

Bloomington Common Council Deliberation Session Packet Addendum #1

Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 6:30pm

Council Chambers, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street, Bloomington, IN 47404

The meeting may also be accessed [remotely](#)¹.

1. Public Works Department Feedback – Adam Wason
2. Summary of Constituent Feedback via uReport

Bloomington City Council meetings can be watched on the following websites:

- [Community Access Television Services \(CATS\)](#)²
- [City's YouTube Channel](#)³

[Materials for this meeting](#)⁴ are available on Council's website.

1

https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/83919591100?pwd%3DpmBfb5iu1BF1JYlqxmLYtQQKizsIXb.1&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1779140577348011&usg=AOvVaw0Kb0Z9ZtB3Mc_PwF7y63z3

² <https://catstv.net/>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/@citybloomington>

⁴ <https://bloomington.in.gov/council/meetings/2026>

Posted: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Departmental Feedback (continued)

Public Works Department (Director Adam Wason)

1. What is the annual budget amount and spending for snow removal on (1) vehicle lanes and (2) pedestrian and multimodal infrastructure?

- *Public Works Administration*: \$50,000 (High Priority Pedestrian Network contract snow removal)
- *Facilities*: \$35,000, but this is not exclusively for snow, it also includes mowing and landscaping.
- *Street*: **2025 Budget Figures (See budget note below*)**
 - 2025 Contracting Services: \$26,825 (Expensed \$10,470)
 - 2025 Materials (Salt): \$518,046 (Expensed \$355,612)
 - 2025 Wages: (Expensed \$217,496)

* *Budget note*: winter season actually falls into two separate annual budget years (for example, this past winter, November to December 2025 expenses fall within the 2025 annual budget. The expenses for the months of January to April 2026 fall within the 2026 annual budget). Funds can be encumbered from one year into the next to help prepare for future expenses.

[Public Works Snow Removal expenses 2025-26](#)

2. I believe DPW has piloted some pedestrian snow removal in the past few years—maybe downtown and along the College/Walnut corridor where there are monolithic sidewalks. Is that correct? And how have these pilots gone?

Winter 2025-26 was the first season of the pilot program which focused on the College/Walnut corridor between 1st Street and Winslow. The monolithic sidewalks were specifically targeted as traditional plows would pile the street snow up onto the sidewalks, making it unreasonable to clear the walks through normal means. To that end, the program was for snow *removal* as opposed to traditional plowing; contractors would transport the snow off-site for disposal. The program functioned well, but was expensive, and time consuming. Even with contractors running multiple units full-time, it was still difficult to meet ordinance deadlines. There is also the question of equity that we heard from constituents about - that we are performing this service for some businesses, but not others.

Additionally, the DPW Brighten Bloomington Crews work to continuously clear ADA curb ramps throughout the downtown after a snow event. Through the process of plowing streets, the

ramps become re-blocked with snow so this is an ongoing activity until snow fully melts. The [Brighten Bloomington Work Summary Dashboard](#) aggregates data on ADA curb ramps cleared

3. Is DPW responsible for snow removal at all city-owned properties? How do we track that across different city entities (e.g., city, utilities, parks, RDC, etc.)?

No, only at City of Bloomington Public Works Department facilities. Other City departments conduct separate snow removal operations at their facilities. If an outside contractor is used, then the billing invoices are sent to the appropriate department (based on service locations) to pay for the snow removal.

4. Is DPW responsible for clearing multi-use paths? What about protected bike lanes? Are other city departments (e.g., Parks) also responsible for some multi-use paths; and are the areas of responsibility clear? Are city departments and residents clear about what infrastructure is a multi-use path vs. a sidewalk and, consequently, whose responsibility it is to clear snow?

No, DPW Street Division is responsible for multi-use paths (many are done via outside contractor support). The Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for B-Line and Clear Creek trails. These areas of responsibility are clear and understood; City staff understand the different infrastructure, but residents/businesses are probably less clear about them.

[GIS Snow Remediation Map](#)

5. With respect to pedestrian safety and access after snow events, what do you think is going well? What do you see as our most significant challenges? What do you think are opportunities for improvement?

