

BUDGET COMMITTEE REQUEST:

- Provide the financial and operating impacts of providing snow removal service Town-wide to communities with small lot sizes where snow storage is a concern.
- Provide clarification on what is covered for snow removal as it relates to unassumed/unaccepted roads.

RECOMMENDATION:

- That the information be received.

KEY FACTS:

- The Town has a mixture of small lots with a property frontage width of less than 8.9 meters and includes units such as multiple-attached dwelling units (i.e. townhouses with front-facing driveways), duplexes, detached and semi-detached dwellings, but excludes condo developments. As a result, in these areas there is limited ability to accommodate snow storage during heavy snowfall events. During snowfalls in excess of 35 cm, snow will partially encroach on the roadway, overly saturate boulevards, block parking lanes and in some cases, obstruct two-way traffic.
- Snow removal is currently only provided to laneway products (when it reaches 35 cm of accumulation) as there is no room for snow storage on the boulevards.
- There are approximately 14,048 residential units with driveways on small lots excluding laneway products, representing 23.81% of all Town residential ground-based units (59,000) excluding condos. The count does not consider the anticipated growth and development in the next few years.
- Implementing a snow removal program for these residential properties excluding laneways will have an estimated cost of \$2.3M per year to be adjusted for inflation (impact of 0.82% increase on the Town tax levy and 0.36% increase on overall tax bill, representing a further increase of 25.3% of the 2026 Infrastructure Maintenance proposed winter control budget of \$9.1M).

COMMENTS/OPTIONS:

Currently, residential snow removal is only budgeted and completed along Town assumed laneways and snow removal begins when the snow accumulation on the road meets or exceeds 35 cm, provided that snowfall has ended and roads have been plowed.

Residential snow removal is not included in the winter control budget as the current Town right-of-way can store snow and permit two lanes of traffic. However, in some areas of the Town, during heavy snow events there is a lack of snow storage on the boulevards. Snow accumulation can create large snowbanks adjacent to the roadway which may block sightlines, make access difficult to properties, affect dedicated on-street parking, among other impacts.

