

Clearing the Path Towards a Safe and Accessible Winter

Date: November 2, 2020

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: City Council

Wards: Ward: All

CITY COUNCIL DECISION

City Council on September 30, October 1 and 2, 2020, referred Motion MM24.23 to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to provide an update on the Winter Maintenance Program Review that includes, but is not limited to, a plan on harmonizing sidewalk clearing standards for neighbourhoods in Midtown, East York and the downtown core, equipment procurement, and budget impact assessment to the October 6, 2020 Infrastructure and Environment Committee Meeting.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to investigate the appropriate equipment required to clear bike lanes and cycle tracks.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to develop a comprehensive snow clearing plan for all paved pedestrian and cycling pathways in Toronto's parks.

SUMMARY

Last winter, City Council called for improved standards for sidewalk snow maintenance due to valid concerns raised by residents that Toronto's current standards are completely insufficient in the downtown and centre of the City.

It is inequitable that residents in the former cities of North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke, and York receive sidewalk snow clearing while the majority of neighbourhoods in Old Toronto and East York do not. This is especially concerning given that the levels of pedestrian traffic are much higher in these areas. Residents of our City's inner suburban areas also frequently walk through downtown and midtown, and rightfully expect safe and accessible sidewalks too.

With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing us all to be outdoors, the City of Toronto must prepare this winter season for an increase in the use of our cycling infrastructure and pedestrian traffic on our City's streets, sidewalks, and park amenities.