Where should Chicago try municipal sidewalk plowing first?

An initiative of Better Streets Chicago and Access Living

Let’s make sidewalk snow and ice removal a city-wide and city-run service.

We are drafting an ordinance asking Chicago to set aside $750,000 in the upcoming budget for a **municipal sidewalk clearing pilot program** – a small test of what a city-wide program will look like.

**This interactive page shows you how Better Streets Chicago & Access Living have written the ordinance – and empowers you to propose your own pilot zones.**

To maximize the pilot program’s impact, we have asked the city to prioritize:

**People with disabilities**, especially ambulatory (walking) and vision disabilities, who may use assistive devices (wheelchairs, walkers, canes) to get around.

**Elders**, who are more susceptible to serious fall-related injuries, and may be unable to shovel their own sidewalks, regardless of whether they identify as having a disability

**Young children** and their caretakers, who may use strollers

**Households without cars,** who are more likely to rely on walking to meet their needs

**Population-dense areas,** to maximize the benefit of each mile of clear sidewalk.

**Areas with high transit activity,** because the vast majority of riders get to and from their stop by walking.

**Known problem areas*,*** specifically those with a high number of sidewalk snow removal requests and vacant buildings reported via 311 and municipal offices.

[equal weights map appears] The map on the right shows areas across the city that rank highly for all of these measures combined.

[sliders appear] Right now, the map places equal importance on each of the seven criteria. Use the sliders below to vary the importance given to each measure – for example, try increasing the importance given to “known problem areas.”

[update map when slider values are changed]

[show 2.5 square mile rectangle on map]

[blank map of the city]

The proposed ordinance [read it here] calls for the city to establish four, 2.5 square mile **pilot zones** across the city.

[place many rectangles with question marks on map] The exact placement of the zones is not yet set – just the priorities we want to use.

Two zones will prioritize people with vision disabilities, ambulatory disabilities, and elders.

[update sliders] [update map]

Two zones will prioritize everything else: children, zero-car households, and transit activity.

[update sliders][update map]

Population density and the distribution of problem areas will also be considered but given less weight than the other criteria. The exact importance value given to each of these criteria is not yet set, but here is what that might look like:

[update sliders][update map]

To ensure equitable placement of pilot zones, the draft ordinance specifies that pilot zones should meet thresholds for some measures.

The ordinance proposes a percentile rule, using the set of Census Tracts that make up Chicago as the baseline:

[histogram, percent of people identifying as over 65 with 25th percentile pointed out]

if the pilot zone was another tract, it would rank in the top 25 percent for every measure included as a cutoff.

Push the button below to start drawing zones of your own.

Like what you see? Send it to Better Streets & Access Living!

[Button]

[Input name]