Winter Maintenance - Snow Removal: Accepted Unassumed Roads

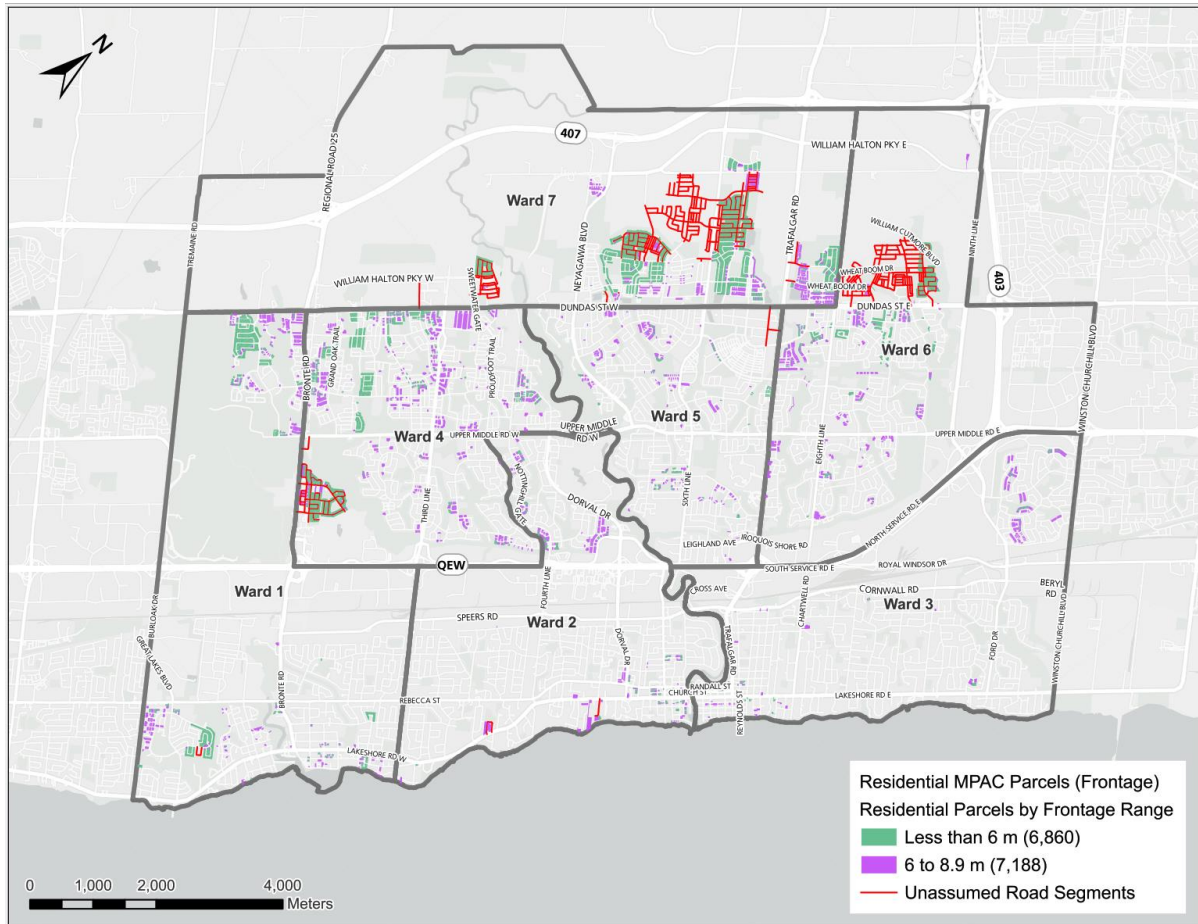
The Town may (not shall), at its sole discretion, provide winter maintenance services to eligible unassumed roads. This discretionary service is contingent upon specific criteria, including a minimum of 90% residential occupancy within the applicable development phase and a site safety review conducted by the Town. If an unassumed road meets the required criteria, it will be designated as an accepted unassumed road, and the Town will provide winter maintenance from December 1 to April 15. If the criteria are not met, the developer will remain responsible for winter maintenance.

Where provided, winter maintenance on accepted unassumed roads is limited strictly to road and sidewalk plowing. These services are offered outside the scope of statutory obligations, as unassumed roads are not subject to the duties prescribed under current legislation. Accordingly, on accepted unassumed roads, the Town provides snow plowing of roads and sidewalks, even though these roads are not officially owned or maintained by the Town under legislation, nor does it constitute assumption or ownership responsibility for those roads.

Snow Removal Service: Proposed Approach

If Council were to consider a snow removal service level, it would apply to all the residential roads in the Town that have narrow property frontage less than 8.9 meters excluding laneways (see Figure 1) with approximately 14,048 residential units representing 23.81% of all Town residential units (59,000). This includes ground base units with driveways at the front including duplexes and properties with up to 6 units, but not multi-residential properties (i.e. condos). Of these, 2,460 units are located on accepted unassumed roads that currently receive winter maintenance services by the Town.

Figure 1: Town-wide proposed Snow Removal Areas without Laneways*



Note: *Current count as of November 7, 2025

Potential Service Level Criteria

The potential service level criteria would be the following:

- **Level of snow:** Snow removal begins when road snow accumulation meets or exceeds 35 cm, provided that snowfall has ended and roads have already been plowed.
- **Initiation timeframe:** Snow removal begins after road plow is complete.
- **Completion timeframe:** The snow removal service will continue until complete without a set completion timeframe dependent on snow accumulation, type of precipitation, vehicles parked on the road etc. (staff estimate 120 hours to have the majority of roads receiving the service being cleared after roads are plowed and this takes into account the dispersed nature of properties across the Town).

- **Removal amount:** The snowbank will not be removed completely to the surface of the boulevard (i.e. to prevent damage to sod, trees, light poles), typically no more than 3' behind the back of curb. The purpose is to provide additional boulevard storage capacity for future events. This service does not include snow removal or windrow removal of the driveway.

