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PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT – OPERATION and MAINTENANCE

Dana R. Wardwell, Director

To: Infrastructure Committee
From: Dana Wardwell
Subject: Sidewalk Plowing
Date: December 9, 2014

For many years Public Works has plowed about 60 miles of sidewalks utilizing 3 Municipal Tractors (with 2 spare MT's) and 2 small front end loaders in the downtown area. The sidewalks we plowed provided a network of sidewalks that connected downtown, businesses and schools. Residential sidewalks were generally not plowed although we did maintain an alternate sidewalks list where we would plow sidewalks not on the priority list upon request by residents. This system worked well and we were generally able to clear the sidewalks within 3 days after a storm.

Recently I have received more requests to plow more residential sidewalks. In response to these requests please see the attached list of proposed sidewalk plowing for FY15. This list contains about 85 miles of sidewalks including the same 60 miles of priority 1 sidewalks with the addition of 25 miles of priority 2 sidewalks, one side of residential streets based on the odd even system. FY 15 is an odd year so we would plow the odd side of residential streets. I have the following concerns and or comments:

1. Plowing sidewalks is very difficult and hard on equipment. The new proposal includes a 42% increase in the amount of sidewalks plowed. We can expect a corresponding 42% increase in repairs, wear and tear on equipment.
2. Municipal tractors are very expensive, about \$140,000 each fully equipped. We currently replace one every other year to keep the fleet dependable to do the very difficult work. With 42% more work we may need to replace them more often.
3. In the past with 2 spare municipal tractors there have been times when both were necessary. Moving to a system utilizing only 1 spare will mean there will be times we will fall behind on plowing sidewalks. The proposed spare small front end loader does not perform well on city sidewalks.
4. If we receive back to back moderate to heavy snowfalls, it is very likely we will be unable to maintain the priority 2 sidewalks.
5. With another pending difficult budget do we want to increase a service?
6. If we are going to plow a sidewalk we should do so from the beginning of the year. Opening a sidewalk mid-season can damage equipment due to debris that may be under the snow.

Staff feels the present system has worked well but if council wishes to expand sidewalk plowing we could implement the proposed plan for FY 15 and evaluate its success before next winter.