

Appendix D: Snow Route Report - PWI16-7

June 9, 2016

To: Members,  
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Re: Snow Routes Program

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RECOMMENDATION

1. That Public Works and Infrastructure Committee approve the framework for a Snow Routes Program (Program) consisting of temporary parking bans for specified hours on Category 1 and 2 streets as defined in the Winter Maintenance Policy.
2. That Administration bring back a report in quarter 4 of this year (2016) detailing a phased in implementation plan for the Program including an initial pilot project beginning in the 2017/18 winter season.

CONCLUSION

This report is in response to PWI14-21 seeking approval for a framework for a Snow Routes Program to address challenges with on-street parking during snow plow operations.

It is recommended that Council approves Option 2, which designates snow routes with temporary parking bans for specified hours on main streets (Category 1 and 2 as described in the Winter Maintenance Policy). The option was developed based on the outcome of public consultation, feedback from engagement sessions and best practices for snow routes from other municipalities. The framework for the program is being presented for approval with the implementation plan being developed once an option has been endorsed by Committee.

The implementation that will be developed will be recommended as a phased-in approach to support the community's adjustment to the variable parking bans, to assess the appropriateness of the routes and to manage necessary operational changes to support the communication and enforcement of the Program. The first phase would include running a pilot in the winter of 2017/2018 to test the Program on a representative selection of the streets. The preparation for the pilot will involve consultation with other internal stakeholders, installation of signage, necessary amendments to *The Regina Traffic Bylaw No. 9900* (bylaw), development of a communication plan and development of budget recommendations. A detailed report on the pilot program implementation will be presented to Public Works and Infrastructure in Q4 2016. Administration will utilize the pilot program results to review the effectiveness of the proposed Snow Routes Program and report back to Committee before full implementation.

BACKGROUND

On October 3, 2014, in response to PWI14-21, the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee (PWI) provided a direction to Administration to develop and outline the most appropriate program to remove vehicles from roads for effective snow removal in a report. Research was conducted which examined the practices of other municipalities to gain insight into possible options for a Snow Routes Program. Appendix A highlights the details of the snow routes challenges other Western Canadian municipalities faced while implementing their snow route programs. The municipalities polled were Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Brandon and Edmonton.

Key findings of the research suggest that arterial roads and transit routes are commonly declared as snow routes. In addition, implementing and operating snow routes programs has challenges and communication to the public will be essential to the success of the Program.

On December 10, 2015 Administration submitted a memo to PWI advising that a consultant would be engaged to determine whether the community supported the snow routes option. In March 2016, the consultant was hired to complete the public engagement activities and compile the unbiased results.

## DISCUSSION

Public consultation involved a multi-modal survey and two open houses. A total of 883 surveys were completed which included 231 participants who took the survey linked to the City of Regina's website. The public engagement activity results (Appendix B) reflect a high level of support for the City to implement a designated snow route program. Participants in the public open houses and citizen survey were presented with two options for snow routes as well as an option to maintain current policy and practices.

### ***Option 1: Status Quo - No snow route program***

The Winter Maintenance Policy does not currently have provisions for parking bans but provides allowances for snow plowing around a parked vehicle leaving a snow ridge around them. Only nine per cent of the residents who took the survey prefer this option.

### ***Option 2: Snow Route Declaration and Temporary Parking Ban (Recommended Option)***

This option recommends the implementation of a temporary parking ban following a snow event on Category 1 and 2 streets. During a declared parking ban, City staff would ensure that the roads designated as Snow Routes are free of parked vehicles. Non-compliance would result in ticketing and towing (to a nearby location not on a Snow Route or to a pre-identified impound lot). The amount of towing would be dependent on the compliance of residents and the availability of tow trucks. Once the snow is cleared from these routes, the parking bans would be lifted. This option is supported by the majority who participated in the public engagement citizens' survey and open houses. Approximately 62 per cent of those surveyed preferred this option.

This option would result in temporary parking bans being in effect for a minimal number of days (15-20 days per season). The cost of removing vehicles found to be non-compliant would be recovered from ticketing and towing fines. As per the survey results, 40 per cent of the residents felt that the City should both ticket and tow the vehicles in violation of the designated snow route. Almost 72 per cent of the residents who participated felt that vehicle owners should pay the cost of enforcement and towing costs through tickets.

The option will also require the creation of an extensive communication plan to ensure all affected road users are made aware of changes. Public education and communication on parking ban status may require the installation of mobile applications and other appropriate communication channels. Building sufficient towing and parking enforcement capacity and the costs of installing permanent signage are also potential challenges with this option.

