

THE CAMAS QUARTERLY



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Camas Quarterly



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Hello Camas,

Well, here we are in another December, with a new year on the horizon. Is it just me, or does it seem like time flies?

First things first, I want to thank all of you who took the time out to vote in this year's election. While I wish the overall numbers were higher, I'm very appreciative of those who supported me and what we're doing in the City. After the certification of the November 7 General Election, we learned that our incumbents remained, and that we'll have a new Council Member joining us, John Svilarich. John will replace Don Chaney, who is retiring after 50 years of total service to the City of Camas, both as an employee and Council Member. I'm proud to call Don my friend, as well as my colleague. His pragmatism on the Council will be dearly missed.

We tackled a lot of big projects in 2023, and we hope to do the same in 2024. Some of the major things we worked on were the Lakes Management Plan. Like you, I am excited to see some solutions being put into place in 2024, and I'm extremely optimistic about our partnership with Clark County moving forward. Another significant project we're looking forward to is the renovation of Crown Park. This is the gem of our parks system and should be treated as such. With that in mind, Parks and Rec Director Trang Lam will be moving forward with a whole host of exciting changes. Some of those changes will be related to The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA compliance, and accessibility.

ADA Compliance is something we often talk about at the project level in the City, but it's so much more than compliance; it's about accessibility. We love all we have to offer here in Camas, and we want to make sure it's accessible to all who want to take part.



MAYOR
STEVE HOGAN

You can learn more about ADA compliance and what accessibility means in Camas on page 06.

Another key area of discussion, and one currently at the top of our list, is our upcoming Comprehensive Plan, Our Camas 2045, and our Downtown Subarea Plan, Our Downtown Camas 2045. Our Camas 2045 will establish a vision for growth and development and will articulate goals, objectives, policies, and actions to guide our future. The plan will also address recent changes to Washington's Growth Management Act related to housing and climate change. In addition, Our Downtown Camas 2045 will provide a more detailed vision and action plan to catalyze public and private investment in our historic downtown that preserves and enhances its unique sense of place. You can learn more about this exciting endeavor on page 10.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who came out for all of our events this year, and we had a lot. However, I especially want to thank all of you who attended our Hometown Holidays event. This was the first year that we were able to bring back the Holiday Tree Lighting since before the COVID Pandemic, and it's all thanks to the combined efforts of the Downtown Camas Association, the Camas-Washougal Chamber of Commerce, and Camas Parks and Recreation.

Continued on next page

The DCA and CW Chamber stepped up and provided volunteers to help keep the event safe, and everything went according to plan... except for the weather, that is!

I also want to thank Police Chief Tina Jones and EMS Division Chief Shaun Ford for establishing an Incident Command Station for this event. This ensured all the right people were in the room in case of an emergency. While we're extremely thankful nothing occurred, it's always better to be prepared.

With that, I want to wish you all a Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. I'm excited for all we have on the horizon here in Camas. We're lucky to live in a community that is as amazing as ours, and make no mistake, it's because of the people that call this City home.

As always, please shop local, and don't forget to say "hello" if you see me around downtown.

Thank you,
Mayor Steve Hogan



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
DOUG QUINN

Hello Camas,

Happy Holidays! What an exciting time to be a part of the City of Camas. The unique aspect of working for a City is that there is always something going on.

This past year was a busy one for the City. We had multiple projects come before Council, an election, and 2024 is looking like it's going to be even busier than 2023.

Speaking of the election, I want to congratulate everyone who was brave enough to throw their hats in the ring. Public Service is a calling, and wanting to be a part of that is very special. Congratulations to our Council Members Bonnie Carter, John Nohr, Jennifer Senescu, and Mayor Steve Hogan on their successful reelection campaigns. Additionally, I want to extend a special welcome to John Svilarich, who will be joining the Council in January as its newest member.

I also want to take this time to thank Don Chaney for his decades of service to Camas. I have worked with Don through the years, and he's always been a man who cares deeply about his community. Don, you will be missed on the dais, but we thank you wholeheartedly for your service to Camas.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we were getting ready to start our Downtown Subarea plan. Well, that time is now! You can find more information about Our Downtown Camas 2045 and the City's Comprehensive Plan, Our Camas 2045, in this newsletter and at engagecamas.com.

As City Administrator, my job is to manage our large team of dedicated employees. The great thing about this position is that I learn new things daily about the work we do. And perhaps more importantly, how and why we perform these tasks.

Suffice to say, there's always a method to our madness. One question we often get during these winter months is, "Why didn't you plow my street?" Or better yet, "Why do I see plows driving with the scoop lifted?" These questions are both valid. So, with that in mind, we have provided you with information on page 15, about How We Plow. This is just a little insight into how our crews deal with snow on Camas' streets.

Another aspect of my job is oversight on employee training. And sometimes, I get invited to be a part of that. This happened recently when Camas PD participated in a regional training exercise focused on driving skills for emergency vehicle operators in November. You can read more about this training exercise in our Department Updates on page 14. Let's just say, I'm more comfortable behind my desk than I am behind the wheel of a squad car in hot pursuit! However, I'm thankful to see the time and effort our officers put into their training; it's quite impressive.

With that, I will close and wish you all a Happy New Year. As always, you can stay updated with everything happening in the City by following us on social media, subscribing to this newsletter, or by attending City Council workshops and meetings.

Thank you,

Doug Quinn
City Administrator



Accessible To ALL

ADA Compliance vs Accessibility



What does it mean when you embrace accessibility? Is compliance the same as going above and beyond?

These are all questions that come to mind when cities discuss ADA requirements and accessibility. ADA stands for the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. In terms of most cities however, it's really considered an umbrella term that encapsulates accessibility as well. The City of Camas is no exception.

Many of the recent projects that have come before Council this year have talked about the need to be inclusive, both in terms of who will use our facilities and how they can access those facilities.

For many at the Department Head level in the City of Camas, the commitment to accessibility spans far beyond mere compliance. It's more of a combination of navigating the legal frameworks, while also embracing proactive measures. In general, the City works hard to make sure our initiatives reflect our dedication to inclusivity for all individuals, regardless of ability.

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

That said, there are very specific federal guidelines the City must follow regarding accessibility within public rights-of-ways, and on public property including parks and buildings, such as the Library and City Hall.

Generally, local agencies self-regulate when it comes to compliance with federal guidelines. However, if federal or state grants are involved in those projects, then that necessitates that cities strictly adhere to applicable ADA standards. State and federal agencies providing these grants do this to ensure specifications and installations meet current ADA standards. And besides that, agencies that receive, or want to receive federal funding, are mandated to have what's referred to as an ADA Transition Plan. The ADA Transition Plan is intended to be a self-evaluation of accessibility of public spaces and includes an inventory, cost estimates and potential schedule (dependent on available funding) addressing necessary retrofits and upgrades.

Camas allocates funding each year for retrofitting areas of non-compliance within the public rights-of-ways. This is contingent on the available budget in any given year, which can be difficult as this work competes with other general services such as Fire, Police and Parks. In most cases available funds are used in response to projects listed in the ADA Transition Plan and/or in response to specific ADA complaints or requests received from the public.



As with most things, there are more projects identified in the ADA Transition Plan than there are funds available, but the City's Public Works Department prioritizes and uses any money available as strategically as possible.

When it comes to public property and buildings outside of the right-of-way, the City's Building Division is the overarching authority on accessibility requirements. While the Building Division only enforces a "minimum" standard identified in the International Building Code, the more features that are accessible allows for greater access, inclusion and equal opportunity for people with disabilities to access and enjoy our public spaces and facilities.

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

And that makes a ton of sense for anything new we add to the City, but Camas also has older buildings like the ones that line our picturesque downtown, what about those?

Generally, when renovation work is performed on existing buildings, Camas follows the International Existing Building Code, which has provisions for requiring certain accessible upgrades to a building or access there to or within, depending on the project scope of work. Ideally, as a building is renovated throughout the years, more and more accessible elements of the building will be brought up to comply with current standards.

A prime example of this is the Camas Public Library. The Camas Library underwent ADA improvements during its remodel approximately 18 years ago. But the time has come again for accessibility upgrades. However, according to Library Director Connie Urquhart, instead of using City dollars, the latest project will be grant funded.

“The Washington State Department of Commerce offers competitive grants to public libraries every two years for capital improvements. One of their funding priorities is for libraries that need to improve their building’s accessibility”, said Urquhart.

“That’s what we’ll be using our grant money to focus on in the coming biennium: for ADA access to the courtyard, to replace the entry doors at 4th and 5th Avenues for greater accessibility, and for several other smaller projects that when combined will improve access to the Library,” she said.

ADA Compliance and accessibility also take place outside of the City’s brick and mortar buildings. Camas Parks and Recreation also has a special interest in accessibility as recently discussed in the Crown Park Renovations, where accessibility and access will be key design features. Some of these ADA improvements will take place in the surrounding rights-of-way, but all new features of the Park are being constructed following ADA best practices.

And while there are no Building Code provisions that require trails to be accessible, the Camas Parks and Open Space Plan does specifically outline minimum requirements for diverse trail types, which balances trail design with minimal impact on mature trees and sensitive habitats. After all, our parks and trails are amazing, and we want to share them with everyone.

Finally, as mentioned in this newsletter, the City will be embarking on Our Camas 2045 and Our Downtown Camas 2045. So how will accessibility play into the City’s updated comprehensive plan and downtown subarea plan?

ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

“Accessibility and ADA requirements in the project’s equity framework will define what equity means for the project and identify equitable outcomes and specific measures of success,” said Camas Community Development Director, Alan Peters.

“Equity will be woven within each plan element with equity-specific goals and policies that correspond to each element. The downtown subarea plan will look at how we can make our public spaces downtown more accessible to those with disabilities and mobility issues.

“ADA improvements such as wide sidewalks and ramps benefit everyone who visits downtown. When spaces are improved to accommodate individuals with disabilities, they also benefit toddlers learning to walk, parents with strollers, athletes with temporary injuries, or those making deliveries to our downtown businesses,” he said.

Camas’ commitment to accessibility isn’t just a pledge—it’s a blueprint for a future where accessibility and inclusivity form the foundation of our community’s development. Using an equitable lens when it comes to accessibility, Camas can ensure that every citizen, regardless of ability, experiences a sense of belonging and opportunity.



COGNITIVE



VISUAL



AUDITORY



MOTOR



SPEECH

OUR CAMAS 2045 & OUR DOWNTOWN CAMAS 2045

The City of Camas is set to embark on a new city-wide Comprehensive Plan and a Downtown Subarea Plan. The simple reason for the new comp plan is based on regulations. The Washington State Growth Management Act requires cities to update their comprehensive plans every ten years to ensure that comprehensive plans stay current with changes in state planning requirements, population growth, and community desires. On the other hand, the downtown plan is something that many in the community have been hoping to see for some time. With that in mind, we sat down with Community Development Director Alan Peters to learn about Our Camas 2045 and Our Downtown Camas 2045.

Question: What is Our Camas 2045 and Our Downtown Camas 2045?

Answer: Our Camas 2045 is a periodic update to our citywide comprehensive plan and will take a big picture look at our city to see how we're meeting the vision of our current comprehensive plan and to make sure that we are prepared for the next 20 years of growth in Camas. We've grown a lot, and now it's once again time to take a fresh look at our 20-year vision and understand how we see ourselves today, and what we want the City of Camas to look like in 2045.

Our Downtown Camas 2045 is an area-specific plan that will provide a more detailed vision for our downtown and provide a framework for future development activities and infrastructure investments. This is something that the downtown community has been looking forward to for a long time, and I am proud of our City Council for funding this important project. Our Downtown Camas 2045 will strengthen our downtown and will recognize the role our downtown plays in preserving Camas's hometown feel and fostering the unique sense of place and personality that makes Camas, Camas.

Q. Why are we doing this now?

A. As mentioned, comprehensive plans must be adopted and reviewed on a periodic schedule set by GMA. Camas's Camas 2035 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016.



OUR CAMAS 2045 & OUR DOWNTOWN CAMAS 2045

The City of Camas is required to complete a review and update of our comprehensive plan by June 30, 2025. The plan must also be compliant with updates to the GMA, including recent changes related to middle housing and climate planning adopted by the Legislature in 2023. It made sense to do the downtown plan now because we just wrapped up the North Shore Subarea planning process, and while working on that plan, we heard a lot from the community about their desire to see more focus on our downtown. Our downtown community, especially the Downtown Camas Association, has also been asking for this plan. So, in 2022, the City Council approved funding for a subarea plan. Knowing that we also had to do a Comprehensive Plan update, we decided to approach both projects together. This approach will make the most efficient use of our community's resources, allow for some synergy, and make the best use of the community's time and attention over the next 18 months. At the end of the day, we'll end up with two distinct plans, but they'll be internally consistent and support one another.

