From: Ian Chamberlain <ianc@takomaparkmd.gov>
Date: Fri, Jan 31, 2025 at 2:38 PM
Subject: Re: Winter salt treatment is degrading Sligo Creek
To: Elaine Lamirande <president@fosc.org>
Cc: Dean Tousley <drtousley@gmail.com>, Daryl Braithwaite <darylb@takomaparkmd.gov>, Anna Mische John <annamj@takomaparkmd.gov>

Hello Elaine Lamirande,

I appreciate the outreach and attention to salt in our waterways. As Daryl wrote Anna Mische-John and I were certified in MDE's Smart Salt program this fall. The City has a relatively small area that requires treatment for safe passage but that doesn't mean our efforts are wasted. The greatest impact of our small treatment area is we use mechanical removal first in all cases. We did previously experiment with brine pretreatment for roadways and parking lots. However, we have greater success mobilizing staff and removing the snow or ice before following with a salt and sand application (80/20 respectively). After a weather event has subsided and we are no longer reacting to changing surface conditions the secondary action is always aggressive removal of excess deposits. If temperatures are above freezing we will also use our street sweeper to pull even the smallest amounts of sand and salt back off the surface. Do note that on the sidewalks we use some alternative methods, primarily high heat (propane torches) and manual chipping.

We are laboring to purchase a new, walk behind brine system for sidewalk pretreatment. The equipment has scaled down to make sidewalk pretreatment not a truck mounted activity. We expect we will see greater success in some of our more difficult sidewalks with pretreatment. Sidewalk clearing is only done during daylight hours so the pretreatment should provide the advantage that is lost by not activating crews around the clock. As for truck mounted systems those will likely phase in with budget or scheduled equipment replacement given the cost. GIS now allows trucks to adjust dispersal rates in real time to match over ground speed and allows easier calibration (both annually and on the fly).

I will work with our communications folks to showcase our Public Works crews not only appropriately treating surfaces, but removing excess after a storm event. Please let me know if you have any additional questions, I will be following up with Dean Tousley in the coming week to have our conversation about Smart Salting practices, and the impacts to our waterways.

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