

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Steps and Laneways Snow Clearing Operations Revision

Date Prepared: November 4, 2020

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Ian Froude, Public Works & Sustainability

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

To consider reprioritizing the Steps and Laneways Snow Clearing responsibilities to increase service frequency and effectiveness.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The Parks and Open Spaces Division is responsible for the snow clearing and ice control of City owned buildings, steps and laneways, municipal parks and selected trails, through the following actions:

Responsibilities:

- Provide effective snow clearing and ice control to City owned buildings and parking lots.
- Snow clear and provide ice control to steps, laneways and identified sidewalks.
- Snow clear and provide ice control to Bowring Park for off-street winter walking.
- Place and service salt boxes in areas where ice control by salt trucks may be delayed due to route priorities or inaccessibility.
- Clear school crosswalk queuing areas, several of which are staffed by crossing guards.
- Clear pedestrian activated push buttons at intersection crossings.
- Clear pedestrian laneways in proximity to schools and post - secondary institutions.
- Clear pedestrian laneways providing links to cleared sidewalks.
- Groom selected Grand Concourse Authority trails for walkers and skiers.
- Maintain the Loop at Bannerman Park.

Process:

Staff respond to weather events in order of designated priority:

- **Priority 1** - City buildings (33 sites) and associated parking lots (38 sites)

ST. JOHN'S

- **Priority 2** – Downtown steps and laneways (New Gower St., Duckworth St., George St. and connecting laneways and streets (14 sites), Bowring Park (12 sites), Bannerman Park (6 sites)
- **Priority 3** - Steps and laneways south of the Topsail Rd to Military Rd elevation (31 sites), Crosswalks (27 sites) access laneways in school area (33 sites), salt box service (54 sites)
- **Priority 4** – Steps and laneways north of the Topsail Rd to Military Rd elevation (19 sites), pedestrian activated light crossings (102 sites)
- **Shoveling locations** – 115
- **Heavy equipment locations** – 206

Completion following the end of the snowfall:

- **Priority 1** – 24 hours
- **Priority 2** – 48 hours
- **Priority 3** – 96 hours
- **Priority 4** – 144 hours

It should be noted that in the event that a subsequent snowfall occurs prior to the completion of all priorities, restarting the routes will be necessary, before advancing. This situation is quite common during mid – winter and often leads to delays in the service to low priority sites, or in rare cases, sites becoming snow packed and inaccessible for the remainder of the winter.

Realignment of Priorities and Service Level

As part of the engagement process on sidewalk snow clearing, the public indicated the importance of ensuring that Priority 1 streets and sidewalks were cleared most effectively; steps and laneways in high priority areas also require that same level of attention.

A mapping tool provided during the public engagement process offered individuals the opportunity to highlight areas where either improved or continued attention was required, as well as areas where snow clearing was not a priority.

This feedback was closely reviewed by staff.

A number of steps and laneways, currently cleared as Priority 3 and 4 sites, were placed on snow clearing routes several years ago to establish neighbourhood linkages, in the absence of cleared sidewalks. Since then, sidewalk snow clearing has been rationalized and more efficient linkages created.

Furthermore, following an assessment of completion times and service levels at Priority 2 locations, it was determined that snow clearing effectiveness could be increased through the discontinuation of service to the following Priority 3 and 4 sites:

1. Poplar Ave. to Chestnut Pl. Steps - not connected to a cleared sidewalk route.
2. Dartmouth Pl. Steps - not connected to a cleared sidewalk route, provides access only to a snow - covered soccer pitch. Cleared sidewalk route is along Strawberry Marsh Rd at north end of Dartmouth Pl.
3. Winter Ave. to Glenridge Cr. Steps - minimal value shortcut that does not connect to a cleared sidewalk route.
4. Quidi Vidi Rd. to Empire Ave. Steps - shortcut between two houses, not on a sidewalk route.
5. 173 Topsail Rd. - St. Mary's School Steps - not on a sidewalk route and ends at an uncleared path to the school.
6. Brennan St. Steps - very low traffic volume street with a short distance to the Water St. sidewalk. Primarily services a building.
7. Clifford St. Steps - discontinue, as site is used for snow storage during road widening. Impractical to clear.

