

Update on Snow and Ice Clearing on Sidewalks

Recommendation:

That the November 15, 2011, Transportation Services report 2011TS8776 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report responds to questions on the impact of the City taking responsibility of clearing snow from all sidewalks.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the September 6, 2011, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee providing updated information on how the City could potentially take responsibility for all sidewalk clearing in light of the potential new Snow and Ice Control Policy C409G.

Report

Currently there is a total of approximately 4950 kilometres of sidewalks in the City of Edmonton. This includes sidewalks adjacent to roadways, shared-use paths and walkways on Public Utility Lots. Transportation Services is responsible for clearing snow from approximately 1100 kilometres of this total with the remaining 3850 kilometres being cleared by adjacent property owners as

required under the Community Standards Bylaw 14600.

After any snowfall, Transportation Services clears snow from the sidewalks they are responsible for down to the walk surface within 48 hours of the end of the snowfall. On average, snow is cleared from these sidewalks 25 times per winter season. The 2011 budget for sidewalk clearing is \$5.6 million.

If the City were to clear snow from the 3850 kilometres currently done by adjacent property owners, it would create an increase in budget costs of \$19.3 million bringing the total to \$24.9 million.

In addition to the cost impacts, there are significant operating challenges. The walk plowing equipment used by the City and contractors has an operating width of 1.5 kilometres and is safe to operate on boulevard sidewalks as narrow as 1.5 metres. Approximately two-thirds of the total sidewalk inventory is curb line sidewalk, much of the residential sidewalks are 1.5 metres wide curb line sidewalks. To operate safely on curb line sidewalks requires a minimum width of 2 metres to avoid contact with parked vehicles. Plowing of sidewalks adjacent to residential property also has a potential to cause damage to landscaping and results in the placement of windrowed snow on frontage lawns.

To address the operating risks, a parking ban on residential roadways with 1.5 metres wide curb line sidewalks would need to be implemented. With an average of 25 cycles of walk plowing each winter, this ban would need to be a fixed seasonal ban.

Policy

Winter Road Maintenance Policy C409G

Corporate Outcomes

An effective snow and ice control program supports The Way We Move strategic goal of a well maintained infrastructure and ensures a safe reliable transportation network through the winter season.