



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

Sidewalk Snow Clearing Update Information Report

Report Number: 2017-34

Department(s): Development & Infrastructure Services – Public Works Services

Author(s): Jeff Bond, Manager, Parks & Property Services

Date: November 20, 2017

Purpose

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole Agenda for discussion through the Clerk. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on how Public Works Services plan to initiate the final year of the 3 year phase in of the Town wide Sidewalk Snow Clearing Service Level.

Background

In Development and infrastructure Services Report PWS 2015-16, Council selected to pursue the Option that includes the clearing of all Town sidewalks, walkways and paved trails, with a priority given to specific areas outlined as schools, Main Street, regional roads, and primary transit locations. This program was approved during the 2015-2017 and most recently the 2018 budget processes.

Prior to the initiation of year 1 of the 3 year phase in, Town staff cleared approximately 65% of sidewalks, walkways and trails (220km of then 340km). The remaining 35% were cleared by adjacent property owners, as outlined in bylaw number 1996-38.

The Town's snow clearing guidelines and service level are outlined in Town Guideline NMS-19. The purpose of this guideline is to deliver the best winter sidewalk maintenance efforts, given the resources available and during average weather conditions. Briefly summarized, the guideline states that assumed sidewalks on Arterial Roads, Primary and Minor Collectors as well as Local Roads would be cleared of snow within 24 hours **after** any new fallen or windblown snow has accumulated on the sidewalk surface and totals 5.0cm (2 inches) or more. According to the Guideline,

walkways and trails were to be cleared only after these areas were in satisfactory condition.

Discussion

Review of Phases

Implementation Year 1

Staff reviewed the approximate 220km of sidewalks, walkways and trails that were being maintained. Staff identified the priority locations and assigned them as 'primary' sidewalks, as directed by Council (Main Street, Regional Roads, Arterial Roads, school locations, major transit locations and the Tom Taylor Trail). The remaining sidewalks, walkways and trails were then assigned a 'secondary' status.

In order to reduce the length of each route and to ensure the priority status could be met, three new routes were created (1 in-house and 2 contracted). The new routes were constructed in order to make them a more manageable length. This allowed staff the time to respond to the priority locations first and then return to clear the secondary locations later. This has addressed the issue of providing service at a more appropriate time (i.e. school zones completed before or shortly after school begins).

Year 2 – First 60km of Sidewalks Added

In year 2 (2016/2017 season) 60km of the remaining 120km of sidewalks were added. This was managed by adding two additional contracted routes and a contracted chaser truck. A chaser truck is a mobile unit that delivers sand and salt to the sidewalk tractors as they travel throughout town.

The percentage of maintained sidewalks increased from 60% to 82% and staff were now maintaining approximately 280km of sidewalks and paved trails. Additional sidewalks were selected by using a fair and equitable approach along with an assessment of the widths of the sidewalks in Town. (There are a number of narrow sidewalks, located mainly in older areas of Town that are anticipated to be problematic to mechanically maintain. Further investigation and research is needed to be done before a viable plan can be developed on how to manage these locations.) Routes were then configured to keep them at the same manageable lengths.

Some challenges were encountered throughout this phase. Staff recognized that some homes that never had winter maintenance on the adjacent sidewalks had significant overgrowth of sod. This caused substantial amount of damage, especially since the first snowfall occurred in November, prior to the ground

freezing. Staff also discovered that a number of these homes also had landscape features, hedges, driveway curbing, etc. that encroached on the Town road allowances and obstructed equipment. An increased public communication initiative was introduced in 2017 to assist us with education and awareness of this issue so that improvements can be made in coming winters. The Town's webpage at newmarket.ca notes how residents can help minimize damage to their lawn and also has a video showing a plough run.

Year 3 – Final 60km Added and Additional Growth Kilometres Added

Now in the final year of the phase in staff added an additional two routes and a second chaser truck to the contractor's scope of work. Staff will also be adding one more in-house route to manage the growth that has occurred since the original report was written with data from 2013. When the original report was submitted there were only approximately 340km of sidewalks and paved trails. This number has grown to approximately 400km of sidewalks and paved trails. This increase was considered and funded in the 2017 budget.

