



## **WINTER MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS POLICY**



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# WINTER MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS POLICY

## 1. General Purpose

The winter maintenance policy provides a uniform understanding of priorities and procedures used to combat snow or ice and other winter related conditions on public roadways, sidewalks, trails and other areas maintained by the City. This policy replaces prior written or unwritten policies. The existing ordinances for winter sidewalk maintenance and parking control are not repealed.

Each storm has unique characteristics and factors, such as intensity, duration, wind, temperature and moisture content. All affect the total amount of snow and ice accumulation, hence influencing the methodology used to combat the resulting snow and/or ice related conditions.

The Operations Department attempts to maintain travel-safe walks and roadways for pedestrians and vehicles properly equipped for winter driving conditions. Arterials and major collector streets will generally be free from compacted snow or ice upon snowfall cessation. Residential streets will not be free of ice or snow packed pavement. Bare, dry pavement should **not** be expected after each storm on residential streets. See Section 22, page 11 for pavement condition reference.

Streets are classified into one of four categories - highest, high, low and lowest priority. These ratings are determined by such factors as traffic volume, school zones, business district etc. These ratings are reviewed annually by the Operations Department.

## 2. Mobilization of Winter Maintenance Operations

Operations shall monitor anticipated inclement weather conditions and keep Police, Fire, and EMS informed of forecasted event intensity and action to be taken by Operations for combatting the storm.

During off-hours, the Operations Superintendent or designee will monitor weather reports and road conditions. Appropriate response action will be initiated as needed.

The need to mobilize for snow/ice maintenance operations is determined by the actual snowfall depth greater than one inch or less if combined with freezing rain and icing conditions making travel difficult.

Arterial, collector roads, ambulance and school bus routes will be monitored during any winter precipitation event. Appropriate response will occur on these main roadways to maintain safe driving conditions.

Weather reports issued by the National Weather Service and local weather media sources are used to prepare for anticipated maintenance service.

The responsibility for ordering personnel and equipment into service for winter maintenance operation rests primarily with the Operations Superintendent/designee. The Police Department assists in notifications to the Superintendent/designee of winter maintenance needs during off hours.

Additional outside private equipment and personnel may be hired by the Superintendent/designee as deemed necessary.

### **3. Communications**

The Operations Superintendent/designee will be the main line of communications with other City Departments. Media notification will come from the Communications Manager/designee.

### **4. Citizen Inquiries**

All citizen issues concerning snow and ice control efforts will be routed to the Operations Department. The Superintendent/designee on-duty will determine appropriate follow-up response to citizen inquiries.

### **5. Snow Emergency Procedures**

Pursuant to Section 10.12.020 (B) of the Municipal Code, a snow emergency may be declared by the Operation Director/designee, (with public notice), and remains in effect until cancelled by the same.

### **6. Equipment Available for Winter Maintenance Operations**

- 5 - Truck mounted snow plows with wings/salt spreaders (plow routes 1 -5)
- 1 - Motor grader and wing (downtown/parking lots)
- 1 - Tractor/backhoe/loader (load salt)
- 1 - Loader with snow blower attachment (downtown/parking lots)
- 1 - Loader with plow and wing. (downtown/route 6)
- 1 - Quad Axle Truck for hauling (downtown/parking lots)
- 3 - 3/4 ton 4x4 trucks with snow plows (alleys/trails wells, lift stations, booster stations, sub stations, cemetery & parking lots)
- 1 - Kubota Tractor with front plow, cul-de-sacs, east & north tractor route
- 2 - John Deere tractors with snow blower/broom (sidewalks)  
snow blowers, shovels, etc. as required around buildings & sidewalks.
- 1 - 4010D Toro tractor equipped with broom (sidewalks/trails)
- 1 - Toolcat and/or Skid Steer equipped with snow blower (sidewalks/trails)

### **7. Inspection and Calibration**

All mounted snow, wing, and under mount plows are inspected annually for structural cracks or breaks, cutting edge wear, hydraulic hose condition and are operationally reviewed. Any deficiencies detected are corrected prior to off-season storage. Anti-icing, de-icing, spreaders and other equipment are also inspected, cleaned, lubricated, operationally reviewed and calibrated prior to the next winter's operations. Calibration of spreading equipment provides appropriate application rate chemicals. These intensive

inspections are completed internally by manufacturer's trained City mechanics.

One hundred percent of the above equipment is available for winter maintenance operations and 90 percent of the equipment is normally kept operational with less than a one-hour repair time.

#### **8. Personnel Available for Winter Maintenance Operation**

From November 1 through April 1, 80 percent of Operations Department employees should be kept available to assist in winter maintenance operations. Other City Department staff are assigned routes to assist in snow removal. The Superintendent/designee may call private contractors and other City personnel for assistance as required. For safety reasons, employees should not be assigned shifts longer than fourteen hours without eight hours of consecutive rest. Service levels on residential streets will be reduced if a storm requires around-the-clock staffing. Overtime during snow/ice operations is assigned by the Superintendent/designee and determined by the severity and duration of a storm.

#### **9. Training of Personnel**

Newly hired employees are trained on proper equipment usage. Plow routes and chemical application are reviewed with new employees prior to being assigned to respond to a storm event. Annual reviews are conducted with all Operations employees prior to the next snow season. Each snow event is reviewed by the Superintendent/ designee to be sure safe roads and walks were maintained in a timely manner during the event.

#### **10. Anti-Icing Operations**

Anti-icing is the application of liquid substances on pavement surfaces prior to the onset of the storm to prevent snow and ice from bonding to the pavement. Products used are salt brine, magnesium, and calcium chlorides or various agricultural by-products. The latter three products allow salt to melt ice below 15 degrees above zero. The Operations Superintendent /designee will have discretion as to what materials are used, the amount, and when applied.

#### **11. De-Icing Operations**

De-icing is completed in conjunction with plowing operations and consists of spreading sodium chloride (rock salt) blended with salt brine and/or magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, agricultural by-products on surfaces with accumulated, compacted snow and ice. All salt spreaders are equipped with pre-wet systems that spray salt brine onto the salt at the spinner. Wetting the dry salt activates the melting process sooner and reduces the tendency of salt to "bounce" off the roadway. De-icing chemicals are stored under cover and truck loading is completed on an impervious surface allowing any spilled product to be easily recovered. The amount of and type of de-icing chemicals used are based on current and forecasted weather conditions, rising or falling temperatures, wind, intensity and form of precipitation. The Operations Superintendent/designee will have discretion as to what materials are used, the amount of materials used and when they are applied.

