



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

Date: November 23, 2004
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Referral to: Honorable Barbara Johnson, Chair Ways & Means Budget Committee
Subject: **Contract services for Snow Emergency automated phone broadcast alerts**

Recommendation:

1. That the appropriate City Officials be directed to proceed with entering into a contract with SwiftReach Networks, Inc., who was selected through a formal RFP process by the City of St. Paul, with the primary goal to provide automated telephone alerts to residents regarding the declaration of snow emergencies. The maximum annual expenditure is estimated at \$90,000. Funds are available within the existing budget.

Previous Directives:

- N/A

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Approved by:

Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Michael D. Kennedy, P.E., Director, Winter Operations

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information:

Public Works has a variety of communications outlets to notify residents of the declaration of snow emergencies. In order to provide for quality plowing services - timely, accurate and clear communications with the public is essential to gaining public compliance with snow emergency

parking regulations. There is emerging technology that can provide an additional new and proactive contact method via automated telephone broadcast messaging.

Briefly, the idea is that a pre-recorded message can be automatically broadcast to a pre-defined list of telephone numbers. The City is looking for a service provider that will create and manage the phone lists, and provide all the technology to record the messages, facilitate launch of the broadcast, and provide tracking of the results. Because of the capacity constraints and costs of the technology, messages must be limited to 30 second alerts, informing recipients that a snow emergency has been declared, and where to go for further information. Due to limitations in phone numbers available to the list managers, not every household or business will be captured. Generally, the lists are about 80% accurate. However, there will be the ability for people to add their number to the lists, as well as remove their number if they do not want to receive a call. The ability to target specific areas or groups is available as well.

During the summer of 2004, The City of St. Paul, Public Works Department conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selection process to select a vendor for emergency broadcast alerts. The desired service requirements, and defined scope of work are virtually identical to the needs of Minneapolis Public Works. They selected, and have entered into a contract with SwiftReach Networks, Inc.

The City of St. Paul has furnished us with documentation of their process. The City of Minneapolis Permanent Review Committee (PRC) has reviewed and agreed that the St. Paul process was consistent with Minneapolis standards, and that the process was open, fair, involved a wide variety of respondents, and their selection process rigorous and complete. The PRC recommends that Minneapolis Public Works be able to move forward with a recommendation to the Council to proceed with entering into a contract with SwiftReach Networks, Inc.

The final contact amount depends upon the eventual number of phone numbers to be dialed, and the number of Snow Emergencies, but it is anticipated that the contract expenditure would be up to \$90,000.

Also, in the event of public health or emergency response situations, the messaging service could be used to transmit notices to impacted businesses and residents.