

Snow and Ice Service Levels

RECOMMENDATION

That the revisions to the Service Level for Snow and Ice Management to include winter maintenance on protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks without additional funding be approved.

ISSUE

The current Service Level for Snow and Ice Management does not include winter maintenance on protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks.

BACKGROUND

One of the recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan is to review and update current snow removal requirements and operating procedures for bicycle facilities. Bicycle facilities include protected bike lanes, cycle tracks, multi-use pathways, and bicycle boulevards.

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on June 28, 2021, considered the Enhanced Service Level Options for Snow Grading and Removal report, and resolved, in part:

- “2. Through the appropriate meeting, that the current practices be adopted as formal Level of Service for snow and ice management on separated cycling facilities and that the level of service outlined for bike boulevards be adopted.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Having an established level of service allows cyclists to know when they can expect snow to be cleared and which cycling routes will be cleared so they can plan their trip accordingly. It reduces key barriers to choosing cycling in the winter such as snow filled streets. It also provides more options for getting around Saskatoon and encourages people to continue to ride their bicycle year-round.

The current practice for winter maintenance on protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks includes:

- snow grading on protected bike lanes within 24 hours of snowfall ending, and
- snow grading on raised cycle tracks within 48 hours of snowfall ending.

Protected bike lanes in Downtown are given higher priority due to higher cycling traffic.

The current practice for winter maintenance on existing protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks has been delivered within the current approved budgets since the existing facilities became operational. Since 2014, the Snow and Ice Management budget has seen budget increases to address service level changes, growth, and inflation. These budget increases have been sufficient to manage the costs for current practice for winter maintenance of existing protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks.

Further expansion of bicycle facilities is anticipated due to city growth and expansion of the Active Transportation network in accordance with the approved Active Transportation Plan. As budget approvals for new facilities are presented, the budget request will include the capital costs as well as the additional operational costs, which will include costs to meet the proposed winter maintenance service levels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current annual cost for winter maintenance of existing protected bike lanes and raised cycle tracks is \$100,000. These costs fluctuate due to contractor costs and natural variations in winter weather.

The work will continue to be delivered within the Snow and Ice Management Service Line budget and no additional funding has been requested.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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