

## **SPECIAL TAX LEVY FOR SNOW REMOVAL FROM THE PATHWAYS AND SOME OF THE ENGINEERED WALKWAYS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF MCKENZIE LAKE**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What paths are being cleared?** All pathways and walkways leading to pathways within the community of McKenzie Lake from Deerfoot Trail up to and including the ridge, and from 130 Avenue to 22X are being cleared. This includes pathways surrounding neighbourhood parks and playgrounds.

Note: Pathway clearing on the ridge from Mt Alberta View north to 130 Avenue has resumed in conjunction with this pathway being re-opened.

**Is the ridge pathway north of 130 Ave leading down into Fish Creek Park cleared?**

No, this falls within the boundaries of the community of Douglasdale.

**Are the walkways between houses cleared?** Walkways that lead to the pathway system are cleared. Walkways that do not lead to the pathway system are not cleared as the snow cannot be pushed out onto the street or piled up against private property owners' fences.

**Are the pathways/walkways sanded?** Sand will be used only if required, in specific areas where there is ice. The sand that the City uses on all pathways, sidewalks and off-leash areas contains 5% salt.

**Who clears the pathways/walkways?** The City of Calgary contracts out the snow removal from all of the pathways and walkways leading to pathways within the above mentioned boundaries, to city standards – normally within 12 hours of a snow fall. The snow is removed beyond the pavement edges to allow water to drain off the pathway onto the grass shoulder when it melts.

**When are they cleared?** The pathways/walkways are cleared from the first snowfall in the fall until the last snowfall in the spring. “Freak” snowfalls that occur very early in the fall or very late in the spring will not be cleared if it is going to be sunny and warm the following day.

**Who is paying for this?** Each property owner pays through a Special Tax Levy, the amount of which appears on your tax bill. Each fall, property owners receive a letter from the City advising them of the amount of the Special Tax Levy for the following winter season.

**How is the cost determined?** There are approximately 11,700 meters of pathways and 800 meters of walkways between houses that lead to pathways or green areas within the community and the cost is based on snow being cleared an average of 35 times per year. A cost is factored in for moving equipment to disjunctive sites. There are 4674 properties in the community to share this cost.

## How much has it cost each year?

Property Tax Bill Year	Tax Levy	Property Count	Collected	Total Snow Removal Costs	Account Balance	Comments
2006	\$10.87	4,691	\$50,991.17	\$20,315.00	\$30,676.17	Initial rate set at \$10.87.
2007	\$11.20	4,684	\$52,460.80	\$38,642.00	\$44,494.97	Ended 2006-07 with a \$10K surplus. As the City had no previous history of clearing snow in the community, they suggested increasing the levy for 2007 by 3% as the community is not permitted to run a deficit.
2008	\$11.20	4,684	\$52,460.80	\$49,840.50	\$47,115.27	2007-08 season had light snow fall thus we ended 2007-08 with a \$26K surplus. As such, the tax rate was not increased for 2008-09.
2009	\$11.20	4,684	\$52,460.80	\$41,500.00	\$58,076.07	2008-09 was a heavy snowfall year, and we had a \$10K deficit. Did not increase the tax levy for 2008-09 to reduce the surplus carried over from previous years.
2010	\$11.54	4,674	\$53,937.96	\$27,290.00	\$84,724.03	Increased the levy for 2010-11 by 3% as we needed approximately \$15K in reserve in case the vote to determine continuation of the Special Tax Levy went to a mailout ballot. The cost of mailing out a ballot to each property owner would have come out of the money collected from property tax owners for the Special Tax Levy. Also, the contract with the contractor ran out at the end of 2009 and the City was predicting an increase in the cost of the new contract.
2011	\$5.00	4,672	\$23,360.00	\$27,219.00	\$80,865.03	On April 27, 2010, a vote was held in the community and 89% of property owners that voted were in favour of continuing the Tax Levy. Thus, there was no mail-out ballot. Tax levy lowered to \$5 to reduce the surplus carried over from previous years.
2012	\$5.00	4,672	\$23,360.00	\$32,658.37	\$71,566.66	2011-12 was a light snowfall year. Tax levy remained at \$5 to reduce the surplus carried over from previous years.
2013	\$3.00	4,672	\$14,016.00	\$43,463.98	\$42,118.68	Tax levy lowered to \$3 to reduce the surplus carried over from previous years.