## **12. Snow Plowing**

Snow Plowing is the removal of snow and ice from the roadway by mechanical means.

Plowing operations are directed by Superintendent/ designee and commence after a snowfall greater than one inch or less, if combined with freezing rain and icing conditions making travel difficult. If possible, streets and roadways on arterial routes should have two lanes of traffic open. When the storm ends, routes should have plowed roadways within 14 hours and be plowed curb-to-curb within 24 hours. Odd/Even Parking requires a second day of snow removal to achieve curb-to-curb plowed roadways.

There is no plowing of private driveways/roads by City personnel. Snow and ice will be deposited in private driveways/roads during plowing operations and will **not** be removed by the City (including areas around mailboxes or fire hydrants in private yards). Equipment and operators are assigned routes. Operators are generally familiar with all routes and strive to complete plowing and de-icing efficiently.

## **13. Salt-Sand Use**

Sanding consists of spreading a salt and sand mixture to improve traction on packed snow/ice and should be applied only in areas of high traffic movement or unsafe areas as determined by the Superintendent/designee. Sand can cause a build-up in storm sewers and points of discharge which could require additional maintenance or environmental concerns. Sanding will only be used when pavement temperatures inhibit the melting action of other available products or conditions are extremely icy.

## **14. Snow Storage**

The downtown central business district, municipal parking lots, and areas around the University campus do not have sufficient snow storage requiring the snow to be hauled to an off-site area located at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Alternate snow storage areas are parking lots at Hoffman Park, the open space grass area east of Hanson Drive, and the west end parking lot in Glen Park.

Each spring once snow melt has taken place, the snow storage areas are cleaned of all previous years' remaining garbage.

## **15. Emergency Requests for Winter Maintenance**

Emergency calls for services may be received when conditions such as power outages, downed power lines, water main breaks, or when police, fire or EMS services are required.

Calls received by Police Department for emergency maintenance service will be sent to the proper staff depending on the need.

## **16. Complaints**

Complaints pertaining to snow/ice removal should be forwarded to the Operations

Superintendent's office at 715-426-3406. The Department Superintendent/designee will notify the proper staff for action, if necessary.

### **Damage Complaints**

Due to the nature of snow removal, work accidents may occur. All accidents should be thoroughly investigated regarding the circumstance. While this may be difficult to do in the middle of a storm, it is important to gather the information accurately. Some common damages are as follows:

#### **A. Mailboxes, Fences and Lawn Damage:**

Plow operators are instructed not to get too close to mailboxes, however occasionally one is knocked over or struck. Operators report these occurrences to their supervisor.

Lawn damage occurs more often in early or late season snowstorms when there is little or no frost in the ground. Operators note areas of damage and report the damage to their supervisor. For this reason, trails may receive less than usual maintenance, especially in the Spring, to prevent undue damage to edges.

A list of properties where damage occurred is created for spring repairs. It is the City's policy to repair property damage caused by City equipment. Mailboxes, fences, or other improvements within the right of way must be structurally installed to withstand the weight of snow rolling off the blade. Repairs to poorly installed or maintained items that fail due to snow load are the responsibility of the property owner. The Superintendent/designee will have the authority to determine City responsibility for damage.

#### **B. Vehicular Damage:**

Should a City vehicle be involved in a property damage accident with another vehicle, the appropriate officials are to be notified. It is important to report all accidents regardless of how minor they may be. City employees driving a Class A or B vehicle must comply with the City of River Falls' Drug and Alcohol Policy.

The Superintendent/designee should be consulted on whether it is necessary to return to the garage immediately for inspection or at the end of the operation.

#### **C. Curb Damage:**

Curb damage is investigated on a complaint basis. If the damage was done by the City plow, the repairs will be done by the City. The repairs should be done as soon as possible during the summer construction season. When damage is done by a private party or contractor, the Police Department will investigate. The costs for repairs/replacement will be sent to the responsible party upon completion of the repair.

## **17. Parking Restrictions - 10.012.020 Overnight Parking**

### **A. Odd-Even Parking.**

1. There shall be odd-even parking on all City streets from November 1 to March 31 of each year between the hours of 1 and 6 a.m., unless other "no parking" regulations are in effect. Streets that are subject to a parking ban during specific times and/or days shall remain subject to this odd-even regulation when the more specific parking prohibition is not in effect.
2. "Odd-even parking" means vehicles will be parked on the odd side of a street designated by property addresses on odd days of the month and on the even side of the street on even days of the month. The date used for parking will be the date after midnight.

### **B. Towing of vehicles**

Vehicles may be towed when violating regulations prohibiting parking between the hours of 1-6 a.m. in residential, commercial and industrial areas. This may occur on the second or third night of snow removal operations without declaring a snow emergency.

Vehicles parked in violation of parking regulations in the downtown business improvement district, all municipal parking lots, and certain areas around the University will be towed during the first night of snow removal operations without declaring a snow emergency.

### **C. Snow Emergency Requirements.**

1. A snow emergency shall be in effect when declared, upon public notice, by the Operations Director/designee and will remain in effect until cancelled.
2. When a snow emergency is in effect, a vehicle may be towed when in violation of the parking regulations prohibiting parking during the hours of 1- 6 a.m.

### **D. Signs and Warning Markers.**

The Operations Superintendent shall erect such signs and warning markers necessary to give notice of the restrictions, prohibitions, and limitations of this subsection and as are shown on the official parking control map. Use of Social Media may be utilized also as applicable.

## **18. Sidewalk Maintenance – 12.04.030 Snow and Ice Removal**

- A. Sidewalks to be Kept Clear.** The owner or occupant of any lot or parcel shall, within 24 hours of cessation of each continuous period of snowfall, remove all snow and ice which may have fallen or accumulated upon the sidewalk in front, side or back of such lot or parcel, provided when ice or packed snow has so formed that it cannot be removed. The owner or occupant shall keep the same sprinkled with a nonskid material which will prevent the sidewalk from being dangerous to pedestrians. This requirement shall also apply to the main sidewalk as it extends from a corner lot to the curb line of an intersecting street. If the owner or occupant

fails to comply with this subsection, the City shall cause the snow or ice to be removed or sprinkled as required in this subsection and payment of a fee sufficient to reimburse the City for the cost of removing any snow or ice may be required.

