
REPORT TO COMMON COUNCIL

M & C 2011 - 290

November 19, 2011

His Worship Mayor Ivan Court
And Members of Common Council

Your Worship and Members of Council,

SUBJECT: 2010 – 2011 Winter Management Plan Review and Update

BACKGROUND

Council endorsed the current *Winter Management Plan for Streets and Sidewalks* (M & C 2009-352) on October 26, 2009. At that time, it also adopted the structure of priorities for winter operations, proposed street plowing objectives, proposed winter sidewalk objectives and the snow removal guidelines, as policies of Common Council. A number of changes to the *Winter Management Plan* were made in 2010 to add sidewalk servicing inventory and additional streets added to Schedule R of the Traffic By-law to allow a Winter Parking Restriction exemption.

ANALYSIS

The *Winter Management Plan* is subject to ongoing review; encouraging ideas and suggestions, and allowing staff to work with citizens to assist in dealing with particular challenges over the winter season. This report is a review of the 2010 – 2011 winter season with recommendations for improvement of the Plan.

A number of improvements to the Plan have been made throughout the winter season to address mainly safety and Winter Street Parking Restrictions concerns. Below is a summary of the improvements. A more detailed analysis is enclosed in Appendix A.

- A comprehensive Communications Plan has been developed for the 2011 – 2012 winter season to remind the public of *Winter Management Plan* provisions and responsibilities related thereto. This Communications Plan is enclosed as Appendix B.



The City of Saint John

- The Winter Operations Centre Standard Operating Procedure was adjusted to add Common Council and the City Manager to the communication list advising that the WOC is activated and deactivated.
- The primary (10/13 times with a 99% success rate) and secondary (9/13 times with a 98% success rate) street plowing service objectives were met considering the challenging winter season that occurred. In 3 events, the primary objectives and in 4 events, the secondary objectives were not fully achieved as a result of reduced equipment availability and consecutive storm events.
- Street plowing route priority changes were mainly made to reflect community concerns. Tilley Lane is recommended to be upgraded from Priority 4 to Priority 2 based on the high number of elderly citizens accessing the Community Health Centre.
- As a result of high traffic volumes, locations of sidewalks near schools and safety concerns brought forward by the public and Councillors, adjustments to the sidewalk servicing have been made to reflect an additional 0.7% increase using the existing resources. Since the 2009 Policy adoption, 1.6% (3,857m) of sidewalk inventory has been added utilizing existing resources.
- Since requests to add 71 more sidewalks for servicing were received, a complete analysis of the winter sidewalk servicing model was completed and it is recommended that the service no longer be aligned with street plowing priorities but aligned with actual pedestrian use since pedestrian use is much different than vehicle use on different types of streets. Appendix A outlines these priorities.
- The primary (2/12 times with a 91% success rate) and secondary (4/10 times with a 96% success rate) sidewalk plowing service objectives were met considering the challenging winter season that occurred. In 10 events, the primary objectives and in 6 events, the secondary objectives were not fully met as a result of increased inventory utilizing existing resources, reduced equipment availability, response timing, quantity and type (wet, heavy) of snow, additional snow being deposited on sidewalks from street plowing and contractor plowing and consecutive storm events.
- Salt inventory levels were at lower than acceptable levels during the latter part of the winter season due to regional and national salt shortages reminiscent of 2008. Salt use was 16% higher and sand use was 56% higher in 2010-2011 than in 2009-2010. Additional salt/sand mixture was used on 'rural' roads in an effort to

manage salt inventory. A cost/benefit analysis to increase performance while using less salt will be investigated to incorporate an eco-friendly anti-icing inhibitor directly onto the salt as the salt is being offloaded into storage. Salt use will become a major focus during the 2011-2012 winter season. Salt is an expensive commodity that must be managed properly while providing the appropriate balance of safe road conditions and cost effectiveness.

- 5 streets or portions thereof were exempted from the Winter Streets Parking Restriction upon completion of a second analysis by the City Traffic Engineer. 3 streets or portions thereof were removed from Schedule R of the Traffic By-law. It was necessary to strike a better balance to meet operational needs and citizen concerns on Champlain and Lancaster Street areas.
- In October 2010, Common Council endorsed the Winter Street Restrictions Exemption of the portion of Douglas Avenue between Bentley Street and Main Street and other portions of Douglas Avenue were removed from Schedule R of the Traffic By-law.
- The Saint John Parking Commission is adding a new on-line parking space matching service in December 2011 that assists in connecting property owners with off street parking needs to those with off street parking availability. This new initiative can be accessed at www.shareyourride.ca and click on the Parking Space Finder icon.
- The current Snow Collection and Disposal Facility is located within an “environmentally sensitive wetland” off of Bayside Drive. An environmental consultant was engaged to determine the suitability of the former Lantic Sugar Refinery site as a potential Snow Collection and Disposal Facility in a more central location to operations. A cost/benefit analysis was completed and a payback period of 1.4 years for a capital investment of approximately \$140,000 would render approximately \$97,000 in annual cost savings to the Service. It has become understood that this site renders a higher potential for development opportunities and the existing facility will require a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment when funding becomes available tentatively in 2013.
- 14 winter drainage issues have been identified and are being addressed through both the General Fund Capital Program and the Operating Budget.
- Over 550 potholes were repaired between December 2010 and April 2011. Some potholes required numerous repairs.

- In 2011, A Preventative Maintenance Program was developed to identify roadway structures (catch basins and manholes) that require repairs prior to the next winter season to minimize plow equipment damage. 433 structures exhibited some type of failure. Utilizing existing resources, 37 permanent repairs were completed through the asphalt resurfacing program (27), the Capital Program (10) and <120 temporary repairs (asphalt collaring) were done until permanent repairs can occur.

Based on 2012 preliminary budgetary planning requirements to meet a 0% net effect, it will become necessary to reduce five sidewalk plow units and two street plow units. Any additional requests to reduce the 2012 Municipal Operations Service Budget further will result in a reduction of Winter Snow/Ice Control equipment. Any equipment reduction will negatively impact the ability to achieve the current Service Objectives outlined in the *Winter Management Plan for Streets and Sidewalks*. Further equipment reduction or a decrease in equipment availability will result in a lower inventory of winter sidewalk service, a reduced or delayed level of response to snow events especially for Priority 3 and 4 streets, changes to reduce the Service Objective description and / or increase the timelines associated with current Service Objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Common Council:

1. Endorse the changes to the *Winter Management Plan for Streets and Sidewalks* that include:
 - a) Winter Sidewalks – addition of approximately 1690m (or 0.7%) to the sidewalk service inventory using existing resources.
 - b) The addition of sidewalks that fall within the established criteria of those that should be serviced while removing an equal length of sidewalks from the current service list while maintaining the same service level standard utilizing existing resource allocations.
 - c) Winter Sidewalk priorities and the redefined boundaries of the 14 sidewalk plowing routes.
 - d) Street Plowing route priority changes to reflect requests based on merit.

Respectfully submitted,

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