

## **Priorities Committee Meeting\_Sep12\_2023**

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### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**

#### **2023 Winter Maintenance Update presentation**

##### **Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on the Winter Maintenance Program.

##### **Our Strategic Goals**

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

##### **Report**

Strathcona County follows a priority system based on the Winter Maintenance Policy SER-009-026 to clear winter roads, trails, parking lots and transit stops. The policy guides this work and related operational decision-making.

There were multiple improvements made in the 2022/23 winter. This was part of the updated Winter Maintenance Policy and the Community Standards Bylaw (sidewalk clearing section). The overall winter season had an above-average snow accumulation and leveled out in January and February. The urban service area had two snow route clearings and one residential snow clearing. The updated snow depth thresholds for clearing of snow routes (15 cm of snowfall) and residential areas (7 cm of compacted snow) were approved in September 2022. These changes had no impact on the number of clearings completed last season due to the timing and amount of snowfall. The changes will be monitored this coming winter season.

The improvements made to the prioritization of the trail network saw pathways being opened within the goal of 48 hours. The clean-up was completed once the overall network was opened. To ensure safe access to these locations, there was an adjustment to have schools, parks, and major recreation centers as priority one. The feedback from stakeholders and residents was positive. Overall, the trail clearing, and ice control was improved.

The new Community Standards Bylaw requires property owners to remove all snow and ice from the sidewalks on the front and side of their property within 48 hours of the weather event ending. The County had 322 complaints received for noncompliant properties during the winter season. After inspection, 173 locations received an immediate action notice under the bylaw. Only 33 locations failed to comply after the notice period. Crews were contracted by Strathcona County to clear the noncompliant sidewalks and the property owners were invoiced. The inspection and notice period evolved over the winter. There were adjustments made to processes to ensure clear information was provided and establish the standards for resident requirements for cleared sidewalks. The process for notifying property owners included a phone call from an Enforcement Services Officer to notify the owner of the infraction. This process was beneficial; however, it created resource capacity issues by adding the call process to Enforcement Services workload.

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Strathcona County is considering updating a few areas for clearing priorities to better align with the overall network approach to winter maintenance. The following locations are being considered:

- The residential streets within Ardrossan currently fall within a rural priority 4 roadway; however, they are treated as a hybrid with snow being windrowed and removed with the urban snows route clearing. The proposed changes would have the residential roadways within Ardrossan change to an urban priority 4 roadway to be cleared like the residential streets within Sherwood Park.
- The subdivision of Meadow Hawk is currently being cleared as an Urban Priority 3 roadway. This area should be cleared as an urban priority 4 roadway to align with other comparable neighbourhoods.

Changes to these proposed priority levels will be brought to Council for consideration.

The overall trail network within Sherwood Park will be reviewed this winter. The focus is on legacy sections of collector road sidewalks that are currently being cleared by the County. This will require the review and analysis of overall impacts in conjunction with any major changes being brought back for Council consideration.

For the 2022-23 season, Strathcona County developed an updated communications approach to support the changes to the Winter Maintenance Policy. The expanded "Avoid a Tow" campaign resulted in an Award of Excellence in Public Sector/Government Communications from IABC Edmonton.

"Avoid a Tow" measures resulted in:

- 161 new SC Alert subscribers between October 1 and November 30, 2022
- 730 subscribers to the new Winter Roads eNewsletter as of March 2023
- Number of vehicles left on the road during a parking ban:
  - Priority 3: November 2022 parking ban: 675, a 32% decrease from March 2022.
  - Priority 4: January 2023 parking ban: 1,652, a 28% decrease from March 2022)
- Between the two snow route parking bans in the 2022-23 winter maintenance season (November and January), there was a 40% decrease in the number of vehicles left on the road. This is in comparison with the 53% increase between the two snow route parking bans in 2021-22.

A broad community awareness campaign was implemented to support the changes to the Community Standards Bylaw.

Sidewalk bylaw measures:

- Survey results (December 2022):
  - 79% were aware of the updated Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw
  - 78% said they clear their sidewalk within 48 hours "most of the time" or "always"
  - 64% agree that the new timeframe improves safety
  - 69% agree that the new timeframe improves accessibility

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- Compliance as of March 24, 2023: 322 violations inspected by the County. This accounts for about 1% of single-family homes with privately maintained sidewalks.

**Council and Committee History**

September 27, 2022	Council approval: THAT revised Policy SER-009-026 Winter Maintenance Policy – Roads, Sidewalks, and Parking Lots, as set out in Enclosure 2 of the September 21, 2022, Transportation and Agriculture report, be approved.
June 21, 2022	Priorities Committee was provided with an update on winter maintenance and public engagement results.
January 18, 2022	Council approved: THAT Winter Maintenance Policy SER-009-026 and County service levels for winter trail maintenance be reviewed as outlined in the January 18, 2022 TAS report, and administration provide a report for Council's consideration by the end of the third Quarter of 2022 with a revised policy and corresponding budget amendments.

**Other Impacts****Policy:** n/a**Financial/Budget:** n/a**Legislative/Legal:** n/a**Interdepartmental:** n/a**Master Plan/Framework:** n/a**Enclosure**

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