have the greatest impact.

Certain zones, such as hospitals, schools, and other locations with high pedestrian traffic, tend to experience lower compliance and pose greater safety risks during roadway operations. High-density residential areas also present unique challenges. These neighbourhoods typically offer limited off-street parking, resulting in lower compliance and making it more difficult for crews to conduct full curb-to-curb clearing.

Administration is committed to developing a key location mapping tool to assist enforcement officers in identifying potentially low-compliance locations. Physical indicators (neighbourhood design and available parking) and behavioural (enforcement history) indicators could be included to direct enforcement efforts. Administration will prioritize proactive enforcement in these areas when time and resources permit. Enforcement officers will still be required to communicate daily with operations crews, ensuring that enforcement is in advance of blading/sweeping. This will also allow operations crews to report real-time low compliance zones.

Administration is also exploring options for operational programming adjustments that can assist with compliance during parking bans. This could include adjusting current signage practices and placement and streamlining operational scheduling, during the parking bans.

Towing Challenges

Towing services were only available during the 2022-23 season through one-time funding. Administration utilized an existing towing contract with two service vendors, providing up to five trucks each. The cost was approximately \$55,000 for 422 tows. Towed vehicles were relocated to the closest street where the parking ban was not in effect. A "Tow Location Tool" was available on the City's website to assist vehicle owners. Only 10 per cent of ticketed vehicles were towed that season. Currently, there is only one contracted tow provider available, further limiting the ability to tow. The City is working on procuring another towing company to address capacity issues. Towing vehicles to the Police Seized Vehicle Lot is no longer an option due to limited storage capacity.

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The main challenge preventing citywide vehicle towing is contractor capacity during parking bans. Several factors limit towing capacity:

- length of time to tow a vehicle (30-45 minutes per vehicle)
- reported labour shortages with the towing contractor
- equipment failures, especially during extreme weather
- competing service demands on the contract provider from the general public

Ultimately, increased and sustained enforcement is key to improving compliance. While towing may be a useful tool in addressing chronically non-compliant neighbourhoods, it is not effective without the foundational support of consistent enforcement and staffing resource allocation.

Enforcement Options and Parking Ban Compliance

Effective communication, public awareness campaigns and consistent enforcement are crucial for ensuring compliance with parking bans. A variety of communication methods are used to support enforcement efforts and complement the proposed enforcement options. Four enforcement options for winter parking bans have been identified, each with varying levels of service and resource commitment. While initially focused on winter parking bans, these options can be scaled up to include spring sweep maintenance activities with appropriate resource adjustments. The options are outlined below and are summarized in Attachment 3.

Option 1: Status Quo - Maintaining Current Practices (no additional funding)

This option maintains the existing enforcement model, which utilizes five temporary bylaw enforcement officers and one clerk. Officers would only issue tickets with no budget for towing. No additional funding is required and resources would be allocated specifically for ticketing during winter parking bans. Option 1 does not provide enforcement for the spring sweep.

This option would not result in any additional funding.

Option 2: Current State with Towing (estimated \$100,000 increase)

Current staffing levels and practices of Option 1 are maintained in Option 2, with the added ability to tow non-compliant vehicles. It would employ the same five temporary bylaw enforcement officers and one clerk as Option 1, and additional funds would be required to accommodate towing costs. Officers would issue tickets and authorize the towing of vehicles violating the parking ban to the nearest available street, enabling snow and ice removal. This option estimates that five per cent of vehicles will be towed by contracted towing companies at an estimated cost of \$130 to \$150 per vehicle. Similar to Option 1, spring sweep support is not included in this option.

This option would cost an additional \$100,000 in ongoing operating funding.

Option 3: Enhanced Resources with Towing Contract (estimated \$1,057,510 increase)

Option 3 would require additional funding similar to the 2022-2023 budget. To support enhanced parking ban enforcement, funding would be allocated for temporary staffing, including one enforcement supervisor, 10 additional bylaw enforcement officers and one

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extra clerk. This would bring the total staffing to one supervisor, fifteen officers and two clerks. The funding would also cover the existing towing contract.

