

17. SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE (WINTER CONTROL) RECOMMENDATION

The TMP recognizes and supports the rationale for the City to develop a sidewalk winter maintenance program that reflects the growing need of the community. Current City practice is for abutting property owners to clear sidewalks and the problems/issues with this approach are numerous and should be referenced against what makes a 'walkable community' that is "accessible for all" through the use of "Complete Streets". There is a fundamental need under a Complete Streets approach, development for an Accessible City and that supports the Pedestrian Charter to ensure that all public sidewalks are accessible to all residents. This includes the timely removal of snow and ice from sidewalks (winter control).

Winter maintenance has been one of the key points raised by the community regarding transportation and mobility in the City of Waterloo. In recent years, the total costs of winter control on City streets each year from 2000 to 2008 ranged from a low of \$730,000 in 2006 to a high of \$1,391,469 in 2007.

Currently, City staff currently maintains the following types of sidewalks and pathways:

- Sidewalks in front of City property
- Access sidewalks to City property and for operator/equipment safety
- Highway over pass sidewalks
- Sidewalks adjacent back lotted properties
- Block to block walkway links
- Current cost recoverable sidewalks
- Park pathways that are school routes.

All other winter maintenance of sidewalks is the responsibility of the abutting property owner(s). The practice of the City, through the Snow and Ice Bylaw enforcement and social marketing campaigns, is to clear snow and ice where required at the property owners expense.

In 2008, the City considered alternatives to winter sidewalk maintenance as it affects accessibility and level-of-service. Four options were investigated with associated costs noted below:

Exhibit 16-1: Winter Control Options / Sidewalks

WINTER CONTROL OPTIONS	AVERAGE ANNUAL COST	1-TIME COST (EQUIPMENT)
1. Maintain Current Level-of-Service	\$285,000	N/A
2. City Clears All City Streets / Sidewalks	\$1.2 M	\$4.2 M equipment
3. City Clears All Class 2 & 3 Streets / Sidewalks	\$261,000	\$900,000 equipment
4. City Clears Along GRT Routes	\$261,000	\$900,000

This TMP recommends that the City follow Option #3 and work to convert its current winter sidewalk maintenance practice to one where the City is responsible for winter maintenance on all Class 2 and 3 streets, which are essentially all arterial and major collector roadways in the City of Waterloo. This recommendation should be considered in the 2011 budget process with the goal of having all public sidewalks cleared by the City over the next ten years (Option #2). This recommendation is made because winter control is a fundamental service provided by the City, and is reflected in the following key areas of the City's Strategic Plan:

- Our Living Environment – staff have implemented a Salt Management Plan, and Best Management Practices to reduce the use of road salt to improve Our Living Environment, and the same can be done for winter sidewalk maintenance.
- A Healthy and Safe Community – facilitating the safe movement of people and vehicles, and mitigating the limitation to mobility caused by a low winter maintenance level-of-service.
- Economic Vitality – maintaining a safe and reliable transportation network is fundamental to the movement of people, vehicles and goods.
- Partnerships and Collaboration – Ongoing improvements to services and adding additional services under the Joint Services agreement with the City of Kitchener.

Furthermore, this TMP recommendation for improved winter sidewalk maintenance through enhanced City involvement conforms to the following principles on which this TMP is based:

- The Complete Streets approach and the role of walking.
- The Accessibility For All guiding principle in the Official Plan.
- The objective to enhancing community safety.
- Creating an inclusive community (furthering accessibility initiatives).
- Supporting a vibrant Uptown core.

It is understood that the City would require time to change the winter sidewalk maintenance practice, and changes would be developed and phased in to address the increase in winter operation cost and the budget process. A five year implementation period is expected in order to convert the practice to City responsibility for winter sidewalk maintenance on all Class 2 and 3 streets. The new practice would start with the higher order streets, transit routes, school routes including universities/college and Uptown Waterloo, and work towards a more comprehensive catchment area across the entire city.