

Operational Services Report to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2023 November 08

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IP2023-1119

Snow and Ice Control Policy Update

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council on the status of the Snow and Ice Control Policy update project. Administration is sharing the draft policy with Council and expects to present the final policy for approval in Q1 2024. Ensuring Calgarians can travel safely in winter conditions is of vital importance and developing policies to deliver on that commitment is what this policy update seeks to accomplish. Administration is also reporting back on opportunities to leverage favorable winter maintenance operating budgets in response to a Notice of Motion to redirect operational savings to mobility infrastructure.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

The Snow and Ice Control Policy update was initiated by Administration. Council has previously directed Administration to review opportunities to direct operating surpluses to be annually allocated for street repairs to improve mobility in Calgary. During the November 2022 Budget Deliberations, a motion was passed with a requirement to report back on increasing the deployments of contractors at trouble spot locations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that Council direct Administration to present a finalized Winter Maintenance Policy and potential service enhancements by the end of Q1 2024.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE, 2023 NOVEMBER 08:

That Council direct Administration to present a finalized Winter Maintenance Policy and potential service enhancements by the end of Q1 2024.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager of Operational Services Doug Morgan concurs with this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Following a comprehensive engagement process, Administration has developed a draft Winter Maintenance Policy (formerly Snow and Ice Control Policy). Sharing the draft policy now allows for continued engagement and transparency.
- Submission to Council for policy approval is planned by the end of Q1 2024.
- The City's Snow and Ice Control Policy has not been updated since 2011. It requires a major update to meet the needs of a growing city while continuing to ensure winter travel is safe and accessible for Calgarians regardless of their mode of travel. The new policy will shape service level priorities and how Calgarians travel safely in winter conditions.
- Administration is reporting back with options on directing favorable winter budget surpluses to fund street repairs through potential amendments to the Snow and Ice Control Reserve or amendments during annual Budget Deliberations.

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DISCUSSION

Policy Updates / Policy Evaluation

Administration assessed the existing Snow and Ice Control Policy (CP2021-01) in terms of legislative needs, strategic factors, integration / alignment, best practices and what community members were saying through engagement. At the centre of the work, we must ensure operational policies remove mobility barriers and do not create barriers for certain groups through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens.

What is changing in the policy: Since the adoption of the Snow and Ice Control Policy in 2011, there have been many operational improvements and investments made to enhance winter maintenance services for Calgarians.

Notable updates to reflect these changes and amendments include:

- Proposing a name change to the “Winter Maintenance Policy”
- Service level updates to reflect operational investments: Priority 1 (18hr), Priority 2 (36hr), City maintained sidewalks (24hr) and transit / accessibility improvements
- Embedding themes of accessibility, equity, safety, environment and connectivity. New sections highlighting Equity Supporting Practices, Sustainability Practices, Wheeling.
- Plain language updates, policy formatting and priority system revisions.

The draft policy will continue to evolve as we build on input received prior to final adoption.

Bylaw Changes

During the engagement process, suggestions were raised with respect to residential sidewalk clearing and safety impacts. Administration is still evaluating the suitability of Bylaw updates to enhance public safety. Currently under consideration is how to deter residents from moving snow from their properties (e.g. from driveways or lawns) onto public right of way, as a fine does not currently exist for this activity. The assignment of clearing responsibility for laneway crossings will also be proposed in conjunction with the final policy.

Service Levels and Budgets

A majority of Calgarians would like The City to invest more in winter maintenance and this service has been identified as a primary opportunity through past citizen satisfaction surveys. Opportunities for base operating budgets investments will be prepared in conjunction with the subsequent policy report. Service level improvements that can be achieved within existing budgets will continue to be implemented.

Opportunities for new service enhancements have been identified based on feasibility as follows:

- Additional priority bus stops cleared
- Prioritized 5A snow removal
- Faster Priority 2 route clearing
- Laneway crossing clearing
- Engineered walkway clearing

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Snow and Ice Control Reserve Updates

In 2012, Council directed Administration to establish a Snow and Ice Control operating reserve and it is used by Mobility, Parks and Open Spaces, and Calgary Transit, to supplement annual budgets to maintain Council's approved Snow and Ice Control Policy. Notice of Motion EC2023-0463 requested Administration to assess redirecting surplus Winter Operations budgets, when available, to fund street infrastructure repairs. Options to utilize favorable balances were assessed in Attachment 4. Updates to the reserve to allow balances exceeding the \$15 million reserve ceiling are possible but not recommended in order to align with existing reserve controls. It is preferable to allocate favorable budgets during annual Budget Deliberations to provide a holistic view of corporate needs.

Trouble Spot Deployments

Following Council direction to increase the deployment frequency of trouble spot clearing resources in November 2022, a total of 24 deployments were completed for 12 snow events requiring dispatch during the 2022/23 winter season. This resulted in a rate of deployment 60 per cent higher compared to the 2021/22 winter season. An increased rate of trouble spot deployments will continue based on the success of this initiative.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

An Engage process was used for the Snow and Ice Control policy project. Public input was received through a ten-question survey to measure public satisfaction, priorities, impacts, accessibility and citizen expectations around snow and ice control. A What We Heard Report (Attachment 5) was developed and made available publicly in November 2022.

The primary engagement themes were assessed and incorporated into the updated policy. The following five areas were the most frequent themes identified in the engagement: accessibility, assistance, equity, enhanced service levels, safety and wellbeing.

Targeted sessions and workshops were completed with various groups representing the accessibility and cycling community (Older Adult Advisory Table, Accessibility Committee on Design, Alberta Ability Network: Accessible and Affordable Transportation Table, Bike Calgary). Individual meetings with Councillors and the Mayor's Office were completed in May and June 2023 and feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the draft policy.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The Winter Maintenance Policy will support social resilience and the Social Well-Being Policy principle of providing equitable service delivery by removing barriers to access.

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Environmental

A changing climate will require The City to respond to increasingly variable weather events such as freezing rain and/or heavier snow events. Administration will be putting forward a policy that aligns with best practices and incorporates innovations to minimize the impact on the natural environment along with climate adaptation components.

Economic

Updating the Snow and Ice Control Policy will contribute to multiple economic strategy pillars to make Calgary a better place to live. High-quality winter maintenance services contribute to reliable goods movement, a business-friendly environment and advances opportunities for Calgarians to make a living and achieve their pursuits safely.

Service and Financial Implications

Other:

There are no anticipated financial impacts resulting from this report. Service enhancements are currently being evaluated and will be presented to Council in 2024 for approval. Changes to existing service levels through additional investments or amendments to service levels could impact base operating budgets. Changes to the Snow and Ice Control Reserve conditions would have a budget impact depending on the specific amendments made.

RISK

Updates to the Snow and Ice Control Policy will garner public attention due to the high level of importance winter maintenance services have in the daily lives of Calgarians. Meeting public expectations and ensuring the needs of Calgarians are met through an equitable lens and comprehensive policy are important to ensure acceptance and understanding of the new policy.

There are no alternative recommendations from this report as the policy will be considered for approval in 2024. Phasing the policy approval over multiple reports allows Council to have a clear line of sight on policy development and ensures risks are mitigated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Notice of Motion EC2023-0463
3. Winter Maintenance Policy Draft
4. Snow and Ice Control Budget Options Assessment
5. What We Heard Engagement Summary
6. Winter Maintenance Municipal Benchmarking
7. Presentation
8. **Public Submission Received After Committee**

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Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Carla Male	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Approve
Troy McLeod	Mobility	Approve
Jill Floen	Law, Legislative Services & Security	Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Inform

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