



March 18, 2025

Toronto City Hall
Executive Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2
Re: EX21.1 Review of Toronto's Winter Maintenance Program

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and committee members,

The Walk Toronto Steering Committee strongly supports all recommendations identified in the request to review winter maintenance operations.

Walk Toronto is encouraged by the mayor's acknowledgement of the frustrations of citizens across the city travelling by multiple modes. At Walk Toronto, we would like particular attention paid to the winter maintenance of sidewalks. Everyone in the city experiences the sidewalk, or lack thereof, at some point in their journey, even if travelling by vehicle.

After significant snowfall, and even when there are relatively insignificant snowfall or ice conditions, people using sidewalks are vulnerable to injury and death. Less than a millimetre of snow can cover black ice. Someone slipping on snow or black ice on the sidewalk could break a bone or suffer a concussion. When a person slips at an intersection, they risk being hit or run over by a vehicle. These risks are significantly higher when snowfall accumulation increases.

During our last snowfall it was shocking to see people walking in the middle of arterial roads because sidewalks were blocked entirely, attempting to get to bus stops and other destinations as vehicles roared past them at speeds significantly greater than posted limits. A week after the snowfall, many bus stops were cleared to allow access to the buses. This bus stop clearing is irrelevant when access to that clearing requires clambering over massive snow drifts or walking along a plowed road in the face of fast-moving vehicles.

Furthermore, the most vulnerable in Toronto often use sidewalks more frequently than people who have access to a vehicle: children, seniors, and people with mobility issues. These vulnerable users are at higher risk for injury and death simply because of their increased need to be on sidewalks for most of their journeys, combined with the challenges they face navigating sidewalks even at the best of times.

We share the concern that parked cars are hindering snow-clearing initiatives and reiterate our general belief that vehicles, especially parked cars, should never have greater priority than a human navigating our city's sidewalks.

Sincerely,

Lee Scott, Member, Steering Committee, Walk Toronto info@walktoronto.ca

cc. Cllrs Ainslie, Bravo, Carroll, Colle, Fletcher, Malik, Matlow, McKelvie, Perks