

YORK REGION: Vaughan votes to clear out end of driveways for residents

Snow removal a costly undertaking for municipalities

BY CHRISTOPHER DOURIS
Staff Writer

Clearing snow from the end of driveways will cost almost \$5 per plowing, based on tenders awarded by Vaughan councillors recently.

At an estimated 42,000 driveways and an average nine clearings per winter, the final bill is going to be in the \$1.2-million range.

Each snowfall will cost more than \$177,000, and add just under half a percentage point to the city's property tax rate, finance commissioner Clayton Harris said yesterday.

But councillors were quick to defend the cost as a service requested by residents.

"It is new for us," Councillor Gino Rosati said. "We realize it's going to cost some money. It's very much a requested and needed service."

Other municipalities in York Region find the costs of the service prohibitive.

Richmond Hill performs the service "for seniors who are on the list and meet the criteria," Councillor Brenda Hogg said. The service is also extended to households with

disabled residents where there is no one else available to do the work.

However, ultimately it would be too expensive to provide the service town-wide, she said.

SERVICE FOR SENIORS

Markham also clears driveways for seniors.

Councillor Bill O'Donnell said he gets requests for town-wide service and council has reviewed the issue every year since he was elected.

However, the latest figures suggest it would increase taxes by 3 per cent and Markham's focus is to hold

the line on taxes without cutting services.

Earlier this year, Vaughan councillors included windrow clearing in the city's budget, after failing to do so last year.

"There is a demand to be able to get out of their driveways and get to work," Kadis said.

She added, during budget deliberations, windrow clearing was "the biggest topic of discussion. People feel very strongly about this issue."

A report presented to councillors Oct. 12 said the \$400,000 budgeted for the service this year should be

adequate.

"However, the awarding of this contract will result in an annual operating budget increase of approximately \$1.2 million for the year 2000."

Rapid growth over the next two years will drive those costs even higher, the report said.

The contracts were awarded to Don Cordingley Gradall Rental for 21,000 driveways at a per-driveway cost of \$4.28 and an overall cost of \$89,880 per clearing and Dee Bee Services for 20,400 driveways for a per-clearing cost of \$87,312.

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