

COORDINATION OF SNOW GO PROGRAMS

COORDINATION DES PROGRAMMES SNOW-GO

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council approve:

1. The transfer of funding for the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs from the Public Works Department operating base budget to Community and Social Services Department, Renewable Community Funding Program operating base budget effective July 1, 2014 with addendums to contribution agreements to nine Community Support agencies under the Community Funding Framework.
2. The Program Objectives, Eligibility Criteria, and Application and Payment Process associated with the Snow Go Program as attached in Document 1 and as outlined in this report.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU COMITÉ

Que le Conseil approuve:

1. Le transfert du financement pour le Programme Snow Go et le Programme d'aide Snow-Go du budget de fonctionnement de base du Service des travaux publics à celui du Programme de financement communautaire renouvelable des Services sociaux et communautaires à compter du 1^{er} juillet 2014, avec des addenda aux ententes de contribution pour neuf organismes de soutien communautaire conformément au cadre stratégique sur le financement communautaire.

- 2. Les objectifs, les critères d'admissibilité et le processus de demande et de paiement du Programme Snow-Go, tels que présentés dans le document 1 en pièce jointe et décrits dans le présent rapport.**

DOCUMENTATION / DOCUMENTATION

1. Steve Kanellakos, Deputy City Manager, City Operations, report dated May 28, 2014 (ACS2014-COS-PWS-0016)

Steve Kanellakos, Directeur municipal adjoint, Opérations municipales, rapport daté du 28 mai 2014 (ACS2014-COS-PWS-0016)

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Transportation Committee
Comité des transports**

**and Council
et au Conseil**

**May 28, 2014
28 mai 2014**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

**Steve Kanellakos, Deputy City Manager / Directeur municipal adjoint
City Operations/ Opérations municipales**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2014-COS-PWS-0016

SUBJECT: Coordination of Snow Go Programs

OBJET: Coordination des programmes Snow-Go

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Transportation Committee recommend that Council approve:

- 1. The transfer of funding for the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs from the Public Works Department operating base budget to Community and Social Services Department, Renewable Community Funding Program operating base budget effective July 1, 2014 with addendums to**

contribution agreements to nine Community Support agencies under the Community Funding Framework.

- 2. The Program Objectives, Eligibility Criteria, and Application and Payment Process associated with the Snow Go Program as attached in Document 1 and as outlined in this report.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des transports recommande au Conseil d'approuver:

- 1. Le transfert du financement pour le Programme Snow Go et le Programme d'aide Snow-Go du budget de fonctionnement de base du Service des travaux publics à celui du Programme de financement communautaire renouvelable des Services sociaux et communautaires à compter du 1^{er} juillet 2014, avec des addenda aux ententes de contribution pour neuf organismes de soutien communautaire conformément au cadre stratégique sur le financement communautaire.**
- 2. Les objectifs, les critères d'admissibilité et le processus de demande et de paiement du Programme Snow-Go, tels que présentés dans le document 1 en pièce jointe et décrits dans le présent rapport.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assumption and Analysis

The City's Snow Go Programs are currently managed by the Public Works Department, and administered by the Senior Citizens Council, in partnership with nine (9) community support agencies. The Senior Citizens Council will be dissolving in September 2014.

This report recommends that the management of the Snow Go Programs be transferred from the Public Works Department to the Community and Social Services Department, Community Funding Branch, and continue to be administered by the nine Community Support Agencies.

Staff has recommended program modifications to:

- update the low income threshold consistent with the Ontario Renovates Program, and;

- provide additional financial support to rural applicants with higher than normal snow clearing expenses attributable to longer laneways;

as reflected in the program details attached as Document 1.

Financial Implications

There are no financial or staffing implications associated with the report recommendations. The funding for the Snow Go programs will be transferred from the Public Works Department operating base budget to Community and Social Services Department, Renewable Community Funding Program operating base budget effective July 1, 2014 with addendums to contribution agreements to nine Community Support agencies under the Community Funding Framework.

