

HRM is not effectively managing its winter operations, Auditor General, Andrew Atherton, said in his report released today, June 18, 2025.

The audit found HRM Public Works management does not formally assess performance against Regional Council approved winter operations service standards, relying instead on informal monitoring with very limited useful information recorded. The lack of formal monitoring applies to both contracted services and the areas of HRM assigned to in-house operations. While third-party snow clearing contracts have adequate performance terms, management cannot objectively assess compliance with these. “Without adequate monitoring it is impossible to know what value HRM is getting for its winter service delivery,” said Atherton.

The audit also found public complaints regarding snow clearing services and related damage repairs are not adequately tracked to resolution. In most cases they are closed as they are assigned to supervisory staff, without follow up. There is also no analysis of this information to help identify any performance trends.

In addition, the audit found management does not know the total cost of in-house winter operations, with some costs captured in other HRM business units. “Not knowing the total costs may limit HRM’s ability to make appropriate resource allocation decisions” the auditor general said.

The audit also recommended improvements to in-house operations related to winter season planning and hazard assessment, as well as training processes. These areas affect the municipality’s ability to adequately identify and manage risks associated with snow clearing activity.

The auditor general’s report includes 13 recommendations which HRM management agreed to implement.

The report is available on the auditor general’s website at <https://hrmauditorgeneral.ca/published-reports>.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

In his report released today, Auditor General Andrew Atherton said HRM is not effectively managing its winter operations.

The audit found no formal monitoring of winter operations and no assessment of performance against Regional Council approved snow clearing standards; along with weaknesses addressing public complaints, tracking of necessary training and winter season planning.

The report includes 13 recommendations which HRM management agreed to implement.

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