Appendix 1 of this report provides some frequently asked questions and is included to illustrate the expectation for delivery of a Town-wide Snow Removal Program on small properties with frontages less than 8.9 meters, excluding laneways.

Snow Removal Service: Implementation Considerations

Snow removal operations would be conducted during the core winter period, from December 15 to March 20. The scope of work would consist of a 24/7 snow removal operation along the Town right-of-way along 9 snow removal zones once the service level criteria has been met. Snow removal would remove excess snow along the boulevards that affect the right-of-way usage (i.e. parking, sightlines, intersection turning radii) and reinstate snow storage capacity for subsequent snow events.

The snow removal operation would consist of a municipal-grade blower, a skid steer loader and traffic control/protection crew per zone, which would remove snow continuously in a mobile operation configuration by either:

- Relocating snow within the right-of-way.
- Loading snow into dump trucks which then haul the snow to its designated disposal site.

Financial Impact

The cost of providing residential snow removal, with all removed snow being hauled and disposed off-site, is estimated to be \$2.3M in 2025 dollars (impact of 0.82% increase on the Town tax levy and 0.36% increase on overall tax bill, representing a further increase of 25.3% of the 2026 Infrastructure Maintenance proposed winter control budget of \$9.1M).

Assuming approval of funding for this program as part of the 2026 budget, snow removal could begin in the 2026-2027 season, with a portion of the expenses included in the 2026 budget and annualized in the 2027 budget.

Risks and Challenges

The following are operational risks that staff anticipate:

- Potential damage to driveway aprons, boulevards, and private property which could result in increased claims against the Town.
- Parked cars adjacent to the road (blocking the boulevard) or on the driveway have a high potential to obstruct snow removal equipment.
- Homeowners may expect the Town to clear the entire boulevard and part of their driveway as part of snow removal along residential roads, when the service itself is limited to large snow piles immediately adjacent to the roadway in the boulevard.
- Homeowners may confuse the snow removal service with windrow clearing of a driveway.
- Residents may have unrealistic expectations concerning service level timelines (i.e. the time when snow removal begins after road plowing is completed is perceived to be too long).
- Waste collection vehicles prevent timely snow removal and encroach on Town service levels.

