



CITY OF MEADOW LAKE

POLICY

SECTION:	Public Works & Utilities	NUMBER: 800-13-001	RESOLUTION: 211/21
TITLE:	Snow Removal Policy	EFFECTIVE DATE: September 27, 2021	
ORIGIN/AUTHORITY:	Council	REVISED: September 27, 2021	
DEPARTMENT:	Office, Public Works	PAGES: 4	

1. OBJECTIVE:

The objectives of this policy are to maintain the City's roadways and sidewalks so as to:

- a) Reduce the hazards of icy conditions to motorists and pedestrians;
- b) Minimize economic losses to the community and industry resulting from unsatisfactory winter driving conditions; and
- c) Facilitate the handling of emergencies by Police, Fire and Ambulance services during the winter.

And to establish the level of service to be provided by the City for snow and ice control, recognizing that weather conditions are beyond the City's control.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the City's Snow Removal Bylaw and Traffic Bylaw.

2. DEFINITIONS:

- a) "Downtown Core" means the downtown commercial area outlined in Appendix A and B, and includes Centre Street from 1st Avenue to 4th Avenue, 1st Street East and West from 1st Avenue to 3rd Avenue, and adjoining Avenues.
- b) "Windrow" means snow that is temporarily pushed by the City's grader to the curb or boulevard or into the center of the road to allow for the passage of vehicles, but does not obstruct traffic flow.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a) City Council is responsible for establishing the annual snow clearing budget of the City and for reviewing and establishing priorities and level of service policies.
- b) The City Manager is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of this policy and providing recommendations to Council.

- c) The Public Works Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, for the overall snow removal operations, and for making budget recommendations to Council.
- d) The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of public roads within the boundaries of the City, for carrying out snow removal in accordance with this policy, and for providing recommendations for policy improvements where applicable.
- e) City residents and businesses are responsible for ensuring private snow removal is carried out in a way that is safe, does not negatively impact any other public or private property, and does not impede the City's snow removal program.

4. SNOW REMOVAL PROCESS:

- a) During a storm event, snow clearing operations will be limited to ensuring emergency vehicles can respond to emergency calls. In the event of limited or near zero visibility, all operations will cease until conditions improve to safeguard both the public and City employees.
- b) Extreme cold can also cause safety issues and an increase in equipment damage. During extreme cold snaps, snow removal operations may be modified or paused at the discretion of the Public Works Manager.
- c) Every effort will be made to complete initial clearing on primary routes within or better than the timeframes established in this policy. However, this policy is a guideline only and is subject to equipment and personnel availability. Where extraordinary or back-to-back storm events occur, higher priority will be given to ensuring roads are passable rather than clear, and Public Works may return to Priority 1 areas before reaching the end of the priority list.
- d) Snow removal will start when vehicles are having trouble moving; snowfall at 4" (four inches) and above or upon the Public Works Manager's or City Manager's recommendation.
- e) Between winter storm events, routes will be maintained in accordance with the priority levels outlined below. As stated in Section 4(c) above, if more snow is received before City staff are able to clear all routes, they will return to Priority 1 and clear by priority before finishing lower priority streets. If there are multiple back-to-back storms, there may be a significant delay before the lower priority streets can be cleared.
- f) Removal of snow by the City's snowblower truck will be conducted as soon as possible after windrows are bladed, and blading of streets may be postponed until snow removal equipment is available in order to avoid having windrows become too hard packed to remove.
- g) City of Meadow Lake staff and equipment are not responsible for clearing snow from private property, and will only consider such a request if it must be done to allow emergency vehicle access.

5. PRIORITIZATION OF ROADWAYS:

- a) In establishing the Snow Removal Policy, the City must take into consideration its fiscal, equipment, and personnel resources to determine the budget required to meet the level of service established in this policy.

- b) Priorities are established with the intent to provide the greatest benefit to the majority of the travelling public, and consider factors such as traffic volumes, emergency services routes, and road classification.
- c) The following priority areas and service standards have been established:

Priority I Streets: Arterial and Emergency Services

As shown on the map in Appendix A, Priority 1 includes all streets determined as main routes for access to the Hospital, RCMP Detachment and Fire Station.