**B. Deposits of Snow Restricted.** Excepting the clearing of snow from sidewalks or entries located upon a public right-of-way, no person shall cause snow to be deposited on boulevards, sidewalks, streets or avenues or any other City-owned property without permission.

Payment of a fee sufficient to reimburse the City for the cost of removing any snow so deposited without permission may be required.

**C. Depositing of Snow on Private Property.** All snow from private property (driveways or parking lots) shall be either deposited on the originating owner's property or hauled away by the owner or their agent. Property owners shall not place their snow on another property without permission from the owner of the other property.

(Prior code § 8.04)

## **19. Mailboxes**

The City will typically plow within the confines of curb line to curb line of a street. During frequent periods of heavy snowfall accumulations when storage areas for snow on the right-of-way are limited, there may be times when City plows cannot physically place the snow from the curb line of the street up onto the adjacent City right-of-way. The adjacent resident will be responsible for clearing snow around their mailbox to assure delivery of the mail. The resident is also responsible for assuring the mailbox is properly installed as required by the United States Postal Service guidelines. The mailbox should be constructed and installed to withstand snow cleaning efforts by the City.

## **20. Typical Snow Plowing Operations (1– 6 inches)**

After snow cessation or weather reports confirm snow to be ending soon, full clean-up operations begin, normally at 12 midnight. The Operations Department starts in the central business district at 12 midnight with the grader and/or loader with plow and wing to windrow snow for loading and hauling. Parking lots are plowed, and if time permits, the lots will be loaded and hauled during the business district loading/hauling operations. Occasionally, loading/hauling of parking lots is finished on the second or third day.

- Five route trucks commence plowing and applying de-icing chemicals.
- Two 4x4 pickups begin clearing alleys, wells, lift stations, booster stations, sub stations, parking lots, and trails.
- Contracted laborers clear the center median, sidewalks, and walkways around all municipal buildings.
- Power driven units with blowers or brooms are dispatched to clean public sidewalks around municipal buildings and remote areas maintained by the City.
- At 2 a.m. the City's loader and snow blower will be used to fill contractor trucks to begin hauling operations. Snow is trucked to the Apollo Road site or other designated sites as appropriate.

- De-icing chemicals are applied to roadways and sidewalks as appropriate.

Following the days after a storm, department tasks include:

- Checking public and private walks for cleaning.
- Piling snow at storage site.
- Cleaning up intersections for improved sight lines.
- Cul-de-sac hauling of snow piles to create additional storage.
- Equipment service and repairs.

## 21. Reports

A storm record will be completed by the Operations Department for each snow event. This record should contain operating times, amount of precipitation, type of precipitation, weather conditions and resources committed.

## 22. Definition of Pavement Conditions

### Winter Pavement Condition Definitions\*



#### Bare Pavement

May be wet. Accurate and precise plowing and chemical use may be needed to achieve this condition and maintain normal travel speeds.



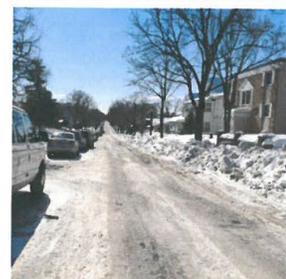
#### Bare Wheel Paths

Some slush may remain. Plowing and chemical applications have been made. The roadway is open to near-normal travel.



#### Plowed and Treated

Wheel paths may or may not be visible, some snowpack remaining, plowing and chemical use performed.



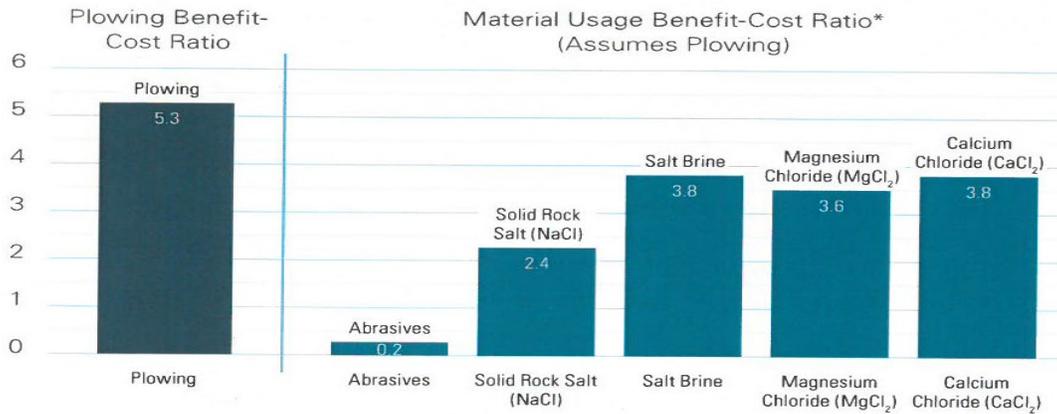
#### Plowed to Snowpack

Maintenance is being performed, but snowpack remains across the roadway.

## 23. Benefit Cost of Plowing Versus Chemical Application

# BENEFIT-COST OF PLOWING AND MATERIAL USAGE

The Clear Roads pooled fund commissioned an analysis of the costs and benefits of various winter maintenance strategies. This analysis found that plowing is the most effective and basic form of winter maintenance and material usage can supplement plowing at various rates. The analysis included safety benefits, agency resources, corrosion to infrastructure and vehicles, and environmental impacts.



\*When applied with typical methods

Read more about this study here:

Fay, Laura, et al. "Benefit-Cost of Various Winter Maintenance Strategies." 2015. [clearroads.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/FR\\_CR.13-03\\_Final.pdf](http://clearroads.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/FR_CR.13-03_Final.pdf)

## 24. Winter Maintenance Materials

# WINTER MAINTENANCE MATERIALS

A variety of winter maintenance materials are available for local agencies to use to manage snow and ice.

