Minute No. 542
Report - Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works - July 11, 2006

Item No. 6 Storm Response Improvement Initiatives
File SC-3.6

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and submits the following to Council:

1. That the Public Works Department initiate the improvements outlined in Appendix A to the report of the Director of Public Works dated July 10, 2006, namely:

    A. That the Public Works Department modify its hiring practices for private sector snow-clearing equipment to provide reasonable incentives to the private sector in order to attract additional snow clearing resources and promote investment by the private sector in new equipment.

    B. That the Administration be instructed to review and report back on the identification of a more effective Residential Overnight Parking Ban that will better meet the needs of both our citizens and the snow-clearing work crews.

    C. That the Administration be instructed to initiate discussions with CUPE Local 500 to revise the hours of work for the City's winter maintenance operations.

    D. That additional annual funding of approximately $700,000.00 for future years be identified during the consideration of the 2007- 2009 Operating budgets.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Minutes - Executive Policy Committee – July 19, 2006

Report - Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – July 11, 2006

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Clement,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 11, 2006, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred in the administrative recommendation and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

On July 11, 2006, the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues concurred in the administrative recommendation, as amended, and approved that an additional appropriation of $250,000.00 be added to the 2006 Snow Budget to cover the increased expenditures that may result during the balance of this year from the introduction of these improvement initiatives, subject to the appropriate approval of the proposed amendments to the snow clearing procedures.

RE: STORM RESPONSE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

FOR SUBMISSION TO: Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues

Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED BY: L.S.W. Larkin. P. Eng., Director of Public Works

REPORT DATE: July 10, 2006

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works make recommendation on the following:

That the Public Works Department initiate the improvements contained in Appendix A attached, namely:

1. That the Public Works Department modify its hiring practices for private sector snow-clearing equipment to provide reasonable incentives to the private sector in order to attract additional snow clearing resources and promote investment by the private sector in new equipment.

2. That the Administration be instructed to review and report back on the identification of a more effective Residential Overnight Parking Ban that will better meet the needs of both our citizens and the snow-clearing work crews.

3. That the Administration be instructed to initiate discussions with CUPE Local 500 to revise the hours of work for the City's winter maintenance operations.

4. That additional annual funding of approximately $700,000 for future years be identified during the consideration of the 2007- 2009 Operating budgets.

That the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues make recommendation on the following:

5. Subject to the approval of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, that an additional appropriation of $250,000 be added to the 2006 Snow Budget to cover the increased expenditures that may result during the balance of this year from the introduction of these improvement initiatives.

Report Summary

Key Issues:

- The City depends on private sector equipment during significant snowfall events.
- The availability of this equipment has diminished in recent years.
- Discussions to resolve this issue have been held with industry stakeholders
- It is evident that the City needs to change its current hiring practices
- Improvement initiatives have been identified and reviewed
- Public Works is recommending that these improvements be proceeded with

Implications of the Recommendation(s):

General Implications

None
X For the organization overall and/or for other departments
X For the community and/or organizations external to the City
Involves a multi-year contract

Comment(s):

- Changes to the City's Hiring Practices for snow-clearing equipment will make it more attractive to work for the City and also minimize the risks to the City that would result from of an equipment shortage.

Policy Implications

No
X Yes

Comment(s):

- Introduction of a more effective Residential Overnight Parking Ban may result in some modifications being necessary to the City's Snow and Ice Control Policy.

Regulatory Implications

None
Eliminates or reduces regulatory impact
X Proposes regulatory impact

Comment(s):

- Implementation of a more effective Residential Overnight Parking Ban would require a change in the City's By-Laws.

Environmental Implications

X No
Yes

Comment(s):

Human Resources Implications

No
X Yes

Comment(s):

- Discussions will be necessary with CUPE Local 500 to ensure that any changes proposed are done within the context of our existing Collective Agreement.

Financial Implications

Within approved current and/or capital budget
X Current and/or capital budget adjustment required

Comment(s):

- Additional funding of $250,000 would have to be added to the 2006 Operating Budget to cover increased expenditures during the balance of the winter that may result from the improvement initiatives.

