



# 2026 Winter Storm Fern Response and Recovery

After Action Executive Report

March 24, 2026



# Winter Storm Fern Overview



- ▶ January 24- February 2, 2026
- ▶ 8 inches snow + sleet + freezing rain
- ▶ 10 days below sustained below freezing temperatures



# Winter Storm Fern Overview

## ▶ **Historic Event**

- ▶ Local, State, and Federal emergency declarations
- ▶ Widespread disruption to transportation, schools, and city services

## ▶ **Prolonged Operations**

- ▶ Three weeks of continuous response

## ▶ **Unprecedented Challenges**

- ▶ Formation of hardened “snowcrete”
- ▶ Required specialized heavy equipment





# Response Highlights

## Pre-Storm Preparation

- ▶ Pretreated roadways
- ▶ Coordination & Planning
- ▶ Public Communication
- ▶ Activated Operations Centers
  - ▶ Emergency Operations Center
  - ▶ Snow Command (TES)
  - ▶ Police Operations Center





# Response Highlights



## Active Storm Event Operations

- ▶ Snow and Ice Removal Operations
  - ▶ Required Heavy Construction Equipment
  - ▶ Contractor support needed
- ▶ Focus on Public Safety
  - ▶ Prioritized primary and emergency routes
  - ▶ Maintained essential services
- ▶ Public Communications



# Response Highlights

## Post-Storm Response

- ▶ 24-hour response through February 13
- ▶ Daily shifts through March 2
- ▶ Cleared snow and ice
  - ▶ Roadways, intersections, sidewalks, bus stops, schools
  - ▶ City facilities, parks, paths
- ▶ Continue debris removal and infrastructure repair





# Scale of Response

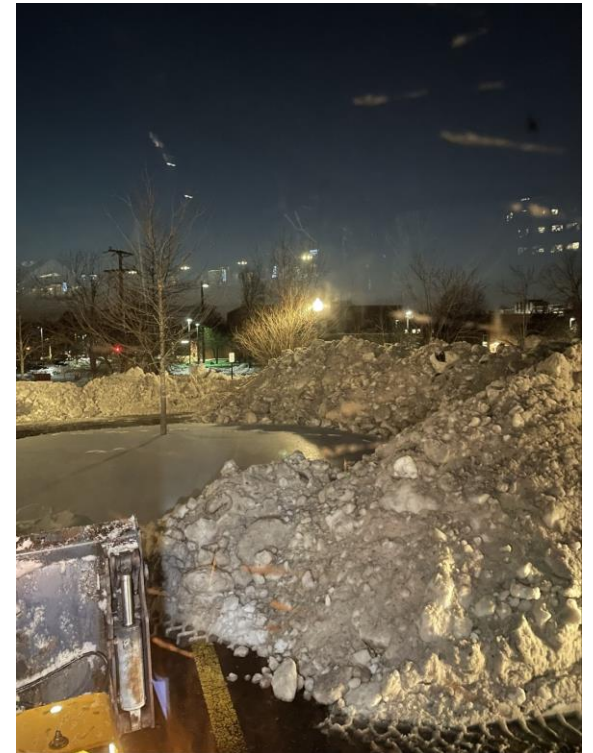


- ▶ Over 250 City personnel working 9,600 hours
- ▶ Over 200 Contracted personnel
- ▶ 150+ pieces of equipment
- ▶ 8,500 dump truck loads
- ▶ 4,582 tons of salt
- ▶ Snow hauled to 6 storage sites



# Cost of Response

- ▶ Total Cost \$9.7 million
  - ▶ Contract Services \$8.4 m
  - ▶ Employee Labor \$0.6 m
  - ▶ Non-Personnel \$0.7 m
    - ▶ Materials & Supplies
    - ▶ Food & Lodging





# Strengths of Response



- ▶ **Strong preparedness and training**
- ▶ **Early activation and decisive leadership**
- ▶ **Effective cross-department coordination**
- ▶ **Established regional partnerships**
- ▶ **Ability to scale operations quickly**



# Opportunities

- ▶ Improved Planning
- ▶ Stronger Public Communications
- ▶ Greater Use of Technology
- ▶ Policy Considerations





# Opportunity: Planning



- Expand staffing depth and cross-training
- Broaden prioritization (sidewalks, transit, business corridors)
- Strengthen contractor capacity



# Opportunity: Public Communications



- Targeting messaging on the right platforms
- Sharing operational priorities and setbacks
- Leverage community stakeholder groups



# Opportunity: Technology



- Improved GPS tracking for City equipment and contractors
- Improved snow map accuracy
- Enhanced 311 tracking and response



# Policy Considerations



- ▶ Sidewalk clearing requirements during major events
- ▶ Temporary **on-street parking restrictions**
- ▶ Reserved parking for **essential workers**
- ▶ Evaluate and bring recommendations to Council in Fall 2026



# Early Improvements



- ▶ Implementing new contracts for snow support
- ▶ Upgrading Vehicle Locator technology
- ▶ Identifying additional 311 capabilities



# Next Steps

Timeframe	Follow Up Action	Lead Agency
Annually	Update Snow Operations Plan Incorporate ACPS Bus Routes & Drop-offs	T&ES
Annually	Conduct Quarterly Training and Exercises for a Broader Range of City Staff	OEM/T&ES
Immediate	Evaluate and Update Support Contracts	T&ES
Summer/Fall 2026	Enhance GPS Routing and Equipment	T&ES/ITS
Summer/Fall 2026	Expand Vehicle Location Capabilities to Include Contractor Equipment	T&ES
Spring/Summer 2026	Update 311 Snow Categories/Responses	DECC/T&ES
Fall 2026	Provide Policy Evaluations and Recommendations	T&ES