



Municipal VU Consulting Inc.

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Briefing Note: Input Opportunity on Winter Maintenance Review at TAAC June 23, 2025

To: Councillor Jamal Myers (Chair, Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee)

From: Municipal VU Consulting Inc.

Date: June 19, 2025

Purpose

As part of City Council's direction to review Toronto's response to the February 2025 winter storms, the City Manager has engaged Municipal VU Consulting Inc. (MVU) to conduct an independent, expert-led assessment of the City's winter maintenance program.

As part of the process of gathering stakeholder insights into the winter maintenance program review, MVU would like to gather direct input from the upcoming TAAC committee meeting. MVU is not opting to present at this time, but rather the team would like to listen to discussion on some of the challenges from the TAAC perspective.

Background

In February 2025, Toronto experienced three significant snow events within one week, resulting in over 50 cm of snow accumulation. The City declared a Major Snowstorm Condition, activated emergency response protocols, and mobilized internal and contracted resources. Despite these efforts, the response faced major challenges, and the public expressed frustration with what was perceived as a slow and inconsistent cleanup.

City Council considered Item EX21.1 on March 26 and 27, 2025 and adopted that the City Manager conduct a review of Toronto's Winter Maintenance Program. MVU was selected to carry out the review.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX21.1>

Also, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee considered Item IE22.12 on June 11, 2025, and the Committee Decision was to "refer this request to the City Manager for inclusion in the review of the City Winter Maintenance Operations Review."

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE22.12>

Important information from Item 2025,DI11.4, considered by the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) on May 9, 2025, is relevant to the MVU assessment. From that motion:

"The City of Toronto's inadequate and excruciatingly slow snow removal process following February's major snowfall had a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities and



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left our streets and sidewalks impassable for far too long. For people with disabilities, this failure is not just an inconvenience—it is a barrier to mobility, independence, and safety...Toronto has made commitments to accessibility and inclusivity, yet every winter, the city's inability to clear snow promptly forces many residents into isolation. It is unacceptable that in a major metropolitan city, basic accessibility needs are continuously overlooked. A more efficient, proactive, and accountable snow removal strategy that prioritizes accessibility for all residents is needed."

Scope and Timeline

The project will assess the City's storm preparedness, response operations, contractor performance, sidewalk and priority route maintenance, interdepartmental coordination, and communications. It also examines broader program design, including resource levels, service standards, and accountability frameworks. Key deliverables include:

- **Interim Report (July 2025):** Summary of findings to date and options to support 2025–26 winter season planning.
- **Final Report (September 2025):** Full set of recommendations and an implementation roadmap to inform future budgets and operational changes.

Consultant Role

MVU was retained based on its expertise in municipal infrastructure, winter operations, emergency response, and governance. The team's approach is collaborative, evidence-based, and aligned with Council's concerns. They are working independently from City staff but engaging closely with all relevant divisions and stakeholders. In addition to extensive analysis and benchmarking against other cities, the team is conducting interviews with staff, leadership, contractors, and stakeholders such as TAAC, to ensure a comprehensive review is achieved.

We thank you for your time and participation in this important process. Your input will help strengthen Toronto's winter storm readiness and service to residents.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Harnum', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jim Harnum, CET, MBA,

President of Municipal VU Consulting Inc.

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