

Transportation Report to
SPC on Transportation and Transit
2018 December 06

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
TT2018-1316

Improving Compliance During Snow Route Parking Bans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Snow Control Routes and related parking bans support the provision of a safe and efficient transportation network for Calgarians. Compliance with parking bans appears to be improving and methods for notifying the public have become more sophisticated and widespread. The City of Calgary has identified further opportunities to improve compliance for efficiency, safety and quality of life for residents.

Administration has reviewed municipal practices across Canada to identify best practices as well as an assessment of fine schedules for non-compliance on snow routes. An amendment to Bylaw 26M96 is recommended to increase the fines for parking on Snow Control Routes during Snow Events in order to bring fines for non-compliance in line with other municipalities.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommends that Council give three readings to the proposed Bylaw to amend the Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96 to increase snow route parking fines to be consistent with fines related to non-compliance for maintenance work.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

In 2011, Snow Control Routes were added to the Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96 to facilitate snow and ice control (SNIC) operations on Priority One and Priority Two routes so that when a snow event was declared, parking was prohibited on the designated Snow Control Routes.

On 2013 September 16, Council approved amendments to Calgary Traffic Bylaw 26M96 following Administration report TT2013-0420 that reviewed the City's Snow Control Route process to determine whether it should continue, be changed, or be removed. The findings of the report were that Calgarians felt that parking bans on these routes were effective and that average time to clear snow on these routes was reduced. Significant changes to the Snow Control Route program were not recommended at that time.

On 2018 March 19, through Notice of Motion C2018-0312, Council directed City Administration to review improvements to increasing compliance for snow route parking bans including, but not limited to:

1. A review of current fine schedules and enforcement practices in applicable parking Bylaws;
2. Review other municipal practices regarding snow route parking restrictions;
3. Identifying low compliance areas and available technology to recommend improvements including communications;
4. Review coordination between Roads, Calgary Parking Authority and other relevant City departments to deliver Snow and Ice Control enforcement services during parking bans;
5. Recommend other communications channels to notify the public about future/current Snow Route Parking Bans; and
6. Recommend other parking options for residents during parking ban operations.

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BACKGROUND

When a snow event is declared, many Calgarians move their vehicles to allow for Roads Maintenance crews to complete snow clearing operations in a more efficient manner. In 2018, there was an average of over 2,000 parking tags issued for each event. This indicates that a number of Calgarians are not moving their vehicles, which results in some sections of routes not being fully completed. This reduced clearing efficiency may cause frustration among those citizens who make the effort to move their vehicles and repeated efforts for Roads crews to complete snow and ice control operations efficiently.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Fine Schedules and Enforcement Practices

Public compliance during Snow Route Parking Bans improves operational efficiency and safety for Calgarians and City staff. Parked vehicles impede the operations of maintenance crews, which results in reduced efficiency and a negative public perception of The City's snow clearing program. Snow Route parking enforcement data for 2018 can be found within Attachment 1. Overall compliance across the city varies, though it should be noted that the number of tags issued is dependent on Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) resource availability.

In addition to fines, the CPA has towed vehicles parked on Snow Control Routes during a Snow Event when the vehicle was still parked after being ticketed in the previous ban. The CPA will also tow vehicles that are parked in a hazardous manner. However, towing is not part of the typical enforcement strategy. During a Snow Event, there is a large amount of snow accumulation, which creates challenges for Calgarians and it is possible that a vehicle on a Snow Control Route has not been relocated may be stuck in the snow and the owner is waiting for a tow truck. If the CPA extensively towed vehicles during a snow event, this would result in even less tow trucks available for Calgarians in difficult situations. Towing all vehicles parked illegally is impractical given that an average of over 2,000 parking tags have been issued during previous bans in 2018.

The current penalty for parking on a Snow Control Route during a Snow Event in Calgary may not be appropriate in relation to the cost and impact non-compliance has on City operations and the operational impact it may have to road users. The fine amount is lower than an existing fine related to The City's spring street sweeping operations. The penalty for "parking or stopping where prohibited in connection with a maintenance operation" is \$120. Administration's recommendation is to increase the snow route parking fines to be consistent with the spring maintenance parking fines.

Other Municipal Practices

The practice for snow route parking bans in municipalities across Canada varies (Attachment 1). The practices range from a seasonal ban restricting parking on designated routes overnight to localized bans based on assessment by City crews.

Another method used across Canada is enforcement and penalty. Currently, the fine for parking on a Snow Control Route during a Snow Event is \$75. If the ticket is paid within 30 days, the fine is reduced to \$50, and if paid within 10 days, the fine drops to \$40. A jurisdictional review

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was completed and Calgary has the lowest fine amount for a similar program in Canada. The most common fine amount for cities with similar programs is \$100 and range from \$100 to \$200. Only three other cities surveyed have a reduced fine for early payment and Calgary's is also the lowest among those cities.

Identifying Low Compliance and Recommended Improvements

With regards to identifying low compliance areas and communicating the routes, The City conducts regular reviews to ensure signage is appropriate and consistent with standards across the City. If a route is no longer required, the related signage is removed. When a 311 Service Request is submitted relating to signage issues on Snow Routes, field staff complete assessments to determine whether further signage is required. Citizens can find out if they reside on a route by visiting Calgary.ca/snow and accessing the online snow route map as well as registering for email alerts when an event is called.

