

# Snow Clearing of Adjoining Cycling Infrastructure and Sidewalks

## ISSUE

Due to the timing of when the property owners clear snow from the sidewalks and the city clears snow from the adjacent cycling infrastructure, there are occasions when snow from the adjoining sidewalk is placed into the cycling infrastructure along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street between Spadina Crescent and Idylwyld Drive, after the cycling infrastructure has already been cleared following a snowfall.

## BACKGROUND

City Council at its Regular Business Meeting held on August 13, 2018, considered the Update to Bylaw No. 8463, The Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw, 2005 which revised the requirement for owners or occupants to clear the sidewalk in front of their properties within 24 hours of a snowfall and resolved, in part:

- “4. That the Administration report on potential options available to mitigate the problems (time gap) with snow removal between the sidewalks and the bike lanes.”

Snow clearing of the sidewalk is the responsibility of the owner or occupant of the adjoining property. Snow clearing of the adjoining cycling infrastructure is the responsibility of the City of Saskatoon.

In 2018, City Council approved an update to Bylaw No. 8463, The Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw, 2005. The update permitted the owner or occupant of the adjoining property to clear or remove snow by placing it in the adjacent cycling infrastructure along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Prior to this change, all snow from the sidewalk had to be placed on private property.

Temporary dedicated bike lanes were installed between the parking lane and the sidewalk in 2015 in this area as a pilot project. The resulting recommendation was to keep the lanes until a downtown Active Transportation Network was developed. Stakeholder consultation on the design of the network will begin in 2021 with a report back to the Standing Policy Committee prior to the end of 2021. Options for better coordination of snow removal with the owner or occupant of the adjoining property will be considered during the design of the Active Transportation Network.

## CURRENT STATUS

The City of Saskatoon does not have an approved level of service for snow clearing of cycling infrastructure. The current practice is to clear the cycling infrastructure within 24 hours of a snowfall.

After the cycling infrastructure is initially cleared by the City, cyclists frequently encounter snow piles. The piles are from the snow clearing of the adjacent sidewalk.

## Snow Clearing of Adjoining Cycling Infrastructure and Sidewalks

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Those sections of the cycling infrastructure are then cleared again by the City to provide full mobility to cyclists.

The property owners or occupants that place snow into the cycling infrastructure after it has already been cleared are not in violation of the Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw as long as the snow is cleared from the sidewalk within 24 hours of the snowfall end.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

#### Public Engagement

Residents were engaged in a survey in early 2017 on winter road and sidewalk maintenance. Those residents who use the downtown protected cycling infrastructure were further asked about their experience:

- 15% did not experience challenges or restrictions,
- 63% did experience challenges, but the cycling infrastructure was useable; and
- 22% indicated cycling infrastructure was not useable over the winter.

Options to mitigate the time gap of snow removal between sidewalks and the bike lanes have been reviewed and are provided below:

Option	Description	Advantages/Disadvantages
1. Status Quo with improved communication with the owner or occupant of the adjoining property	<p>This option maintains the current practice. The owners or occupants of the adjoining properties along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street between Spadina Crescent and Idylwyld Drive would remain responsible for clearing snow from the sidewalk and placing it in the adjacent cycling infrastructure within 24 hours of a snow fall.</p> <p>Improved communication with the owners or occupants of the adjoining properties would be carried out. The purpose of the improved communication would be to ensure they are aware of the cycling infrastructure clearing schedule. This would minimize the number of occurrences where snow is placed in the cycling infrastructure after it has already been cleared.</p>	<p><u>Advantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ No additional costs for the City.</li><li>▪ Improved communication may reduce the number of instances where the owners or occupants push snow into the cycling infrastructure after it has already been cleared.</li></ul> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Cyclists may continue to experience instances where they encounter snow piles after the cycling infrastructure has already been cleared.</li><li>▪ Inefficient due to City crews having to return to clear snow from the bike lanes.</li></ul>

## Snow Clearing of Adjoining Cycling Infrastructure and Sidewalks

Option Cont.	Description Cont.	Advantages/Disadvantages Cont.
2. City of Saskatoon removes snow from both, sidewalk and cycling infrastructure	<p>The City of Saskatoon assumes responsibility for clearing the sidewalk along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street between Spadina Crescent and Idylwyld Drive until the expanded downtown Active Transportation Network is in place.</p> <p>This option ensures that both the sidewalk and cycling infrastructure are cleared at the same time.</p>	<p><u>Advantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cyclists would not experience piles of snow in the cycling infrastructure after it has already been cleared by the City.</li> <li>▪ No repeat City crew visits to clear snow from the cycling infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional annual cost of \$30,000.</li> <li>▪ Property owners or occupants along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street receive a service from the City while the owners or occupants along other routes are responsible for clearing the adjoining sidewalk.</li> <li>▪ May raise expectations from the owners and occupants along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street that the City will continue to clear snow from the adjoining sidewalk after the expanded downtown Active Transportation Network is in place.</li> </ul>
3. Owner or occupant of the adjoining property clears the cycling infrastructure	<p>This option includes amending the Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw further to have the owner or occupant of the adjoining property be responsible for clearing both the adjoining sidewalk and cycling infrastructure along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.</p>	<p><u>Advantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cyclists would not experience piles of snow.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Property owners would be required to either invest additional time and effort, or incur additional costs to clear the snow from the cycling infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Cycling infrastructure would not all be cleared at the same time.</li> </ul>

The annual cost of snow clearing of the cycling infrastructure along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street would increase by approximately twofold if Option 2 were selected. Regardless of the challenges with the snow piles, 78% of residents surveyed in 2017 indicated the downtown cycling infrastructure was useable in the winter months. This indicates that the benefits of Option 2 would be small relative to the incremental cost.

Option 3 would create hardship for the adjacent owners or occupants. Additionally, it would only result in improved winter cycling conditions if the clearing work by multiple owners or occupants were all done at the same time, which would be unlikely to occur.

### Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

The City of Calgary has protected cycling infrastructure adjacent to their sidewalks similar to Saskatoon, however, they generally do not have adjacent parking lanes. The owners or occupants of properties adjacent to the cycling infrastructure are instructed to pile snow at the edge of the sidewalk. This approach is not recommended for Saskatoon as the snow piles on the sidewalk create a hazard for those approaching parked vehicles from the sidewalk.

The City of Edmonton encourages the owners or occupants of the adjoining properties not to deposit snow into the cycling infrastructure. Edmonton inspects their cycling infrastructure and if they find snow piles, they will remove them. Edmonton is planning an assessment to determine strategies for next year's winter season.

The City of Winnipeg clears all sidewalks and cycling infrastructure.

The City of Regina does not have cycling infrastructure protected with delineation posts. Their cycling infrastructure is on the street with no physical features separating it from the traffic lane, so they clear the cycling infrastructure and traffic lane at the same time.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Administration will continue with the current practice of clearing cycling infrastructure within 24 hours of a snowfall or as directed by City Council.

#### Report Approval

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