Report

REASON FOR THE REPORT:

In recent years there has been gradual erosion in the availability of private sector snow clearing equipment that the City relies on to undertake its snow and ice control program in accordance with City Policy.

During the first major snowfall event of this past winter on November 14th and 15th, 2005, the City experienced a shortage of snow clearing equipment that impacted on its ability to undertake the clearing operations in a responsive and timely manner. This event has provided an early warning of the risks that our City faces if this issue isn't addressed quickly.

Therefore it was critical that the City's storm response capabilities be reviewed.

Organizational By-law 7100 sets out the authority of the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues to approve additional appropriations.

HISTORY:

Winter snow and ice control in the City of Winnipeg has been historically undertaken by a mixture of City and private forces and it is this mix of equipment that has allowed the City to carry out its winter maintenance responsibilities in a timely and cost-effective manner**.**

The Streets Maintenance Division of the Public Works Department staffs a 24/7 operation during the winter months that functions out of four yards servicing three geographic areas of the City. The permanent staffing levels for that Division have been established to provide sufficient resources during the winter season to adequately undertake all of the required routine salting and sanding activities that are warranted in the City as well as any snow clearing work that may be required between significant snowfall events. Additional seasonal staff and private resources are then used to supplement our permanent staff and equipment during any significant snowfall event as well as undertake any major snow clearing operations that should become necessary as a result.

Therefore the City depends upon a significant amount of private equipment being available for work when an all-out snow clearing operation is underway. During a major plowing operation the City would use over 300 pieces of equipment in carrying out the snow clearing on our City streets and 85% to 90% of that equipment would be provided by the private sector during those times.

DISCUSSION:

The November 2005 snowfall was the fifth largest snow event that the city has faced in the past 40 years in terms of snow accumulation and it is a credit to our staff and our private sector partners that, in spite of the problems that were faced, it was still "business as usual" for most of our citizens and Winnipeg Transit.

However this event has clearly demonstrated that changes must be made to ensure that our City maintains its reputation as providing one of the highest levels of service for snow and ice control anywhere in North America.

It should also be noted that the world is currently experiencing some very significant changes in weather and this apparent climate change is likely to bring our City further challenges for winter maintenance. The implementation of some changes in the City's utilization of private sector resources will certainly make us better prepared to deal with these possible events in the future.

In addressing the challenges that have been identified, it was critical the City did so in a consultative manner with our City staff and private sector partners. There are two primary member groups that represent the majority of the private contractors that the City relies on – those being the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and the Hired Equipment Rental Association of Manitoba, which also includes the Independent Dump Truck Association members. A number of consultation sessions have been held with each of these external stakeholders to review the issues and identify improvements that might assist in the provision of suitable equipment resources to ensure that the City can better meet the many challenges of future winter snow events. Numerous sessions were also held with our CUPE field staff to take advantage of their expertise and solicit valuable input into their perspective as to how the snow clearing operations could be improved.

Additional background information and a comprehensive summary of the Stakeholder discussions regarding the issues identified and the recommended improvement initiatives that have been determined is provided in greater detail in the attached

Appendix A – Consideration of Storm Response Improvement Initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS:

The City of Winnipeg is a leader in winter snow and ice control. However it has become evident that, during a major snowfall event, there may not always be sufficient equipment available in the Winnipeg area to meet the obligations of both the City and private sector. This places the City's snow clearing operations at some risk as a result.

Therefore it is absolutely essential that the City consider changes to its hiring practices to provide some reasonable incentives to the private sector. The City must instill some

confidence in the industry in order to attract increased interest and promote investment in new and/or additional snow clearing equipment.

The introduction of the recommended improvement initiatives that are proposed could result in an increase in snow clearing expenditures of approximately $700,000 during an average winter. This means that there would have to be $250,000 provided in additional funding in 2006 to cover the increased expenditures that could result if average winter conditions are experienced during the balance of this year.

