

City of Spokane Snow Plan Overhaul

When it snows, we respond.

Rev. 10/2017



The City of Spokane is updating its plan to manage street conditions in the winter, responding to citizen concerns.

The City listened and has overhauled its plan to include:

- More plowing, sooner.
- More equipment and people available for snow removal.
- Completing plowing of all streets during heavier snowfalls more quickly.
- Piloting of new equipment to minimize driveway berms.
- Plowing snow away from sidewalks.

Here's a look at what citizens told us and the changes we have planned:

Concern: Complete a full-City plow more quickly, starting at a lower threshold.

Response: When it snows—even if it's just an inch or two, the City will plow all the streets, including residential streets as part of their regular work days. During small snowfalls, crews will work during their normal working hours and clear snow throughout the City. The City will move more crews to plowing efforts earlier and use more snow removal equipment on a day-to-day basis.

When snow conditions warrant—but at least at 4 inches of accumulation—the City will move to 24/7 operations until every street is cleared. The Street Department expects to complete those plows in about three days using this changed plan, quicker than in previous years.

Concern: Provide clearer communication of expectations spread through more communications channels.

Response: The City will share information before and during the snow season, communicating with media and using all our communications tools including social media, our web site, CityCable 5, and more. Staff also plan to update online plowing maps more frequently during 24/7 operations to give citizens a better look at where plowing has completed and what areas will be next.

Concern: Snow should be moved away from driveways and sidewalks.

Response: The City is adding equipment that should allow us to minimize “berms” in driveways. The City is buying four new loaders with “gates” and will equip three other pieces of equipment with those gates to avoid plowing in driveways as a pilot program. If we see good results, we will buy more such equipment over the next several years.

Crews also are going to change some of our plowing strategies to help with driveway and sidewalk snow. In some cases, crews may push snow to center medians; the Street Department also is looking at plowing a little away from the curb to keep snow off sidewalks as much as possible.

Concern: Priority should be give to school routes for walking and buses, STA stops and routes, and medical facilities.

Response: Increased plowing in residential areas at lower snow totals should help keep vehicle routes more clear for all of these locations. The City also will coordinate with our partners at Spokane Public Schools, Spokane Transit Authority, and our medical facilities to address areas of concern.

The City will work to educate and encourage citizens and businesses to complete sidewalk clearing. The City will provide more intense education efforts on routes that serve school children and have been jointly identified by the City and Spokane Public Schools. In the future, the City could look at additional enforcement of sidewalk snow removal on these routes.

What Citizens Can Do:

For a successful snow season, citizens and businesses need to do their part.

Parking: The City is asking citizens to move their cars to the odd side of the street for the entire snow season, which runs from Nov. 15 to March 15. Within the downtown core from Maple to Division and I-90 to the Spokane River, cars will need to be moved out of on-street parking stalls between midnight and 6 a.m. when it snows. Recreational vehicles, boats, and trailers also need to be moved off the street before Nov. 15.

Sidewalk Snow Clearing: City ordinances and practicality demand that property owners clear the sidewalk adjacent to their properties. The City is asking citizens to clear a 36-inch pathway to allow school children, disabled individuals, bus riders, and other pedestrians to safely move through the community, with a goal of completing that work by 9 a.m. after a snowfall. Not everyone is capable of clearing sidewalks so neighbors should consider assisting seniors or disabled individuals with sidewalk shoveling.