SNOW REMOVAL BLOG PART 6: THE PATH FORWARD

If you haven't already read through my previous Snow Removal Blog Posts earlier this year, please start by reviewing those as that will give you context for the following update.

Blog Part 1

Blog Part 2

Blog Part 3

Blog Part 4

Blog Part 5

After a comprehensive review of newly developed performance measures, City Administration has determined that there are insufficient resources and equipment to meet the majority of current service levels outlined in the Snow and Ice Policy. Administration has proposed two options to establish new baseline service levels, as well as a suite of options for new service enhancements once a baseline level of service is determined.

Since 2016, Edmonton has grown in geographic size (11.7 percent increase), population (8.4 percent increase), and mobility network inventory (21.2 percent increase). The human and equipment resource requirements of the snow and ice control program have not kept pace with the expectations of the snow and ice policy. Equipment has been replaced at a one-to-one ratio and the

Here is our current situation regarding the completion of snow and ice control jobs compared to our enhancement options for roads and active pathways:

ROADS

P1 Arterial roads **P2** Collector roads **P3** Industrial roads **P4** Residential roads

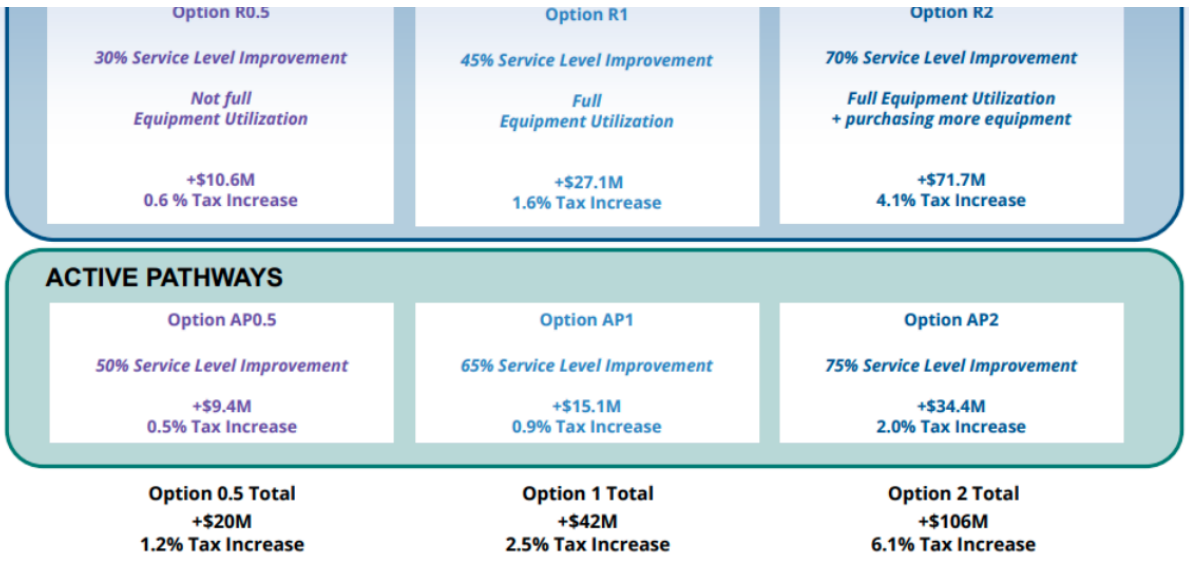
Expectations		Current State		Option R1			Option R2		
Priority	Hours	Hours	Days	Hours	Days	Increase	Hours	Days	Increase
P1	36	127	5.3	69	2.9	45.7%	36	1.5	71.1%
P2	48	112	4.6	72	3.0	35.7%	48	2.0	57.1%
P3	120	135	5.6	74	3.1	45.2%	38	1.6	71.6%
P4	215	250	10.4	136	5.7	45.6%	71	3.0	71.6%
		Base Budget $38.6M		Estimated Cost $65.7M (current state +$27.1M)			Estimated Cost $110.3M (current state +$71.7M)		

ACTIVE PATHWAYS

P1 Inventory adjacent to City facilities, prioritized bike route network
P2 City maintained sidewalks, ramps, shared pathways, parking lots, all season staircases, access to bus stops adjacent to City property, pedestrian bridges
P3 Manually cleared active pathways, breezeways, benches, pedestrian only streets, community sandboxes

Expectations		Current State		Option AP1			Option AP2		
Priority	Hours	Hours	Days*	Hours	Days*	Increase	Hours	Days*	Increase
P1	24	22	1.1	6	0.3	72.2%	6	0.3	72.2%
P2	48	158	7.9	40	2.0	74.7%	40	2.0	74.7%
P3	120	405	20.3	216	10.8	46.7%	100	5.0	75.3%
		Base Budget $18.5M		Estimated Cost $33.6M (current state +$15.1M)			Estimated Cost $52.9M (current state +$34.4M)		

