



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Joy Anderson, Director - Recreation & Culture

Date: June 7, 2021

Report No: COMS-003-21

Subject: Milton Windrow Program - Eligibility Update

Recommendation: THAT the program scope, eligibility and service standard as outlined in COMS-003-21 for the Milton Windrow program be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town's Windrow Program provides eligible residents with a service to remove the snow at the end of a residential driveway created by a snow plow.

During the 2020 budget deliberations, Council requested the introduction of a "means test" to ensure access for the service to those without the ability to pay. The transitional season occurred in 2020-21 and access to the program was based in the following priority order: (a) residents 65 years of age and older with financial need - based on total gross household income below the LICO-BT (Low Income Cut-off Before Taxes), and no other able-bodied person living at the same address; (b) residents with a physical disability (confirmed with a doctor's note) and no other able-bodied person living at the same address; (c) remaining spaces allocated to residents 65 years of age and older with no other able-bodied person living at the same address. During the 2020-21 winter season, program subscription was 63% and all applicants to the program were accommodated.

This report provides an update on the 2020-21 season and recommended adjustments to the 2021-22 Windrow Program eligibility.

REPORT

Background

The Town's Windrow Program provides eligible residents with the removal of snow windrows at the end of a residential driveway. The program operates annually from December 1st - March 31st and is activated every time a snowfall exceeds 5 cm (2



Background

inches) and after the Town has completed plowing all roads. The established service standard is to remove the snow windrow for program participants 24 hours following the plowing of all roads.

Program Scope and Service

- 1) Program length: December 1st - March 31st
- 2) Service: removal of snow windrows at the end of a residential driveway made by a snowplow.
- 3) Service Activation: every time a snowfall exceeds 5 cm (2 inches) and after the Town has completed plowing all roads.
- 4) Service standard: complete the plow out by 24 hours following the plowing of all roads.

Note: The service does not include the removal of windrows created by sidewalk plows and does not include the plowing of the entire driveway.

During the 2020 budget deliberations, Town Council through Res. 252-19 added funding to the budget to provide the service to everyone who had been waitlisted. In addition, staff were directed to implement a means test to the 2020-21 windrow program to provide the service only to those without the ability to pay.

Council received an update in October 2020 to clarify and outline the approach for the 2020-21 program in terms of priority and access. This report is intended to recommend further adjustments for the 2021-22 winter season based on an evaluation of last season's program.

Discussion

The Council-Staff Work Plan envisions a community that leads when it comes to sustainability, diversity and inclusion. During the winter season, this program is intended to increase mobility for seniors and residents with physical disabilities following snow events, allowing them to be engaged with their community.

The 2020-21 program was a transitional year and following an evaluation, this report is intended to provide an update to Council, and confirm the scope of the program and applicant eligibility moving forward.



Discussion

Program Participation

The 2020-21 program subscription was 63% and supported 94 residents.

Priority Access	Age Range	# of Residents
1. 65 years of age and older with a financial need and no other able-bodied person living at the same address	n/a	1
2. Physical disability with no other able-bodied person living at the same address	n/a	5
3. 65 years of age and older with no other able-bodied person living at the same address	65 - 74 years	50
	75 - 84 years	31
	85 years and older	9

Customer Satisfaction

Staff received minimal concerns from the participants during the 2020-21 program. Themes of those that were raised during the season included:

- 1) The timing of the service meant that neighbours or family had to support these residents when they need to leave their homes for appointments that occurred prior to the Town service being available.
- 2) During snow events it is typical for more than one windrow to be created in front of residential driveways and the participants were expecting the service to include removal of all windrows created during the snow clearing process.

The Town is not in a position to advance the timing of the service activation. The logistical process of plowing operations in constantly changing conditions is not conducive to activating this service at an earlier point in the snow event operation. The Town will continue to activate the service at the earliest opportunity to minimize inconvenience to program participants. Staff will investigate opportunities and solutions to deal with multiple driveway windrows from the same event.

Discussion

Future Participant Eligibility

Based on an assessment of participants, staff recognize the program appeals to residents who do not have a person living in their home who is able to remove the snow windrows but are otherwise active in their community. The program's focus supports an inclusive community and staff recommend not transitioning to a service that only supports those with a financial need at this time. Residents with a financial need would continue to be prioritized.

Recommendation - Future Program Eligibility

- One person per address is eligible for this program.
- Program eligibility is based on the following qualifications:-
 - a) Applicant is a Milton resident and is;
 - b) 65 years of age or older in the program year OR is physically unable (as certified by a physician) to clear the windrow and;
 - c) does not have an able bodied person living in the same residence
- Applicants who are not able to afford the program fee, can apply for a fee exemption.
 - a) Fee exceptions are based on LICO-BT as established by Statistics Canada
 - b) Applicants must have a total gross household income below the LICO-BT
 - c) Proof of annual income must be provided for all adults in the household

The current fee in the Town's User Fee By-law 072-2020 for windrow removal is \$63.00. With only one participant in the 2020/21 program supported with financial assistance, the waiving of fees for participants did not have a significant financial impact to the Town. However, this could change as demographics or the pool of program participant's change.

Staff are benchmarking other municipalities and will bring forward any recommendations to revise the current fee for this program as part of the corporate wide user fee By-law update for Council consideration.

Financial Impact

The 2021 budgeted cost of this program is \$82,232 which accommodates approximately 150 participants. As referenced through the Town's current user fee By-law 072-2020, the fee currently charged for this service is \$63.00 per participant which provides for total budgeted recoveries of \$9,450. The balance of the program is funded from property taxes.



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Financial Impact

The changes proposed in this report to waive the fees for participants under a certain income threshold will result in an additional financial impact to the Town. Based on the number of participants included in this category from the 2020/21 season, the lost revenue is not expected to be significant. Impacts will be incorporated into the 2022 and future budgets.

Any future changes to user fees for this program will be brought forward as part of a corporate wide user fee By-law update for Council consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristene Scott
Commissioner, Community Services

For questions, please contact: Joy Anderson

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Attachments

None

CAO Approval
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer