

Adopted by Council at its meeting held February 1, 2016 [CR73/2016]

/AC

Windsor, Ontario February 1, 2016

REPORT NO. 339 of the
ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC SAFETY
STANDING COMMITTEE
of its meeting held January 20, 2016

Present: Councillor Fred Francis
Councillor Chris Holt
Councillor Bill Marra (Chair)
Councillor Hilary Payne
Councillor Paul Borrelli

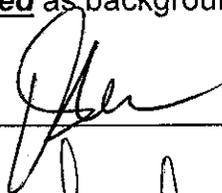
That the following recommendations of the Environment, Transportation and Public Safety Standing Committee **BE APPROVED**:

Moved by Councillor Payne, seconded by Councillor Francis,
THAT Council **RECEIVE** this report for information in response to CQ63-2015 which requested administration report back on the following winter control items in regards to 1) notification to property owners not to clear their sidewalks until all plowing is done; 2) plowing onto lawns rather than sidewalks; and 3) declaration of a snow emergency so as to get vehicles off streets where possible be responded.

Carried.

S 61/2015 SW2015

Clerk's Note: The report of the City Engineer dated December 3, 2015 entitled "CQ63-2015 – Winter Control Items" is **attached** as background information.

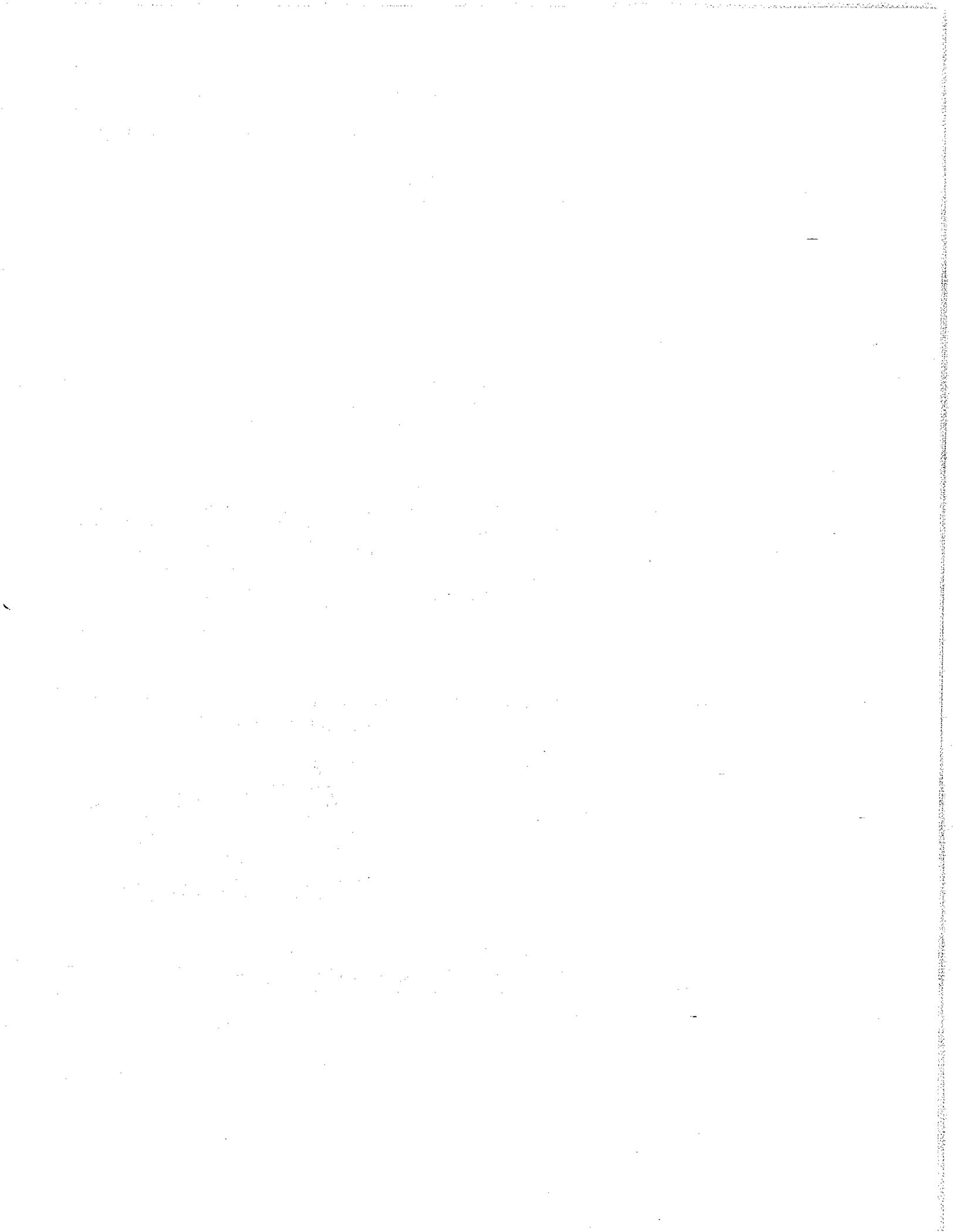


CHAIRPERSON



SUPERVISOR OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NOTIFICATION:	
NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION





