



MEMORANDUM

P.O. BOX 4100 ♦ FRISCO, COLORADO 80443

TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: LINSEY JOYCE, RECREATION DIRECTOR

RE: WINTER RECREATION PATH MANAGEMENT PLAN

DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Summary and Background: Beginning in December of 2022, the Frisco Public Works Department began a pilot snow plowing program whereby sections of the Frisco multi-use recreation pathway were cleared for the winter season. These sections of pathway were not traditionally plowed in the past. Snow accumulated on the pathways and was not removed until the spring season. The pilot plowing efforts included the pathway through the Reserve neighborhood from Larson Lane to Rose Crown Circle, and the section of the recreation pathway between Summit Middle School and the Dillon Dam Road (see Attachments A and B). The goal of the pilot program was to display how pedestrians and cyclists could use the pathways, create new connectivity options, and keep these key connections clear and accessible in snowy winter months for residents and visitors.

Town Council received both positive and negative public comments regarding the pilot snow plowing program in early 2023. Council listened to the public concerns and directed staff to continue with the pilot program for the remainder of the 2022-2023 winter season. Council also directed staff to return to a Council work session prior to the 2023-2024 winter season to review the winter management plan for the recreation pathway prior to the start of the season.

The purpose of the work session with Council on September 26, 2023, is to update Town Council on the 2023-2024 winter recreational pathway management plan. Staff reviewed options for these sections of the recreation pathway including:

- Continue with the snow plowing efforts on both segments of the recreation pathway, or
- Grooming these segments of the recreation pathway, or
- Plowing fewer segments of the recreation pathway, or
- Not grooming or plowing these sections of the recreation pathway, thereby returning to operations prior to the start of the pilot program.

Staff will review the options with Council and welcome the opportunity for Council to provide feedback.

Analysis: In late 2019, the Town of Frisco adopted the Frisco Community Plan. In the plan, mobility was identified as a guiding principle and included placing “a higher priority on bicycle and pedestrian options for moving around town in alignment with the Frisco Trails Master Plan”. This community input and subsequent plan have resulted in significant pathway improvements in Frisco, including the pedestrian underpass between County Commons and the Frisco Adventure Park and the extended pathways between Frisco Main Street and Peak One Boulevard.

In 2023, the Frisco Trails & Pathways Master Plan was updated and included the following goals:

- Add trails that fill gaps to create or improve access to recreational trails, the Summit County Recreation Path system, and key destinations. By creating new points of access and connectivity, Frisco and its surrounding area become a true “network” where one can get from one place to another without a car.
- Make Frisco a safe place for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, and cross the street. Prioritize access for people over access for vehicles.
- Continue to explore ways to enhance winter recreation and connectivity through an enhanced Nordic Center; trails for fat biking, skiing, showshoeing, and walking; and strategic plowing and grooming.

Since the implementation of the 2017 Frisco Trails Plan, the Town has invested deeply in improvements to the winter trails and facilities at the PRA and Nordic Center. The winter use policies include management strategies that the Town of Frisco can pursue to provide accessible and diverse multi-season recreation opportunities. These strategies include plowing and grooming specific sections of trails and trailheads to enhance connectivity and access and identifying opportunities to support fat biking, pedestrian access, and Nordic ski trail development.

The pilot snow plowing program provided a well-connected and comfortable year-round pedestrian path in both areas. Public comments in support of the plowing efforts expressed appreciation for the connectivity and cleared pathways for a variety of users. Public comments against the plowing efforts expressed concerns for the inability to ski/snowshoe on the trails, the blocking of access points, and the reported icy conditions. Public comments also recommended grooming the section of the recreation pathway between Summit Middle School and the Dillon Dam Road.

Staff reviewed options for these sections of the recreation pathway including:

- Continue with the snow plowing efforts on both segments of the recreation pathway. Based on the goals of the Frisco Trails & Pathways Master Plan and the positive comments received from the public, this is a viable option and staff's recommendation for the 2023-2024 winter season.
- Grooming these segments of the recreation pathway. Grooming would open these segments of the pathway to skiing and snowshoeing. Grooming also requires additional equipment and resources, including a snowcat or a snowmobile with a drag. For the segment of the pathway in the Reserve, this is not a viable option due to the short distance. For the segment of the pathway between Summit Middle School and the Dam Road, only certain segments could be groomed as the Willow Preserve footbridge cannot sustain the weight of a snowcat or snowmobile. Additional equipment would need to be purchased and housed at the Public Works facility or transported from the Nordic Center to the Public Works facility. This too is a not a practical nor feasible solution.
- Plowing fewer segments of the recreation pathway. The same concerns as above hold true for this option.
- Not grooming or plowing these sections of the recreation pathway, thereby returning to operations prior to the start of the pilot program. This could be a viable option although it does not support the Town goals of mobility and accessibility.

Financial Impact: There is no major impact to the snow removal operations budget by continuing to plow these sections of pathway. Public Works and Fleet have a routine maintenance schedule for all equipment as well as a routine schedule for snow removal. Should Council opt to groom these segments or a segment of the pathway, additional funds will need to be allocated for equipment and training.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Quality Core Services and Inclusive Community are two of the strategic priorities for Town Council. By continuing to remove snow in these two areas, the Town is providing a safe and more inclusive mobility option for residents and visitors. These plowing efforts also enhance winter recreation connectivity by offering additional pathways for pedestrians, bicyclists, and accessibility for strollers.

Environmental Sustainability: Continuing the pilot program will allow for people of all ages and abilities to get from one destination to another without the need to drive.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends continuing the program which includes removing snow along the recreation pathway from Larson Lane to Rose Crown Circle and from Summit Middle School to the Dillon Dam Road.

Approved By:

Tom Fisher, Town Manager

Diane McBride, Assistant Town Manager

Leslie Edwards, Finance Director

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Map of the Recreation Pathway – Larson Lane to Rose Crown Circle & Summit Middle School to the Dillon Dam Road