

January 27, 2010

Our Reference: 94289805-GM

TO: Stephen Mandel
Mayor

All Councillors

Simon Farbrother
City Manager

FROM: Robert Boutilier
General Manager

SUBJECT: Residential Snow Removal

On 26 January at the Transportation & Public Works Committee meeting, the Transportation staff provided a verbal update on the snow program. It included a description of the current situation, a decision to increase the frequency of residential “blading” of the snow pack to keep it well below 10 cm and confirmation of the public consultation on the snow program which begins in February with a Report to the Committee in March.

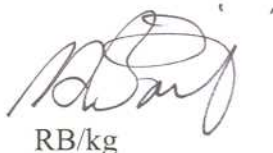
During the meeting, staff were asked to explain why residential streets were not being plowed down to bare pavement. In accordance with the Winter Road Maintenance Program – Policy C409E, residential plowing only involved the “blading” of the snow. Removal of windrows was the responsibility of property owner. While a public notification was required through the media, a parking ban cannot be used. However, staff have responded to calls where unique local problems required action outside the Policy.

I was questioned why a recommendation was not being made to use a special provision in the Policy where the plowing of residential streets to bare pavement may be initiated at the discretion of the City Manager. This provision was defined as the road to bare pavement; all driveways, crosswalks and corners opened; windrows along streets not hauled away, cul de sac snow initially piled in the centre for removal later; but excluded bare pavement in alleys.

I reviewed the current situation again after the meeting and concluded that my statement at the meeting remained the same. A plowing of residential streets to bare pavement was not warranted at this time. The following factors contributed to my recommendation –

- The temperature projections for the next month indicated normal weather associated with below freezing which supports the snow pack condition.
- Residential plowing to bare pavement as defined in the Policy would cost between \$3.5 million to \$5 million which is not included in the 2010 budget plan. Without including snow removal of windrows, it would generate city wide complaints and loss of on-street parking.
- Additional snowfall between now and the end of the winter would add to windrows and the streets would gradually get back to the snow pack with the potential for another demand for a City-wide plowing to bare pavement.
- If the removal of windrows from residential streets was required which is not included in the current definition of plowing to bare pavement, the cost could double, require several weeks to complete and create a snow storage requirement that exceeds our capacity. Unlike in the past, the City cannot just dump snow anywhere due to environmental concerns unless an emergency is declared.
- I have received no complaints from emergency service agencies that the current conditions on the residential streets are impeding their work in the City.
- The activation of residential snow plowing to bare pavement has only taken place 3 times in the last 11 years and each event was related to emergency situations which affected the entire City. It was not something that was done without substantial justification.

Transportation staff will continue to deal with unique situations to ensure the safety of the public and movement within the City. As mentioned at the meeting, the change in frequency of “blading” on the neighbourhood streets will make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RB/kg', written over a light blue circular stamp or watermark.

RB/kg