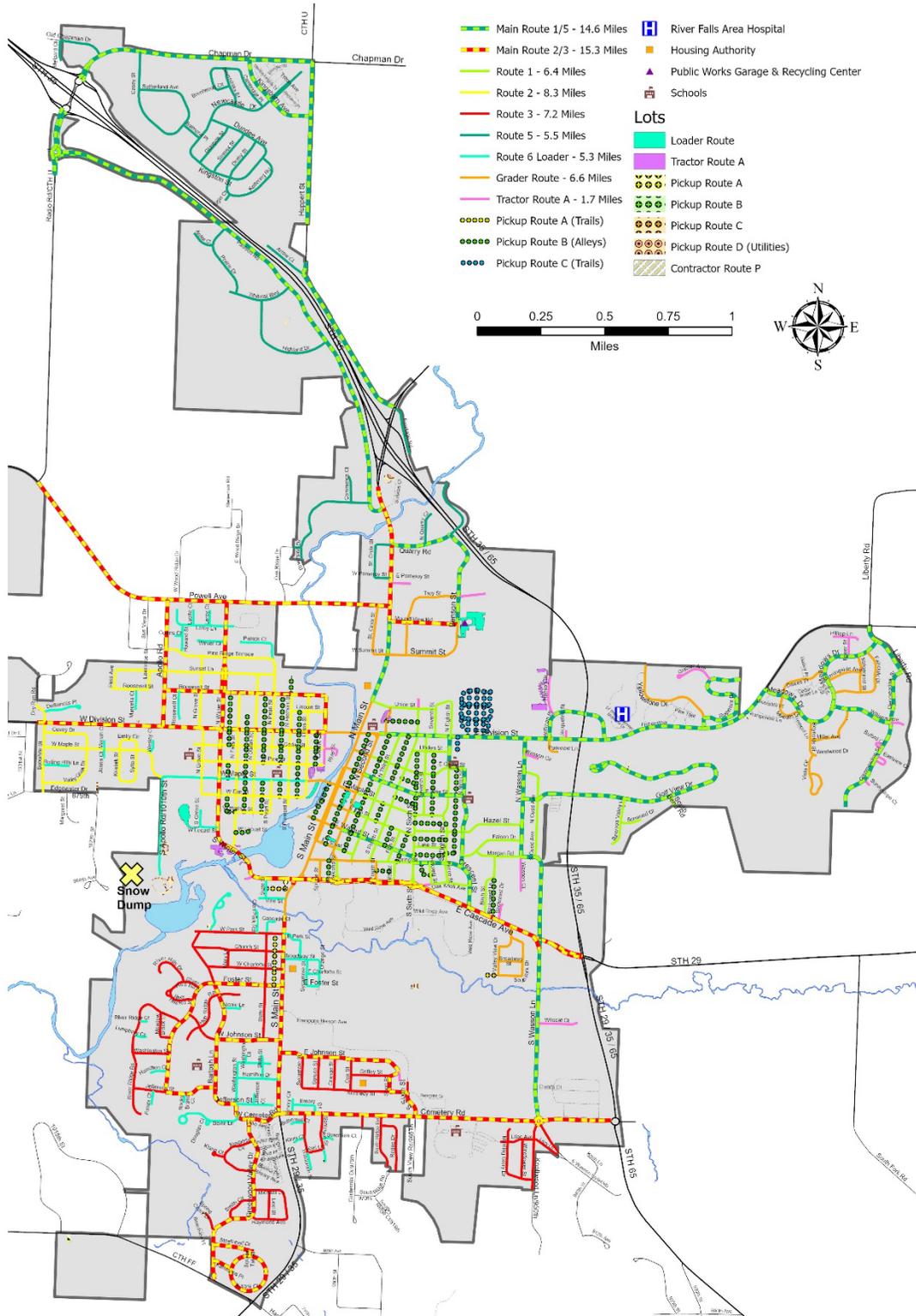
This table summarizes the commonly used materials, their uses, attributes and environmental impacts.

							
	Abrasives	Solid Rock Salt (NaCl)	Salt Brine	Magnesium Chloride (MgCl <sub>2</sub> )	Calcium Chloride (CaCl <sub>2</sub> )	Calcium Magnesium Acetate	Potassium Acetate
Usage	Mix with salt to provide traction to slippery roads.	Deicing or anti-icing	Prewetting and anti-icing	Deicing, prewetting, and anti-icing	Deicing	Anti-icing	Anti-icing
Typical Form	Sand (paved roads) or gravel (unpaved roads). Mixed with salt (20% to 33% salt).	Solid granular	Liquid	Liquid or solid	Liquid	Liquid	Liquid
Lowest Practical Melting Temperature	Lowest practical melting temperature	15° F	15° F	-10° F	-20° F	20° F	-15° F
Positive Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides temporary traction</li> <li>- More effective than chemicals at very low temperatures and for spot traction at targeted locations (hills, curves, bridges, intersections, shaded areas, windblown areas)</li> <li>- Useful alternative in environmental sensitive locations (no salt roads)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excellent melting capacity</li> <li>- Lower cost compared to other chemicals</li> <li>- Clear roads of snow and ice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prevents snow and ice from bonding to pavement (anti-icing)</li> <li>- Lower cost compared to other chemicals</li> <li>- Reduced granular scatter when used for prewetting</li> <li>- Low cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced amount of product used, reduced salt and abrasive use over rock salt</li> <li>- Better cold temperature performance than rock salt</li> <li>- Persists on the road surface, aiding in longer black ice prevention than sodium chloride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better cold temperature performance than rock salt</li> <li>- Reduced amount of product used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-corrosive</li> <li>- Often used on bridge anti-icing systems</li> </ul>	

							
	Abrasives	Solid Rock Salt (NaCl)	Salt Brine	Magnesium Chloride (MgCl <sub>2</sub> )	Calcium Chloride (CaCl <sub>2</sub> )	Calcium Magnesium Acetate	Potassium Acetate
Negative Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recovery from storms is slower than chemicals when used alone or in combination with only plowing</li> <li>- More plow passes and applications are required than if chemicals are used</li> <li>- Cannot achieve deicing</li> <li>- Requires clean up after winter season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corrosion</li> <li>- Impacts on roadside and waterways</li> <li>- Pavement deterioration</li> <li>- Corrosion to vehicles and infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corrosion</li> <li>- Impacts on roadside and waterways</li> <li>- Corrosion to vehicles and infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pavement deterioration</li> <li>- Corrosion</li> <li>- Material cost is higher than rock salt</li> <li>- More corrosive than sodium chloride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pavement deterioration</li> <li>- Corrosion</li> <li>- Material cost is higher than rock salt</li> <li>- More corrosive than sodium chloride</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expensive</li> </ul>	
Environmental Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abrasives can enter the waterways and clog streams, clog drains, can impact water quality and aquatic species</li> <li>- Straight abrasive use does not pose corrosion issues, but abrasive-salt mixes can cause this issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry into waterways</li> <li>- Impact to roadside soil, vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry into waterways</li> <li>- Impact to roadside soil, vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry into waterways</li> <li>- Impact to bridge infrastructure</li> <li>- Leaching/run-off from stockpiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry into waterways</li> <li>- Impact to roadside</li> <li>- May mobilize heavy metals in soil releasing them into the water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Their decomposition consumes dissolved oxygen, resulting in lower oxygen levels in water.</li> </ul>	

