Minute No. 411
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – April 11, 2023

Item No. 4 Sidewalk Plowing Pilot Project

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and adopted the following:

1. That the Council Motion of March 23, 2023, be received as information.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Lukes,
That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On April 18, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the matter to Council.

Councillor Allard, St. Boniface Ward, submitted communications with respect to the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On April 11, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works recommended to the Executive Policy Committee and Council:

1. That the Council Motion of March 23, 2023, be received as information.

David Lacho submitted a communication in support of the matter.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On March 23, 2023, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works:

Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Schreyer,

WHEREAS the current City of Winnipeg Snow Clearing and Ice Control Policy often leaves sidewalks in a treacherous condition that results in an unsafe condition for all residents who would use these sidewalks, especially for residents with vision loss, mobility issues, the use of wheelchairs, the use of strollers;

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg is the home of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights;

AND WHEREAS the United Nations Declaration of human rights article thirteen (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State;

AND WHEREAS the arterial road network has a level of service that leads, in most cases, to levels of service to bare pavement;

AND WHEREAS access to the road network is not available to those who cannot afford transportation and therefore do not benefit from the road network that has levels of service which, in most cases, lead to bare pavement;

AND WHEREAS those who do not have access to this to bare pavement road network should have equal freedom of mobility in their choice of transportation whether this be in a motorized vehicle, wheelchair, or as a pedestrian including for those people who have mobility issues;

AND WHEREAS those who find sidewalks inaccessible, icy or unsafe, are often forced to choose to either walk in traffic lanes and be exposed to vehicles and trucks in slippery winter conditions, or to remain housebound which further reduces their access to public transportation, employment and schools;

AND WHEREAS Council has the opportunity to amend the Snow Clearing and Ice Control Policy for a pilot project to plow one sidewalk to pavement per Council Ward to test technologies that are used in other cities;

AND WHEREAS the National Research Council Canada has determined that salt such as Calcium Chloride (CaCl2) is effective at very low temperatures (-20°F, -29°C), and tends to act more rapidly than NaCl (otherwise know as table salt) because it releases heat as it goes into solution; where in contrast, NaCl requires heat;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg already uses sodium chloride (which is the same product as table salt (NaCl)) on arterial roads, and the salts that the City uses in the treatment of streets are natural substances like calcium, sodium and chlorides that are essential to human life;

AND WHEREAS anticorrosive materials should be used to mitigate their corrosive effects on infrastructure and plant life;

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS in comparable cities, including the City of Edmonton, City-owned sidewalks and pathways use anti-icing calcium chloride brine with a corrosion inhibitor to maintain sidewalks, protected bike lanes and active mobility pathways (including shared use paths) when the conditions require;

AND WHEREAS the City of Edmonton uses as a pre-wetting agent for the sand/salt mix that is dispensed by sanding trucks and sidewalk plows, as it prevents the mixture from freezing prior to being dispensed, which results in a more even dispensing of product (less clumping), and improves the adherence of the mixture to road surfaces;

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg should review winter sand specifications and may require a more effective and abrasive/salt mix with coarser and more angular stones and more salt;

AND WHEREAS the current level of service for snow clearing at bus stops is to plow to pavement;

AND WHEREAS this level of service should be extended to the sidewalk network to make the transit system accessible to all residents, including those with vision loss and mobility issues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back with multiple options for a pilot project in which the snow on sidewalks is plowed to bare pavement on one street per Council Ward which connects to a bus stop, and include the following:

    A. The application of aqueous sodium chloride, aqueous calcium chloride, anti-corrosion materials.

    B. A separate method of snow plowing on sidewalks from snow plowing on roads to deal with snow drifts and melting of windrows on sidewalks.

    C. Reducing and removing snow banks at intersections and crosswalks to improve visibility and safety.

    D. Heavier and more frequent applications of salt and abrasives on sidewalks that cannot be cleared to bare pavement.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

E. The use of anti-icing agents to reduce the required snow plowing and grooming of sidewalks.

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to update its sidewalk construction standard to ensure that sidewalks are built to last a minimum of 20 years, and that they be designed to permit snow clearing to bare pavement in order to meet accessibility standards.

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