Going well

- Clearly defined areas of responsibility, and centralized activation process for contractors for snow events.
- Crews work long hours, and take great pride in making roads passable for emergency vehicles, transit, MCCSC and the traveling public
- Brine program has shown cost savings and effectiveness

Challenges

- Snowfall events will happen on weekends, holidays and in the middle of the night
- Equipment limitations for protected bike lanes

- Monolithic sidewalks having no where for snow to go when clearing roads
- Once first passes are done, working on getting curb to curb clear of snow is hampered by vehicles, and often pushes snow to ramps and sidewalks that have already been cleared
- Difficulty in finding willing vendors. There were actually very few contractors willing to bid on our snow removal packages.
- Expectations after a major snow event often do not meet the realities of the challenges faced from a labor and equipment perspective.
- **The Fleet and Street facilities do not meet modern work environments for the long hours involved with snow events**

Constituent Feedback via uReport

Note: To assist in a high-level analysis of resident experiences, data trends, and opportunities for improvement identified within the City's uReport system, I (Councilmember Flaherty) used an AI assistant to analyze the 404 uReport records under the "Sidewalk Snow Removal" category for winter 2025-2026, producing the following analysis:

Executive Summary: Analysis of Bloomington uReport Sidewalk Snow Removal Requests (Winter 2025–2026)

This analysis reviews 404 sidewalk snow removal-related uReport requests submitted during the 2025–2026 winter season in Bloomington, Indiana. The dataset reveals a consistent pattern: residents experience snow and ice conditions not merely as an inconvenience, but as a significant disruption to pedestrian mobility, transit access, accessibility, and public safety.

Several themes recur throughout the complaints:

- pedestrians being forced into streets due to impassable sidewalks,
- chronic snowbanks and intersection obstructions,
- inaccessible bus stops and curb ramps,
- uneven compliance across property owners and institutions,
- recurring concerns near schools, apartments, and major pedestrian corridors,
- and frustration regarding repeated noncompliance and inconsistent enforcement.

At the same time, the data also points toward opportunities for operational improvement, stronger prioritization systems, clearer accountability, and more coordinated accessibility-focused winter response.

Key Findings

1. The Dominant Issue Was Loss of Pedestrian Mobility

The single most consistent theme was residents reporting that sidewalks became effectively unusable, forcing people into streets and travel lanes.

Approximately 90 complaints explicitly referenced pedestrians walking in the roadway, unsafe pedestrian conditions, or impassable walkways.

Residents repeatedly described:

- snow piled onto sidewalks during street plowing,
- sidewalks remaining uncleared for days,
- packed snow turning into ice sheets,
- and intersections becoming inaccessible.

The complaints frame winter accessibility as a continuity-of-mobility issue rather than simply a maintenance issue.

Representative concerns included:

- pedestrians forced into traffic,
- children walking in roads near schools,
- inability to access transit stops,
- and inaccessible pedestrian corridors during extended snow periods.

2. Complaints Frequently Identified Accessibility and ADA-Related Concerns

Many reports specifically referenced:

- wheelchair access,
- curb ramps,
- inaccessible crossings,
- and mobility limitations.

Although explicit disability-related language appeared in a smaller subset of complaints, accessibility barriers were embedded throughout the dataset.

Recurring accessibility issues included:

- curb ramps blocked by plowed snow,
- snowbanks at intersections,
- sidewalks too narrow to pass safely,
- and uneven or icy surfaces.

The data strongly suggests that snow response is currently experienced by many residents as vehicle-prioritized rather than universally accessible.

Major Recurring Themes

A. Sidewalks Became Impassable for Extended Periods

Residents frequently described sidewalks as:

- “untouched,”
- “never shoveled,”
- “packed into ice,”
- or “completely impassable.”

Common concerns included:

- delayed clearance after snowfall,
- sidewalks remaining snow-covered after streets were plowed,
- and repeated noncompliance by certain property owners.

The issue appears especially acute along:

- apartment complexes,
- commercial corridors,
- institutional properties,
- and heavily traveled pedestrian routes.

B. Intersections and Snowbanks Were Critical Failure Points

Approximately 35–40 complaints specifically referenced:

- snowbanks,
- blocked crossings,
- intersections,
- or curb ramps.

Residents consistently identified intersections as locations where:

- plowed snow accumulated,
- pedestrians lost access to crossings,
- and safe movement became impossible.

This suggests that intersections may function as “critical network chokepoints” where otherwise passable routes fail.

C. Transit Access Was Frequently Disrupted

Approximately 29 complaints referenced bus stops or transit access.

Residents described:

- bus stops blocked by plowed snow,
- inaccessible waiting areas,
- inability to board buses safely,
- and lack of pedestrian access between sidewalks and transit stops.

The complaints indicate that sidewalk snow removal and transit accessibility are operationally interconnected and should likely be planned together.

D. Residents Perceived Chronic and Repeated Noncompliance

Many complaints referenced:

- repeated failures by the same properties,
- long-standing issues recurring year after year,
- and frustration with warning-based enforcement systems.

Representative themes included:

- “ongoing problem year after year,”
- “still not shoveled,”
- and requests for stronger enforcement.

