



January 26, 2022

Mayor John Tory and City Councillors
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Sent as an email attachment

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

Re: Winter Snow Clearing and Road Safety

Last Monday, 36 centimetres of snow fell in our city. The City of Toronto's website makes clear that **all on-road bikeways are salted and/or plowed at about the same time as the adjacent road based on the level of service after a snowfall.** Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

A week after the snowstorm, Toronto residents were still posting images on Twitter of bike lanes such as Danforth Avenue, Sherbourne Street, and parts of the Richmond-Adelaide corridor that had not been cleared of snow. This failure to keep roads safe during the winter months --- which has also significantly prejudiced city residents travelling on foot --- is unacceptable and needs to be addressed on an urgent basis, especially during the first winter when all sidewalks are to be cleared by the city.

With transit usage considerably lower than normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto does not have the road capacity to accommodate everyone switching to car travel; indeed, discouraging driving and reducing GHG emissions is consistent with our TransformTO goal of Net Zero by 2040. City residents will not, however, consider biking year-round if bike lanes are not properly maintained, often forcing them to move into motor lanes, which is particularly hazardous on streetcar routes such as College. Some riders may even cycle on sidewalks, imperiling pedestrians.

The importance of properly maintaining and snow clearing in bike lanes is increasingly important for food delivery, much of it carried out in the central city at nighttime by essential workers on bikes.

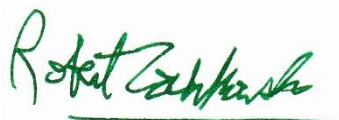
We have observed that clearing protected bike lanes of snow appears to be easier than on painted bike lanes, especially when those painted lanes are adjacent to parked cars. During snow clearing, the snow creates an additional buffer even where the cycle track protection mainly consists of bollards and/or cement curbs. Bike lanes located in the door zone, such as those on College Street (which will thankfully be upgraded to cycle tracks later this year) pose

an added danger when parking lanes are not properly cleared, often prompting drivers to illegally park in bike lanes. Toronto may want to look to cities such as Montréal which have used sweepers and brine for snow removal, a process more effective and environmentally friendly than plowing and salting.

We urge you to take immediate action to ensure that all bike lanes and sidewalks in the city are quickly cleared of snow, and that measures are taken to better prepare for future snowstorms. We also encourage you to ensure existing painted bike lanes get upgraded to protected cycle tracks to make winter clearing easier. These measures would help make our streets safe for everyone while helping to achieve the city goal of 75% of short trips travelled on foot, bike, or transit by 2030 as set out in TransformTO.

Sincerely,

Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition



Robert Zaichkowski

CC: Barbara Gray (General Manager, Transportation Services)
Vincent Sferrazza (Director, Transportation Operations and Maintenance)