



Memo

January 11, 2021

To: Members,
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Re: Safe Sidewalks - Accessibility and Inclusion Consultation

RECOMMENDATION

That Accessibility Advisory Committee receive and file this communication.

BACKGROUND

Administration is preparing a report to respond to *Motion MN19-9*. Report *PWI19-18* was considered at the December 12, 2019 meeting of the Public Works and Infrastructure (PWI) Committee requesting that Administration provide information about how the City of Regina (City) is managing sidewalk safety and what work is being done to improve walkability and accessibility of sidewalks for pedestrians.

The intention of the report *PWI19-18* was to provide an overview of the classification, condition, maintenance treatments and repair prioritization of City-owned sidewalk assets. The report also outlined the ways sidewalk improvements coordinated with other City programs as well as treatments available to address concrete deficiencies, and a brief summary of the results of a municipality survey regarding these topics. During the discussion the PWI Committee requested Administration provide an update on the sidewalk priority system and recommendations for improving sidewalk accessibility for consideration in future budget planning.

DISCUSSION

Policy/Strategic Impact

Repair and enhancement of sidewalks and other concrete assets, such as pedestrian ramps and curbs under the Concrete Distress Program and other City programs helps to improve pedestrian safety and better accommodate those who are using them. Sidewalk accessibility is advanced by implementing pedestrian accessibility ramps where practical and feasible, and repairing sidewalk deficiencies that pose the greatest risk to the public.

Administration's requirements regarding the repair and maintenance of sidewalks and other concrete assets specified in *Section 306(1)* of *The Cities Act* where these assets must be kept in a "reasonable state of repair". This requirement, as defined in *Section 306(1.1)*, considered to be met if "those who use the street, road or other public place can, exercising ordinary care, do so with safety".

The *Concrete Inspection and Maintenance Policy* was developed in 2004 to provide the framework under which sidewalks would be monitored and deficiencies addressed in order to fulfill the requirements of *The Cities Act*.

Sidewalk Prioritization

Sidewalks in the City are classified as either Group A or Group B. These categories are determined by the commercial and high-density residential areas and several other factors that attract higher user volumes. The classification is intended to reasonably differentiate between the sidewalks that have, or have the potential for, higher pedestrian user volumes with those considered as having normal user volumes. The sidewalk classification is used in lieu of performing pedestrian counts on all sidewalks throughout the city, which would be a costly and labour-intensive task with variable results.

Sidewalks will receive a Group A classification considering high user volume, vicinity to schools, churches, hospitals, shopping centres, and senior citizens complexes (with more than 20 units). All other sidewalks in the city that don't receive the Group A classification are classified as Group B.

Administration has also been reviewing the transit ridership data as another data source for informing the sidewalk classification. There is some correlation between the streets which have received a Group A classification and streets that have transit stops, but this is not an exact overlay. There are many instances where transit stops exist on Group B sidewalks, as transit stops are required throughout the city to ensure public access to the transit system even though the annual ridership counts for these stops may be low. During the next review, within our five-year plan, of the *Concrete Inspection and Maintenance Policy*, additional data including the transit ridership will be reviewed to determine if there is new criteria that could be introduced to improve the accuracy of the sidewalk classification.

Sidewalk Maintenance Priority

The Concrete Distress Program (CDP) was developed to satisfy the requirements of the *Concrete Inspection and Maintenance Policy* with the purpose of addressing the sidewalk deficiencies to improve safety as well as the overall sidewalk condition. The prioritization of repairs considers the following:

- 1. Severity:**

Administration follows a "worst-first" prioritization strategy for repairing sidewalk deficiencies. The strategy recognizes that the more severe the rating a deficiency receives, the more risk it poses to the public. By addressing the most severe deficiencies

first, the overall risk to the City and the public is decreased to a larger amount compared to addressing the less severe deficiencies first.

2. Sidewalk Usage:

As discussed previously, the sidewalks are classified as either Group A or Group B based on their expected usage. Where a Group A sidewalk would be expected to have higher user volumes.

To balance the requirement to address the worst deficiencies first while ensuring the repair crews are functioning efficiently, maintenance crews systematically move through the community addressing deficiencies on Group A sidewalks rated 1 through 4 and Group B sidewalks rated 1 or 2 (critical deficiency locations). Note, severity ratings are from 1 to 10, where 1 is the worst.

New Initiatives for Temporary Sidewalk Repairs

Administration has limited repair options available to address deficiencies in the winter/cold temperatures. Permanent repairs using concrete or hot-mix asphalt are impractical due to the extra costs required to complete this work outside of the regular construction season. Therefore, temporary repairs are used in the winter to make these locations safe until more permanent repairs can be completed when temperature permits. The most used method of temporary repair in the winter is granular fill (gravel). This helps to reduce trip hazards resulting from removed sidewalk panels, but the finished surface is more irregular/uneven compared to concrete. Gravel can also be worn away with usage requiring additional maintenance and upkeep.

Administration is currently researching practices in other municipalities, and products available in the industry to enhance accessibility during the winter months.

Repair Timelines for Repairing Deficiencies

Administration is currently updating systems that will improve its ability to track deficiencies and generate reports and statistics based on the concrete distress inventory. The entire repair inventory was inspected this fall with recommendations for repair types made to get an understanding of the scope and budgetary impact of these repairs. Following the sidewalk prioritization mentioned above, Administration is targeting to have utility cut reinstatement and distress repairs on Group A sidewalks rated either 1 or 2 completed by the end of June with the remainder of the planned repairs being completed by season's end. There have been two improvements made to achieve these goals including increased contracted support as well as more integrated repairs with underground utilities. When possible, crews will be coordinating repairs on high pedestrian use sidewalks at the same time the underground repair is made. The benefits of this initiative will be realized by residents who will be impacted for a very short duration and does carry some cost savings to our maintenance budgets.

Sidewalk deficiencies are inspected within two weeks of being reported during an active inspection cycle (May to September of each year). If a distress is reported outside of an active inspection cycle, it is added to a list to be inspected once the next inspection cycle begins.

COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT

Administration would like to have an open dialogue with the Accessibility Advisory Committee about the current state of sidewalk accessibility in Regina, and what gaps might exist in realizing our goal of a safe and accessible sidewalk network. Please provide feedback for enhancements in the following areas of focus:

1. Criteria in prioritization of sidewalks
2. Sidewalk accessibility in the winter months regarding repairs and maintenance
3. Sidewalk repair timelines

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Warren, Director, Roadways & Transportation

1/5/2021



Kim Onra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

1/8/2021