



## PRIVATE DRIVEWAY SNOWPLOWING SERVICE DISCONTINUED

Council certainly understands the consequences to our residents in their decision to cancel the driveway snowplowing service. The service is one that has been discussed and changed in structure many times over the past years to try to accommodate the needs of those relying on the service versus the cost to all taxpayers and time spent by grader operators off the public roads. As an elected body, Council must be accountable and considerate of all municipal stakeholders.

Estimated costs to provide the service in 2018 were \$5,700 for administration and inspections (which does not include time spent fielding calls of special requests and other complaints from those who have paid the fee) plus \$14,000 for the plowing, totaling the costs at \$19,700. These estimates are based on data collected over the winter of 2018-2019 which was a relatively low snowfall period so driveways were plowed fewer times than they have in recent years. Revenue received from residents for the service in 2018-2019 was \$16,600. This left a shortfall this past winter of \$3100 which was covered by all taxpayer dollars (some driveways are plowed at no cost for school bus route and equipment logistical reasons).

There were 90 households that received the service last winter which represents about 12% of approximately 740 households. 90 taxpayers of an approximate 1500 taxpayers on 3200 parcels of land equates to about 6% of all taxpayers. With the shortfall of cost recovery of this service, basically all 1500 taxpayers are paying for 6% of taxpayers to receive the service. This is a concern that has been brought to Councillors from taxpayers who do not receive the service yet their tax dollars are helping to pay for 90 residents to receive the service (concerns about plowing of public roads taking longer were also raised). Council discussed raising the cost to those who apply for the service but having heard many complaints about the \$200 fee when it was implemented, they chose not to increase the fee. Additionally, since provision of the service varies from year to year depending on snowfall, there is no guarantee that the service will be provided on a fully cost recovered basis no matter what service fee is implemented. There are certainly many residents who appreciated the service and accepted the limitations but also some that developed an attitude of demand and entitlement.

Council did discuss the possibility of continuing the service for senior citizens only. They felt that regardless of who would be eligible for the service, the program would likely not be cost-recovery, so made the difficult decision to end the service program completely.

An additional aspect of Council discussion regarding this service was the overlying philosophy of the "Code of the West" that past and present Councils have adopted. You can read the full document on our website at [www.mdfairview.com](http://www.mdfairview.com) if you wish. To summarize the philosophy, there are many aspects to rural living in an agricultural-based municipality that potential residents need to consider when deciding to live in a country setting. There are agricultural aspects such as large equipment on roads and early and late working hours, environmental aspects such as noise, dust, odors, weather and water concerns that need to be considered as well as limited services and the need for self-reliance, especially in times of local emergency and disasters.

As said earlier, the structure of the program has changed many times over the years in an attempt to satisfy the needs of everyone involved - the residents, tax payers, municipal manpower and equipment, municipal insurance and legal requirements. As none of the structures worked effectively, efficiently or economically, Council was faced with making a very difficult decision, taking into consideration the municipality as a whole.