### ***Option 3: Seasonal Snow Routes and Parking Bans***

This option recommends the implementation of seasonal parking bans on identified Category 1 and 2 streets. This would require the installation of signage along the roadways, indicating a permanent seasonal parking ban throughout the winter months. This option was not supported by those who participated in the public engagement open houses.

Municipalities such as Winnipeg and Brandon utilize this type of Snow Routes policy, where the permanent parking ban typically takes place during the overnight hours between the months from November to March.

This option would ensure efficient plowing of Category 1 and 2 streets, and would allow for snow storage in parking lanes during the ban. However, because there are generally only 15-20 days where on-street parking would impact Winter Maintenance activities, this represents a significant impact to citizens that park their vehicles on Category 1 and 2 streets.

### **Snow Route Implementation:**

Proper implementation of a snow route program is fundamental to its success. A phased implementation approach is recommended based on research done from other Western Canadian municipalities. Introducing snow routes will be a significant change for residents and a phased approach will help address the behavioural change needed for the program to be successful. A phased approach also allows for operational areas involved in the delivery of the program to build capacity gradually.

Running a pilot snow routes program on a select section of the streets in the 2017/2018 winter is recommended. The preparation for the pilot will involve consultation with other internal stakeholders, installation of signage, necessary amendments to *The Regina Traffic Bylaw No. 9900* (bylaw) development of a communication plan and development of budget recommendations. The information from the pilot program will be useful to expand the program to a larger network of arterial streets in the City.

A detailed report on the pilot program implementation will be presented to Public Works and Infrastructure in Q4 2016. Administration will utilize the pilot program results to review the effectiveness of the Snow Routes Program and report back to Committee before full implementation.

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

Budgetary approval will be required for the installation of signage and communication to residents. As the pilot project has yet to be fully developed the costs associated are yet to be determined. However, it is anticipated the cost associated with operating this program will be partially offset by efficiency gains and recovered through ticket and towing fines.

### Environmental Implications

The recommended option will have positive environmental implications by allowing comparatively unrestricted movement of traffic on the streets thereby reducing exhaust emissions and unnecessary vehicle idling. Reduced amounts of road salts and abrasives may be required as the streets will be more efficiently plowed. Increased street capacity due to enhanced snow removal on roads may help in the reduction of vehicle fuel consumption. The heavy equipment engaged in snow plowing and ice control would operate freely resulting in reduced emissions. A road network that is clear from snow will allow for unrestricted traffic flow. This may reduce pollution caused by idling. However, the program will see an increase of tow trucks on the road and this will create increased pollution as these vehicles are left idling during operation.

### Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The recommended option will allow City of Regina Winter Maintenance crews to improve the quality of plowing operations. The implementation of a Program with temporary parking bans would require bylaw amendments. The amendments to *The Regina Traffic Bylaw No. 9900* will include the processes for enforcement, ticketing, and towing of illegally parked vehicles on designated snow routes. It will also include an amendment for the new “Snow Route” signs to be installed on the streets. Further details on these changes would be provided when the pilot program and detailed implementation plan are presented.

### Other Implications

Implementation of a Snow Routes Program in the city will result in a more consistent level of service in accordance with the Winter Maintenance Policy. It will contribute to more efficient winter maintenance operations, provide smoother driving conditions and reduce potential claims due to property damage during maintenance activities. Snow ridges will be placed consistently in the parking lanes which will eliminate unequal distribution of snow when plowing around parked vehicles. Properly cleared streets will help create a more positive image of the City in the eyes of residents, businesses and visitors. The program will temporarily eliminate parking on affected streets for about 15 to 20 days per season.

### Accessibility Implications

Vehicles of residents with Accessibility Permits could be towed and returned to the previous location at no cost to the vehicle owner as long as the Accessibility/Handicap Permit is properly displayed in the vehicle. This option will be analysed as part of the pilot program.

### COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Department will work closely with Roadways & Transportation to develop communication plans for each the pilot and then the permanent implementation to ensure that the residents are appropriately informed on how the snow routes and temporary parking bans will work in their neighbourhoods. They will also aid in communicating any changes in the bylaws.

### DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendations contained in this report require City Council approval. City Council’s approval will also be required to authorize the amendments *The Regina Traffic Bylaw No. 9900*, when presented.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director  
Roadways & Transportation

Respectfully submitted,



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