
Memorandum

To: Budget Committee

From: Dan Dillon, P.Eng. – Director-TES

Date: November 20, 2015

Subject: 2016 Budget - Winter Control

At its meeting of September 28, 2015, Council considered Report TES 261-2015 – Winter Control Program – Budget and Service Levels. The following recommendations from that report were referred to the Budget Committee:

- That Council endorse the establishment of a Winter Control Program Reserve fund to assist in providing sustainable Winter Control Program funding for consideration by the Budget Committee
- That Council direct staff to report budget implications of the proposed changes to the program, service level and delivery model for the “Sidewalk Snow Removal for Seniors and Persons with a Disability” as described in the report for consideration by the Budget Committee
- That Council direct staff to report budget implications for the proposed enhanced service level for the “Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Program” affecting the downtown service area as described within the report for consideration by the budget committee

This memo addresses these items.

Winter Control Program Reserve

To be the subject of a separate report for a future Budget Committee Agenda

Sidewalk Snow Removal for Senior’s and Persons with a Disability

As indicated in the report, the ‘Sidewalk Snow Removal Program for Senior’s and Persons with a Disability’ provides assistance to those residents who cannot physically maintain the sidewalk in front of or abutting their property during the winter season. The City has contracted the Wayside House of St. Catharines to perform sidewalk snow removal services for this program for the past 26 years. For the 2014-2015 winter season there was a total of 764 residents enrolled in this program. This program does not include the clearing of driveway windrows. The cost of the program is shown on Table 1:

TABLE 1 – Sidewalk Snow Removal for Seniors & Persons with a Disability	
Winter Season	Total Cost of the “Wayside Program”
2010	\$55,687.59
2011	\$70,862.22
2012	\$24,502.41
2013	\$53,506.62
2014	\$74,000.80
2015	\$57,732.14*

(*) denotes not a full winter season – excludes November and December

Wayside House crews begin clearing sidewalks after a snow event has ended, and are available to work 7 days a week as necessary. City staff notifies Wayside House when to dispatch crews and they perform spot checks on the work being performed. While this long term relationship with Wayside House has been a positive experience, there are some weaknesses in the program: (i) driveway windrows are not cleared under the program and do present hardships for residents unable to do so; and (ii) the number of addresses who qualify for the service far exceed the capabilities of Wayside House to complete within the 24 hour timeframe outlined in By-law 2008-315.

Staff continues to support a program providing sidewalk snow clearing for seniors and persons with a disability and recommend the inclusion of windrow clearing to the program. Additional consideration and planning is required on the best option to provide this service. Wayside House could continue to be utilized for sidewalk snow clearing, perhaps within a set area of the city and the remainder of the sidewalks and windrows could be completed by a contractor.

To that end, staff recently issued a tender for sidewalk snow clearing for 500 properties and driveway windrow clearing for 700 properties. One bid was received with the following costs:

- Sidewalk snow clearing (500 properties): \$188,500 per season
- Driveway windrow clearing (700 properties): \$122,150 per season

Notwithstanding the challenges that the crews from Wayside House have in clearing the number of sidewalk locations that they have, staff believe that they provide good value and recommend continuing with that relationship. Staff will look for ways to augment their efforts with City staff as they become available in order to reduce the timelines that are required to complete the work. Given the costs involved and the other budgetary challenges that the City is facing, staff do not recommend proceeding with the enhanced level of service of driveway windrow clearing at this time.

Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Program – Downtown Service Area

As indicated in the report, with the opening of the Meridian Centre and the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, there will be an increased expectation for sidewalk snow clearing in the downtown. To that end, staff have developed the following proposed approach:

Objective: Provide an increased level of service for snow removal from designated downtown sidewalks and crosswalks in response to increased pedestrian traffic generated by FirstOntario PAC and Meridian Centre.

Level of Service: The plan should provide the following Level of Service on designated sidewalks within the downtown area during the winter season. This includes the additional 6 km of sidewalk that have been added to the designated sidewalks list.

- Provide immediate response to snow/ice accumulations on designated downtown sidewalks between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week.
- When plowing, ensure a minimum sidewalk clearance width of 1.5 m. (5 feet)
- Ensure 2 sets of metal stairs between the upper and lower level area are clear of snow/ice
- Ensure walkway between upper and lower level are clear of snow and ice
- Ensure snow and ice on full sidewalk width fronting and abutting the FirstOntario PAC are clear of snow and ice 1 hour before opening and end of performances
- Maintain ramps and access points to pedestrian crosswalks

Resources Required: The following staff and equipment resources are required to meet the Level of Service outlined above.

- 6 Staff – new postings filled by seasonal employees
- 2 Trackless units (existing equipment)
- 1 - 3 tonne dump truck (existing equipment)

Budget Implications: Assuming a 3 month period (12 weeks) that the program will be required.

6 Staff (including benefits)	\$91,000
3 tonne dump	\$24,000
2 Trackless	<u>\$45,000</u>
Total	\$160,000.

(Note: Does not include any hauling of snow from downtown area. – typical cost is \$50,000 per event)

Staff recommend this item be referred to the 2016 Operating Budget process through the TES department presentation for funding consideration and that in the interim winter control services be delivered in accordance with the previous service levels.