

Date: April 9, 2025

To: **Mayor and Council.**

Name and title: Blake McIntosh, Director of Civic Operations

Subject: Snow Clearing on Statutory Holidays

Attachment(s):

1. Staff Report to Council dated January 29, 2025 titled "Snow and Ice Control Policy 2025 Review"
2. Snow and Ice Control Policy approved September 9, 2019
3. Staff Report to Council dated October 18, 2024 titled "Snow & Ice Control Policy Review"

Recommendation(s):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled "Snow Clearing on Statutory Holidays" dated April 9, 2025 from the Director of Civic Operations.

Purpose:

This report is before Council to provide information on a potential amendment to the existing Snow and Ice Control Policy that could create cost savings for changing existing snow clearing processes on statutory holidays.

Background:

At the February 24, 2025 open council meeting, Council received the attached report dated January 29, 2025, titled "Snow and Ice Control Policy 2025 Review". Attached to that January 29, 2025 report was the report titled "Snow and Ice Control Policy" which was presented in open council on November 4, 2024. The report presented in November 2024 provided three options in which potential savings could be realized. At the February 24, 2025 open meeting, Council directed administration to return a report to Council with options to amend the Snow and Ice Control Policy that will create cost savings for snow clearing on statutory holidays and includes compounding factors for those options.

This report investigates potential savings for reducing snow and ice control operations on statutory holidays and the overall impacts to winter operations.

Discussion:

To achieve the objectives of the Snow and Ice Control Policy, when minimum snow accumulations are met for a full deployment of City forces and contracted resources, timelines established in the policy require continuous 24 hour operations. As a result, crews continue to work through weekends and statutory holidays to achieve the service level.

The current service level outlined in the policy requires Priority 1 & 2 routes be cleared within 48 hours for snow accumulations of 7.5 cm and greater. Priority 3 routes are to be cleared within 72 hours after Priority 1 & 2 routes are complete when snow accumulations are 12.0 cm and greater.

Should Council wish to advance with no snow and ice control services being provided on statutory holidays, the following service level factors should be considered:

- In the event of back-to-back snowfalls or snowfalls within a defined snow event of accumulations greater than 7.5 cm, crews would be required to restart plowing on Priority 1 and 2 routes. This scenario would add another 48 hours of plowing time and delay work on Priority 3 routes. A further reduction of 24 hours and additional snow on residential streets could reduce ease of travel and create rough, compact roadways. Compact snow can be more difficult to clear and may increase time required to clear the entire city. Budget savings may not be realized with the extra costs associated with removing built up snow and ice.
- Sidewalk accessibility could be reduced and hazardous conditions could be present for pedestrians.
- Recent snow events have included precipitation in the form of rain. Snow accumulations have reached snow event thresholds and shortly after, rain events occurred. Snow/Rain events create hazardous conditions to commute in, makes clearing more difficult due to compact, heavy snow and can create surface flooding conditions which can impact surface infrastructure and ease of travel.
- Cost savings of not providing snow and ice clearing on statutory holidays are only realized if a snow event encompasses a statutory holiday. No savings occur if staff are not providing services on a holiday.

For each day snow and ice control services are paused during a defined snow event that encompasses 3 shifts for internal labour and equipment and contracted services on a statutory holiday, cost savings reflect a total of \$211,501. Should a snow event include all applicable winter statutory holidays (4 in total), savings would amount to \$846,004. Both figures are reflected in 2024 dollars.

Strategic Priorities:

The Snow and Ice Control Council Policy supports the City myPG Strategy – Sustainable Infrastructure and provides direction regarding snow and ice control management.

Summary and conclusion:

The Snow and Ice Control Policy defines the intent of the City of Prince George winter maintenance operations through the establishment of service levels. The main objective of snow and ice control is to allow the City to continue to function under typical winter conditions through a reduction of hazards and provision of reasonable mobility on municipal roadways, laneways, sidewalks, trails, Civic and Park facilities. In times of winter conditions outside of the norm, the policy provides guidance and timeframes in which the public can reasonably expect City infrastructure to return to passable winter conditions.

The review of pausing roadway clearing on statutory holidays is a reduction of current service levels. Potential savings of the proposed service level change has been outlined in this report. It is important to recognize that the outlined savings are variable due to unpredictable weather and are only applicable to snow event situations. To administer the current Snow and Ice Control policy, it is necessary to have staff at the ready working through statutory holidays.

Pausing snow and ice control on a statutory holiday that is encompassed by a defined snow event and deferring the service to the next day would potentially lessen the impact to the annual snow budget but as outlined above, could come with operational challenges that could increase time required to clear the entire city, increase the risk to city infrastructure and create accessibility issues for pedestrians and hazardous conditions for motor vehicles. Budget savings may not be realized as a result.

If Council wishes to amend the Snow and Ice Control Policy to implement no snow and ice control services being provided on statutory holidays as outlined in this report, a resolution directing administration to return a revised Snow and Ice Control Policy for Council's approval to accomplish that change would be in order. Should Council choose to amend the current Snow and Ice Control Policy as described, administration would look to implement those changes later in 2025.

Respectfully submitted:

Blake McIntosh, Director of Civic Operations

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/04/23