

COUNCIL POLICY



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

Document Name: Urban Snow and Ice Control Program

Department Name: Public Works

Document Number: OPE-150

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STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

Fiscal Management

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (the “Municipality”) aims to provide for the safe passage of vehicles and pedestrians within the Urban Service Area. The Urban Snow and Ice Control Program (the “Program”) ensures that Snow and Ice Control is carried out on Roads, Back Alleys, and Sidewalks in a timely manner in accordance with priorities identified by Council.

The purpose of the Urban Snow and Ice Control Program Policy (the “Policy”) is to:

- set winter Snow and Ice Control service standards for Urban Service Area Roads, Back Alleys, and Sidewalks;
- support reduction of hazards and mitigation of economic loss; and
- prioritize safe access to emergency vehicles and transit.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. “Back Alley” means a Road providing direct access to adjacent lands typically parallel to other classification of streets and mainly used for access, deliveries, and refuse collection.
- 1.2. “Compacted Snow Surface” means snow that has accumulated on the Road surface and is packed by traffic or leveled by snowplows.
- 1.3. “Council” means the collective group of elected officials who govern the Municipality.
- 1.4. “Greenbelt” means open grassed or park space adjacent to a Road.
- 1.5. “Primary Routes” means routes that include heavy usage Roads, including arterial Roads and other Roads that provide emergency services access (e.g., police departments and fire departments).

- 1.6. "Road Maintenance Services" means the Road Maintenance Services branch of the Public Works department.
- 1.7. "Road" means that part of a highway intended for use by vehicular traffic, and includes Back Alleys, but does not include gravel roads or private roads.
- 1.8. "Salt Management Plan" means the annual municipal plan for implementing salt management practices that fulfill obligations to provide safe, efficient, and cost-effective Roads with limited negative impacts to the environment.
- 1.9. "Sanding" means the controlled application of abrasives or de-icing agents which are comprised of a variety of mixtures of sand, granular sand, and liquids.
- 1.10. "Secondary Routes" means routes that include school zones, Urban Service Area transit routes, and main access routes to residential neighborhoods.
- 1.11. "Snow and Ice Control" means the control of the build-up of packed snow or ice on Roads through the use of equipment, abrasive materials, or chemicals, including, but not limited to, road salt, calcium chloride, and other products and blends that comply with relevant regulations.
- 1.12. "Snow Event" means a winter storm where more than thirty (30) centimetres of snow has fallen within forty-eight (48) hours.
- 1.13. "Snow Plowing" means the pushing of accumulated snow from the Road or Sidewalk surface to either the sides of the Road or the centre of the Road or Sidewalk in order to maintain no less than one lane passage in each direction.
- 1.14. "Snow Removal" means the removal of the plowed snow by loading snow into trucks or casting snow from the Road onto adjacent land or boulevards within the Road right of way.
- 1.15. "Snow Storage" means the storage of bladed, plowed, or cast snow on adjacent land or boulevards within the Road right of way as well as the storage of snow at designated snow disposal sites.
- 1.16. "Snowfall" means a winter storm where less than thirty (30) centimetres of snow has fallen within forty-eight (48) hours.
- 1.17. "Stockpile" means snow that has been deposited into a pile during Snow and Ice Control activities.
- 1.18. "Subzones" means the designated subzones for Zones under the Winter Maintenance Zone Program.
- 1.19. "Tertiary Routes" means routes that have geometric or alignment features, such as Roads with steep narrow hills, that require occasional service to improve user safety.
- 1.20. "Urban Service Area" means the geographical boundaries of Fort McMurray.
- 1.21. "Windrows" means a row of snow that is left from a snowplow's blade during Snow Plowing.

- 1.22. Winter Maintenance Zone Program” means the municipal program that covers Snow Plowing and Snow Removal for select residential Roads from October 15 to April 15 each year.
- 1.23. “Winter Maintenance Zones” means the designated zones under the Winter Maintenance Zone Program.

2. Responsibilities:

2.1. Council to:

- 2.1.1. approve this Policy; and
- 2.1.2. approve any future amendments to this Policy.

