

Offered by Councilor Kenzie Bok, Worrell, Baker, Breadon, Mejia, Arroyo, Murphy, Flaherty, Lara, Louijeane, Fernandes-Anderson and Flynn



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING A SUPPLEMENTAL SIDEWALK CLEARANCE PROGRAM DURING SNOWSTORMS IN BOSTON

WHEREAS: During snowstorms, the City of Boston is responsible for clearing the roadway while property owners are responsible for clearing their sidewalks, but often sections of sidewalk and crosswalks, including at busy intersections, go uncleared; *and*

WHEREAS: During each snowfall, City Councilors, the Mayor's Office, and 311 receive countless calls, emails, and messages from concerned constituents detailing where lack of snow removal has made their ability to get back to their home, to work, or to the grocery store, dangerous, difficult, or impossible; *and*

WHEREAS: Lack of proper snow clearance by property owners has a disproportionate impact on the disabled community, individuals with mobility challenges, elders, parents and guardians with children and strollers, and residents without a vehicle, even to the point of making it untenable for certain people to leave their homes in the days after a heavy storm; *and*

WHEREAS: The prioritization of road access over pedestrian access in the wake of a snow storm does not reflect the needs of the many Bostonians who do not own vehicles or routinely travel by car; *and*

WHEREAS: In the City of Rochester, New York, while property owners are responsible for removing snow from the sidewalk in front of their property, the City provides the low-cost supplemental service of plowing sidewalks when there are new snow accumulations of four inches or more; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Rochester clears 878 miles of sidewalk when four inches of snow has fallen, with the sidewalk divided into 15 mile "plow runs" that take approximately five hours to clear, in the morning and evening where there is minimal pedestrian traffic; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Syracuse, New York also has a Supplemental Sidewalk Snow Removal Program, which was recently doubled in size to include approximately 100 miles of city sidewalks; *and*

WHEREAS: Following a 2021 Boston City Council hearing focused on sidewalk snow removal, Councilor Kenzie Bok, leadership at the Public Works Department, and the Mayor's administration have worked together to find solutions for clearing essential sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersections during snowstorms; *and*

WHEREAS: On a trial basis this winter, the City of Boston has taken the important step of adding additional skid-steer loaders to clear crosswalks and ramps in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic, and is testing how much area each piece of such equipment can reasonably clear in the period immediately after a storm; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Boston should use the information gathered from this exciting pilot this snow season to continue to make progress towards providing a supplemental snow removal service on City sidewalks during winter snow storms above a certain level of severity and snow accumulation, which could also provide a local workforce development opportunity; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss progress towards a supplemental sidewalk clearance program in the City of Boston, and that representatives from the Public Works Department, 311, the Office of Workforce Development, the Office of Budget Management, and the public be invited to testify.

Filed on: January 28, 2022