The transfer of the Snow Go Programs funding would be subject to annual adjustments as part of the annual budget process consistent with the City's other community funding programs.

Public Consultation/Input

Consultation was undertaken with the Senior Citizens Council and the nine (9) Community Support Agencies on the administration of the Program. Comments received were largely positive and has been reflected in the proposed adjustments to the program.

RÉSUMÉ

Hypothèse et analyse

Les programmes Snow-Go sont actuellement gérés par le Service des travaux publics et administrés par le Conseil des aînés d'Ottawa, en partenariat avec neuf (9) agences de soutien communautaire. En septembre 2014, le Conseil sera dissous.

Le présent rapport recommande que la gestion des programmes Snow-Go soit transférée du Service des travaux publics à la Direction du développement et du financement communautaires des Services sociaux et communautaires, et que les neuf agences de soutien communautaire continuent de les administrer.

Le personnel a recommandé des modifications au programme en vue de :

- tenir compte du seuil de faible revenu actuel conformément au programme Rénovations Ontario;
- fournir du soutien financier supplémentaire aux demandeurs en milieu rural ayant des frais de déneigement plus élevés en raison des entrées de cours plus longues à déneiger;

comme le reflètent les détails du programme présentés dans le document 1 en pièce jointe.

Répercussions financières

Aucune autre répercussion sur le plan des finances ou de la dotation en personnel n'est associée à la mise en œuvre des recommandations du présent rapport. Le financement des programmes Snow-Go sera transféré du budget de fonctionnement de base du Service des travaux publics à celui du Programme de financement communautaire renouvelable des Services sociaux et communautaires à compter du 1^{er} juillet 2014, avec des addenda aux ententes de contribution pour neuf organismes de soutien communautaire conformément au cadre stratégique sur le financement communautaire.

À la suite du transfert, le financement des programmes Snow-Go pourrait augmenter chaque année dans le cadre du processus budgétaire annuel, conformément aux autres programmes de financement communautaire de la Ville.

Consultation du public/Rétroaction

Une consultation sur l'administration des programmes a été menée auprès du Conseil des aînés d'Ottawa et des neuf (9) agences de soutien communautaire. Les commentaires reçus étaient majoritairement positifs et sont reflétés dans les ajustements proposés pour le programme.

BACKGROUND

On 27 September 2006, Council approved the guidelines and accountability framework for the Snow Go Program and Snow Go Assist Pilot Program (Snow Windrow Clearing Assistance Report [ACS2006-PWS-SOP-0006](#)). The Snow Go Program and the Snow Go Assist Pilot Program were launched on 1 October 2007.

The programs were developed in consultation with the Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton, the program administrator, and with the co-operation community support agencies, which were responsible for the program implementation. On May 26 2010, Council approved that the Snow Go Assist Pilot Program be permanently integrated into the Snow Go Program (Snow Go Assist Pilot Program Report [ACS2010-COS-PWS-0002](#)).

There are two components to the Snow Go Programs as follows:

1. **Snow-Go program** is a snow removal coordination program that links seniors and persons with disabilities with individuals and contractors willing to clear snow from private driveways and walkways. Residents using the program make payments directly to the individual or contractor who removes snow. The program provides no direct financial subsidy to residents.
2. **Snow Go Assist program** provides eligible low-income seniors and persons with disabilities with financial assistance to hire an individual or contractor to clear snow from private driveways and walkways.

At its 2013 Annual General Meeting, the general members and Board of Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton resolved to dissolve the Not-for-Profit Corporation by October 2014.

As a result the City has evaluated the best options for moving forward with the ongoing implementation of the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs and has identified some program enhancements based on a review of the statistics for the past 7 years, as well as the results of recent consultations with the nine (9) participating community support agencies.