It is also quite evident that recent winters have convincingly demonstrated the shortcomings of our existing Residential Overnight Parking Ban. Therefore the Public Works Department needs to develop some alternatives for Council consideration. It should be noted that a quick review of other winter cities that provide similar service levels of plowing for residential streets has demonstrated that, in order for any ban to be effective, there must be significant consequences for violators including towing.

It is also recognized that our CUPE Collective Agreement must be respected if consideration is given to any changes that may impact on our City staff and it will be necessary to participate in discussions with them about any proposed changes in the City's winter operations.

Financial Impact Statement

Date: July 7, 2006

Project Name:

Storm Response Improvement Initiatives

First Year of Program **2006**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 250,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 250,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 250,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000	$ 700,000

Original signed by D. Stewart, CA

Manager of Finance & Administration
Darcy Stewart, CA

Approved by Divisional Financial Analyst: X

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT THERE WAS:

Internal Consultation With and Concurrence By:

Mayor and Council - Council Seminar June 2006
Streets Maintenance Operational Staff
CUPE Local 500

External Consultation With:

Representatives – Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
Representatives – Manitoba Heavy Equipment Rental Association of Manitoba

THIS REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

Department	Public Works
Division	Streets Maintenance
Prepared by:	Bruce McPhail.....986-2308
File No.	U:\StMaint\Bruce\Storm Response Report July2006.doc

Appendix A:

Consideration of Storm Response Improvement Initiatives

Reason for this Report

During the first major snowfall event of this past winter on November 14th and 15th, 2005, the City experienced a shortage of snow clearing equipment that impacted on its ability to undertake the clearing operations in a responsive and timely manner. During the early stages of the clean-up operations, the City was only able to obtain about 65% of the equipment normally utilized during an event of this magnitude.

Therefore it is critical that the City's storm response capabilities be reviewed.

Background Information

Winter snow and ice control in the City of Winnipeg has been historically undertaken by a mixture of City and private forces and it is this mix of equipment that has allowed the City to carry out its winter maintenance responsibilities in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The Streets Maintenance Division of the Public Works Department staffs a 24/7 operation during the winter months that functions out of four yards servicing three geographic areas of the City. The permanent staffing levels for that Division have been established to provide sufficient resources during the winter season to adequately undertake all of the required routine salting and sanding activities that are warranted in the City as well as any snow clearing work that may be required between significant snowfall events. Additional seasonal staff and private resources are then used to supplement our permanent staff and equipment during any significant snowfall event as well as undertake any major snow clearing operations that should become necessary as a result.

Accordingly the City depends upon a significant amount of private equipment being available for work when an all-out snow clearing operation is underway. Approximately 85% to 90% of the approximately 300 pieces of equipment that would be utilized in plowing our City streets during those times would be from the private sector and this equipment is hired in two distinct ways which is discussed in more detail below:

1.) Private-sector forces working under contract

There are 7 major contracts in the city - each of which includes responsibility for a defined geographic area of the city. In total these 7 contracts comprise approximately 40 - 45% of total lane km. of streets in the city, and include approximately 80% of the Regional Street system.

Contractors are responsible for clearing snow to specified standards within a prescribed time period and contractors must provide a minimum number of pieces of equipment. Payment is made on a bid price per lane kilometre basis, for a 10 cm. snowfall. Snowfalls in excess of 10 cm are paid on the basis of an additional 90% of the bid price for each additional 10 cm or portion thereof.

An example of lane kilometer would be a kilometer stretch of Portage Avenue that is six lanes wide. That is considered to be 6 lane kilometers.

The contractors are guaranteed 40% of their tender price in recognition of their "readiness to serve". Penalties are also imposed should they fail to meet their contractual obligations.

This work is monitored by City staff who provide contract inspection services.

In addition the City has recently instituted a couple of neighbourhood snow contracts which are much smaller than the major contracts but basically are handled in the same manner. These smaller contracts are aimed at the contractors with only a few pieces of equipment.

In each of the Snow Contract areas, the City currently maintains responsibility for the snow clearing services related to back lanes and sidewalks.

