

CRCOG's BENCHMARKING PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

In response to a request made by a member community, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) convened a subcommittee of managers to explore the concept of establishing "benchmarks" and related costs of services for various municipal operations. After some deliberation, the subcommittee determined that a number of municipal Highway Department functions should be targeted for study, as most of CRCOG's members either provide the same, or similar services each year utilizing Town forces. To date, the following services have preliminarily been identified for inclusion in what is projected to be a twelve month-study:

1. Snow and ice removal and control
2. Annual street and roadway sweeping each spring
3. Curbside leaf removal in the fall
4. Catch basin cleaning
5. Motor vehicle maintenance
6. Road management

It should be noted that **snow and ice removal and control** has been selected as the first functional area to be studied under this initiative.

METHODOLOGY

Since primary baseline data is essential if the research is to be credible and applicable, all participating regional municipalities must collect baseline information using the same approach. To assist each community and ultimately ensure an "apples to apples" comparison of resulting data, the baseline criteria has been predetermined and a hypothetical snow EVENT has been created. A more specific explanation of the type of information that is to be collected follows, and a set of forms is attached for you to complete.

The Snow and Ice Removal and Control event to be measured is as follows:

THE EVENT

The storm commences on a "normal" Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Snow starts at 30° with all precipitation to remain moderate snowfall. Total accumulation to be 7", duration of storm to be 12 hours ending at 1:00 a.m., with temperature being 28°. No unusual events occurring before, during or after the storm.

YOUR RESPONSE

On the attached questionnaire, you are asked to: specify the staffing, equipment and material resources you would make use of if your community was to respond to such an event; note any and all associated costs; provide basic information about your city/town that will help the subcommittee understand the scope of your operation; and highlight the operational guidelines that direct your Highway Department's snow response, either as a result of a formally adopted snow control policy, or based on informal performance standards (i.e., % of main roads open at all times, extent of black road policies, etc.).

Please note that the data you collect should only apply to snow and ice removal and control activities performed on town roadways. Similar work at school and town properties, firehouses, parking lots and on sidewalks remain outside the scope of this study.

NEXT STEPS

Upon completion of the baseline data collection and analysis phase, CRCOG's next step will be to evaluate the actual service quality and satisfaction levels of select communities within the pilot program. This evaluation will be performed through visual observations during real snow events, interviews of residents and business owners, historical police report reviews, and other appropriate methods. A final report will then be generated and distributed to all participants highlighting the results of the survey and all follow-up performance analyses. It is envisioned that similarly sized communities will be grouped together to allow for more valuable comparisons and recommendations.

It should be noted that this undertaking is intended to promote a level of performance and productivity within the Region that applies the best methods and lowest costs, and ultimately focuses on maximizing efficiencies. In return, the satisfaction level of the Region's residents and taxpayers will be raised, while the highest professional standards of municipal services will be integrated wherever possible.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Snow and Ice Removal and Control

Directions: Please answer all questions and attach additional sheets of paper if more space is required.

1. Town Information:

- a. # of residents _____
- b. # of road miles maintained _____

2. Materials:

- a. Amount of salt used _____
- b. Price per ton of salt _____
- c. Amount of sand used _____
- d. Price per yard of sand _____
- e. Sand/salt ratio (3:1, 4:1) _____
- f. Other ice fighting chemicals used, including quantities.

g. Describe the application procedures used for all materials listed above.

3. Response Duration:

- a. Projected start time _____
- b. Projected completion time _____
- c. Projected time to plow assigned route with one pass _____

4. **Operational Guidelines:**

a. Does your city/town have a policy that a certain percentage of all main roads must remain open at all times? ___ **YES** ___ **NO**

If **YES**, please specify the percentage. ___%

b. Does your city/town prioritize certain areas to be sanded first?
___ **YES** ___ **NO**

c. Does your city/town have a policy of sanding hills immediately?
___ **YES** ___ **NO**

d. Does your city/town have a policy of sanding curves immediately?
___ **YES** ___ **NO**

e. Does your city/town have a policy of sanding intersections immediately?
___ **YES** ___ **NO**

f. Are other areas targeted as priorities for sanding/salting/deicing first?
___ **YES** ___ **NO**

If **YES**, please specify them (e.g., main arteries). _____

g. Does your city/town have a "black roads policy"? ___ **YES** ___ **NO**

If **YES**, please describe. _____

h. Does your city/town have a policy that a certain amount of snow must first accumulate before plow work is to commence? ___ **YES** ___ **NO**

If **YES**, please specify the amount of accumulation. _____

i. Please note other operational guidelines relied upon by your Department.

5. **Miscellaneous:**

a. Average number of years of experience
of your highway crew

b. Miles per snow plow

Town

Respondent

Position

Phone Number

THANK YOU!