Public Works - Operations

MISSION STATEMENT

"Our City is built on relationships – between citizens and their government, businesses and public institutions, city and region – all interconnected, mutually supportive, and focused on the brightest future we can create together"

REPORT #: S 61/2015	Report Date: 12/3/2015
Author's Contact: Roberta Harrison Maintenance Coordinator (519) 255-6560 ext. 4241 roharrison@citywindsor.ca	Date to Council: December 23, 2015
	Clerk's File #: SW2015

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

Subject: CQ63-2015 - Winter Control Items - CITY WIDE

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report **FOR INFORMATION** in response to CQ63-2015 which requested administration report back on the following winter control items in regards to 1) notification to property owners not to clear their sidewalks until all plowing is done; 2) plowing onto lawns rather than sidewalks; and 3) declaration of a snow emergency so as to get vehicles off streets where possible be responded.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

On November 3, 2015, Councillor Payne, asked for Administration to report on the following questions:

CQ63-2015

- "1. Notification to property owners not to clear their sidewalks until all plowing is done?*
- 2. Plowing onto lawns rather than sidewalks; and*
- 3. Declaration of a snow emergency so as to get vehicles off streets where possible?"*

DISCUSSION:

The City is committed to ensuring that safe levels of winter control service are provided on a regular and on-going basis for residents and visitors to the City. Like other services, the level of service provided for winter control operations is a balance between available budget and resident expectations of the service. The City's winter control service Level Policy (as approved by CR24/2006) provides information about the specific level of winter control service provided by the Corporation during various types of weather events. Information on the City's winter control service levels, including answers to frequently asked questions, can be found on the City's website. With respect to the Councillor's specific inquiries, the following information is provided:

1. Notification to property owners not to clear their sidewalks until all plowing is done:

Clear sidewalks are essential for many citizens especially those with disabilities, people who enjoy walking as a form of exercise and children who walk to and from school. Snow or ice covered sidewalks also make it difficult, if not impossible, for those who deliver services to the community to do their job i.e. - people who deliver the mail, read water/gas meters, delivery services, EMS and fire.

Under City By-Law 8544, owners and/or tenants of residential properties are required to remove snow or ice in front of their property within 12 hours while owners or tenants of commercial properties have 4 hours to do so.

By-law 8544 could be amended to provide more time for residents to clear snow but this would come at an increased risk as delaying the clearing of snow covered sidewalks increases the likelihood of slip and fall accidents and makes it harder for those using the sidewalks to get around safely.

The City does coordinate the Snow Angels program which matches volunteers from the community with seniors and persons with disabilities who are unable to clear the snow from their City sidewalk however, requests for service for the program currently far exceed the number of volunteers.

There are no commonly accepted best practices amongst municipalities for the maintenance of sidewalks during the winter months and there are currently no legislated minimum maintenance standards for sidewalk snow clearing. In major municipalities, there is a general trend toward the municipal provision of snow clearing of sidewalks for arterial or high pedestrian volume routes only. The desired pavement condition after plowing operations also ranges from 'bare pavement' to 'safe and passable' to 'snow packed.'

To date, Operations has not been resourced to conduct sidewalk snow removal throughout the City. Snow removal from sidewalks has been limited to those abutting City owned facilities/properties and a few select sidewalks.

2. Plowing onto lawns rather than sidewalks:

The goal of plowing is to remove the snow from the travelled portion of the roadway and fold it into a windrow and place the snow onto the adjacent boulevard. For many areas across the City, there is a grass boulevard between the roadway and sidewalk in which to store the snow that has been plowed off of the roadway. However, in some locations across the City, the sidewalk is adjacent to the roadway (integral). In order to ensure the full road width is cleared of snow in these locations, the snow must be placed onto the sidewalk for storage. (Snow is always pushed away from oncoming traffic). Administration takes steps to ensure that the amount of snow placed onto sidewalks is minimized (i.e. reducing the speed of the plough truck).

In residential areas, residents are required to shovel the snow from the integral sidewalks onto the lawns at the back of the sidewalk and not place it back into the roadway as this is against the Highway Traffic Act (Chapter 626.2.1). While this may be seen as a hardship for some homeowners, mechanical means to additionally clear the windrow from the sidewalk prove costly and are not practical for the city to perform. As noted above, the Operations department has not been resourced to conduct sidewalk snow removal throughout the City. Snow removal from sidewalks has been limited to those abutting City owned facilities/properties and a few select sidewalks.

