

2025 Winter Maintenance Program Follow-Up: Status of Auditor General's Previous Recommendations

Date: June 26, 2025
To: Audit Committee
From: Auditor General
Wards: All

SUMMARY

Contracted winter maintenance services are part of the City's snow and ice management plan to ensure the safety and mobility of all road, sidewalk, cycle, and path users.

In March 2025, City Council requested the Auditor General to review whether previous Auditor General recommendations related to winter maintenance operations were implemented by City management ahead of the February 2025 winter storm ([2025.EX21.1](#)).

This report presents the status of the 30 recommendations made in three of the Auditor General's previous reports related to the Winter Maintenance Program:

1. [Audit of Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase One: Leveraging Technology and Improving Design and Management of Contracts to Achieve Service Level Outcomes \(October 2020\)](#)
2. [Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase 2 Analysis: Deploying Resources \(June 2021\)](#)
3. [Winter Maintenance Program Follow-Up - Status of Previous Auditor General's Recommendations & Processes to Hold Contractors Accountable to New Contract Terms \(June 2023\)](#)

In the 2023 follow-up, 11 recommendations were closed. For this follow-up cycle, management reported that the remaining 19 recommendations were fully implemented. We verified that eight are fully implemented, two are no longer applicable and closed, and nine are still in progress and are not fully implemented.

Our report also includes three new recommendations for the Transportation Services Division to continue improving how it oversees and manages the current winter maintenance contracts going forward.

Fully implementing the remaining nine recommendations from our previous reports, along with the three new recommendations in this report will help management more efficiently and effectively monitor contractor performance, report on service level achievement, and apply liquidated damages and performance-based price adjustments in accordance with the terms of the winter maintenance service contracts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Auditor General recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services Division to implement a structured process for managing route map updates to improve accountability and enable effective real-time monitoring throughout the season by:
 - a. providing updated GIS data and infrastructure changes to contractors in advance of the winter season;
 - b. requiring contractors to submit finalized route maps incorporating these updates before the start of the season; and
 - c. ensuring the finalized route maps are uploaded to the GPS dashboard before winter operations begin.
2. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services Division to incorporate longer street segments and additional risk-based samples into field audit reports to improve coverage, enhance quality assurance, and identify contractor deficiencies.
3. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services Division to:
 - a. review whether there is a systemic issue with contractor performance due to contractors using single-axle vehicles on local roads; and
 - b. ensure contractors achieve the required pavement outcomes within the time specified in the contract when single-axle vehicles are used on local roads and apply performance-based price adjustments when contractors do not meet performance requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Effectively implementing the recommendations from the Auditor General's two previous reports on the winter maintenance program and 2023 follow-up report, as well as the three new recommendations in this report, will help the Transportation Services Division manage the new winter maintenance contracts in a more effective and efficient manner, including monitoring contractor performance to ensure contracted service levels are achieved.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 27-30, 2020, City Council adopted the Auditor General's report, [Audit of Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase One: Leveraging Technology and Improving Design and Management of Contracts to Achieve Service Level Outcomes](#). This report made 22 recommendations aimed at modernizing Transportation Services' management of winter operations, improving the program's efficiency and effectiveness, resolving contract and performance issues, and establishing better mechanisms for measuring service levels.

On July 14-16, 2021, City Council adopted the Auditor General's report, [Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase 2 Analysis: Deploying Resources](#). This report included four recommendations, concluded that outsourcing winter services delivered better value than in-house service delivery (under the then-current pricing and unit-based contracting model), and identified opportunities to optimize the deployment and utilization of the contractor fleet.

On July 19-20, 2023, City Council adopted the Auditor General's report, [Winter Maintenance Program Follow-Up - Status of Previous Auditor General's Recommendations & Processes to Hold Contractors Accountable to New Contract Terms](#). This report reviewed progress made on implementing the earlier recommendations and added four new recommendations to further strengthen contractor oversight and accountability under the City's new performance-based contracts.

On December 13-15, 2023, City Council adopted the Auditor General's report, [Update to Winter Maintenance Program Follow-Up: Change in Contract](#). This report provided City Council with information about changes to the liquidated damages specified in the current winter maintenance contracts.

In March 2025, City Council requested the Auditor General to consider reviewing whether previous Auditor General recommendations related to winter maintenance operations were implemented by City management ahead of the February 2025 winter storm ([2025.EX21.1](#)).

COMMENTS

This report on the results of the Auditor General's 2025 follow-up of previous recommendations related to the Winter Maintenance Program identifies opportunities for improvement in the following areas:

- A. Strengthening real-time monitoring and verification using GPS technology
- B. Improving field audits for more effective oversight of contractor performance
- C. Enhancing other operational and compliance controls

A high-level summary of the key findings from the follow-up are provided in the one-page At a Glance.

Table 1 below summarizes the status of 30 recommendations from our three previous reports related to the Winter Maintenance Program. The Auditor General's 2023 follow-up report noted that 11 of the 26 recommendations from our previous reports had been fully implemented and included four new recommendations. In this follow-up cycle, management reported that the remaining 19 recommendations were fully implemented.

As outlined in **Table 1**, we verified that eight are fully implemented, two are no longer applicable and closed, and nine are still in progress and are not fully implemented.

Table 1: Implementation Status of Auditor General Recommendations from Winter Maintenance Reports for Phase One, Phase Two, and 2023 Follow-up

Report	Total Number of Recs	Recs Closed in 2023	2025 Follow-up Cycle Results		
			Fully Implemented	No Longer Applicable	Not Fully Implemented
Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase One Audit (October 2020)	22	9	5	-	8
Winter Road Maintenance Program - Phase 2 Analysis (June 2021)	4	2	-	2	-

Report	Total Number of Recs	Recs Closed in 2023	2025 Follow-up Cycle Results		
			Fully Implemented	No Longer Applicable	Not Fully Implemented
Winter Road Maintenance Program Follow-Up (June 2023)	4	-	3	-	1
Total	30	11	8	2	9

The report in Attachment 1 provides the Audit Committee and members of City Council with the detailed results of our follow-up and management's action plan for recommendations that are not yet fully implemented. The report also includes three new recommendations. Management's response to these additional three recommendations is also included in the report.

CONTACT

Ina Chan, Deputy Auditor General, Auditor General's Office
Tel: (416) 392-8472, E-mail: Ina.Chan@toronto.ca

Ruchir Patel, Senior Audit Manager, Auditor General's Office
Tel: (416) 392-8470, E-mail: Ruchir.Patel@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Tara Anderson
Auditor General

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2025 Winter Maintenance Program Follow-Up: Status of Auditor General's Previous Recommendations