

December 19, 2016

To: His Worship the Mayor
And Members of City Council

Re: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee: Annual Winter Maintenance Summary

RECOMMENDATION

**RECOMMENDATION OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
- DECEMBER 8, 2016**

That this report be received and filed.

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE – DECEMBER 8, 2016

The following addressed the Committee:

- Jim Elliott, representing himself; and
- Sara Marie Daubisse, Brandon Wright and Luke Nichols, representing Bike Regina

The Committee adopted the following resolution:

1. That this report be forwarded to the December 19, 2016 meeting of City Council for information.
2. That the cost portion of category 1, 2 and 3 enhancement of bicycle lane snow clearing be deferred to the Administration for inclusion on the 2017 budget process.

Recommendation #2 does not require City Council approval.

Councillors: Sharron Bryce (Chairperson), Lori Bresciani, John Findura and Barbara Young were present during consideration of this report by the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

The Public Works & Infrastructure Committee, at its meeting held on December 8, 2016, considered the following report from the Administration:

CONCLUSION

The 2015/2016 winter season can be described as well-below average, due to lower than average snow fall accumulations and warmer than average temperatures. This helped to achieve policy objectives 100 per cent of the time and lead to reduced winter activities that created a significant

surplus. Any remaining funds at the end of the budget cycle will be transferred into the Winter Maintenance Reserve. Operationally, this made Winter Maintenance staff available to undertake tasks, typically performed by contracted services, to be done in-house, creating cost avoidance.

The Annual Winter Maintenance Summary 2015/2016 (Appendix A, attached) provides an overall summary of the winter maintenance activities for the 2015/2016 season. The following are highlights from that report:

- The 2015/2016 winter had well-below average conditions, due to a lack of snow and warmer temperatures;
- the policy objectives were met 100 per cent of the time;
- there was a surplus of \$1.1 million at the end of 2015 and a similar surplus at the end of 2016 is anticipated;
- cost reductions and cost avoidance of approximately \$717,000, were achieved through reallocation of winter staff reducing requirement for contracted services; and
- further enhancement of winter maintenance services are continually being examined and will be presented to City Council for approval in the future

BACKGROUND

On December 18, 2006, City Council (Council) approved the Winter Maintenance Policy, which was officially implemented in November 2007. Council approved the recommended policy amendments submitted in November 2010, December 2014 and December 2015. Annually, the delivery of winter maintenance services are evaluated against the objectives outlined in the Council approved Winter Maintenance Policy (Policy) with a commitment to continual improvement.

The purpose of the Winter Maintenance program is to provide winter maintenance activities that effectively supports the health, safety, attractiveness and economic viability of the city. The Policy was created in an effort to provide an acceptable and consistent level of service, when maintaining the road network, and to ensure safe winter driving conditions for the citizens of Regina, including guidelines and timelines regarding the plowing of streets, sidewalks, and alleys following snow events, as well as for routine maintenance of the road network during the winter months. Within the Policy, there are several general objectives laid out to support the purpose of the program, which the branch strives to meet in both performance and end conditions. This report discusses the application of the Policy as it relates to operational, environmental and financial implications.

DISCUSSION

Appendix A of this report provides an overall summary of the 2015-2016 winter maintenance activities. The following are highlights of that report.

Below Average Winter

The winter season is defined as the period from October 1 to April 30. In general terms, and based on the five-year average, the 2015/2016 season can be described as well-below average with the following characteristics:

- Lower than average snow days
- Lower than average snow fall
- Above average temperatures
- Lower than average number of freeze/thaw cycles

Policy Objectives Met

Although several of the objective activities were not actioned due to the below average season, the review of documentation would indicate that the Policy's quality objectives were met 100 per cent of the time.

Surplus

In 2015, Council approved an increase to the Winter Maintenance budget. This increase was used for the delivery of services to meet the level of service outlined in the Policy. The 2015 budget was \$8.98 million and total expenditures were \$7.8 million. At the end of 2015, there was a surplus of \$1.1 million. The 2016 budget is \$9.068 million, of which \$2.707 million has been spent as of September 30. The total expenditures for 2016 are forecasted to be \$5.645 million, based on average conditions expected for October through December. It is anticipated that there will be a similar surplus of approximately \$1 million again at the end of 2016. The Winter Maintenance Reserve is in place to fund shortfalls as a result of extreme snow events or severe winter conditions. It has a current balance of \$3.9 million and can hold a maximum balance of \$3.923 million.

Cost Reductions and Cost Avoidance

In lieu of staffing complements and in an effort to maintain staffing levels necessary for storm and snow removal response, Winter Maintenance crews were allocated to other activities throughout the corporation, when winter maintenance activities were not required. A collaborative effort was made between departments, showcasing the mutual benefits for all parties. Winter Maintenance staff continues to investigate innovative solutions to reduce the cost

to deliver the policy objectives, as well as maximizing resources to perform work for other departments in delivering cost effective services in favour of contracted services. Operational support in the following areas achieved a combined cost savings of approximately \$717,000:

- Asphalt Production and Materials Engineering
- Landfill Operations
- Water and Sewer Construction
- Sweeping and Alleys
- Concrete Services
- Asphalt Services

Future Changes

Further to the successes already achieved, additional proposed changes will be brought forward and are intended to enhance the City's winter maintenance services:

- Snow Storage Site User Fee (approved by Council and ready for operation in the 216/2017 winter season)
- Enhanced Sidewalk Clearing
- Snow Routes Project
- Use of Liquid Salt in Ice Control
- Enhancement of Bicycle Lane Snow Clearing

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

None with respect to this report.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Roadways & Transportation will continue to review the Policy to ensure that it aligns with *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 2013-48*.

Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

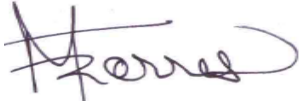
The Communications Department develops an annual strategy for winter operations and activities to inform the public. This strategy includes media relations, an advertising campaign for citizens to help clear snow from their sidewalks, as well as use of the City's social media tools including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. See Appendix A for more details.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

A change to the Policy would require City Council's approval. At this time, there are no policy changes proposed. As such, the disposition of this report is within the delegated authority of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Torres', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mavis Torres, A/Secretary