Of the 400km staff discovered that approximately 10km (about 2.5%) of sidewalks are too narrow and will not be able to be mechanically maintained. Staff have recommended that the threshold of maintainable sidewalks be set at 122cm or 48in (equipment narrower than 48" is not currently available). This recommendation came after research concluded that a number of other municipalities do not maintain their historic areas of town for the same reasons as major sod and property damage, no snow storage and a spike in increased complaints. There are a few locations under 122cm wide that are part of our current service area; however, these are areas that have been maintained for a number of years and residents are used to specific sod damage caused by the ploughs and vegetation has been compressed back to minimize future issues. Staff also recognize that although the equipment does not fit properly on these sidewalks, residents have come to expect these areas as being maintained. Maintenance in these areas will continue as 'legacy services'.

In order to prevent a reduction in service and to be fair to all residents, Public Works staff and Engineering Services staff have developed a retrofit plan of areas that have sidewalks less than 122cm which will see the widths of these sidewalks brought up to the current standard as the road and other infrastructure is retrofitted.

After experiencing some of the challenges encountered during phase 2, Public Works staff enlisted the assistance of GIS staff who were able to develop a layer on the existing app. Parks staff are able to use this app to inspect the remaining kilometres scheduled to be added in the final phase. Areas noted as being problematic are captured by the app by type of issue and address and have associated photos to go along with the patrollers comments. Staff then delivered notices directly to those homes briefly explaining the phase in program and the

specific issue. As these issues are addressed with the associated property owners, they are closed with notes explaining the results.

As indicated previously, an educational video was also developed using dash cam footage and photos gathered from the 2016/2017 season. The intention of this was to help reach out to residents to address the importance of edging the sod adjacent to the sidewalk and not placing landscape features directly adjacent to the sidewalk. Staff's hope is that both these tools will successfully decrease the amount of damage and challenges staff faced during phase 2.

Staff have also recognized a need to significantly revise the Town's snow clearing guideline. Not only is the priority response not captured in the current policy, other parameters such as sidewalk widths are not captured. When the first 60km of sidewalks were added we discovered that weekend response was now more difficult to manage. Although our staffing levels increased during regular business hours, they did not increase after-hours. In the past staff responded to after-hours weather events using a combination of on-call staff and other staff members who were not on-call but were 'available to help'. This system was not consistent as responses were planned based on whoever showed that day. Not only were the numbers of staff able to work always different, this meant more overtime was incurred. Public Works Services will move to adopt a response system based on storm types and time of day that they occur instead of relying on volunteers. This is done in many other municipalities and allows for consistency and predictability. This will significantly decrease overtime by having only contractors and on-call staff respond to the event.

Conclusion

What Does this Mean for Residents?

With the inception of the sidewalk app, Public Works will now be able to provide residents with the proper notification when we discover encroachments on the sidewalks. They will also be able to benefit from better service should they be made aware of an issue. If a resident requires clarification, after receiving a sidewalk encroachment notice, the supervisor will be able to review the issue over the phone, while viewing photos and a description of the problem, providing clarification and options for the resident. This along with continued education will hopefully reduce the amount of sod and other property related damages. Residents can also continue to expect the same tiered response the Town has offered in the past two seasons, where primary areas are cleared first. With the introduction of after-hours response based on storm types our hope is to offer a more predictable response to snow events

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Living Well: deliver efficient, effective maintenance services to an appropriate level that achieves Council and/or Provincially mandated service levels, which meet public health and safety requirements and enhances quality of life.

Consultation

Staff will work with Corporate Communications and Customer Service to continue to educate and reach out to residents and property owners. A Snow Clearing Service Map will be developed and available on the Town's website within the upcoming weeks.

Although at the end of the phase in, the Town will be clearing 100% of assumed sidewalks over 122cm wide, property owners can aid the Town in clearing sidewalks adjacent to their property. Sidewalk snow clearing by property owners will be a support to the Town's winter maintenance.

Human Resource Considerations

No new full time equivalents are needed at this time. Additional routes have been contracted out.

Budget Impact

In the 2015 Budget, Council approved \$300,000.00 increase to the annual operating budget to be implemented over three years of the phase in. These funds have been incorporated as part of the base budget.

