



To Chair Robinson and Members of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

November 20, 2016

RE: Maintenance Fees for Pavers on City Streets, Item PW17.7

Walk Toronto is concerned that the City proposal to charge a Paver Maintenance fee will lead to delays in repairing sidewalk pavers, with the result that walking conditions for pedestrians will be degraded. Repairs could be delayed because those responsible for installing the pavers would not feel responsible after having paid a maintenance fee to the City, and the City may take some time to arrange for the pavers to be repaired.

Also, the proposed maintenance fee of \$55 per square metre seems inadequate, given that the cost to buy and install sidewalk pavers is approximately \$100-\$200 per square metre, and that ongoing maintenance should include leveling uneven pavers, re-installing loose pavers, repairing utility cuts, and removing weeds from the cracks between pavers, raising the maintenance costs even higher.

We suggest it might be more effective to require those who wish to install pavers to sign an agreement taking responsibility for their maintenance. If timely, proper maintenance is not done, the City will do it and then charge the full cost to those responsible -- much like the way removal of graffiti vandalism is managed.

More fundamentally, we disagree with the suggestion that installation of sidewalk pavers improves walkability. Yes, some pavers, if the quality of materials and installation are high, create a safe, even walking surface and also improve the aesthetic environment of pedestrians. Examples of these installations may be found in the financial district, and along central Bloor Street. The City should encourage more installations such as these. But often, poor quality pavers are installed unevenly, and they settle and move even further out of alignment. This fragments usable sidewalk space, and looks neglected, too. Examples of this condition are far too common in Toronto.

Poured-in-place concrete sidewalks, when designed properly, can provide aesthetic appeal, such as in front of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum. They are also much easier to walk on, especially by seniors and those using mobility devices such as walkers. Furthermore, they can be installed faster and less expensively. So, more attention should be directed at using well-designed concrete sidewalks rather than pavers as they are usually used in most cases in this city. When pavers are used, only those of the highest quality and with secured maintenance should be allowed.

Thank-you.

John Fischer
On behalf of Walk Toronto