



Safe streets
Healthy city
Vibrant voice

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March 28, 2022

Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

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

Dear Mayor Tory and members of City Council,

Thank you for your leadership and for the progress the City has made toward offering healthy, affordable, and zero-emission transportation options during the pandemic. We are now seeking your leadership to ensure that the City's network of cycling infrastructure across the city remains accessible and safe year-round.

As a city that experiences four seasons, paired with the growing incidence of extreme weather events, the City's policies, programs and procedures need to be able to adapt quickly to the changing seasonal weather. Despite having a comprehensive snow and ice clearing plan that is meant to prioritize the safety and movement of everyone, January's major snow event exposed barriers and challenges for the city's most vulnerable such as people walking or cycling, those living with mobility and visual challenges, parents with children, and seniors.

The city's bike lanes and sidewalks went uncleared for as long as 3 weeks. The bike lanes and sidewalks were so inaccessible and treacherous that people were seen on the roads; scenes of parents trying to scale snowbanks with strollers at pedestrian crossings became commonplace across the city. TTC bus stops were unclear or inaccessible. For almost a month, mobility in Toronto was safe for only those privileged enough to own a car.

We are writing in support of the City Council's request to consult with internal and external stakeholders on the preparation of an Extreme Winter Weather Response Plan. As a community stakeholder who would like to be consulted with the preparation of this plan, we would like to bring forward a few recommendations for consideration to ensure that this plan is prepared with equity of access and mobility for all road users top of mind:

1. The City should prioritize vulnerable road users and apply an equity lens by:

- a. Prioritizing school zones and active modes of transportation for snow clearance for people walking, cycling, and taking transit (including Bike Share Toronto) to keep Toronto moving safely;
 - b. Adopting snow-clearing accessible design guidelines for all winter weather;
 - c. Ensuring bike lanes and sidewalks are cleared to bare pavement;
 - d. Prohibiting City snow plows outright from storing snow and ice on sidewalks, bike lanes, transit stops, and pedestrian rights of way;
 - e. Ensuring traffic signal buttons are accessible for people walking and cycling;
 - f. Prohibiting on-street parking adjacent to bike lanes or sidewalks to allow for snow storage until snow removal has occurred, and ticketing and towing vehicles obstructing snow clearing from bike lanes and sidewalks
2. Assess and evaluate the impact associated with the cost and distribution of resources associated with the January major snow event, including the number of traffic collisions and visits to the ER
 3. Establish and communicate a process for the proactive inspection of snow removal by contractors and clarify accountability when service levels have not been met;
 4. Procure more specialized equipment to facilitate the snow removal of bike lanes, sidewalks, transit stops and Bike Share stations;
 5. Consider a coordinated approach that prioritizes snow clearing resources to active transportation, public transit, and emergency vehicle access while discouraging non-essential vehicular travel when a Significant Winter Weather Event is declared

We need predictable and consistent snow clearing and maintenance on all of our roadways and sidewalks. When people drive, they expect nothing less; and receive nothing less. Cyclists and pedestrians deserve as much. The City recognizes the importance of providing people with accessible and healthy alternatives to driving in order to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis.

As more cyclists take advantage of Toronto's expanded cycling network and Bike Share program, the City of Toronto must ensure that the streets and sidewalks are accessible, passable and safe for vulnerable road users, all year-round.

Sincerely,



Keagan Gartz
Executive Director

Cycle Toronto is a member-supported charitable organization that works to make Toronto a healthy, safe and vibrant cycling city for all. We are focused on advocacy, education and encouragement, as we work to shape policy and infrastructure, and build community to transform our city's cycling culture.

