

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **STORM DAMAGED TREE CLEANUP POLICY**

BACKGROUND:

In 1998, City Council adopted a Storm Damaged Tree Cleanup Policy, which determines the level of City response to tree cleanup activities after a storm. This policy has provided direction to City staff in a variety of storm events since and proved especially helpful after the Derecho in August 2020. When utilizing this policy, staff noticed the need for updates to be made to the policy, since Right of Way (ROW) maintenance responsibility was transferred from Public Works to Parks and Recreation several years ago. Thus, staff reviewed the 1998 policy and is proposing a revised policy (Attachment A).

PROPOSED CHANGES:

Most of the changes are housekeeping items, yet some are more significant. A summary of the changes (numbering matches the policy) is shown below:

- I. Damage Evaluation Team – Public Works Director is changed to Parks and Recreation Director; Public Works is added to clarify the Operations Manager; Parks and Facilities Superintendent and City Forester are added to the team.

A second change in this paragraph is to change 24 hours to 36 hours for staff to decide regarding the City’s cleanup response. Depending on when a storm ends, making a decision within 24 hours may not be possible. An additional 12 hours would help staff evaluate the damage thoroughly and make a recommendation regarding the City’s response.

- II. City Response
 - a. Full Collection City-Wide
 - i. The current policy states that 50% of residential properties in four of seven “maintenance districts” (Attachment B) must be affected for full collection to be implemented. These maintenance districts are no longer used by Public Works and the City has grown since 1998. A new Storm Debris Cleanup Areas map (Attachment C) divides the City into eight areas and also allow for future growth. It is proposed that five of the eight areas must be affected for full collection to be implemented. Requiring five of eight areas (62.5%) is very similar to the current policy requiring four of seven districts (57.0%).

- ii. No change
 - iii. The Volunteer Center is identified in the current policy, but it is no longer in existence. Proposed change is “Volunteer Organizations (i.e. RSVP)” will be contacted to help coordinate volunteers.
 - iv. Director of Public Works is changed to Director of Parks and Recreation, or designee.
- b. Full Collection in a Limited Area – Minor rewording took place in this paragraph without changing the purpose.
 - c. Intermediate City Response
 - i. “Maintenance district” is changed to “Storm Debris Cleanup Area”
 - ii. The Volunteer Center is identified in the current policy, but it is no longer in existence. Proposed change is “Volunteer Organizations (i.e. RSVP)” will be contacted to help coordinate volunteers.
 - iii. Director of Public Works is changed to Director of Parks and Recreation, or designee.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the proposed revised Storm Damaged Tree Cleanup Policy as presented.
2. Direct staff to modify the proposed revised Storm Damaged Tree Cleanup Policy.
3. Do not approve the proposed revised Storm Damaged Tree Cleanup Policy.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This policy provides direction to staff regarding cleanup activities after a storm. Some of the changes are due to Parks and Recreation now being responsible for ROW maintenance, while other changes help in the administration of the policy. Utilizing the proposed Storm Debris Cleanup Areas is reflective of the way Ames has grown. Additionally, providing staff 36 hours to make a decision regarding the City’s response ensures a thorough evaluation can be done.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as stated above.

Storm Damaged Tree Cleanup Policy

To be more responsive to citizens needs after a storm in which damage was done to trees on private property, the following guidelines will be utilized to establish the City's response.

I. Damage Evaluation Team

The City Manager, Parks and Recreation Director, Parks and Facilities Superintendent, Public Works Operations Manager, and the City Forester shall form an evaluation team to review the damage and establish the City's response based on the extent of damage. The evaluation team will also establish appropriate drop-off site(s) for citizens to use. The City's response shall be decided within 36 hours of the end of the storm.

II. City Response

a. Full Collection City Wide

- i. If the survey by the evaluation team yields tree damage beyond small limbs and twigs that involve 50% of the residential properties in five of the eight storm debris cleanup areas (attached map), there will be full collection throughout the City. Timing and standards for placement of the damaged trees will be included in the notifications detailing the City's response.
- ii. A free drop-off site(s) will be designated for citizen use.
- iii. Volunteer organizations (e.g. RSVP) will be contacted to help recruit and coordinate volunteers to assist citizens needing help.
- iv. The Director of Parks and Recreation, or designee, will coordinate the disposal of debris at the City's drop-off site(s) only.

b. Full Collection in a Limited Area

If a tornado or other isolated event creates a significant amount of tree damage beyond small limbs and twigs that involves 50% of the residential properties in a limited area, the evaluation team can designate full collection of the damaged tree debris in the limited area, not City wide.

