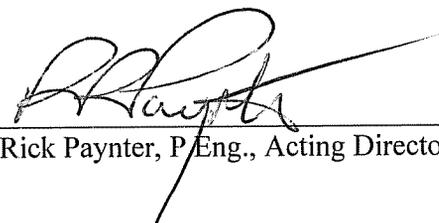

Halifax Regional Council
May 7, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer


Rick Paynter, P.Eng., Acting Director, Public Works & Transportation

DATE: April 29, 2002

SUBJECT: Plowing of Sidewalks on Major Arterial Roads

ORIGIN

Agenda item 11.5.1(ii) at the February 12, 2002, Halifax Regional Council meeting requested staff to provide a report regarding HRM taking over the responsibility of snow and ice control on sidewalks located on major arterial roads in HRM that abut these roads but do not have a grass median for snow storage.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council not approve HRM taking over the responsibility of snow and ice control on sidewalks that abut major arterial roads in the West region of HRM and do not have a grass median for snow storage.

BACKGROUND

The removal of snow and ice from sidewalks in the former Halifax area is regulated by Part I, Articles 4, 5, and 6 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Streets By-law S-300 (copy attached). The By-law generally provides that the abutter is responsible for providing for snow and ice removal from any sidewalk abutting their property within 12 hours of the end of any snowfall, or 6 hours after daylight if the snow stops during the night. Consistent with pre-amalgamation services, By-law S-300 does not apply in the East and Central regions of HRM, where staff provides sidewalk snow and ice services for all sidewalks including those abutting major arterial roads, and the cost of this service is offset by area rates.

DISCUSSION

In preparing this report, staff considered sidewalks abutting major arterial roads and having no snow storage due to lack of a grass plot and or no additional improved sidewalk area in excess of the standard 1.5 meter (5 ft.) wide sidewalk slab. Sidewalks with more than the standard width of improved sidewalk surfaces were not included.

In order to meet both the Council approved Snow & Ice Control Program Service Standards and the requirements for sidewalk snow clearing provided by Streets By-law S-300, and to ensure a reasonable level of risk management, it would be necessary to either contract out the service for these main artery sidewalks, or provide the necessary resources in-house, or a combination of both. Staff identified approximately 8 kilometers of sidewalks in the West region that meet the criteria of abutting a major arterial road and having no snow storage. An inventory of these locations is attached. Approximately 1.5 kilometers of these sidewalks could be added to existing routes under the West region sidewalks snow and ice program without greatly impacting on the costs and service levels (completion times) due to their close proximity to sidewalks currently being serviced through the program. The remaining 6.5 kilometers would add two additional sidewalk routes to the program.

HRM does not currently have the manpower or equipment resources to service the additional routes especially as these routes would require snow removal after every snow event of more than 10 to 15 centimeters. Given the scope of the work, the resources required and the seasonal nature of the work, staff would prefer to contract out this service, but staff's last attempt to recruit contractors for sidewalk snow and ice control did not result in the availability of outside resources. Therefore, staff is not certain outside resources would be available for this additional sidewalk snow removal service.

Based on the assumption that the service may have to be provided in-house, the following factors will need consideration before Council changes the by-law and initiates this increase in service level:

