

November 18, 1996

To: Council Members  
From: Parks & Recreation Department

The Wasilla Parks & Recreation staff would like to thank you for your support of our request to extend our two regular seasonal positions to nine month positions. Since we were not prepared for some of your questions at the council meeting, we would like to expand our explanations for work needing to be done during the winter months.

#### Snow Removal

**Sidewalks:** Public Works removes snow from the city streets first with all their available personnel. Then, when the streets are clear, they clean the sidewalks - many times days after a snowstorm, and by that time the snowmachines have packed it down and it is even more difficult to remove. It is our intent to give sidewalks first priority for clearing, including the handicap accesses at our public buildings which are oftentimes blocked with snow pileup from regular clearing. Public Works focus is on road clearance, P & R focus is on pedestrian access. We have a snowblower and a JD tractor plow to accomplish this. The width of a truck plow is too great to be used safely on most of the sidewalks. Attached is a map of the sidewalks we will clear in the core area of Wasilla. These will be cleared before snow reaches 4" in any snowstorm. By P & R doing the sidewalks, special care can be given to the flower beds which would be ruined by salt buildup from street cleaning. Tony, Property Maintenance, normally cleans City Hall, Library and Museum walkways, but for the past month he has been constructing a building at the Sewer Treatment Plant so P & R personnel have helped clear those walks also. With 2 people working together, the snow can be removed faster and the heavy machinery can be loaded and unloaded from the trucks safely.

**Wasilla Lake Newcomb Park:** Mayor Palin has requested that we maintain the skating area of the lake in the park. We are working with the Lions Club in setting up lighting. We would need to keep the parking lot open, and Public Works will lend us a pickup plow truck to accomplish this. Our 250 gallon water truck will be adapted to spray hot water on the rink area to resurface it periodically as needed. We have arranged with WHS to get hot water for this as the Hockey Association does. Bob Freisen from the Hockey Assoc. has offered to help us with this also. We will have to provide 1 porta potty for this area.

**Wonderland Playground area:** We would like to keep a road open into the area and clear parking spaces. The Hockey Association has approached us about placing a rink here and if we open up a public rink close to them, they will help us maintain it. We would need to do the prep work and keep the parking lot clear. The P & R budget cannot provide lights, so this may just be a day rink. We will need to provide a porta potty for this rink also.

**Carter Park:** Several snowmobilers have approached P & R regarding parking areas for their trailers and access to Lake Lucille. We would like to keep the Susitna Avenue boat launch area plowed for parking as well as the Carter Park parking area, with access to the lake for skaters. Many people skate here because it is sheltered and shallow. We would also like to keep this skating area cleared.

**Nunley Park:** This park is used quite frequently in the winter by families and children. There is a natural sliding area there as well as the play equipment. P & R needs to keep one parking lot open with a path into the park.

Cross Country Ski Trails: We have talked to WHS re extending their trails to Fritzler-Ressler field areas for a more beginner/intermediate trail. They were very interested in working with us. We would also like to keep Lucille Bike Trail open for skiing and walking if time allows. Newcomb Park has also been studied as a possible beginner trail area, as well as the Airport Site. All would need to be groomed on an ongoing basis.

City of Lights Program: Wasilla Chamber, P & R and Friends of Wonderland are promoting this program. We have arranged donation spots at local stores and P & R staff will pick up the donated lights and put them up at public facilities and parks in the City. Putting lights in higher trees is difficult and can be accomplished more efficiently and safely with two people. We will also remove and store the lights at a later date.

Christmas Banners and Celebrations: Public Works has rented a cherry picker ladder to hang the banners with garland and P & R personnel will be involved in this also. For safety, 2 or more people must always be present. In late January, the Christmas banners will be replaced with Iditarod banners. The December 7th celebration will need preparation of the airport site in opening a path from the east end to Wonderland for the tree lighting. A plow may be needed to accomplish this, since snow is dumped here by Public Works from the streets.

Iditarod Restart: P & R will sponsor several community events such as snow sculptures, snowshoe softball, etc, and will need to prepare the area in conjunction with Public Works.

Snow removal for all the above would occur with every snowfall of 4" or more. In addition, picnic tables need to be repaired and 14 new ones built, flowers ordered for spring, vehicles repaired (including water tanker), park signs made, playground equipment ordered, mower blades sharpened, and fencing repaired.

We cannot stress enough the importance of two people working together for safety and efficiency. As you can see with the above activities, they will be kept quite busy and can work together to provide Wasilla with much needed winter activities.