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March 23, 2022

Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: IE28.11 – January 16 and 17, 2022 Major Snow Event, Post-Operational Report

Dear Chair and Members,

I am writing this letter to respectfully request your consideration of the accompanying recommendation to item IE28.11, which requests Transportation Services staff to report back on an Extreme Winter Response Plan in the first quarter of 2023 following the Major Snow Event in January this year.

We can reasonably expect snow again in 2022. It is critical that an extreme weather response plan be put in place as soon as possible as waiting until 2023 is just too long for Toronto residents.

While the City undertook extensive efforts in its snow clearing and removal operations during the major snow event, the latter brought to light significant concerns regarding safety and accessibility as the current service delivery standards for a major snow event have exposed a number of gaps and challenges for our residents, particularly those living with mobility challenges, including seniors.

Further, the current standards for snow clearing and removal operations left too many streets and sidewalks impassable and hazardous. The period of time it took to complete these operations left many without safe options to navigate their communities. In fact, too many sidewalks, streets and bike lanes across our city had still not been cleared weeks after the event. Our most vulnerable road users bore the brunt of this as many were left homebound or forced to commute in conditions that pushed pedestrians into live lanes of traffic. Residents raised concerns regarding the lack of winter maintenance of community safety zones, local sidewalks, roads, and cycling infrastructure, access to public transit, and a dearth of windrow clearing.

It is imperative that a first phase of the plan is put in place before next winter so that the City of Toronto is prepared to provide the quality of service delivery Torontonians expect in the event of another extreme snow storm.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services to report back to the Infrastructure and Environment committee on immediate first steps of an Extreme Winter Weather Response Plan in July 2022 with a full report in the first quarter of 2023.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Matlow', with a large, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Josh Matlow
City Councillor
Toronto – St. Paul's
www.joshmatlow.ca