



City of Stevenson

Planning Department

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TO: City Council
FROM: Ben Shumaker on behalf of the Planning Commission
DATE: December 15th, 2022
SUBJECT: Strategic Priority Recommendation: Snow Plowing, Snow Shoveling

Hello-

For the second winter in a row, the Planning Commission has heard public concerns about how our community deals with snow and ice. At their December 12, 2022 meeting they directed me to prepare this letter to you to share these concerns. Typically, when making such requests, the Planning Commission takes a 2-touch approach, outlining their concerns for inclusion in a draft letter then evaluating that draft before sending. Seeking to expedite the discussion for this season, they did not do so on this occasion. Please see the following 4 observations and 2 recommendations.

Observations

The discussions at Planning Commission meetings includes the following observations:

- Snow management isn't on anyone's mind when strategic priorities are established during summer season retreats.
- Climate change is creating a new (ab)normal. Our policies and practices related to snow management have not kept up with these changes.
- Property owners are not aware of or accountable to their responsibility for snow removal on sidewalks.
- Our community is aging. This makes pedestrian travel (including travel between a vehicle and a destination/origin) difficult and dangerous in the snow. Plowing practices complicate this even further. Driveway berms are difficult to remove. Snow plowed from the streets ends up on sidewalks, complicating property owners' removal efforts. Intersection curb ramps are used for permanent snow storage.

Recommendations

The Planning Commission mad these recommendations made in light consistent with their understanding of the City's limitations to effect immediate change in this issue:

- During the next strategic planning retreat, consider overhauling the snow management policies of the city/community. A comprehensive approach will evaluate:
 - Building property owner awareness of their statutory responsibility.
 - Adding a local regulatory incentive for property owners to meet their responsibility.
 - Changing snow plowing policies related to vehicle speed, berm creation/management and snow removal.
 - Considering expanded services to meet community needs (ex., berm removal, sidewalk plows)
- As soon as possible, start developing partnerships with property owners, businesses, and the Stevenson Downtown Association to improve removal of sidewalk snow in the downtown core.