

February 21, 2020

To Infrastructure and Environment Committee Chair and Members,

Re: Environmental Impacts and Auditing Our Road Salt Usage

In recent months, I have heard from many residents across my ward who are concerned about the environmental impacts of over-salting our roads. We also continue to get complaints that the amount of salt used by the City far exceed what is required. We know that salt can be harmful to our environment, our water, and wildlife in the city, as well as damaging to the City's infrastructure.

I am aware that Toronto has had a Salt Management Plan (SMP) in place since 2002, as required by Environment Canada, and that LiveGreen Toronto is working to raise awareness about excessive salt use on private property. I am also aware that we have been experimenting with environmentally friendly alternatives, such as beet juice, to work towards positive change while balancing the need to keep roads and sidewalks safe for users at a reasonable cost, with the environmental impacts.

All of these initiatives are good steps. However, with our acknowledgement of the Climate Emergency this past year, it is time to review our plans and actions as a City to determine if we are doing the best we can with regards to salt use. A review of this was previously requested with PW20.11 in 2017.

I want to ensure that road salt is being applied in accordance with the SMP, and to determine if there are additional actions we can take this winter to further minimize our impact on the environment by reducing our use of salt.

Recommendations

1. The General Manager, Transportation Services audit the existing road salt contracts to ensure that road salt is being applied in accordance with the Salt Management Plan in advance of issuing the tender for the next road salt contract
2. The General Manager, Transportation Services respond to a previously requested review of road salt and environmental impacts from 2017 (PW20.11) before the end of the second quarter of 2020.

Thank you,

Councillor Mike Layton
Ward 11, University-Rosedale