Officers would issue tickets and tow vehicles violating the parking ban to the nearest available street, enabling snow and ice removal. This option estimates that five per cent of vehicles will be towed by contracted towing companies at an estimated cost of \$130 to \$150 per vehicle. Due to possible limitations in towing contracts and the number of vehicles not following regulations, the practicality of this approach is uncertain.

While this option enhances Edmontonian satisfaction with the option to tow and provides additional proactive snow and sidewalk enforcement in priority areas when there is no parking ban, it does have drawbacks. These include the limited number of tows, the practicality of timely towing and difficulty finding a safe spot to tow vehicles, especially in congested areas.

This option would cost an additional \$1.1 million in ongoing operating funding.

Option 4: Existing External Parking Enforcement Services Contract with Towing Contract (estimated \$1,511,440 increase)

Option 4 would involve utilizing the existing Parking Enforcement Services and towing contracts, which would require an increased budget. This option would result in increased ticketing and towing, with enforcement starting before street clearing and occurring seven days a week. Approximately five per cent of vehicles would be towed at an estimated cost of \$130-\$150 per vehicle.

Contracting out parking ban enforcement presents risks, including less control, high staff turnover, poor operational coordination, limited resource flexibility, inconsistent standards and quality, delayed data and potential capacity issues. The current towing contract lacks guaranteed dedicated service, potentially having limited capacity during major snow events. Extended towing distances may increase tow times. This option also excludes proactive sidewalk snow removal.

Despite these challenges, consistent enforcement and towing could promote long-term behaviour change, remove vehicles from streets for effective snow clearing, deter future violations, increase compliance and improve satisfaction with towing services. It would also increase the availability of parking enforcement resources year-round.

This option would cost an additional \$1.5 million in ongoing operating funding.

Considering the various enforcement options presented, each presents distinct advantages and challenges. While Administration continually adjusts operational practices to improve the City's response to variable winter conditions (snow, freezing rain, ice, significant thaw) within existing resources, additional resources would offer greater consistency to provide service to residents. Additional resources would enable more effective and proactive enforcement in responding to parking bans.

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Budget/Financial Implications

Administration has developed four options for Council consideration:

Option	Description	New Annual Funding Required
1	Status Quo (ongoing funding of \$274,000)	\$0
2	Current State with Towing	\$100,000
3	Enhanced Resources with Towing Contract	\$1,057,510
4	Existing External Parking Enforcement Services Contract with Towing Contract	\$1,511,440

Options 2 through 4 outlined in this report would be considered annual increases to the parking ban enforcement service level and are not within current budget allocations.

Community Insight

Since 2022, Administration has conducted surveys to understand residents' perceptions about the communication of the City's Snow and Ice Control (SNIC) program. The findings from these surveys are used to inform communication improvements as recommended in the 2021 Snow and Ice audit. These surveys are done each spring and are distributed to the City's Insight Community through an open link on the City's website and promoted through social media and the weekly engagement public service announcement. Before the 2025 survey was conducted, a major snow event occurred. This may have influenced the conditions observed and the responses gathered during the survey, possibly impacting public opinions. It is important to take into account the possible impacts of this snow event when analyzing the data collected from the 2025 survey conducted between April 1 and April 14, 2025. A total of 4,138 respondents completed the survey.

- 52 per cent of respondents were aware of the Phase 2 Parking Ban from January 7 to January 24, 2025. Awareness was generated through the following channels:
 - Street and digital signs (55 per cent)
 - Parking Ban Service Notifications (email/SMS) (44 per cent)
 - Transit signage (42 per cent)
 - Social media (24 per cent)
 - City website (15 per cent)
- 32 per cent of respondents are subscribed to service notifications to receive communications on parking bans
- 71 per cent understand how a Phase 1 parking ban works
- 67 per cent understand how a Phase 2 parking ban works

Additional engagement with public and interested parties was completed in 2022 to inform reports CO00778 Snow and Ice Control - Options to Increase Service Standards (Community and Public Services Committee, April 25, 2022) and CO01277 Snow and Ice Control -

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Programmed Approach for the 2022-23 Winter Season (Community and Public Services Committee, June 27, 2022). The What We Heard Report surveyed 5,038 Insight Community members in addition to 106 external partners and 122 internal partners. The results revealed that over half of the public respondents agree that the community parking ban signs are easy to see or find.

