

Services and Accommodations for Seniors and Residents with Physical Limitations – Options and Possible Partnerships

Recommendation

That the options to address requests for assistance with moving recycling/garbage bins and sidewalk clearing, as outlined in this report, be considered during the 2016 Business Plan and Budget Review.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to an inquiry requesting options to address requests from seniors and residents with physical limitations for assistance with moving recycling/garbage bins and with sidewalk clearing.

Report Highlights

1. Public Works currently has a limited program for seniors and people with physical limitations, where City of Saskatoon (City) employees move the bins from private property and replace the bin after collection. This service was established, in conjunction with the garbage container conversion project, as a way to address concerns raised by some residents who physically could not manoeuvre roll-out bins.
2. Public Works currently has community-based initiatives encouraging the community and community-based groups to support those with health and mobility restrictions.
3. There are a number of options available for consideration, consisting of continuing with the existing limited level of service, considering grants and/or partnerships with community-based organizations, and enhancing the information available about community-based options.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City's Strategic Goal of Quality of Life and refocusing on our services that are of high importance to our citizens.

Background

In 2007, Environmental Services introduced a Special Needs Service whereby City employees move garbage bins from private property, collect with a semi-automated rear-loading truck, and replace the bin after collection. This service is provided on a different day from regularly-scheduled collections. The service was established in conjunction with the garbage container conversion project that saw 300-gallon communal waste containers located in back-lanes across the city replaced by individual roll-out black garbage bins. It was never officially created as a program. The Special Needs Service was created as a way to address concerns raised by some residents

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who could physically manage taking small bags of garbage to a large bin but could not easily manoeuvre roll-out bins.

Procedures have been created for the administration of this service. Eligibility criteria were established and implemented through a site visit by the Customer Service Supervisor to confirm:

- the resident lives in a neighbourhood that underwent a conversion from communal waste collection to individual roll-out carts; and
- lives independently (without the benefit of family members); and
- has a physical disability or other limitations; or
- lives at a property with extreme physical barriers (such as an elevated yard).

At its March 4, 2013 City Council meeting, the following inquiry was made by Councillor Loewen:

“Would the administration please explore options and possible partnerships that would allow the City to expand services and accommodations to seniors and to residents with physical limitations? Specifically, please supply information about how the City could address requests for assistance with moving recycling and garbage bins as well as with sidewalk clearing.”

In 2013, with the launch of the new Recycling Program, City Council was informed that the Special Needs Services would also be delivered by Loraas Recycle to the same addresses served by the City.

Report

The City's Current Services and Accommodations – Moving Bins

Through Public Works, the City offers the Special Needs Service for assistance with moving garbage bins. When the program started in 2007, there were 488 participating households. The service was specific to the neighbourhoods affected by the garbage conversion project only. Addresses would be dropped from the service over time and no new addresses would be added. As of 2015, there are approximately 400 households still receiving the service.

The Special Needs Service comprises approximately 60% of the work completed by rear-loading garbage trucks (of which Public Works operates two). The projected cost to provide this service to 400 homes in 2015 is \$195,000 (or \$488 per household). This service costs approximately five times more than automated curbside garbage collection.

The City's Current Programs and Services – Shovelling Snow

Public Works, in relation to snow removal on residential sidewalks, has community-based initiatives already underway. Annually, the Snow Angel Program is promoted with a call to action for neighbours to consider adopting a senior's sidewalk and keep it clear of snow. In the past, Public Works has also put out a request to non-

profit and volunteer groups offering sidewalk snow-clearing programs for the elderly or those with mobility restrictions to register on a list that could be published and promoted by the City. This list of organizations offering this service is then promoted on the City's website.

Public Works also annually distributes the "Snow What to Do" flyers to remind all residents of their responsibility under Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw, 2005, No. 8463. Within that brochure, residents who are not physically able to remove the snow are reminded to ask family members, friends, and neighbours to assist with snow removal, or contact a local community group providing the service.

Options and Possible Partnerships

There are a number of options available for consideration, consisting of continuing with the existing limited level of service, considering grants and/or partnerships with community-based organizations, and expanding the program for all residents that would qualify under the program.

To address the requests for assistance with moving garbage and recycling bins and sidewalk clearing, the Administration has identified a number of options for consideration. In brief, the options are:

1. Continue with the existing level of service to the approximate 400 households currently on the program within the neighbourhoods that were part of the garbage bin conversion project.
2. Launch a marketing promotion campaign, like the Snow Angel Program, with a focus on neighbours helping neighbours with moving their garbage/recycle bins. This would include the establishment of a process for groups to be on a list for providing a low-cost fee for service in assisting with moving bins.
3. Explore partnership opportunities that would include providing support funding for neighbourhood-level clubs, teams, or organizations willing to sign up as volunteers to take on the task of moving the bins on regular collection days. Support funds are considered necessary to provide incentive for volunteers to ensure the service is available equally across the city and consistently on each collection day. Such an initiative could provide a fundraising opportunity for non-profit organizations operating in Saskatoon. The amount of funding required to provide an appropriate incentive is not known at this time. A partnership program of this type would require administrative support from the City (at an estimated cost of \$20,000 annually), along with an annual amount of support funding.
4. Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for community-based organizations to take on the city-wide service of assisting with the moving of garbage/recycle bins throughout the year for any residents that qualify under the criteria of the program.
5. Explore other options to ensure that all citizens have reasonable choices available for moving recycling/solid waste bins and sidewalk clearing.

The options identified in this report provides a range of potential programs and supports to assist seniors and people with physical limitations. While the list is not exhaustive, it does provide information about potential supports to consider pursuing.

Options to the Recommendation

The Business Plan and Budget Review Committee could direct the Administration to implement one of the options presented within this report.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

In investigating potential options or partnerships, representatives from the Saskatoon Council on Aging were consulted, as were members of the Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee of Council.

Communications Plan

Any new options would be communicated using Public Service Announcements and updating the City's website.

Financial Implications

Option 1: No new budget is required as this program is already supported within the operating budget.

Option 2: The estimated costs to expand the promotion of the neighbour helping neighbour with the moving of bins would be similar to the cost of the Snow Angel Program promotions, which is approximately \$12,000 per year. There needs to be internal resources allocated to develop the communications plan/marketing strategy, graphic design work, and support for developing the online forms to sign up community-based organizations.

Option 3: In addition to the \$20,000 in administrative support to the program, there would also be a need for funding support for the organizations participating in the program. The total impact would need to be further explored should this option be considered.

Option 4: The financial implications of this option would need to be determined through an RFP.

The implications of an expanded Special Needs Service for recycling carts is unknown at this time. While it would be expected that the same level of service be provided for recycling, Loraas Recycle may also request additional contract fees as a result.

Other Considerations/Implications

At this time, there are no policy, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations. Pending the direction of City Council, these implications may also need to be further investigated.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Should City Council approve one of the options within this report and the corresponding resources, the Administration would look to formalize the details of the program in the first half of 2016. The Administration would undertake to further investigate the full scope of that option and the detailed costing with a plan to implement the changes for the 2016 winter season.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Public Notice Policy No. C01-021, is not required.

Report Approval

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