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Do you have an opinion to share?
E-mail your letter to
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news

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Keeping residential sidewalks safe in winter is up to all of us

The front end of another Canadian winter is upon us—with it comes accumulations of ice and snow.

It's as normal and natural a Canadian experience as the setting sun.

Through maintenance contractors, our tax dollars go to work to keep our roadways safe.

Snow is plowed and

Achieving Justice

PAUL HERGOTT



icy surfaces are sanded or salted. When budgeting for road maintenance, our government leaders do their best to strike the right balance between

affordability and safety.

Drivers need to do our part as well, adjusting our driving to snowy and icy conditions that cannot be 100 per cent

avoided.

What about residential sidewalks? I've seen sidewalk clearing plows here and there, but never in residential areas.

The only plows on my street are the road plows that sometimes end up dumping chunks of ice and snow up on those sidewalks.

The level of care homeowners put into home front sidewalks varies widely.

There are the retired keeners who are out there, it seems, to remove every flake of snow as it falls.

They not only keep the sidewalk perfectly clear, but also a swath of the street along the sidewalk.

Then there are those who seem not to own a shovel. The thinnest skiff of snow quickly turns to a layer of ice.

A narrow path develops through deeper snow, which also becomes icy and treacherous.

Neglected sections of residential sidewalks quickly become unsafe even for those wearing good quality winter boots.

In order to avoid the icy surfaces, pedestrians climb over plow-piles to walk on the street, or walk through fresher snow alongside the sidewalk.

The only chance of staying upright on the icy sections of sidewalk, is to purchase a form of "ice cleat" that manufactures have developed for strapping onto the bottoms of footwear.

Financial realities can get in the way of many people having the best of footwear, or purchasing "ice cleat" type products.

Those with mobility

issues are effectively kept prisoners in their own homes, unable to go out and get the walking exercise they need in order to stay as healthy and mobile as they can.

We could fix this problem by increasing our taxes and hiring maintenance contractors to add residential sidewalks to the roadways they keep safe for us.

Perhaps, on the whole, it would be a sensible solution.

Each of us pitching in to get the job done right would arguably be less expensive, when taking into account the cost of shovels and whatnot, along with time spent we spend hand-removing snow.

Until we vote in higher taxes, please take note of our municipal bylaws (Bylaw 8120 in the City of Kelowna and bylaw 0071.01 in the District of West Kelowna).

The two bylaws are very similar, each requiring homeowners to remove accumulated snow or ice from the sidewalks in front of our properties within 24 hours.

How do we get homeowners to follow the law and keep sidewalks safe?

Maybe it's time for our municipalities to start imposing fines for non-compliance. Perhaps a public shaming website such as www.shitparkers.com might be effective.

How about we start by handing a copy of this column to your friends and neighbours as a friendly reminder of our responsibilities in the hopeful expectation of voluntary compliance.

If someone around you has mobility issues that make it difficult to fulfill his or her responsibility, how about picking up a shovel to help them out.

Paul Hergott is a personal injury lawyer at Hergott Law in West Kelowna.

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Cole needed some extra help in his first 6 months and the KGH Perinatal Unit was there.

Cole Everett Britton
Date of birth: 02-05-14
Kelowna General Hospital



KGH is expecting! A new expanded Perinatal Unit opens this March. With your help, the KGH Foundation will raise the funds necessary to equip this new unit with state-of-the-art, lifesaving equipment, ensuring a future full of happy, healthy giggles.

Watch Cole's story at givinggiggles.ca

KGH FOUNDATION
together we change lives

givinggiggles.ca | #GivingGiggles | #KGHkid | 2268 Pandosy Street | 250-862-4438

Ethel Street to re-open

Ethel Street has re-opened today to motorists between Harvey Avenue and Bernard Avenue Friday, beginning at 5 p.m.

This \$1.7-million investment on Ethel Street includes a separated "cycle track" on both sides of the road, new sidewalks, landscaping and utilities improvements.

A cycle track is a protected bike lane that has a physical barrier from roadways and sidewalks.