Q. What is the overall goal?

A. Ultimately, our goal is to develop two plans that provide our community's shared clear, long-term vision for our City and for our downtown. Together, the comprehensive plan and subarea plan will serve as the blueprint for growth, sustainability, economic success, and the enhancement of the residents' quality of life. These plans should serve as guiding documents for the next 20 years of growth in Camas to make sure that as we change and grow, we still maintain what makes Camas unique. The plans should also be dynamic and able to be implemented. Our common sense of community is the core identity of our city, which is why many residents have chosen Camas as their home. We are all working towards the common goal to keep this sense of community intact as we progress into the future.

Q. What are some timeline milestones residents should be aware of?

A. While we've been working on getting this process going for several months now, we're excited to be kicking off the public process now.

OUR CAMAS 2045 & OUR DOWNTOWN CAMAS 2045

From now through Spring 2024, we are completing an assessment of current and future conditions. We will also be scheduling two Community Summits during this time for visioning and goal setting. Beginning Summer 2024 and Spring 2025, we will be working on policy development and implementation strategies and will be holding another two Community Summits to inform policies and implementation strategies. Our goal is to complete and adopt both plans in June 2025. Community members should expect to see more outreach about Our Camas 2045 beginning in the new year and should visit Engage Camas to stay informed about the project.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A. Personally, as I look towards 2045, I want Camas to be a place that our kids will want to come back to and will be able to come back to because we have jobs that can provide for them, housing that meets their needs, and because Camas will have maintained its sense of community even as it has grown and progressed into the future.

With that in mind, the final comprehensive plan will include the following elements:

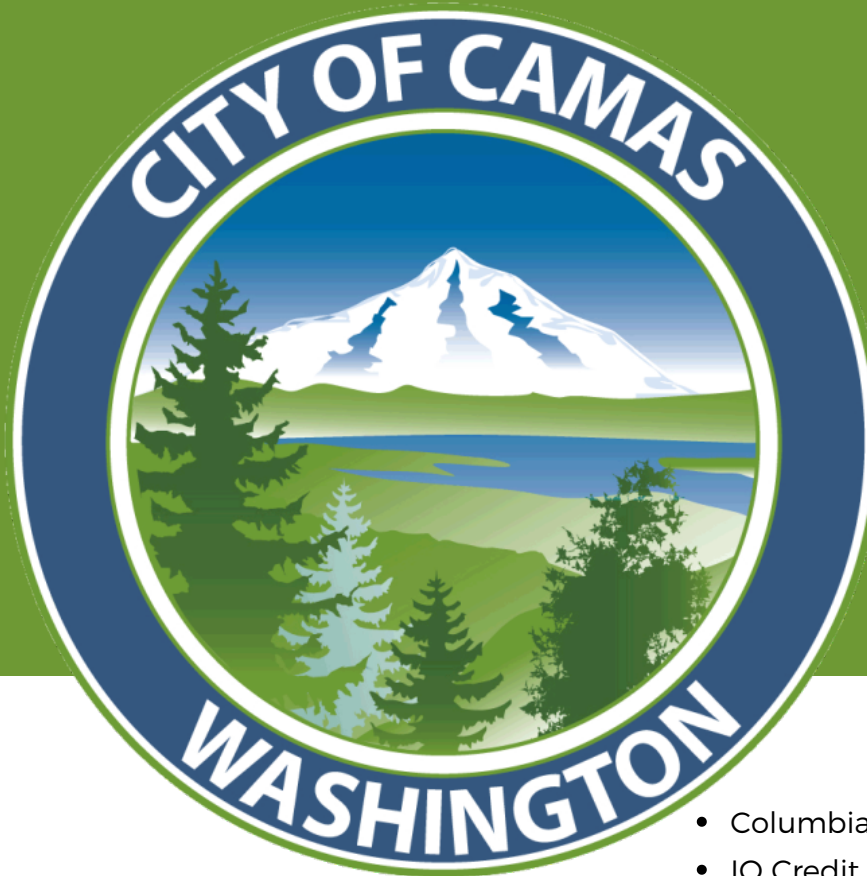
- Community Character
- Land Use
- Housing
- Natural Environment
- Climate
- Transportation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Economic Development.