The review of locations with low compliance is an ongoing exercise being completed by the CPA. Compliance maps have been created that show areas with higher numbers of tags issued. The trends are reviewed to influence enforcement activity. Additionally, reports from Roads Maintenance on challenging areas can assist with enforcement.

Review Coordination with Relevant City Departments

Towing vehicles on a smaller scale in areas identified by Roads as being problematic may be feasible and is something that will be determined collaboratively should these areas be identified. Roads Maintenance and the CPA will also continue to collaborate on identifying problematic areas where enforcement may assist with operations.

Another area that was reviewed is the coordination between internal groups with The City and Roads. Currently, operational crews advise staff responsible for signage improvements of suggested changes to the snow routes. The changes are then made to signage and the online public map as required. Additional coordination occurs when Maintenance becomes aware of locations where signage is missing and advises Traffic and this is an ongoing effort and will continue.

Communication Channels

Prior to snow route parking bans being implemented, the CPA issued over 15,000 courtesy notices to residents that would be impacted if a ban was called. Since then, a more comprehensive communication strategy has been implemented. Currently, when a snow event is declared, the public is notified through a variety of communication channels:

- 311 (automated messaging)
- The City's Calgary.ca website
- the Roads and MyParking mobile applications
- email alerts to those who have subscribed (13,700 subscribers)
- Twitter (@cityofcalgary–247 thousand followers; @yyctransport–42 thousand followers)

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- 50 digital messaging signs along main roads
- Traditional media (TV, radio and print)

Public notifications are helpful in order to gain compliance during a parking ban. Calgarians who want to be sure they are aware of an upcoming ban can sign up for direct notifications such as the email list or the notifications from the MyParking app.

There may also be an option to push these notifications to the mobile phones of those who have the app and have allowed alerts for it. The Roads smartphone app has 14,079 total downloads with 6,643 of those occurring in 2017. Though the usage of the app is increasing, it does not currently have push notifications for snow events and this is being explored by Administration.

The Calgary.ca Snow Route Parking Ban webpage has received over 90,000 visits from January to November 2018 with 72% of visits occurring during active bans. In 2017, there were over 44,000 webpage visits although there were fewer bans in 2017.

Other Parking Options

During a Snow Route Parking Ban, all vehicles must be removed from the streets that are signed as Snow Control Routes. It is expected that residents of Snow Control Routes make arrangements to move their vehicles when a snow event is declared. Because Snow Control Routes are only on Priority One and Priority Two routes, there are typically nearby streets that are not restricted. To assist residents who may have difficulties finding alternative parking locations, the CPA provides free parking from 9:00pm to 6:00am in any CPA surface lot or parkade displaying the CPA logo. This information and a map of the lots is provided on both Calgary.ca and CalgaryParking.com. These websites also provide information on alley parking rules in case alley parking is available for affected residents. As per the Traffic Bylaw, on-street accessible parking zones located on Snow Control Routes are exempt from parking bans at all times.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The recommended Bylaw changes were developed collaboratively with the Law Department, Calgary Parking Authority, and Roads. They are based on reviews of SNIC operational needs. The 2018 Roads Annual Survey showed that overall, Calgarians are satisfied with Roads operations, but they feel we could be doing better with snow and ice control.

The most recent citizen survey data was collected during the 2015 Roads Citizen Satisfaction Survey of 800 Calgarians. Most Calgarians agreed (84%) that Snow Route Parking Bans were effective in having snow moved quickly from Calgary Roads. In addition, many respondents agreed (83%) that Calgarians are reasonably notified with bans are put into effect and 86% agreed that parking bans routes can be readily identified within the city.

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Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with principles found in the Calgary Transportation Plan, as we ensure the attractiveness, convenience and safety of all modes of transportation. However, access to emergency and municipal services, and the incorporation of emergency evacuation routes, must be considered in the design and operation of all road and street types. This is critical to ensure every Calgarian lives in a safe community.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The report recommendations support the Snow and Ice Control (SNIC) Policy (TP004) to ensure a reliable transportation network and safe driving conditions. The 7-Day plan was developed in order to achieve the SNIC requirements within the assigned budget and resources. The plan addresses high volume and higher-risk transportation assets first, and then moves to lower volume and lower risk assets.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

There are no operating budget implications associated with the report recommendations as the increased fine amount is expected to be offset by improved compliance. Through increased compliance, the efficiency of maintenance crews will increase and minimize the need to return to areas that were not clearing during the snow route parking ban.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no capital budget implications associated with the report recommendations.

Risk Assessment

The proposed fines to be more consistent with other operational work may be perceived negatively given that recent budget deliberations occurred even though satisfaction surveys indicate support for encouraging more compliance with parking bans. The accumulation of snow on parking ban routes can be a safety concern. Adopting the recommendations in this report will result in increased effectiveness of the SNIC program.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The recommendations reflect the importance of maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system in the winter months and updating fines in the Traffic Bylaw pertaining to Snow Control Routes will provide more incentive for compliance.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Snow Event Parking Ban National Summary
2. Attachment 2 – Proposed Bylaw Amendment