

Report TR-TAPS-47-16

To: Chair Bell and Members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee
From: Graham Wilson, Maintenance Manager
Meeting Date: September 22, 2016
Subject: Request For Winter Part-Time Operators
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution TAPS98-16; Endorsed by County Council October 4, 2016 per Resolution CC123-16;

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS an operational review of the winter maintenance operations has determined the need for eight Winter Part-Time Operators (two for each patrol);

AND WHEREAS by offering three, eight hour scheduled winter shifts per week, Transportation Services will be providing weekend coverage consistent with weekdays and improve the overall level of service;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT report TR-TAPS-47-16 be received;

AND THAT staff be directed to proceed with hiring the proposed eight Part-Time Operators for the 2016/2017 winter season.

Background

An operational review of the past two winter seasons has confirmed the need to hire part time operators.

Transportation Services hired 24 Back-Up Operators for the 2014/2015 winter season. Back-Up Operators are typically construction workers and look for employment for the winter months. The Back-Up Operators were not guaranteed hours and were not compensated while on standby. At the beginning of the 2014/2015 winter season some of them were still working with another employer and were not available until the end of December, 2014. A number were seeking other temporary employment and when they received offers of work, they were not available to plow and others applied for

Employment Insurance benefits. As a result, Transportation Services needed to hire three more Operators that season and spent an additional \$4,500 training new staff.

In the 2015/2016 winter season, Transportation Services guaranteed the Back-Up Operators 16 hours a week if they were available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 20 Operators returned from the previous season and four additional Operators were hired to bring the Back-Up Operator compliment to 24. When plowing hours were not available, the Back-Up Operators would be called in to assist regular staff with performing other maintenance tasks such as, cold patching and sign maintenance. These call-ins were unscheduled and staff would usually be given 24 hours' notice of call-in. Due to the lack of notice and previously arranged appointments, frequently the Back-Up Operators were unable to come into work as per our request and as a result, they would lose their guaranteed hours.

The Back-Up Operators indicated that 16 hours was not enough and that they would rather collect Employment Insurance benefits. During this season four Operators left the organization and Transportation Services needed to hire four more and spent an additional \$6,000 in training.

During the time of recruitment, hiring and training Transportation Services had to rely on our regular staff at an overtime rate of one and one-half for after hour and weekend coverage. The extra hours incurred had to be monitored closely to ensure compliance with the Highway Traffic Act regarding hours of service. Work/life balance also needed to be considered and this was raised by the Union at recent Labour Management meetings.

Analysis

Transportation Services has consulted with Simcoe County and Dufferin County to determine how they are managing their weekend coverage in terms of plow staffing. It was determined that both Counties provide 40 hour weekly operator shifts. Currently, Dufferin County has a total of 21 Operators for 10 routes, utilizing two, eight hour shifts daily with reduced routes or lengthened routes on afternoons, overnight and on weekends. The ratio for Operators to routes is 2.1:1. Currently, Simcoe County has a total of 74 Operators for 36 routes, utilizing two, eight hours shifts daily with reduced routes or lengthened routes overnight and on weekends. The ratio of Operators to routes is 2.0:1.

The additional staff requested in this report will give Grey County a total of 30 Operators for 17 routes, with reduced routes or lengthened routes on afternoons and overnight. The ratio of Operators to routes is 1.8:1. Grey County will continue to have afternoon and overnight Patrollers operate plows when conditions dictate to spot plow and spot spread during their patrol shifts. This operational difference has been proven to be more efficient than having a Patroller in a pick-up truck and calling in an Operator for isolated areas throughout the patrol. In addition, the Patroller using the plow is effective in addressing drifted and slippery sections in a timely manner. When a winter event has affected all routes and staff has been called in, the Patroller remains in the plow on an assigned route.

The below table provides the operational comparison of all three Counties.

Item	Dufferin County	Simcoe County	Grey County
Number of Operators	21	74	30
Number of Routes	10	36	17
Ratio	2.1:1	2.1:1	1.8:1

Dufferin and Simcoe Counties do not use Patrollers as Operators. This operational difference explains Grey County’s lower Operator to route ratio. Factoring in the four Patrollers as Operators, the ratio of proposed Operators to routes is 2.0:1.

