Oct. 6, 2026

Snow Ready 2026 – 2027: Building on Progress

Presented by:

Wes Sydnor, Executive Director, Louisville Metro Public Works

Bill Bell, Director, Louisville Metro Department of Transportation (LouDOT)

LOUISVILLE Department of Transportation

LOUISVILLE JEFFERSON COUNTY

Looking Back: 2025 – 2026 Snow Season

- Responded to 15 winter weather events throughout the season (11 salt/plow events, 4 brine events)
- Put recommendations from the DW Clonch Consulting snow operations review into action
- Updated Louisville Metro's dedicated snow routes, covering approximately 2,705 miles of roadway
- Expanded pretreatment and brining operations, including cold-weather additives for extreme temperatures
- Strengthened staffing, training and equipment, including new snow trucks, replacement brine tanks and upgraded plow blades
- More than 200 Snow Team members supported operations across Metro Government, often working around the clock in 12-hour shifts

Looking Back: 2025 – 2026 Snow Season

- Improved coordination among Metro departments and partners, along with more frequent public updates before, during and after storms
- Used contractor support during the season's most significant storm (Winter Storm Fern) to supplement operations and provide additional access to essential destinations
- Continued identifying opportunities for technology, training, equipment and operational improvements for the 2026 – 2027 season
- Developed secondary routing for major events (snowfall amounts, extreme cold, duration of subfreezing temps-contractor focused). Parameters include: connections to schools, medical facilities, bus routes, transportation hubs, economic/job centers.

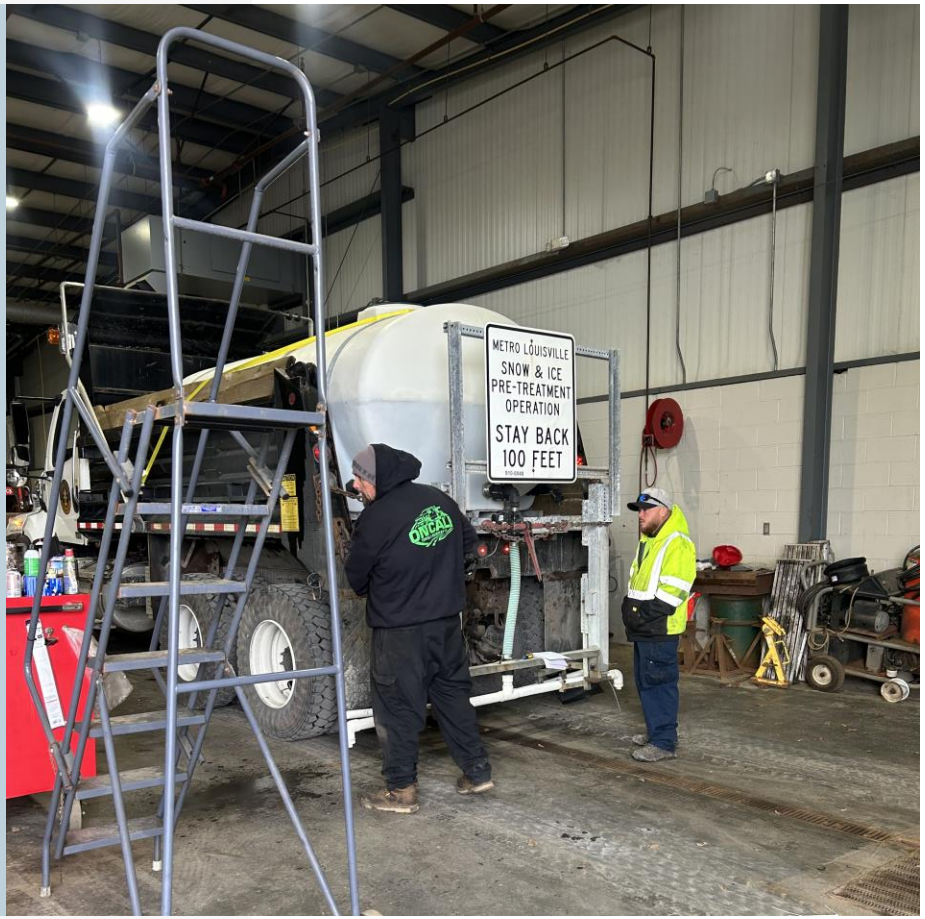
About our Snow Team and Routes

- The Snow Team includes more than 200 staff members from:
  - Public Works (Louisville Metro Department of Transportation and Solid Waste Management Services)
  - Emergency Services
  - Louisville Parks and Recreation
  - Codes & Regulations
  - Urban Forestry
  - Fleet Services
- Louisville Metro Snow Team crews provide service to 2,705 miles of roadway, which is divided into more than 100 routes to systematically clear snow and ice across Louisville Metro.
- The snow routes are focused on roads which carry the most traffic and are critical to connecting people to large employment areas, neighborhoods, schools, medical facilities, and hospitals.
- Neighborhood streets and roads that are not included in Metro's designated snow routes are not plowed or treated by Louisville Metro crews.

Central Roads District	637.7
East Roads District	598.2
West Roads District	566.0
SWMS	427.8
Metro Parks	200.2
Metro Vacant Lots	275.9
Total Plow Miles	2705.8
Total Salt Miles	1352.9

Looking Ahead to the 2026 – 2027 Snow Season: Salt Storage

- More than 30,000 tons of salt on hand — fully stocked heading into winter
- Salt contract is being rebid as costs continue to rise:
  - About $90/ton at the start of last season
  - About $98/ton by the end of last season
  - Current quote: about $141/ton
- Snow preparation began earlier this year



Looking Ahead: Brine Improvements

- New automated brine maker planned for the East District
  - More efficient blending
  - Automatic truck filling
  - Better tracking of brine usage
- New 3,000-gallon brine/water truck added to the fleet
- 25 brine-capable trucks total, with roughly eight assigned to each district

Looking Ahead: Equipment and Technology

- More than 100 pieces of snow-fighting equipment, including 96 salt trucks
- Internal GPS planned for roughly half or more of the snow-fighting fleet
  - This tool will help us see where our trucks are and better coordinate operations.
  - GPS will not be public-facing

Snow technology: stronger routes, better visibility

Scott Stepro and the GIS team have rebuilt the operational foundation for snow routing.

01 ROUTE DATA — 02 FIELD WORKFLOW — 03 COMMAND VIEW — 04 PUBLIC STATUS

MAP

Modernized route foundation

- Rebuilt snow routes and the Snow Book around current operational needs
- Expanded the routable-road dataset with lane-mile and roadway attributes
- Integrated priority areas, roadway class, transit needs and field input

OPS

Stronger field and command tools

- Prepared route data to support vehicle tracking and service-status reporting
- Standardized Snow Command route-entry and pass-tracking workflows
- Created GIS views that help staff review, sequence and update routes

VIEW

Clearer operational visibility

- Maintained Snow Map and route-status information for public communication
- Built the framework for dashboards, performance review and event reporting
- Positioned the program for future automation when funding becomes available

Looking Ahead: Snow Team Training

- Our six-phase training program prepares snow fighters through a mix of classroom instruction and hands-on experience:
  - Safety and equipment training – Proper operation, maintenance and snow response procedures
  - Hands-on road training – New snow fighters train alongside experienced operators
  - Plow and route training – Practice operating single and tandem plows while learning assigned routes
  - Tandem and triple-plow operations – Focus on coordinated plowing, radio communication and safe spacing
  - Mock snow event – Full simulation of a winter weather response from start to finish