APPENDIX 1

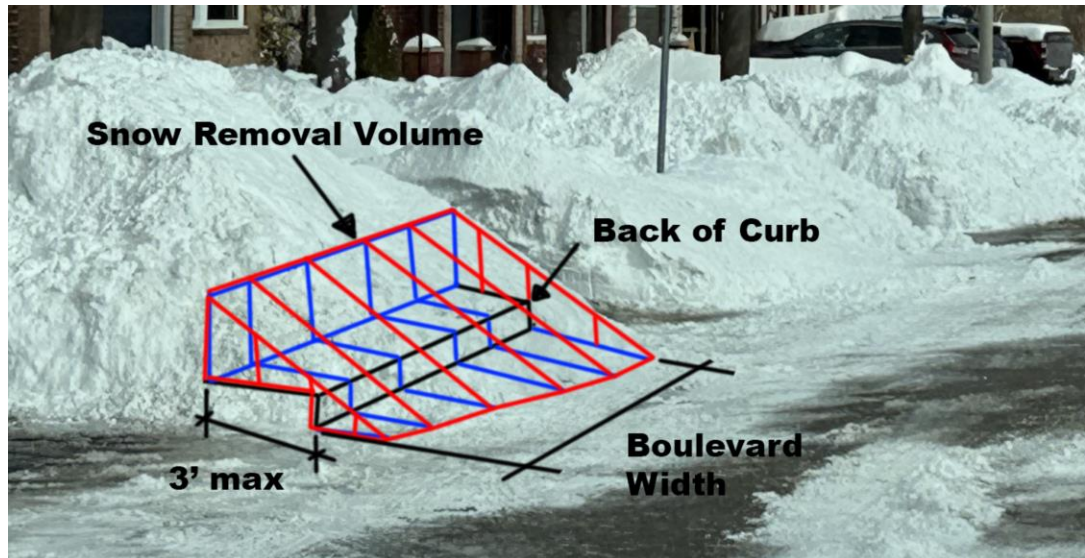
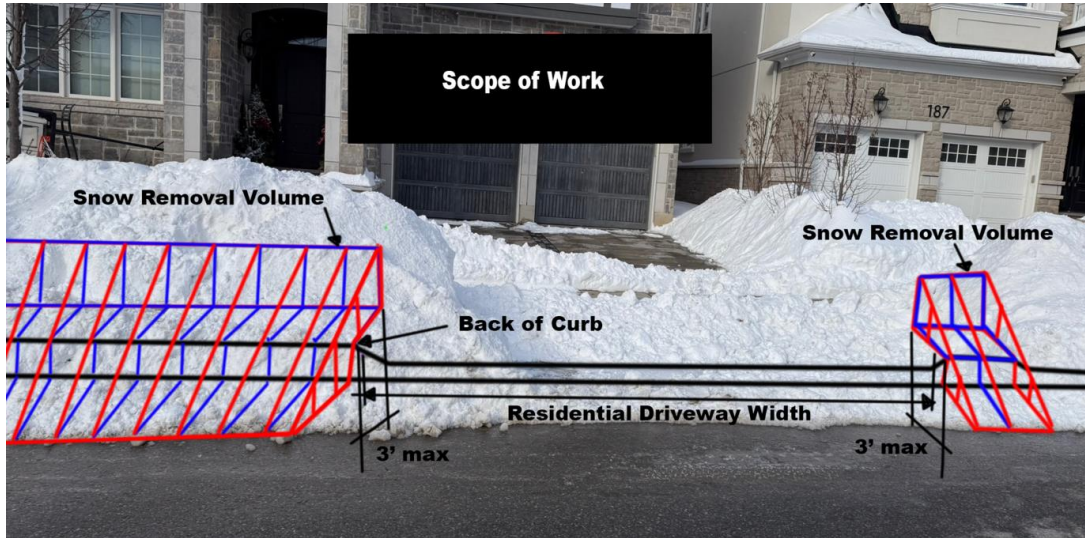
Expectation for delivery of Town-wide Snow Removal Program on small properties with frontages less than 8.9 meters, excluding laneways.

Q1. What will the Town-wide snow removal program include?

- The program includes the mechanical removal of snow using a municipal-highway high-capacity blower and a skid steer, with the snow being loaded or blown into triaxle dump trucks and hauled off site. Example shown below.



- The snowbank will be removed adjacent to the curb up to a 3' width behind the back of the curb. The snowbank will not be removed completely to the surface of the boulevard to prevent damage to sod, trees, light poles, etc. The purpose is to remove excess snow along boulevards that affect the right of way usage such as parking spots, sightlines, intersection turning radiuses and reinstating snow storage adjacent to boulevards on roads for future snowfalls.



Q2. Why are all other properties with frontages of more than 8.9 m excluded?

- Generally, properties with wider frontages offer greater snow storage capacity within the boulevard, resulting in a smaller snow accumulation as there is more area to spread the snow. The image below provides a good example of this, and this image was taken within the same timeline as the prior ones.
- Narrower properties mean they have smaller boulevards, which will create a very large snow pile which will eventually encroach onto the road. This can also affect sightlines and makes it difficult to get out of the driveway.



Q3. How do these neighborhoods with properties with frontages less than 8.9 m look like?

Below are examples on different types of properties along Town which have frontages less than 8.9 meters with front facing driveways and small boulevards.

Example #1, Ward #1 - Semi Detached homes: 8.3 m wide frontage property.



Example #2, Ward #7 - ROW Townhouses: 5.3m wide frontage property.



Example #3, Ward #3 – Detached homes: 6.9m wide frontage property.



Q4. Why does this program exclude laneways?

- Laneways with rear facing garages already receive this service once snow accumulation reaches 35 cm, where snow is removed on the garage facing portion of the laneways.
- Examples shown below on the current scope of work for laneways. Photos taken from the February 2025 storms.



Before Laneway snow removal



After Laneway snow removal