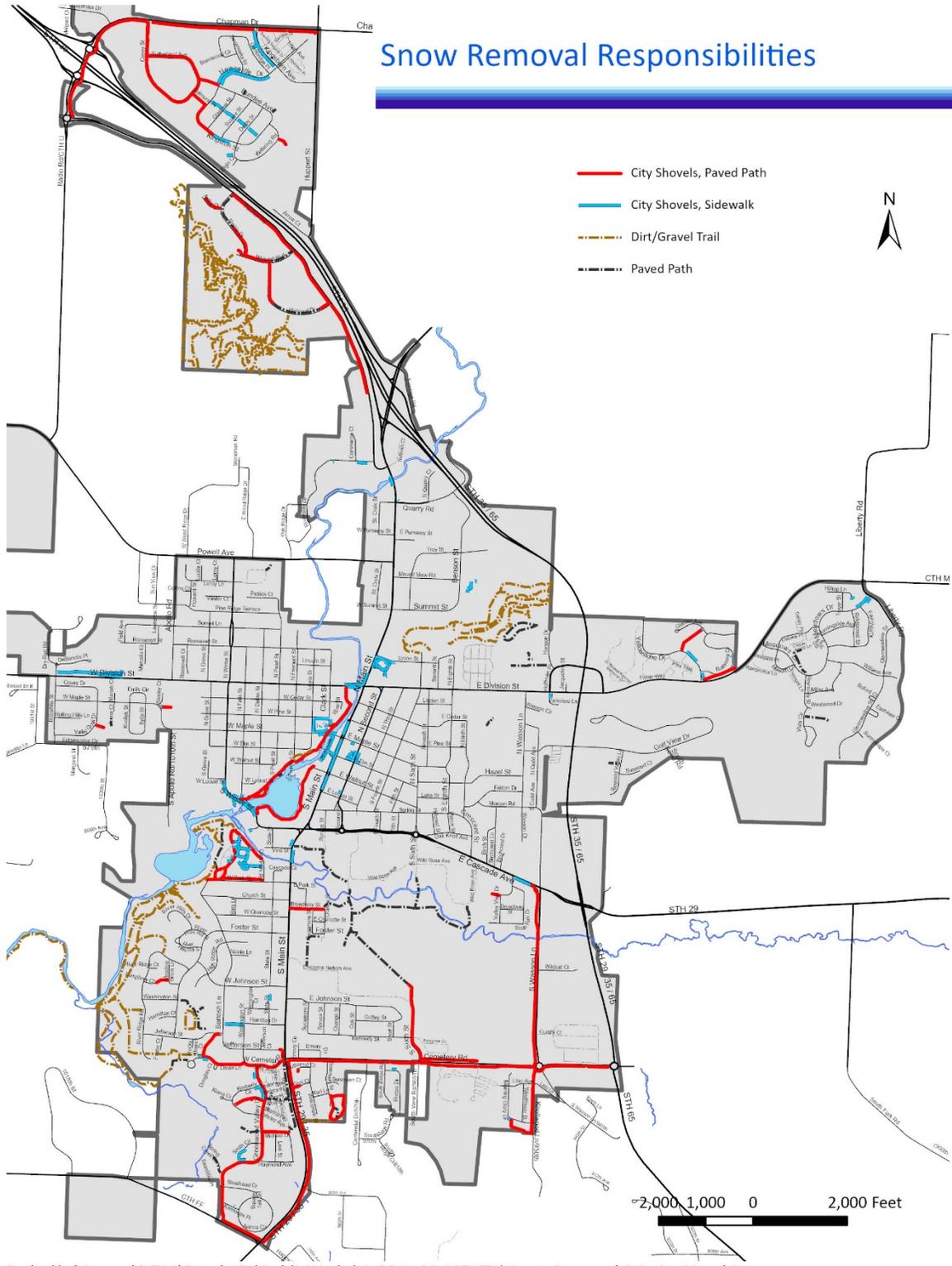
# APPENDIX A

## Snow Plow Routes



# APPENDIX B

## Snow Removal Responsibilities

