



April 8, 2025
Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Re: IE20.12 Breathing Easier During Construction

Dear Chair McKelvie and committee members,

Though often considered "non-toxic," nuisance dust from construction can have a range of negative effects on pedestrians, and pose serious health and safety concerns. Therefore, Walk Toronto supports Councillor Dianne Saxe's recommendation for a plan to reduce dust from commercial and multi-residential construction and demolition including potential amendments to by-laws and the Municipal Code to allow for relevant and meaningful enforcements for non-compliance.

As mentioned in Councillor Saxe's recommendation, construction dust can have a wide range of health impacts. Unfortunately these are most likely to be found in vulnerable populations including children, the elderly and pregnant women. Dust particles, especially fine ones, can be inhaled and irritate the nose, throat, and lungs causing coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, wheezing. People with asthma, allergies, or other respiratory conditions may experience flare-ups. Additionally, dust particles can cause itchy, red, or watery eyes. None of these make for appealing conditions for walking.

For pedestrians walking through a construction area without adequate dust control measures, the impacts can greatly decrease physical safety and general comfort. Nuisance dust from construction sites can reduce visibility near construction sites, increasing the risk of pedestrian accidents. And, dust in the air can create a gritty feeling, dry mouth, dirty clothes or belongings creating unpleasant environments to

walk through. Local businesses may also be impacted negatively as these impacts can lead to decrease in pedestrian traffic with people avoiding walking near the site, and visiting the area altogether.

At a time when Toronto needs to get people out of their cars and start using active or public transit to decrease congestion and our carbon footprint, the City must create environments that make people able to walk. Given the many negative impacts of construction-related dust—on health, comfort, safety, and local businesses—we believe that stronger regulation and enforcement are necessary and an important component to creating a walkable city.

Walk Toronto urges the Committee to support Councillor Saxe's recommendations. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to seeing Toronto lead as a city that prioritizes walkability, public health, and the well-being of all residents.

Sincerely,

Susan Bakshi

Walk Toronto Steering Committee