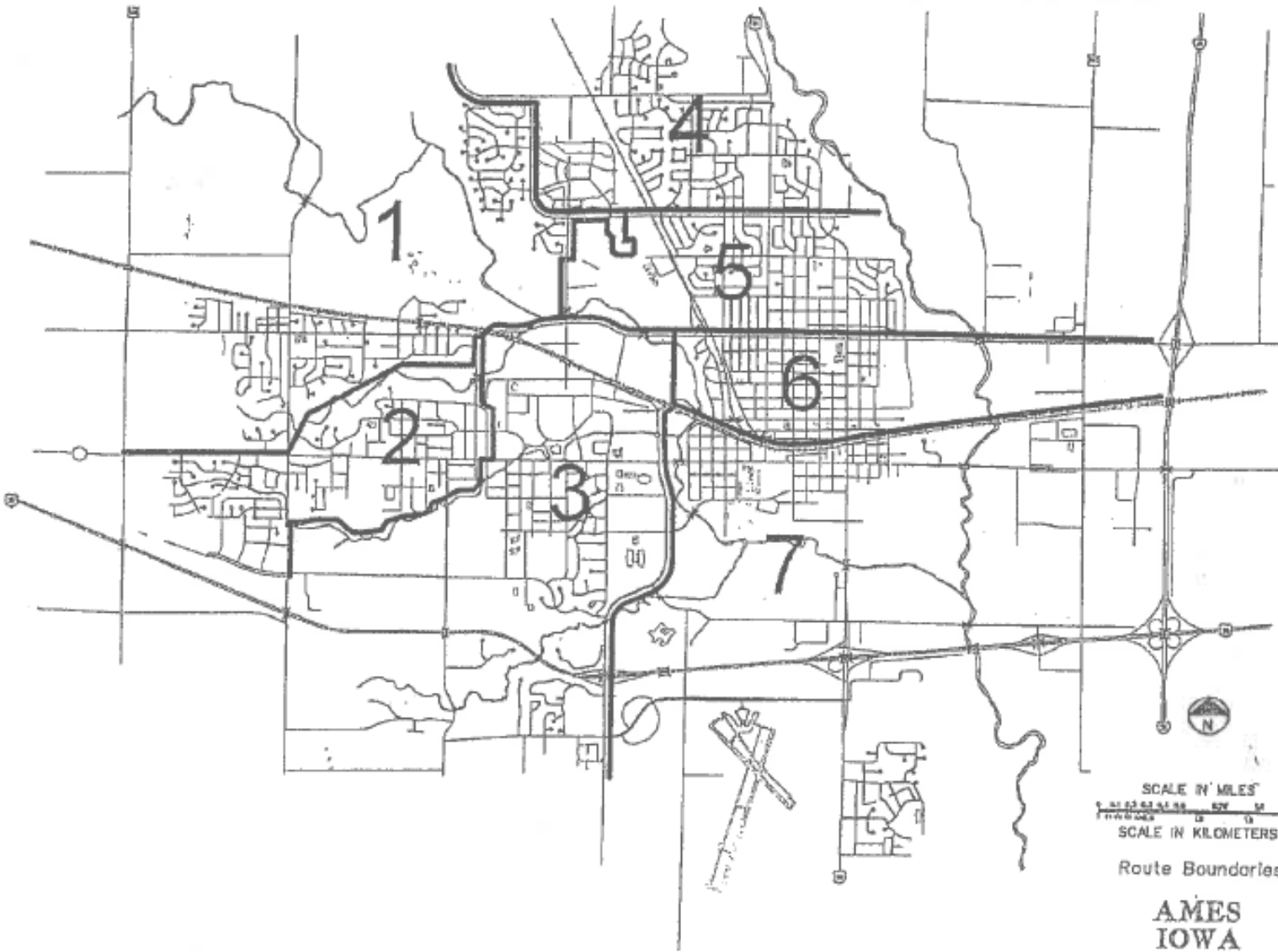
c. Intermediate City Response

- i. If the evaluation team determines that 25% of the residential properties, in at least one storm debris cleanup areas, have tree damage beyond small limbs and twigs, the City will designate a free drop-off site(s) for all citizens to use.

- ii. Volunteer organizations (e.g. RSVP) will be contacted to help recruit and coordinate volunteers to assist citizens needing help.
- iii. The director of Parks and Recreation, or designee, will coordinate the disposal of debris collected at the City's drop-off site(s) only.

If the above conditions related to extent of damage don't occur, citizens and private sector businesses will be responsible for the damaged tree removal and disposal needs.

Public Works Maintenance Districts



SCALE IN MILES
0 1/2
SCALE IN KILOMETERS
0 1

Route Boundaries

AMES
IOWA

Printed July 1936

Storm Debris Cleanup Areas

