



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council's Snow and Ice Task Force Sets Clean Up in Motion

AKRON, Ohio (February 25, 2019) – The Task Force created in late January by Akron City Council to evaluate Akron's snow and ice removal response system has released its first set of recommendations in the wake of Winter Storm Harper, one of Akron's worst snow storms in the last 10 years. The recommendations were presented to Mayor Horrigan and were met with his full support.

"The Task Force went above and beyond in its effort to develop swift and effective recommendations," said Council President Margo Sommerville. "I could not be more pleased with their effort to learn, explore the issues, and collaborate on cost-effective, short and long-term recommendations to help the City move forward."

"I want to thank the entire Task Force. This group was enthusiastic and developed both reasonable and doable action items," said Councilman Fusco. "The energy was very positive and, as a matter of fact, the group doubled down and committed to continuing their work for and with the City of Akron."

The Task Force's most notable recommendations are to reopen the Maintenance Facility on Copley Road, which was in use during the last storm of comparable scale to Harper, and to invest in new plowing equipment for 10 trucks specifically for complaint response. The full list of recommendations is as follows:

- 1. Reopen the Maintenance Facility on Copley Road** which was closed in 2007. Currently, the City has only one facility open for maintenance on the east side of town on Triplett Blvd. This means plows must travel across town for minor repairs and servicing. A west side facility would greatly reduce travel time and increase plowing time.

2. **Invest in new plow equipment for 10 additional trucks.** This new fleet will be reserved for complaint response, and one truck will be designated to the side streets of each City ward. The City will also evaluate and develop a repair and replacement program for all equipment.
3. **Evaluate protocols for hiring private contractors** to assist in plowing. Having quality control measures and operational guidelines with pre-established route assignments in place in advance will greatly speed up the process.
4. **Reassess maintenance agreement with ODOT.** Current contractual obligations require the City to maintain state highways within the City of Akron. The contract is up for renewal in July 2019. At that time, the City should reevaluate the costs and benefits of this agreement.
5. **Evaluate staffing levels in Public Works.** Re-evaluate the number of full-time employees in Public Works, as compared to temporary seasonal employees, to maximize retaining efficient and experienced workers, while still working within budgetary constraints.
6. **Enhance parking ban regulations.** Cars left on streets during periods of heavy snow slow down plow trucks and make plowing some streets nearly impossible. Announcing the bans early and enforcing them will improve plowing efficiency.
7. **Develop a training plan for all snow and ice response personnel.** Many of the personnel who had experience with large storms retired over the last 10 years. A comprehensive training plan will be developed and current and future staff will be certified. The Task Force is looking into the cost of simulator software for training purposes and the potential for collaborating with other cities and community stakeholders.
8. **Develop a digital technology strategy to improve communication.** Tools to be considered may include social media channels, a dedicated webpage displaying plowing progress, text alerts, etc.
9. **Create and publish a set of snow and ice FAQs** to appear on the City Council website and other relevant locations.
10. **Evaluate performance metrics** of truck routes in order to increase plowing efficiencies and reduce travel times

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