

Unlike in CNV and West Van, the current DNV bylaw forces only businesses and multi-unit complexes to clear snow

# Should DNV force homeowners to clear snow?

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As the North Shore prepares for the first snow of the season, residents of the District of North Vancouver are once again questioning why the District refuses to require homeowners to clear the sidewalks in front of their property.

Both the City of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver have bylaws in place that make property owners responsible for clearing sidewalks. The City is succinct in saying "The owner or occupier of

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any real property shall remove any accumulation of snow and ice from the sidewalks and footpaths".

West Vancouver is more specific, requiring snow-clearing within 24 hours or before accumulations reach 10 cm. Even though neither municipality commonly tickets homeowners, the bylaws do give them the opportunity to encourage residents to bring out their shovels and salt buckets.

The current District bylaw forces businesses and multi-unit complexes to clear snow but excludes the owners of single-family homes. When the District last discussed amending their snow removal



bylaws, the argument from then Mayor Richard Watson was that the District didn't want to fine seniors or people with disabilities who have difficulty shovelling snow, homeowners who are away on vacation, and the owners of vacant homes awaiting demolition.

Amy Amantea, the chair of the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, points out that uncleared sidewalks are especially hazardous to people living with various disabilities who are greatly affected by winter snowfalls.

"When sidewalks and bus stops are not accessible, people with disabilities are

many times trapped in their homes. This creates a barrier to people with disabilities getting to work, medical appointment and social activities causing a significant risk to their gainful employment, health and wellbeing," she says.

Amantea also says that despite being legally blind "I shovel my sidewalk diligently every snowfall. I get outside early in the morning and shovel my driveway and the sidewalk in front of both my home and my neighbour's, because they just don't. It's a funny thing when you look up my hilly street, Highland Blvd, and notice that mine is the only sidewalk that is shoveled

for as far as the eye can see. "New District Mayor Mike Little is promising to revisit the question. "It hasn't come up yet, and wasn't featured in the election, but I will bring it up," he says.

Even if the District currently has no way to force homeowners to clear sidewalks, Little goes on to promise that the District would be monitoring developers building in the District.

"The District expects all construction projects to keep their sidewalks free and clear of obstructions, including the prompt removal of snow and ice through the winter season."