2.2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:

- 2.2.1. support the implementation of this Policy;
- 2.2.2. recommend amendments to this Policy;
- 2.2.3. approve any related Administrative Procedures;
- 2.2.4. alter levels of service and priorities as described in section 3.1; and
- 2.2.5. review and support any amendments to the Program.

3. General Procedures:

3.1. Service Standards:

- 3.1.1. The Municipality will aim to plow Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes to a Compacted Snow Surface condition.
- 3.1.2. Service levels may be impacted because of available resources, budget approved by Council, equipment failures, and extreme weather conditions.
- 3.1.3. The CAO may exercise discretion in altering levels of service and priorities to meet emergency and operational demands.

3.2. Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes:

3.2.1. Priority Schedule:

- 3.2.1.1. Snow Plowing, Snow Removal, and Sanding of Roads shall be carried out on a priority basis to best serve the public and accommodate emergency equipment within budgetary guidelines, as follows:
 - 3.2.1.1.1. first priority – Primary Routes;
 - 3.2.1.1.2. second priority – Secondary Routes; and
 - 3.2.1.1.3. third priority – Tertiary Routes.
- 3.2.1.2. Pursuant to sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, the priority may be modified.

3.2.2. Snow Plowing:

- 3.2.2.1. During Snowfall and Snow Events, Snow Plowing will occur based on the priority established in section 3.2.1.

3.2.2.2. Snowfall:

- 3.2.2.2.1. During a Snowfall, Snow Plowing is conducted according to the priority established in section 3.2.1, as equipment and personnel resources permit.
- 3.2.2.2.2. Snow Plowing is to occur on both sides of the Road, adjacent to the curb and the public boulevards throughout the duration of the Snowfall.
- 3.2.2.2.3. For Roads adjacent to Greenbelt areas, snow may be plowed to the Greenbelt side.
- 3.2.2.2.4. For Roads with a center median, snow may be plowed to the centre.
- 3.2.2.2.5. Other Roads may be plowed to the center line for Snow Storage prior to Snow Removal (e.g., Franklin Avenue from Morrison Street to Hardin Street).

3.2.2.3. Snow Event:

- 3.2.2.3.1. During a Snow Event, Primary Routes shall be plowed continuously as equipment and personnel resources permit.
- 3.2.2.3.2. Once Primary Routes are plowed, Secondary Routes shall be plowed.
- 3.2.2.3.3. Once Secondary Routes are plowed, Tertiary Routes shall be plowed.

3.2.3. Snow and Ice Control and Sanding for Roads:

- 3.2.3.1. Snow and Ice Control and Sanding may be carried out in accordance with the priority established in section 3.2.1, when conditions warrant.
- 3.2.3.2. Conditions that may impact the priority include the following:
 - 3.2.3.2.1. temperatures and ambient conditions that are conducive to the formation of ice on Roads;
 - 3.2.3.2.2. icy intersections, stop or yield signs, and school zones/crossings;
 - 3.2.3.2.3. freezing rain events; or
 - 3.2.3.2.4. other hazardous situations.
- 3.2.3.3. Snow and Ice Control and Sanding may occur in conjunction with other activities, such as Snow Plowing and Snow Removal, or may be done independently.
- 3.2.3.4. Sanding materials are to be applied to Roads to promote traction, as required, following the Salt Management Plan, which is updated yearly.

3.2.4. Snow Cleanup:

- 3.2.4.1. The Municipality will endeavour to push centerline snow on Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes to the curb sides or center medians to widen the Road, including left and right turn lanes and transit lanes.

- 3.2.4.2. The Municipality will endeavour to remove snow in transit lane areas to allow safe access by buses and pedestrians.