DISCUSSION

Both report recommendations will provide enhancements to the two Snow Go programs in the following ways to;

- increase the number of seniors who will be eligible for assistance,
- address some financial inequities to approved rural applicants,
- ensure consistency with other city programs targeted toward seniors, and;

- achieve internal efficiencies within City Operations.

The City provides core program funding for both Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs to the Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa Carleton and nine (9) Community Support Agencies to administer the Snow Go program. Please refer to Document 2 for a list of participating Community Support Agencies and their catchment areas.

Recommendation 1 - Transfer to Community Funding

As a result of the decision to dissolve the Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton, the council will no longer be in a position to coordinate the delivery of the Snow Go Programs.

As a result, staff explored the option of in-house delivery whereby the coordination role could be played by the Community Funding Branch, within Community and Social Services Department.

The in-house option provided internal efficiencies as the Community Funding Branch is able to provide administrative coordination of the program within existing resources that will result in providing additional program funding to each of the nine (9) community support agencies to cover the core operating costs of delivering the programs with no increase to the City's base budget.

Other benefits of the in-house service delivery include the following:

- Community Funding Branch has extensive expertise in the funding and ongoing development of Contribution agreements to support not-for-profit agencies in the delivery of services to vulnerable populations; and eliminates the need for Stakeholder Relations, Public Works Department to maintain a funding expertise for only one client thus creating some staff efficiencies. The Public Works Department will continue to promote the program.
- The Community Funding Branch currently has existing multi-year Contribution Agreements with all of the community support agencies delivering the program, which can be amended to include funding for Snow Go and Snow Go Assist Programs. This will eliminate the need for yearly stand-alone agreements between a Coordinating agency and the nine (9) Community Support Agencies.

- The transfer of the budget to Renewable Community Funding program recognizes that the need for this program is ongoing.
- The Renewable Community Funding is eligible for a COLA cost of living adjustment and as such Snow Go funding would receive this going forward.
- The administration budget previously allocated to the Senior Citizen's Council will now be reallocated to the nine (9) community support agencies.
- The Snow Go program coordination funding may be applied to cover core operating costs of both programs.

Recommendation 2 - Enhancements to the Snow Go Assist Program

Changes to the Snow Go Program will be seamless for residents. The summary of Program Statistics (refer to Document 3) illustrates the level of interest in the program and confirms that opportunities exist to make effective use of the full allocation of funding available to subsidize low income seniors and people with disabilities by enhancing the program eligibility requirements.

To improve up-take and coverage associated with the program staff examined the income threshold to ensure that it was up-to-date and consistent with other programs delivered to seniors and also reviewed the provision of additional financial support to rural applicants who have a higher cost of snow removal associated with generally longer rural driveways and availability of service versus urban and suburban areas of the City.

Income Threshold

The current threshold for eligibility in the Snow Go Assist Program is an income below \$25,000 gross annual income for a single individual and below \$32,000 for a household (defined as two or more persons). The City offers a number of financial assistance programs to seniors who are living in residential properties. The goal was to benchmark these and compare the Snow Go threshold that was set in 2007 against the criteria set for these similar City run programs to determine if a common standard could be established based on similar program objectives including the need to reflect an adjustment for the cost of living increases since 2007.

Staff found that Snow Go Program is comparable to the Ontario Renovates Program that provides financial support for home repairs and renovations to help seniors (aged 65+) and people with disabilities live independently. It is open to seniors who own their home and have a low income based on household size and gross annual income (same as the Snow Go Assist Program). Eligibility is based on one person with a gross annual income of less than \$31,500 and below \$39,200 for households of two persons.

Rural Applicants experience additional financial difficulty due to higher snow removal costs associated with longer driveways, higher contractor costs and more remote access. Community Support agencies have requested that this inequality be addressed through additional funding for rural residents. Per the criteria attached in Document 1, rural participants will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$450 to reflect higher cost of snow removal in rural areas.