Transportation Services’ recommendation is to hire eight Winter Part-Time Operators at the Operator 1 position title at a rate of \$23.38 per hour to 25.50 per hour from October 31, 2016 until April 17, 2017. The recommended Part-Time Operators will be guaranteed three, eight hour scheduled winter shifts per week, which will cover weekend routes that are currently not staffed by full time staff on-call, as per the Collective Agreement. Weekday afternoon routes will also be staffed using Part-Time Operators from the Winter Part-Time Shift 1 and the Winter Part-Time Shift 2. The proposed Winter Part-Time Operator Shifts 1 and 2 are detailed below.

Winter Part-Time Shift 1: Thursday 3:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
 Friday 3:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
 Saturday 1:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Winter Part-Time Shift 2: Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
 Monday 3:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
 Tuesday 3:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.

The Winter Shifts Schedule (attached) illustrates the current Winter Shift Schedule, along with the proposed Part-Time Operator shift schedule. Weekday shifts shown as “OFF” will be covered except for Wednesday, which can be filled as required by either the Winter Part-Time Shift 1 or the Winter Part-Time Shift 2.

These positions will help provide a level of service on the weekends consistent with weekday levels of service without exhausting regular staff resources and will reduce the required number of Back-Up Operators from 24 to 8. The Back-Up Operators will not be guaranteed hours. The current talent pool of seasonal bridge crew staff and previous Back-Up Operators includes those with the skills and knowledge required to fill the Part-Time Operators positions. We also have staff that work Monday to Friday with another employer and like to pick up extra work on the weekends with Grey County. These staff will be looked upon to fill the winter shifts available for Back-Up Operators.

This hiring initiative will have a positive effect on staff retention for the summer months and enhance Transportation Services' efforts related to succession planning. Some of the tangible benefits and cost savings that cannot be quantified include fewer turnovers in winter operators, which means better return on investment for training and a reduction in recruitment costs. Implementing these shifts will also increase our ability to manage hours of service.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/Information Technology Considerations

The determined annual cost of \$189,000 will be offset by a significant reduction in full time employee overtime wages and back-up employee wages. Please see tables below for complete details.

Full Time Employee Overtime Wages (includes benefits and burden)	
2014/2015 Actual	2015/2016 Actual
\$212,000	\$204,000

Back-Up Employee Wages (includes benefits and burden)	
2014/2015 Actual	2015/2016 Actual
\$112,000	\$78,000

Winter Part-Time Employee Wages (includes benefits and burden)
2016/2017 Estimated
\$189,000

The exact cost offset will be determined by the number of winter events. Based on last year, the estimated cost is approximately \$75,000 savings from Full-Time employee overtime wages and Back-Up Operator employee wages.

No full time Union employee will be laid off as a result of employing the requested Part-Time Operators.

The Winter Part-Time Operator positions will not limit Transportation Services' ability to investigate other winter maintenance delivery options.

Link to Strategic Goals/Priorities

Strategic Goal 6: Achieving Excellence in Governance and Service

Attachments

Winter Shift Schedule

Respectfully submitted by,

Graham Wilson
Maintenance Manager

Director Sign Off: *Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation Services*

Winter Shifts Schedule

CURRENT SHIFTS

A.M. Shift WEEKENDS

WEEKEND - PATROLLER		WEEKDAY - OPERATOR				
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
midnight - 8:30 a.m.	midnight - 8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	OFF	OFF
8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours		

Day Shift WEEKENDS

WEEKEND - PATROLLER		WEEKDAY - OPERATOR				
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	OFF	OFF	3:30 p.m. - midnight
8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours			8.0 hours

P.M. Shift WEEKENDS

WEEKEND - PATROLLER		WEEKDAY - OPERATOR				
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	OFF	OFF	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight
8.0 hours	8.0 hours			8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL SHIFTS

Part Time Shift 1

WEEKEND - OPERATOR		WEEKDAY - OPERATOR				
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight
8.0 hours					8.0 hours	8.0 hours

Part Time Shift 2

WEEKEND - OPERATOR		WEEKDAY - OPERATOR				
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
OFF	1:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m. - midnight	3:30 p.m. - midnight	OFF	OFF	OFF
	8.0 hours	8.0 hours	8.0 hours			