



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date	February 28, 2007
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Agenda Item No.	4
Roll Call No.	<u>07-</u>
Communication No.	<u>07-126</u>
Submitted by:	William G. Stowe, Assistant City Manager/Public Works/Engineering

AGENDA HEADING:

Recommendations from the City Manager regarding storm-damaged tree debris disposal due to February 24, 2007 snowstorm.

SYNOPSIS:

On February 24-25, 2007, the City of Des Moines experienced icing conditions and a snowstorm, which deposited 5-6" of snow throughout the City. The combination of ice and snow resulted in damage to trees both on public right-of-ways and private property. Forestry personnel and road crews worked throughout the two-day period to open streets blocked by over 250 downed trees; clean-up efforts have continued to date. A map showing the location of storm-damaged trees that have been reported as affecting public right-of-ways is attached to the roll call.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$200,000

Funding Source: Recommended 2008 Operating Budget, page 311, Stormwater Utility Management, EN301 PWK077001, Stormwater Utility Operations Fund

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Background

In the aftermath of severe storms in 1997, 1998, and 2002, the City of Des Moines experienced extraordinary costs due to the abuse of free curbside tree debris collection. The 1997 and 1998 events were much more significant than the recent storm. While the City did receive assistance for the 1997 storm event (mostly in the form of a loan), and over \$2,930,000 for the 1998 storm event (total reimbursement for all damages and costs), Federal assistance for last weekend's storm event in Polk County is not anticipated. A final decision is likely in the next few days and may be impacted by the storm that is anticipated for later this week.

Storm-Damaged Tree Debris Disposal Recommendations

In an effort to balance the City Council's request for citizen assistance with lessons learned from past tree debris clean-up programs, Public Works staff recommends:

- Public Works Forestry crews will continue to remove and dispose of all tree debris cleared to open streets following the storm. Work on right-of-way trees is expected to continue through March 9, 2007.
- Any resident may cut, bundle, and sticker tree debris for manual collection at the curb under the existing “pay as you throw” program. A Compost It!® sticker will be required. Solid Waste crews will pick up tree debris placed at the curb on regular solid waste collection dates. (Branches should be cut to four-foot lengths and tied into bundles not exceeding 1.5 feet in diameter.)
- The City’s SCRUB Program will process yard debris for any Des Moines resident without charge at Metro Waste Authority Metro Compost Center events beginning April 7, 2007. Subsequent dates will be posted on the City’s website.
- Residents who are already qualified for the City’s Non-curbside and/or Low-income Subsidy Program may place their storm-related tree debris at the curb without a sticker for collection by City crews. Eligible residents will receive a letter that advises them of this program’s offerings (attached to the roll call).

Funding for the City’s recommended storm damage tree debris plan is currently available in the Stormwater Utility Operations Fund. Public Works staff recommends funding for this and future storm-related clean-up from this fund because its revenue is derived from all property classes: residential, commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt. This is a recommended change in funding; past clean-ups were covered through from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, which is funded solely by residential rate payers.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: July 13, 1998

Roll Call Number: 98-2270

Action: Status Report from City Manager on proposal to assist low-income residents with storm clean-up (City Manager will report further in two weeks). ([Council Communication No. 98-302](#)). Moved by Vlassis to adopt. Motion Carried 5-2. Absent: Flagg and McPherson.

Date: October 27, 1997

Roll Call Number: 97-3573

Action: Approving emergency tree debris clean-up procedures: Communication from City Manager. ([Council Communication No. 97-526](#)). Moved by Vlassis to receive, file and adopt recommendations contained in Council Communication No. 97-526. Motion Carried 6-1.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE