



RE: **Resolution R-22-105 Re: Winter Sidewalk Maintenance**
TO: Mayor Taylor and Members of the City Council
CC: Milton Dohoney, City Administrator
FROM: John Fournier, Deputy City Administrator
DATE: 12/23/22

In this memo I provide an update to the Council regarding resolution R-22-015, which directed several initiatives related to improving the maintenance of sidewalks for winter weather. A prior resolution from Council requested that the administration provide cost estimates for several program configurations that would have allowed the city to ensure city-wide sidewalk clearing after winter storms. That memo [can be found here](#).

Response to Resolution R-22-015

Resolution R-22-015 directed the following:

[1] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to provide an analysis in the FY23 budget presentations regarding the staffing needs and costs to ensure sidewalks and paths owned by the City are cleared with the same timeliness as required of privately owned nonresidential properties in the City;

[2] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator carry out an RFI process to determine contractor capacity, interest, and costs that could be used to further determine feasibility of using contractors for a municipal snow clearing program;

[3] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to work with the Attorney's Office to prepare City code amendments related to sidewalk clearing to ensure that City code offers Community Standards necessary discretion and opportunity to focus enforcement on problematic properties and utilize educational alternatives, while conducting enforcement efforts;

[4] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to work with the Ann Arbor Police Department and Community Standards to develop a more robust annual education and enforcement campaign for snow clearing across the City, with an initial emphasis on proactive enforcement along transit corridors;

[5] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to implement solutions for better outcomes in the DDA district with a particular emphasis on ensuring unobstructed access to/from/within all crosswalks, including, but not limited to convening a working group of representatives from the Main Street BIZ, the merchant associations, property owners, and major institutional building owners to implement solutions for better snow clearing operations in the DDA district; and

[6] RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to conduct outreach to the AAPS to encourage the timely clearance of sidewalks adjacent to all AAPS-owned properties.

In the intervening months city staff have been working toward implementation of Council's direction. Staff have moved the following efforts forwarded related to each resolved clause, provided numerically per indicated above.

- 1) Staff provided the following cost analysis to the Council earlier this year, indicating that the two-year cost of prioritizing city-owned sidewalks and paths to be cleared in the same timeframe as city streets would be approximately \$953,305 in FY22 dollars, spread over



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two fiscal years. After some discussion with members of Council and weighing the various priorities of the city, this expenditure was not included in the FY23 budget proposal.

Personnel Costs (FY22 \$\$)	\$328,000
Startup Costs (FY22 \$\$)	\$175,000
Operations and Maintenance Costs (FY22 \$\$)	\$50,833
Year 1 Costs	\$559,153
Year 2 Costs	\$394,152
Total Two-year Cost	\$953,305

- 2) This fall the city advertised an RFI for snow removal contractors to see what interest there is in the region to aid the city in a municipal sidewalk clearing program. [The RFI can be read here](#). Unfortunately, we only received one response to the RFI and it was deemed to be inadequate for the city’s needs. We would have needed several high-quality responses, allowing us to platoon firms across the city to cover regions of Ann Arbor, to hope to achieve any effective municipal snow clearing program. As has been demonstrated in other cities in the region, Ann Arbor’s RFI showed that there is not contractor interest nor capacity in the Ann Arbor area to conduct a municipal snow clearing program successfully.
- 3) We will not be recommending amendments to City Code related to sidewalk clearing, and instead will be focusing our efforts on a city-wide education campaign and improved services in the downtown.
- 4) We have designed an engagement and outreach campaign to city residents and businesses that is more robust than what has been undertaken in previous years. This year, the City has or will be providing the following communications:
 - i) To all city residents, post cards are being sent advising residents of their responsibilities under the code.
 - ii) We have sent letters to previous offenders who have been written tickets under the sidewalk clearing ordinance reminding them of their responsibilities under the code.
 - iii) We printed door hangers with the same messaging as the post cards that will be hand delivered to all addresses along our major transit corridors.
 - iv) We have already begun our social media campaign reminding people of their responsibilities for winter sidewalk clearing.
- 5) The City Administrator has convened a working group comprised of stakeholders in the downtown to discuss a wide range of issues. Among those issues, the group has discussed the importance of timely sidewalk clearing. Both the State Street and Main Street associations hire contractors to clear their sidewalks, and we have discussed the importance of having those contactors keep pedestrian curb cuts clear throughout the winter, not just after a snow event. The City will monitor the downtown sidewalks, discuss improvements if pedestrian curb cuts are not regularly cleaned, and explore additional resources with the Council if they are needed.



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- 6) The city administrator has communicated the city's desire that the Ann Arbor Public Schools dedicate attention to the clearing of sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure around their schools, and the schools have acknowledged that desire.

A2 Snow Match

In addition to the efforts listed above, Ann Arbor's "A2 Snow Match" is a pilot program which looks to pair residents who are unable to clear their own sidewalks with nearby neighbors who volunteer to assist them with snow removal on their city sidewalks. Recipients of the volunteer services can be individuals with disabilities or seniors (55+) who do not have resources (financial or family/friends nearby) to assist with snow removal. This pilot program hopes to foster stronger community relationships and relieve some of the stress that comes from a snowfall or freeze. The program aims to make our sidewalks safer for all in our community.

It is important to note that this is only a pilot program and will be limited in scope. Our hope is that we will be able to demonstrate success and grow the program in the coming year. This year, we anticipate that the demand for support will be greater than the number of volunteers that we have. At the time of this writing, we have recruited 31 volunteers, with volunteer efforts ongoing through mid-January. Of those 31, seven have completed the vetting process and are cleared to participate with our efforts to finish recruiting the remaining volunteers in process.

Registrations for residents who are seeking support with shoveling their sidewalks will begin in late December and will be ongoing. Residents seeking support must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 55 years old or have a physical disability
- Live within the City of Ann Arbor Limit
- Do not have resources (financial or family/friends nearby) to assist with snow removal on their own

Staff will use GIS software to attempt to match volunteers with residents seeking support withing a 10-minute walk for their address. It is important for volunteers to be within walking distance of their matched house or houses so we are not encouraging people to drive in potentially unsafe road conditions. For this reason, not all volunteers or residents will be guaranteed a match, though we will work as hard as we can to create matches. We anticipate that requests will likely outnumber available volunteers this year. However, since this is a pilot program we are looking to establish the program this year and cultivate an initial pool of volunteers, with the hope that limited success this year will prompt more investment and growth in the program in the coming years.

Staff will inform volunteers and neighbors when a match has occurred. Neighbors receiving a volunteer's help are asked to have a snow shovel and salt (optional) available for their volunteer. Volunteers will be asked to help their match out within 24-hours of the end of a snow event.

Residents can sign up as volunteers through City Parks, here:
<https://secure.rec1.com/MI/city-of-ann-arbor/catalog?filter=c2VhcmNoPTIyNDkxMzM=>

Residents can sign up as recipients of these snow clearing services here:
<https://secure.rec1.com/MI/city-of-ann-arbor/catalog?filter=c2VhcmNoPTIyNDkxNDE=>