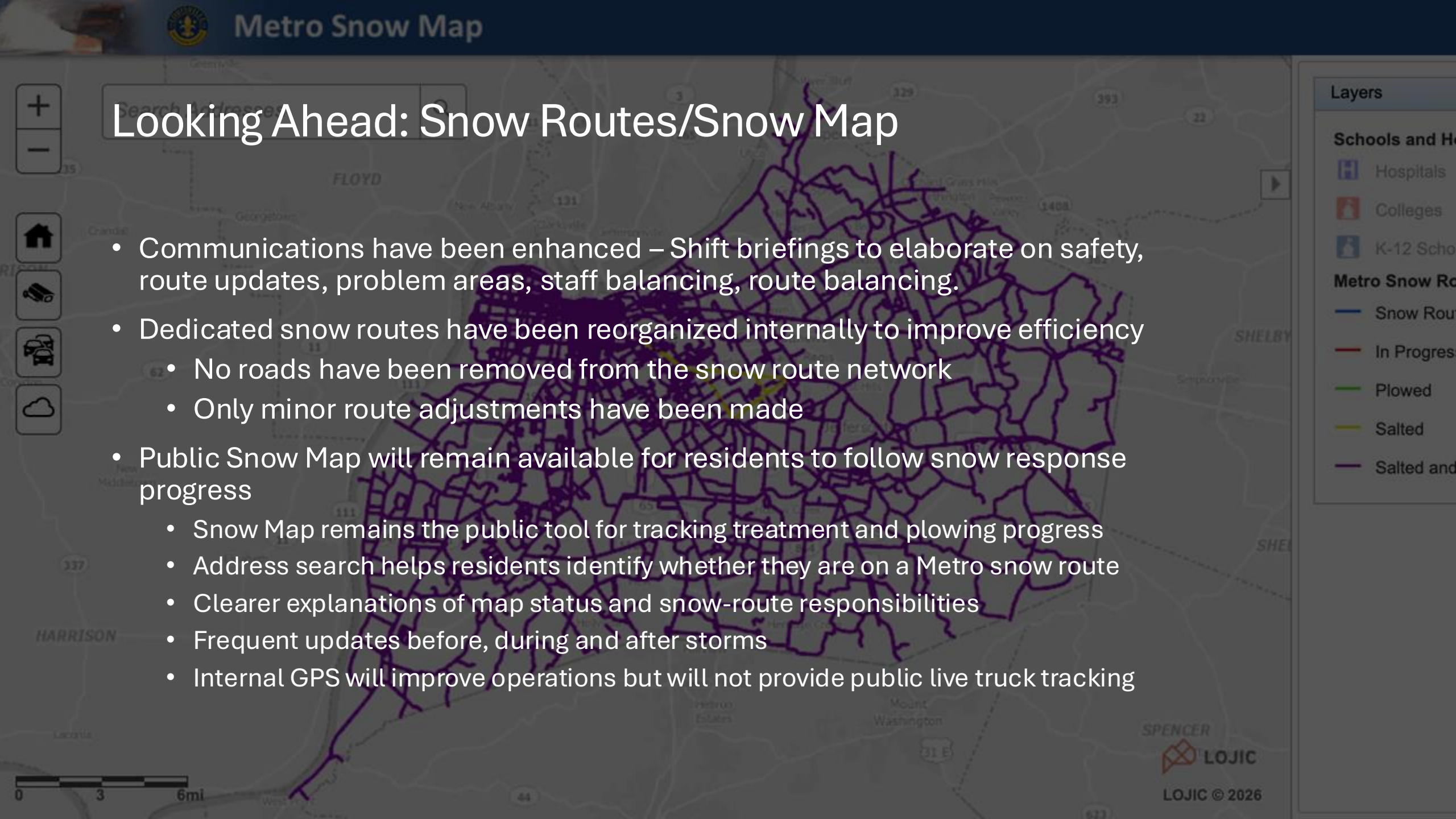
Looking Ahead: Expanded Tandem and Echelon Plowing Training

- This year, snow fighters will receive additional training on tandem and triple-plow operations.
- During Winter Storm Fern, crews successfully used an echelon plowing operation on Preston Highway.
- Echelon plowing involves multiple snowplows traveling side-by-side in a staggered formation, allowing crews to clear several lanes of a roadway at the same time while moving snow toward the edge of the road.
- The Preston Highway operation worked well, and we plan to build on that experience with additional training this season.

  Video: Echelon plowing on Preston Highway during Winter Storm Fern

Looking Ahead: Staffing Support

- Launching a Snow Team volunteer form to identify additional Metro staff who can support winter weather operations as needed (dispatching, monitoring, etc.)


Metro Snow Map
Looking Ahead: Snow Routes/Snow Map
Communications have been enhanced – Shift briefings to elaborate on safety, route updates, problem areas, staff balancing, route balancing.
Dedicated snow routes have been reorganized internally to improve efficiency
No roads have been removed from the snow route network
Only minor route adjustments have been made
Public Snow Map will remain available for residents to follow snow response progress
Snow Map remains the public tool for tracking treatment and plowing progress
Address search helps residents identify whether they are on a Metro snow route
Clearer explanations of map status and snow-route responsibilities
Frequent updates before, during and after storms
Internal GPS will improve operations but will not provide public live truck tracking
Layers
Schools and H
Hospitals
Colleges
K-12 Scho
Metro Snow Ro
Snow Rou
In Progres
Plowed
Salted
Salted and
FLOYD
HARRISON
SHELBY
SPENCER
0
3
6mi
LOJIC
LOJIC © 2026

Looking Ahead: Communications

- New text and email alerts are now available through the Public Works homepage for LouDOT updates
- We're working to grow our subscriber list — please help us spread the word
- These alerts will give us another way to share important information during winter weather events
  - Snow response updates
  - Travel and safety reminders
  - Requests to move vehicles from emergency snow routes
  - Other significant operational updates
- We will continue providing updates through the Snow Removal webpage and Public Works social media channels
- A Winter Ready press conference is planned for early November to share preparedness information and set expectations ahead of the season

Questions?