



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: January 28, 2014

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **Public Communication of the Requirements for Snow and Ice Removal From Public Sidewalks.**

Recommendation:

Receive and File

Previous Directives:

October 22, 2013: Council directed staff to report back to the Transportation and Public Works Committee by January 2014 with a strategy for a more widespread communication plan on the requirements for snow and ice removal from public sidewalks.

Department Information:

Prepared by: Michael D. Kennedy, P.E., Director, Transportation Maintenance & Repair

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Michael Kennedy, 673-3759

Reviews

- Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval _N/A_ Date _____
- Civil Rights Approval Approval _NA_ Date _____
- Policy Review Group (PRG): Approval _NA_ Date _____

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Supporting Information

In response to testimony from a resident who objected to his sidewalk snow shoveling assessment, staff was directed to research strategies for increased communication

regarding property owners' responsibility for compliance with the City's snow shoveling ordinance.

Outreach to the public from both Public Works and the Communications Departments for the snow shoveling ordinance is continually improving. Current modes of communication include:

General:

- Snow shoveling news releases are sent as needed through the winter
- Newsbites article for City Council member newsletters
- An informational video is offered in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong on the City website and YouTube channel
- A Public Service Announcement (PSA) video is now airing on Comcast cable channels (new this season) and on City website and YouTube channel
- Sidewalk shoveling information is on the City and Public Works Web Pages
- Public Works produced and distributed a Snow Shoveling Flyer
- City Cable slates
- Snow Shoveling reminders are included in the annual utility bill inserts
- 311 has specific scripting to answer sidewalk snow shoveling questions
- City-wide snow emergency telephone alerts include the spoken reminder, "Please remember to shovel your sidewalk."
- Snow emergency email alerts to subscribers include the statement, "Also, be sure to shovel your sidewalks and around your garbage cart."
- During a snow emergency, the snow page on the web site is updated to say, "Current Parking Information – On (DAY and DATE) the City of Minneapolis declared a Snow Emergency. Please see the links to the Parking Rules. Thank you for your cooperation. Also, please remember to shovel your sidewalks and around your garbage carts."

Other:

- The Warning letter sent to noncompliant property owners includes a copy of the snow shoveling ordinance. The usual comment inserted into the warning letter by the sidewalk inspectors is "Please remove all snow and ice from the public sidewalk, full width and down to pavement." Also, the inspector's name and phone number is on the letter so that the property owner can call if they have any questions. When this letter is sent to a noncompliant property owner, additional time is then given for the owner to clear the sidewalk before any action is taken. That means in each case, when a property owner is assessed for clearing work he/she/they had previously received the letter with shoveling information.
- Every season Public Works staff has several opportunities to get the message out through major media stories and interviews (television, radio and print), and articles with various local and area newspapers such as the Southwest Journal and the Northeaster.

Public Works and the Communications Department continue to look for innovative communications strategies to educate the public about sidewalk shoveling responsibilities.