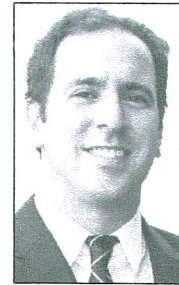


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March 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

**TO: Chair & Members, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee**

**FROM: Councillor Josh Matlow**

**RE: *Improving Levels of Service Related to Snow Removal in the City of Toronto***

In Canada, it should come as no surprise when we experience a snowstorm. And Toronto, on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2013, had what was reported as the largest snowfall in several years- and it was forecasted several days in advance.

While this was one relatively severe winter storm, I believe, based on my own experience and from what I heard from residents, this snowstorm highlighted many long standing service gaps that need to be resolved.

While, there are significant problems encountered across the city, there are unique challenges faced on many of our streets in the old City of Toronto. With narrower streets and abundance of on-street parking that our residents and small businesses rely on, it is much more difficult to safely and efficiently clear and remove snow from our roads and sidewalks.

This winter I have heard from many residents in my Ward who have some major concerns about the City response in clearing and removing snow from our streets and sidewalks.

These concerns include:

- Permit parking spaces lost to snow banks and windrows
- Vehicles parked on the street were plowed in
- Parking lanes on major arterial roads were not fully cleared, creating traffic bottlenecks
- Plows pushed huge piles of snow back on to the sidewalk after being cleared by residents
- Windrows blocking pedestrian crossing and access points
- TTC passengers in some areas were unable to access bus stops
- Windrows blocking driveway entrances
- By-law enforcement had backlogs in addressing snow clearing complaints on private properties
- Public sidewalks not adequately cleared of ice and snow.
- Many steep hills including those on Mt. Pleasant, Yonge Street, Avenue Road and Bathurst Street, where drivers struggle to gain traction were not sufficiently cleared

While I personally found staff to be earnest in their attempts to address the problems identified on a case by case basis, the real issue is the longstanding service gap when it comes to snow removal on our midtown and downtown avenues, streets, roads, crescents, boulevards, laneways and sidewalks. The city does not provide a level of service that is equitable across the entire city.

I am asking that Transportation Services Staff to report back to the Public Works Committee on a strategy to address the service gaps with regards to snow clearing across the city. This strategy should address the current barriers to an equitable level of service across the city, specifically how to work better to remove and not just clear snow from our more narrow streets and those with on street parking. This strategy should also address concerns raised regarding pedestrian safety, including quicker removal of windrows that are blocking sidewalk access and crossing points, and clearer direction including a public awareness campaign and better enforcement when private property owners do not adequately clear snow off of public sidewalks.

**Recommendations:**

That the General Manager of Transportation Services review and report back to the Public Works Committee with recommendations on how to improve the level of service for snow removal to including, but not limited to; removing snow piles and windrows from where they are blocking on street parking spaces that both residents and local businesses depend on, fully clearing parking lanes on major arterial roads to prevent traffic bottlenecks, ensuring vital pedestrian access points along public sidewalks are kept clear at both major intersections and a TTC stops, enhancing both by-law enforcement and providing better communication to property owners on their responsibility to clear snow off of public sidewalks, across the City of Toronto and providing an equitable level of service across the city when it comes to removing windrows from driveways and sidewalk snow clearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh Matlow', written over a large, horizontal, oval-shaped scribble.

Josh Matlow  
Toronto City Councillor  
Ward 22 - St. Paul's