



Staff Report

Operations – Roads & Drainage

Report To: Special Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: June 27, 2022
Report Number: CSOPS.22.029
Title: Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Implementation
Prepared by: Jim McCannell, Manager of Roads & Drainage

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.22.029, entitled “Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Implementation”;

AND THAT Council consider that additional winter maintenance activities are required to align with current and projected population growth within the Town.

AND THAT Council consider winter maintenance activities on all sidewalks throughout the Town and that service be provided by internal resources as outlined in Option 4A with the use of 2 depot locations.

AND THAT Council approve the addition of six (6) full time year-round (FTE) Operators to the Roads and Drainage Division of the Operation Department to begin November 1, 2024.

AND THAT Council directs staff to bring forward an addition to the budget for consideration in the 2023 budget deliberations to allow for the tendering of equipment and buildings.

B. Overview

On February 15, 2022, Council received Staff Report CSOPS.22.020, entitled “Sidewalk Winter Maintenance”. Staff was directed to develop a strategy to extend winter maintenance service to public sidewalks within the Town for consideration in 2022 by this term of Council with a proposed implementation strategy for the winter of 2024 /2025. This was in response to several letters received by Council from the community requesting the Town provide winter maintenance to the sidewalks in new developments within the Craighleith area.

C. Background

The Town of The Blue Mountains is committed to building and maintaining a pedestrian friendly community. The Town recognizes the importance of clearing sidewalks and enabling residents to maintain healthy, active lifestyles and in providing safe access to destinations such as work, schools, and commercial areas. Town staff strive to provide safe winter road and sidewalk conditions for vehicular and pedestrian traffic as set out in the Town's Winter Maintenance Standards and the Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards, all while operating within the means of its approved budget.

There are approximately 31 kilometres of municipal sidewalks, with the Town contracting out the winter maintenance of 20.23 kilometres of Town sidewalks. There are approximately 10.78 kilometres of municipal sidewalks where the Town does not provide winter maintenance. In addition, there are approximately 10.65 kilometres of sidewalks proposed in new development within the Lora Bay and Craighleith Areas. The table below identifies the status of each sidewalk in reference to winter maintenance (reference attachment 1 for map). Condominiums (Private Sidewalks) for example will not be relevant in considering this report.

Table #1

Town of The Blue Mountains Sidewalk Winter Maintenance	Length (km)
Town Sidewalks with Winter Maintenance	20.23
Town Sidewalks without Winter Maintenance	10.78
Private Sidewalks	4.58
Unassumed Sidewalks	10.65
<i>Total</i>	46.24
Georgian Trail Winter Groomed Maintenance between Christie Beach Road and Grey Road 21	20.48 km

The Town's Roads and Drainage Division is responsible for the winter maintenance of hard surfaced (concrete) sidewalks. This involves plowing and sanding sidewalks to reduce the snow depth and provide a smooth, snow packed surface as required in the Town's current level of service for pedestrians during the winter months. The Town does not expect bare sidewalks in the winter. *Ontario Regulation 239/02 Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways* establishes maintenance standards for municipalities and municipal roads, highways, and sidewalks. The purpose of O. Reg. 239/02 is to clarify the scope of the statutory defense available to the municipality under the maintenance clause (Clause 44) of the *Municipal Act* by establishing maintenance standards which are non-prescriptive as to the methods or materials to be used in complying with the standards, but instead describe a desired outcome.

Section 16.3 to 16.7 of the Regulation set out minimum standards for the maintenance of sidewalks. All maintenance standards are based on post-event operations (i.e., after a snowfall or storm event) and adhere to guidelines set by the *Municipal Act* and the Town's Level of Service requirements. The Town's level of service stipulates a smooth, snow packed surface for sidewalks. Following a winter storm event, the Town's winter maintenance policy calls for

snowplow equipment to be dispatched to primary routes upon the accumulation of five (5) centimetres of new snow within sixteen (16) hours. Plow equipment will be dispatched to secondary routes after the priority routes are completed and upon the accumulation of five (5) centimetres of new snow within twenty-four (24) hours. The Town's level of service for sidewalk maintenance exceeds the Provincial requirements.

Current Winter Maintenance of Sidewalks

The Town's current winter maintenance practice is to clear priority sidewalks which include those along Highway 26, Bruce Street, Marsh Street, and from Thornbury to Clarksburg. These priority sidewalks were approved by Council on May 28, 2012, through the review and approval of staff report EPW.12.018. This includes the business sections, around the school, and the nursing home area. The residential sidewalks in Clarksburg and Thornbury are deemed to be secondary sidewalks. Primary sidewalks are cleared first, and secondary sidewalks are serviced next. The Town has a service contract for the patrolling, inspection, and winter maintenance of the sidewalks in Thornbury and Clarksburg. This sidewalk service is not performed by Town staff, as the Town does not own the necessary equipment.

