

Question: Many Whitehorse residents choose cycling as a year-round transportation option. What are your thoughts regarding prioritizing winter maintenance for vulnerable road users?

Candidates - Councilor	Response
Michelle Stimson	<p>I was really nervous to start riding again for safety - I keep leaning towards flags to separate some lanes- it feels friendly and special side road paths that are cleared (snow) Creative routes to keep biking beautiful. The sidewalks are not the only areas needed to be clear. This is tough work and I'm behind and support a sign up sheet and discussion of routes - bet there are lots.</p>
Norma Felker	Expensive and difficult
Ken Schick	<p>Maintenance for year-round transportation is an annual concern for all means of transportation. I agree it is even more of an issue for cyclists. Without reviewing budget and manpower availability/restrictions it is difficult to offer a constructive answer to this issue</p>
Anne Middler	<p>We learned a lot from Haari and Pekka, the Finnish urban well-being traffic engineers from Oulu Finland, the winter cycling capital of the world. They came to the Yukon earlier this year on a side quest from their trip to Edmonton where they attended the World Winter Cycling Congress. It was refreshing and inspiring to learn how their city has long prioritized separated bike paths, and the winter maintenance of these paths. I was grateful to go on two bike rides with the Finns and a gang of local cyclists, and i got to kicksled with them too (my kicksleds are from Finland, and it was lovely to hear their experience past and present with this scandinavian/northern european mode of recreation and active transportation). I attended their talk at the CGC. I am grateful to Cycling Association Yukon, Kicksled Yukon and Medicine Chest Pharmacy who brought them up to educate and inspire City and YG staff about what is possible.</p> <p>A couple points: 1. In winter in Oulo, the bike network is plowed first before the roads. The maintenance contracts have requirements for when this work needs to be completed and the service providers are also users of the trail, and there is consistent feedback and evaluation by users to local officials and service providers. This signals</p>

the importance of this transportation option, and commitment to ensure consistency for riders who need to be confident they can leave the house in the morning by bike and not face barriers to access because of snow or ice.

2. They require their maintenance operators to actually use the infrastructure. That would be useful here - we can't make operators all ride their bikes or walk to work everyday, but they do need to do that regularly as part of their paid tasks within their job description (and it would be great to include frequent users in these recon missions), so that they understand from a user perspective why they are doing their job and how best to do it so they don't inadvertently do anything that puts up barriers - like literal barriers such as pushing a snow berm onto a path access - or compromise safety. I have myself put on a high vis vest and taken a broom to sweep the steep curved approach ramp between the SS Klondike and the Robert Campbell bridge to Riverdale. And I have done the same at the steep black street stairs approach. I know others who have done this too. Once the risk of ice is completely gone, grit itself on the trail is a hazard. The City tends to leave it on trails too long and sometimes indefinitely in places where they can't fit their large equipment, forgetting that simple tools and elbow grease can often do the job just fine and frequently better than equipment.

3. Grit as necessary but not necessarily grit. Many of you know me not just as a cyclist but also as a kicksledder, and I know the debate about the grituation can be contentious. Last winter was a disaster and it was difficult and scary to get around because of so much ice from November to April due to inconsistent temperatures and rain in January. The city didn't always adequately grit - or grit at all - and it wasn't clear who needed to make the call. The kicksledders and other trail users got in touch with the city on several occasions to report icy and unsafe trails asking for any or more grit, etc. It was nearly impossible to kicksled last year and it was daunting to walk without spikes on boots. It's impossible to ensure every square inch in one's path is gritted, so in addition to the city being more on top of this, users need to recognize we live in a winter place and take some responsibility too.

One good thing about that bad winter with poor kicksledding conditions was that it made me finally buy a fat bike - and thank goodness it has studded tires. I generally prefer to kicksled in winter, and I always will choose that option when it's feasible. But I am a now winter bike convert and I love it. I found that I was in better physical condition when I was able to take out my gravel bike to once again hit the hills on the Miles Canyon Road when the roads dried up in spring. And I bought another winter bike so that my daughter and I can ride together - although the second one does not currently have studded tires.