- A. HRM would require two additional pieces of salting and plowing equipment which it does not presently have. The cost to purchase this equipment is approximately \$100,000 per unit, at a total cost of \$200,000. As well, two equipment operators per machine would be required to operate these units assigned to the two operation shifts of the Snow and Ice Program. There is an additional cost to HRM for these operators when they are not required for snow and ice operations which would add approximately \$15,400 annually to the regular department operating budget. It should also be noted that the purchase of this equipment and hiring of operators is not recommended as there is no work for this equipment and manpower during the summer months, or in winters in which we do not receive much snowfall.
- B. The numbers of sidewalks and daily pedestrian users of Halifax's sidewalks would multiply the numbers of liability claims. It is estimated that the annual legal costs and claims costs would increase and while these costs are not a direct operating cost, they are incurred and must be budgeted for in other HRM departments. Also, the domino effect of increased claims will increase the number of successful claims which will escalate these costs even higher.
- C. As the abutters have been doing sidewalk snow removal themselves and as many of them routinely exceed the requirements of By-law S-300, there is built up high expectations for sidewalk snow removal in the former Halifax area to be completed within these enhanced time frames. Based on the amount of snow, timing and frequency of the storms and operating requirements to complete the streets before doing the sidewalks, it is anticipated that while the funding levels noted in this report will provide a reasonable level of service, it will not guarantee either the approved or the public expected level of service. Experience in the East and Central regions has shown that in snowfalls in excess of 10 to 15 centimeters in quick freeze situations and winters with heavy snow build up, the provision of sidewalk snow service by mechanized equipment is not as effective as hand shoveling provided by the abutter.

In summary, if Council were to approve HRM providing sidewalk snow removal for sidewalks with no snow storage that abut major arterial roadways, in the West region, staff would strongly attempt to contract out this service. To determine if outside resources are available and the cost to provide this service by contract service, staff would have to actually call tenders and get bids from the private sector. Staff estimate, however, the annual cost would be approximately \$64,000 plus legal and claims costs. If contracted services were not available, and the service was provided in-house, the estimated costs are \$82,400 in operating costs, plus legal and claims costs, plus capital equipment costs of \$200,000.

Also, funding has not been included in the 2002/03 Operating Budget for this service, and Council would have to approve the required increase in funding for the Sidewalk Snow & Ice Program if this service were approved. Council also asked that staff consider the feasibility of recovering the operating costs for this service through area rates. Given the relatively small amount of the estimated operating costs, and the fact that the sidewalk locations are spread throughout several districts in the former Halifax area, it would not be feasible to charge area rates.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The 2002/2003 operating budget has not provided for HRM taking over sidewalk snow removal for these sidewalks. If this service was approved by Council, and the service can be provided by contract service, the annual sidewalk snow and ice related operating budget increased cost is estimated at approximately \$64,000 plus legal and claims costs. If the service had to be provided in-house, the increased cost is estimated at \$67,000 for the Sidewalk Snow and Ice operating budget plus \$15,400 for the Streets' accounts, plus legal and claims costs, plus capital equipment costs of \$200,000. Council would therefore have to approve appropriate funding increases in the operating and capital budgets if this service was approved.

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.

The operating costs would be ongoing. The capital equipment costs would be a one time only expense, financed over ten years.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Instead of providing sidewalk snow removal services for sidewalks with no snow storage that abut major arterial roads in the West region, Council may wish to direct staff to concentrate on addressing the concerns of seniors and disabled persons on these roads that have difficulty meeting their snow removal needs and responsibilities through the Council approved Seniors Snow Removal Program initiative.
2. Council could approve increased funding of the Sidewalk Snow & Ice Program for the provision of sidewalk snow removal services by HRM for sidewalks on arterial roads with no storage as listed in the inventory attached.

ATTACHMENTS

- By-Law S-300, Part I, Sections 4, 5, and 6
- Inventory of Snow on Arterial Roads - Without snow storage areas

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:

P.J. Cochrane, Manager of Streets & Roads Services 490-6034



PART 1 - REMOVAL OF ICE AND SNOW FROM SIDEWALKS

Removal of Snow and Ice

4 (1) Abutters, except where snow removal service is provided by the Municipality, shall remove all snow and ice,

- (a) from any sidewalk which abuts any side of their property;
- (b) from any pathway leading from a sidewalk abutting their property to the roadway, and
- (c) between any sidewalk abutting their property and a crosswalk

for a minimum width of three feet or the full width of the paved sidewalk, whichever is less, within twelve hours after the end of any snowfall or, where the snow stops falling during the night, six hours after daylight, and without restricting the generality of the foregoing, abutters shall render the sidewalk completely free of snow and ice to bare pavement within said times.