The current service contract for sidewalks includes a minimum of one (1) sidewalk machine and a spare machine with sufficient staff to provide service seven (7) days a week. In addition to the sidewalk service, the service contract includes five (5) tractors with a combination of snow blades, snow blowers, and front-end loader options, a minimum of one (1) parking lot sander, plus a spare sander. This equipment is for winter maintenance of substandard "cottage" roads, laneways, and parking lots. The Contractor is responsible for completing patrols of the roads, laneways, and parking lots covered under the service contract. The Contractor works with Town staff to complete winter maintenance of roads, laneways, and parking lots before, during, and after winter events. The Contractor also provides labour for hand shoveling around Thornbury, and the bridges in Clarksburg. This service contract was awarded in 2019 and has a 5-year term which can remain in place until April 15, 2024. The Town may terminate the contract upon thirty (30) days written notice to the vendor at the end of the Town fiscal period in any given year.

Also receiving winter maintenance are those sidewalks within the commercial areas of the Blue Mountain Village resort area. The sidewalks in proximity to the Village, or to the commercial rental condominiums, are classified as priority sidewalks. Sidewalks in the Blue Mountain Resort (BMR) Village core area including the Snowbridge Development (3.24 km) are maintained through a tender between the Town and Blue Mountain Resort (BMR).

All other residential sidewalks in the Lora Bay/Camperdown and Craigeleith areas are classified as secondary sidewalks and are closed each winter. The sidewalks are signed "Closed – No Winter Maintenance". The signs are installed November 1 and removed after April 15, at the end of the winter control period. This work is currently done by our Roads and Drainage staff.

Changing the Level of Service for Winter Sidewalk Maintenance

Under the current snow clearing program, the Town does not provide winter sidewalk maintenance to 10.78 km of sidewalks. There is also an anticipated 10.65 km of proposed sidewalks within new developments yet to be assumed by the Town. Expansion and improvement to the current sidewalk clearing program would contribute to geographic equity while ensuring equitable mobility and active transportation opportunities for all by focusing on areas in Town that do not currently receive winter sidewalk maintenance.

As the Town continues to grow the demand for additional winter maintenance of sidewalks will increase. By not changing the level of service the Town runs the risk that it will have to continue to tender out the contract for the Thornbury/Clarksburg area which is getting more difficult to fill due to contractor liability issues and escalating costs, qualified personnel, and the lack of available service providers.

For the 2021-2022 contract term, the Town acknowledged the increase in insurance premiums and agreed to compensate the current Contractor a total of \$35,000 with submitted insurance invoices. Any further or additional payments will be considered on an individual basis and shall not become part of the ongoing invoicing. The cost of the current sidewalk ploughing contract is approximately \$51,938.00 for the Clarksburg and Thornbury locations, based on 600 hours of service, and \$13,315.50 for BMR.

With the current and anticipated continued growth rate for the Town of The Blue Mountains, more development will result in more sidewalks. During reviews of development applications, staff ensure that there is a focus and responsibility for building a community that provides for well thought-out connectivity and inclusivity for all residents and visitors. The Table below provides Council and the public an idea of the Town's total active development in reference to planning review status (reference attachment 2 for map). Due to the various stages of development, and the split between public and condo is not yet known, an exact number on additional sidewalks is not available. Included in this is the 10.65 km of unassumed sidewalks which are located within the approved developments. There is an increased demand from current Town residents to provide additional winter maintenance for municipal sidewalks, with this need projected to grow as more sidewalks are created.

Table #2

Development Applications 2022	
Planning Review Status	Units
Approved	1581
Approved with Conditions	1460
Awaiting Application	337
Under Appeal	22
Under Review	425
<i>Total</i>	3825

D. Analysis

Future Winter Maintenance of Sidewalks

Option 1: Status Quo – Current Winter Maintenance of Sidewalks

- The Status quo option will keep the current winter sidewalk maintenance plan. The current state allows winter maintenance of the 20.23 km of sidewalks located in Thornbury/Clarksburg, and the Blue Mountain Village commercial areas. All other residential sidewalks are deemed closed for the winter.

Many residents have expressed frustration and a desire to increase the existing level of service for winter maintenance of sidewalks. Council has directed staff to look beyond this model to service all Town sidewalks.

