



## Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

October 11, 2022

### Summary and Motions

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Chair F. Brown called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members Kay, Ellinger, Moloney, McCurn, LeGris, Sheehan, Kloiber, and Bledsoe were present. Committee Member Worley was absent. Council Member Reynolds was present as a non-voting member.

#### I. Approval of September 13, 2022 Committee Summary

Motion by Ellinger to approve the September 13, 2022 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary. Seconded by McCurn. Motion passed without dissent.

#### II. Annual Snow and Ice Removal Plan

Rob Allen, Director of Streets and Roads, reviewed the snow season expense comparison from 2018 to 2022, pointing out that this does not include personnel. He spoke about the salt supply and said both barns are full and they have a contract in place to purchase additional salt if necessary. He reviewed the route rankings from ranks 1-4 and outlined what streets are included in each rank. He spoke about the 3 service levels based on amount of accumulation. He reviewed changes for the season and mentioned no specific changes were requested this year. He spoke about the COVID-19 assistance plan which involves several divisions across government working together to provide assistance during peak times. He displayed a map of the snow plow tracker that can be utilized by residents to view where a snow plow has been. He highlighted the sidewalk snow removal plan which is taken care of by Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, and Facilities. He mentioned that several divisions in Environmental Quality & Public Works assist with this program.

Moloney asked if we would need to use staff from other divisions if we were fully staffed. Allen said we would still need help. The federal government changed how CDL drivers are trained and it is challenging to learn the new rules because there are also some restrictions that we have never had to deal before. It used to be that riding along with someone who has a CDL counted as drive time, but now we have to use registered trainers with so many hours have to be logged behind the wheel. He mentioned that an RFP was issued for CDL training and we are looking at other solutions as far as getting folks who have experience or a license to help us, but there has not been a lot of interest. Moloney and Allen discussed using Red River to assist with servicing streets such as Man O War. Allen said they have asked Red River if they could provide additional plows and drivers, but they do not have the capacity to assist.

LeGris spoke about Town Branch Commons as part of the sidewalk plan for snow removal. She asked how the trail systems are ranked when it comes to the snow removal plan. Jennifer Carey, Director of Environmental Services, said the Division of Environmental Services would handle Town Branch Commons, but the Division of Parks & Recreation primarily takes care of snow removal on trails. LeGris and Carey confirmed that the Division of Parks & Recreation has similar equipment to assist with this.

McCurn spoke about a potential worst-case scenario when staff gets pulled for an emergency and he asked if we are the number one priority when using a contractor. Allen said the contract employees are dedicated to us exclusively so they wouldn't have to leave to assist the state or other entity and they also have the ability to work extended hours. McCurn mentioned that his district is constantly changing and

developing so some of the routes on the chart appear to be outdated and he asked if this is something that can be changed. Allen said the Commissioner and staff can meet to update this and he also suggested looking into modernizing routes.

Ellinger asked about Parks & Recreation taking care of the trails and Allen explained that Environmental Services handles Town Branch Commons which is downtown where facilities might not be able to reach. Ellinger referenced page 8 and mentioned the 1,000 rock in 2021 and Allen said this was to extend our salt and it is used as a last-case scenario. He said they do get complaints from cyclists because the rock tends to stay around. Allen added that we never want to do this, but if we need to, we can. Allen emphasized that the bicycle lanes are a point of emphasis for snow removal.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

### **III. Urban Tree Canopy Change Analysis and Planting Plan**

Rachel Comte, Arborist with Urban Canopy Works, LLC, spoke about the purpose of this study which is to look at the Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) over time in different scenarios. She displayed a map to illustrate how the tree canopy is measured. She spoke about how the tree canopy cover changed from 20% in 2012 to 23% in 2020 when the tree canopy goal is 30%. She spoke about the ecosystem benefits of the UTC which include air quality, stormwater reduction, carbon sequestration, and carbon storage. She also pointed out how the UTC impacts health. She reviewed changes in UTC by property ownership type and changes to the UTC by Council District. She mentioned ways to identify areas for potential new canopy by defining areas of highest priority by community needs. She provided recommendations for moving forward which include promoting the importance of the urban forest, identifying areas of priority canopy expansion, reaching private land owners, and promoting use of the online canopy viewer.

Sheehan asked if this data can be used to tell the difference in impact between new plantings versus natural tree growth. Comte explained that the analysis that was used for this project would not show this, but you could drill down to smaller areas if you used the online canopy viewer to compare 2012 to 2020 and you could tell what is causing the growth. Sheehan asked how easy it is to view growth changes from year to year using new technology. Comte said canopy growth is a slow process and the existing recommendation is to update the tree canopy every 5-10 years because it is difficult to see a lot of growth in a short period of time. Carey mentioned that part of their contract with *PlanIt Geo* is for them to provide the online viewer for a 3-year subscription and currently the NAIP program is flying aeriels for 2022. Once that is publicly available, it will be uploaded into the canopy viewer so anyone will be able to access it and look at changes from 2020 to 2022. Sheehan and Carey discussed posting a link to the online viewer on one of the Urban Forestry web pages.

McCurn spoke about development in his district in the last 10 years and trying to include tree canopy in this development. In looking at the list of prioritizing efforts, he asked why this area is ranked on the lower section. Comte said *PlanIt Geo* and the staff decided on the factors to be used which were weighed equally. McCurn and Carey discussed whether this was something the city was adopting to say that this is where we are focusing our efforts. Carey said this is a tool we can use and we can play with the different metrics to determine how many trees need to be planted.

Ellinger spoke about stormwater projects and asked about the "F" grade on the report card. Carey explained that the stormwater grade is a strict calculation of the ratio of impervious surface to pervious surface, but is not so much about how it drains in that area. Ellinger asked what the size requirement is

for a tree to be included in the tree canopy. Comte believes it is approximately 15 feet when a tree starts to register as canopy.

LeGris said \$1.5M of budget stabilization funds was allocated to the maintenance, enhancement, education, and outreach associated with the tree canopy and she mentioned an ad hoc group that has been working on this. She said there are variety of directions they can go with regard to planting and this tree canopy study is intended to serve as a guiding document, knowing that there are a lot of variables involved when it comes to planting on private land. This helps us to figure out where we can do more outreach and education and if we want our partner groups and our residents to be involved in that process. Comte added to this by saying that when you allow neighborhoods to choose for themselves what their priorities are, they can run these reports for their council district or neighborhood.

No further comment or action was taken on this item.

#### **IV. Items Referred to Committee**

No comment or action was taken on this item.

Motion by Sheehan to adjourn at 1:52 p.m. Seconded by LeGris. Motion passed without dissent.