Roads will be plowed and have ice control applied within 24 hours of the conclusion of a major snow event. Every effort will be made to maintain Priority 1 streets as close to bare pavement as practicable, though during a major storm a compact drivable surface will be an acceptable standard. Snow will be windrowed to the side or center of the street and removed as equipment allows. Due to traffic congestion, hauling of snow, particularly in the downtown area will typically be performed prior to 7:00 a.m.

Priority II Streets: Schools and Downtown

As shown on the map in Appendix A, Priority 2 includes streets determined as main routes for access to schools, the Northland Pioneer Lodge, and local businesses, including the remainder of the downtown core and service roads.

Roads will be plowed and have ice control applied within 48 hours of the conclusion of a major snow event. The City will aim to maintain Priority 2 streets as close to bare pavement as practicable, though during a major storm a compact drivable surface will be an acceptable standard. Snow will be windrowed to the side or center of the street and removed as equipment allows.

Due to traffic congestion, hauling of snow in the downtown area will typically be performed prior to 7:00 a.m. Wherever possible, snow removal will not be performed within school drop-off zones between the hours of 8:00-9:00 a.m. and 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Priority III Streets: Primary Residential Streets and Industrial Streets

As shown on the map in Appendix A, Priority 3 includes all paved residential through streets and avenues not already included in Priority 1 or 2, as well as the industrial business area.

Roads will aim to be cleared and have ice control applied within 4 business days of the conclusion of a major storm event. A bare pavement surface is difficult to maintain throughout an average winter due to the extent and width of residential streets. As a general standard, a drivable, packed surface will be maintained. Between major snow events, snow will be windrowed and hauled away as time and equipment allows, following the priority routes.

Wherever possible, snow removal will not be scheduled for the same day as an area's residential garbage or recycling cart collection.

Priority IV Streets: Local Residential Streets

As shown on the map in Appendix A, Priority 4 includes all remaining residential streets that serve local traffic only, including crescents, cul-de-sacs, and streets east of 3rd Street East.

Roads will aim to be cleared and have ice control applied within 7 business days of the conclusion of a major storm event. A bare pavement surface is difficult to maintain throughout an average winter due to the extent and width of residential streets. As a general standard, a drivable, packed surface will be maintained. Between major snow events, snow will be windrowed and hauled away as time and equipment allows, following the priority routes. On gravel streets, a bare surface will not be maintained as a general standard through the winter. Snow will typically be graded to the side of the street.

Wherever possible, snow removal will not be scheduled for the same day as an area's residential garbage or recycling cart collection.

Back-Alleys / Lanes:

With the exception of certain designated alleys behind apartment / condominium complexes that do not have street access, back-alley clearing is generally not performed at any time during the winter months. Alleys may be cleared where conditions are deemed warranted at the direction of the Public Works Manager, but there is no guarantee for this work.

6. PRIORITIZATION OF SIDEWALKS:

- a) The City will set a service priority to clear sidewalk snow along the removal route as shown in Appendix B following the conclusion of a storm event. Only those sidewalks located on the snow removal route map, which include the downtown core, walking trails, and sidewalks adjacent to City-owned property will have a service level established for clearing by the City. The City does not make any guarantees as to the ability to clear other sidewalks and recommends adjacent owners clear these sidewalks if they wish to see them done in a timely manner.
- b) City-owned parking lots will be cleared after sidewalks and when required to provide access to municipal facilities. Ice control and snow hauling will be performed as required.
- c) Between storm events, sidewalks along the priority route will be cleared as necessary. As a general rule, the City will not apply salt/sand to sidewalks except as deemed necessary by the City Manager and Public Works Manager where sidewalks are otherwise wholly impassable due to extreme weather conditions.
- d) Snow removal on sidewalks will be performed by the City's sweeper equipment, and is not guaranteed to achieve a perfectly clear state. Adjacent property owners in the downtown core who desire a hire degree of snow clearing will be responsible for doing so themselves.
- e) Other sidewalks outside of the area noted in Appendix B may be cleared at the discretion of the Public Works Manager if department operations allow and resources are sufficient, but the City makes no guarantees that this will be done at any point during the winter season.

