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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**July 3, 2007**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Mike Labrecque, Director Transportation & Public Works

**DATE:** June 28, 2007

**SUBJECT:** 2006/07 Winter Works - Season End

### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council, March 20, 2007, Information Report, Item 2.

#### BACKGROUND

The "Winter Works" operation season spans from November to April each fiscal year. This year's program ran from November 13, 2006 to April 8, 2007.

A reorganization of the Transportation and Public Works business unit in April 2006, included an amalgamation of all municipal operations activities, namely Streets & Roads, Sidewalks, Parks & Open Spaces, and Playgrounds & Sportsfields. This management unit includes approximately 240 employees who are now able to provide more flexibility in the level of service outputs (e.g. a "Streets" employee can provide support to a "Parks" need and vice versa). This type of flexibility in work assignment was not delineated in former collective agreements and has provided excellent opportunities for expanded service efficiencies.

## DISCUSSION

This is a final report with information provided as at April 10, 2007. The formal Winter Works season ended on April 8, 2007. At the March 20, 2007 session of Regional Council, staff indicated that a full season report, including an accounting of all hours of work, would be provided post season.

“Winter Works” is comprised of three (3) levels of priority tasks:

### Priority 1

Priority 1 Winter Works tasking includes all activities involved with the direct handling and removal of snow and ice from HRM’s streets, sidewalks/crosswalks, parking lots, and bus stops. Over 66,000 labour hours were spent on this level of activity with a total cost of \$9,801,713.00 (this includes \$1,200,000.00 in overtime costs).

Priority 1 servicing was expanded to include sidewalk clearing of all arterials and transit routes with the former City of Halifax and the enhancement of the Seniors and Disabled Snow Removal Program. The total budgeted costs for these enhancements was \$1,100,000.00. With respect to the Seniors and Disabled Persons program, staff was able to provide a substantial increase over last year, in the amount of servicing to HRM seniors and disabled persons, as a result of this expanded approach.

### Priority 2

Priority 2 tasks are regular (i.e. non snow related) street, sidewalk, parks, and sportfield related maintenance activities that continue throughout the winter months. Generally speaking, Priority 2 tasks include leaf pickup, asphalt patching & repairs, litter cleanup, fencing repairs, shouldering, graffiti removal, street cleaning, park, playground & trail maintenance, spring repairs (i.e. snow damage), and all other maintenance activities for which Municipal Operations is normally responsible.

Because of the light winter weather, nearly 92,000 staff hours were allotted to tasks such as asphalt patching, tree/brush work, and playground equipment repairs, which often are relegated to the summer months. With the onset of the Winter Works program and the 2006 reorganization of the Transportation & Public Works business unit, Municipal Operations staff were better able to support the maintenance of sportfields and playgrounds by utilizing staff and heavy equipment that had historically not been available, such as backhoes and dump trucks. This resulted in more playground equipment being replaced throughout the municipality, as well as other sportfield related infrastructure being developed.

Finally, approximately 1,054 hours were spent on upgrade training for staff, in areas such as equipment operation, Class 3 licensing, and Traffic Control accreditation. This type of training, though crucial for staff development, succession planning, and to meet legislated requirements, is often unfulfilled during the winter months.

*Snow Damage*

During this reporting period, 794 Hansen Service Requests (plus 1850 self-identified issues) related to damage from snowplows and sidewalk equipment were initiated. All citizens requesting a call-back have been contacted. The overall spring repair program began in April and has continued through to approximately a 95% completion rate in June, 2007.

The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the work orders assigned:

<b>Work Order Breakdown - Priority 2 &amp; 3 Tasking (Nov. 13, 2006 - April 10, 2007)</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b># of Work Orders</b>	<b># of Hours</b>
Asphalt Patching	517	8,851
Graffiti	346	929
Litter / Garbage	278	20,376
Playground Equipment	183	3,849
Trees / Pruning	151	2,025
Bleachers/Benches	75	815
Fencing	72	108
Sport Courts / Skate Parks	69	299
Signage	61	1,395
Asphalt / Grading	60	614
Sportfields / Diamonds	36	1,820
Sidewalks / Concrete	30	455
Leaf Collection	19	21,492
Training, Vacation, Sick Leave etc.	N/A	28,394
Priority 3 (Facilities / Special Events)	98	8,943
<b>Total Priority 2 and 3</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>100,365</b>

While the preceding table accurately accounts for the number of hours consumed by type of work it does not provide any productivity measures. For the past two seasons, under the new delivery approach, the focus has been exclusively on accounting for the hours under each category of work and better performance reporting against the service standard. Introducing productivity measures will be the focus going forward but will require a higher level of sophistication in operations.

### Priority 3

Priority 3 activities are those performed by Municipal Operations staff on behalf of areas outside of their reporting structure, such as Metro Transit, Traffic and Transportation, Recreation, and Special Events. This type of servicing achieved good success in terms of resource management and goal achievement. Almost 9,000 hours were spent on this level of tasking. These requests were predominantly comprised of facility maintenance activities (i.e. Halifax Forum, Halifax Regional School Board, and Sackville Sports Stadium) and special events support, particularly in the Capital District.