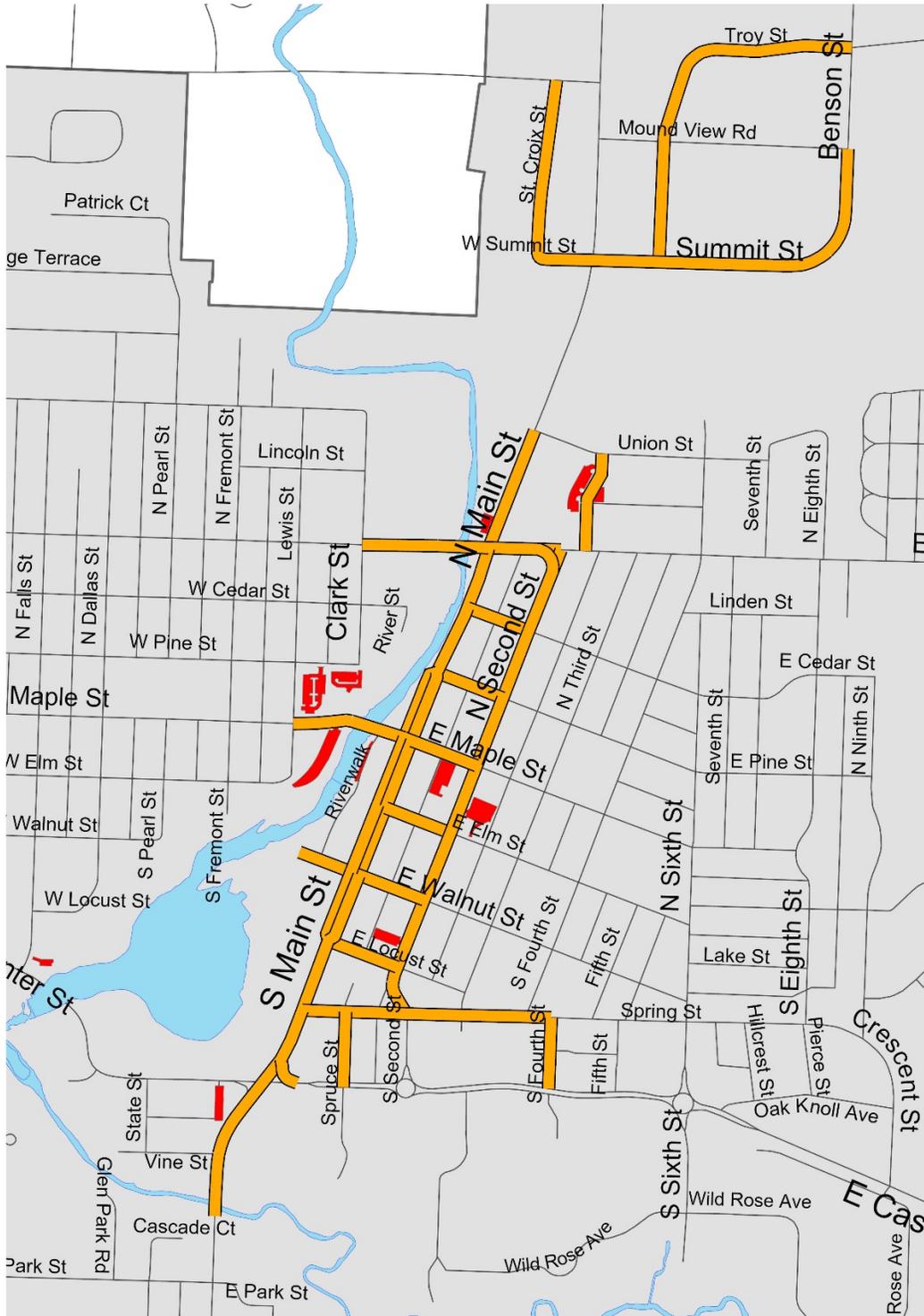


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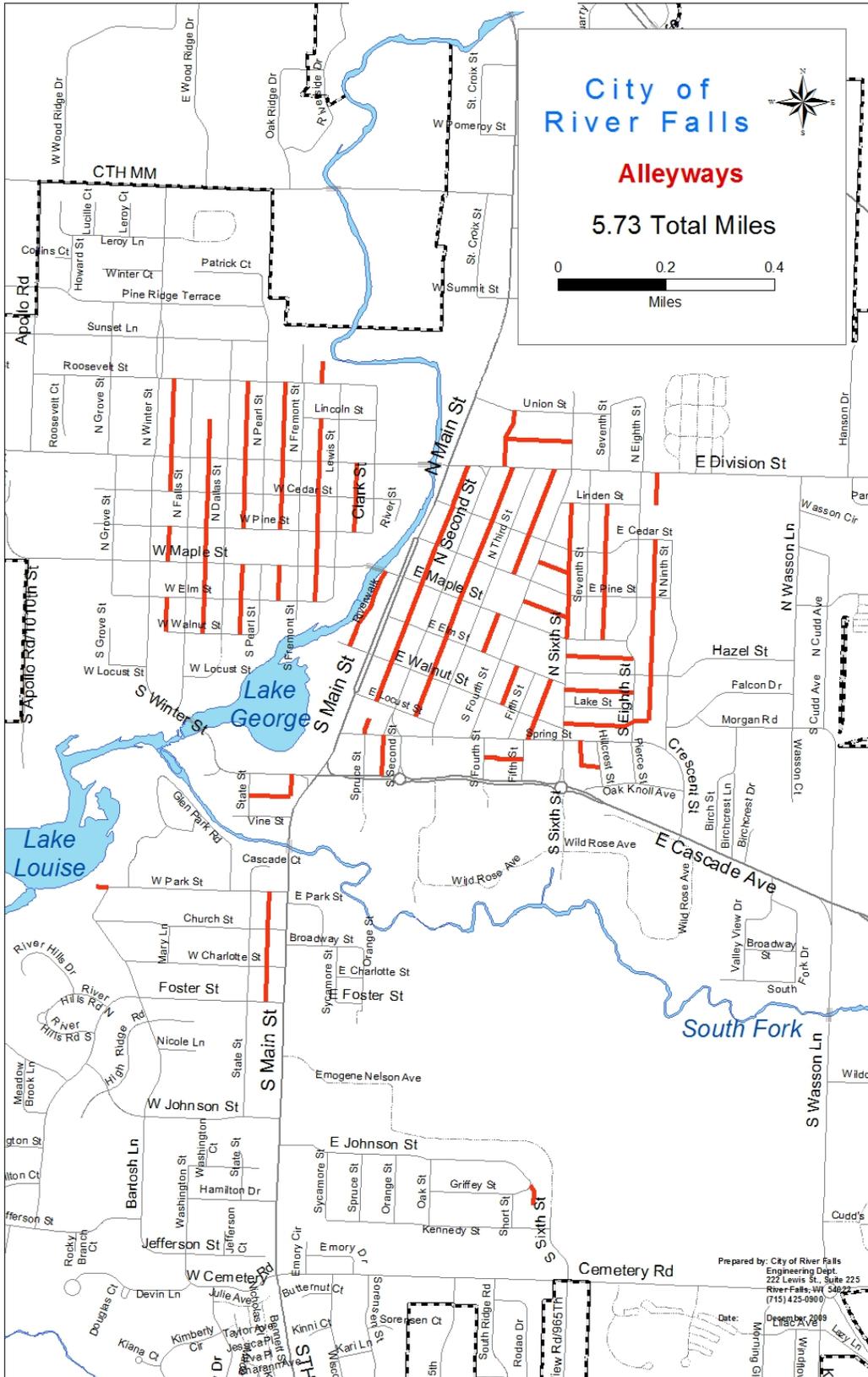
# APPENDIX C

