



September 1, 2015

Office of the City Council
310 City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmembers,

I'm writing on behalf of St. Paul Smart Trips to express our support for the proposed amendment to the city ordinance requiring immediate snow abatement of nuisance properties. St. Paul Smart Trips is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission to improve access and mobility for those who travel in and around Saint Paul. St. Paul Walks, a program of St. Paul Smart Trips focusing on educating drivers about the cross walk law, also supports the amendment.

Snow clearance in northern cities like St. Paul can be challenging. St. Paul's ordinance that sidewalks must be cleared within 24 hours of a snowfall helps to ensure that people have safe places to walk in the winter. However, there are many properties that do not comply with this requirement, and the time it takes city staff to legally clear snow from these properties is time consuming and leads to dangerous conditions for people walking. We see the recommended changes to the ordinance for repeat offenders as a positive step to ensuring access and mobility on our sidewalk network.

Having safe places to walk is critically important for our most vulnerable populations. The elderly, the disabled and youth are especially susceptible to the dangers of uncleared snow and ice. By having a faster way to remove snow from properties showing an inability to clear the sidewalks, getting to school, the bus stop, shopping, services or even back to one's car becomes a much more manageable journey in the winter.

In addition to the proposed changes, we would ask that the Council clarify the City's position on snow clearance for sidewalks without an adjoining property. We've heard from our constituents that areas like bridge decks, where sidewalks are often used as storage for snow removed from roadways, and vacant parcels owned by government agencies are some of the most impassible in the winter. We believe our snow removal policy should be applied equitably to St. Paul's entire sidewalk network.

Everyone is a pedestrian during some portion of every trip, whether we are walking, taking transit, riding our bike or driving a car. We look forward to St. Paul being a safer and easier place to get around in the winter with these changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Treat". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Treat
Executive Director
jessica@smart-trips.org