Probably one of Municipal Operations' best service offerings is its ability to provide experienced and technically proficient labour options to other agencies and business units, during periods of minimal weather activity. Municipal Operations can often be called upon to provide labour support to clients for a wide variety of tasks, both day and night.

### Cost Analysis

The Budget for the 2006/07 Winter Works program is \$12,201,830.00. The overall 2006/07 Winter Works expenditure was \$13,082,000.00.

Year	Priority 1 Costs (Net of area rated sidewalks)
2006/07	\$ 9,801,713 *
2005/06	\$ 7,103,486
2004/05	\$13,237,258
2003/04	\$13,203,694
2002/03	\$13,626,403
2001/02	\$11,251,157

*\* includes service enhancements of \$1,100,000.00 relating to sidewalk snow plowing on arterials and bus routes, and additional funding for the Seniors and Disabled Snow Program. These were new services introduced for the 06/07 fiscal year.*

Because of the efficiencies drawn from the savings in Priority 1 activities, more effort was re-directed to Priority 2 and 3 level tasks. The total cost for these activities during this past winter was \$3,280,287.00.

A breakdown of each level of Priority costs is below:

Priority	Labour Hours	Labour Costs	Total Costs
Priority 1	66,421	\$ 2,991,000*	\$ 9,801,713
Priority 2	91,422	\$ 2,339,070	\$ 3,007,287
Priority 3	8,943	\$ 212,000	\$ 273,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,786</b>	<b>\$ 5,542,070</b>	<b>\$13,082,000</b>

\* includes overtime

### Efficiencies

These efficiencies can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the latest Collective Agreement (with CUPE Local 108) outlines a dual 12 hour shift structure for Winter Works Operations. During the winter season, two teams are each assigned a specific shift. The regular hours for one group (Team "A") are Monday-Friday, 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM; The second group (Team "B") works Sunday-Thursday from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM. This shift structure provides a span of coverage (at regular pay) of 16 hours as opposed to the eight (8) hour period in previous contracts. The result was better management of service outputs and a reduction in overtime costs.

Secondly, weather data saw less snow fall and milder temperatures than is typical. Snowfall events tended to be followed by mild temperatures which often negated the need to remove snow in the Capital District.

Weather Events	Budget for 2006/07	Actual for 2006/07
Major snowfalls (over 15 cms)	4	2
Average snowfalls (5 - 15 cms)	8	6
Minor snowfalls (1-5 cms)	9	14
Freezing rain events	3	4
Salting events (freeze/thaw, frost, runoffs, blowing snow)	40	46

There was a significant emphasis placed on Works Control for service monitoring and capturing costing data since November, that focussed on "planned" or regularly occurring maintenance activities. Staff has expanded usage of Hansen and SAP modules to more effectively monitor and resolve customer service requests and properly capture costs for budgetary purposes. Also, staff have made a concerted effort to provide ongoing performance reports at the end of each snow event (See Attachment A).

As well, there was a more proactive approach toward “demand” or preventative maintenance programs. Resources were assigned to identify and expand opportunities for Priority 2 and 3 tasks. Maintenance Planning staff initiated over 1880 Work Orders that accounted for nearly 18,000 hours of Priority 2 and 3 Winter Works labour. These activities included identifying opportunities for support to facilities such as the Forum Complex and Metro Transit garages while increasing day to day maintenance activities such as replacing and repairing park benches, bleachers and picnic tables, and litter pickup, etc.

### Risks

While major improvements in cost and operational efficiencies can be identified, the Winter Works program overall, remains underfunded. Though the Snow and Ice Reserve balance will be increased to approximately \$2,500,000.00 in fiscal year 2007/08, the concern remains that over expenditures could occur in future years, in the event of severe winter weather.

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None.

### 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.

### ATTACHMENTS

A. Snow Event Service Standard Report

**2006/07 Winter Works - Season End  
Council Report**

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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.

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## ATTACHMENT A

### Snow Event Service Standard Report

**Start Date of Event: Monday Feb 19th**

**Event Description:** Snow started approx 1pm on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> and continued until 7pm . Cold temps and some blowing snow for next 5 hours. Between 5 and 7cm in total

**General Notes:** Actual event wasn't as bad as first forecasted. Crews were able to take advantage of forecast and reasonably mild temperatures on Monday to aggressively pre-salt street and sidewalks.

**End of Snow fall:** Monday Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

#### Streets

	Standard	West	Central	East
Priority 1	3 hour turnaround	achieved	achieved	achieved
	streets cleared 12 hours from end of snowfall	achieved	achieved	achieved
Priority 2	cleared 24 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved

#### Sidewalks

	Standard	West	Central	East
Arterial	ploved 12 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
	salted 18 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
Transit	ploved 18 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
	salted 24 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
Residential	ploved 36 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
	salted 48 hours from end of snowfall	achieved	achieved	achieved
Bus Stops	cleared 72 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved
Sidewalk Intersections	cleared 72 hours from end of snow fall	achieved	achieved	achieved