Feedback regarding parking bans highlighted the need for stricter enforcement, clearer information on parking ban signage, and addressing issues with signs being posted prematurely or delays in snow removal.

GBA+

Parking bans play an important role in maintaining the safety and efficiency of the City's mobility networks. However, neighbourhood design can influence the availability and type of residential parking, meaning parking bans may disproportionately impact Edmontonians with limited access to off-street parking. Individuals with reduced mobility, including seniors and persons with disabilities, may be especially affected, as parking further away from their homes during a parking ban may increase the risk of injury, particularly in icy conditions. The challenges of parking interruptions are taken into consideration when parking bans are called and enforcement is used. To help mitigate these impacts, vehicles displaying valid accessible parking placards or those authorized to park in accessible parking spaces are exempt from the parking ban. These vehicles are not subject to ticketing or towing in designated accessible areas. At the same time, enforcement remains in place for unauthorized vehicles parked in these reserved spaces to ensure they remain available to those who need them most. Administration considers the challenge of parking interruptions when issuing and enforcing parking bans, with the goal of balancing effective road maintenance with equitable access and safety for all Edmontonians.

Environment and Climate Review

The City Plan Intention 2.4.2 envisions Edmonton as a leader in efficient, sustainable and resilient community design, development and living, which includes how we manage public spaces such as curbsides and off-street parking spaces (City Plan Direction 2.4.2.5). Parking bans are traffic measures needed to ensure snow removal and street sweeping are completed efficiently and safely at declared parking locations in the City based on established parking policies and operational needs. To protect the environment and demonstrate stewardship, Administration follows applicable regulatory requirements and established administrative and operational controls for storing, handling and managing snow and ice control materials (i.e. salt and other de-icing substances) to avoid generating waste and causing unintended spills/releases. As Administration continues to increase compliance with parking bans by enhancing enforcement options, the following environmental and climate implications may be considered:

Impact on air quality

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Both the towing of non-compliant vehicles¹ and the potential effect of local traffic driving around to locate available parking spots² contribute to traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) that affects human health.³ It is noted in this report that high-density housing areas tend to have low compliance with parking bans, which implies that there is potential for increased idling and cruising behaviours in these areas. The proposed Option 3 with increased towing contracts may need to consider the environmental implications of enhanced towing of vehicles during parking bans.

Increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

It is expected that the towing of non-compliant vehicles will utilize light and medium-duty trucks. These vehicles can haul considerable weight, and therefore produce more GHG emissions (compared to single occupancy passenger vehicles) from the combustion of fuels, contributing to community transportation-related GHG emissions in Edmonton. In 2023, transportation made up thirty-six per cent of the community's GHG emissions.⁴ Administration could consider emissions reductions by way of contractual obligations for the use of low-emitting towing vehicles.⁵

Attachments

1. Jurisdictional Scan
2. Parking Ban Enforcement
3. Resource Options

¹International Energy Agency. (2017). The Future of Trucks: Implications for Energy and the Environment, Paris: IEA. DOI: 10.1787/9789264279452-en

² Höglund, P. G. (2004). Parking, Energy Consumption and Air Pollution. Science of The Total Environment, Volumes 334–335: 39-45. Cruising does not only imply more vehicle-kilometres travelled but also cruising for parking, which contributes to road congestion and air pollution, given that cruising for parking is at slower speed and slows down other vehicles.

³ Government of Canada. (2023). Traffic and Air Quality: Driving Change Through Research. Accessed from: <https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/blogs/science-health/traffic-and-air-quality-driving-change-through-research>

⁴ City of Edmonton. (November 2024). Climate Strategies Annual Implementation Update: 2024 Report. City of Edmonton.

⁵ City Tow Truck. (No Year). The Future of Towing: Trends and Predictions. Accessed from: <https://citytowtruck.com/the-future-of-towing-trends-and-predictions/>