2.) Hired Hourly Equipment working directly under the supervision of City personnel

The balance of the snow clearing work in the City is undertaken by a mix of City resources and private sector resources that are hired by the hour.

Each year a quotation is issued and contractors bid a price for each piece of equipment that they may have available. The equipment is called out as required on the basis of lowest price first/ highest price last and payment is by the hour. Contractors are not obligated to supply equipment when called and the City is not obligated to pay any guarantees.

Current Reality (as confirmed during the stakeholder sessions)

The primary impact of the shortage of equipment during the November 2005 snowfall event was a less timely response in the clearing of the City's major roadways and bus routes. Typically the City would have had these streets cleared within 36 hours following the end of a storm and, in this instance, this work took about 24 hours longer. However it should be noted that the clearing on the residential street system was able to be completed within the time frame called for by the Snow Policy.

Historically this hiring system has worked fairly well in terms of obtaining sufficient equipment. However in recent years, and particularly during the November 2005 snowfall event, the City has faced some stiff challenges in obtaining enough private sector equipment to undertake the snow clearing operations in a manner that meets with the requirements of the City's Snow Policy. These challenges can be identified as follows:

- Extended Construction Season

  Road construction projects typically end in late October with the onset of cooler weather and this usually results in sufficient time for the contractors to prepare their equipment for the winter season. However, in 2005, wet weather earlier in the summer delayed a number of construction projects around the Province and the mild weather experienced in October and early November provided contractors an opportunity to catch up and finish some of this work. Unfortunately this resulted in a number of pieces of equipment being out-of-town and/or otherwise unavailable on short notice to deal with the storm.

- Competition For Private Sector Equipment

  One area where the City has experienced significant growth during the past few years is in the development of suburban strip malls and "big box" retail stores. These businesses demand a very high level of snow clearing in order to provide suitable parking facilities for their customers and they are prepared to attractively compensate their contractors to ensure that their parking lots are cleared.

  As a result the City is competing for this equipment during the early days following a storm event. However most of the contractors have pre-arranged firm contracts for these lots and therefore are not available to the City initially. The contractors are also well aware that the City is in a position that means that the City will still need them for City work once they have completed their parking lots.

- Shortage Of Operators

  This issue is potentially the greatest challenge that the City and the industry is facing, and the prospects are grim. The baby boomers are retiring and very few of the young people entering the work force today are choosing to become equipment operators. In addition substantial training is required and the opportunities to receive this training are very limited.

  This shortage of operators isn't just limited to the local construction industry but is rather a concern in every region of the country. Our Contractors are willing to be part of an industry initiative to develop qualified equipment operators but are reluctant to make any significant investment towards such a program because

there are no guarantees that the newly trained workers will remain in this area given the opportunities elsewhere and for what can be fairly sporadic work during the winter.

In addition there have been a couple of external factors that are influencing the shortage as well. Two years ago the Province changed the laws to require heavy equipment operators to have valid drivers' licenses. Prior to this time someone could operate a grader or loader on the roadways without holding a valid license. The winter maintenance contractors have indicated that this eliminated about 10% to 20% of their existing operators.

There have also been other safety initiatives brought forward that are also impacting on the shortage of operators. National standards have been established for acceptable hours of work. Operators should be limited to 15 hours of work including travel time to and from home. In the past you would often hear stories of operators who worked 24 hours or more straight. As information the City tries to limit its staff to 12 hour shifts.

Addressing the Challenges

The November 2005 snowfall was the fifth largest snow event that the city has faced in the past 40 years in terms of snow accumulation and it is a credit to our staff and our private sector partners that, in spite of the problems that were faced, it was still "business as usual" for most of our citizens and Winnipeg Transit. However this event has clearly demonstrated that changes must be made to ensure that our City maintains its reputation as providing one of the highest levels of service for snow and ice control anywhere in North America.

It should also be noted that the world is currently experiencing some very significant changes in weather and this apparent climate change is likely to bring our City further challenges for winter maintenance. The implementation of some changes in the City's utilization of private sector resources will certainly make us better prepared to deal with these possible events in the future.

