

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION #2014-01

Dated: November 12, 2014

SUBJECT: Township Snow Removal Policy (This supersedes Resolution #2013-01 dtd 3/13/2013)

WHEREAS, the Town Board ("Board") of STAR LAKE Township ("Town") is the road authority and provides maintenance for approximately 31 miles of road in the Town;

WHEREAS, the Board, as the road authority, provides for snow and ice control on the town roads it has designated to receive winter maintenance;

WHEREAS, the Board determines it is in the best interest of the Town to develop a policy to set out how snow and ice control activities will be conducted on town roads considering the limited maintenance budget, personnel, and equipment available in the town;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board hereby adopts the following as the snow and ice control policy for the Town:

I. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In developing this policy for how to best undertake snow and ice control activities in the Town, the Board has had to balance a number of factors including, but not limited to, the following: public safety; the amount of funds available for these activities; the number and availability of town personnel to engage in these activities; the safety of town personnel; enable the safe transportation of school children; the wish to maintain an efficient transportation system; enable the delivery of emergency services; avoid damage to Town property and personal property; and the cost effective allocation of resources. A further explanation of some of these policy considerations follows:

1. **Budgetary**: The funds the Town has available for snow and ice control are derived from two sources. The first is the town road and bridge tax levy that is set by the town electors at the annual town meeting held in March. The second source of funds comes from the gas tax imposed and collected by the state, a small portion of which is distributed to towns to help maintain their roads. The Board has no direct control over either source of funding. A proposed levy is submitted to the town electors at the annual town meeting, but the actual amount of the Town's road & bridge levy is determined solely by a vote of the electors.
2. **Personnel & Equipment**: The Town typically has two part-time Town employees available to carry out snow and ice control activities. The Board Chairman is designated the "Road Superintendent"..

The Town owns and has available the following items of equipment for snow and ice control:

- One 1994 Ford 8000 truck equipped as snow plow, and one road grader equipped with V-Plow and snowplow wing,

The number and availability of Town personnel and equipment may change over time. These changes may be temporary such as when personnel leave and replacements are hired or while equipment is down for repair, or permanently for budgetary or other reasons.

3. **Safety, Equipment Damage, & Effectiveness**: Snow and ice control operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the safety of employees or pose an unreasonably risk of damaging equipment. Once initiated, operations will be suspended if conditions deteriorate to the point that operations become unsafe for employees because of factors including, but not limited to, severe cold, significant winds, limited visibility, accumulation of ice, or rapid accumulation of snow. Operations will also be delayed or suspended if existing or anticipated conditions indicate the operations will not be effective. Any decision to delay or suspend operations shall be made by the road superintendent based upon the actual and anticipated weather conditions.
4. **Work Schedule for Snowplow Operators**: The Snowplow operators will be expected to work an eight hour shift. In severe snow emergencies, operators may need to work in excess of an eight hour shift. However, because of budget and safety concerns, no operator should work more than an eleven (11) hour shift in any twenty-four hour period. Operators will take a fifteen-minute break every two hours with a half-hour meal break after four hours. After an eleven-hour day, the operators will be replaced if additional qualified personnel are available.
5. **Environmental Protection**: Because the Town is concerned about the potential negative environmental effects of the use of salt, it will minimize its use. When possible and financially practicable, salt and sand with salt will be stored in a manner to minimize run-off, and if snow containing salt is hauled, every reasonable effort will be made to deposit the snow away from public waters.

II. TOWN ROADS THAT ARE SNOWPLOWED

Unless closed because of a snow emergency, the following town roads or portions of town roads are normally snow plowed by the Town:

1. 380th Street
2. Bright Star Road
3. Bambi Drive

4. 280th Avenue south from State Hwy 108 to junction with 380th Street
5. 390th Street
6. 300th Avenue from State Hwy 108 to County Hwy 35
7. East Lodge Loop
8. 395th Street
9. 285th Street to Maine TS Line
10. 360th Street
11. Big Rock Road
12. Buddy Lane
13. 355th Street
14. Star Land Shore Drive
15. Kreuger Loop
16. Vic's Beach Road
17. Downy Drive
18. Beaver Dam Road north from Cty Hwy 35 to 380th Street
19. Beaver Dam Point/Trail

