



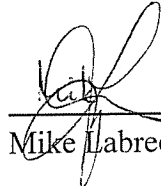
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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**January 9, 2007**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
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Mike Labrecque P.Eng., Director Transportation & Public Works

**DATE:** January 2, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Contractual Services - Property Damage

## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council, December 12, 2006 - Request from Councillor Murphy.

### BACKGROUND

Council has questioned some of HRM's sidewalk snowplowing practices and has requested clarification on HRM sidewalk snow and ice control services, particularly with respect to contracted services and property damage.

## **DISCUSSION**

HRM is responsible for 564 kilometers of sidewalks under the Sidewalk and Walkway Snow/Ice Control Program. The Program is delivered by: performance based contracts (139 kms); hourly based contracts (330 kms); and, in-house services (95 kms). See Appendix A for Route Descriptions.

The first two snow events of the year created some snow damages, particularly with damage to sod abutting sidewalks. Over 300 damage complaints have been identified to date.

The following questions were raised by members of Council during the December 12<sup>th</sup> Council Session:

### **Why are Contractors Not Using Proper Equipment?**

The hourly based contracts clearly identify the type and size of equipment to be used in the Snow/Ice Control Program, including the width of the blades. The contracts also state that the Contractor shall be responsible for: examining all locations on the assigned route; determining the width of sidewalk and providing appropriate snow removal equipment; and, repairing any damage to the adjacent area. Any cost associated with the damage shall be recovered from the Contractor.

The performance based contracts state that the Contractor is fully responsible to determine the equipment needs to meet the contract. The contract also states that all equipment used to carry out this contract will be inspected and approved by HRM. The Contractor is also responsible for all repairs of any damage to HRM and private property which is a result of snow and ice control activities.

### **How many pieces of equipment does HRM have? Why is HRM not using its own snow equipment?**

HRM is utilizing in-house equipment to its maximum. Currently 11 trackless vehicles are in operation (nine are assigned specific routes and two are used as back-up). HRM is also utilizing four skid steers that are suitable for sidewalk plowing (of which two are assigned to specific routes).

**Would it be possible to get the Contractor out to fix the sods after each occurrence and can the properties be reinstated sooner?**

The performance based contracts emphasize the importance of customer service. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure a high degree of quality customer service is provided in the delivery of the Sidewalk and Walkway Snow/Ice Control Program. Staff has met with the Contractors, and where possible, damaged properties are being reinstated. The contracts also state that all repairs must be completed by May 15<sup>th</sup>. A hold back of 10% of the contract is withheld until the repairs are finished.

In regard to the hourly based contracts, staff are working with the Contractors to have damaged properties partially, or fully, reinstated where possible. Repairs must be completed by June 1, with a 5% hold back and a month retaining fee withheld until the work is completed.

**What is the amount of claims?**

To date, approximately 300 claims have been identified, either through Hansen or by Contractors and staff. It is estimated that the total cost to repair the damages is between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

**What is the protocol for residents to report occurrences and have them addressed in a timely manner?**

The following protocol will be observed regarding the reporting of damage to HRM:

1. The resident will call the HRM Call Center (490-4000) to identify snow damage. A Hansen Service Request will then be assigned to Transportation and Public Works;
2. TPW Works Control Staff, on a daily basis, will review all requests relating to snow damage and ensure the request is assigned to the appropriate day supervisor. A form letter will also be sent to the caller, where necessary, stating that in most cases the repairs will be carried out in the spring/ or before, weather permitting;
3. TPW Supervisors will review the Service Requests on a daily basis and visit sites to assess damage, and forward to the contractors;
4. TPW Supervisors will identify a plan of action and ensure it is entered in Hansen (i.e., repairs to be completed in the spring (or immediately), contractor responsibility, expected completion date and estimated cost);
5. All repairs to be completed by June 1.

**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.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Route Descriptions

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Report Approved by: Mike Labrecque P.Eng., Director Transportation & Public Works, 490-4855

## Appendix A

### ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS (Sidewalks)

<b>Performance Based Contracts</b>	
East of Robie, North of Cogswell	SWP1
North of Chebucto, West of Robie East of CNR tracks	SWP2
South of Chebucto (except areas done by HRM In-house Services: see below)	SWP3
Beechville, Timberlea	SWW9
Spryfield, Herring Cove	SWW10
Burnside	SWE1
North Dartmouth bounded by Wyse Road, Thistle Street, Slayter Street, Woodlawn Avenue, Albro Lake Road	SWE3
<b>Hourly Based Contracts</b>	
Cole Harbour, Colby Village, Cherrybrook	District 4
Port Wallis, Waverley, Westphal	District 6
Woodlawn, Portland Estates	District 7
West of Wyse Road	District 9
Upper Sackville, Millwood	District 19
Middle Sackville	District 20
Bedford	District 21
Fall River	District 2
Clayton Park West	District 10
Fairview, Rockingham, Dutch Village	District 15
Clayton Park	District 16
<b>HRM In-House Services</b>	
Bounded by Robie Street, Spring Garden Road, Cogswell Street	West
All sidewalks on harbour side of Circumferential Highway to Thistle Street (Woodside, Downtown Dartmouth, Creighton Park, Manor Park, Southdale area)	East