



# **Survey on the Toronto Snow Removal Plan**

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**Survey Summary Report**  
May 2024



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## Overview

The City of Toronto is updating plans for snow removal to make sure roads, sidewalks and bikeways are accessible for everyone. Public feedback was sought to help the City confirm alignment with community values, needs and priorities.

Specifically, the City was looking to hear from vulnerable road users in Toronto, including people with disabilities of various kinds which affect their mobility, people who walk frequently, and people who cycle.

An online survey captured opinions on this topic in May 2024. The survey included:

- Questions about respondent demographics and travel habits
- A brief explanation of how snow is removed after major snowstorms
- Draft key elements of the proposed updated response plan
  - Guiding principles
  - Prioritized types of locations
  - Featured actions
- Questions about levels of agreement with the principles, prioritized locations, and other feedback and suggestions

See a copy of the survey in *Appendix 5*. This report summarizes the outreach, participation and results from the survey.

## Outreach

The Survey on the Toronto Snow Removal Plan was open for responses from May 1 to 22, 2024. Survey invitation messages were sent on May 1, 2024 to 185 contacts, primarily to accessibility related stakeholder organizations, as well as some cycling and road safety advocacy groups (see *Appendix 1 – Invited Organizations*). A reminder email was sent on May 15. The invitation messages were also shared by some organization contacts to their networks.





## Participation

The survey received a total of 239 completed responses (i.e. included responses to key opinion question #8). Respondents were self-selecting, covering a full range of adult ages, genders and household incomes, from across the city (see *Appendix 2 - Survey Participant Demographics*).

- 175 (75%) of the respondents travel by public transit, which means significant travel by walking to reach their departure point
- 135 (49%) of the respondents travel by bicycle.
- 51 (19%) of the respondents indicated they have a mobility disability (i.e. walk assisted such as using a cane for balance, walker, rollator, caregiver; use a wheelchair or assistive mobility device; and/or walk with a white cane or guide dog for sight loss).







See charts of responses to travel behaviour question #6 and #7 below.

## 6. How do you typically travel as a pedestrian?

	Count	% of responses	%
Walking – unassisted	189		80%
Walking – assisted (examples: cane for balance, walker, rollator, caregiver)	23		10%
Wheelchair or assistive mobility device	20		9%
Walking – with a white cane or guide dog (for sight loss)	16		7%

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## 7. How else do you typically travel in the city? Select all that apply.

	Count	% of responses	%
Public transit	175		74%
Private vehicle (as a driver or passenger)	135		57%
Bicycle	118		50%
Taxi / Private transportation company (examples: Uber, Lyft)	61		26%
Wheel-Trans	29		12%
Other (please explain):	20		8%

N 237

Representatives of 21 unique organizations self-identified when completing the survey. There organizations were in the following categories:







- 10 disability and/or hospital
- 8 cycling advocacy
- 1 walking advocacy
- 2 school boards

*See list of organizations represented in Appendix 3.*

Overall, the number of responses exceeded expectations for this limited and focused public consultation.







## Results

On question #8 “Do you agree that these principles reflect how you would like to see snow removal activity prioritized?” 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed.

	Count	% of responses	%
Strongly Agree	124		52%
Somewhat Agree	87		36%
Neutral	16		7%
Somewhat Disagree	6		3%
Strongly Disagree	3		1%
Not sure	3		1%

N 239

On questions #9 “Do you agree the location priorities are reasonable?” 89% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed.

	Count	% of responses	%
Strongly Agree	141		60%
Somewhat Agree	67		29%
Neutral	9		4%
Somewhat Disagree	9		4%
Strongly Disagree	6		3%
Not sure	2		1%

N 234

Among the 25 organization representatives (21 unique organizations) there was no disagreement on the principles (question #8) and location priorities (question #9).

Support was also very strong among people with disabilities with 94% in agreement with the principles (question #8) and 96% in agreement with the location priorities (question #9).

Of the 19 respondents who disagreed with either of the two main opinion questions (question #8 and #9), there was no clear trend in their demographic or stakeholder types, compared to the overall survey participant profiles.

Key question #10 was “After reading the above guidelines, principles and actions, what feedback and suggestions would you like to share with the City about snow removal?”