3.2.5. Snow Removal:

- 3.2.5.1. Snow Removal may occur to accomplish the following:
 - 3.2.5.1.1. increase the driving width of the Road where it is less than five and a half (5.5) meters, or if there is a need to increase Snow Storage capacity of the Road; and
 - 3.2.5.1.2. mitigate sightline hazards and maintain cross traffic visibility when the height of snow exceeds one (1) meter.
- 3.2.5.2. Snow may also be removed where the location of a Sidewalk inhibits Snow Plowing.
- 3.2.5.3. Snow Removal may occur in Greenbelt areas to reduce spring runoff.
- 3.2.5.4. Snow Removal may be carried out in areas where there are rural cross-section Roads (i.e., Roads with no curb and gutter) within the Urban Service Centre on an as required basis.
- 3.2.5.5. During Snow Removal operations, “No Parking” or “Street Maintenance” signs will be posted a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
- 3.2.5.6. Vehicle owners using on-street parking will have twenty-four (24) hours to move their vehicle from the area after signs have been posted. All vehicles on the street must be removed. On-street parking will not be permitted until Snow Removal is complete.
- 3.2.5.7. Vehicles contravening the “No Parking” sign postings may be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense, pursuant to the Roads and Transportation Bylaw No. 02/079.

3.3. Sidewalks:

3.3.1. Sidewalks Adjacent to Residential Properties:

- 3.3.1.1. A person shall remove snow and ice from any Sidewalk adjacent to a property that they own or occupy within forty-eight (48) hours after the snow or ice was formed or deposited thereon, in accordance with the Community Standards Bylaw No. 21/010.

3.3.2. Municipal Sidewalks:

3.3.2.1. Snow Plowing:

- 3.3.2.1.1. Snow Plowing will generally occur based on the following prioritization:
 - a) first priority – Sidewalks on routes to emergency facilities, transit stops, and schools, within forty-eight (48) hours of a Snowfall or Snow Event;
 - b) second priority – remaining Sidewalks, within seven (7) days of a Snowfall or Snow Event.

3.3.2.2. Sanding:

- 3.3.2.2.1. When the temperature and ambient conditions are conducive to the formation of ice on Sidewalks, Sanding will be undertaken to promote traction.

3.4. Winter Maintenance Zone Program:**3.4.1. Snow Plowing:**

- 3.4.1.1. Snow Plowing will occur on residential Roads on a bi-weekly schedule. This schedule is subject to change, as required, to ensure efficient operations.
- 3.4.1.2. When Subzones 1 and 2 are active for Snow Plowing, Subzones 3 and 4 will be relaxed. On the following week, when Subzones 3 and 4 are active, Subzones 1 and 2 will be relaxed.
- 3.4.1.3. Snow in Winter Maintenance Zones will be plowed to both sides of the Road after a five (5) cm Snowfall or when centerline snowpack measures five (5) cm. Snow will be plowed adjacent to the curb and on municipally owned boulevards.
- 3.4.1.4. In cul-de-sacs, snow may be plowed to the center and removed later.
- 3.4.1.5. For Roads adjacent to Greenbelt locations, snow will be plowed to the Greenbelt side.
- 3.4.1.6. Permanent "No Parking" signs will be placed in Winter Maintenance Zones indicating the Subzone, scheduled day for Snow Plowing, and times when parking restrictions are in effect.
- 3.4.1.7. When Subzones are active, parking will be restricted in each area from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.
- 3.4.1.8. Vehicles contravening the "No Parking" sign postings may be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense, pursuant to the Roads and Transportation Bylaw No. 02/079.

3.4.2. Sanding:

- 3.4.2.1. Sanding will be carried out when conditions warrant in accordance with section 3.2.3.

3.4.3. Snow Removal:

- 3.4.3.1. Snow Removal will be carried out in accordance with section 3.2.5.1.
- 3.4.3.2. Snow Removal in Subzones will occur on designated days until a Snowfall or Snow Event occurs or until there is sufficiently warm weather to melt snow.

3.4.4. Sidewalks:

- 3.4.4.1. The Municipality may remove any snow placed on a sidewalk as a result of Snow Plowing in Subzones. For Snow Removal beyond this, section 3.3.1 applies.

