

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**98-530**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

DECEMBER 7, 1998

**SUBJECT:**

SIDEWALK SNOW  
REMOVAL

**TYPE:**

RESOLUTION  
**ORDINANCE**  
RECEIVE/FILE

**SUBMITTED BY:**

JOHN P. BELLIZZI  
PUBLIC WORKS  
DIRECTOR

On May 4, 1998, by Roll Call No. 98-1431, the City Council received and filed a communication from Ms. Linda Railey of 4118 Maryland Pike requesting a reduction in the amount of time residents are provided to remove snow from their sidewalks following winter storms. The Public Works Department has now surveyed the amount of time allowed for sidewalk snow removal in the metropolitan area and in several Midwestern cities (see attached survey). Based on the results of that survey, it is recommended that the ordinance be modified to require that sidewalks be cleared of snow and ice within 24 hours following cessation of a winter snow event.

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

Funding for the inspection of sidewalk snow complaints is provided for in the Public Works Department Operating Budget.

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**To modify Chapter 23-165 of the Municipal Code to require that public sidewalks be cleared of snow and ice accumulations within 24 hours following cessation of the weather event which deposited the material.**

**BACKGROUND -**

On February 23, 1987, by Roll Call No. 87-757, the City Council approved a 48-hour time period for residents to clear ice and snow accumulations from their sidewalks following winter storms. Delays in clearing sidewalks results in inconvenience to pedestrian traffic, particularly

elderly residents and children. The inconvenience of sidewalk snow accumulations has given rise to complaints.

In response to complaints received, the Public Works Department surveyed the Des Moines metropolitan cities of West Des Moines, Clive, Windsor Heights, and Urbandale, other Iowa communities consisting of Ames, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Iowa City, and Sioux City, and several Midwestern cities including Minneapolis, Minnesota, Kansas City, Missouri, and Madison, Wisconsin. While the range of time allowed for clearing sidewalks varied from 10 hours to 48 hours, the average time appeared to be approximately 24 hours. Therefore, the Public Works Department is recommending modification of Chapter 23-165 of the Municipal Code to require that abutting property owners be required to clear their sidewalks of snow and ice within 24 hours following cessation of winter storms. Unremovable ice and snow must also be treated to facilitate traction.

Public Works' staff will continue to inspect sidewalk snow removal complaints and issue appropriate notices to residents who fail to comply with Municipal Code provisions for sidewalk snow removal.

Attachment