When it comes down to it, Our Camas 2045 and Our Downtown Camas 2045 are not simply a set of policies and initiatives; they are a commitment to shaping the future in a way that reflects the values, character, and uniqueness of what makes the City of Camas so special.

Our
**Downtown
Camas**

**Hometown.
Downtown.
Our Town. 2045**

DEPARTMENT UPDATES



**Trang
Lam**
Parks and
Recreation
Director

The City of Camas' Hometown Holidays returned this year with a bang – well, more of an illumination if you will! This amazing community-based event has been a part of Camas' history since 2003. And this year, after a 3-year hiatus, we were thrilled to welcome back the tree-lighting ceremony, made possible through the collaborative efforts of DCA (Downtown Camas Association), the Camas-Washougal Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Camas Parks and Recreation Department.

I want to thank, once again, all those who made our Hometown Holidays celebration possible:

- Columbia Credit Union
- IQ Credit Union
- Windermere Crest Realty
- Downtown Camas Association
- Lutz Hardware
- Your Party & Event Center
- Majestyk Tree Farm
- Liberty Theatre
- Billy Purta with The Revolution Group
- Journey Church

Also, a special thank you to Camas School District for generously providing buses and drivers for the Event Parking Shuttle. Thanks to Santa Claus, the City of Camas Public Works, and all the entertainers and incredible volunteers who contributed their time and talents to make this celebration a reality.

DEPT. UPDATES - CONT.

Regional Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) Training

On November 2 and 3, the Camas Police Department participated in a regional training exercise focused on driving skills for emergency vehicle operators. Sergeants David Garcia and Brie Bieber worked hard on internal and external logistics and coordination to help make this training a success. Sworn members from Camas Police Department, Washougal Police Department, Ridgefield Police Department, Battleground Police Department, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribal Public Safety Department participated in the training at the Portland International Raceway.

Participants honed skills related to driving under high-stress conditions and pursuit management. One scenario centered on a pursuit of a suspected homicide suspect. Participants engaged in a pursuit, managed radio responses, coordinated resources, all while maintaining safe driving practices. This is not easy, which is precisely why it's important for our teams to practice these perishable skills. Participants also practiced deploying spike strips, designed to help end a pursuit and apprehend a suspect safely. Another course involved a series of cones set up in various patterns that participants had to navigate at increasing speeds.



**Tina
Jones**
Chief of
Police

The goal was to navigate the course as quickly as possible without knocking over a cone, encouraging precision and good driving habits.

Camas City Administrator Doug Quinn and Camas City Council Member Bonnie Carter attended the training as observers. They experienced being in the “rabbit” car, which was being chased by the officers. They also took part in the cone course and gained insights into the challenges of driving while responding to an emergency and the myriad decisions officers must consider. For instance, determining if a pursuit meets the legal standard to initiate, obtaining supervisory approval, planning

intervention strategies to end a pursuit, knowing their location, relaying updates on speeds, traffic and road conditions, suspect behavior, and more.



HOW WE PLOW!

A background image of a snowplow clearing a road in winter. The plow is white with orange lights and is moving from left to right, leaving a clean path behind it. The surrounding area is covered in snow, and there are bare trees in the background. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day.

Winter weather in our area can be unpredictable at best, and downright weird at worst. We've seen wet winters and snowy springs. We've seen cold summers and hot winters. Basically, as the saying goes, if you don't like the weather in Washington, give it a minute and it will change!

However, we do receive snow and over the past years, it seems we've received more than we typically do. So, the question then becomes, how do we plow?

The first step in the process is determining when we need to get the plows out. This happens in a variety of ways. City leadership looks at weather models, consults with the County and CRESA, and has crews out very early, or sometimes the night before, watching the weather to see what happens. If we're able to anticipate a large amount of snow on the horizon, we can pretreat the roads to help ourselves when the snow does fall. However, that's not always possible. Pretreatment in advance of a storm only helps when the roads are dry. Unfortunately, if it's wet or raining, it just washes the pretreatment off the road before it snows or freezes.

Another question we often get: how many plows does the City of Camas currently have?

Camas currently has a total of 6 plows, but not all plows are the same. The City currently operates four large snowplows with solid deicer -and sand-dispersing capabilities, along with two smaller plows on flatbed trucks with liquid deicing units. Unfortunately, this equipment is not enough to keep all City streets maintained during snow or ice events. This leads to the need to identify priority routes as discussed below.

