



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE


SUBJECT: QUEEN'S PARK SOPHIA STREET WEST PATHWAY

WARD: WARD 2

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: H. COLEMAN 
OPERATIONS PROJECT COORDINATOR (EXT. 4871)

SUBMITTED BY: D. FRIARY
DIRECTOR OF ROADS, PARKS & FLEET 

APPROVAL GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: R.J. FORWARD, M.B.A., M.Sc., P.Eng.
GENERAL MANAGER, INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT 

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: C. LADD
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the City continue its practice not to provide winter maintenance services on the pedestrian walkway that passes through Queen's Park (Sophia Street West Pathway).

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

2. Council Motion #14-G-117 states "That in light of the unique nature of the Sophia Street West pathway passing through Queen's Park and its historic role as a road allowance, staff in the Roads, Parks and Fleet Department investigate the feasibility of plowing the pathway and report back to General Committee with the financial implications associated with the snow removal before the winter season."
3. The purpose of this Staff Report is to address Council Motion #14-G-117 and provide Council with the recommendation and financial implications associated with performing winter maintenance on the Sophia Street West Pathway.
4. Council Policy Section 33 - 35 addresses Transportation Section 33.4 which relates to walkways and states "That in light of the high cost to provide winter maintenance services on pedestrian walkways, the limited resources available and the practical difficulties involved in undertaking the work, The City of Barrie will continue its practice not to provide winter maintenance services for pedestrian walkways (98-G-72)."

ANALYSIS

5. The first 40 metres of the Sophia Street West walkway has been widened to 2.5 metres, however, the remaining 150 metres would have to be widened the same and a radii installed to allow for turning of the sidewalk plows and equipment. In addition the existing sidewalk is constructed on varying types and conditions of concrete. Two park benches would have to be moved to ensure adequate width for sidewalk snow clearing equipment and some grading would be required at locations where unimproved pathways connect to the concrete sidewalk (see Photos 1 and 2). This work is estimated to cost \$35,000.
6. At the west end of the walkway, there is no intersection or appropriate crosswalk for pedestrians (see Photo 3). There is existing angle parking causing pedestrians to walk between cars for approximately 6 metres to see if it is safe to cross the street. This is very dangerous, especially for smaller children and is an exposure to liability should someone be injured.
7. The walkway connects to Toronto Street at two locations (see Photo 4). The newer section directs pedestrians to the intersection of Toronto Street and Ross Street. With some minor improvements to the radius, a sidewalk plow could make the turn and plow to the intersection. Due to space limitations with the hydro pole and the curb on Toronto Street, the walkway connecting the Sophia Street right-of-way cannot be plowed.
8. The annual cost to maintain the walkway in the winter would be approximately \$250 this includes one pass with a sidewalk plow and occasional sand applications as per our regular sidewalk maintenance. However, beginning to maintain any walkways may set a precedent that would require the City to maintain more or all walkways. There is approximately 20 km of walkways throughout the city. To maintain these would add an additional \$30,000 per winter season for additional operating costs of staff and equipment. An additional sidewalk plow would be required at a cost of approximately \$85,000. These walkways are in varying conditions. Each would require differing upgrades, in some cases our traditional sidewalk equipment cannot plow them due to space limitations or grade.
9. Maintaining walkways in the winter would also entail additional preparation in the fall, monitoring during the winter, clean up and repairs in the spring, adding to staff time. The bollards and gates would have to be removed each fall and reinstalled in spring. Many bollards fold down and have a base that is raised out of the ground. These would need to be removed and replaced with "cattle gates" (\$200,000). Traditional sidewalk plowing equipment can't turn 90 degrees so concrete would need to be installed at the entrance and exit of each walkway across the boulevard (approximately \$675 per walkway). Curb cuts for areas with barrier curbs would cost an additional \$200 per walkway. Walkways are not necessarily designed for regular maintenance by heavy equipment so an increase in asphalt repairs and trip hazards would be created. Most of the older walkways would require repaving. Many walkways are dead ends or lead to private property (plazas, schools) so turning equipment around would be an issue. Some walkways have stairs and would require special maintenance. Some walkways interconnect with other walkways at angles that a sidewalk clearing unit would not be able to navigate. Many walkways double as overland flow routes for rain events and are designed to collect runoff. This would increase icing and freeze-thaw, requiring more maintenance to reduce slips and falls. Walkways get snow drifts due to wind swirling and would require additional maintenance. Narrow walkways would require snow lifting as there is inadequate snow storage space. There would be an increase in costs for spring clean up due to sand build up.

10. Pedestrian walkways serve a number of purposes for residents, utilities and the municipality. In addition to being convenient short cuts for pedestrians between streets, they also provide alternative entrances to parks, school yards and open spaces. Many walkways also serve as service corridors for underground utilities such as sewer and water. In the case of the Queen's Park walkway, the distance to use the sidewalk in the winter is 358 metres compared to the walkway which is 190 metres. There are several other walkway locations where the distance to use the sidewalk in the winter is considerably longer.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

11. The following environmental matters have been considered in the development of this recommendation:
- a) Additional use of salt, when applied, has its effects on the environment. The City of Barrie is trying to reduce its road salt use.
 - b) Use of winter sand, which also contains some salt, collects at the edges of the sidewalk. It will require raking with clean up to prevent sand build up and raised areas around the sidewalk.

ALTERNATIVES

12. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 That winter maintenance services be provided on all City walkways.

This alternative is not recommended due to the cost required to prepare the walkways for this service. Purchasing equipment, the annual operating cost and practical difficulties to carry out the work.

Alternative #2 That winter maintenance be provided on the Queen's Park walkway.

This alternative is not recommended due to the high cost of repairs required to prepare the walkway for winter maintenance; the exemption from current Council Policy that may set a precedent leading to other such exemptions and escalated costs for winter control.

FINANCIAL

13. The cost of Alternative #2 is estimated to be \$35,000 for repairs and preparation, with an additional \$250 per year; however the implications of maintaining this walkway could be maintaining all walkways at in excess of \$200,000 for preparation, \$85,000 for an additional sidewalk plow and \$30,000 per winter season.

Appendix "A"



Photo 1: Varying types of materials



Photo 2: Additional grading required



Photo 3: West end of walkway at Parkside Drive



Photo 4: Two connections at Toronto Street



Barrie Downtown Neighbourhood Association

April 7, 2014.

The City of Barrie

Dear Sirs:

The Barrie Downtown Neighbourhood Association is submitting this letter in support of the Historic Neighbourhood Strategy Committee's request that the walkway through Queen's Park be ploughed in the winter.

We understand that this winter is through, but would ask that the City's policy be reconsidered before next winter.

The B.D.N.A. has requested that this walkway be cleared for the last 3 years. The Historic Neighbourhoods Strategy report of June 2010 asked that the City "ensure sidewalks and public pathways are correctly cleared of snow in the winter months". This is mentioned both in the body of the report and in the recommended action plan which states "Park Paths: ensure park paths are correctly cleared of snow and properly de-iced in the winter months".

The Council Direction Memorandum, approved September 29, 2008, Staff Report ENG067-08 Appendix "A" Recommendations, item 11 reads: "Keeping sidewalks free from snow and ice in the winter. In addition to benefiting pedestrians in general, keeping sidewalks clear and ensuring a smooth transition at crossing points is also important to people in wheelchairs, walkers or those pushing strollers". The walkway through Queen's Park is a well used sidewalk.

The B.D.N.A. feels that The City's failure to clear this walkway indicates a singular lack of support for Active Transportation in Barrie.

Ben Strudwick
Co-chair Barrie Downtown Neighbourhood Association