



Alternative Snow Fence Program *Guidelines*

How can you get involved?

The placement of snow fences is an important part of the City's annual winter road maintenance program.

What is a snow fence?

Properly placed snow fences prevent the build-up of snow and ice on roads and help to keep winter roads safe by improving visibility for motorists. The City of Ottawa currently erects many kilometres of traditional wood-slat snow fences along its roadway network.

What is an alternative snow fence?

The City of Ottawa began a pilot project during the winter of 1996-97 to investigate the use of corn and tree rows as alternatives to traditional snow fencing. During that winter, five sites that used corn as a snow fence provided the same protection as regular wood-slat snow fencing. In subsequent years, the program was expanded and to date has proven to be an economical way for the City to provide a safer driving surface during the winter months.

The benefits of alternative snow fencing

Standing corn and trees are an economical alternative to the high cost of installing, removing, repairing, replacing, and storing traditional snow fences. They are a cost-effective way to keep our roadways safe and clear of snow and ice build-up during the winter season. In addition, corn also eliminates concerns raised over potential damage to tile drainage systems, which may occur with the installation of wood-slat fences.

How to participate

In partnership with the City of Ottawa, landowners with a corn cropping system are encouraged to participate in the Alternative Snow Fencing Program to help maintain the safety of our roadways during the winter months. Landowners are encouraged to leave a properly located swath of standing corn throughout the winter instead of

traditional snow fencing. A successful snow-break using corn requires landowners to leave a strip of corn 6-12 rows wide parallel to the roadway, approximately 20 meters from the edge of the road. In areas that are not used for agriculture, the City of Ottawa is encouraging landowners to plant trees as windbreaks along roadways. When planting tree windbreaks, the setback distance from the edge of the roadway should be 15 times the height of the plants at maturity.

Compensation

The City of Ottawa will compensate the landowner for the market value of the unharvested corn and for the extra work required to leave the corn stalks in the field. Compensation shall be agreed upon prior to participation in the program.

Trees as an alternative to snow fencing

The City of Ottawa is keen to partner with landowners interested in planting tree windbreaks along their fields adjacent to the roadway:

Tree plantings offer:

- Enhanced views along the roadway;
- Habitat for wildlife;
- Minimal maintenance, once the plants become established.

To find out more about how you can participate in the Alternative Snow Fencing Program, please contact:

City of Ottawa
24-Hour Call Centre at 580-2400