Analysis of the open text responses to this question are summarized as follows (with a focus on opinions of people with disabilities and other vulnerable road users):

- People with disabilities face a significant amount of distress because of snow ploughed which left piles of snow around intersections, crosswalks and sidewalks in general. Respondents expressed these areas should be a top snow clearing and removal priority for the City.
- Residents described snow piles as “hills” and “mountains” that were often difficult to navigate around.

- It is imperative to remove snow, as well as plowed piles of snow from Wheels-trans pick-up and drop-off locations, streetcar stops, as well as the accessible entrances/exits in subway stations. Some respondents described their experiences as feeling “trapped” in their homes, as well as being “held hostage” as a result of having difficulty accessing transit due to snow accumulation.
- Many respondents suggest snow removal from bicycle lanes as a high priority, along with sidewalks and transit. Respondents expressed that when snow is not removed from bike lanes quickly, cyclists will ride on sidewalks, which creates safety issues for pedestrians. Respondents that cycle highlighted that when bicycle lanes are not ploughed, they are forced to use the roadway with cars, causing safety concerns.
- Respondents want to see a quicker turn around time for removal of snow and snow piles in priority locations.
- A few responses suggested that the City devise a system that would provide residents with real time updates about the status of snow clearance on sidewalks as well as transit stops.
- One respondent who is blind noted that piles of snow can sometimes be a barrier to reaching the audible crossing signal buttons which they rely on.

Among those few who disagreed with either the principles (question #8) or location priorities (question #9), there was no consistent trend in the open text responses to question #10. A few themes that were repeated include the following:

- Multiple respondents expressed that the use of excessive amounts of salt on the sidewalks, especially at TTC stops, is not environmentally friendly.
- Some respondents said bike lanes should not be a priority for snow removal, while others expressed that they should be a priority.

Overall, the responses to the survey expressed strong support for the intentions and objectives of the Snow Removal Plan, while also reminding the City of the high expectations for effective and prompt clearing of snow from transit stops, sidewalks and bikeways.