This suggests that some locations may warrant:

- targeted enforcement,
- proactive outreach,
- or enhanced monitoring during snow events.

E. Schools and Major Pedestrian Corridors Emerged as High-Concern Areas

Several complaints specifically referenced:

- children walking to school,
- elementary school routes,
- apartment-heavy corridors,
- and major pedestrian thoroughfares.

These reports suggest an opportunity to formally designate:

- priority pedestrian routes,
- school-access corridors,
- transit corridors,
- and accessibility-critical sidewalks.

Geographic Patterns

Several corridors and locations appeared repeatedly in the dataset, including:

- S College Mall Road,
- S Walnut Street,
- N Walnut Street,
- College Avenue,
- and areas near major apartment complexes and commercial corridors.

The recurring nature of complaints in these areas suggests:

- high pedestrian demand,
- operational difficulty,
- or chronic compliance problems.

Further GIS analysis could identify:

- hotspot intersections,
- overlap with transit routes,
- proximity to schools,
- and priority accessibility corridors.

Operational Insights

The dataset points toward several structural operational challenges:

1. Vehicle-Centered Snow Operations

Many complaints suggest streets were often cleared before sidewalks and crossings became passable.

Residents repeatedly described conditions where:

- roads were drivable,
- but pedestrian infrastructure remained inaccessible.

2. Responsibility Zones Appear Confusing or Fragmented

Complaints frequently involved:

- apartment complexes,
- institutional properties,

- commercial parcels,
- city-maintained corridors,
- and areas where responsibility may be unclear.

This suggests a need for:

- clearer accountability,
- public communication,
- and potentially revised maintenance agreements or ordinances.

3. Intersections Require Dedicated Operational Attention

Snowbanks at curb ramps and crossings appear to be a systemic issue rather than isolated complaints.

Operationally, intersections may require:

- dedicated equipment,
- secondary cleanup passes,
- or prioritized accessibility standards.

Opportunities for Improvement

A. Establish a Priority Pedestrian Accessibility Network

The city could formally designate:

- school-access routes,
- transit corridors,
- downtown pedestrian routes,
- healthcare access corridors,
- and accessibility-critical sidewalks.

These routes could receive:

- accelerated snow response,
- dedicated monitoring,
- and published performance targets.

B. Prioritize Intersections, Curb Ramps, and Bus Stops

The data strongly supports treating:

- curb ramps,
 - crosswalks,
 - and transit stops
- as essential accessibility infrastructure during snow response.

Potential improvements include:

- dedicated crews,
- smaller equipment,
- secondary clearing operations,
- and intersection-focused performance standards.

C. Improve Enforcement and Compliance Systems

Potential policy options include:

- escalated enforcement for repeat offenders,
- proactive outreach to chronic problem properties,
- institutional compliance plans,
- and clearer timelines for required clearing.

The city may also benefit from distinguishing between:

- first-time violations,
- and chronic repeat noncompliance.

D. Develop Accessibility-Oriented Performance Metrics

Potential metrics could include:

- time to clear priority sidewalks,
- time to clear curb ramps,
- transit stop accessibility rates,
- repeat complaint locations,
- and geographic equity indicators.

This could help shift snow response evaluation from roadway performance alone toward multimodal accessibility.

E. Improve Coordination Between Public Works, Transit, and Accessibility Planning

The complaints suggest that:

- sidewalk maintenance,
 - transit accessibility,
 - pedestrian planning,
 - and ADA compliance
- are operationally interconnected.

A cross-departmental winter accessibility protocol may improve consistency and response times.

Asset-Based Observations

Although the dataset primarily captures complaints, it also reveals important community strengths:

- Residents are highly engaged and attentive to pedestrian safety.
- Many reports demonstrate strong civic awareness of accessibility needs.
- Residents frequently identify specific operational solutions.
- Community members consistently advocate for children, transit users, and disabled residents.
- The city already possesses a robust public reporting system capable of generating actionable operational data.

The existence of this reporting infrastructure creates a significant opportunity for data-informed winter accessibility planning.

Strategic Takeaway

The central policy issue emerging from the data is not simply snow removal.

It is whether Bloomington treats winter pedestrian mobility and accessibility as essential civic infrastructure.

The complaints consistently frame snow response as:

- an accessibility issue,
- a transportation issue,
- a public safety issue,
- and a continuity-of-community-life issue.

The strongest opportunities appear to involve:

- prioritizing critical pedestrian corridors,

- improving intersection accessibility,
- integrating transit and sidewalk operations,
- clarifying responsibility zones,
- and adopting accessibility-centered performance standards.

The dataset provides a strong empirical foundation for a deliberative policy discussion focused on improving winter mobility, accessibility, and pedestrian safety citywide.