In addressing the challenges that have been identified, it was critical the City does so in a consultative manner with our City staff and private sector partners. There are two primary member groups that represent the majority of the private contractors that the City relies on – those being the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and the Manitoba Hired Equipment Rental Association of Manitoba, which will also include the Independent Dump Truck Association members. Consultations have been held with each of these external stakeholders to review the issues and identify improvements that might assist in the provision of suitable equipment resources to ensure that the City can better meet the many challenges of future winter snow events. Numerous sessions were also held with our CUPE field staff to take advantage of their expertise and solicit

valuable input into their perspective as to how the snow clearing operations could be improved.

Identification of Improvement Opportunities

The Stakeholder sessions have identified a number of improvement opportunities that can be considered for introduction in an effort to ensure the availability of sufficient equipment resources for future snowfall events. No commitment has been made on behalf of the City at this point and additional discussion will be required with the Stakeholders if the City should want to proceed.

In addition it must be mentioned that further discussions will have to be held with the CUPE Union with regards to any initiative involving changes to existing contract scope. It is hoped that there would be quick agreement in most cases as it may not have any significant impacts on CUPE staff and their hours of work.

Section A – Snow Contract Services

1. Contract Duration

   Investment in heavy equipment is an expensive proposition. Contract duration should be extended to four-year terms. This will help assure the ability of the industry to invest in new equipment; thereby raising the ability to efficiently address snow removal requirements. In addition an escalation clause would be added to reduce the risk of volatile price increases such as has been experienced in recent times with fuel costs.

   Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

2. Additional Contract Areas

   The City should add one additional large tender area, which will have the effect of further attracting interest and investment in heavy equipment. It is recommended that this additional contract area be established as an inclusive snow clearing contract covering all aspects of snow clearing services including the plowing of back lanes and sidewalks. This additional contract would serve as a “pilot” for the city and identify whether this inclusive practice should be extended to other contract areas in the future.

   In addition the City should look at adding one or two additional “mini-contract” areas. These are small neighborhood contracts with a reduced equipment requirement that address the snow clearing on the Priority II and Priority III streets within those communities. Similar contracts have been quite successful in the past in St. Norbert and Waverley Heights and allow smaller contractors with minimal equipment resources to participate.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

3. Back Lane Contracts

The City relies almost exclusively on the Hired Hourly Equipment sector for the provision of loaders to clear snow in the city's back lanes. The response during the November 2005 storm event for loaders of sufficient size to undertake this work was very poor. Therefore the City should also consider identifying one or two lane-plowing areas within the City and contracting this work out in a similar fashion as the streets contracts, including a commitment from the contractor to be available for work and a guarantee of compensation in return for that commitment.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

4. Guarantees

The existing contracts provide for a 40% guarantee. The guaranteed payment provides a level of confidence that, during below-average winters, a contractor will be able to cover off his costs incurred in assuring that his equipment and staff are in a position of readiness. The benefit to the City is an assurance that there will be a substantial amount of equipment available at short notice.

This guarantee should be increased to 60% as an incentive to attract new contractors and support them in dealing with their financial institutions when making arrangements to make the necessary investments in newer/additional equipment. During the past five winters the minimum compensation paid out under these contracts was 77% of bid price so there would appear to be minimal risk to the City with this increase.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

5. Truck Plow Use

During significant snowfall events such as the City experienced last November, it is critical that our snow clearing efforts are focused as a priority on maintaining the Snow Emergency Routes that have developed in cooperation with Winnipeg Transit. Consideration should be given to modifying the area contracts to address events of this magnitude by placing the contract truck plows under City direction for the purposes of more effective truck plowing operations during storm situations.

