



Safe streets
Healthy city
Vibrant voice

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March 17, 2023
Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: IE2.8 - Request for First Year Review of Winter Maintenance Contracts and Addressing Obstructed Sidewalks with Snow and Ice

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

Cycle Toronto supports the recommendations of Councillors Saxe And Carroll to conduct a comprehensive review of winter maintenance services for the 2022-2023 season. Too often, snow cleared from roadways is placed on sidewalks and bike lanes, making travelling difficult for even the most able bodied person, and rendering safe passage insurmountable for those in wheelchairs, pushing strollers or those living with physical and mobility issues.

We understand that road clearing is a huge undertaking that takes multiple rounds of salting and plowing. Snow removal standards should prioritize clearing sidewalks, bike lanes and transit stops over vehicular travel lanes. Safe conditions for a 2-ton vehicle aren't the same as those for a person on a bike. In 2021, City Council approved a controversial deal awarding new snow-clearing contracts worth \$893 million over a period of 10 years to just two companies. Aside from the concerns many had that the bid process was not as competitive as it should have been, we are more concerned with the accountability and penalty structure set out when these third party contractors fail to meet the service levels set out to them.

In addition to supporting the request for a comprehensive review of winter maintenance services for the 2022-2023 season, with the objective of preventing city maintenance staff, contractors and property owners from dumping snow and ice onto sidewalks and bike lanes, we are calling on the city to facilitate snow clearing efforts by:

1. Issuing a moratorium on all non-emergency vehicular traffic following a weather event that includes 5 cm of snow or more to help expedite snow clearing without hindrance of traffic and subsequent traffic collisions which consume emergency services.
 - a. In addition to expediting the clearing of streets and roads, the city's emergency services resources will be less strained dealing with collisions that could have been avoided.

2. Restricting overnight on-street parking so that roads are able to be cleared from curb-to-curb overnight to ensure that people are able to get around safely as they head out to work, school or their appointments.

With every winter comes the snow. Winter is an annual weather event that shouldn't take the city's snow clearance operations by surprise. People should be able to walk, ride or roll safely throughout the year, regardless of the season. If we want people and businesses to thrive all year long, we must prioritize the movement of people over vehicular travel.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Alison Stewart
Interim Co-Executive Director, Advocacy and Public Policy
Cycle Toronto

Cycle Toronto is a member-supported charity that works to make Toronto a safe, healthy, and vibrant cycling city for all.