

WOODRIDGE SNOW REMOVAL

It is typical in communities to plow snow from the center of a roadway to the edge -- towards the parkway and (unfortunately) homeowners' driveway aprons. The only alternative would be to plow the snow towards the middle of each street and then haul it away so that the street would be passable. Even trying to direct the plow away from each driveway as it is passed is not manageable (there are well over 10,000 driveway aprons) and would result in snow being left in the street.

Because the plows can only be so wide, it is impossible to plow an entire lane in one pass -- therefore, multiple passes must be made on each street and in each direction just to get from the center to near the edge. On each of these passes, snow flies or spills off the edge of the plow and into driveways. With over two hundred lane miles to plow, it is a considerable effort to make just one pass in each direction on every mile of street. It then takes at least one more pass in each direction to fully open a lane for travel, and then another pass to open the street up from curb to curb. At this time we also have to do the tedious work of pushing back the corners at each leg of an intersection. Finally, depending on how deep or heavy the snow is, how much drifting is occurring due to wind and what type of truck we have assigned to that street, we may have to adjust the number of passes it takes to clear the street.

In many snow storms, as in this last one, the length of the storm will also influence how many times we are forced to make a pass down each street. For instance, this last storm (2004) started at about 7:00 pm on Tuesday evening and did not stop until after 12:00 noon on Thursday. We had crews on the road since Tuesday evening, first salting and then plowing. While our streets were nearly clean by 7:00 pm Wednesday (and the snow had by then tapered off significantly), we then were hit with another four inches of snow in a short period of time late Wednesday night and into early Thursday morning. As a result, we did not finish fully clearing each and every street from curb-to-curb until very early this morning (Friday). The extended storms are the most frustrating, even more so than short ones that drop a lot of snow. Just as you may have to clear your driveway more than once during a prolonged snow event, our trucks have to do the same. We cannot wait until the storm is over and then start our operations.

I do also understand your frustration about having to clear heavy snow or even ice even well after it has stopped snowing. But we have to do this in order to make sure that the curbs are clear so that when the snow melts (which it is predicted to do this weekend), the curbs and storm sewer catch basins are not blocked with ice. If we don't do this, we could get street flooding and then create an unsafe situation should the water freeze again (which is likely to occur with fluctuating temperatures). The other reason we have to clean from curb-to-curb is to make room for the next possible snow fall. If we leave snow piled at the edge of the street, we will just be compounding the problem when the next snow comes.

As promised, I can offer you a few tips on reducing the amount of snow that ends up in your driveway:

1. When you shovel your driveway apron near the street, place the snow to the left of your driveway (as you face your house). If you pile it on the other side, it is a likely target for a snow plow that is getting close to the curb, and will definitely end up in your driveway.
2. Clear a few feet of the edge of the street and curbline to the right of your driveway (again, as you face your house). This will help reduce the amount of snow that gets dumped in your driveway as the plow goes by.

I hope this information is helpful in some way. You can be sure that our snow plan is indeed designed with the residents in mind (and in keeping with best practices employed by public works agencies), with specific focus on making roads passable and open for safe travel during and as soon after a snow event as possible.