Option 2: Contract Sidewalk Maintenance in All Areas

- It is highly unlikely that a single contractor would bid on the winter maintenance of sidewalks in the Lora Bay and Craighleith areas due to the distance between the two areas and the need to transport equipment between areas.

Pros: The cost of staff/equipment and storage are the responsibility of the contractor. The Town needs to only administer the contract, or several contractors.

Cons: The Town could face unanticipated costs with the loss of service mid-season which has been experienced in the past.

Option 3: Hybrid Version of Contracting and Town Maintenance

- The Town would continue with the current contracting out of the sidewalk winter maintenance of 21.43 km, which would include the sidewalks along Highway 26, Bruce Street, Marsh Street, sidewalks from Thornbury to Clarksburg, the business section, schools, and nursing home areas.
- Town staff would provide winter maintenance to the remaining 10.78 km of assumed municipal sidewalks as well as the additional 10.65 km of municipal sidewalks that are anticipated as the result of new development.

Pros: This option would help to control costs while Town staff become more experienced with the sidewalk maintenance.

Cons: The Town could face unanticipated costs with the loss of service mid-season, which has been experienced in the past.

Option 4 A: Town Staff Provide Maintenance of Sidewalks – Two (2) Depot Locations

- Staff and equipment could be shared between two (2) depot locations. Two (2) service areas could be created: one for the Lora Bay/Thornbury/Clarksburg area, and one for the Craigleith area.

Pros: Having two (2) depots would result in less transportation and associated downtime when floating equipment between two (2) service areas. A secondary depot would allow for the storage of sand/salt for the sidewalk machines, within the Craigleith area. This would allow for faster redirection of staff and equipment as required. This would help ensure that the sidewalks are maintained in a timely fashion. It would also require less transportation related to equipment (fewer trucks and trailers). Furthermore, two (2) new locations could allow for other departments (parks) to utilize the space, or potential expansion of the space for off-season maintenance activities.

Cons: Having two (2) depots would result in a higher initial start-up cost to construct the depots. Having two (2) depots would result in a longer lead time, as well as the additional operating costs for two (2) buildings.

Equipment Needs

Winter maintenance of the Lora Bay/Thornbury/Clarksburg and Craigleith service areas would require the following equipment:

Five (5) sidewalk maintenance units with respective attachments (blower, blade, and sanding unit) as follows:

- Two (2) sidewalk maintenance units (and attachments) for the Lora Bay/Thornbury/Clarksburg area (as Lora Bay grows an additional machine and route may be created).
- Two (2) sidewalk maintenance units (and attachments) for the Craigleith area.
- One (1) spare machine (and attachments) in the event of mechanical failure/repairs.
- One (1) heavy duty pick-up truck to supply sand/salt, and haul sidewalk machines.

Equipment Costs

The capital investment is estimated to be as follows:

- \$1,050,000 for sidewalk maintenance units with additional attachments (\$210,000 per unit, with five (5) needed in total).

The annual operating estimated costs.

- \$15,000 annually for a heavy-duty pick-up truck, with sander attachment.
- The approximate annual operating and maintenance would be \$160,000 (\$40,000 per sidewalk maintenance unit.) Based on Approximately \$2000/500 hours in maintenance

costs with \$120/hour for a repair tech to complete the service; replacement rate with an average municipality life cycle of 8-12 years; fuel consumption average of 14L/hour for the sidewalk maintenance unit (estimated at 12,600 L).

- Deicing materials. (1000 Tons at \$25/ T). \$25,000.

Facility Requirements for Craigleith – Building on 3-acre site

- A 1200 sq. ft. heated prefabricated structure with concrete floors to accommodate two (2) sidewalk machines (\$540,000), with one (1) washroom. This estimate is based on \$450/sq. ft.
- A fuel storage system with diesel, dyed diesel, and gasoline tanks (\$60,000).
- A block wall foundation with a wooden structure with metal clad siding and roofing for salt/sand storage (\$20,000).

Other Items to be Considered

- Staff parking
- The site needs to be expandable to allow other activities including maintenance of other Town sites. Including servicing of parking lots, laneways, and condo developments.

Potential Depot Location in Craigleith

- Vacant Town Owned Land located in Craigleith on Grey Road 19 would serve as a staging area to service the sidewalks in the Craigleith area as it is centrally located to most new development within that area. [Staff Report FAF.21.106](#) provides an overview of the preliminary stage of a potential project to establish a Town facility in the Craigleith area that would provide an enhanced level of service with what is anticipated to be a range of municipal services.

