364.12 Responsibility for public places.

1. As used in this section, *"property owner"* means the contract purchaser if there is one of record, otherwise the record holder of legal title.

2. A city shall keep all public grounds, streets, sidewalks, alleys, bridges, culverts, overpasses, underpasses, grade crossing separations and approaches, public ways, squares, and commons open, in repair, and free from nuisance, with the following exceptions:

a. Public ways and grounds may be temporarily closed by resolution. Following notice as provided in section 362.3, public ways and grounds may be vacated by ordinance.

b. The abutting property owner is responsible for the removal of the natural accumulations of snow and ice from the sidewalks within a reasonable amount of time and may be liable for damages caused by the failure of the abutting property owner to use reasonable care in the removal of the snow or ice. If damages are to be awarded under this section against the abutting property owner, the claimant has the burden of proving the amount of the damages. To authorize recovery of more than a nominal amount, facts must exist and be shown by the evidence which afford a reasonable basis for measuring the amount of the claimant's actual damages, and the amount of actual damages shall not be determined by speculation, conjecture, or surmise. All legal or equitable defenses are available to the abutting property owner in an action brought pursuant to this paragraph. The city's general duty under this subsection does not include a duty to remove natural accumulations of snow or ice from the sidewalks. However, when the city is the abutting property owner it has the specific duty of the abutting property owner set forth in this paragraph.

c. The abutting property owner may be required by ordinance to maintain all property outside the lot and property lines and inside the curb lines upon the public streets, except that the property owner shall not be required to remove diseased trees or dead wood on the publicly owned property or right-of-way.

d. A city may serve notice on the abutting property owner, by certified mail to the property owner as shown by the records of the county auditor, requiring the abutting property owner to repair, replace, or reconstruct sidewalks.

e. If the abutting property owner does not perform an action required under this subsection within a reasonable time, a city may perform the required action and assess the costs against the abutting property for collection in the same manner as a property tax. This power does not relieve the abutting property owner of liability imposed under paragraph *"b"*.

f. A city has no duty under this subsection with respect to property that is required by law to be maintained by a railway company.

3. A city may:

a. Require the abatement of a nuisance, public or private, in any reasonable manner.

b. Require the removal of diseased trees or dead wood, except as stated in subsection 2, paragraph *"c"* of this section.

c. Require the removal, repair, or dismantling of a dangerous building or structure.

d. Require the numbering of buildings.

e. Require connection to public drainage systems from abutting property when necessary for public health or safety.

f. Require connection to public sewer systems from abutting property, and require installation of sanitary toilet facilities and removal of other toilet facilities on such property.

g. Require the cutting or destruction of weeds or other growth which constitutes a health, safety, or fire hazard.

h. If the property owner does not perform an action required under this subsection within a reasonable time after notice, a city may perform the required action and assess the costs against the property for collection in the same manner as a property tax. Notice may be in the form of an ordinance or by certified mail to the property owner as shown by the records of the county auditor, and shall state the time within which action is required. However, in an emergency a city may perform any action which may be required under this section without prior notice, and assess the costs as provided in this subsection, after notice to the property owner and hearing.

4. In addition to any other remedy provided by law, a city may also seek reimbursement for costs incurred in performing any act authorized by this section by a civil action for damages against a property owner. However, a city shall not seek reimbursement for costs incurred in performing an act if the same act has not been performed by the city on adjoining city-owned property. For the purposes of this subsection, a county acquiring property for delinquent taxes shall not be considered a property owner.

5. A city may cause, without prior determination and notice, the repair or replacement of public improvements including, but not limited to, sidewalks, water stop boxes, and driveway approaches if the property owner does all of the following:

a. Requests the repair and replacement of the public improvements specified in this subsection abutting the property owner's property located outside the lot and property lines and inside the curb lines.

b. Waives the requirement of a prior finding by the city council that the condition of the public improvements constitutes a nuisance and the requirement of prior notice.

c. Consents to the repair of the public improvements and the assessment of the cost of the repair to the abutting property.

6. If, in repairing and replacing improvements in the area between the lot or property lines and the curb lines pursuant to subsection 5, it becomes necessary for the city to repair or replace adjacent improvements in the area, the cost of repairing or replacing the adjacent public improvements may be assessed, with consent of the property owner, against the property which the public improvements abut.

7. A city may accumulate individual assessments for the repair and replacement of sidewalks, driveway approaches, water stop boxes, or similar improvements or for the abatement of nuisances, and may periodically certify the assessments to the county treasurer under one or more assessment schedules.

1. [C75, 77, 79, 81, § 364.12(1)]

2. [R60, § 1097; C73, § 467, 527; C97, § 753, 757, 780, 781; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § **5874, 5945, 5950, 5969;** C46, 50, § 381.1, 389.12, 389.19, 389.38; C54, 58, 62, 66, § 368.33, 381.1, 389.12, 389.38; C71, 73, § 368.33, 381.1, 381.2, 389.12, 389.38; C75, 77, 79, 81, § 364.12(2)]

3. [R60, § 1057, 1058, 1070, 1096; C73, § 456, 457, 480, 526; C97, § 696, 698, 699, 709712; S13, § 696, 711, 713-b, 737; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § **5739, 5751, 5752, 5755, 5759, 57845786;** C46, § 368.2, 368.14,

368.15, 368.18, 368.22368.24, 368.44, 368.53368.55; C50, § 368.2, 368.14, 368.15, 368.18, 368.22368.24, 368.44, 368.53368.55, 368.62; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, § 368.3, 368.4, 368.9, 368.26, 368.31; C75, 77, 79, 81, § 364.12(3)]

84 Acts, ch 1002, § 1; 89 Acts, ch 261, §1; 95 Acts, ch 58, §1

Footnotes

Nuisances in general, chapter 657