As an example the truck plowing of Portage Avenue is currently undertaken by three separate work forces – two contract areas and the Downtown Square

which is done by City forces. With this proposed change in place for significant storms, the City would direct a large plowing crew assembled of Contract, Hired Hourly, and city equipment to start plowing at one end and plow continuously until the street is completed.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

Section B – Hired Hourly Equipment Services

The City will always be in competition for the hired hourly equipment with the big box stores, shopping malls and other parking lot owners. This outside work is attractive to the equipment owners because the lots are often cleared to a higher standard resulting in more frequent work and much of the compensation that they receive is guaranteed. Obviously contractors must be able to realize a return on their investment in heavy equipment through rates paid for their service and they are going to go to the work that provides that level of compensation.

For these reasons it is evident that the City must change its hired hourly hiring practices if it hopes to attract more equipment for its snow clearing efforts. The City should be introducing a Hired Hourly Quotation that would encourage equipment owners to make the necessary investments in heavy equipment.

Much of our discussion at the Stakeholder sessions has focused on what changes would be necessary to make working for the City much more attractive. There is general agreement as to the principles that have been identified to date as a result of these talks.

These modifications to the Hired Hourly Quotation will not be without a considerable increase in cost. However we must be prepared to provide some incentive that will make it attractive to come to work for the City as well as instill some confidence in the industry that will spur additional investments in heavy equipment.

Based on historical experiences the introduction of these improvements to the Hired Hourly Quotation could result in an increase in annual snow clearing expenditures in the order of $600,000 to $700,000 during an average winter.

1. Fixed Rates During Storm Events

   The City and the industry could establish a standard industry equipment rental rate that would be paid to all equipment hired during an all-out plowing operation undertaken by the City. It is proposed that this practice be restricted initially to loaders and graders which form the bulk of our storm plow equipment requirements.

   Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

2. Bid Hourly Rates For Maintenance Activities

Equipment required for maintenance snow clearing activities between all-out plowing operations would continue to be called out based on their bid hourly rate.

No change required

3. Guarantees

It is proposed that contractors who are prepared to provide a commitment to the City that their equipment will be available when called should be provided a guaranteed payment in return for that commitment. This guarantee may be based on a guaranteed number of hours paid per winter month with that payment offset by any hours actually worked.

Contractors that don't satisfy the commitment made to the City would be subject to whatever penalties that the City determines to be appropriate. One additional advantage of this initiative is anticipated to be an increased availability of equipment for storms early in the winter season.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

4. Other Incentives

Consideration should also be given to providing incentives such as a bonus payment for any equipment that is available to the City at the initial startup of any major plowing operation and remains working for the City for the duration of the event.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

Section C – City Resources

1. City "Contract Area"

As previously indicated the City undertakes plowing operations in the non-contract areas utilizing City equipment supplemented by hired hourly resources. It is proposed that the City should identify a area within the City where the snow clearing work be conducted using strictly City resources. These efforts will not only serve to generate some additional pride in our staff for their "area" but allow the City to properly evaluate our internal snow clearing costs in preparation for any "Managed Competition" initiatives that might be considered in the future.

It will be necessary to review the impact that such a decision would have on our current manpower and equipment resources. Consideration will be given to a reallocation of staff and equipment among the existing yards to properly resource the new “contract area” but it may prove to be necessary to arrange for a small number of additional seasonal staff and equipment to carry out this new undertaking.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

2. Truck Plowing Activities

As mentioned earlier the City is considering making some modifications to the truck plowing to place all of those contract truck plows under City direction during significant snowfall events to ensure that the plowing operations are carried out in the most effective manner.

In addition the City‘s spreader truck replacements scheduled to arrive this summer will be equipped so as to offer the flexibility of operating these vehicles as spreaders, plow trucks or in combination performing both activities at the same time. This capability has the purpose of increasing the City’s truck plow fleet during significant snowfall events and allowing the City to enhance its truck plowing operations.

Work already in progress

Section D – Other Considerations/Opportunities

1. Improved Decision Making

A) The City has always undertaken its storm cleanup operations in a sequential order based on street priorities. As a result, during last November’s storm event, the first focus for the all-out grader plow activity was the Priority I Street System. However the extensive truck plowing that had been undertaken during the storm had left many of the City’s major roadways in a much better condition than the Priority II streets. Therefore it has been concluded that, in this instance, it would have been more beneficial to focus the initial grader plowing efforts on the Priority II Street System while continuing to use truck plows to maintain the Priority I Streets in an acceptable condition. These types of considerations will become standard protocol for major storm events in the future.