Removing these sites from the snow clearing shoveling routes enhances the time crews are available to spend at Priority 2 and 3 steps and laneways. This change will enable a higher level of service:

- low accumulation snowfalls will be more rapidly addressed; and
- ice control may be conducted more frequently.

The increased service level will be readily apparent in the Downtown Core and in the linkages connecting the Topsail Rd./ Military Rd. elevation to the business area. Salt can be redeployed to increase ice control effectiveness, at no additional cost. Additional service, typically required after minor snowfall plowing, will also be afforded pedestrian activated light crossing locations.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:
No increased cost. May reduce costs depending on weather conditions.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
NA
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:
 - A Sustainable City
 - A City That Moves
 - A Connected City

- An Effective City
- 4. Legal or Policy Implications:
NA
- 5. Privacy Implications:
NA
- 6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:
Steps and laneway priorities will be added to the City's webpage, stjohns.ca/snow.
- 7. Human Resource Implications:
NA
- 8. Procurement Implications:
NA
- 9. Information Technology Implications:
NA
- 10. Other Implications:
Increased service level with existing resources.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the indicated changes to the Parks and Open Spaces Division snow clearing and ice control operations to enhance service level delivery.

Prepared by: Brian Head, Manager, Parks and Open Spaces Division, November 2, 2020

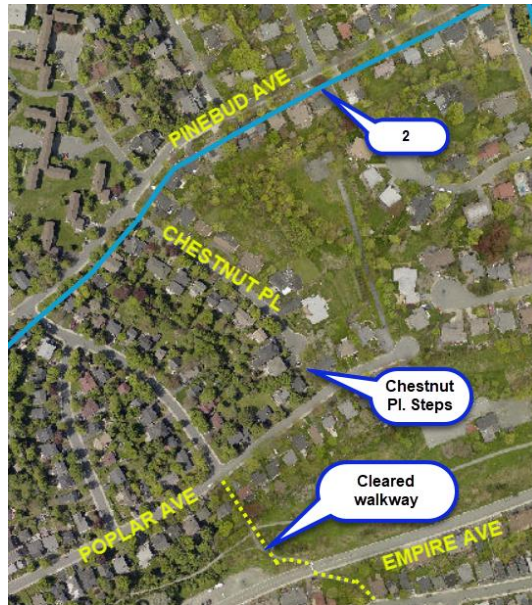
Approved by: Lynnnann Winsor, Deputy City Manager, Public Works, November 2, 2020

Attach. Appendix 1: Steps and Laneways Proposed Changes

Appendix 1.

STEPS AND LANEWAYS PROPOSED CHANGES

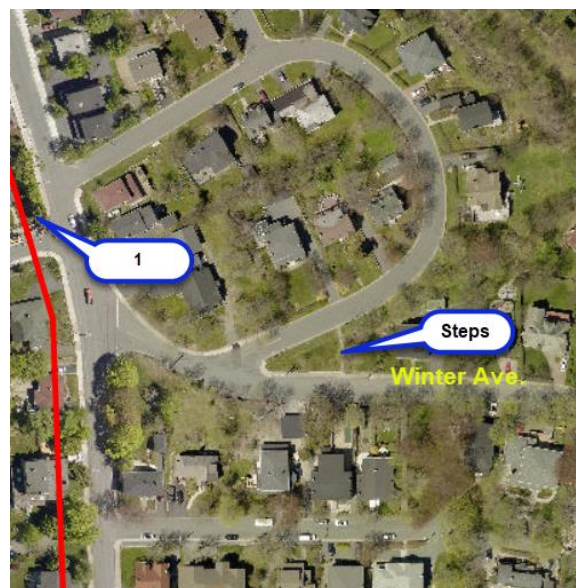
1. Poplar Avenue to Chestnut Place Steps - not connected to a cleared sidewalk route.



