

Sand Boxes at Intersections Pilot Program

Recommendation:

That the January 25, 2011, Transportation Department report 2010TD1312 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the implementation of a pilot program where sand boxes can be provided in locations where there are frequently icy intersections.

Previous Council/Committee Action

- At the November 16, 2010, Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting, the November 16, 2010, Transportation Department report 2010TD1312, was postponed to the January 25, 2011, Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting.
- At the May 4, 2010, Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:
That the Administration provide a report to Transportation and Public Works Committee on how to implement a pilot program where sand boxes can be provided in locations where there are frequently icy intersections.

Report

The winter road maintenance procedure presently defines areas in need of winter maintenance that are not on a regular

snow and ice control route to be dealt with as follows:

- Sand in all areas where freezing run off has created a hazardous condition.
- Sand complaints reviewed by radio dispatch or crew leader.
- All maintenance districts are to document and monitor all "hot spot" locations such as hills in residential areas.
- Placement of sandboxes does not minimize the liability to the City of Edmonton.
- Request from motorists or residents in the area identifying icy conditions at residential intersections would still require dispatching of a sander to render this location safe for vehicles and pedestrians.
- The average cost to place and maintain a sand box is approximately \$500 per box per season (based on three to four events per season). The cost to respond to a reported icy condition off the arterial/collector network is approximately \$100 per hour (based on an average 45 minute response time).

Based on all information provided, implementing this pilot program would increase costs without eliminating the requirement for City crew response.

Legal Implications

A pilot program to place sand boxes near icy intersections has the potential to expose the City to greater liability. Section 531 of the *Municipal Government Act* provides that a municipality is only liable for personal injury or property damage caused by snow, ice or slush on roads if the

municipality is grossly negligent. By placing sand boxes near icy intersections, the City will implicitly encourage motorists to stop their vehicles, exit them, and proceed into the intersection for the purpose of spreading the sand. In the absence of appropriate means to warn and control other traffic approaching the intersection, this has the potential to create dangerous situations, particularly where visibility is limited (for example in adverse weather conditions or when light is dim, situations that are common in an Edmonton winter). In short, encouraging the public to set foot in an icy intersection for the purpose of spreading sand without taking steps to control traffic approaching the intersection could be construed by the courts as gross negligence if damage or injury results. The Law Branch, Corporate Services Department does not support the implementation of such a pilot project.

Others Reviewing

- D. H. Edey, General Manager,
Corporate Services Department