Back to the grit. The Finns showed that a compact snow base is best for all users. When it snows, slightly lift

	<p>the blade on the equipment and ensure a compact snow base remains. This is the best trail condition for all users. There needs to be better communication and education with operators so they know exactly how to do their job and not assume to just lower the blade and scrape then grit after a snowfall. That is not necessary if temperatures are staying cold. If the path is scraped to pavement, it will need to be gritted because the dark colour absorbs heat and causes melt of adjacent snow, which then freezes to black ice on the exposed pavement. The scraping to pavement maintenance approach is inefficient and requires far more energy, equipment and human resources to deal with, and inevitable grit - which doesn't always ensure slip mitigation when trail surface conditions are like this. Further, a compact snow base reflects the heat and is far more resilient and safe in the spring when we start to get warmer daytime temperatures. If there is ice, the city needs to apply grit adequately so that all trail users are safe. But again: grit as necessary, not as default. We are a winter city and need to find ways to maintain paths efficiently without being counterproductive. A compact snow base is clean and white, and so lovely for walkers, cyclists, people towing kids on sleds, kicksledders, etc. For whatever reason if paths become slippers, grit there.</p> <p>There also could be better coordination between Operations and Parks departments who are both responsible for maintaining different paths in the network and tend to do things differently. This is worth exploring and I'm not sure what the solution is - but finding best practices and ensuring operators from both departments are well educated is key.</p>
<p>Sarah Newton</p>	<p>Winter maintenance is important for both active transportation users and disabled citizens. We need a way to deal with emergent issues quickly so I think a complaint line or process could be implemented to better allocate city resources.</p>
<p>Lenore Morris</p>	<p>I am one of those Whitehorse residents who choose cycling as year-round transportation. That means I have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) had to navigate bike lanes filled with snow plowed into them from the centre lane; (2) concluded that riding on the sidewalk was the only safe option; (3) given up and walked. <p>I agree that winter maintenance should prioritize vulnerable road users - pedestrians and cyclists over drivers. I would support the City taking over snow removal / winter maintenance of sidewalks in high pedestrian areas, which could be mechanized and therefore more efficiently done, and end the existing patchwork of surfaces.</p>

Tony Lundgaard	Go by the data and public input and adjust my plans around it
Jenny Hamilton	<p>Safety is my highest concern for all citizens. We need to keep roads clear for ambulances, police and fire fighters always. As for clearing roads and pathways, there seems to be a lack of workers or equipment or scheduling. I do not know if it all or any of these to be clear. Something is missing for the city to make accessibility for all happen. Accessibility for all in the downtown core needs to be a priority. Secondary roads and pathways never seem to be cleared, and they absolutely need to be.</p> <p>I do believe it is an issue that can be solved. I am more than encouraging people who know the problems to state them, so the solutions can be found. I will advocate for the City to work with those who have answers to these issues so that they can be found and implemented.</p>
Jean-Sebastien Blais	<p>I understand the question about vulnerable road users who are for me cyclists and pedestrians. They are vulnerable because they are less visible to vehicles drivers during dark and cold winter's months. It is easy to miss seeing them. Such situations can lead to tragic accidents. For this reason alone, the City has to ensure that active transportation corridors are secured for all users. Well maintained active transportation corridors for commuters is an important responsibility of the City.</p> <p>Active transportation corridors are as important as streets, boulevards and avenues. Therefore, Council should look at having a strong policy requiring them to invest the appropriate budget for the maintenance of clear active transportation corridors all year long, including winter.</p>
Paolo Gallina	<p>Prioritizing winter maintenance for vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians, is essential. I believe in allocating specific resources in the city's budget to ensure that bike lanes, sidewalks, and pathways are cleared promptly after snowfalls, especially on key commuter routes. Safe winter cycling infrastructure is necessary if we are serious about supporting year-round active transportation. This means addressing not only snow removal but also ice buildup and ensuring adequate lighting.</p> <p>As well - I plan to bring forward a motion to support the proposal to provide winter maintenance on the Hamilton Blvd. trail so citizens have a usable and safe space to cycle commute in the winter.</p>
Daniel Schneider	This needs to be prioritized to ensure safety for cyclists
Candidates - Mayor	Response

Stephen Kwok	Ensure trails are groomed regularly and are safe for all riders.
Dino Rudniski	I support prioritising winter maintenance that benefits both cyclists and pedestrians by implementing user-friendly snow management designs, engaging with the community, allocating dedicated funds, and using technology for efficient path maintenance, ensuring safe year-round cycling and walking options.
Dan Bushnell	I would like to whenever possible provide plowed pathways that create a barrier between bikes and cars. Until we are able to increase bike ways and maintain them in the winter I would be interested to see if we can plow in such a way that we can use snow to separate a cleared bike path and a cleared road.