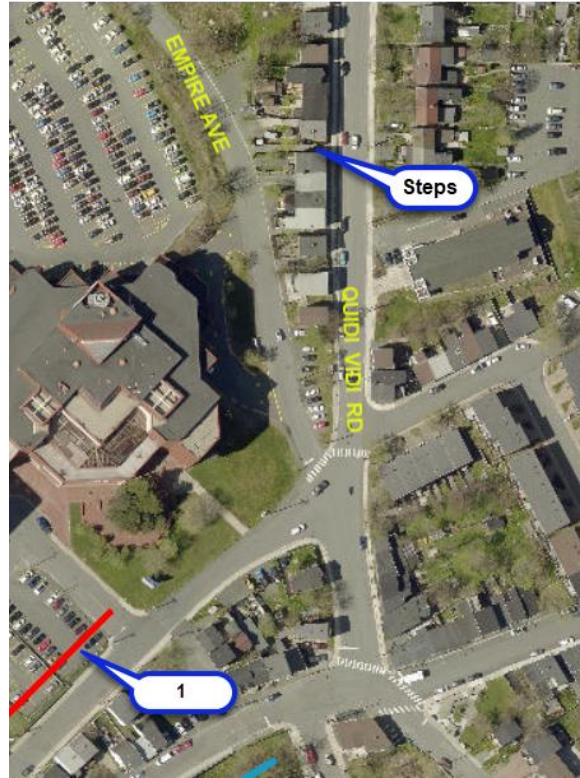
2. Dartmouth Place Steps - not connected to a cleared sidewalk route, provides access only to a snow - covered soccer pitch. Cleared sidewalk route is along Strawberry Marsh Rd.



3. Winter Avenue to Glenridge Crescent Steps - minimal value shortcut that does not connect to a cleared sidewalk route.



4. Quidi Vidi Road to Empire Avenue Steps - shortcut between two houses, not on a sidewalk route.



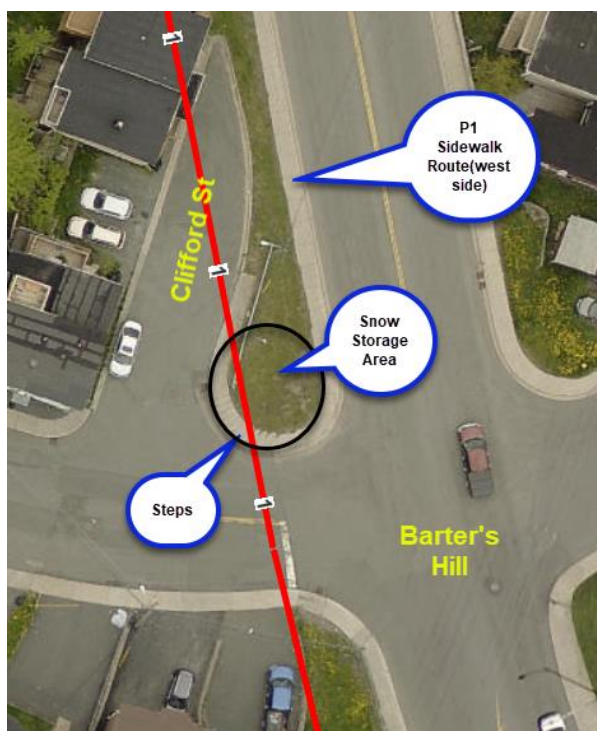
5. 173 Topsail Road - St. Mary's School Steps - not on a sidewalk route and ends at an uncleared path to the school



6. Brennan Street Steps - very low traffic volume street with a short distance to the Water St. sidewalk. Primarily services a building.



7. Clifford Street Steps - discontinue, as site is used for snow storage during road widening.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Steps and Laneways Snow Clearing Operations Revision.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 4, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Lynnann Winsor - Nov 4, 2020 - 12:51 PM