B) Similarly the standard procedure for an all-out grader plowing operation includes the use of graders with wings to windrow the snow well up onto the boulevards, thereby creating snow storage space for future snowfalls.

However the experiences of last November's storm identified that there is considerable risk of damages in undertaking this task in early winter. Accordingly it has been decided that the use of grader wings shall not be considered when the ground is not sufficiently frozen as use of the wing at this time can lead to unnecessary damage to boulevards, grass, etc.

Work already in progress

2. Emergency Snow Routes

Public Works has worked with Winnipeg Transit to develop a Snow Emergency Route classification. The intention of this designation was to identify a plowing plan in the event that the City transportation system should ever be brought to a standstill during a major winter storm. The experiences from last November's storm has identified that there is merit in using this special classification in maintaining the road network open during any major storms such as last November's.

Work already in progress

3. Timely Hauling Operations

There are a number of streets in Winnipeg that do not have sufficient boulevard space to adequately store the volume of snow that results from the plowing operations during a major storm such as was experienced last November. As a result the curb lane and/or the sidewalk become compromised as a result of the snow clearing efforts. Consideration will be given to altering the plowing efforts during significant snowfall accumulations by leaving the windrowed snow within the curb lane on a limited number of designated streets and utilizing a supplementary snow blowing operation to remove this windrow within 24 hours.

Roadways that would merit such consideration would include a street like Henderson Highway that has limited snow storage areas and our plowing efforts often result in only two and one-half lanes remaining available for traffic, placing a safety concern for our buses and other vehicles that normally travel in that lane. This situation can exist for several days and it is felt that the proposed strategy would result in safer travel,

Recent upgrading of the City's complement of snow blower equipment has placed the City in a position where these activities may be undertaken in the proposed manner. Any discussion on this issue must involve Winnipeg Transit as there will be some impacts on their operations.

Work already in progress

4. More Effective Residential Overnight Parking Ban

At each of our stakeholder sessions it was indicated that this winter's experiences have convincingly demonstrated the shortcomings of our existing Residential Overnight Parking Ban and its lack of effectiveness as a tool to allow our snow clearing crews to undertake the snow clearing operations on our residential streets without the barriers presented by parked cars. A meaningful reduction in parked cars would see a timelier cleanup operation as well as reduce the overall requirement for snow clearing equipment.

The mild winter the City has experienced this past winter has enabled most vehicle owners not to have to plug their vehicles in overnight and this has resulted in a considerable increase in on-street vehicles parked overnight or longer. In addition many vehicle owners are prepared to accept the minimum fine they may face for parking in violation of the ban as an alternative to finding off-street parking at a cost that may be several times greater. They also recognize that enforcement is limited so the risk of being ticketed is low in the first place. The City has a well-established process of informing the public and technology initiatives are allowing the City to improve even more with our public education. Certainly enforcement could also be increased but, as previously stated, it is not seen as much of a deterrent. There is no doubt that our City needs a more effective parking ban.

In reviewing other winter cities that also have a high level of service for residential streets, most have some type of parking restrictions such as alternate side of the street that are in place throughout the winter months. However the success of these programs rests in the consequences that result if the parking ban is ignored. Vehicles parked in violation of the ban are almost always ticketed and towed. This allows the work crews to carry out their work efficiently and effectively and the vehicle owners are quick to recognize that there is a serious consequence and opt for alternate arrangements.

One key point with an option such as alternate side of the street parking is that there is always somewhere to park. Alternate side parking may mean that parking is allowed on one side of the street one night and the opposite side of the street the next night. Plowing of the street would be restricted to the available lane each night and be done in a much more efficient manner because of the freedom from the constrictions imposed by parked cars.