III. TOWN ROADS THAT ARE NOT SNOWPLOWED

1. NOT APPLICABLE – ALL TOWN ROAD WILL BE SNOWPLOWED
2. **Minimum-Maintenance Roads that are not Snowplowed:** Towns are authorized by Minn. Stat. § 160.095 to designate roads that are used only occasionally or intermittently for passenger or commercial traffic as minimum-maintenance roads. Once a road is properly designated as a minimum-maintenance road and appropriate signs are posted, the town need only maintain the road at a level needed to accommodate the occasional or intermittent use. In this Town the Board has designated certain roads in the Town as minimum-maintenance roads. Some or all of the roads designated as minimum-maintenance are used primarily as access to lands for *[farming, hunting, sight-seeing, or for other summer recreational purposes]*. Because the Board determines that these roads are not needed for vehicular traffic during the winter months, the following minimum-maintenance roads will not be snowplowed or otherwise maintained during winter months:

- **280th Avenue south of residence on south side of County Hwy 24.**

While these roads are not used for vehicular traffic during winter months, the Board does recognize that they may be used for snowmobiling. If the Board were to close and barricade these roads during the winter months, snowmobilers would be prohibited from using them under Minn. Stat. § 160.27, subd. 5(14) which makes it a misdemeanor to drive through or around barricades. Furthermore, erecting barricades across roads used for snowmobile traffic creates a concern for the safety of snowmobilers. To accommodate the use of these roads by snowmobilers, instead of closing and

barricading the roads the Board will erect signs on or adjacent to the minimum-maintenance signs indicating that they do not receive any winter maintenance.

3. Town Roads Closed in Snow Emergencies: In snow emergencies the Board will close and barricade roads at it deems necessary to respond to the emergency. The Board will determine when to reopen each road that was closed based on need and condition of the road as well as on the availability of funds, personnel and equipment.

5. **Special Circumstances:** An owner of property adjacent to a road or road portion that the Board has determined not to snowplow during winter months may request the Board to snowplow the road in emergencies or if special circumstances exist. The Board will consider each such request and determine if it has the sufficient resources to accommodate it.

IV. TOWN ROAD SNOWPLOWING PRIORITIES

In order to provide for the most efficient and effective snowplowing as possible given the Town's limited resources, the Board must determine which town roads will be plowed first. To this end, the Board has determined the plowing priority to be that which is indicated on the "Star Lake Township Snow-Plowing Priorities/Routes" (see Attachment A). A town road may only be snowplowed in the order designated except in emergencies as set out in this policy, or at the direction of the Town Board, or in the best judgment of the plow operator depending upon safety concerns.

V. EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE ASSISTANCE

If law enforcement requests snow removal to assist emergency vehicles to respond to an emergency situation, reasonable efforts will be made to dispatch necessary personnel and equipment to accommodate the request.

VI. WHEN SNOWPLOWING BEGINS

The road superintendent or designee shall determine when to begin snow and ice control operations. The criteria for that decision are:

An evaluation of the immediate and anticipated weather conditions.

- The likely effectiveness of operations.
- Safety of employees.
- If an unreasonable risk of damaging equipment exists.
- Severe icy conditions that seriously affect travel.
- Time of snowfall in relationship to heavy use of the roads.

Snow and ice control operations are expensive and involve the use of limited personnel and equipment. Consequently, operations will normally not begin until the snow has stopped falling or until at least [four] inches of snow has accumulated.

VII. WHEN SNOWPLOWING WILL BE DELAYED OR SUSPENDED

As stated in the policy considerations above, snow and ice control operations will be delayed or suspended if the road superintendent determines that the safety of employees is at risk, conditions pose an unreasonable risk of damaging equipment, or if operations will not be effective because of existing or anticipated conditions.

VIII. HOW SNOW WILL BE PLOWED

Snow will be plowed in a manner as to minimize traffic obstructions. Snow will normally be plowed from the center of the road first. Then snow will be pushed from left to right until at least the main traveled portion of the road has been cleared. On narrow roads, the plow operator may choose to plow snow from one side to the other. In the event of equipment failure, extreme snowfall, or other unanticipated events including the availability or need to rest snowplow crews, deviation from these standards may be appropriate at the discretion of the road superintendent.

