

Additional Justification for BOE Operating Budget amendment 16

2011 Operating Budget					
Proposed Board of Estimates Amendments					
					10/26/2010
				Amendment No. 16	
Agency:	Streets Division				
Page(s):	112				
Sponsors:	Alds. Schmidt, [Clear?]				
<p>Add 2 Lead Workers and 6 Street Machine Operator 2s to the Streets Division effective 1 September 2011. Tasks include clearing prioritized bus stops after all snowfalls. High priority stops (TBD) would be cleared within 3 days and all stops cleared within 5 days except following major snows greater than 8" or back-to-back snowfalls. Crews will be responsible for maintaining Bus Stops at all times except for major snow events when plowing of all City streets is required. Crews will remain assigned to Bus Stop clearing even during salt spreading snow events (snows of less than 3"). During the rest of the year the crews will be assigned to duties such as stump removal, curb repair, more consistent maintenance of city bike paths, additional brush or leaf collection capacity in the fall, and more. There is a stump removal backlog and with the impending Emerald Ash Borer invasion we will need additional capacity to deal with the City's Ash trees. A Capital Budget amendment of \$303,000 is also needed to fund 6 additional "Tool Cats" for use in the bus stop clearing as well as the other tasks. Tool Cats are better for leaf collection than most of the equipment we use today. Total annualized operating costs are \$663,608. An additional \$442,405 will therefore be required in 2012.</p>					
	Permanent Salaries		\$ 130,998		
	Benefits		53,578		
	Fleet Service charges		36,626		
		Total:	\$ 221,203	Levy Impact:	\$ 221,203

A recently introduced ordinance change sought to address bus stop clearing by adding paved bus pads to what we consider sidewalks. The request for this change came from the ADA Transit Subcommittee to the TPC, which has for several years attempted to raise the issue of clearing snow from bus stops, driven by the need to make them more accessible to transit users, particularly those with disabilities. Current city policy is to clear the bus stops, but they are at the end of the priority list and often will not be cleared for a week or more after a moderate, let alone heavy, snowfall. The City does hire contractors to augment City staff for this task. However, during the Council Working Group on Snow Removal Policy discussions it became clear that additional contractors are not available for this task.

This proposal adds 8 individuals to the Streets Division as on 1 September 2010. There will need to be a corresponding 2011 Capital Budget amendment to purchase some equipment. Bus stop clearing is an intermittent, seasonal task, and if that were the only need this hiring would not be justifiable. However, there are several other City responsibilities that are underserved, and a substantial upcoming need in one area in particular.

The Capital Budget amendment is for the purchase of 6 new Toolcat-type pieces of equipment that would be equipped with brooms, buckets, plows and snow blowers to clear not only the windrows at the bus stops but the concrete boarding areas in a more timely manner. Toolcats cost \$50,500 each. Toolcats can be used year-round.

Winter:

With the additional staffing, Streets Division commits to clearing the High Priority Bus Stops (yet to be determined) within 3 days after the plowing of all City streets is completed and all bus stops within 5 days. Major storms of 8" or greater or back to back storms would be exempt from this commitment but the additional crews would be working on bus stops while other City crews are dealing with the after effects from the major storm. Crews will be responsible for maintaining Bus Stops at all times except for major snow events when plowing of all City streets is required. Crews will remain assigned to Bus Stop clearing even during snows of less than 3", referred to as salt spreading snow events.

The bus stop crews would be on duty from the First Sunday in December until mid-March when Spring cleanup begins - Sunday through Thursday nights from 11:00 pm until 7:00 am. This represents a third shift for Streets Division staff, which saves on equipment costs. For the rest of the year (mid-March until the first Sunday in December) they could be on duty Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The additional staff would be:

- 2 Streets Leadworkers (position currently does not exist)
- 6 Street Machine Operator II's

Tasks for these crews when Bus Stops are cleared:

- Focus on plowing and sanding Alternate Side Parking Ordinance areas on regular time rather than overtime and perform it more frequently than what is currently done
- Anti-icing in preparation for impending snow events, including anti-icing on concrete bus pads
- Continue working on snow removal of vision hazards and street widening for emergency vehicles
- Fill sand barrels and fill public sand sites more regularly
- Continue with winter maintenance such as left hand winging and right hand winging back of snow from boulevards and open areas to create space for future snowfalls.
- Transfer/haul winter salt supplies from the S. Point salt storage facility to both the Sycamore and Badger Rd. Operations Facilities.
- Perform much needed vehicle maintenance and vehicle washing of the salt spreaders and other equipment.
- Perform potholing duties especially during late winter during the freeze/thaw cycle.
- Late winter main arterial street sweeping.

Spring/Summer:

In recent years the City has changed brush collection policies and made other changes to priorities to accommodate lower staffing levels. However, some issues have emerged that support adding staff back. A stump removal backlog has developed, and while it could be cleared over time, we are facing the impending loss of around 40,000 City-owned Ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer invasion. We are also losing terrace Maples at an increasing rate, Maples that were planted to replace the Elms and other trees lost during previous arboreal crises. There is need for additional "stump-grubbing" capacity and that

need will grow in coming years. A backlog in stump removal causes delays in the planting of replacement trees.

With additional staff, damage from winter plowing as it pertains to concrete curbs would be repaired in a more timely fashion. Currently, most curb plow damage cannot be repaired by Streets crews until August due to sealcoating preparations by the Street Repair Crews. While sealcoating is being dialed back in 2011 to create some budget savings, that is a temporary change.

Finally, additional staff would be available for non-scheduled facets and emergencies such as storm clean-up related work, island weed removal, additional graffiti clean-up work, student move-out, special projects, and so on. The wild weather of recent years has shown how quickly our capacity to handle emergency clean-up can be overwhelmed. These tasks relate to the appearance of our city and general quality of life.

Fall:

In the fall:

- Stump crews who currently stop removing stumps by October 1st due to leaf collection responsibilities could continue to work on stump removal until the end of November.
- Crews could be assigned to brush collection during October and November when current brush crews must be assigned to leaf collection.
- Additional and necessary winter operating training would be performed.
- Toolcats are much better suited for leaf collection. They result in less damage due to equipment driving up on the terraces and thus fewer complaints and fewer needed repairs, saving on costs.
- These additional staff could be assigned to assist with leaf collection if necessary.

Accompanying this document is an Average Bus Ridership from Metro map that depicts, by colored dots, the relative boarding frequency of the bus stops throughout the City. The Streets Division and Metro are working together to define and designate the best possible Priority Bus Stop list.

New hires would not be available until after the winter season ends, so the September 1, 2011 start date was selected. This also reduces the budget impact in 2011, but adds additional costs in future years.

Thank you for your consideration!

Alder Chris Schmidt

(Thank you to Al Schumacher for assistance and information)