Obviously the only way this strategy can work is strict removal of any vehicles parked in violation of the ban. Our existing parking ban basically eliminates on-street parking during our residential plowing events, leaving the public in a difficult position in identifying off-street parking locations to temporarily relocate their vehicles.

The introduction of any new parking ban will have considerable start-up costs initially but will have the potential to result in considerable cost savings in the future. Using the alternate side parking strategy as an example, traffic signs may have to be placed on every residential street to inform our citizens of the parking regulations at a first-year cost of $750,000. In addition there would have to be an extensive public education program focused around the new initiative costing an estimated $200,000 the first year and an additional $25,000 annually thereafter.

When a major review of the existing parking bans was undertaken in 1993, the former Operations Department proposed a residential overnight parking ban that included towing as a consequence to violators but Council at the time was of the opinion that towing was too punitive. However the introduction of a parking ban that has serious consequences has worked very effectively in the other winter cities and our experiences in recent years would suggest that Winnipeg needs a similar tool.

Therefore the Public Works Department needs to identify if the development of a residential overnight parking ban that includes towing is a course of action that Council is prepared to consider at this time.

Decision required to pursue new ban that includes towing

5. Policy Consideration – Clearing of Front Approaches

The requirement in the City's Snow Policy to clear windrows of snow placed across front approaches as a result of the street plowing operations introduces a need for a considerably increased number of loaders in order to carry out this work during storm events. Removal of this requirement could reduce the number of loaders required for the snow clearing operations by up to 50%.

However it is certainly recognized that the windrow removal is something that has become expected and certainly very much appreciated by our citizens. Therefore the City is planning to carry out a pilot project related to this issue. Currently there are a small number of Canadian municipalities that make use of an end gate attached to the grader blade. The end gate, when deployed at approaches, temporarily blocks the flow of snow off the grader blade, thereby eliminating the windrow of snow across the approach. Use of this "grader gate" could reduce the loader requirements freeing up some equipment for use elsewhere.

The City will be outfitting three of our newer graders with these end gates for this upcoming winter and will determine whether this initiative should be further pursued. However it should be noted that the private sector resources do not support this initiative as it could ultimately result in a reduction in loader use.

Work already in progress

6. Policy Consideration – Plowing of City Sidewalks

The City's Snow Policy currently mandates that the City undertake snow clearing on all sidewalks within the public right-of-way. However public expectations have risen to a level where our sidewalk snow clearing efforts are often criticized following major storms as many people have little patience in waiting for their sidewalks to be cleared in accordance with the Policy.

A solution could be to enact a by-law similar to ones in place in several other Canadian winter cities that require property owners to clear their fronting sidewalk within a prescribed period of time such as 48 hours following the end of the snowfall event. However the severity of our winters and the increasing age of our population may make this difficult for the public to accept. Therefore the City should first examine other alternatives to enhance our capability to clear the sidewalks in a timely fashion. In accordance with this strategy, the Public Works Department is proposing that a requirement for sidewalk snow clearing be included in one of the City's Snow Contracts. The success of this initiative will allow us to determine whether this program should be expanded to additional contract areas in the future.

Public Works recommends that this initiative be proceeded with

7. Review of Winter Shift Hours

As previously indicated the Streets Maintenance Division staffs the City's winter snow and ice control operations on a 24 hour per day/7 day a week basis. However the number of staff working on each shift varies considerably with evenings and weekends, as an example, typically handled by a reduced number of staff who would be supplemented by other off-duty staff on overtime when required.

During our Stakeholder sessions the position was put forward that the weather that drives our maintenance activities doesn't have a work schedule and can happen at any time of the day or night and on any day of the week. In addition it was also suggested that snow clearing maintenance work may be better undertaken during the night because of reduced traffic and pedestrian activity.

Therefore the Public Works Department would like to review this issue. Obviously the first step would to initiate discussions with CUPE executive and identify that the City would like to review the hours of work for our winter operations.

Public Works recommends that discussions be initiated with CUPE to review the benefits of changing the winter shift hours of work.