

February 19, 2020

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Travis Rob, Manager of Operations and Facilities

RE: On Street Parking Ban – Winter Weather Events

In May 2018 there were a number of changes to the Minimum Maintenance Standards brought forward aimed to improve the winter maintenance of roadways in Ontario. One of these changes was the ability for Municipalities to declare significant weather events when there were watches or warnings posted by Environment Canada. The idea with these declarations was to advise the traveling public that road and sidewalk conditions may not be safe for travel and to encourage people to stay off the roads and sidewalks if possible. In the fall of 2018, the Town updated their winter maintenance policy to reflect the changes to the Minimum Maintenance Standards and set out a protocol for handling winter weather events.

Since that time, we have declared 6 Significant weather events. In all cases we dispatched crews to clear roadways and sidewalks with the intent of meeting the requirements of the MMS regardless of the declaration or not. The great part of the declaration is that the timelines to have the roads cleared do not start until the event is declared complete. This allow some flexibility in the event we have a breakdown or low staffing situations which is typical around the holidays. On every event we are always very close to meeting the standard, but we err on the side of caution in an effort to improve public safety.

One issue that we have noted is that, particularly during significant events, cars parked on the roadway cause a great deal of impedance when our crews are out plowing and lengthen the time it takes us to plow the roads in Town. Many municipalities ban all on street parking during the winter months, typically through the nighttime hours, to assist in snow plowing and removal. The Town will close specific blocks of Town for specific nights to assist in snow removal operations as needed but a more regular ban would be instrumental in assisting in the snow clearing operations.

There are four real options when it comes to implementing a parking ban of this type, on street parking could be banned between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am, to coincide with our winter control night shift operations, through the winter months, alternatively, given that our night shift works Sunday night to Thursday Night, we could just implement a ban on those specific nights. The third option would be to impose a ban in concert with the declaration of a significant weather event per the Minimum Maintenance Standards. The fourth option would be to ban overnight parking on specific routes through town related to high priority plowing routes through the entire winter.

Some residents do not have off street parking available to be utilized in a preferable town wide nighttime parking ban for the winter months, further parking is not a real concern on the primary routes given that overnight parking is already banned in the Downtown core, compared to some secondary routes. Given this, it is suggested that the Town amend its traffic control By-Law to ban all on street parking during the declaration of a significant weather event per the Minimum Maintenance Standards between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am. This ban would be town wide with the exception of the downtown core where existing overnight bans are in place and some businesses are open later into the evening. Further the hours stipulated would allow us greater time to clear the roads given that we will typically run operations the full 24 hours of the day during these events to try to stay on top of snow removal.

A ban of this nature will allow crews to better and more quickly clear roadways, remove obstructions from the roadways, left by banks around cars, and reduce the frequency of interactions between parked vehicles and our large snow removal equipment which can lead to damages.

It is the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that the Traffic Control By-law be amended to include a provision banning on street parking throughout the Town of Fort Frances, except for the downtown core, for the duration of a declared Significant Weather Event per the Minimum Maintenance Standards, O. Reg 239/02 between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Rob', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Travis Rob, P.Eng
Manager of Operations and Facilities

Council approval of this report will agree with the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that the Traffic Control By-law be amended to include a provision banning on street parking throughout the Town of Fort Frances, except for the downtown core, for the duration of a declared Significant Weather Event per the Minimum Maintenance Standards, O. Reg 239/02 between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am.