



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

February 3, 2003

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report #03-03 regarding a plan to assure all streets in the City are swept clean of leaves after November 15 and make provisions for cancellation of street cleaning resulting from inclement weather, Public Works Commissioner Lisa Peterson reports the following:

Overall, the City's street sweeping program is a very successful program. The problems that surfaced this year were the result of early snow and freezing temperatures after the leaves had fallen. Street sweeping equipment does not perform effectively during heavy rain or snow, and leaves cannot be swept up when the material is frozen. This fall, the DPW did deploy hand crews whenever feasible to shovel leaves at intersections, by catch basins and along a number of major thoroughfares, but it was impossible to make up for a mechanical sweeper with hand sweepers, due to the huge volume. As far as fall leaf pickup, unfortunately there is no guarantee that what happen this year won't happen again. Weather is a major factor that effects what we can effectively remove from the street.

Nonetheless, we currently have an opportunity to fine tune our program and make improvements. We are in the process of re-bidding our existing street sweeping contract and are changing some of the specifications to allow greater flexibility. Traditionally, makeup days are scheduled for the end of the month. While this is an effective and cost efficient way to operate during most times of the year, it doesn't work very well in others. Also during times of the year when debris is heavy on the street (spring and fall) existing contract language still limits us to two sweepers per day. In the new contract, we are seeking the ability to deploy additional sweepers when necessary. Having this ability would enable us to take advantage of mild days in the late fall to more effectively pick up large volumes of debris. A program with additional sweepers might include hand posting an area with heavy debris in order to sweep additional streets during the week, without disrupting the normally scheduled route.

Unfortunately changes such as this may come with a cost, and anticipated State budget cuts may not allow us to substantially increase our costs for street sweeping. Nonetheless, we are bidding the contract with the option for the suggested service improvements. Once the new contract is bid and the actual cost for service are in hand, we can begin to further refine these future plans. Regardless of whether we can afford additional sweepers, we are committed to continuing to provide a high level of service within our existing budget, improve service when possible, and to keeping the streets clean.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

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Consent Agenda #1

Awaiting Report Item Number

03-03, regarding a report on the plan to assure all streets in the City are swept clean of leaves after November 15th and make provisions for cancellation of street cleaning resulting from inclement weather.

In City Council February 3, 2003

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