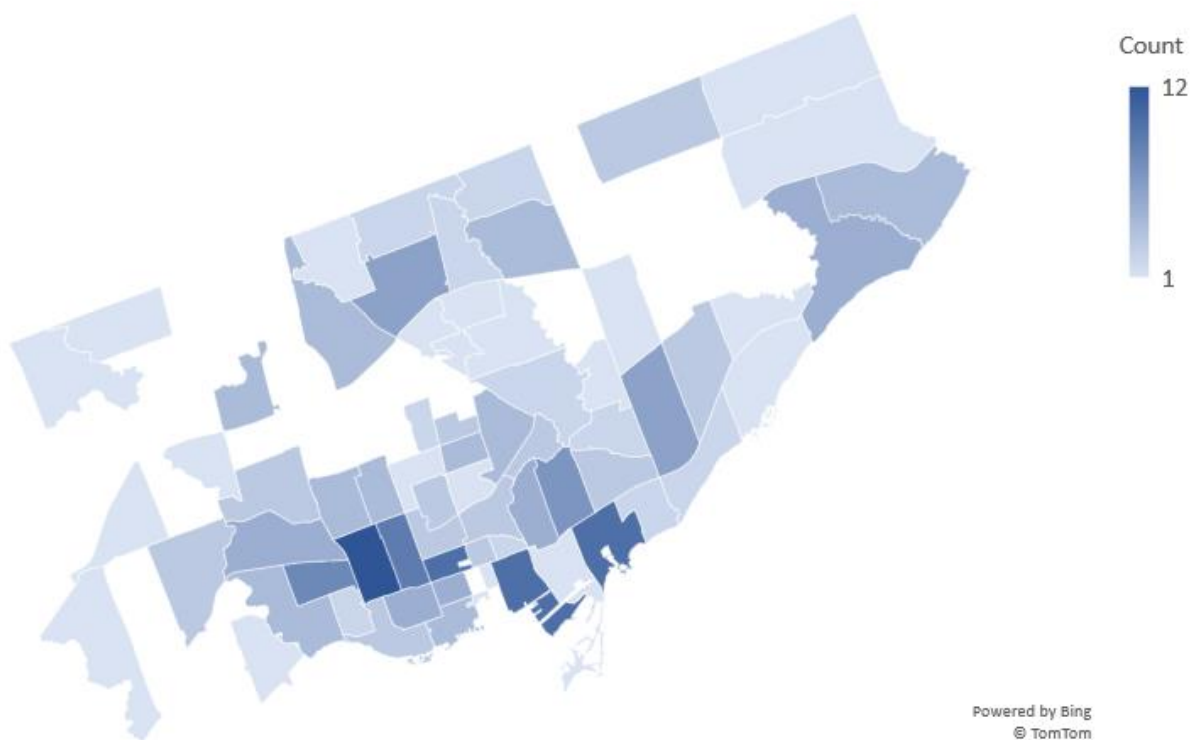
## Appendix 1- Invited Organizations

- 32 Spokes
- 8-80 Cities
- Access Independent Living Services
- AccessNow
- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC)
- AODA Alliance
- ARCH Disability Law Centre
- Arthritis Society Canada
- ASE Community Foundation, for Black Canadians with Disabilities
- Balance for Blind Adults
- Baycrest
- Bells on Kingston/Danforth
- Betty Dion Enterprises Ltd.
- Bicycle Friendly Communities
- Biking Lawyer
- Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST)
- Bridgepoint, Sinai Health
- Canadian Abilities Foundation
- Canadian Accessibility Network at Carleton University
- Canadian Angelman Syndrome Society
- Canadian Association for Community Living
- Canadian Association for Retired Persons (CARP)
- Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE)
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
- Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS)
- Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance (CCHA)
- Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) Toronto Visionaries
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)
- Canadian Deafblind Association
- Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP)
- Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Canadian Pain Society (CPS)
- Center for Connected Communities
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)
- Charlie's FreeWheels
- Chronic Pain Association of Canada (CPAC)
- Citizens With Disabilities - Ontario
- City of Toronto - City Clerk's - Election Services
- City of Toronto - PFR - Community Development Outreach
- Community Head Injury Resource Services (CHIRS)
- Community Living (Ontario & Toronto)
- Community Living Toronto
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD)
- Crohn's & Colitis Canada
- CultureLink Bike Hub
- Cycle Don Valley Midtown
- Cycle Toronto
- Cycle Toronto Spadina-Fort York
- Cycle Toronto University-Rosedale
- Cystic Fibrosis Canada
- Danforth-Kingston 4 All
- Deafblind Network of Ontario (DBNO)
- DeafBlind Ontario Services
- Diabetes Canada
- Disability Justice Network of Ontario
- Disability Solutions
- Diversability Development Organization (DDO)
- Doctors for Safe Cycling
- Easter Seals Ontario
- Empowerment Council (CAMH)
- Epilepsy Toronto
- Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario
- Etobicoke South Cycling Committee
- FlashAbility Access
- Francobus
- Friends and Families for Safe Streets
- Gateway Bike Hub
- George Brown College - School of Deaf and Deafblind Studies
- Gig Workers United CUPW
- Guide Dog Users of Canada
- Gyaldem Cycling Collective
- Harmony Place Support Services
- Heart & Stroke
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation
- Human Space
- Huntington Society of Canada
- Hydrocephalus Canada
- Inclusion Canada (formerly Canadian Association for Community Living)
- Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (IDRR) Ontario Tech University

- Lupus Canada
- ManDem Cycling Club
- March of Dimes Canada
- Margaret's Housing & Community Support Services
- Marsha Forest Centre (MFC)
- Metrolinx
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre Accessibility & Inclusion programs
- Millennium Support & Care Group
- MS Canada (formerly MS Society of Canada)
- Muscular Dystrophy Canada
- North Yorkers for Disabled Inc.
- Obesity Canada
- OCAD University, Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC)
- Ontario Brain Injury Association
- Ontario Disability Coalition (ODC)
- Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)
- Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy (OFCP)
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC)
- Osteoporosis Canada
- Our Greenway
- PACE Independent Living
- Parkdale High Park Bikes
- Parkinson Canada
- Pegasus Community of Adults with Special Needs
- People First of Canada
- REACH Canada
- Reena
- Rick Hansen Foundation
- Rooted in Rights
- Saddle Sisters
- Safehaven Project for Community Living
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- Scarborough Cycles
- Scarborough Cycles - Bike Hub
- Seneca College (Newnham Campus)
- Seniors for Social Action (Ontario)
- Share the Road
- Smart Commute
- Social Planning Toronto
- SPH Planning and Consulting
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario
- Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
- StopGap Foundation
- The Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Toronto Chapter
- The Bike Brigade
- The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)
- The Disabled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada)
- The Drive Side
- Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Toronto Bicycling Network
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto Centre Cyclists
- Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition
- Toronto District School Board
- Toronto East Cyclists
- Toronto Metropolitan University - School of Disability Studies
- Toronto Metropolitan University - School of Disability Studies
- Toronto Public Library
- Toronto Student Transportation Group
- Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)
- Transportation Options
- TTC - ACAT
- University of Toronto - International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation
- University of Toronto - Scarborough - Department of Human Geography
- University of Toronto - Scarborough, Centre for Global Disability Studies
- Variety Village
- Walk and Cycle York South-Weston
- Walk Toronto
- Wallace Emerson community traffic group
- War Amps
- Ward 14 Bikes
- Women's Cycling Network
- WoodGreen
- Working for Change
- York University - Critical Disability Studies

