

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - DECEMBER 1, 2009

SNOW CLEARING IN REAR LANEWAYS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends that the following report be received for information.

Contribution to Sustainability

Efficient and effective snow removal contributes to the economic sustainability of the community, and reduces lost productivity created when people are not able to get to work.

Economic Impact

There is no significant impact to the current or proposed 2010 budget to implement the level of service to rear laneways contained in this report.

Communications Plan

No specific communications plan is required at this time; however, when winter control operations are taking place, regular updates are provided to the public via the City's web site.

Purpose

To advise Council as to the potential for improved rear laneway snow clearing, as per Report 6 Item 5, February 24, 2009.

Background - Analysis and Options

There are approximately 4 km's of rear laneways in the City of Vaughan. The City's standard level of snow clearing service for rear laneways is as follows:

Rear Lanes

- *Rear lanes are maintained only after all other roads have been completed.*
- *Rear lanes are maintained through the application of salt.*
- *Circumstances permitting, if snow and ice accumulations reach 15 cm or 6 inches, or if severe rutting occurs, snow removal will be commenced.*

There are two issues that residents have expressed concerns about with respect to laneway snow clearing: a) the depth of snow accumulation prior to clearing taking place; and, b) the timing of the operations themselves.

The City of Vaughan has two types of rear laneways. The single loaded laneways have garages on one side of the laneway only. The double loaded laneways have garages on both sides of the laneway.

The single loaded laneways do not cause the same operational challenges in terms of snow clearing as the double loaded laneways. In a single loaded laneway, the snow can be pushed to the side opposite the garage doors, and if need be, removed at a later date. This is not possible to do in the double loaded laneways. As double loaded laneways have garages on both sides, ploughing the laneway would only result in all the snow from the laneway being pushed against the garage doors on one side of the laneway.

The first line of attack for either type of laneway is the use of salt to try and melt the snow to a reasonable depth to allow passage of motor vehicles. If the depth is still too great, the only option in the double loaded lanes has been removing the snow using loaders and dump trucks. This is a slow operation compared to ploughing, and requires different equipment. For that reason, these types of laneways are not cleared at the same time as the roads, or receive the same level of service as roads.

Council previously approved the purchase of two new rubber tired front end loaders, as well as two loader mounted snow blowers to assist in snow removal activities. With the purchase of these 2 loaders and snow blowers, an opportunity exists to clear snow from the rear lanes in a more efficient manner, thereby reducing the wait time for residents. With the loader mounted snow blowers, staff will be able to perform snow removal services in these rear laneways faster than before, and the operation can commence sooner than previously was done.

Public Works staff drafted the detailed specifications for these new loaders and snow blower units, and the tender has closed. As soon as these units arrive, and can be put into service, they will be delivered to the appropriate yards so that Roads staff can use them to perform this improved level of service for the rear laneways.

The single loaded laneways are often ploughed at the same time as the adjacent residential streets. As such, these are already being maintained in a manner that exceeds the current standards in terms of snow depth and timing of the operations.

For comparative reasons, the following is from the City of Toronto's web site and is taken from briefing notes to Toronto Council in 2004 concerning the level of service for rear laneways:

"There are approximately 250 kms of laneways in the City of Toronto with the vast majority located in the South District. These laneways were constructed to provide access to rear garages on residential properties, or to provide access to commercial properties on arterial roads. The existing winter maintenance of laneways can be summarized as follows:

After a major snowfall, public lanes are typically one of the most problematic areas Transportation Services has to deal with. Approved funding level is based only on undertaking salting in laneways. This will certainly not result in the snow being eliminated, but does assist in keeping them at least passable. Windrows are cleared at the entrances/exits to laneways."

"If a service improvement (higher than the current salting operation) is considered, the options are limited to a complete removal operation. This operation would require the securing of small skid steer equipment, front-end loaders, dump trucks, flag persons and supervisory staff for the entire winter season. Yearly estimates for the additional staff and equipment are:

Stand-by \$600.00/day x 121 days = **\$72, 600.00**

Operating \$350.00/hr x 12 hrs/day x 3 days* x 250 km network = **\$3.15 million**

(assumption: 3 days to clear 1km of laneway per crew)

*Additional disposal sites and costs also need to be considered. **Our estimate is that the costs for the removal would be in the \$3.5 million to \$4.0 million range per major snowfall requiring additional annual funding of \$21 million to \$24 million.** Additional detailed planning and securing of equipment and resources would also be required."*

Regardless of the municipality, snow clearing in rear laneways is an issue for the public, and with operations crews.

With the anticipated arrival of the new snow blowers and loaders later this winter, the City of Vaughan's service level will be improved, and the work will be done mostly with in-house resources. Notwithstanding this, the timing of the service may still not be as good as that of the second priority roadways, simply due to the amount of snow to be removed, and other operational considerations.

At this point it is premature to formally change the approved levels of service for rear laneways; however, once the new equipment arrives and is placed into service, and staff gain experience using it for rear laneway snow clearing, a report will be presented in the future outlining any necessary service level changes.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and ties into Vaughan Vision 20/20 as follows:

Goal	Service Excellence
Objective	Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery

Goal	Management Excellence
Objective	Enhance Productivity Cost Effectiveness and Innovation.

Regional Implications

There are no regional implications associated with this report.

Conclusion

When the new front end loaders and snow blowers arrive and are placed into service, improved levels of snow clearing can take place in rear laneways, especially those that have garages on both sides of the laneway. Once staff have gained experience using this equipment for rear laneway snow clearing, a further report will be submitted, making the necessary changes to the approved levels of service.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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