Potential Depot Location in Lora Bay/Clarksburg/Thornbury Area

- The Tomahawk/Park Facility is a potential location to store the sidewalk machine units which would allow for service in the Lora Bay/Clarksburg/Thornbury areas. The current facilities would have expenses related to upgrades of the exiting building including providing a heat source within the shop to accommodate the equipment and staff.

Alternative location

- Bayview Park area requires replacement of the current storage barn.

Option 4 B: Town Staff Provide Maintenance of Sidewalks – One (1) Depot Location

- All staff equipment could be located at a single site currently owned by the Town. The sidewalk machines could be loaded on a trailer and hauled with a truck to various service

locations. This is currently common practice for the Town's lawn mower and tractors that service the Town's Parks.

Pros: Allows for the use of a single property. The Town owns several usable sites in which a warehouse or service depot could be constructed, which would allow for the indoor parking of trucks, trailers, and sidewalk machines. This will lower initial capital costs and allow for the easy flow of communication between staff. Furthermore, this allows for the redirection of staff and equipment as required.

Cons: Sidewalk machines are heavy and require an experienced driver to float them on a trailer, which could potentially require a specialized license. The sidewalk machines would be difficult to move on snow event days in the dark, which could lead to accidents, equipment damage, and possible injuries. Any delays in the floating of equipment would result in a reduced level of service to the Town.

Additional Equipment Needed to Support a Single Depot

If the winter maintenance of the Lora Bay/Thornbury/Clarksburg and Craigleith areas were maintained from a single depot three (3) additional trucks and trailers would be required.

- Three (3) trailers to float the sidewalk plowing equipment from the depots to the Lora Bay/Thornbury/Clarksburg area, as well as the Craigleith area. Three (3) trailers \$24,000 (\$8000/trailer).
- \$45,000 annual operating cost for three (3) heavy duty pickup trucks.

Staffing Requirements – Option 4 A and Option 4 B

To provide proper winter maintenance for the two areas, the Town would require five (5) operators plus one (1) lead hand/spare operator for a total of six (6) employees. Four (4) routes would require four (4) drivers, each driver would be on a five (5) day, 40-hour shift with two (2) days on stand-by. The spare Operator and the Lead hand would both be available to cover shifts due to illness and other issues. The approximate annual labour component to hire six (6) full time FTE staff will be approximately \$610,000. In addition, this program will need oversight for compliance and supervision. The need to track work records and service logs to ensure staff meet the expected level of service, would require 0.5 FTE of a Compliance Coordinator at an annual cost of \$55,000. Total annual staff costs are expected to be \$665,000.

Two of the six (6) fulltime staff could transition to the Community Service – Parks & Trails Division in the summer months to be utilized for Town maintenance and return to the Roads and Drainage Division for the winter months. Currently, seven (7) staff in the Parks & Trails Division are laid off during the winter months. The remaining four (4) full-time staff would remain in the Roads & Drainage division. See table #3. This would allow for continuity of service for six (6) employees for the entire year. In addition, this program will need oversight

for compliance and supervision. The need to track work records and service logs to ensure staff meet the expected level of service, would require 0.5 FTE of a Compliance Coordinator at an annual cost of \$55,000.

Table #3

winter positions	6 staff assigned to Sidewalks
Summer positions	2 staff assigned to CS- Parks
	4 staff assigned to OPS- R&D

In addition to sidewalk maintenance, Operations Staff can help with the demand for service requests received by the Town daily. A total of 352 service requests were assigned to roads in 2021, with almost half of those occurring between January and April. Service requests included: sidewalk conditions, dangerous trees, boulevard damage, storm drains, ditching, blocked culverts and flooding. The implementation of the sidewalk maintenance program would allow for these service requests to be addressed in a timelier fashion and allow trouble areas to be addressed before escalating to a service request by residents.

Parking Lots and Laneways

The Roads and Drainage Division currently hires 5 tractors with a combination of snow blowers, snow blades and front-end loaders to clear areas around the Town. There are a total of fifty (50) locations between the Community Services and Operations Divisions which need to be maintained (reference attachment 3 for map). As fewer local contractors are available to take on these works, the Town will need to take on the additional services in-house. The option could be explored to offer this service on a cost recovery bases to local Condominium's facilities. These options will be further explored in Report CSOPS.22.026.

Communication and Education Plan

Staff will need to prepare an extensive communication program to make residents aware that cars cannot be parking overnight on Town lands where they block the sidewalks. This could lead to confusion where parking areas are smaller, and larger vehicles block the sidewalk. Residents will also need to be aware that snow from laneways cannot be placed on the sidewalks, or road boulevards, as the Town will require this space for snow cleared from the road and sidewalks. Future developments may require additional right-of-way widths to accommodate snow storage.