In commercial areas, the sidewalk widths are able to accommodate more snow as the sidewalk widths are larger, allowing for some storage space and allowing pedestrians to move in a safe manner.

3. Declaration of a snow emergency so as to get vehicles off streets where possible:

In February 2008, Council adopted the Winter Control Level of Service Policy as approved by CR24/2006. In section 4.2, the declaration of a snow emergency is addressed;

"4.2 In the event of a winter storm situation in which the Executive Director of Operations deems the situation may require the formation of the Emergency Operations Control Group pursuant to the Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Executive Director of Operations in conjunction with the Chief Administrative Officer, Police Chief or Fire Chief may request the Emergency Alerting System be activated."

The severity of the storm, the quantity of snow and the weather forecast for the upcoming days will dictate whether a declaration of a snow emergency is necessary.

Once a Snow Emergency is declared under the protocol outlined in the Winter Control Level of Service Policy, By-law 9023 Section 10.1(j) addresses parking on City streets;

10.1 No person shall park a vehicle at any time -

*(j) On core salt/plough routes as set out in Schedule "II" (Core Salt/Plough Routes) hereof, for forty-eight hours following the end of any snowfall above seven and one half centimeters (7.5) when publicly declared by the Corporation.
(ADDED B/L 70-2014 APR 22/14).*

By-law 9023 only allows for towing of cars on main snow plough routes once a snow emergency is declared. Main snow plough routes consist of expressways, arterials, collectors and bus routes. Consideration may be given to expand the scope of Parking By-law 9023 to also include this requirement on residential streets.

Currently, we utilize the media to ask residents to remove their cars from the streets to make the work of the snow plough more effective and efficient. However, not all residences have driveways and/or available off-street parking, particularly in the downtown core. Free parking (as deemed appropriate) in municipal surface lots is authorized during a Snow Emergency. This information is disseminated through the local media. While we have historically opened City parking lots at no fee, the distance people are required to walk (in inclement weather) from the parking lot to their home is a detrimental factor in gaining compliance with removing vehicle(s) from the street.

RISK ANALYSIS:

While steps are taken to minimize the amount of snow placed onto sidewalks by plows, and every effort is taken to accomplish such plowing activities in a timely manner, By-law 8544 with regard to removal of snow from sidewalks takes precedence. The risk associated with the presence of snow and ice on a sidewalk is a moderate risk, both to users of the sidewalk and the Corporation. If the Corporation directed property owners not to clear their sidewalks until all plowing is done, this would be in contravention of its own by-law and could increase the risk. In order to mitigate this risk to the Corporation, By-law 8544 should be followed.

There is risk associated with plowing onto boulevards, sidewalks and other hard surfaced areas. However this is an acceptable practice as the goal is to plow the snow from the roadway to ensure the safety of the motoring public and mitigate the significant associated risk to the travelling public. Therefore, the risk associated with placing snow

onto boulevards, sidewalks and other hard surfaced areas where required must be tolerated.

There are no significant risks identified with declaring a Snow Emergency, when warranted.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Winter control costs can significantly vary from year to year depending on the severity of the winter weather. The winter control budget and actuals for the past several years are provided for Council's information.

	Budget	Actuals	Variance
2010	\$3,307,074	\$3,658,352	(\$351,278)
2011	\$3,498,876	\$4,665,120	(\$1,166,244)
2012	\$3,641,145	\$3,673,164	(\$32,019)
2013	\$3,793,854	\$4,539,425	(\$745,571)
2014	\$3,735,163	\$5,579,458	(\$1,844,295)
2015 (Nov 30)	\$4,123,237	\$3,805,025	\$318,212

Winter control is provided by both City staff and contractors.

The City's winter control costs include: City staff, salt, salt brine, fleet costs and additional hired equipment for snow clearing as required.

The winter control contracts themselves are comprised of the following cost components:

- Hourly rates for salters/ploughs for both guaranteed operating hours and additional operating hours;
- Lump sums for some wing ploughs;
- Hourly rates for wing plough Operators;
- Hourly standby rate for drivers;
- Lump sum for annual training; and

- Daily Equipment standby rate per unit.

The guaranteed operating costs due to the City's contractors for the 2015 season total \$1,539,227.30.

CONSULTATIONS:

Public Works

A. Kalinowski, Manager of By-law Enforcement, Policy, Gaming, Licensing & By-Law Enforcement

D. Paladino, Manager of Risk & Insurance

C. Etmanski, Financial Planning Administrator

CONCLUSION:

In order to provide the continued safe movement of people and goods throughout the City, given the allocated resources, roads and sidewalks are maintained per the approved levels of service. Winter control is driven by unpredictable and uncontrollable factors and the service is provided in the most economical fashion possible.

PLANNING ACT MATTERS:

N/A

APPENDICES: