



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Information Item No.2
Audit & Finance Standing Committee
September 17, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Audit & Finance Standing Committee

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting CAO

DATE: September 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Action Plan from the Management of Winter Operations Audit

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

June 18, 2025 motion of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee (Item 13.1.1)

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Morse

THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop an Action Plan on the Winter Operations Audit and report back to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee within three months.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Works has developed a plan to address recommendations from the Management of Winter Operations audit (see Attachment A).

BACKGROUND

The Halifax Regional Municipality Auditor General's Management of Winter Operations Audit, presented in June 2025, outlined thirteen (13) recommendations to strengthen the overall management and oversight of the Winter Operations program.

All recommendations were accepted by management. The audit identified the need for formalized policies, improved data collection, centralized tracking within CityWorks, enhanced contract and in-house performance monitoring, and structured seasonal planning.

DISCUSSION

Public Works is implementing a comprehensive action plan to address all thirteen recommendations.

Key focus areas include:

- Formalizing policies and procedures for both contracted and in-house winter services

- Developing KPIs and standardizing data collection
- Centralizing tracking of deficiencies, repairs, and service requests within CityWorks
- Updating contractor reporting requirements for consistency
- Right-sizing training and licensing programs for winter equipment operators to align with operational needs
- Establishing monitoring procedures for all operational phases: pre-event, event, post-event recovery, and non-event days

The action plan, including a summary table of recommendations, actions, status, and anticipated completion dates is provided in Attachment A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All current fiscal year costs can be accommodated in the approved 2025/26 operating budget for Public Works.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39:

50(2) The Auditor General shall examine, in the manner and to the extent the Auditor General considers necessary, the accounts, procedures and programs of the Municipality ...

Audit & Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference:

- 1. (1)** The purpose of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee is to provide advice to the Council on matters relating to audit and finance.
- (2)** The other purposes of the Committee are to:
 - (a)** fulfill the requirements as outlined in Section 48 of the HRM Charter; and
 - (b)** assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities by ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of financial reporting, risk management and internal controls.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Management of Winter Operations Audit Action Plan

Report Prepared by: Steven York – Manager Contract Operations & Winter Services, 902.880.0948

Appendix A

Management of Winter Operations Audit Action Plan

#	Recommendation	Status	Anticipated Completion
1	Public Works should develop and implement a process to monitor in-house and contractor snow clearing operations against the service standards. This information should be documented and retained for each event.	In progress	Q2 2026
2	Public Works should determine what data is needed to assess winter operations program performance, develop and implement processes to collect it, and measure and report on the results.	In progress	Q3 2026
3	Public Works should define the level of monitoring required to ensure vendors comply with the contract terms and develop and implement procedures to support snow and ice clearing contract monitoring activities.	In progress	Q3 2026
4	Public Works should develop and implement a process to centrally track and document contractor deficiencies. The information retained should be sufficient to assess vendor performance and apply penalties and damages as appropriate.	In progress	Q3 2026
5	Public Works should develop and implement a process to identify all required contractor post-season repair work, communicate it to the contractor, and track its completion. This information should be documented and retained.	In progress	Q3 2026
6	Public Works should define how they will monitor and assess post-season repair work has been satisfactorily completed. This information should be included and documented with procedures in Recommendation 3.	In progress	Q3 2026
7	Public Works should determine what information they require from vendors to effectively manage and monitor snow and ice clearing contracts and implement a process to collect this information, including taking appropriate action if it is not provided.	In progress	Q3 2025

#	Recommendation	Status	Anticipated Completion
8	Public Works should document key takeaways from prior winter season operations and pre-season planning events. If gaps are identified, plans should be developed to address them.	In progress	Q3 2026
9	Public Works should develop procedures for key winter season planning processes and monitor to ensure they are implemented.	Complete	
10	Public Works should develop a procedure to support monitoring activities for in-house snow and ice clearing operations. The procedure should define what level of monitoring needs to be completed and what information needs to be retained for event and non- event days to effectively assess performance.	In progress	Q3 2026
11	Public Works should develop and implement a procedure to ensure urgent and non-urgent street and sidewalk service requests are addressed in a timely manner.	In progress	Q3 2025
12	Public Works should document what training and licensing are required to operate the various types of winter works equipment, ensure staff are appropriately trained, and maintain a central list of winter works staff training and licenses.	In progress	Q3 2025
13	Public Works should determine what information is required to be included in the asset management system to support effective monitoring and develop and communicate guidance to relevant staff to support its implementation.	In progress	Q3 2025

Recommendation 1

Public Works should develop and implement a process to monitor in-house and contractor snow clearing operations against the service standards. This information should be documented and retained for each event.

Action Plan

Public Works proposes developing a structured process to monitor and measure service standard adherence for both in-house and contracted winter maintenance

operations. For each declared snow event, this process will ensure that performance is systematically evaluated against established service levels.

To facilitate this, Public Works will collaborate with the Asset Management Office to develop a dedicated reporting tool within CityWorks. This tool will centralize the collection and retention of critical data, providing a single, verifiable source of information for performance analysis and audit purposes. The implementation of this process will enhance accountability and support data-driven decision-making.

Outcome

For each declared weather event, Public Works will provide the Work Supervisor/Contract Supervisor with a random list of five street/sidewalk/walkway segments per area for each priority rating. The Supervisor will then be required to physically inspect these identified segments to ensure service levels are met. Photos will be taken and notes recorded within CityWorks.

- **Current Status:** In Progress. A draft policy is under review, and implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q2 2026

Recommendation 2

Public Works should determine what data is needed to assess winter operations program performance, develop and implement processes to collect it, and measure and report on the results.

Action Plan

To ensure effective oversight and accountability, Public Works will develop a policy that will govern data collection and performance measurement protocols. This policy will clearly define the data to be collected and outline procedures for acquisition and validation. Furthermore, it will establish key performance indicators (KPIs) against which operational performance will be measured.

Outcome

In conjunction with the third-party Winter Operations Service Standard review currently underway, Public Works will review established KPIs from other jurisdictions, which will aid in the development of KPIs for the Winter Operations program. Data to support KPI reporting will mostly be collected from the updated reporting from recommendation 1 through CityWorks.

- **Current Status:** In progress. The third-party review will be completed for winter 2025. Proposed KPIs will be reviewed, and data requirements will be confirmed for implementation.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 3

Public Works should define the level of monitoring required to ensure vendors comply with the contract terms and develop and implement procedures to support snow and ice clearing contract monitoring activities.

Action Plan

Establish a formal policy and procedure to define and standardize the contract monitoring process for winter maintenance. This will ensure consistent, data-driven oversight of our contractors' performance.

The policy will clearly outline:

- The specific data points and metrics to be collected.
- The methodology for data collection and validation.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) to consistently measure contract adherence and overall performance.

This structured framework will enhance accountability, mitigate risks, and provide a transparent and auditable process for managing our winter maintenance contracts.

Outcome

Currently, HRM Contract Supervisors monitor Performance-Based contracts without a formal process. During a typical winter event, supervisors perform inspection activities throughout each contract area. Notes, including contract deficiencies, are recorded in their diaries and in post-event summary sheets. In the future, a formalized procedure utilizing CityWorks reporting will be implemented, enabling standardized data collection, contract monitoring, and centralized information storage. CityWorks will also be used for post-season repair tracking as per recommendation 6.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review, and implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 4

Public Works should develop and implement a process to centrally track and document contractor deficiencies. The information retained should be sufficient to assess vendor performance and apply penalties and damages as appropriate.

Action Plan

Standardize the process to track and address contractor deficiencies, assessing vendor performance utilizing a reporting tool, which will allow the collected data to be stored in a centralized location.

Outcome

A process is being developed to track and retain contract deficiencies through inspections within CityWorks. For each declared weather event, a random list of Street/Sidewalk segment inspections will be created in CityWorks and Supervisors will be required to physically check these segments to ensure service levels are met. The results of each inspection, including photos, will be uploaded to the database.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review, and implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 5

Public Works should develop and implement a process to identify all required contractor post-season repair work, communicate it to the contractor, and track its completion. This information should be documented and retained.

Action Plan

Develop a process to track all post-season repair work within CityWorks.

Outcome:

Currently, post-season repair work is tracked through CityWorks and manually through Excel spreadsheets that are exchanged between Contractors. This does not allow for proper documentation, including photographs, to be included with each service request/workorder. A process is being developed which will centralize all post-season repair work within CityWorks. This will result in formal documentation,

including photographs of completed repair work, before outstanding service requests/ workorders are closed.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review, implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 6

Public Works should define how they will monitor and assess post-season repair work has been satisfactorily completed. This information should be included and documented with procedures in Recommendation 3.

Action Plan

Develop a process to confirm post-season repair work is completed and tracked within CityWorks.

Outcome

This process is being developed in combination with the process for recommendation 5. CityWorks will become the sole location of all post-season repair work. Formal inspections of completed work, including photographs, will occur before workorders are closed. HRM Contract Supervisors will complete these inspections to ensure repairs to municipal infrastructure meet applicable standards.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review, and implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 7

Public Works should determine what information they require from vendors to effectively manage and monitor snow and ice clearing contracts and implement a process to collect this information, including taking appropriate action if it is not provided.

Action Plan

Review existing contract reporting requirements and revise the required reports that contractors need to submit. Work with HRM procurement update contracts as they come up for renewal.

Outcome

The Winter Operations team has reviewed the reporting requirements for all performance-based winter maintenance contracts and identified the necessary reports. This will be communicated to contractors, and an updated contract report tracking sheet and policy will be created. The policy will outline the timelines within which contractors must submit reports and a process to apply liquidated damages if reports are not received in a timely manner.

- **Current Status:** In progress
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2025

Recommendation 8

Public Works should document key takeaways from prior winter season operations and pre-season planning events. If gaps are identified, plans should be developed to address them.

Action Plan

Completed 2024/25 lessons learned sessions to identify gaps that require attention. This process will be formalized going forward.

Outcome

A Lessons Learned policy is being developed, which formalizes the process of collecting feedback from stakeholders at the end of the winter operations season. A document will be created for each winter season, which includes feedback received and proposed adjustments to the program. These documents will be stored in the Winter Operations OneDrive location to be accessed in future years.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review. Implementation will occur after the next winter season.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 9

Public Works should develop procedures for key winter season planning processes and monitor to ensure they are implemented.

Action Plan

Develop a process to identify and track deliverables required for planning the winter operations season.

Outcome

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed that outlines the planning of key deliverables for in-house and contracted winter maintenance activities. The SOP includes a schedule of events with date ranges. These dates are relative to the start of the winter operations season to ensure critical path adherence. The Program Support Assistant will monitor deliverables and report to the management team if timelines are not met.

- **Current Status:** Complete

Recommendation 10

Public Works should develop a procedure to support monitoring activities for in-house snow and ice clearing operations. The procedure should define what level of monitoring needs to be completed and what information needs to be retained for event and non-event days to effectively assess performance.

Action Plan

Develop a procedure to support formalized monitoring for in-house operations.

Outcome

This procedure is similar to the contract monitoring process included in the response to recommendation 3. Currently, timesheets and diaries are used to track employee activities throughout the winter season for event and non-event days. A procedure will be created to utilize CityWorks for standardized data collection via inspections for snow event days. At the same time, a daily non-event operations report will be developed for non-event days throughout the winter operations season.

- **Current Status:** In progress. A draft policy is under review, and implementation into CityWorks is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2026

Recommendation 11

Public Works should develop and implement a procedure to ensure urgent and non-urgent street and sidewalk service requests are addressed in a timely manner.

Action Plan

Develop a formal procedure to track and manage all service requests, ensuring a clear and auditable record of both urgent and non-urgent actions. This process will standardize response protocols and allow for a comprehensive analysis of service

delivery. This will enhance accountability and provide a transparent overview of operational effectiveness.

Outcome

A Winter Operations Urgent and Non-Urgent Service Request (SR) Response Procedure is being developed to establish the standard for timely response to both internal and external requests. This will ensure efficient communication, excellent customer experience, and prompt resolution of inquiries. Formal notes will be added to all SR's within CityWorks before closing any SR. A new process map will be created to outline the process, and the changes are being made at 311.

- **Current Status:** In progress. Implementation is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2025

Recommendation 12

Public Works should document what training and licensing are required to operate the various types of winter works equipment, ensure staff are appropriately trained, and maintain a central list of winter works staff training and licenses.

Action Plan

Create a document to formally identify training and licensing requirements for winter equipment.

Outcome

A formal document is being developed that will outline training and licensing requirements for all winter operations equipment. Public Works will continue to review current staff credentials before each winter season. A central list of staff training and licenses will be updated. A training course catalogue will be created, which will be added to the Winter Operations Policy document. In addition to this, Public Works will review all current employee training records and update them where required.

- **Current Status:** In progress
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2025

Recommendation 13

Public Works should determine what information is required to be included in the asset management system to support effective monitoring and develop and communicate guidance to relevant staff to support its implementation.

Action Plan

Develop work instructions for staff to follow when entering required information into the Asset Management system.

Outcome

A policy is being developed that establishes the mandatory fields for each service request or workorder, in addition to the roles and responsibilities of all users of the CityWorks system, specific to the winter operations program. There will be controls in place, such as mandatory fields and random data audits of the service request/workorders to ensure the information that is being collected is accurate.

- **Current Status:** Implementation is in progress.
- **Anticipated completion date:** Q3 2025