



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

**DATE:** October 26, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Report from the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee recommending that City Council authorize the City Manager to overspend the budget, if necessary, to keep the 10 highest-use bus stops free of snow during the 2017-2018 winter season.

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report.

### **Background**

At its March 15, 2016 meeting, the Public Transportation Subcommittee of the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) began an investigation into winter bus-stop access for bus riders. At issue were concerns reported by Concord Area Transit (CAT) bus riders regarding bus stops remaining unplowed for extended periods with no place to stand, and with snow banks from street plowing blocking walking access to/from stopping buses. The Public Transit Subcommittee considered this issue at its meetings from March 15, 2016 to October 17, 2017. TPAC formally considered the subcommittee's findings at its October 26, 2017 meeting and approved the recommendation reported herein.

### **Discussion**

While both well intended and fiscally constrained, the City's current sidewalk snow maintenance program leaves challenges for bus riders, particularly the elderly and those with limited mobility. Until sidewalk areas at bus stops are plowed, bus patrons must stand for extended periods in potentially-deep snow or stand and wait in the adjacent street. Another challenge which may remain for an extended period, even after sidewalks are plowed, is the often-tall snow bank along the curb which must be climbed over in order to walk between the sidewalk waiting area and the stopped bus.

General Services Division (GSD) currently plows sidewalks after storms in three priority levels. High-priority sidewalks in the downtown area are plowed first. Second priority includes sidewalks on established walk-to-school routes which are cleared before the next

open school day. All remaining sidewalks are plowed under normal priority which generally begins with those on the more heavily-travelled streets, followed by sidewalks along the local street network. While GSD and fire personal work to clear snow as quickly as possible from intersection crosswalk openings and around fire hydrants, the areas around bus stops can remain snow-bound for days or weeks, depending on location.

The Public Transportation Subcommittee conducted an extensive review of bus stop conditions during the winter of 2016-17, including: review of CAT observations of bus stop conditions during and following several snow events; review of all bus stop locations with respect to the snow-plow priority assigned to the adjacent sidewalk area; review of Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) CAT ridership survey data; and input solicited from GSD on sidewalk snow-maintenance practice.

The subcommittee ultimately focused its efforts on an option to improve the priority of snow-clearing efforts at the 10 highest-use bus stop locations. These locations are summarized in the table below and are based on three-day boarding and alighting surveys conducted by CNHRPC at all CAT bus stops during three-day periods in 2015 and 2016.

Bus Stop	2016 Ridership Survey			2015 Ridership Survey			GSD Current Sidewalk Plow Priority
	On	Off	3 Day Total	On	Off	3 Day Total	
Main St @ State House	144	289	433	168	186	354	high
Main St @ Eagle Square	209	59	268	208	36	244	high
Village St @ Washington St	65	51	116	67	83	150	school
Fisherville Rd @ Bog Rd	39	40	79	64	46	110	school
Main St @ Pleasant St*	6	13	19	26	25	51	high
Ormond St @ Prescott St	20	17	37	26	23	49	normal
Pleasant St @ Main St*	13	25	38	16	31	47	high
Loudon Rd @ Morning Star	42	7	49	37	9	46	school
Loudon Rd @ Gates Street	4	36	40	11	24	35	school
S Fruit St @ Memorial Field	22	11	33	1	6	7	normal
*To be relocated to Pleasant Street north of N. State Street. Source: CNHRPC							

The subcommittee chair, Sheila Zakre, met with the City Manager on two occasions this fall to share the subcommittee's efforts to date and to seek advice on formulating realistic options for TPAC consideration. The Manager suggested two potential options based on his discussions with GSD, and with the objective to clear sidewalk waiting areas at ten bus stops, including maintenance of a pass-through area in adjacent curbside snow banks for walking access to/from the stopped bus. One option would be to ask Council to consider funding an item in next-year's budget that would either: allocate \$20,000 to hire two seasonal employees to clear the bus stop areas both during and after snow events; or alternatively, allocate \$10,000 to hire one seasonal employee to clear the bus stop areas

immediately after snow events. Another option would be to ask Council to consider authorizing the Manager to overspend this year's budget by up to \$10,000 to hire one seasonal employee to clear the bus stop areas immediately after snow event. The latter option would also act as a first-season test to better define costs and monitor effectiveness.

At its October 26, 2017 meeting, TPAC considered the subcommittee's findings and approved the latter option.

### **Recommendation**

TPAC recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager to overspend the budget, if necessary, to keep the 10 highest-use bus stops free of snow during the 2017-2018 winter season. The Manager's suggested options are based on his discussion with GSD with the objective to clear a five-foot waiting area at the ten bus stops including maintenance of a pass-through area in the adjacent curbside snow bank for walking access to/from the stopped bus.