Snow will be plowed as close as practicable to mailboxes located in the road right-of-way. It shall be the responsibility of property owners to clear snow from around their mailboxes to enable mail delivery.

Snowplowing unavoidably results in snow being deposited on driveways and approaches. Because the Town does not have the resources available to it to clear the ends of driveways and approaches, it is the responsibility of land owners to remove snow from their driveways and approaches.

IX. SANDING AND SALTING

The Town must consider the cost, environmental impact, public safety, and availability of staff and equipment when deciding if, when, and to what extent to apply sand and salt. Furthermore, the state legislature has imposed the following limitations on the use of salt by road authorities:

In order to -

- (1) minimize the harmful or corrosive effects of salt or other chemicals upon vehicles, roadways, and vegetation;
- (2) reduce the pollution of waters; and
- (3) reduce the driving hazards resulting from chemicals on windshields;

road authorities responsible for the maintenance of highways or streets during periods when snow and ice are prevalent, shall utilize such salt or other chemicals only at such places as upon hills, at intersections, or upon high speed or arterial roadways where vehicle traction is particularly critical, and only if, in the opinion of the road authorities, removal of snow and ice or reduction of hazardous conditions by blading, plowing, sanding, including chemicals needed for free flow of sand, or natural elements cannot be accomplished within a reasonable time.”
Minn. Stat. § 160.215.

To the extent sand and salt is applied, priority will be given to the following areas in the order listed:

- Hills, controlled intersections, bridges, and curves.
- Major arterial and collector streets.
- School zones.
- Bus routes.
- Commercial areas.
- Residential areas.
- Rural areas.

X. SNOW STORAGE

Collecting, hauling, and storing snow is expensive, requires special equipment, is labor intensive, and interferes with traffic while it is being performed. As such, snow will only be hauled and stored elsewhere when the road superintendent determines it is necessary to keep a road reasonably open and passable. Snow that is hauled will only be stored on public land or on private property with the expressed written permission of the owners. To the extent possible, when snow containing salt is hauled it will be stored away from public waters.

XI. SNOWPLOWING OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

The Town will not snowplow or sand private property except when requested to do so by law enforcement to provide access for emergency vehicles responding to an emergency. If private property is used with permission of the owner to turn around Town equipment or to store snow, the Town may snowplow the private property as needed to accommodate the Town’s use of the land.

XII. DEPOSITING SNOW IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

It is unlawful for anyone to deposit any snow or ice in a public road right-of-way or to otherwise obstruct a public road. Minn. Stat. §§ 160.27, subd. 5(a)(1); 169.42, subd. 1. Depositing snow or ice in a road also increases snowplowing costs, creates a potential public safety hazard, and could damage equipment.

XIII. OBJECTS WITHIN TOWN ROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Public road rights-of-way are used for a variety of purposes that are outside of the direct control of the Town. While reasonable efforts will be made to avoid damaging private property, snow and ice control operations may result in damage to the property of others. Where private property damage does occur, it is the policy of the Town to handle damages in the following manner.

1. **Mailboxes:** Owners are responsible for erecting their own mailboxes in order to receive roadside mail delivery. Mailboxes must conform to the standards established by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Mailboxes that do not conform to the established standards are considered a public nuisance and are prohibited by law. Minn. Stat. § 169.072. The mailbox owner assumes all risk of damage from snowplowing including damage from pushed or piled snow. The only exception is where the mailbox is damaged through direct contact with snowplowing vehicles. If, in the opinion of the road superintendent or designee, a mailbox was damaged through direct contact with snowplowing vehicles, the Town will repair, replace, or make other arrangements with the owner to correct the damage to the mailbox. Under no circumstances will the Town pay more than \$40 to correct damage to a mailbox. Furthermore, the Town will not pay to repair or replace any mailbox that does not substantially comply with the standards established by the state, even if they are damaged by direct contact with snowplowing vehicles.
2. **Sod and Landscaping:** The Town assumes no responsibility for damages from snow or ice control operations to sod, trees, or other landscaping materials or vegetation.
3. **Lawn Sprinklers, Lighting, and Personal Property:** The Town assumes no responsibility for damage to aboveground or underground lawn sprinkling systems, exterior lighting systems, or other items of personal property located in a road right-of-way whether by direct or indirect contact with snow or ice control equipment.
4. **Utility Structures:** The Town will only be responsible for damage to utility pedestals, transformers, or other utility structures within the right-of-way that result from direct contact with snow and ice removal equipment provided the structure was marked with a minimum 5 foot identification marker. Town liability will be limited to the actual costs