7. SIGNAGE AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:

- a) The City will endeavor to communicate with residents regarding snow removal activities through this policy, through the city website, and through the Voyent Alert system.
- b) Due to the timelines to clear Priority 1 and 2 streets, signage will generally not be placed out in advance of snow clearing operations in these areas.
- c) Priority 4 streets that are historically too congested for the snow removal equipment to access without vehicle removal will be signed a minimum of 12 hours in advance. For greater clarity, signage will typically be installed by the end of the work day for snow removal routes planned for the following work day. As per the City's Traffic Bylaw, vehicles left on a street that has been signed for snow removal may be ticketed or towed at the Public Works Manager's direction.
- d) The streets that will normally be signed prior to snow removal are: Semchuk Drive, Jackson Drive, Coupland Crescent, Dunfield Crescent, Stack Crescent, Morin Crescent, Marion Crescent, Charpentier Place, Carter Place, Ducluzeau Place, Evans Place, and the 500 block of 3rd Street West (in front of the Northland Pioneer Lodge). Notification will also be issued through Voyent Alert wherever possible.
- e) The City will endeavor to follow the published and signed snow removal route. However, unforeseen circumstances such as additional snow, equipment breakdown, or other factors, may require streets to be rescheduled on short notice.

8. USE OF SALT AND SAND ON CITY STREETS:

- a) The Public Works Department will monitor streets and salt sand as required. In the event of a substantial snowfall, streets will be cleared first before applying salt and/or sand.
- b) The use of salt sand is only effective for the melting and removal of ice and snow accumulations on the pavement when surrounding temperatures are above -7°C, depending on pavement temperatures, the radiant heat of the sun, wind conditions, traffic speed and volume. This temperature limitation will be considered in the application of salt and sand to City streets.
- c) Salt sand application will generally follow the priority routes, with a focus on intersections.

9. SNOW REMOVAL RESERVE

- a) Annual snow removal budgets are based on the average historical costs and snow events, and staffing costs for the winter months and include a contingency budget for emergency contracted services.
- b) Should the weather in any year result in the snow removal budget not being completely used, the balance, particularly of any unused contracted services amounts, will be placed in an operating reserve account for future snow removal years.
- c) Should an extreme weather event in any year require snow removal funds over and above the established budget, the snow removal reserve may be accessed to cover these costs.

- d) City Council will be notified any time the snow removal reserve is accessed for operations and will approve the amounts to be transferred to the reserve at year end.

10. EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

- a) Where possible, the City will maintain a list of pre-qualified contractors along with their rates from which the Public Works Manager is authorized to draw upon at their discretion when City resources are not sufficient to maintain safe and passable roads.
- b) During extreme weather events, or where conditions prevent the timely completion of the priority routes, the Public Works Manager may request a temporary transfer of manpower from other departments and/or hire equipment to support snow removal activities. Such operating adjustments will also be reported to Council for information.

11. OTHER POLICIES

- a) It is advised that residents avoid parking their vehicles on the streets during snow removal work, and to move vehicles to a driveway wherever possible. The City is not responsible for clearing windrows away from vehicles that have been left on the street during snow plow operations.
- b) The Public Works Department may refuse to remove windrows from the streets or boulevards that have been created or added to with snow from private residential or commercial properties.
- c) When snow is windrowed to the middle of the street to prepare for removal, motorists are advised to exercise additional caution and that normal traffic rules still apply.
- d) When windrows are pushed to the side of the street, the grader will make every effort to keep driveway entrances clear of snow. Small amounts or ridges of snow left behind by the grader are to be expected and are the property owner or occupant's responsibility to remove. Where a ridge has made access and exit from the property impossible, residents are advised to contact City Hall or the Public Works Shop for assistance.
- e) This policy and its priorities may be reviewed on an annual basis prior to setting the snow removal budget, at the request of Council or the Public Works Department.

Appendix A - Snow Removal Priorities Map



