

## **SNOW MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE CITY MAINTAINED TRAIL AND SIDEWALK SYSTEM**

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### **Purpose**

Snow removal is necessary on trails and sidewalks for pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools, transit, high-density housing and commercial areas.

The City annually budgets a sum of money for winter maintenance of certain City trails and sidewalks. Taking into consideration the financial and personnel resources available to the City, it is the policy of the City to remove snow from the most frequently used trails and sidewalks in accordance with the standards set further in this policy. Staff will prioritize and make recommendations for new trail and residential requests to City Council based on the goals of this policy.

### **Goals**

1. Trail or sidewalk segment provides:
  - A route to school
  - Access to transit
  - Located in a high-density housing area
  - Access to commercial area
2. Maintain selected trails and sidewalks in a reasonable winter condition.
3. Have snow removed on selected trails and sidewalks within 36 hours after the commencement of snow removal.

### **Snow Management Operations**

Each year the Parks and Recreation Department updates its Trail and Sidewalk Snow Removal Map of the City that establishes priority systems for snow removal on trails and sidewalks. The designated trails and sidewalks will not be cleared of all snow and/or ice nor will they be maintained to bare pavement.

The start of snow removal operations for any storm is dependent upon immediate and anticipated conditions. Snow removal shall commence under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Director or his or her designee. During and following a snowfall, the Director will determine the staff power and equipment needed based on the environmental conditions and the provisions of this policy.

Snow removal may be conducted on a 24-hour a day basis, which may result in snow removal equipment being operated in residential areas during overnight and early morning hours.

In general, snow removal operations shall commence when one of the following occurs:

- Snowfall accumulation of two inches.
- Drifting of snow, street plowed snow piled on trails or sidewalks or residual street snow may warrant commencement of partial or full operations depending on conditions.
- Any other type of emergency as determined by the Parks and Recreation Director.

It is the goal to have the entire system cleared after a typical snowfall within 36 hours after the commencement of snow removal. The system may require more than 36 hours to complete based on event conditions, availability of personnel and equipment resources available.

The Parks and Forestry Division staff remove snow and/or provide maintenance in the following priority:

- Parking lots (e.g. LifeTime/Plymouth Ice Center; City Hall; Plymouth Creek Center/Fieldhouse)
- Trails, sidewalks and other park parking lots (e.g. Dog Park; Bass Lake Park; Parkers Lake Park)
- Skating rinks

## **Procedures and Responsibility**

The Parks and Recreation Director or designated representative determines when operations begin based on immediate and anticipated conditions, including number of personnel needed for operations.

## **Exceptions**

In the event of equipment failure, extreme snowfall or other unanticipated events including the necessity of resting snow removal crews, deviation from these standards may be appropriate.

## **Use of Chemical Agents**

Due to environmental concerns, abutting vegetation along trails and sidewalks, staffing, and specialized equipment needed, chemical agents will not be used in the snow removal process for trails and sidewalks. Chemical agents may be used in parking lots at recommended application rates as needed.

## **Suspension of Operations**

Safety of personnel and the public is important. Therefore, snow removal operations may be terminated after a prolonged time period of continual cleaning to allow personnel adequate time for rest. There may be instances when this is not possible depending on storm conditions and other circumstances. Operations may also be suspended during periods of limited visibility and/or severe weather conditions. Any decision to suspend operations shall be made by the Parks and Recreation Director. Suspending operations shall be based on the conditions of the storm, safety, and effectiveness of the clearing operation.

## **Landscaping**

Landscaping, including turf grass, trees, sprinklers and inanimate materials that are installed or encroach on City owned right-of-way are permitted, but the owner assumes all risk of damage. The City will assume no responsibility for damages incurred as the result of snow removal activities except that the City, at its option, will repair damaged areas with black dirt and grass seed only on City owned right-of-way that is removed as the result of snow removal activities.

The City will reimburse the property owner up to \$35 per sprinkler head for damage to underground sprinkling systems resulting from direct contact with City snow removal equipment. Documentation of costs incurred must be provided by the property owner for reimbursement.

If private landscaping is damaged due to indirect contact, including the force of snow generated by the snow removal vehicle, the City will assume no responsibility.

## **Snow Storage**

Ongoing snow removal efforts require the use of City owned right-of-ways and easements for storage of plowed or blown snow. Snow storage on or near private property may be required, when all other practical options have been exhausted because it is impossible financially and practically to haul out all snow from abutting trails and sidewalks.

## **Unusual Circumstances**

The Parks and Recreation Director, or his or her designee, is authorized to depart from this policy to settle unusual claims when circumstances warrant, as determined by the City Manager. These unusual situations shall be handled in a manner similar to the way other claims against the City are handled.

## **Review**

City staff will review this policy after each winter season and may make recommendations for change to the City Council as warranted.

***Resolution No. 2018-346, November 13, 2018  
(Supersedes Resolution 2016-326, October 25, 2016; Resolution 90-70, January 22, 1990)***