to repair the damages as documented by invoices submitted to the Town by the utility company.

5. **Clearing Snow Around Items Left in Road**: It is the responsibility of owners to keep the road rights-of-way clear of vehicles, trailers, trash cans, and other items of personal property in order to facilitate the proper snow and ice control operations. If an owner fails to keep the road clear of personal property, the owner becomes responsible for promptly clearing the snow left in the right-of-way around the item. If the Board determines personal property left in the road right-of-way poses an unreasonable risk to public safety, or significantly interferes with snowplowing operations, it will have the item removed from the right-of-way at the owner's expense.
6. **Damage by Contractors**: The Town shall not be responsible for any damage or injuries caused by independent contractors performing snow or ice control operations for the Town. Any claims of damage must be made directly to the contractor.

XIV. SNOW EMERGENCIES

In the event that snow in excess of twelve inches is forecast, or a blizzard warning is issued by the National Weather Service, the Town Board may implement Snow Emergency Operations: Those operations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Arranging for an additional snow plow operator to act as backup to the normal operator. The intent is to keep the snow plow operating on a continuing basis until all roads are clear, and storm conditions subside.
2. Arranging for an operator for the Road Grader. The intent is to have all available snow removal equipment in operation until all roads are clear, and storm conditions subside.
3. Allowing the primary snow plow operator to pre-position the snow plow at his/her residence to insure he/she can physically get to the township roads.
4. Securing the services of private contractors to assist in snow removal operations as deemed necessary.

XV. SNOW REMOVAL OPERATIONS – MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The following routine maintenance functions/preparations will be accomplished each November:

1. The snow wing, tire chains, and V-Plow will be installed on the road grader to insure it is properly configured & equipped for heavy snow operations.

2. The road grader and snow plow truck will topped off with winter blend fuel and windshield washer fluid.
3. The snow plow box will be topped off with 3-5 yds. of a sand/salt mixture.

XVI. COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR FURTHER SERVICES

Complaints and requests for further services regarding snow and ice control or damage will be taken during normal working hours and handled in accordance with Town procedures. Complaints and requests for further services should be directed to the road superintendent. The road superintendent shall inform the board of complaints, any requests for changes to this policy, or any other request that requires a Board decision to address.

XVII. REVIEW OF POLICY

The Board will periodically review this policy, taking into consideration any changing conditions in the Town's circumstances, any complaints or comments received, and the experienced learned from undertaking snow and ice control procedures.

Adopted this 12 day of November,
2014.

BY THE TOWN BOARD 

Town Board Chair

Attest: 

Town Clerk

ATTACHMENT A

SLT SNOW-PLOWING PRIORITIES/ROUTES* (11/12/14 this supercedes Attach. A dtd. 3/14/13)

*There are approximately 104 full-time residences located on 32 miles of township roads. In determining snow-plowing priorities these residences have identified on a map, and clustered into specific township road groups. The intent is to reach the greatest number of residences in the shortest amount of distance/time in an efficient manner. Adherence to this routing will also insure that ALL Roads are serviced. Based upon the above criteria the following route priorities have been determined:

