Update on Snow Plowing & Parking Restrictions

**Victoria Ponds Townhouse Association – November 3, 2023 2024 DRAFT**

**Introduction**. We have had one snowfall with more certainly on the way. This communication covers what the VPTA Board is doing and how we are working with both our association management firm, First Service Residential (FSR), as well as the grounds and plowing contractor, Mangold Services. The memo focuses on how we are managing the situation and on what each of us as townhome residents need to do to make it work.

**Short background on Visitor Parking spaces**.

The winter snow storage will encroach on and eliminate on some of the visitor parking spots. We will have fewer spots. So, *we still want to make clear that the snow plowing discussion laid out below is consistent with and does not replace the current overall VPTA parking policy*. There are (BLANK) Visitor Parking spots in the development. Under current policies (1) Visitors Parking spots are designated and reserved for visitors (including contractors). (2) Visitors in these spots are limited to one over-night stay. (3) Practically this means these spots are not alternatives to airport parking, long-term visitors, or generally even extra household vehicles, etc. (4) The legacy hanging tag permit policy is no longer in effect. (5) The Board has the right to tow or otherwise intervene when a visitor’s car has overstayed. (6) Nothing in the current parking policy suggests that a visitor cannot leave a car in the homeowner’s driveway, and (7) Finally, the Board acknowledges the Visitor Parking policy needs work.

**How are we managing the plowing and the storage of plowed snow**?

1. Mangold Services is the contractor that plows the snow from streets, driveways, entrances and sidewalks. This is the fourth winter we have worked with them. Under the terms of our contract, Mangold plows when a snowfall has reached 1.5 inches or more. Mangold has been a good business partner and has performed better than previous firms. The VPTA snow budget is incorporated with irrigation, lawn maintenance, shrubbery trimming, etc. The budget for specific ice treatment for roads is $2,800 this year which is approximately 2 treatments/season. The contract and performance is monitored by FSR.
2. The more complicated issue is how we handle smaller snowfalls – the nuisance snowfalls. Recognizing that even slight snow accumulation may pose a slippery hazard, this is a matter that will need Board discussion.
3. A VPTA team will conduct a walk-around with Mangold and identify the designated snow dumping areas if there is a change from last year. The map was prepared in CY 2022 by Dwight Fellman and Neil Bentley and affirmed by the VPTA Board. Take a look at the map and the designated dumping areas. You will see the loss of some Visitor Parking spots. The plan assumes routine street side deposit will continue. ***Attached to this communication is an updated map showing eight areas (red) where the plowed snow may be deposited.***
4. The ***bike path*** is property of Three Rivers Parks, but maintained and plowed under an agreement by the City of Hopkins. VPTA Maintenance Committee members have met with these two parties and discussed our mutual interests in (a) keeping the path plowed and (b) not having the City blow the path snowfall onto Victoria Way. S Our shared interests have been discussed and attended to.
5. The Visitor Parking spots immediately adjacent to the Japanese Garden are available for snow storage. Dwight Fellman will put up a colored-tape barrier.
6. Under the contract Mangold is required to shovel out fire hydrants and maintain clearance around all mailboxes. This is a contract enforcement issue.

***Attached is a map showing where the plowed snow will be deposited* .**

**Expectations of townhome owners after a snowstorm?**

1. The principal expectation is that with a snowfall, homeowners will move their cars into their garage - - making it easier to clear the driveways. This should be a simple matter.
2. Additionally, there may be smaller snowfalls not falling under the contractual agreement. This is a situation that we as a community have to manage. It is in our collective interests to make sure that if a neighbor needs help sweeping or shoveling her walkway or entrance, that someone might reach out and help. Additionally, if you know visitors, including tradesmen and vendors, are coming to your home, it is a good idea to check for slippery spots.

**What about the big vehicle problem**?

Some homeowners have vehicles that don’t fit in the garage and otherwise reside on the driveway.This is a challenge for the plows and staging, (it is not a budget problem). The VPTA has had preliminary discussions with Mangold. Here’s the pilot process for these larger vehicles and trucks:

1. First, Mangold will clear Victoria Way and a first path through the other streets. Victoria Lane will be a priority as a homeowner who is a full-time fire fighter resides at the end of the lane.
2. Next, Mangold will clear some of the Visitor Parking areas **and** homeowners are expected to move their big vehicles to these spots.
3. Mangold will continue to plow and finish up the driveways and streets.
4. Once the driveways are plowed, the big vehicles must be **promptly** moved back to the homeowner’s driveway. There are no free passes and these vehicles must be quickly moved back to their driveway or into garage.

**What about the protocols for salt application?**

The VPTA contactor regularly supports the application of calcium chloride (CaCl2) on the streets. During snow and ice storms, this is the compound virtually all jurisdictions use on streets, roadways and sidewalks. (Sodium chloride (NaCl) is no longer used as road salt.) As a mineral, calcium chloride is ubiquitous in soils and the environment. It is not harmful and on application melts snow and drops the freezing temperature to -50’F. An application of CaCl2 to the VPTA streets costs $650 (est.) Who decides on whether it is needed? Historically, the Board chair just makes the judgment and calls in FSR/Mangold for the application. This seems to work.

There are two related concerns with this application. The overflow basins (ponds) cannot handle a heavy load of sand and calcium chloride. Water quality is an issue. Second, the mineral has at times burned and killed grasses, suggesting some care is appropriate.

**A note on the enforcement question.**We are a community organization with a tight, but realistic annual operating budget. There is no budget line item tied to formal enforcement of these guidelines. Nor do we currently have alternative plans to do so. This means we have to self-police to make it work. We need your help in working with these guidelines.

**Attachment.**