



Legislation Text

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Title

Final Report: Common Council Work Group to Review Snow Policies & Procedures, June 2010

Body

In the last several years, Madison has seen above-average snowfalls. While the overall time to plow all city streets has remained effectively steady, the early heavy snowfalls caused heavy rutting and other quality of life issues across the city. On December 8-9, 2009 a large storm dumped approximately 18" of snow across the City. The snow had a high water content and the resulting road conditions led Mayor Cieslewicz to order a top-to-bottom review of the City's response. The report was available on December 24, 2009 and outlined several operational changes that could be implemented to improve the quality of response to snowstorms.

At its first meeting following the December 2010 storm, the Common Council Organizational Committee asked several questions of the Mayor's Office and Streets Superintendent Al Schumacher. It was determined that a Council Work Group be formed to look at the issues in more detail, with the goal of formulating policy and budget adjustments that would improve the city's response to snowstorms.

From the beginning, it was recognized that the record-breaking and near record-breaking snowfall seasons of recent years were remarkable in their magnitude and the stresses they had placed on the City's resources. It was also recognized that the Streets Division had not been growing at a pace to match the City's growth, and that several new technologies had recently become available that could be explored. Previous equipment improvements had made up some of the difference between the growth of the City and the growth of the Streets Division, but one of the main questions the Work Group set out to address was whether the Streets Division needed additional resources and employees in order to function optimally. The Work Group also examined new equipment options, changes to practices such as pre-wetting of pavement with a brine solution and exceeding salt policy limits in extreme cases, and improving dissemination of public information.

After a series of meetings attended by a group of Alders, City Staff, and a representative from the Mayor's Office, the Work Group compiled the recommendations in this report. Additional background on the process is available in the Work Group agendas and minutes and other attachments to the report. (Please view the entire report as an attachment to this legislative file)