Recommendation

Staff recommends winter maintenance activities on all sidewalks throughout the Town and that service be provided by internal resources as outlined in Option 4A with the use of 2 depot locations; one located in Craighleith at the vacant lands located on County Road 19, and a second storage facility at Tomahawk facility.

Staff recommends the addition of six (6) full time year-round (FTE) Operators to the Roads and Drainage Division of the Operations Department to begin November 1, 2024. The positions would be assigned as described above. The creation of full-time, year-round jobs improves recruitment, relevant candidate experience, and retention which results in consistent continuity of service for the residents. This creates a stronger duty of care and commitment to the residents.

Staff recommends to bring forward an addition to the budget for consideration in the 2023 budget deliberations to allow for the tendering of equipment and buildings. The construction of a storage building will need more than 12 months and should be started in early 2023 for completing prior to November 1, 2024.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

The introduction of additional sidewalk maintenance machines will increase the use of diesel fuel and increase the release of Green House Gases (GHG). The release of GHGs has been shown to contribute to the warming of the planet.

The winter maintenance of sidewalks will increase their use by residents and will help to promote a healthy lifestyle, and active transportation in general.

G. Financial Impacts

The financial impacts of this level of service increase are split between operating and capital. The first part of this section will look at the operating impacts followed by the capital impacts, please note these costs are built using Option 4A.

The chart below outlines the operating impacts of the new staff and new services as well as the amounts already carried in the annual operating budget for the current level of service.

Expense	Budget	Impact on 2022 Tax levy
5 Operators	\$500,000	
Lead Hand	\$110,000	
Compliance Coordinator	\$55,000	
Vehicle Costs	\$15,000	
Machine Costs	\$160,000	
Facility Costs	\$5,000	
Less Items Included in the Base Budget		
Seasonal Staff	\$225,000	
Sidewalk Contracts	\$65,000	
Net Impact on Taxation	\$540,000	2.92%

Taking the averaged assessed property in the Town at \$540,000 this increase would represent a \$60 increase however Sidewalk Maintenance can be special area-rated to only those benefiting properties. Staff have done a high-level analysis on what a special area rate would look like for sidewalk winter maintenance. In this scenario only the urban centre properties would be funding these costs and would represent an annual cost of \$75 on the average assessed property of \$540,000. Please note this is a high-level example and more consideration and direction from Council would be required.

On the capital side, the Town would be required to purchase the sidewalk snow removal equipment as well as build facilities for the staff and equipment. No land purchase costs have been included in this analysis as the recommended locations are all on Town owned lands. The other items as listed in the body of the report (fuel systems etc.) are included in the facility capital costs.

Capital Expense	Budget
Sidewalk snow removal machinery	\$1,050,000
Facilities	\$1,230,000
Total Capital Costs	\$2,280,000
Taxation Funding	\$910,000
Public Works Development Charges Funding	\$1,370,000
Total Funding	\$2,280,000

Although not owned by the Town, the Town has access through the contractors for two sidewalk snow removal machines therefore these two are not growth related whereas the additional three are growth related. Using this information, the funding split is 2/5 taxation and 3/5 Public Works Development Charges.

H. In Consultation With

Sam Dinsmore, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting and Budgets

Dax McAllister, Roads and Drainage Supervisor

Sarah Hanson, Public Works Compliance Coordinator

Ryan Gibbons, Director of Community Services

Sarah Traynor, Manager of Human Resources.

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Jim McCannell, Manager of Roads & Drainage managerroadsdrainage@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Sidewalk Winter Maintenance 2022 - Map
2. Active Development as of April 2022 - Map
3. Current and Proposed Snow Removal Locations Maintained by Community Services - Map
4. Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Implementation Presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim McCannell
Manager of Roads & Drainage

Shawn Carey
Director Operations

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CSOPS.22.029 Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Implementation.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment 1 Sidewalk Winter Maintenance 2022 - Map.pdf- Attachment 2 Active Development as of April 2022 - Map.pdf- Attachment 3 Current and Proposed Snow Removal Locations Maintained by Community Services - Map.pdf- Attachment 4 Sidewalk Winter Maintenance Implementation Presentation.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 20, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jim McCannell - Jun 17, 2022 - 4:13 PM

Shawn Carey - Jun 17, 2022 - 4:15 PM

No Signature found

Shawn Everitt - Jun 20, 2022 - 9:27 AM