

# We'll need another place to park

## City to consider banning parked cars from streets after heavy snowfalls

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Published: Thursday, March 3, 2011

Edmonton residents could see overnight parking bans on all residential streets after severe snowstorms if council accepts new recommendations from the transportation department.

City staff are also asking to be exempt from the noise bylaw while clearing residential streets. And they want more equipment - \$8.4 million worth of trucks, loaders and snowblower attachments - to meet more stringent plowing deadlines. Of that, only \$3.5 million could come out of the existing capital budget.

The report, prompted by January's heavy snowfall, is scheduled for debate at a council committee meeting March 8.

It's essential to make some changes, since so many people were upset about snow removal this year, Coun. Amarjeet Sohi said after reviewing a draft copy of the report.

"I have never seen that level of dissatisfaction for services," he said. "Other cities have parking bans. We need to look at that."

People will have to find other places to keep their cars for a few nights, said Coun. Bryan Anderson.

"There are almost no houses without a garage. The problem is they are full of crap. The garages, not the people," he said with a smile.

"The only way to do a functional street clearing is to create a ban." The \$8.4 million that city staff are seeking would buy 20 more trucks, two more loaders and five more snowblower attachments.

City transportation operations manager Brice Stephenson said the new loaders and snowblower attachments will deal with windrows, while the trucks will give the city a dedicated fleet for plowing residential areas. "The trucks with sander plows will get the fleet to the point where we can get done all residential blading within five days."

Details on some parking bans still need to be worked out, but there would be two types.

A seasonal parking ban on residential bus routes would go into effect from Nov. 15 to March 15 each year. The overnight parking bans on all residential streets would go into effect if it snowed 30 centimetres or more and the city's general manager of transportation declared a severe snowfall. That declaration would deploy crews to plow residential roads to the pavement and put all available city equipment under the control of the director of roadway maintenance.

Year-round parking could also change, said Stephenson. The city wants to eliminate parking on one side of streets less than nine metres wide. "It's a year-round problem with narrow streets and this plan is driven by emergency vehicles which are unable to get through."

These narrow roads "are scattered through the city and in older neighbourhoods, but they're becoming more common in newer subdivisions."

City staff are also recommending council change the policy for residential blading. Currently, blading trucks start on residential roads only once the main roads have been cleared. If another snowfall hits, equipment gets pulled back to the main roads again.

The transportation department is now recommending the city set a target of five working days to finish blading. That would take at least 50 units working 24 hours a day to finish, and city crews would need to be exempt from city noise bylaws.

Coun. Kerry Diotte had asked for an independent review of the city's snow-clearing policy, and city staff agreed, suggesting it be a panel of peers from other winter cities.

"It's hard for people to investigate themselves," said Diotte. "If we look at the bigger picture we'll find out if parking bans have to be part of that. It's something we really have to get right."

Mayor Stephen Mandel said he would like to see the city contract out up to one-quarter of streets rather than buying more equipment.

"It's getting to the point where the city shouldn't do everything. Let's get some private enterprise," he said.

Residents were already wondering what the new rules will be like.

Sergiu Stefanut, a post-secondary student, isn't opposed to parking away from his house next winter. "I'm definitely for restricted parking if it helps snow removal go faster."

People restricted from parking on one side of the street probably won't be happy, said Trish Botha. "But it's got to be an improvement in residential areas. It's a hazard to get past cars parked beside windrows."

City staff submitted a comparison study on snow removal policies of Edmonton, Ottawa and Winnipeg with their recommendations. They pinpoint Edmonton's 4,900 kilometres of sidewalks directly adjacent to the roads as a big part of the problem.

The other cities often have boulevard-style sidewalks or no sidewalks at all, making windrows less of an issue.

Edmonton budgeted \$44.4 million for snow removal in 2010, compared to Winnipeg's \$31.3 million for a similar amount of snow and Ottawa's \$69 million for double the snowfall.

Both Winnipeg and Ottawa can already ban overnight parking on all residential roads with 12 hours notice or less.

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## SNOW PLAN

City staff will recommend a number of changes to improve snow removal, including:

Buying 20 more sander trucks with plows, two loaders and five snowblower attachments at an \$8.4-million cost.

Year-round restrictions allowing parking on only one side of streets less than nine metres wide.

Exempting city snow clearing equipment from the noise bylaw.

No parking on bus routes from Nov. 15 to March 15 each year.

Overnight residential parking bans any time more than 30 centimetres of snow falls.

Residential blading, including alleys, to be completed within five working days after snowfall, commencing within 48 hours of the end of the snowfall.

Seasonal parking bans on bus routes.

Independent peer review of Edmonton's snow removal policy.