

Mason District - Concerns and Suggestions Snow Summit 2010

In 1996, Fairfax County held a snow summit that resulted in strategies that were used in 2010 and helped our portion of the region get through the unprecedented snowfall in February. Multiple consecutive snow storms created a higher level of challenges, which now provide an opportunity to identify, develop, and refined a snow removal response plan for the future at the state level and improve public safety at the local level. Supervisor Gross participated in the 1996 snow summit, and this memo summarizes the concerns relayed to the Mason District office during the recent storms.

In Mason District, there were approximately 84 phone calls and 226 e-mails received requesting snow removal, some of which offered also suggestions for improved service. There also were three individuals who came by the office to share their experiences and offer suggestions for improved service in the interest of public safety. These numbers do not include calls and conversations received personally by Supervisor Gross.

The recurring concerns expressed by residents are:

1. No plow service more than three days or longer after the snow stopped falling.
2. No response from VDOT at their customer service line, which either did not have a person answering calls; no ability to leave a message because the voicemail message would transfer to another recording that focused on how traffic would be managed on Inauguration Day 2009; if someone answered the phone, some residents were told the road they called about was not VDOT-maintained when it actually was in the state's system; and no information on the Web site to indicate the status of service, or how to find their streets' route numbers.
3. Emergency vehicles and personnel could not reach destinations where either medical or fire services were needed. Fire hydrants were covered and, in some cases, damaged and rendered useless to Fire and Rescue.
4. School buses were getting stuck on their routes, and established bus stop locations were covered with so much snow that it endangered students waiting for the bus to arrive.
5. Sidewalks that were cleared by residents were later covered by six feet or more of snow due to additional clearing activities by VDOT contractors.

Based on the number of requests received for snow removal, the communities that endured an inordinate amount of delayed service included:

1. Broyhill Crest
2. Parklawn
3. Sleepy Hollow Woods
4. Winterset-Varsity Park
5. Wynfield

The suggestions offered by Mason District residents are:

1. Require residents to use their driveways and/or park on one side of the street only so plows can clear the majority of the road; and have the snow piled on the side of the road that gets the most sun.
2. In anticipation of the next snow storm, have fire hydrants marked with flags that could be seen during a substantial snow fall.
3. Flag roads in communities that have elderly residents or residents who need recurring medical assistance and have those roads plowed first so that if a medical emergency arises, responders can reach their destinations in a timely and safe manner. Even though VDOT coordinates with emergency response personnel, there were instances where EMT could not get their ambulances to the location to provide service and had to walk to the home and carry the patient to the ambulance.
4. Require school buses to clear the tops of the buses.
5. Require property owners to shovel sidewalks adjacent to their homes or businesses.
6. Establish snow routes in areas where there are none, and conduct enforcement.

The number of residents who offered a follow-up word of **thanks** for snow removal services totaled **64**. Residents who most candidly expressed their **outrage and displeasure** about the quality of snow removal services totaled **six**.

Mason District Tally

			Phone	Email	Walk-in	Nasty-gram	Thank you's
December-09							
01/06/09	01/12/09	week 1					
01/13/09	01/19/09	week 2		1			
01/20/09	01/26/09	week 3		14		1	8
01/27/09	02/02/09	week 4		2			
Monthly total			0	17	0	1	8
January-10							
01/03/10	01/09/10	week 1		2			2
01/10/10	01/16/10	week 2					
01/17/10	01/23/10	week 3					
01/24/10	01/30/10	week 4					
Monthly total			0	2	0	0	2
February-10							
01/31/10	02/06/10	week 1		3			1
02/07/10	02/13/10	week 2	50	99	1	2	22
02/14/10	02/20/10	week 3	27	78		2	22
02/21/10	02/27/10	week 4	3	10			1
Monthly total			80	190	1	4	46
March-10							
02/28/10	03/06/10	week 1	1	6	1		4
03/07/10	03/13/10	week 2	3	11	1	1	4
03/14/10	03/20/10	week 3					
03/21/10	03/27/10	week 4					
Monthly total			4	17	2	1	8
Total			84	226	3	6	64