

CITY COUNCIL POLICY

SUBJECT: WINTER MAINTENANCE OF SIDEWALKS AND TRAILWAYS

DATE ADOPTED: October 15, 1996

REVISED: June 2, 1998; April 15, 2003; Sept. 16, 2008; June 7, 2011;
November 19, 2013; April 17, 2018

Background: In response to numerous requests to have the City's sidewalk and trailway system maintained year around, the City Council adopted a formal policy in October of 1996. After an initial trial period of evaluating two seasons of winter maintenance on a limited segment (3.8 miles) of trails and sidewalks, the City Council expanded the program in June of 1998 to include 56 miles deemed necessary to meet the basic pedestrian needs of the community. Every year since then, the Council has carefully reviewed all requests for additions or changes to the approved system.

When the original program was first initiated, the Council also evaluated the cost and time frames associated with providing this new service with City personnel and equipment or through private contractual services. Up until 2008-09, the City had contracted out this service delivery program.

However, State legislation, budget constraints and economic projections resulted in a need to change the way this Winter Trail Maintenance Program was provided without reducing the number of trails themselves. The Park System plan states "Prudent decision making regarding snow plowing must consider the actual amount of trail use gained given the level of investment required". Subsequently, the 2009 Budget process eliminated funds for the continued use of contractual services, requiring this service delivery program to be performed solely with City resources as a secondary priority to the City's larger Snow and Ice Control program for local streets.

Purpose: The City of Eagan developed a formal policy in order to respond in an orderly, consistent, and fiscally responsible manner to the desires of the community for a basic Winter Trail and Sidewalk Maintenance Program. After reviewing the extent of sidewalks and trails that exist within the community, the City Council has continually reviewed and determined which of those segments meet the City's basic criteria for inclusion in a winter maintenance program.

Criteria: The updated plan adopted by Council action on June 4, 2013 incorporates approximately 72.6 miles of the current 116.5 mile system. The following criteria will be used to determine whether a segment of sidewalk and/or trailway should be included in the winter trail maintenance program:

1. Trails along Major Arterial Roads. These are thoroughfare roads with 4+ traffic lanes, traffic volumes greater than 5,000 vehicles per day and speed limits of 45 mph or greater.
2. Trails along Community Collectors. These are thoroughfare roads with 2 traffic lanes (with safety lanes/shoulders) or 4 full lanes of traffic with volumes greater than 3,000 vehicles per day and speed limits from 35-45 mph.

3. Trails along Neighborhood Collector Streets. These are local streets approximately 1 mile in length with 2 traffic lanes (with safety lanes/shoulders), traffic volumes less than 3,000 vehicles per day and speed limits of 35 mph or greater.
4. Local School Walking Routes. These are trails and sidewalks that are relied upon by the school districts for designated walkers under their bus transportation policy.
5. Transit Routes. These are trails and sidewalks that are located along scheduled transit routes with designated transit stops (i.e. signs, shelters, benches or stations) maintained by the MVTA and are also located within or adjacent to high density residential areas, retail centers or high density employment centers.
6. Other. The Council's discretion will be used to designate other segments as necessary to provide continuity, designated recreational loops, etc.

Operational Policies:

Specific operational policies are hereby adopted to implement a Winter Trail and Sidewalk Maintenance Program on an efficient, prioritized and equitable basis as conditions and resources allow. These Operational Policies will be evaluated periodically by the City Council as necessary to determine the appropriateness of discontinuing, maintaining or modifying the program.

1. Snow removal operations will be performed with City staff and equipment.
2. Snow fall attributes and operational responses can vary significantly by event and seasonal occurrence. The City will attempt to complete all sidewalk and trail snow removal operations as quickly as possible. However, depending on the severity of the snow event, the moisture content, temperature, seasonal accumulation totals, frequency of back to back storms and other weather prediction factors, this may take up to several weeks.
 - a. Sidewalk and trailway snow removal operations will be performed only after a minimum of 2" of snow has accumulated resulting from a snowfall event.
 - b. Accumulations resulting from drifting and/or depositions resulting from public street snow removal operations will be performed as determined necessary by the City.
 - c. City-wide snow removal operations on trails and sidewalks will begin after all public street snow removal operations have been completed and/or when deemed necessary by the City in coordination with public street snow removal operations.
 - d. Snow removal operations on trails and sidewalks will be performed by City personnel during the standard work day (7:00 am to 3:30 pm, M-F) and limited overtime hours, as directed by the Transportation and Operations Engineer or his designee. For safety reasons, no operator shall work more than a twelve-hour shift in any twenty-four hour period.
 - e. Due to the varying width of sidewalks and trails combined with the different types of specialty equipment necessary to maintain them, designated trails and sidewalks will be grouped into districts by attributes and location with a progression plan based on efficiency. For heavier snow events, excessive seasonal accumulations or back to back storm events, it may become necessary to modify the normal progression based on a Priority Response Plan approved by the Council. Priorities will take into consideration walking routes to schools, high density residential neighborhoods, major retail commercial centers, transit stops, and efficient use of equipment resources.

3. The level of service will be limited to what can be provided by mechanical equipment. Due to the limitations of mechanical equipment and trail irregularities, pathways may not be cleared or maintained to a dry pavement standard. No hand work will be performed by the City. Surface irregularities and slippery conditions may result. No ice control (sanding or salting) will be performed by the City.
4. It is to be expected that snow can be plowed, blown, swept or dumped on public right-of-way and drainage easements on either side of the sidewalk/trail as needed for the best efficiency of operation.
5. Reasonable attempts will be made not to deposit excessive snow in driveways and/or private sidewalks if it is operationally or mechanically controllable. However, the removal of any plow spillage that may result will be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner and/or occupant.
6. The City will not be responsible for sand, salt or incidental plow damage to turf or driveways, nor irrigation systems, fencing or any landscaping improvements located within public rights-of-way or adjacent drainage easements. Any related repair will be the responsibility of the adjacent property owners and/or occupant.
7. In order to perform snow removal operations, pathways must remain free of any obstructions (i.e., vehicles, refuse containers, play equipment, implements, etc.) until the pathway snow clearing operation has been completed. If obstructions are encountered, the City's operation may skip portions of the affected property frontage and the subsequent removal will be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner and/or occupant.
8. School districts will be expected to perform snow removal operations on those segments of public trails and sidewalks adjacent to their property as necessary to accommodate designated walkers according to their bus transportation policy.

Plan Adoption:

The sidewalks and trails designated to be maintained by the City of Eagan will be so referenced on the most recent map adopted by Council action and kept on file in the Department of Public Works.

Process for Modifications to Approved Plan:

With approximately 38% of the system not being maintained and new trail/sidewalk segments being constructed each year, it is anticipated there will be requests for other segments to be added. Due to the cost and/or time to add additional segments to the overall maintenance program, it is necessary that a need and benefit be demonstrated to justify additions to the Winter Trail Maintenance system. Subsequently, no public request will be considered unless accompanied by a petition of at least 50 property owners or employees of businesses located within 1/2 mile of the segment to be considered. All requests/petitions must be submitted in writing by April 1st. If the Public Works Director, or his designee, find a petitioned request to adequately meet the aforementioned criteria (#1-#4), said segment of sidewalk and/or trail may be added to the Winter Trail and Sidewalk Maintenance Program. Any such added sidewalk and/or trail segment will then be presented to the Council at the next available Council Workshop with formal action taken at a subsequent regular Council meeting for possible inclusion into the following season's program.