3.5. Back Alleys:**3.5.1. Snow Removal:**

- 3.5.1.1. Snow Removal on Back Alleys will be engaged after Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes and Winter Maintenance Zones have been completed or when the snowpack reaches ten (10) cm.
- 3.5.1.2. Notwithstanding section 3.5.1.1, in areas where the Back Alley is the only access to the property or refuse collection is carried out, the Back Alley will be prioritized.
- 3.5.1.3. Snow and Ice Control and Sanding will not be carried out unless conditions warrant. These conditions may include freezing rain events and other hazardous situations.

3.6. Windrows and Stockpiles:

- 3.6.1. Windrows and other Stockpiles of snow occur as an outcome of Snow and Ice Control.
 - 3.6.1.1. If Windrows of fifteen (15) cm or higher are created in driveway openings as a result of Winter Maintenance Zone Snow and Ice Control, the Municipality will endeavour to remove Windrows within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - 3.6.1.2. All other Windrows at driveway entrances on Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes will not be cleared by the Municipality.
- 3.6.2. Windrows and other Stockpiles of snow can be hazardous.
 - 3.6.2.1. It is recommended that all persons attempting to access property that is located on the other side of the Windrow use an alternate point of access or wait until the hazard has been abated.
 - 3.6.2.2. It is recommended that all persons exercise caution and refrain from climbing on Stockpiles.

3.7. Snow and Ice Control Resources:

- 3.7.1. When additional resources are required, the Municipality may:
 - 3.7.1.1. use its own staff through overtime hours;
 - 3.7.1.2. hire contracted equipment where available; or
 - 3.7.1.3. use its own staff and hire contracted equipment.

3.8. Public Communication:

- 3.8.1. The Municipality shall make the following information available to the public:
 - 3.8.1.1. maps of Winter Maintenance Zones;
 - 3.8.1.2. maps of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Routes;
 - 3.8.1.3. signage information; and
 - 3.8.1.4. other relevant information.

3.9. Record Keeping:

3.9.1. The Director of Public Works, or their designate(s) shall maintain records related to the Program, including, but not limited to:

- 3.9.1.1. daily weather forecast;
- 3.9.1.2. time, equipment, and operators for Snow Plowing, Snow Removal, Snow and Ice Control, and Sanding operations; and
- 3.9.1.3. GPS information for equipment used, where available.

4. Rescind and Replace

This Policy rescinds and replaces the Urban Snow and Ice Control Policy PRL-150, dated January 12, 2016.

APPROVAL

This Policy was approved by Council. It will be reviewed not later than its next Revision Date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. It may be assessed before that time, as necessary.



Sandy Bowman, Mayor



Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer



Date

SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND POSITION RESPONSIBLE

Legal References: Community Standards Bylaw No. 21/010, as amended.
 Roads and Transportation Bylaw No. 02/079, as amended.

Cross References:

Position Responsible: Director, Public Works

COUNCIL POLICY DETAILS AND REVISION HISTORY

Date	Action	Description
October 10, 2000	Introduction	New Snow Plowing, Sanding, and Snow Clearance Policy.
July 10, 2001	Revision – Substantive	Revisions included changes to general procedures and a name change to Snow Clearance Policy.
September 9, 2003	Revision – Substantive	Revisions included a new number PRL-150 and changes to service level procedures related to Stop and Yield signs, residential streets, continuous season communications, and prioritization of plowing and sanding streets.
June 22, 2010	Revision – Substantive	Revisions included a name change to Urban Snow Clearance Policy, as well as changes to the Policy Statement and Policy Objective, and the addition of Definitions, Responsibilities, and General Procedures.
January 12, 2016	Revision – Substantive	Revisions included the removal of the Definitions section and a name change to Urban Snow and Ice Control Policy. Changes were made to all remaining sections, including Policy Statement, Purpose and Objective, Responsibilities, and General Procedures. When appropriate, clauses under General Procedures were move to the Urban Snow and Ice Control Administrative Directive PRL-180.
October 10, 2023	Revision – Substantive	Revisions included a Policy number change from PRL-150 to OPE-150, as well as a name change to Urban Snow and Ice Control Program Policy. Definitions and Strategic Plan Linkage sections were added, and the Policy Statement section was removed. Minor changes were made to all remaining sections, including Purpose and Objective, Responsibilities, and General Procedures.