## Day 1 Towing Map

- Street Centerlines
- Parking Lots



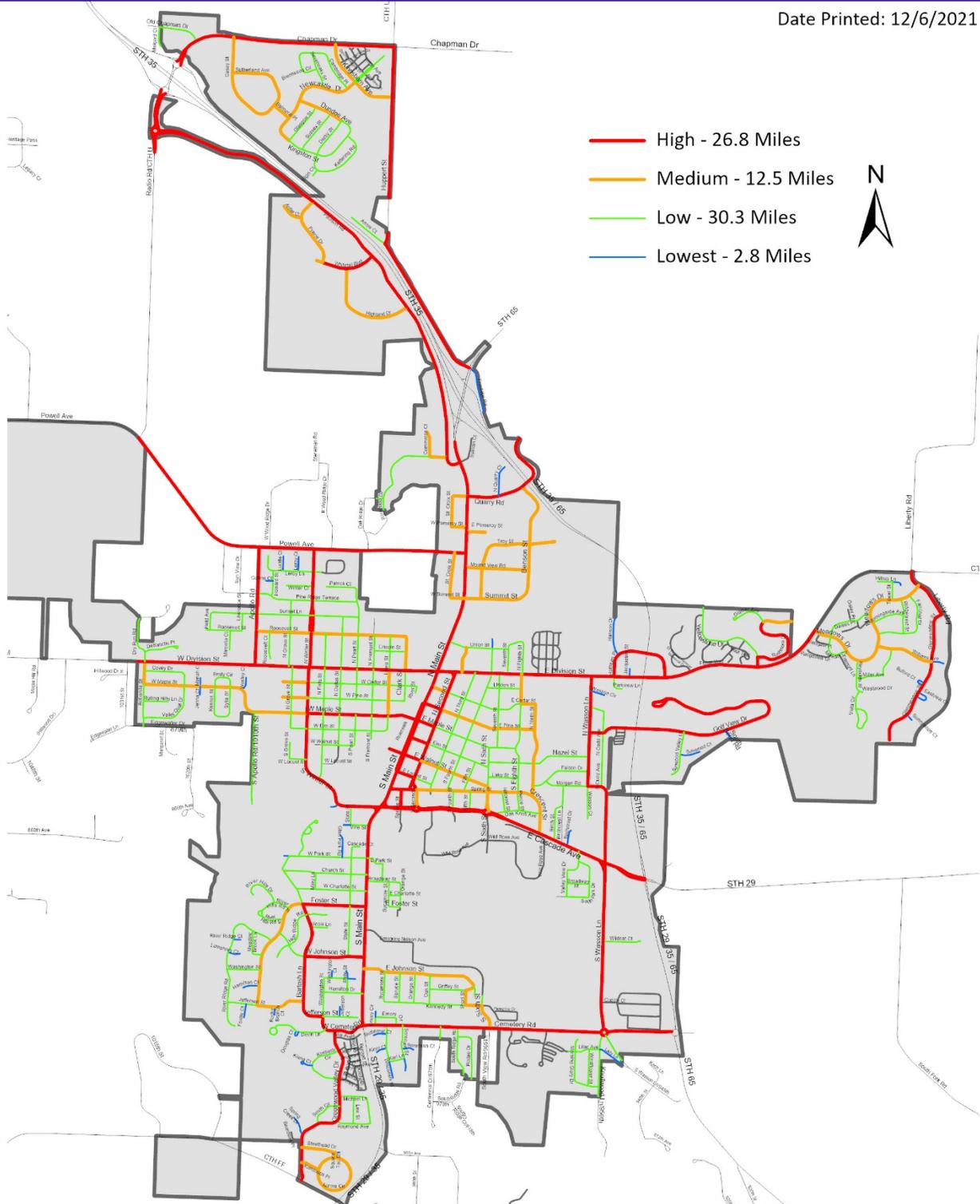
# APPENDIX D



# APPENDIX E

## Snow Plowing Priority Level

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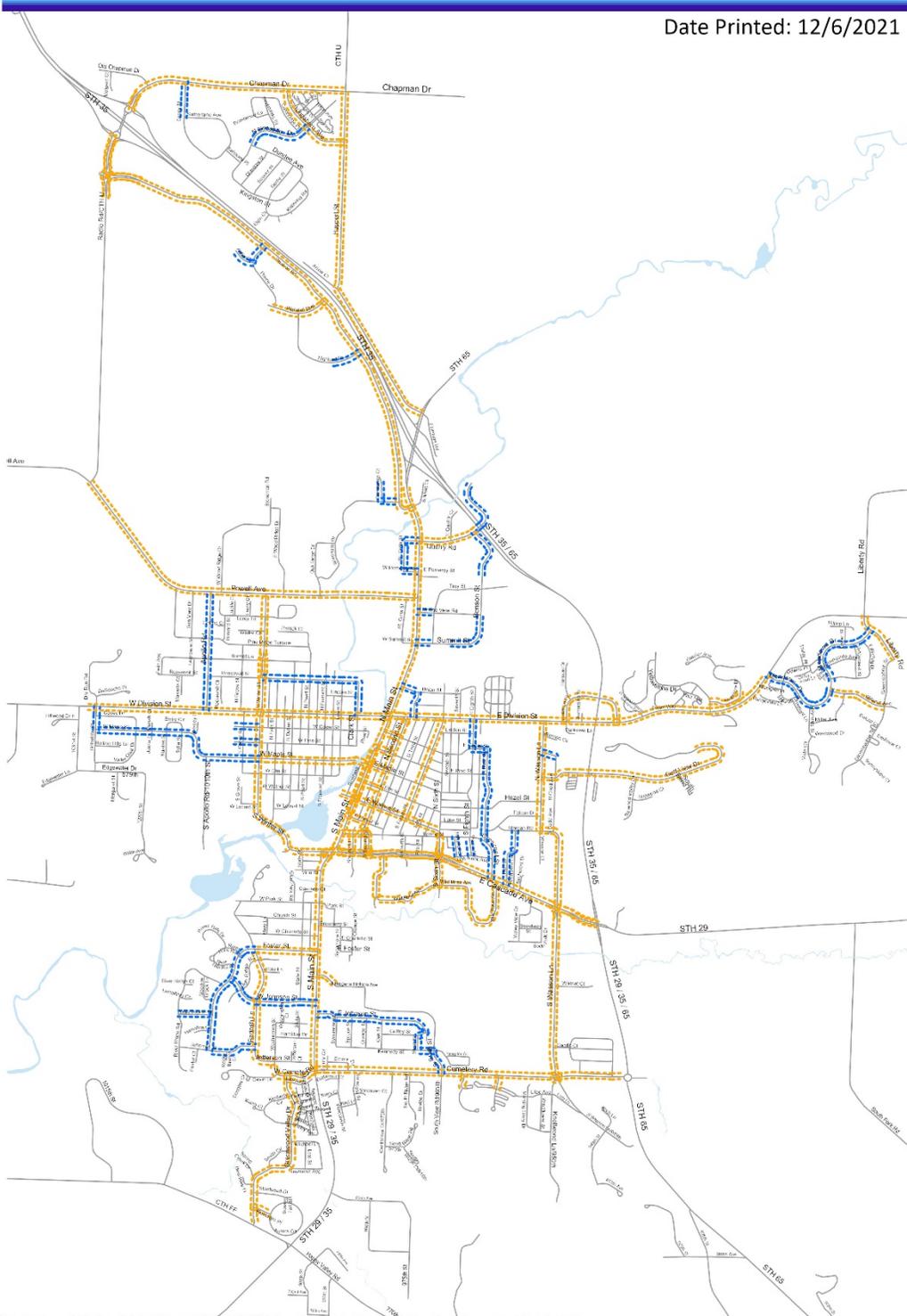
# APPENDIX F

