

**COMMUNICATIONS MEMORANDUM
#4-2024**

DATE: Aug. 12, 2024
TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members
THROUGH: Heather Geyer, City Manager *hmg*
FROM: Diana Wilson, Director of Communications *DW*
SUBJECT: Snow Stormer Program Overview & Proposed Change

PURPOSE

To provide City Council with an overview of the Snow Stormer program's current operations and solicit Council direction on a change proposed by Council Members Megan Burns and Nicholas Walker.

BACKGROUND

Snow Stormer records date back to 2005. The program partners residents in need with volunteers willing to help with snow shoveling during a winter season. This helps those residents follow the City ordinance of clearing sidewalks within 48 hours of a snowstorm. Staff volunteers work citywide; resident volunteers are paired with a home as near to their home as possible.

The program currently supports 91 residents thanks to 26 individuals and groups, including staff teams. At the end of the 2023-24 snow season, there were 19 residents on the waitlist. The waitlist high point that season was 27 residents in January. This program was compared to nearby municipal programs (Thornton, Westminster and Denver) two years ago. Proportionally, the Northglenn program is the largest, possibly due to utilizing staff as Snow Stormers.

Burns and Walker proposed releasing the waitlist names and addresses to current volunteers in hopes Snow Stormer volunteers would shovel for those on the waitlist.

Since the program is administered by a municipality, release of private information must be given by written consent. The current forms only include permission to provide information to an assigned volunteer. To make a program change, the forms must be updated and a system put in place to notify Snow Stormers of addresses in need.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

Funds for the program are included in the General Fund.

A program change would increase time for the Community Outreach Coordinator. Calls to add residents to the waitlist are year-round. As the waitlist is updated, the Coordinator would need to regularly update the active Snow Stormers.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends leaving the program as is.

If Council would like to change the program, staff recommends waitlist persons opt-in if they would like to be on the "if help is available" contact list, which would include permission to share an address and phone number with multiple persons. Volunteers should also be asked if they would like to be on the "if extra time, I can help someone on the waitlist" option. In addition, before Snow

Stormer volunteers venture out, the Coordinator would recommend they call ahead to make sure the resident still needs assistance and to let the resident know they will receive assistance.

Please note, while many residents need assistance, making the proposed changes to the waitlist process could create inconsistency of coverage. Residents may count on assistance and if it did not occur for that particular storm, it may leave them without any plan or assistance in a major snowstorm. This change may also appear unfair to residents who have been waiting for a volunteer, since more recent additions to the waitlist have traditionally been assisted first.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council Members have any questions, please contact:

- Diana Wilson, Director of Communications, at dwilson@northglenn.org or 303.450.8713
- Jenna Gragg, Outreach Coordinator, at jgragg@northglenn.org or 303.450.8904

SNOW STORMER PROGRAM REVIEW

Jenna Gragg

Community Outreach Coordinator

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Council Meeting

Aug. 12, 2024



**CITY OF
Northglenn**

PURPOSE

To provide City Council with an overview of Snow Stormer program current operations and solicit Council direction on a change proposed by Council Members Burns and Walker



PROPOSAL

Send current Snow Stormer volunteers the waitlist addresses in case they have availability to pick up additional homes



HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

- **Records date back to 2005-06**
- **Residents and volunteers called in late July to confirm ongoing need and availability**
- **Waitlist cleared every year**
 - **Residents must call to be placed on new waitlist starting in August.**



HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

CONT'D

- **Residents and volunteers fill out a release of liability waiver.**
- **Residents and volunteers are given each others' contact information once assigned.**



SNOW STORMER REQUIREMENTS

- **Shovel for assigned residents within 48 hours of snow stopping**
 - **Snowfall 1”+**
- **Shovel front walkway, path to front door**
 - **Driveway optional**



VOLUNTEER ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Willing to support top of waitlist?**
- **OR next home available based on east/west of I-25**
- **Number of homes assigned based on volunteer's availability**



CURRENT NUMBERS

Assigned Residents

- **91 Homes served**
- **26 Volunteers and groups**
- Includes individual staff groups - Planning, Neighborhood Services
- **41 Homes (45% of total) served by staff**

Waitlist Residents

- 19 residents
- 11 east of I-25
- 8 west of I-25
- High point of 27 on the list in Jan. 2024
- Added 2 volunteers
- 2 assigned + 2 waitlist residents no longer needed assistance



CURRENT NUMBERS

CONT'D

Turnover

- **2 new volunteers in 2024**
- **2 homes each**
- **1 volunteer exited in January 2024**



PROMOTION EFFORTS

- **Connection (Aug. – Feb.)**
- **Rec guides (fall, winter, spring)**
- **Social media**
- **Park posters**
- **Water bill note**
- **I-25 digital sign**
- **Economic Development E-newsletter**
- **Northglenn Now E-newsletter**



CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **Individual volunteers typically take one to three homes.**
- **Limited new recruits**
- **Volunteers go on vacation.**
- **Volunteers have left the program mid-season.**



CURRENT CHALLENGES

CONT'D

- **Staff-assigned homes do not receive support on weekends or holidays.**
- **Residents call asking for support the day of, or after, a storm.**
 - **Think it is an 'on-call' program**
- **Resident confidentiality**



BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL

- **More residents could receive help**
- **Sharing information with Snow Stormer group could lead to better support when volunteers are on vacation or leave unexpectedly.**



CONSIDERATIONS

- **Is it okay to get a liability/permission form even though the City doesn't have a firm volunteer for the applicant?**
- **Is it okay to release a list of addresses and phone numbers? City would need permission from each person.**



CONSIDERATIONS

CONT'D

- **City has been firm on not “skipping the line” to be fair. Does this violate that standard?**
- **Would the opt-in list set unrealistic expectations for those on the waitlist? If someone has help once, does it set up an expectation that they will in the future?**



CONSIDERATIONS

CONT'D

- **Staff does not stay in regular contact with waitlist persons currently – to do so would be an additional task for the Coordinator.**
- **Many Snow Stormers already help more homes than they are assigned – helping their own neighbors first, before moving to their list.**
- **Would the list pressure volunteers too much?**
- **Would any volunteers actually take on more?**



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the program stay as-is.

If Council would like to make this program change, staff recommends:

- Ask waitlist persons if they are interested in sharing information in case help is available.
- Ask volunteers if they want to email waitlist info in case they can help.
- Provide willing volunteers with the name, address and phone numbers of waitlist persons that opt in.
- Instruct volunteers to call ahead if they are able to help someone on the waitlist.



COUNCIL FEEDBACK



QUESTIONS?

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