



REPORT FOR ACTION

Heathfield Drive Winter Path Maintenance

Date: September 5, 2017

To: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: 43 - Scarborough East

SUMMARY

Transportation Services is responding to a request by Councillor Ainslie to reinstate winter maintenance on the Heathfield Drive connection to the waterfront trail connecting two neighbourhoods as a result of signs being installed advising there is no winter maintenance on this path.

Winter maintenance has not historically been provided on this trail by Transportation Services, given the length and existing condition of the path. Implementation of winter maintenance is not recommended, as Heathfield Drive, Sylvan Avenue and Hill Crescent do not have sidewalks; therefore, sidewalk plows would have no way to access this section of the Waterfront Trail unless staff travel along the adjacent roadways which is both unsafe and inefficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts as a result of adopting the recommendation in this report.

However, should Council direct Transportation Services to undertake winter maintenance of this path, the cost is estimated at \$800 per snow event. At approximately 24 snow events per winter season, the annual impact is approximately \$19,200 per season.

Funding is currently not available in the Operating Budget for Transportation Services.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of June 8, 2017, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee considered item PW22.8, requesting staff to reinstate winter maintenance on the Heathfield Drive connection to the waterfront trail connecting two neighbourhoods. This motion referred the item to Transportation Services to report back to the September Committee meeting.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW22.8>

COMMENTS

Background

Heathfield Drive connects the Waterfront Trail from Hill Crescent to Sylvan Avenue. The waterfront trail path is approximately 410 metres in length. It is identified on the City's Official Record of Highways as city-owned but it is not dedicated as public highway nor a public walkway.

Staff recently installed "No Winter Maintenance" signs as an advisory to caution pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers, etc. that this service is not provided and any risks associated with the use of this path, are assumed by the user.

Transportation's records indicate this trail has not received winter maintenance in prior seasons, and the signs were posted not because Transportation recently ceased the provision of this service, but simply as an advisory to the general public. 'No winter maintenance' signs are very common within parks walkways in the City of Toronto as an advisory to the general public.

Maintenance Standards

There are currently no legally mandated minimum maintenance standards for sidewalk snow clearing that are legislated in Ontario. Under the City of Toronto Act, Ontario

Regulation 612/06, a municipality is not liable for a personal injury caused by snow or ice on a sidewalk, except in cases of gross negligence. This identical provision is stated in the Municipal Act, Ontario Regulation 239/02 for the rest of the province as well.

Nevertheless, Toronto has a high level of service in providing mechanical sidewalk snow clearing on most city streets, with the exception of inner areas where it is not feasible.

Transportation Services is not presently, nor has it historically been resourced or budgeted to provide winter services on off-street facilities, aside from selected exceptions which are under the purview of the Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division.

Feasibility

Transportation Services does not normally look at requests for such significant length of trails as this one (over 400 metres); however, of critical importance to review is the width of the path, obstructions, safety of the workers who would carry on the maintenance work when required, and consideration whether mechanical clearing can be done in a contiguous area.

Winter maintenance is typically provided on pathways when they connect the sidewalks of one public street to the sidewalks on another public street. Heathfield Drive, Sylvan Avenue and Hill Crescent do not have sidewalks; therefore, sidewalk plows would have no way to access this section of the Waterfront Trail unless staff travel along the adjacent roadways which is both unsafe and inefficient.

The path is overgrown with foliage obstructing the 1.5m in width, does not have lighting, and has a steep grade (>8% along some sections) and a significant drop off on the east side (>70% along some sections). These conditions, make mechanical clearing hazardous for maintenance staff. Providing winter maintenance services may encourage use of the pathway while potentially giving users a false sense of security particularly during darker early morning or evening periods.

In situations like this, the practice is to close the walkway, and not maintain them during the winter when there is a danger to operators and the public. This is most notably in cases where walkways that are adjacent to watercourses and have very steep slopes adjacent narrow pathways. The Waterfront Trail path meets this criteria as assessed above.

If winter maintenance is required against Transportation Services' recommendation, an increase the budget for winter maintenance of approximately \$19,200 would be required through the 2018 Budget cycle.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Barbara Gray
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Overall Area Site Plan