## Appendix 2 - Survey Participant Demographics

### Survey Respondents by Postal Code



### Age

	Count	% of responses	%
Under 18 years of age	0		
18-24	11	<div></div>	5%
25-34	32	<div></div>	14%
35-44	56	<div></div>	24%
45-54	44	<div></div>	19%
55-64	45	<div></div>	19%
65-74	27	<div></div>	11%
75-84	15	<div></div>	6%
85+	2	<div></div>	1%
Prefer not to answer	5	<div></div>	2%





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### Parent or Caregiver of Children

Yes: 20%








No: 80%

## Gender

	Count	% of responses	%
Woman	117		54%
Man	79		37%
Trans woman	0		
Trans man	0		
Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)	5		2%
Two-Spirit	0		
Other, please specify:	0		
Prefer not to answer	15		7%

N 216

## Household Income Before Taxes

	Count	% of responses	%
0 - \$29,999	16		7%
\$30,000-\$49,999	14		7%
\$50,000-\$69,999	19		9%
\$70,000-\$99,999	31		14%
\$100,000-149,999	30		14%
\$150,000 or more	44		20%
Don't know / Prefer not to answer	61		28%

N 215

## **Appendix 3 - Organizations Represented in Survey Results**

### **Cycling Advocacy**

- Bike brigade
- Cycle Don Valley Midtown
- Cycle Toronto
- Saddle Sisters of High Park
- Women's Cycling Network
- Yonge4All
- Pedaal Inc
- The Biking Lawyer

### **Disability and/or Hospital**

- Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
- Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Access Alliance
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- Hydrocephalus Canada
- North Yorkers for Disabled Persons Inc.
- Ontario Disability Coalition
- Pegasus Community Project
- The Neighborhood Organization TNO
- Easter Seals

### **Walking Advocacy**

- Walk Toronto

### **School Boards**

- Toronto Catholic School Board
- Toronto District School Board

# Appendix 4 – Survey Form

## Toronto Snow Removal Plan Survey



**The City of Toronto is working to update our plans for snow removal to make sure our roads, sidewalks and bikeways are accessible for everyone. Your feedback on our plans will help us make sure we are aligned with community values, needs and priorities.**

We are looking to hear from vulnerable road users in Toronto, including people with disabilities of various kinds which affect their mobility, people who walk frequently, and people who cycle.

The survey should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. No personal information will be asked. Please do NOT include any personal information in your responses, such as names, addresses, phone numbers or email. If you are responding on behalf of an organization or association, you may provide your name and the name of the organization or association.

**Survey closes:** May 22, 2024

Thank you for participating. If you have any questions or difficulties completing this survey, or require the survey in a different format, please contact

Jason Diceman, Senior Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit  
City of Toronto  
Phone: 647-883-0648  
Email: [Jason.Diceman@toronto.ca](mailto:Jason.Diceman@toronto.ca)

To Begin...

1. Are you responding as an anonymous individual or as a representative of an organization or association?
  - Individual

- Representative of an organization or association
- Both

**[PN: IF ANSWERED REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ORGANIZATION OR BOTH]**

As a representative of an organization, please answer the following:

2. Name of the organization which you are representing: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your role in the organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your email (for potential follow-up and future engagement from the City of Toronto):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**[PN: ALL RESPONDENTS]**

**About You**

These questions help the City understand who this survey reached, and whose feedback we may be missing. Responses to these questions are voluntary.

3. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18 years of age
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. Please provide the first three characters of your home postal code (e.g. M5H).

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a parent or caregiver of children under 18?

- Yes
- No

6. How do you typically travel as a pedestrian?

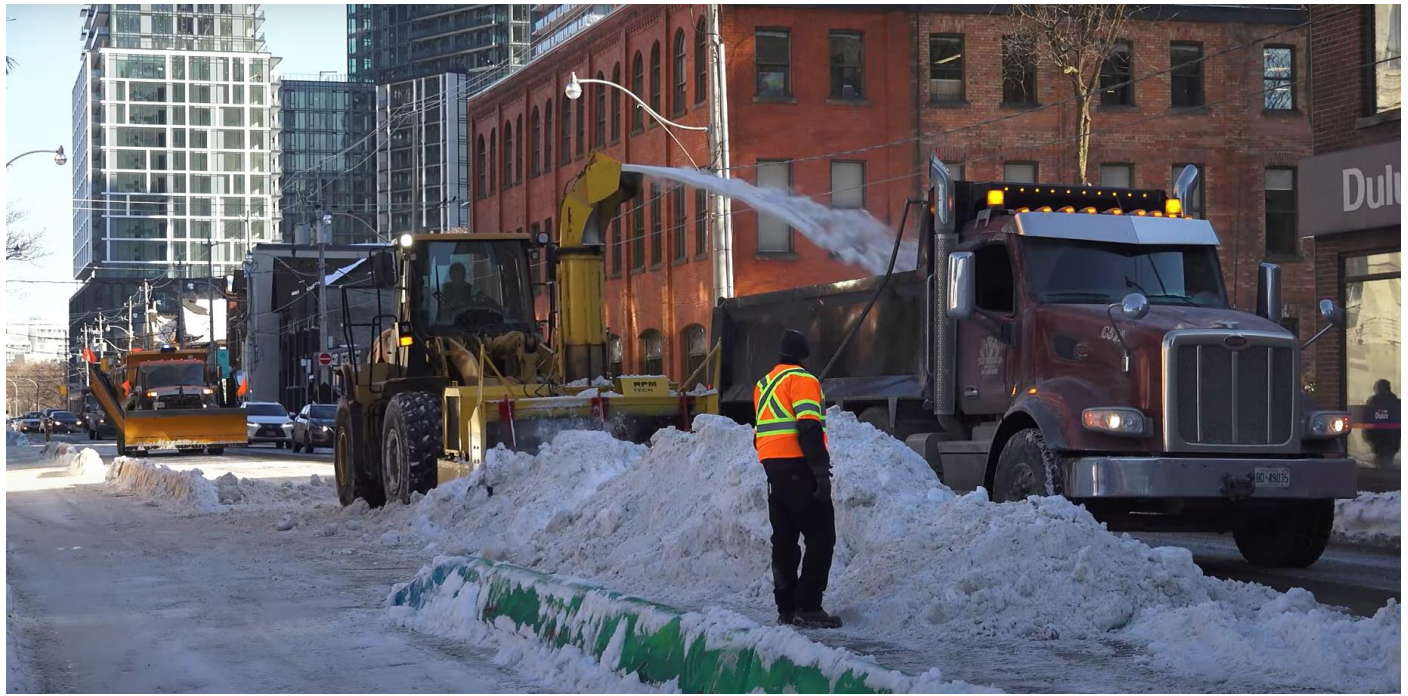
- ☐ Walking – unassisted
- ☐ Walking – with a white cane or guide dog (for sight loss)
- ☐ Walking – assisted (examples: cane for balance, walker, rollator, caregiver)
- ☐ Wheelchair or assistive mobility device

7. How else do you typically travel in the city? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Wheel-Trans
- ☐ Public transit
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Private vehicle (as a driver or passenger)
- ☐ Taxi / Private transportation company (examples: Uber, Lyft)
- ☐ Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Background on snow removal:

### **Snow Removal After Major Storms**



*Snow piles being removed from Richmond Avenue*

Toronto receives approximately 130 cm of snow annually and Transportation Services has a comprehensive plan to clear snow and ice, with operations focused on salting and plowing of roads, sidewalks and bikeways.

