



Ombudsman
Toronto

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

City Ombudsman Monitoring Snow Removal Concerns

Toronto – February 19, 2019

Ombudsman Toronto is aware of broad-based public concern about snow removal in Toronto this winter.

The City of Toronto Ombudsman believes there are two issues at play. “One issue is the quality of service the city is providing” says Susan Opler. “We have heard many stories of people reporting that sidewalks, roads, bike lanes or public paths have not been cleared of snow and ice in a timely way. People have also said that calls to the City to complain sometimes yield delayed responses or no response.”

The Ombudsman says the other issue relates to the City’s very different approaches to sidewalk snow removal in different parts of the city, a holdover from before amalgamation more than two decades ago. While the City provides mechanical sidewalk snow clearing in most parts of Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough, it does not provide this service in Toronto and East York because it says it is unable to. “Sidewalks not cleared of snow and ice affect many people”, says Opler, “including those with mobility challenges and young families with strollers.”

Both issues raise important questions about administrative fairness in the services the City delivers to meet the needs of the people of Toronto. The Ombudsman says her office is monitoring these issues closely. “We await with interest the report that the Mayor has requested from the City’s Transportation Services division as well as upcoming City Council budget discussions on this topic.”

Members of the public with concerns about the quality and/or timeliness of snow removal should first contact 311. If they are not satisfied with the City’s response, they should contact Ombudsman Toronto.

For more information, contact:

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An Ombudsman Toronto backgrounder is available on request.

Ombudsman Toronto listens to and investigates people's complaints and concerns about City administration and the fairness of City services. We are a free and impartial office that operates independently from the City, holding it accountable to the people it serves.