Adjusting eligibility criteria

In a draft Position Paper related to the City's Older Adult Plan, it is recommended that City departments harmonize terminology and financial assistance age thresholds for programs delivered to Older Adults and Seniors.

The Snow Go and Snow Go Assist Programs will adopt the recommendations of the Older Adult Plan's harmonization process to ensure that the Snow Go Programs are consistent with other city programs, once it has been approved.

Consultation Feedback

Consultations in March 2014 were undertaken with the Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton and in April 2014 a survey was undertaken with the nine (9) Community Support Partners on the administration and proposed enhancements to the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs.

Summary

The staff recommendations include the following;

- Transfer of funding from the Public Works Department to the Community and Social Services Department.

- Increase the definition of low income from the existing threshold set in 2007 of below \$25,000 gross annual income for a single individual, and below \$32,000 for a household (defined as two or more persons) to \$31,500 and \$39,200 respectively, in keeping with the Ontario Renovates Program.
- Provide additional financial support up to \$450 per term to rural applicants with excessively expensive driveways to clear from snow and ice.
- The Snow Go and Snow Go Assist Programs will adopt the recommendations of the Older Adult Plan's harmonization process to ensure that the Snow Go Programs are consistent with other city programs, once it has been approved.

It is anticipated that these enhancements will enhance access to the Snow Go Assist program. Concerns that the demand for the program may exceed the allotted funds will be mitigated by the program stipulations that the financial assistance is available on a first come first served basis and that community support agencies have the ability to limit funds allocated to participants if the demand is too high.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The Snow Go programs are available city-wide. The recruitment of snow removal workers for the Snow Go Program continues to be a challenge for many community support agencies as the availability of workers varies annually and geographically. This is a particular challenge in the rural areas, and as such, services cannot be guaranteed.

To reduce the limited availability of snow removal workers, participants in the Snow Go Assist Program have the option to use workers who are not associated with the Snow Go Program. The City will continue to work with community support agencies to recruit snow removal workers.

Participating community support agencies from the rural areas have confirmed that rural clients often have higher than normal snow clearing expenses due to the fact that rural laneways are often longer and more expensive to maintain. Rural clients will now be eligible for additional funding under this category. The additional costs would be covered from within the existing funding envelope.

CONSULTATION

Consultations were undertaken with the Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton, the nine (9) Community Support Partners and city staff on the administration of the program. A survey was undertaken on the staff recommendations to this report and the feedback received indicated wide-spread support for the report recommendations.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a city-wide report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the report recommendations.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The risks associated with the recommendations have been identified in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial or staffing implications associated with the report recommendations. The funding for the Snow Go programs will be transferred from the Public Works Department operating base budget to Community and Social Services Department, Renewable Community Funding Program operating base budget effective July 1, 2014, with addendums to contribution agreements to nine Community Support agencies under the Community Funding Framework. The transfer of the Snow Go Programs funding would be subject to annual adjustments as part of the annual budget process consistent with the City's other community funding programs.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The City is collaborating with the Older Adult Working Group and the Accessibility Office to increase promotion of the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs. The Snow Go Assist program has not utilized all available funding to date, however, it is anticipated that interest in the program will greatly increase in the near future due to the increase in the older adult demographic as well as with the changes proposed to the eligibility thresholds.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technical implications associated with receiving this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

One of the key priorities under the 2010-2014 Term of Council Priorities is Sustainable, Healthy and Active Living City. Under this priority the City of Ottawa is committed to initiatives that meet the needs of all citizens through its social services, social housing, supported living and public health services. It strives to promote social inclusion and address inequalities that ensure equal access to services for all.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Snow Go Program Objectives, Eligibility Criteria, and Application and Payment Process

Document 2: List of Participating Community Support Agencies

Document 3: Summary of Program Statistics

DISPOSITION

Following Council's approval, the Community Funding Branch in Community and Social Services Department will work with the Public Works Department to implement the recommendations and administer the Renewable Community Funding for the Snow Go Programs.