## City Anti-Icing Routes

- Priority Route
- Secondary Route



Date Printed: 12/6/2021



## APPENDIX G

### SIDEWALK SNOW & ICE CONTROL - TAGGING STRATEGY

#### Complaint Initiated Inspections

1. If received, the City will investigate complaints 24 hours after winter precipitation cessation.
2. Cessation of snowfall shall be that time which no additional accumulation of snow has occurred whether due to snow falling or snow blowing.

#### City Initiated Inspections

3. City initiated Inspections shall not start earlier than the following:
  - a. Zone 1 – 24 hours after snow cessation.
  - b. Zone 2 – 48 hours after snow cessation.

#### Enforcement Guidelines:

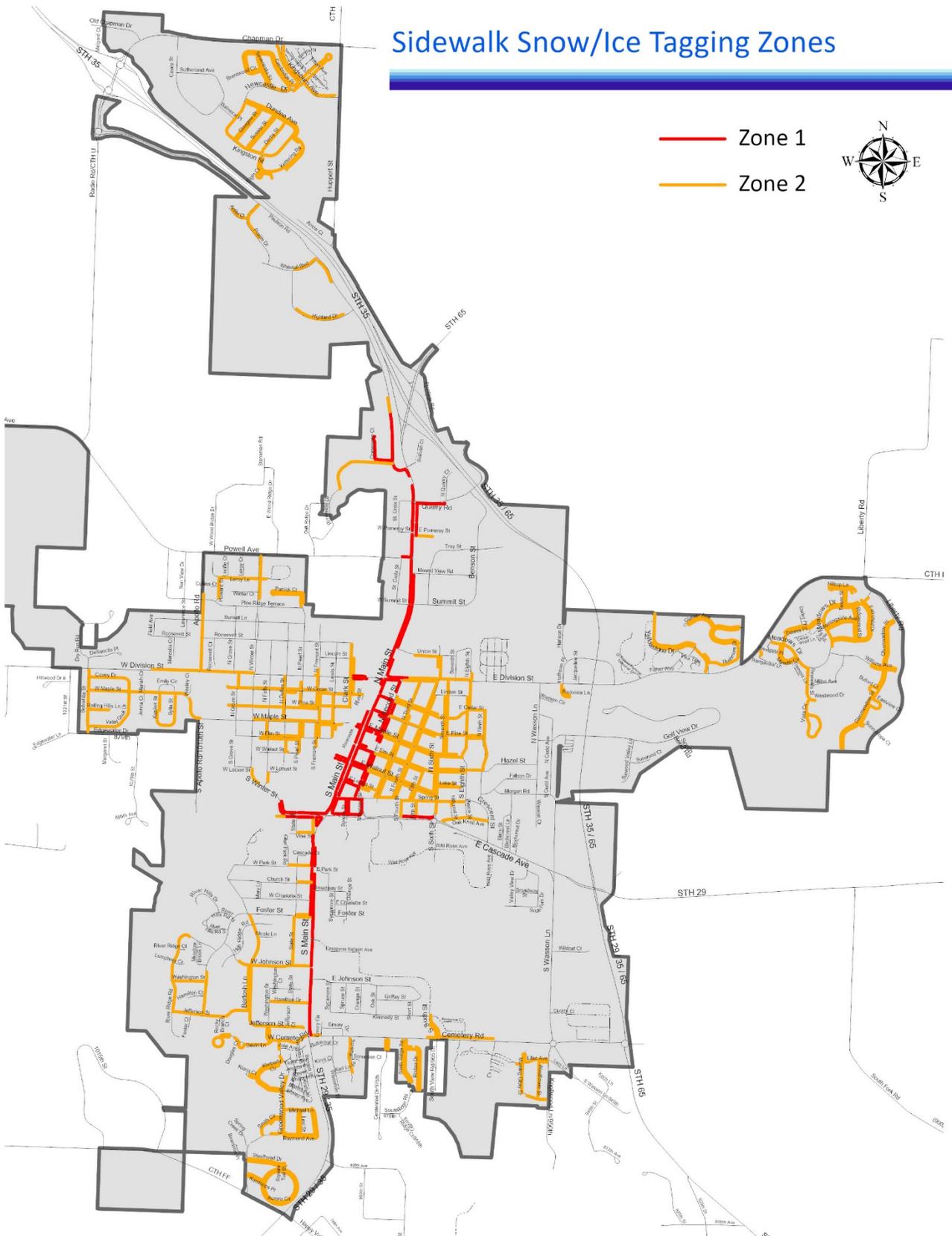
4. Where an attempt to clear the walk has been made but is considered inadequate by staff or by complainant, tagging shall be referred to Public Works staff.
5. Tagging shall not be done for ice control in sidewalk sag locations where water from melting snow accumulates. Staff performing inspections shall apply salt (or sand) to these locations during their inspection.
6. Tagging of handicap ramps for not removing snow deposited by plowing shall not be done earlier than the following:
  - a. Zone 1 – 24 hours after plowing.
  - b. Zone 2 – 48 hours after plowing.
7. Sidewalks may be tagged on Mondays if snowfall occurred Friday leading into a weekend or during a weekend, but discretion is advised.
8. Sidewalks will **not** be tagged on a day immediately following a holiday. An example would be: January 1 is a Tuesday. No tagging would occur on Wednesday. Note: This includes zone #1.

#### Tagging follow-up

9. The City will generally tag *only once during the season*. If a walk is cleared by City due to no action being taken by owner after tagging, we will likely **not** provide another notice for subsequent non-shoveling.

# Sidewalk Snow/Ice Tagging Zones

- Zone 1
- Zone 2



## APPENDIX H

**Brine Fact Sheet: The American Public Works Association (APWA) publishes a number of Fact Sheets related to Public Works operations. A good information sheet on Salt Brine and its importance to Winter Maintenance Operations can be found at the following link:**

[Brine Fact Sheet](#)