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DIRECTOR

Date: January 13, 2025

Subject: Response to Snow Removal Concerns

Dear Board of Aldermen,

Thank you for your understanding and support as we work through this winter season. I appreciate you taking the time to share your gratitude with the staff and your concerns with myself and other city leaders. We recognize that this storm has brought snow levels that the City of St. Louis has not seen in years, creating challenges beyond what our city is historically able to service. I want to assure you that we are doing everything possible to address the challenges caused by the snowstorm and low temperatures. I understand how frustrating and challenging these conditions have been, especially for residents living on streets that remain unplowed and vulnerable members of our community.

Currently, our snow removal teams are prioritizing primary and secondary routes to ensure that emergency vehicles, public transportation, and critical services can continue operating. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to plow our residential streets, which are typically narrow and have vehicles parked on both sides, with our current equipment without causing damage to or burying vehicles, and so, it has long been City policy not to plow those streets.

You can find a map of our snow plow routes [at this link](#), and I encourage you to share this link with your constituents.

Below, is an update on our plan

Streets Dept. Operations

- During this past storm, we **operated 50+ trucks with 53 employees working in 12 hour shifts.**
- As of today, staff are continuing to work regular shifts to treat pavement and plow where they can. Ongoing efforts are meant to ensure that primary and secondary routes are cleared and treated.
- **Resources are being directed to address neighborhood streets. We started with neighborhood streets on Sunday, Jan. 4.**
- It was brought to my attention that there is concern with the conditions around schools within our city limits. I requested a map to verify that all charter, independent, parochial, and public schools, along with Senior Service Centers, are all on snow routes, **which have all been treated. GIS provided by the planning division shows that all of these schools are on snow routes.** I am now in communication with representatives from schools through the Mayor's Office staff to identify emergency situations to handle on a case-by-case basis.
- I encourage you and your constituents to utilize the [Citizen's Service Bureau](#) to request streets that need to be salted in the City.
- We are actively monitoring the weather forecast and are aware of the potential for ice formation in the coming days. Additional salting and treatment efforts are planned to mitigate these hazards.

Expansion of Efforts

- This **winter storm has allowed us to expand snow removal operations beyond the traditional routes.** This includes evaluating additional resources, such as equipment and personnel from other departments, such as the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry, to expedite clearing efforts.
- Discussions are underway to reassess our response strategy to ensure neighborhood streets are addressed sooner in extreme weather events like this. I have been working with local contractors to explore the financial and operational obligations of obtaining a contractor to plow residential streets, but financial obligations and liability have all posed challenges to moving forward with a contract.
- **We have purchased additional fleet vehicles outfitted to plow some of our residential streets.** Due to supply chain delays, we have not received the additional fleet, and this will be put in service for next winter.
- We are currently looking at **expanding the snow call pay incentive and working with other departments that have small fleet vehicles.** Once this work is completed, you will be briefed on the changes to the snowplow policy, and **I will be requesting your help with ordinance enforcement and resident education on expectations of vehicle and business owners.**

Trash Collection

- As you are aware, the Refuse Division is a part of the Street Department, and we have all been working together to keep city services moving. Trash collection teams worked every day but Monday, Jan. 6.
- Due to the weather conditions last week, we were able to collect 50% of our city routes. This weekend, we had salt trucks treating alleys for better accessibility this week, and once conditions improve, trash collection will resume at full strength as quickly as possible.

Communication

- Mayor Jones, Kent Flake, and I have worked to continuously provide updates on the condition of our streets. I have made myself available and tried my best to reply to all your requests to facilitate your constituents' needs. If you hear concerns about specific areas, I ask that you or your legislative aids report them through CSB to help us deploy crews to those emergency areas.

We deeply appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to improve conditions. Please know that we are committed to ensuring the safety and accessibility of our streets for all residents.

If you have additional questions or concerns, feel free to reach out. I will continue to keep you informed as new developments occur.



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