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the
**WOMEN'S
CENTRE**

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Meeting of the standing policy committee on transit and transportation

Sarelle Azuelos, Women's Centre of Calgary

The Women's Centre is a street-front, drop in space that has served 9,000 women last year. A very diverse community of women come to the Centre for basic needs, like food bank referrals and peer support; for workshops and opportunities to meet other women; and to learn about social issues. Of the women who engage with us, half are living in poverty and a third have a chronic health issue. They visit the Centre to feel welcome and included in a variety of ways. In our advocacy work, we seek to give them a voice and represent their concerns at decision-making tables.

I'm sure it's no surprise to hear that nearly everyone we talked to had an opinion on snow removal.

- Women shared that they had difficulty leaving their homes, and getting on to busses or into cabs because of the windrows.
- Women stay home because they are afraid of falling, further contributing to the social isolation many people living in poverty experience.
- A number of women reported slipping and falling, sometimes resulting in serious injuries.
- Women with children saw further barriers, related to strollers, transporting children to and from child care or school, and running errands.

There was one more story I wanted to share in full:

"When it snows, it is harder for all of us to get around. I work as an architect in the downtown core and along with my partner, I am raising a 10-year-old child. This winter when the sidewalks were not clear, I had to walk alongside my 10-year-old to make sure he got to school safely – the icy and snowy paths were really hard for him to navigate alone. Every time I accompanied him, I had to go to work late. This affects the way I am viewed in the workplace and my career in general. Reliable snow removal means more stability in my family and professional life."

The Women's Centre would like to support the inclusion of a gender equity and diversity perspective to the issue of snow removal with a focus on pedestrian mobility. Cities in Sweden (Karlskoga and Stockholm) have found that men were more likely to drive to city centres, while women were more likely to visit schools, community centres and public spaces on foot and earlier in the day. (Similar findings came up in Edmonton as part of a Transit Social Sustainability Overview.) By re-prioritizing pedestrian snow clearing, a more equitable and functional public policy on snow removal is now in effect. In their words, "it is more difficult to get through 3 inches of snow on foot than by car."

Thank you for your time and for addressing the need to improve snow and ice removal for pedestrians in Calgary.

How has snow and ice affected your ability to get around?

People in wheelchairs can't get on the sidewalk because the snow is up to peoples knees



I walk to work downtown and have slipped + fell twice this winter - which has not been great, as I just had surgery on my foot

3 months ago in Royal Oak Clinic N.W.
I be in the Bus stop. but the snow was a lot very Dangerous. For me because I can't stay there. That is no nice for me.

Yes I was walking then I fell

This happened multiple times this



Access to community bus stops poor snow removal prevents access at times with walkers & strollers

Yes.

Where my daughter lives, she fell and broke her ankle. She needs to take her kids to school.

) Bus stops too.

One Thursday Morning I went out early to go to Rotary Club and there was no salt on the ice where I was walking when I nearly fell on the ice.

I'm afraid of falling and it take me awhile to get places. I walk alone. This is a bad time of year for snow

watching my friends with balance issues falling on the ice



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