

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 606 Relating to Removal of Snow and Ice from Public Sidewalks

Requested & Presented by: Darcy Perkins, Municipal Services Specialist

Meeting Date: Public Works on 01-15-2026

Finance and Common Council on 02-03-2026

Committee Review:

Background: Chapter 606 of the Code of Ordinances governs snow and ice removal from public sidewalks. Staff reviewed the existing provisions to improve clarity, consistency, and enforceability while maintaining alignment with Wisconsin law and peer municipal practices.

The current ordinance establishes a general duty but includes procedural requirements that have delayed abatement and hindered cost recovery, limiting the City's ability to respond promptly to public safety concerns.

The proposed ordinance repeals and recreates Chapter 606 in a simplified, modernized format. The revised Chapter establishes a clear standard requiring sidewalks to be cleared within twelve (12) hours after the end of a snowfall, clarifies responsibility regardless of the source of accumulation, and expressly addresses corner properties, crosswalks, and curb ramps.

Procedural barriers are removed while preserving courtesy notice as an option, not a prerequisite. Clear billing, delinquency, and tax roll placement procedures are established, allowing the City to recover actual abatement and administrative costs and ensuring those costs are borne by responsible property owners rather than the general taxpayer.

Cost Basis and Justification: Staff evaluated the City's actual labor and equipment costs incurred when performing sidewalk snow and ice abatement to ensure the proposed are reasonable, defensible, and proportionate.

Abatement Costs: A minimum labor and equipment charge of one-half (½) hour per occurrence is proposed to account for mobilization, travel, equipment setup, safety measures, and documentation. Based on standardized municipal equipment rates and typical field operations, the City's minimum direct abatement cost is approximately \$40.00-\$60.00 per occurrence, depending on required equipment.

Legal Authority Wis. Stat. §§ 66.0113–66.0114 (municipal citations); WI § 66.0907 (special charges for abatement); Ch. 74 (tax roll collection).

Department Recommendation: Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 606 relating to removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks.

Financial Impact: The ordinance improves the City's ability to recover abatement and administrative costs. Under the prior ordinance, enforcement and collection were difficult due to required administrative steps, resulting in costs often being absorbed by the City rather than the owner responsible.

Requested Action:

PUBLIC WORKS: Motion to forward Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 606 relating to removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council.

FINANCE: Motion to recommend to the Common Council adoption of Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 606 relating to removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks.

COUNCIL: Motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 606 relating to removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks, as presented.

Attachment(s):

- Ordinance #2026-XX_Amending Chapter 606 Relating to Removal of Snow and Ice from Public Sidewalks