



The Annex Residents' Association

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St West 10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Matthew Green

Delivered via email : iec@toronto.ca

November 19, 2020

RE: IE17.7 Clearing the Path Towards a Safe and Accessible Winter

Dear Councillor James Pasternak, Chair, and Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

In its report to Council, the Toronto Office of Recovery & Rebuild, recommended that Council "consider developing a Winter City Plan to expand winter use of public parks, expand the CaféTO plan and pursue winter solutions for ActiveTO to increase resilience on a year-round basis."

Bravo! But the recommendation begs the question – how do Torontonians reach those parks and other outdoor venues?

Here in the Annex, our residents generally walk to and through our parks on foot. But because the City fails to clear our sidewalks in the winter, walking becomes a particularly hazardous activity for us all and a total impossibility for some.

As you know, the City plows the sidewalks for over 80% of Toronto yet abandons the remaining 20% of walkways that are located mostly in the downtown core. The rationale for leaving shoveling to the haphazard attempts of downtown property owners is that:

"In the older parts of Toronto, narrow sidewalks, obstructions and obstacles prevent plows from working safely."

In other words, it sounds like the City has prioritized the safety of snowplows over the safety, health, and wellbeing of its own citizens. Sidewalks that are difficult enough for pedestrians to negotiate under ideal conditions because of "obstructions and obstacles" are left to become even more hazardous in winter weather.

City Council and City staff are to be applauded for their efforts to ensure that residents continue to have opportunities for outdoor recreation through the winter months. However, it is crucial to ensure that these outdoor activities remain safe and accessible for all residents. IE17.7 recommendations, which are consistent with TORR's recommendation, will allow walking, running, and cycling to be safe activities for everyone in Toronto throughout the winter months.

It is for these reasons that the Annex Residents' Association strongly supports the recommendations of Councillors Matlow and Layton that City Council harmonize sidewalk clearing, clear bike lanes and cycle tracks, and develop a comprehensive snow clearing plan for all paved pedestrian and cycling pathways in Toronto's parks.

Yours sincerely,

Rita Bilerman
Chair, Annex Residents' Association

C: Mayor John Tory
Councillor Mike Layton
Councillor Josh Matlow
Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services
Becky Katz, Manager, Pedestrian and Cycling Unit, Transportation Services
Janie Romoff, General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division