- 1- From the town hall garage proceed east on 380th St. to Cty. 41,
- 2- Cross Cty. 41 & proceed east on 380th St. to Bright Star Rd.,
- 3- Turn Right on Bright Star & proceed to dead end & return to 380th St.,
- 4- Turn Right & proceed to dead end & return to Cty. 41,
- 5- Cross Cty. 41 & proceed west on 380th St. to Bambi Drive,
- 6- Turn Right & proceed north on Bambi Drive turning right to dead-end and return to 380th St.,
- 7- Turn Right & proceed west on 380th St. to 280th Ave.,
- 8- Turn Right & proceed north on 280th Ave. to 390th St.,
- 9- Turn Right & proceed east to East Lodge Loop,
- 10- Turn Right & proceed to dead end and return to 390th St.,
- 11- Turn Right on 390th St. & proceed to Cty. 41,
- 12- Turn Left on 41 & proceed to 395th St.,
- 13- Turn Right & proceed east on 395th St. to dead-end,
- 14- Turn-around & proceed west on 395th St. to Hwy 41,
- 15- Turn Left and proceed back to 390th St.,
- 16- Turn Right and proceed west on 390th St. to 300th Ave.,
- 17- Turn Right & proceed north on 300th Ave. to State Hwy 108,
- 18- Turn-around & proceed south on 300th Ave. to 390th St.,
- 19- Turn Right & proceed west on 390th St. to 280th Ave.,
- 20- Turn Right & proceed north to State Hwy 108,
- 21- Turn-around & proceed south on 280th Ave. to 380th St.,
- 22- Turn Left & proceed east on 380th St. to 300th Ave.,
- (50% of TS residences have been cleared)**
- 23- Turn Right & proceed south on 300th Ave. to Cty. 24,
- 24- Cross over Hwy 24 & proceed south to Hwy 35 – turn around & return to Hwy 24,
- 25- Turn Left & proceed west on Hwy 24 to 285th Ave.,
- 26- Turn Left & proceed south on 285th Ave. to turn-around point & return to Hwy 24,
- 27- Turn Right & proceed east on Hwy 24 to 300th Ave.,
- 28- Turn Left & proceed north to 380th St.,

- 29- Turn Right & proceed EAST to Hwy 41,
- 30- Turn Right & proceed to 360th St.,

- 31- Turn Left on 360th St., & proceed to Hwy 35,
 - 32- Turn Left & proceed to Starland Shore Dr.,
 - 33- Turn Left to dead-end & proceed back to Hwy 35,
 - 34- Turn Left & proceed to Kreuger Loop,
 - 35- Turn Left & proceed to Hwy 35 – turn around & retrace route to Hwy 35,
 - 36- Turn Left & proceed to Downy Drive,
 - 37- Turn Left & proceed to dead end and return to Vic's Beach Road,
 - 38- Turn Right & proceed to dead-end & return to Downy Drive/Hwy 35,
- (an additional 19% of TS residences have been cleared, for a total of 82%)**

- 39- Turn RIGHT & proceed SOUTH to 355th St.,
- 40- Turn Left on 355th St. & proceed to Big Rock Road,
- 41- Turn Right & proceed to Hwy 35 & turn around,
- 42- Proceed on Big Rock Rd. to Buddy Lane,
- 43- Turn Right & proceed to dead end and return to Big Rock Rd.,
- 44- Turn Right & proceed to Cty. 35,
- 45- Cross over Cty. 35 & proceed north on Beaver Dam Road to 380th St.,
- 46- Pick up blade & proceed north to Beaver Dam Trail,
- 47- Turn Left on Beaver Dam Trail & proceed to dead end at Beaver Dam Trail/Point and return to Beaver Dam Rd.,
- 48- Turn Right & proceed south to Hwy 35,
- 49- Cross Over Hwy 35 & proceed south on Big Rock Rd. to 355th St.,
- 50- Turn Right on 355th St. & proceed to Cty 35,
- 51- Turn Right on Cty 35 & proceed to 360th St.,
- 52- Turn Left on 360th St. & proceed to Cty 41,
- 53- Turn Right & return to town hall garage.

This routing priority may be changed/deviated from based upon the judgment of The Snow Plow Operator, or upon specific direction by the Town Board. However, it has been designed to clear the roads servicing the most township residences & priority school bus routes in the most efficient manner. This route measures approximately 70 miles, and should take approximately 4 hours to complete, depending upon conditions. Any changes to this routing should be for a very good reason.