We also currently only have seven total Street Crew employees who are the first to respond and are all capable of driving the trucks with plows. However, for safety reasons, we run two employees in each truck. But this puts us in an employee deficit! One option that we employ is to pull members from other crews such as the Garbage, Stormwater, and Parks maintenance divisions. But that doesn't mean anyone can operate the plows. To be able to operate the snowplow and deicing equipment, our employees need special training, and they also need a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Most Public Works employees have their CDL; however, not everyone has had the opportunity to receive specialized training in snow/ice-removal equipment. So, this also limits our response and can have a dramatic impact on being able to provide other services to the community.

HOW WE PLOW!

With large, sustained events that are forecasted with high confidence, the City will also employ a “split shift” with our operations and maintenance personnel. This means that we will split the full 24-hour day into two, 12-hour shifts (or some other variation) and work approximately 24 hours/day until the storm event has concluded. This is tough on the employees, and obviously comes at a large cost. This option can only be efficiently used when there’s a high certainty of a large event.

When it comes to inclement weather, no two storm events are exactly the same, but the City typically follows a standard response. Generally speaking, we focus on the primary arterials that handle the most traffic, then work our way to the collectors, and then down from there and ultimately to the residential side streets. The City's Snowplow & Anti-Icing Routes Map identifies Priority 1 Routes (Red Lines), Priority 2 Routes (Green Lines), Priority 3 Routes (Yellow Lines), and the typical Road Closures (Blue Lines) during inclement weather. All other streets will be serviced during regularly scheduled hours after the Priority Routes have been serviced with the exception that snow and ice removal crews will treat non-priority routes as dispatched or requested by emergency services.

The Snow and Ice Map” can be found under our “Government” tab on the homepage.

As mentioned, we also have a few roads that we always close during snow and ice events. They are as follows:

- NW 23rd Avenue, from NW Douglas Loop to NW Hood Street
- NW Forest Home Road from NW 10th Avenue to NW Astor Street
- Division Street from NE 6th Avenue to NE 11th Avenue
- NE Dallas Street from NE 6th Avenue to NE 14th Avenue
- NW Dahlia Drive from NW 30th Circle to NW 34th Circle
- NW Lacamas Lane from NW Jasmine Street to NW Lake Road
- NW 44th Avenue from NW Jasmine to NW Lacamas Lane.

Often, we will hear individuals ask what it would take to be able to plow the whole City when events like this do occur. To be honest, we don’t even know if that’s possible, but what we do know is that something on that large of a scale would take an abundance of one thing - money. That’s in the form of more employees and more equipment. While we can always add equipment, we must have trained employees to use that equipment safely and effectively.

HOW WE PLOW!

As we see an uptick in storms like the few we've experienced over the past 3 years, and as the City continues to grow, the idea of investing more money in snow equipment definitely seems logical. But that ultimately comes down to the matter of cost versus benefit. There is a risk of paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for one truck/plow and then only using it for snow and ice response one or two days in an entire year.

In reality, the vast majority of snow/ice events are over before there's a chance to get to the side streets, and sometimes even before getting to Priority 2 Routes - meaning the temperatures warm up enough to melt things while crews are still attempting to get the main roads cleared. This most recent storm was one of those rare occasions when that did not occur. One question we inevitably get each year, why do residents sometimes see a plow truck driving by with the blade up? There are many reasons a plow operator may have the blade up.

They may be responding to an emergency call, there could be an equipment malfunction, or the operator determined that plowing would be ineffective or make things worse.

It could also be that they're using the tire chains and the weight of the truck to break up the ice coating to allow for future plowing.

Now if we could only figure out how to forecast the weather with 100 % accuracy, we'd be ahead of the game every time!



CAMAS CITY COUNCIL



Marilyn Boerke
Ward 1



John Nohr
Ward 1



Bonnie Carter
Ward 2



Tim Hein
Ward 2



Jennifer Senescu
Ward 3



Leslie Lewallen
Ward 3



Don Chaney
At Large

The City Council is an elected group of individuals tasked with creating policy for a City. They represent certain wards. The City of Camas has three wards. Of the seven elected Council members, there is one elected at-large and six elected within wards. The wards are established based on population estimates within the City's boundaries and are reviewed and modified periodically by Council.

<https://www.cityofcamas.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-members>