(2) No person shall deposit snow or ice on the travelled way of any street.

Removal of Icicles

5 No person shall permit icicles to accumulate on the eaves or gutters of any building owned or occupied by him so as to become dangerous to persons passing on the street.

Engineer May Remove

6 (1) Where an abutter fails to remove snow or ice from sidewalks or structures as required by this By-law, the Engineer or a peace officer may give to the abutter an order to remove the snow and ice within twenty-four hours of service of such notice.

(2) Upon the failure of the abutting owner to comply with such notice the Engineer, where the notice is given by either the Engineer or a peace officer, may order the removal of such snow and ice and may recover the cost of such work from the abutter.

(3) The Municipality's cost in removing the snow and ice pursuant to subsection (2) shall constitute a lien against the abutting property which shall be applied and enforced in the same manner as for rates and taxes under the Assessment Act.

**HRM Sidewalk Survey - West Region
Arterial Roads - No Snow Storage Areas
February 26, 2002**

Objective:

Identify sidewalks along major arterial roads with no grass strips, single-wide concrete or asphalt slabs, and no snow storage area (excluding all bus stops).

Purcell's Cove Road

- William's Lake Road, West side, Purcell's Cove Road to Collingdale - .1 km
 - Entrance to Sir Sandford Flemming Park to Anchor Dr. - .3 km
 - Intersection of Purcell's Cove Road and Herring Cove Road - .1 km
-
- .5 km

Herring Cove Road

- From Rotary to Purcell's Cove Road (both sides) - .1 km
 - Herring Cove Road and Purcell's Cove Road Intersection, West side to the Cowie Hill Connector .5 km
 - Civic Address 99 Herring Cove Road to 139 Herring Cove Road - .3 km
 - Corner of Punch Bowl and Herring Cove Road - .05 km
 - Autumn Drive/Autumn Drive to Lynette Drive - .05 km
 - Maplewood to Keddy Road - .1 km
-
- 1.1 km

Old Sambro Road

- From intersection of Rockingstone/Sussex/Old Sambro Road outbound on the Old Sambro Road, North side - .1 km
-
- .1 km

Chebucto Road

- North side from Connlly St. to North Street - .2 km
-
- .2 km

Lacewood Drive and Titus Smith

- Clayton Park Drive to Glenforest, South side - .3 km
 - Titus Smith, South side from main Ave to former Halifax West School - .2 km
-
- .5 km

Barrington Street

- West side, Corwallis Street to Brunswick Towers - .15 km
 - West side, MacDonald Bridge ramp to Artz Street - .2 km
-
- .35 km

Bedford Highway

- West side, wall - Bluenose Inn and Nelson Monuments - .1 km
 - West side, Bayview Road to Shell Station - .4 km
-
- .5 km

Joseph Howe Drive

- RR Tracks at the PetroCan to fire hydranton Dutch Village Road - .4 km
 - Joseph Howe On-Ramp to the Bi. Hwy. to Bayer's Road Intersection - .3 km
-
- .7 km

Dutch Village Road

- Both sides - Joseph Howe Dr to McFatrige Rd. Intersection - .3 km
 - West side, new Bi - Hi ramp to Springvale Ave. - .8 km
 - West side, Craigmere Dr. to Rotary - .15 km
-
- 1.25 km

Kearney Lake Road

- Petro Canada to Bi Hi Ramp - .1 km
-
- .1 km

Bayer's Road

- North side from Micmac Street to Romans Ave. - .5 km
-
- .5 km

St. Margaret's Bay Road

- North side from the Rotary to Clinton - .2 km
 - South side from Rotary to Northwest Arm Overpass - 1.5 km
-
- 1.7 km

Rockingstone Road

- 3 telephone poles in front of Lieblin Road to 3 poles past Dekker - .3 km
-
- .3 km

Total Km of Sidewalk

7.8