

June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018



**Dear Councilor Farrell, Chair & Co-Chair of Transit & Transportation Councilor Keating & Councilor Gondek**

**Letter of Support for TT2018-0467  
Improving Accessibility and Reducing Injuries through Snow & Ice Control**

Members of the Disability Action Hall were pleased to be asked to take part in the public consultation and members who could not come today also contributed to the "East Village Booklet" submission in support of a walk-able snow and ice removal strategy. We applaud council going into emergency reserves earlier this year to help address pedestrian safety and ensure we all stay connected. Many of our members either fell or knew someone who was hospitalized or socially isolated for more than three days this winter.

The options presented are improving our ability to remove the snow quicker and a shift in focus to look at how people move, versus looking just at traffic volume. There are five good reasons why broadening our focus is a good investment and strategy as it will improve safety, belonging, increase assets, reduce costs to reactive responses, create strong relationships with taxpayers and help set financial priorities in future planning.

**1. Adapting a Winter Strategy improves safety and belonging**

Investing in a pedestrian winter strategy is a step forward for mobility rights as a human right. Adapting a winter city walk-able strategy will help elevate Calgary to Cities and villages who have already financially capitalized on winter. Places like Oslo, Helsinki, Ottawa, New Jersey, Banff, Lake Louise and our sister City to the North, Edmonton adapted a winter strategy focus. Back in 2013 Edmonton created 4 strategic goals "*Winter life-winter design, winter economy and our winter story.*" The number one element all these cities shared was shift of focus from cars to... pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation. Investing in how we move as people ensures citizens and tourists can get around safely in an affordable manner to enjoy the winter outdoors for free, to stay healthy and reinvest our dollars into the local economy.

**2. See the windrows as an asset**

Since the invention of the snowplow in 1888, windrows have been a barrier to pedestrians. It is not a new problem, and its response in our City is muddled among many different business units, making the solution multifaceted. Some Cities have found creative spaces to use windrow dump to make public markets, a place of play, a place of art, year round lawn furniture for snow palaces & cafes. While some places in Germany & Japan have even been able to reduce their use of salt by

pre-wetting it and placing the windrow snow to melt in pre-treated water tanks to reduce pollution on the environment and parks. While other cities like Montreal have invested in smaller machinery to address sidewalks windrows that can then dump the snow into a dump truck. We encourage the working group to explore a creative use of windrow snow and environmentally friendly contents and use of smaller sidewalk machinery.

### **3. An investment in capital and collaboration saves money and time**

We simply don't have enough equipment to haul the snow away quickly. The trucks spend a great deal of time unloading and loading to get to the next destination. In 2014 the snow events allowed our City to subcontract the work out when a snow event is called. We encourage the working group to look more of this collaborative thinking to improve performance time for pedestrian priority areas. For instance Ottawa remove the snow in 6 hours as they have double the amount of snow than Calgary. Ottawa has learned over time, the faster you remove it, the cheaper it costs in the long run.

### **4. Working Group Membership to include impacted citizens**

We would like to recommend the working group also have citizens with reduced mobility as members to ensure the solutions encourage a pedestrian friendly outcome. Our experience working with Transit and Fair Calgary enhance stronger collaboration, stronger relationships and create confidence in taxpayers why we invest our tax dollars into certain priorities.

### **5. If we don't invest now, it will cost double in the future:**

Identifying high use walk-able areas is helpful way to guide the budget for the future. High use areas mirror public transit, shopping centers, learning institutions, hospitals and affordable dense apartment living in the urban centers. When we look deeper into the report it is growing concern that 78% of expected growth in our City will occur in outlying suburbs. If we do not master a pedestrian winter strategy soon - 10 years from now the problem will only be amplified as it takes time for social infrastructure to catch up with a growing City.

In summary, an investment that considers how Calgarians move in winter will help ensure we are all safe, connected and create new ways to prosper as a winter City. We look forward to how a working group will help set the tone for a City for all Calgarians and visitors to enjoy.

**Warmest regards,**

**Colleen Huston**

**On behalf of the Members of the Disability Action Hall**