**Crews work 20 hours per day, so the number of days to complete a service is divided by 20 hours instead of 24 hours.*

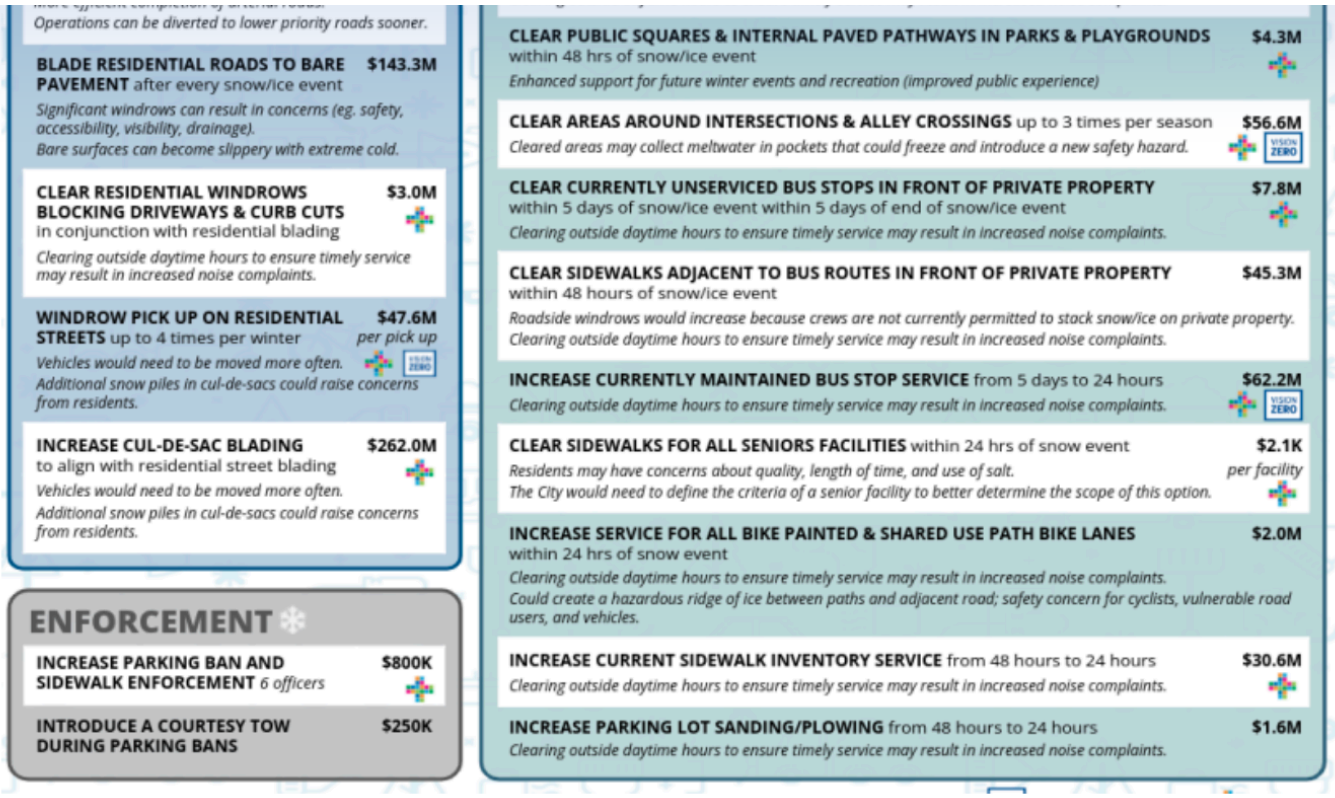


Option R1 balances the safety, mobility and livability of Edmontonians with value for taxpayer dollars. Service levels would be adjusted to reflect a standard that can be consistently achieved for an average winter season. With this option, Edmontonians would experience a noticeable improvement to overall service delivery.

Option R2 would enable the City to fully meet current service standards on arterial, collector and residential roads, although there would be a significant increase in cost for doing so. This option may not be necessary to achieve Council's goal of improving SNIC service delivery for Edmontonians.

AP1 shows a 65% level improvement for 0.5% tax increase, AP2 shows a 75% service level improvement with a 2.0% tax increase.

Here is the operating cost of snow and ice control tools on roads, enforcement and active pathways:



During our council meeting on May 9th, council approved the following motion:

1. That Administration provide a report to Committee outlining budget considerations to support the following options as outlined in Attachment 6 of the April 25, 2022, City Operations report CO00778 including:

1. Options to Enhance Current Service Delivery:

1. Roads Option R1 **($27.1 million increase)** and Road Option R0.5 **($10.6 million increase)**;
2. Active Pathways AP1 **($15.1 million increase)**; and
3. Modify Active Pathways AP1 to AP3 which is 12 hours for P1, 24 hours for P2, and 120 hours for P3. **($47.5 million increase but if this were approved, the $15.1 million option would not be needed).**

