



Department of Public Works  
**Engineering Division**  
Robert F. Phillips, P.E., City Engineer

City-County Building, Room 115  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
Phone: (608) 266-4751  
Fax: (608) 264-9275  
[engineering@cityofmadison.com](mailto:engineering@cityofmadison.com)  
[www.cityofmadison.com/engineering](http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering)

**Assistant City Engineer**  
Michael R. Dailey, P.E.

**Principal Engineer 2**  
Gregory T. Fries, P.E.  
Christopher J. Petykowski, P.E.

**Principal Engineer 1**  
Christina M. Bachmann, P.E.  
Eric L. Dundee, P.E.  
John S. Fahrney, P.E.

**Facilities & Sustainability**  
Jeanne E. Hoffman, Manager

**Operations Manager**  
Kathleen M. Cryan

**Mapping Section Manager**  
Eric T. Pederson, P.S.

**Financial Manager**  
Steven B. Danner-Rivers

October 30, 2015

Mr. Perry Sandstrom  
3520 Gregory Street  
Madison, WI 53711

RE: Winter Operations on the Southwest Bike Path

Dear Mr. Sandstrom,

I have received your email regarding our proposed changed in snow/ice control operations on the Southwest Bike Path (SWBP). To recap how we got to this proposal a timeline is provided below:

- 8/10 email received by City Engineering regarding this issue from Mr. Sandstrom
- 8/11 email responses from Greg Fries & Tony Fernandez
- 8/11 email response to above by Mr. Sandstrom
- 8/27 meeting at City Engineering offices – attendees include Mr. Sandstrom, Mr. Rewey, Kathy Cryan and Greg Fries
- 10/1 operational policy change made formal and working plan beginning for 2015/16 winter season
- 10/22 Lake Wingra Steering Team meeting – where Greg informed group of planned operational change
- 10/27 email received by City Engineering from Mr. Sandstrom objecting to the proposed policy and requesting issue to be put on the Ped/Bike agenda.

(emails are appended to this document)

As you are aware, multiple City agencies maintain our bike system through the winter season. While this is primarily done by Parks and Engineering, on street paths are done by the Streets Department. Each agency manages paths according to their protocols, and there is no adopted uniform city policy regarding winter maintenance of bike paths.

In the case of the SWBP, a major commuter bike corridor maintained by City Engineering, winter operations are as follows:

Existing:

- 1) for snows in excess of 1” - snow removal (by bladed plows)
- 2) following the removal of snow and the end of the storm event - salt (NaCl) is placed
- 3) engineering equipment does not have rate control equipment installed so salt is applied based on operator assessment of need.

Proposed:

- 1) for predicted snow events where conditions are suitable (i.e. pavement temperature, wind, water content) of 15 degrees F or higher, – engineering crews will anti-ice the main path ( spraying the pavement) with a brine made of sodium chloride. Please note that as with any tool anti-icing is not suitable for all situations. We will not be anti-icing prior to forecast of rain or freezing rain events, when winds are more than 15 MPH, when the anti-icing agents have the potential of causing snow to stick to the roadway under blowing and/or drifting snow conditions or when pavement temperatures are too low.
- 2) for snow events less than 4”, snow will then be removed with broom/brush style equipment
- 4) for snow events exceeding 4” of snow, removal will be completed with bladed or snow blower equipment
- 3) following snow removal no additional de-icing will be used on the main path.

Please note that anti-icing activities will be confined to the main path and will not include ramps. As such we will continue to apply de-icing materials on these areas as needed for safety.

The proposal to use this method of snow removal follows the current state of knowledge regarding best practices, and resolves several known problems with the existing methods. Currently, the use of a blade on a crowned path results in the blade only reaching pavement surface on approximately ½ the path, and in fact causes compaction of snow on the other.

We are hopeful that by switching to anti-icing (to prevent bonding of the snow to the pavement) and the use of a broom/brush we will reduce compaction and bonding of the snow to the path. As a result this will reduce or eliminate the need for any follow up de-icing applications.

I appreciate your concern for the path, and the adjacent environment. However, as this path is used by a wide range of users from throughout the region, we believe our proposed operational plan provides the level of service that balances the needs of all users.

Sincerely,



Robert F. Phillips, P.E.  
City Engineer

RFP:gtf

cc: Mike Rewey, 5522 Comanche Way, Madison WI 53704  
Alderson Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, District 5  
Alderson Sara Eskrich, District 13  
Alderson Chris Schmidt, District 11  
Alderson Maurice Cheeks, District 10  
David Dryer, Traffic Engineering  
Kathy Cryan, City Engineering