

Introduction

This report outlines observations and recommendations from the Lindsay Downtown BIA regarding the impact of winter weather on vehicle and pedestrian traffic, as well as parking lot management in downtown Lindsay. The aim is to enhance safety, accessibility, and overall winter operations for future years.

For reference, the BIA's primary points of contact for winter maintenance are Public Works for streets and sidewalks, and Building & Property for the nine municipal parking lots, monitored by the BIA and their Parking Control Officers.

This report is submitted to the City of Kawartha Lakes' Roads Task Force, established in 2024, and we thank you for your consideration.

The BIA's History with Improved Winter Maintenance

The Lindsay Downtown BIA expresses gratitude to the City of Kawartha Lakes for recognizing the importance of previous recommendations for improved winter maintenance and for implementing new processes, which include:

- **2020/2021:** Repeal and revision of By-Law 1995-004, which previously exempted the Lindsay Downtown BIA geographical area from any municipal winter sidewalk maintenance. As a result, the municipality now provides a minimum of one 'pass' of the sidewalk plow through the downtown. This enhanced service has been a significant asset, providing a more standardized level of service and lessening the burden of full snow removal on property owners and tenants
- **2014:** Snowbank removal from downtown sidewalks, which had only been provided in December as an enhanced service during the holiday season, was increased to occur year-round by Public Works. This service is appreciated by the Downtown BIA, its membership, and visitors, as it greatly enhances accessibility in the downtown

Observations on Winter Snowfall, 2025 to Date

January 2025

- Significant snowfall following Christmas & New Years
- January 3rd: 25 to 35cm of snow; January 4th: an additional 10 to 15cm
- City Staff managed to plow streets and sidewalks effectively
- Persistent issue: snow piles remained too long on streets, forcing pedestrians to walk along roads to access sidewalks
- Marquis Snow & Ice (MSI), the City's contractor, performed well in parking lot plowing, but subsequent snow removal from municipal lots remains an issue
- Communication with our contact at the Building & Property regarding snow pile removal was generally effective; piles were cleared 2-3 days post-request, on average

February 2025

- February 13th: 20 cm snowfall; subsequent large snow piles in municipal lots
- Blocked curb walk-up areas impeded pedestrian access to sidewalks, plowed snowpiles at the curb were far too significant for the average business to create pathways from the parking spaces to the sidewalks, even if willing
- Communication with City Staff regarding snow removal timelines was initiated, but responses were delayed
- The BIA had to cancel several shifts for the BIA's Parking Control Officers due to hazardous conditions and an inability to perform accurate timings and ticketing
- Snow pile removal from municipal lots not initiated until February 25th, completed over two weekdays, causing difficulty with high traffic in those lots during business hours; and communication from City Staff to the BIA regarding the delays was limited, causing many of the BIA's business members to file their own complaints to the municipality

Assessment of Snow Removal Services

Sidewalk Management

- Sidewalks continue to be initially plowed with appropriate equipment, in a timely manner following each snowfall
- Plowed snow from the road, pushed up to the curbs, frequently obstructs crosswalks and intersection curbs, creating safety hazards for pedestrians
- Sidewalk snowbank clearing has been taking place following each snowfall, but the timeline of how soon this removal will take place following the snowfall could benefit from improvement; as well as the level of communication from Public Works to the BIA regarding the intended removal date
- Improvements have been noted this year in the attempts to clear accessible parking spaces and their sidewalk access

Roadway Management

- Bumpouts (additional sidewalk areas at several downtown intersections) installed during Downtown Reconstruction pose ongoing challenges for snow plowing, leading to many unplowed parking spaces and difficulty for pedestrian crossing at those intersections. This is due to the awkward angle of the bumpouts, which do not allow the snowplow equipment to efficiently clear the roadways and parking space lanes without additional equipment or manpower

Municipal Parking Lots

- MSI, the City's current contractor, generally performs well in plowing, but delays in snow pile removal are a recurring issue
- Accessible parking spaces often obstructed by snow piles
- Current scheduling of snow removal by MSI appears to be inefficient; daytime removal during busy hours is problematic

Recommendations

Improve Communication

- Enhance collaboration between City Staff, MSI, and BIA to ensure clearer communication regarding snow management timelines and processes, and reasons for delays when unavoidable
- Regular updates to the BIA will allow this communication to be effectively forwarded to the BIA's 165 business members, reducing their need to contact the City directly with complaints

Snow Management Strategy

- Review current snow removal contracts for potential adjustments to improve efficiency, particularly in timing of plowing and removal, and locations for snow to be stored until it can be relocated
- Focus on timely removal of snow from accessible parking spaces and high-traffic areas
- Consider alternative scheduling for snow pile removal during off-peak hours to minimize disruption and improve efficiency for the contractor

Contract Review

- Recommend a thorough review of snow removal practices during the awarding or renewal of contracts to ensure effectiveness and responsiveness to downtown needs

Conclusion

The Lindsay Downtown BIA acknowledges the improvements made in snow management over recent winters, but emphasizes the need for continued enhancements to ensure a safer, more accessible, and welcoming downtown for all citizens and visitors. Implementing these recommendations will contribute to a more effective winter operations strategy.