2. Clear sidewalks for all senior facilities within 24 hours of snow event; **Defeated because this is the responsibility of the companies that run the seniors facilities.**
3. Optimize the efficiency of sandboxes, including options to increase/decrease frequency and volume, and streamline locations; **(Costs or savings to be determined)**
4. Introduce a tow during parking bans; **(No cost as this will be paid for by those leaving their cars on the street during a parking ban).**
5. Clear public squares and internal paved pathways in parks and playgrounds; **($4.3 million. This will mean that all City-owned sidewalks and trails will be maintained which isn't currently the case)**,
6. Buy 6 double-wide trailer snow plows; **Defeated**
7. Expand the windrow free zones in front of schools to include both sides of the road; **(Cost to be determined. Unfortunately, the cost to remove all the windrows even once a year would be over $50 million so a decision was made to just focus on schools to start.)**
8. clear residential windrows blocking driveways and curb cuts. **(Cost to be determined. Current policy is windrows are only removed when higher than 30cm and there is no requirement for the curb cuts.)**

c) Assisted Snow Programs.

I'm going to spend the remainder of the post detailing why each of these were brought to forward and what happens next since approving each of these items doesn't guarantee they will proceed.

When we voted on this motion, we voted on each point separately which is why you will see two items with "defeated" beside them. For clearing the sidewalks beside seniors facilities, I did not support that because this is currently the responsibility of the property management company that operates the building and I don't believe the City should be taking that over. With so many other important needs, I couldn't justify adding this cost to our budget.

the losing end of this vote so that will not proceed.

For everything listed in Point 1 (a), this is critical. While I generally don't receive many complaints about the maintenance of our main roads (P1 and P2), I often hear about the local roads (P4). This year was particularly challenging due to the volume of snow that we received which created very large windrows.

If you read through my previous blog posts, I was suggesting that we should be looking at full windrow removal. Unfortunately, the cost to remove all the windrows is far more than the previously estimated cost of $20 million and so adding another $50+ million to the budget when that amount of money could fund many of the other items listed in the motion does not appear to be the best use of limited resources.

Instead, I brought forward Point 2 (b) vii. to focus on windrow removal on both sides of schools since that is often one of the biggest problem spots in each community. Over time, I would like to get to a point where we remove all windrows, but considering the financial pressures, I think it's better to ramp up over time since that would require a very large tax increase.

I've written a lot about active pathways in my previous blogs but I'll just note that the feedback from groups like the Accessibility Advisory Committee, seniors organizations, etc. clearly show that we aren't doing nearly enough for those who cannot walk and we need to do a much better job. While I would prefer going to AP3 instead of AP1, this will likely need to be phased in over time to help smooth out the cost.

everyone else on the block.

It's time to actually remove those vehicles from the street and those that choose to not move should be the ones to pay for the cost of towing. When the streets have no vehicles on them, the crews doing neighbourhood blading can do a much better job in a shorter amount of time.

The final item I will flag is Point 2 (b) v, which states that we will clear all active pathways. If you have read my blog previously, you know that I often use the example of Terra Losa Park. The exterior of the park is cleared of snow but the City doesn't clear the inside of the park all winter long. That's unacceptable. If we are asking all Edmontonians to keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice, we should be required to do the same. AP3 would also include this item so as we ramp up over time, we can ensure we clear all our sidewalks.

Passing this motion doesn't mean this will all happen next winter. In fact, based on the total cost, I don't think we will be able to do it all in one year. I think it is more realistic to take the total cost and spread it out over the next few years. Council will make that decision later this year during our 2023-2026 budget deliberations.

Of course our budget decisions are influenced by your feedback. This will likely cost around $75 million to do everything and our current budget is around $60 million. If we added $75 million to our budget in one year, that would likely result in a 4.5% tax increase just for snow removal alone.

This is a core service and I believe we need to fund it properly. I'm also interested in looking at all 73 lines of business in the city to determine if there are some areas we can scale down or remove in order to reallocate those funds to a service like this. I'll be writing a separate post about preparation

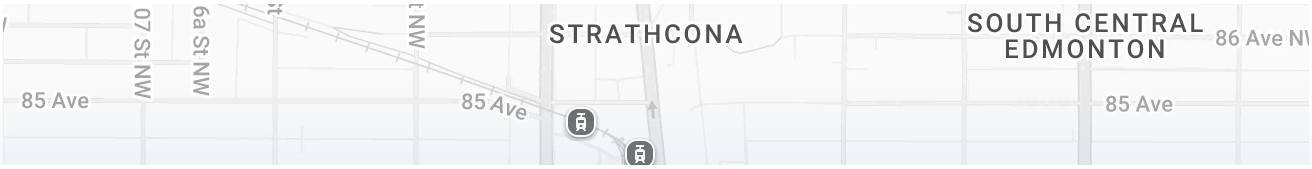
As mentioned above, I'd love your feedback. Let me know your thoughts and if you have any follow up questions after reviewing all of these blogs, please let me know.

‹ COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE (MAY 2022)

THANK YOU CHERYL! ›

We acknowledge that the traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Dené, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.

VISIT OUR OFFICE





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