

Request for Decision United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria Council

| Type of Decision | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------|--|----|-----------------|------------------------|------|--|--------|
| Meeting Date | Friday, March 11, 2016 | | | | Report Date | Tuesday, March 8, 2016 | | | |
| Decision Required | X | Yes | | No | Priority | X | High | | Low |
| Direction | X | Information Only | | | Type of Meeting | X | Open | | Closed |
| Plowing for Seniors - Report #11/03/16/1104 | | | | | | | | | |

Subject:

Council request to follow up on process to subsidize low income seniors for snow plowing purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS Head, Clara and Maria has a significant proportion of senior residents who are increasingly facing difficulties managing the removal of snow from their yards during the winter season;

AND WHEREAS various programs exist for subsidizing snow removal for property owners in municipalities across the province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby authorize staff to implement a subsidy policy to begin in November of 2017 offering assistance to low income seniors in Head, Clara & Maria;

AND FURTHER THAT said policy be brought to Council for final adoption prior to implementation.

BACKGROUND/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A survey was conducted of county municipalities...

| Provide Service | Do Not Provide Service | No Response at time of printing | Details for those with programs |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | 8 | 9 | n/a |

For those municipalities across the province who provide a service there are many variations. Some programs:

1. Remove the windrow at the end of the driveway only. (Snow placed there by the plow and not the remainder of the driveway or walkway.)
2. Apply only to the city sidewalk in front of a residence. Does not apply to driveways or private approaches to residences.
3. Assist in matching service providers with those requiring service.
4. Subsidize low income seniors and persons with disabilities for snow removal from their entire driveways.

And

1. Apply to seniors over 65 or 60. Must provide proof of age.
2. Apply to disabled, with evidence of physical mobility restriction required.
3. Provide financial assistance to those with low income:
 - a. a rebate up to a set limit per season.
4. Low income:
 - a. defined as \$31,500 for a single individual and below \$39,200 for a household (two or more persons).
 - b. Must be recipient of:
 - i. GIS (Guaranteed Income Supplement) (\$9,283.20 maximum annually)
 - ii. ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program)
 - iii. Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit
 - iv. Ontario Works plus
5. Require signatures and receipts from service providers

A number of HCM residents do not have pensions other than government support programs. They rely solely on Canadian Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) resulting in a significantly low annual income and might benefit from this program.

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact:

Unless it is possible to obtain information from social service agencies, until the subsidy is advertised and people apply, we cannot know who might be eligible and who might apply except using anecdotal information.

There will be an increase in administration costs for this program.

What we do know.

- i. Some residents have little CPP due to seasonal and fluctuating work schedules over their lives and rely on OAS and GIS.
- ii. An individual with an irregular work history might earn as little as \$22,685 per year from government sources (CPP, OAS, GIS). A homemaker with very little work outside the home might earn less at approximately \$16,000 (OAS and GIS). A couple might earn approximately \$26,800 (CPP and OAS, little or no GIS).
- iii. Of course there are many variations but with no pension plans, irregular work histories and existing government support there may be a number of people in HCM who fall within this category.
- iv. According to the 2006 census there are 65 residents over age 60.
- v. According to MPAC there are 128 homes with year round residents.
- vi. Over the past two years there were an average of ____ events where our plows were called out – presumably a similar number of times driveways would need to be cleared.
 - a. 2014-2015 – 20 events
 - b. 2015-2016 – 15 events to date
- vii. The current rate for plowing an average sized driveway would be \$25 - \$35 per event.
- viii. Cost per driveway per year based on an average of 17 events and \$30 - \$510.
- ix. If council considers assistance for removal of windrows?

Options:

There are many options. Council will need to provide direction.

- Subsidy to a maximum amount?
- Qualification criteria.
- Consideration of hiring someone to do the work?
- Income threshold.
- Driveways or windrows only? Different options for different people?
- What about work on private roads and private drives and liability?

Policy Impact:

Creates new policy. Will be adapted based on information received from Council and brought forward for consideration and adoption.

Others Consulted:

County Municipalities, online research of other municipal programs – various across Ontario.

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,
Municipal Clerk

Melinda Reith

Background from other municipalities...

1. The Municipality of Leamington provides snow clearing services for seniors and individuals with disabilities who reside in urban Leamington. This service includes clearing the pile of snow created by the snowplow from the foot of the driveway.

To be eligible for this service you must be either a resident over the age of 65 with no person under the age of 65 living in the residence, or a resident who is disabled with no person living in the residence under the age of 65.

2. Snow Angels Volunteer Snow Removal Program

Snow on sidewalks is a potential hazard to those with limited mobility. It also makes it difficult, if not impossible, for those who deliver services to the community to do their job - people who deliver mail, read water/gas meters, delivery services, EMS and fire.

That's why the City of Windsor offers the Snow Angels Program, a voluntary snow removal service for senior citizens and persons with physical disabilities. The program attempts to match volunteers from the community with residents in their neighbourhoods requiring assistance.

For volunteers, it's a great way to get some exercise and help your community! For high school students, it's an opportunity to help someone in need and round out your Community Volunteer Hours. For residents, it's a great way to access timely snow removal assistance.

If you want to volunteer or are looking for some assistance with snow removal at your home, don't wait. Call or email today to find out more about the Snow Angels Program.

3. City of Ottawa has a combination of the above programs and might be reviewed here...
<http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/social-services/seniors/get-help-clearing-snow>