

To: Community and Operations Services Committee

From: Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,
Community and Operations Services Department

Report Number: CO-24-45

Date of Report: September 11, 2024

Date of Meeting: September 16, 2024

Subject: Winter Maintenance Operations and Customer Feedback
Implementation

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to respond to the following Council direction of October 18, 2023 concerning [Report CO-23-56](#):

“That staff report back at the end of the winter season on the findings of the customer service satisfaction communications and any proposed winter maintenance operations changes including City Quality Standards and potential budget implications.”

2.0 Recommendation

That the Community and Operations Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That based on Report CO-24-45, dated September 11, 2024, concerning the implementation of Winter Maintenance Operations and Customer Feedback during the 2023-2024 winter season, staff continue with the Snow Clearing Satisfaction feedback form for the upcoming 2024-2025 winter season and report to Council regarding findings.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Corporate Communications
- Service Oshawa
- Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services
- Legislative Services
- Legal Services

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Background

In accordance with Council direction, staff undertook customer service satisfaction communications to gather feedback on the City's winter maintenance operations program over the period of the 2023-2024 winter season.

4.2 2023-2024 Winter Season

The 2023-2024 winter season was unusually mild for the city, with only 12 winter storm events necessitating the commencement of winter maintenance activities. The most significant storm event lasted for a duration of 26 hours with an accumulated snowfall of approximately 19 cm.

On average, storm events in the 2023-2024 winter season:

- lasted for a duration of approximately 13 hours and resulted in an average snowfall accumulation of 7 cm; and,
- many were followed by warmer temperatures resulting in rain and snow melting, thereby aiding maintenance activities.

This was significantly fewer storm events than seen in years past:

- the 2022-2023 season saw 26 snow events; and,
- the 2021-2022 season saw 23 snow events.

4.3 Feedback Results

The Snow Clearing Satisfaction feedback form was available online on Connect Oshawa (www.connectoshawa.ca) and in hard copy at Service Oshawa from December 1, 2023 to April 1, 2024 and was promoted to the community using a variety of communication channels.

Questions on the feedback form assessed resident concerns regarding the City's winter maintenance of roads, parking lots and garages, sidewalks, school crosswalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, recreational trails, the downtown core and the Snow Clearing Assistance Program (S.C.A.P.).

As part of the City's commitment to continuous improvement, feedback was reviewed regularly to help inform any potential adjustments to winter maintenance operations activities.

In total, the City received 54 responses. The number of responses received is lower than anticipated but is a direct reflection of the mild winter. Unfortunately, due to limited responses, it is not possible to derive substantial conclusions or recommendations at this time, however it is worth mentioning that the majority of respondents (58%) indicated they Agreed or Somewhat Agreed that "the City's winter maintenance activities occurred within the City's service standards during the last snow event."

City staff recommend that the Snow Clearing Satisfaction feedback form be made available online on Connect Oshawa and in hard copy at Service Oshawa again for the 2024-2025 winter season.

4.4 Service Oshawa and Enforcement

Information gathered through the feedback form was supplemented by analysis of calls logged by Service Oshawa and enforcement activities related to private sidewalk clearing and parking violations, conducted by Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services.

During the 2023-2024 winter season, Service Oshawa noted a substantial 75% drop in the volume of complaints, paralleled by a similar reduction in issues reported concerning uncleared private sidewalks. Concurrently, the issuance of warnings and fines by Municipal Law Enforcement saw a notable decline. In contrast, there was a 35% increase in seasonal parking violations, an uptick that occurred despite fewer winter storms.

Once again, based on the mild winter conditions, the information gathered provides little insights to allow for any meaningful recommendations. The data should be reassessed at the end of the upcoming winter season along with the feedback results.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related to the recommendations contained in this Report.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area, “Lead: Governance and Service Excellence” with the goal to offer community engagement activities that enhance transparency and bring diverse voices and perspectives into decision-making processes.



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