

Offered by Councilor Kenzie Bok, Flaherty, O'Malley, Flynn, Baker, Breadon, Campbell, Wu, Edwards, Mejia, Essaibi-George, Janey and Arroyo



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING A SUPPLEMENTAL SIDEWALK CLEARANCE PROGRAM DURING SNOWSTORMS IN BOSTON

*WHEREAS:* According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service, over 13 inches of snow accumulated in Suffolk County on December 17, 2020; *and*

*WHEREAS:* In the City of Boston, the City is responsible for clearing the roadway while property owners are responsible for clearing their sidewalks, but often sections of sidewalk and crosswalks, including at busy intersections, go uncleared; *and*

*WHEREAS:* On December 17, 2020 City Councilors, the Mayor's Office, and 311 received countless calls, emails, and messages from concerned constituents detailing where lack of snow removal has made their ability to get back to their home, to work, or to the grocery store, dangerous, difficult, or impossible; *and*

*WHEREAS:* Lack of proper snow clearance by property owners has a disproportionate impact on the disabled community, individuals with mobility challenges, elders, parents and guardians with children and strollers, and residents without a vehicle, even to the point of making it untenable for certain people to leave their homes in the days after a heavy storm; *and*

*WHEREAS:* The prioritization of road access over pedestrian access in the wake of a snow storm does not reflect the needs of the many Bostonians who do not own vehicles or routinely travel by car; *and*

*WHEREAS:* In the City of Rochester, New York, while property owners are responsible for removing snow from the sidewalk in front of their property, the City provides the low-cost supplemental service of plowing sidewalks when there are new snow accumulations of four inches or more; *and*

*WHEREAS:* The City of Rochester clears 878 miles of sidewalk when four inches of snow has fallen, with the sidewalk divided into 15 mile "plow runs" that take approximately five hours to clear, in the morning and evening where there is minimal pedestrian traffic; *and*

*WHEREAS:* The City of Saint John's, in Newfoundland and Labrador, also has a sidewalk snow removal program, which assigns sidewalks varying levels of priority

depending on pedestrian traffic, proximity to school zones, and other factors, and which they are exploring expanding with a variety of options to finance this low-cost supplemental service; *and*

*WHEREAS:* The City of Boston should examine providing a supplemental snow removal service on City sidewalks during winter snow storms above a certain level of severity and snow accumulation, which could also provide a local workforce development opportunity; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

*ORDERED:* That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss a supplemental sidewalk clearance program in the City of Boston, and that representatives from the Public Works Department, 311, the Office of Workforce Development, the Office of Budget Management, and the public be invited to testify.

Filed on: January 8, 2021