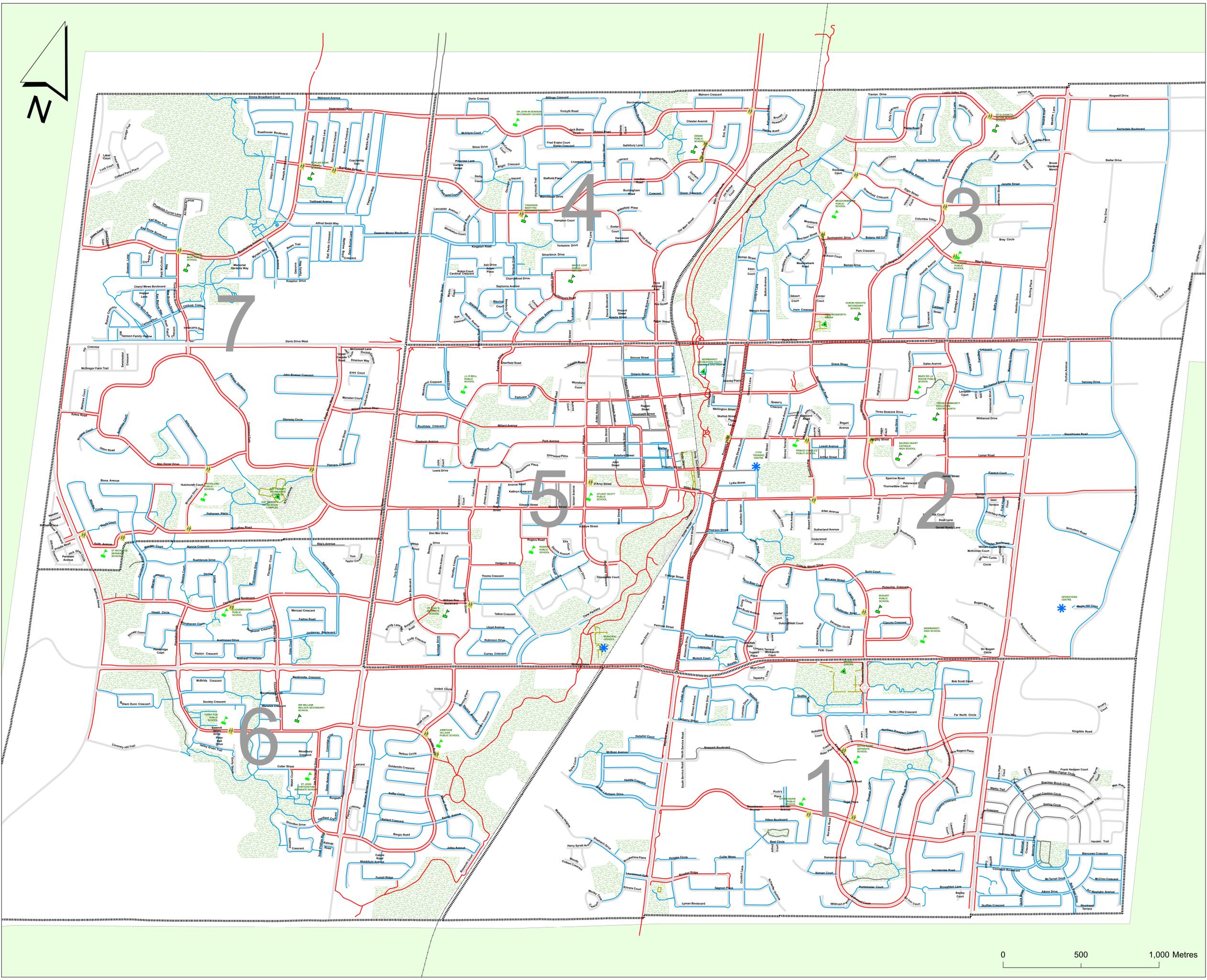
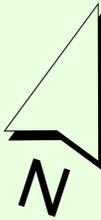
In the future, additional funds may be required to accommodate growth that would be in addition to the budget impact noted above.

Attachments

Sidewalk Snow Clearing Map

Contact

For more information on this report, contact Jeff Bond, Manager, Parks & Property Services at extension 2582.



Legend

- WARDS
- MUNICIPAL BUILDING
- SCHOOL
- RECREATION CENTRE
- SCHOOL CROSSING
- RR TRACKS
- PARKAREAS

EXISTING SIDEWALKS ROUTES

- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- SIDEWALKS OTHER**
- FACILITY MAINTAINED
- NOT MAINTAINED



Designed & Produced by
Information Technology
Engineering



Printed:
Date: 01/12/2017

Land Parcel Boundaries © 2017, Inc. and its suppliers. All rights reserved. NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY, 2017.
(DISCLAIMER: This document is provided by the Town of Newmarket for your personal, non-commercial use.
The Town of Newmarket assumes no responsibility for any errors, and is not liable for any damages of any kind resulting from the use or reliance on.
It is not a substitute for a legal survey.)