

8.



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
December 14, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Drew", written over a horizontal line.

Larry Drew, A/Director Public Works & Transportation

DATE: December 10, 2004

SUBJECT: Options for Sidewalk Snow Removal

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council, January 21, 2003 Items 8.2.1. and 9.6.1; January 27, 2004, Item 11.4.
Committee of the Whole, February 18, 2003, Item 4.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality currently spends approximately \$2.5 - 3 million for the sidewalk snow removal program. The program is funded primarily through area rates.

Currently, the servicing for sidewalk snow removal is fragmented across the HRM, and has been the cause of confusion and, at times, acrimony for members of Council, staff, and residents. Staff believes it is necessary to review the best option for sidewalk snow removal for the municipality as a whole - one that befits the goals and objectives for all services outlined in the HRM Corporate Scorecard and that results in the most satisfaction to the HRM taxpayer.

DISCUSSION

The intent of this report is to provide a brief overview of the options available to HRM with respect to sidewalk snow clearing and removal. At this point, staff is not requesting that Regional Council risk making an uninformed decision on any of the options presented, as staff's intent is to first review the service in more detail at Program & Service Review early in January, 2005.

It is intended that operations staff will maintain the current sidewalk snow program for the upcoming 2004/05 winter season and implement any new HRM-wide option(s) in the fall of 2005/06. This was conveyed to Council in the July 6, 2004 report "2004-05 Area Rates for Sidewalk Snowplowing". Continuation of existing service levels was also discussed with those Councillors who currently do not receive the service at a meeting on June 8, 2004. Staff believes that this is an appropriate time frame, given the amount of public consultation required and the need to reach a new Collective Agreement with CUPE 108, which is currently being negotiated.

Current Service Level

Currently, the Snow & Ice Program clears approximately 480 km of sidewalk along main arterial/collector and residential streets at a cost of \$2.5 - 3 million. This includes sidewalks abutting both HRM-owned and privately-owned properties for those Districts included in the program.

Under the published Snow & Ice Service Standards, sidewalks fall under the "Other Surface Types" category. Surfaces under this category are cleared according to the following criteria:

- These surfaces will be completed during regular shifts.
- The Snow and Ice Control Program endeavours to complete these areas not later than three days after any weather event.
- Under circumstances where multiple events occur, these routes may not be fully completed when work must start again on the priority 1 routes.
- Cleaning of sidewalks will follow the standards set in by-law 300.

Options for Sidewalk Snow Removal

Although a more detailed presentation will be made to the Program & Service Review Committee in January, 2005, staff wishes Council to consider the following five options for sidewalk snow removal:

1. Council could direct staff to provide sidewalk snow removal for all sidewalks in the entire municipality, including residential sidewalks.
2. Council could direct staff to only maintain arterial and major collector sidewalks in all of HRM, but not residential sidewalks (i.e. responsibility of abutter).
3. Council could direct staff to maintain the current service levels for sidewalk snow removal, but add in collectors/main arterials on the Halifax peninsula and Districts 17 and 18.

4. Council could direct staff to maintain the current service levels for sidewalk snow removal.
5. Council could direct staff to discontinue the service.

During the presentation to Program & Service Review, staff will provide more detailed costing information and return to Council with a formal recommendation for implementation beginning the 2005/06 winter season.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Bruce Fisher, Manager Financial Planning, Financial Services 490-4493
Gordon Hayward, Snow & Ice Coordinator, Public Works & Transportation 490-4956
Wayne Legere, Manager Technical & Underground Services, Public Works & Transportation 490-6034
Liz Kingston, Coordinator - Director's Office, Public Works & Transportation 490-4862

Report Approved by: 
Dale MacLennan, Director Financial Services 490-6308