

Pittsburgh may ease up on road salt under maintenance plan, administration says

Pittsburgh could cut back on road salt and make snow removal more efficient under a \$1.45 million proposal that Mayor Bill Peduto's office is sending to city council, the administration said Monday.

The three-year agreement with Bloomington, Minn.-based Quetica LLC would use advanced technology to guide plow drivers with real-time GPS directions, optimize their routes and better control salt-spreading in icy weather, Peduto spokesman Timothy McNulty said.

Quetica also would help run the city's popular Snow Plow Tracker, replacing contractor TeMeDa in Naperville, Ill. The set-up would continue to monitor each plow truck's movements via a city website. Additional details — showing when a plow's blade and salt spreader are engaged — would be accessible to city officials and could appear later on the public site, Mr. McNulty said.

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The arrangement “does a lot of what the mayor has been asking for — for years,” he said. Mr. Peduto first unveiled the Snow Plow Tracker in January 2015.

Neither Quetica nor TeMeDa immediately commented Monday. Council is expected Tuesday to introduce the Quetica proposal, which would be up for discussion Oct. 10. The agreement would set a maximum cost of \$1,453,924 over three years, with two optional one-year renewals.

Mr. McNulty said the city was pleased with Snow Plow Tracker under TeMeDa, whose contract expired in September. Quetica was the lone responsive bidder that fulfilled all requirements under a recent request for proposals, he said.

The company's approach includes computerized salt spreading to better calibrate distribution, the administration said. The city would probably reduce usage by 33 percent and

maintain the same level of road de-icing, according to estimates shared by the Department of Innovation and Performance.

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Pittsburgh spends about \$2.2 million a year on road salt, the department said.

The latest moves follow an outburst of public anger last winter, when complaints over snowy, icy roads piled up in January. The Peduto administration tightened up snow removal at the time and said additional improvements would materialize for this winter.

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