



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™
General Services Department

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jeffrey K. Hoadley, General Services Director

DATE: June 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Response to City Council referral requesting the addition of the Centre Street/Loudon Road Sidewalks to High-Priority Snow Removal for access to the Transportation Center.

Recommendation

Accept this report.

Background

This memorandum evaluates whether the City's current Winter Operations Policy should be modified to accelerate sidewalk snow removal along Centre Street and Loudon Road to improve pedestrian access to the Concord Transportation Center. The referral stems from a constituent request to elevate these sidewalks to a higher priority within the City's sidewalk snow removal program.

The Concord Transportation Center is a key regional transportation asset, providing residents and visitors with access to intercity bus service and other transportation options. General Services recognizes the importance of maintaining pedestrian access to the facility during winter weather and understands concerns about the timing of sidewalk clearing after snow events. At the same time, the City must balance competing service demands while operating within available staffing, equipment, and budgetary resources.

The current analysis assumes that staffing levels, winter operations funding, equipment inventories, and the City's adopted sidewalk priority network remain unchanged. These assumptions are important because any shift in priorities without corresponding increases in

resources will inevitably affect service levels elsewhere in the system. Changes to staffing, equipment, or budget allocations could alter the conclusions of this analysis and would also introduce additional operating and capital costs.

Under the City's Winter Operations Policy, snow and ice control operations follow a deliberate sequence to maximize public safety and operational effectiveness. Crews initially focus on maintaining safe travel conditions on arterial roadways and major transportation corridors. Once roadway conditions stabilize, sidewalk operations begin. After the downtown sidewalk network is complete, designated School Walking Routes receive priority attention before crews proceed to the remainder of the City's sidewalk system. This approach was developed in coordination with City and School District officials and reflects the community's longstanding commitment to safe pedestrian access for elementary school students walking to and from school.

Discussion

The principal policy question for the General Services Department is whether sidewalks serving the Transportation Center should be elevated above designated School Walking Routes in the City's snow removal hierarchy. Staff evaluated four potential courses of action. The first option is to maintain the current Winter Operations Policy without modification. The second option is to expand the Priority 1 sidewalk network to include Transportation Center access routes. The third option is to supplement City operations by using a private contractor dedicated to Transportation Center access routes. The fourth option is to establish a dedicated pedestrian access program with specialized personnel and equipment focused on critical pedestrian corridors throughout the City.

Each alternative was evaluated using six criteria: public safety, cost, operational impact, sustainability, public benefit, and ease of implementation. Public safety was given the greatest weight because protecting residents remains the primary objective of winter maintenance operations. Cost and operational impact were also heavily weighted because of the fiscal and service implications of any policy change. Sustainability, public benefit, and ease of implementation were considered to ensure that any proposed solution could be maintained over the long term and implemented effectively within the City's operational framework.

Expanding priority routes to include Transportation Center access would provide earlier pedestrian access to the facility after snow events and benefit residents who rely on public transportation. However, because staffing and equipment would remain unchanged, elevating these routes would necessarily delay snow removal on designated School Walking Routes. Staff estimates that during larger storms, completion of School Walking Routes could be delayed by as much as one day. Such a delay would affect elementary school students attending Abbott-Downing and Christa McAuliffe Schools and would shift resources away from an area historically identified as having higher public safety value.

Alternatives that rely on contractor support or a dedicated pedestrian access program offer operational advantages but would require additional financial resources. Contracted services would create recurring operating expenses and may not guarantee availability during major regional storm events, when demand for snow removal contractors is highest. Similarly,

establishing a dedicated pedestrian access team would require significant investments in personnel and equipment and create ongoing budget obligations. Neither alternative is currently funded, and implementation would require future appropriations by the City Council.

When evaluated against the established criteria, maintaining the current Winter Operations Policy produced the strongest overall outcome. The existing policy offers a balanced, sustainable approach that directs limited resources to areas with the greatest public safety benefit while preserving predictable service levels across the community. It also avoids additional operating costs, capital expenditures, and administrative complexity. Most importantly, it continues to prioritize designated School Walking Routes, which were established to provide safe access for school-aged children.

After reviewing the available alternatives, staff believe that maintaining the current Winter Operations Policy remains the most prudent course of action. While improving pedestrian access to the Concord Transportation Center is a worthwhile objective, doing so by elevating Transportation Center routes above designated School Walking Routes would reduce service levels for elementary school students and compromise the policy priorities that have guided winter operations for many years. Likewise, alternatives requiring additional personnel, equipment, or contracted services would impose significant costs without sufficient corresponding benefit.

For these reasons, staff recommends that the City continue to follow the current Winter Operations Policy and maintain the existing sidewalk-priority structure. The policy reflects a thoughtful balance among public safety, operational efficiency, service delivery, and fiscal stewardship, and remains the best available approach to managing the City's winter sidewalk maintenance program.