

For Information Only

Snowplowing Municipal Parking Lots

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Recommendation

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Finance Implications

Savings of \$85,000 have been incorporated in the 2012 budget and \$40,000 will be incorporated in the 2013 budget.

Background

As part of the City of Greater Sudbury's Financial Sustainability plan, an internal task force commissioned by the C.A.O.'s office was tasked with examining the feasibility of snowplowing municipally-owned lots rather than using a contractor. The committee consisted of Ron Henderson, Dan Laakso and Paddy Buchanan. The underlying premise of this study was to eliminate contractors by better utilizing existing city labour and equipment.

In or around 2003, the City of Greater Sudbury changed its' practice and decentralized the responsibility for winter control activities of municipally-owned facilities and parking lots to the operating departments. Prior to that year and prior to municipal amalgamation, these winter activities were the responsibility of the operations division (roads and parks).

The premise of the decision in 2003 was to have the roads division fully concentrate their efforts on maintaining the roads and that winter control activities for parking lots were curtailing the effectiveness of the roads division to maintain Council approved service standards for winter roads maintenance. Beginning in 2003, a 5 year contract was let out that provided for the clearing and removal of snow, as well as lot sanding with the operating departments responsible for the management of that contract.

The following outlines specific observations made by the committee with regard to the current method of contracting out winter maintenance activities for municipally-owned facilities and lots.

- The contract appeared to be very expensive at \$735,000 per year.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Ron Henderson
Director of Citizen Services
Digitally Signed Nov 10, 11

Division Review

Ron Henderson
Director of Citizen Services
Digitally Signed Nov 10, 11

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Nov 15, 11

- The contract is unsupervised, possibly leading to the City paying for unnecessary work.
- The contract is being managed by managers outside of the Roads division who do not have the expertise to manage snowplowing contracts.
- Snow removal and sanding activities are assigned to this contract while there is capacity within the roads division to do this non-critical work at very little incremental cash cost as there is existing capacity within their labour force and equipment pool. (i.e. They are already paying for wages and we already own the equipment. The only incremental cost would be the salt/sand and fuel for the equipment used.)

Based on these observations, the committee examined the cost effectiveness of both Parks and Roads taking on as many municipal lots as possible. It was also determined that a pilot project be put in place for the upcoming winter season.

In the Roads case, it was determined that it was cost effective to take on 33 municipal lots by adding four additional 4X4 plows to existing beats along with nighttime supervision.

In the Parks case, it was determined that it was cost effective to take on 30 municipal lots with the addition of two pieces of equipment and weekend casual employment.

Savings of this pilot project from both operating departments taking ownership of 63 municipal lots is estimated at \$125,000 per year.

As well, there other benefits that are expected to be gained by the City by utilizing our own municipal forces:

- Roads offers 24/7 supervision of snowplowing operations.
- The 4X4 plows that are currently contracted by the Roads division doing laneways and cul-de-sac's work in close proximity, often driving right by 33 municipal lots.
- The 4X4 contract is managed by the Roads Division. This assigns the responsibility to the department that has the expertise.
- There will be an improved level of service to cul-de-sacs and laneways.
- Snow removal, for the most part, is non-critical work that can be done by the roads division in time periods when they are not responding to a snow event instead of contractors.
- Similar to snow removal, sanding is a non-critical event (with the exception of a freezing rain event). There is capacity within the Roads division to sand City lots at a very minimal cost.
- The City will achieve better utilization of labour and equipment that it already pays for and owns if it undertakes its own non-critical snow removal and sanding activities.
- New collective bargaining agreement language will allow the Parks division with two additional pieces of equipment to plow an additional 30 municipal lots within Community Development instead

of using contractors.

NEXT STEPS:

The Task Force recommended that a winter control pilot project for the next two winter seasons be put in place, beginning November 1, 2011, with the Roads Department and November 1, 2012, with the Parks Department, based on the following actions:

1. Utilize up to four additional contract 4X4s to snowplow 33 City lots within the City's South Section. This contract will be administered by the roads department with a potential savings of approximately \$85,000. These savings have been incorporated in the 2012 budget.
2. Utilize the Parks Department, beginning November 1, 2012, to snowplow an additional 30 municipal lots instead of contractors. The estimated savings are \$40,000 and will be incorporated in the 2013 budget. The equipment required to do this work are two Cab & Chassis c/w dump body, plow and sander with an estimated cost of \$60,000.00 per unit. Funds are available for this purchase from Fleet Capital accounts.
3. Utilize city crews for snow removal and non-emergency sanding for all city facility parking lots.

It was also recommended that upon the successful completion of the pilot project that the Roads and Parks divisions continue to review alternative ways to deliver in-house snowplowing service for other municipal properties, including sewer and water and other municipal facilities outside the main City core.