2014	\$7.85	4,669	\$36,651.65	\$39,831.95	\$38,938.38	Tax levy increased to \$7.85 to ensure sufficient funds in the event of a heavy snowfall year for 2014-15.
2015	\$7.85	4,669	\$36,651.65	TBD	TBD	Tax levy remained at \$7.85 to ensure sufficient funds to facilitate a mail-out ballot if required in Fall 2015.
2016	\$5.00	4,669	\$23,345.00	TBD	TBD	On Oct 20, 2015, a vote was held in the community and 100% of property owners that voted were in favour of continuing the Tax Levy. Tax levy lowered to \$5 to reduce the surplus carried over.

The tax rate levy is set a year in advance. For example, the levy for 2016 is set in Oct 2015 and collected in Jun 2016.

**What if the pathways are not cleared 35 times during the winter?** Any excess money at year-end is added to next years balance. A refund will not be issued. If budgeted dollars run out before the last snowfall, the City of Calgary will not stop clearing snow from the pathways/walkways.

**Is the cost the same each year?** Annual increases never exceed the rate of inflation – for the last 5 years it has ranged between 0% to 3% increase – with 3% being about 30 to 34 cents per property owner per year. Property owners receive a letter from the City each fall advising them of the rate of the Special Tax Levy for the following winter season. i.e. in the fall of 2012 you received a letter advising of the rate for the 2013-2014 winter snow clearing season.

**What is the term of this program?** The term is 5 years. Renewal is subject to continuing support of the property owners. The winter season of 2010-2011 was the final year of the first five years. The Special Tax Levy by-law required a vote to be held in the Community of McKenzie Lake in 2010 and if 50%+1 of the property owners present at the meeting vote in favor of continuing snow removal from the pathways/walkways as outlined above, the Special Tax Levy will continue for another 5 years. This vote was held in the community on April 27, 2010 and 89% of the property owners that voted were in favour of continuing the Levy.

**Why did we need a 2/3 majority for the levy to pass in 2006, but 50%+1 to continue after 5 years?** The 2/3 majority is a requirement of the Municipal Government Act for Petitions and after 5 years the City only requires 50%+1 when asking the Community to confirm that they want to continue the program.

**What if I vote “no” and 50%+1 vote “yes”, do I still have to contribute?** If it is approved by 50%+1, all property owners will contribute.

**Can anyone living in the home vote?** The registered homeowner of the home or condominium can vote. If there are two registered homeowners, either can vote but only ONE vote per registered property.

**How do I know if I am the homeowner?** Check a recent property tax bill. If your name appears on the property tax bill, you are a registered homeowner.

**What if I live in a rental property, can I vote?** No, only the registered homeowner can vote.

**Can I FAX or e-mail my vote?** No, you must be present at the meeting to receive a ballot to vote.

**Are there any pathways cleared in the community that are not under the Special Tax Levy?** The pathway on the south side of 130 Ave. from Deerfoot Trail overpass to the beginning of the Pinnacle Condominium property and the pathway on the south side of McKenzie Lake Blvd. from Deerfoot Trail overpass to the stoplight at Mt. McKenzie Drive S.E. are cleared by the Province as they are on the Provincial right-of-way for the overpasses. The pathway on the south side of McKenzie Lake Blvd. from the bus stop east of McKenzie Lake Way to McKenzie Lake Way at Cardinal Newman School borders the Beach Club property and is cleared by the Beach Club.

**Who takes on responsibility of Liability insurance?** The City of Calgary takes on the responsibility of Liability insurance. The Pathways Snow Removal Committee and the McKenzie Lake Community Association have no legal liability in this initiative.

**Residents of the community make the decision to adopt a Special Tax Levy. The City of Calgary does not impose a Tax Levy on them.**