On rare occasions, Toronto receives large amounts of snow. After standard snow clearing is mostly completed, large snow piles are left which can restrict traffic flow, interfere with the movement of pedestrians, people who cycle, and vehicles, and obstruct sightlines. When this happens, the City undertakes snow **removal** operations. Large machines remove snow piles from prioritized locations and take it to designated sites for storage and melting.

## Draft Guiding Principles

The City is working to update its plan for responding to major snow storms with a vision to better provide for safe travel after major snowstorms and ensure clear routes on sidewalks and streets as quickly as possible. But we can never remove everything at once so decisions must be made about how to prioritize the snow removal activities. Below are draft guiding principles about how the City should organize snow removal.

**Safety:** Facilitate removal of snow on travel paths in an equitable manner that maintains the integrity of infrastructure and minimizes emergency situations caused by snow hazards.

**Access:** Ensure an equitable way or means to get to emergency and essential services for all users of the right-of-way.

**Mobility:** Facilitate safe movement for all modes of transport in a manner that supports equity deserving groups throughout the year.

**Environment:** Mitigate operational impacts to the environment while facilitating safe travel paths. Preserve snow covering on natural landscaping (trees, grass, planters etc.) to allow the benefits of snow on permeable ground cover.

**Efficiency:** Achieve a productive operational process that mitigates increased costs and time.

**Communication:** Effective and equitable communication with the public, City staff, and partner agencies about expectations for operational outcomes, respective responsibilities to facilitate efficient snow removal, and coordination among service providers.

8. Do you agree that these principles reflect how you would like to see snow removal activity prioritized?
- ☐ Strongly Agree
  - ☐ Somewhat Agree
  - ☐ Neutral
  - ☐ Somewhat Disagree
  - ☐ Strongly Disagree
  - ☐ *Not sure*

Based on the principles described above, below are the proposed types of locations where snow removal should be prioritized (in no particular order):

- On main street sidewalks, to provide safe movement and access to services, and to support transit use and equity needs (including for people living with disabilities, and gender equity needs)
- At surface transit stops, including streetcar stops, and bus stops to provide safe access to transit service
- At hospitals and Emergency Services stations to support continuity of emergency services
- At school bus loading zones to provide safe access to schools
- On bike lanes to facilitate safe and passable cycling infrastructure
- On roads with limited snow storage capacity, recognizing that certain roads have more snow storage capacity.

9. Do you agree the location priorities are reasonable?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ *Not sure*

The updated snow removal operations plan will also feature the following actions:

- enhance focus on sidewalks to provide accessibility and support transit use (as every transit trip requires some pedestrian travel);
- account for the increased kilometres of bike lanes including physically separated bike lanes;
- clear snowbanks in key areas such as streetcar stops, and school bus loading zones;
- facilitate access at hospitals and Emergency Services;
- phased approach to prioritize narrow roads with little existing snow storage capacity, recognizing that larger roads and those with boulevards have more capacity for temporary snow storage;
- update by-laws to enable earlier public communication and road use restrictions when a major storm is forecast;
- consider how the City of Toronto will best optimize the resources and capacity of the winter contractors and in-house staff to ensure an efficient, timely and effective response to a major snow event.

10. After reading the above guidelines, principles and actions, what feedback and suggestions would you like to share with the City about snow removal?

[open ended multiline]

### **More About You**

The last few questions ask about who is filling out this form. These questions help the City understand who this survey reached, and whose feedback we may be missing.

Responses to these questions are voluntary.

11. What language do you prefer speaking?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

12. What best describes your gender? Gender identity is the gender that people identify with or how they perceive themselves, which may be different from their sex assigned at birth.

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Trans woman
- ☐ Trans man
- ☐ Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

13. What was your total household income before taxes last year? Your best estimate is fine.

- ☐ 0 - \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000-\$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000-\$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000-\$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000-149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 or more

Don't know / Prefer not to answer

**Your responses have been registered!**

On behalf of the City of Toronto, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is important.

Learn more about

- [City Services for People with Disabilities](#)
- [Clearing Snow & Ice from Toronto's Roads & Sidewalks](#)
- [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#)

The survey will be available until May 22, 2024.

Invite others to complete this survey by sharing this link:

<http://toronto.ca/SnowRemovalSurvey>