



Dateline: Paid for by the City of Loveland

LOVELAND

Coming soon to your neighborhood: Snowplows on City trash trucks

As you read this in December, you may have already benefitted from a major new service throughout Loveland. Beginning this winter, when the city is hit with a major snowfall, trash trucks with snowplows will clear the centers of residential streets.

Following a successful trial program last year, the Streets Division will now use City trash and recycling trucks equipped with newly-purchased snowplow equipment to open up residential streets. When a big storm hits, the plows will be affixed to ten trash trucks that will then plow the center third—not curb to curb—of the residential streets.

It's important to remember residential street clearing is third priority. First priority

Loveland residents may painfully remember the winter of 2006-07 when snowstorms fell one after another during a prolonged cold spell. City crews were so busy keeping the main roads open they couldn't attack the residential streets. Residents may have been just a block or two from a plowed roadway but couldn't get there without a big-league, 4-wheel-drive vehicle.

In just a couple of days, the vehicles that did travel the unplowed residential streets packed down the snow, plus the ongoing freeze-thaw-freeze weather pattern resulted in roadways that resembled frozen and badly rutted lakes. The City called out its heavy-



Pros and cons

Our world is imperfect. There are always tradeoffs. Positives and negatives. That reality exists with this new program, too, but the positive will far outweigh any negatives.

The big positive is obvious—citizens will be able to drive down their small residential streets to the main streets. People will be able to get to work, school, shopping, the movies, wherever. 4WD won't be required. Even after a major snowstorm, everyone's lifestyle may suffer a bit of a delay but won't come to a halt.

OK, now the cons. Plowed snow has to go somewhere. Clearing the center of the street means the plowed snow will pile up—windrow is the proper word—against parked cars and across driveways. Shoveling will probably be required to get through the windrow. City crews will open the residential streets, but they can't shovel 25,000 driveways. That's the tradeoff for not missing work, not running short of groceries or medications, not missing your child's piano recital or that concert at the Rialto.

Good neighbors

Adversity often brings people together. A windrow may bring a young, able bodied person together with a neighbor who is no longer young or whose body is not very able.

Residents who know that a neighbor next door or down the street may have difficulty clearing the windrow may want to help. Consider taking the initiative by knocking on their door and asking if they need help. Better yet, after you finish reading City

Update and before the next snow falls, knock on that door and volunteer to help out for the entire winter season.

And the trash?

Depending on the day of the week and/or the time of day when the large storm hits, residents' trash and recycling may be delayed or even canceled for that week's pickup. With a big storm, the truck drivers will be called upon to do double duty; clearing snow and picking up the carts. Snow clearing will have priority over cart pickup.

For residents whose pickup day follows the snow clearing, please place carts further out in the street than normal, possibly as far out as the windrow to make them more accessible to the trucks for pickup. Snowstorms, especially the large ones that will bring plowing by trash trucks and the resulting windrow, make pickup a major challenge.

Please remember

On a citywide scale, this new effort will be a new experience for everyone, residents and snow crews alike. Please keep in mind:

- The residential streets will only be plowed following a major storm; six inches at least.
- The plowing will leave a windrow and shoveling will likely be needed.
- A neighbor may need some help.
- Street clearing may interrupt trash pickup schedules.
- It's a new program. It won't be perfect, some tweaking will surely be required.
- Most importantly, enjoy a safe and pleasant winter!



First priority

Loveland's major streets get major attention during snowstorms. State highways like US287 shown here downtown are the first to be plowed and maintained. Next come collector streets and other important roadways. Residential streets are lowest priority, but now using trash trucks equipped with snowplows, may have center lanes plowed after major snowfalls only – i.e. more than six inches.

is the city's highways and main avenues—287, 34, 402, Taft, Wilson, etc. Second priority is heavily-used two-lane collector streets, school bus routes and streets that serve commercial/industrial zones—W. 22nd, Duffield, Colorado, Silver Leaf, Rossum and others.

The trash-truck plows will be called out only when the snowfall exceeds six inches deep, the weather forecast is poor and the higher priority streets are already passable.

Some history

Making use of the trash trucks—an existing City resource—to clear snow in Loveland was inspired by similar use of refuse trucks back East in cities like New York, Milwaukee, Baltimore and others. Loveland may be the only small city west of the Mississippi doing this.

duty equipment plus spent about three-quarters of a million dollars hiring private contractors with road graders and front-end loaders. The results were not only costly but disappointing. Even the heavy equipment couldn't scrape up the ice.

Last year, the Streets Division tried an experiment. They purchased a snowplow and mounted it to one trash truck. When the first big storm occurred, they tried it in one neighborhood. It worked. When the next big storms hit, they tried it again. It worked each time. So last spring, for less than one-third the cost of the bill for 2006-07, the City ordered more plows. There was no cost for trucks because the City already has a fleet of trash trucks. The new plows have a long lifespan.

Plowing priorities: All streets are not treated equally

Priority One: Four-lane arterials that carry the most traffic, plus important two-lane thoroughfares. This includes state highways 34, 287 and 402 plus Loveland's other main streets such as 29th, 1st, Taft, Wilson, Madison and 14th St. SW. Roads to hospitals, fire stations, and police stations are kept open.

Priority Two: Collector streets school bus routes and streets which serve commercial/industrial zones get plowed next. Examples are 18th, 22nd, Van Buren, 8th, 10th, Dotsero, Colorado, Duffield, Carlisle and Silver Leaf.

Priority Three: Remaining streets including residential, are not routinely plowed and de-iced because their lower

traffic volumes and traffic speeds do not typically warrant the expense. However, when snow accumulations are such that residents will have difficulty driving to the nearest designated plowed route—usually six inches

or more—trash trucks with snowplows may be deployed to clear a path down the center of each street. Snow depths, daytime temperatures and the time of year will be factored into the decision to plow or not plow residential streets.



Both ends working

When the snow falls, Loveland's dump trucks are equipped stem to stern to clear the roadways. On the front is a heavy duty snowplow and on the rear is a spreader for the de-icer loaded in the truck's dump box.

Remember:

- Residents are responsible for opening up their own driveways.
- Residents are responsible for clearing their sidewalks within 24 hours after a snowfall.



Snow Squad needs volunteers

The City of Loveland Snow Squad program needs volunteers to help shovel snow for low income, disabled residents. City regulations require that sidewalks be cleared within 24 hours after a snowfall.

There is currently a waiting list of residents in-need, several of whom are in hospice care. Volunteers are asked to commit to a full season of shoveling.

To help a neighbor in-need this winter, or for more information, contact Snow Squad at 962-2764.