

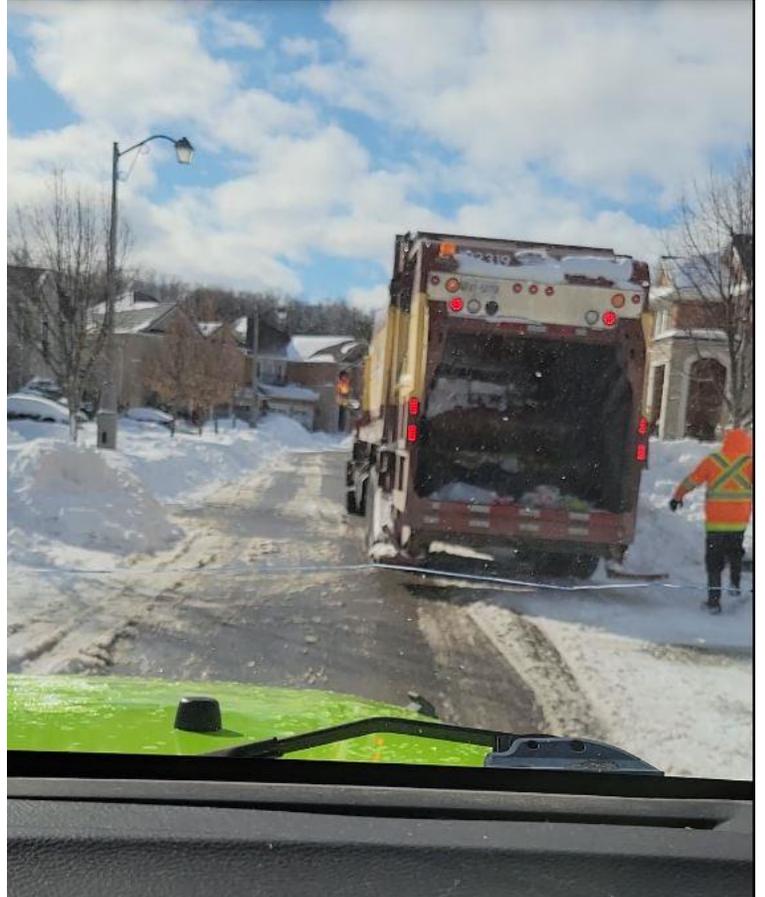
**RE: Agenda Item 14.2 – Member Motion: Councillor Liu
Review of Snow and Windrow Removal**

Dear Mayor, Councillors and Staff:

I am writing to you today to share some local and personal experiences with respect to our snow removal services this past winter. Let me begin by creating some context. I am a 35-year resident and voter in Richmond Hill, a homeowner since 1991 and have been living in my current home since 2005. Throughout the many years as a resident, we have experienced many weather emergencies, often related to heavy winter snowfalls or ice storms. We all understand that in the case of Winter Event declarations, it may take longer than normal to complete winter maintenance activities. Under such circumstances there is a need for patience, understanding and cooperation, both with our neighbours and with city staff. We understand because **this is not the first year encountering heavy snowfalls**. My personal observation has been that, in years past, even with minor delays, the roadways and sidewalks were, for the most part, cleared promptly and efficiently. Additionally, if we had an unusual circumstance specific to our own neighbourhood – such as roadway restrictions caused by the plow not cutting back to the curb – the city sent special equipment to respond to the complaint in a timely fashion.

That said, I must express my extreme disappointment and, frankly, my outrage that the windrow program – which is literally costing Richmond Hill taxpayers millions of dollars in both capital and operational funding – has become a fool's errand of gargantuan proportions. The timing of plows and windrow clearing has left homeowners exasperated and completely at a loss for how a program, which was pitched as something to help the community, has added to everyone's workload and stress. I'm sure you've read more than your fair share of stories of residents clearing the large windrow left at the bottom of their driveway by the snow plow many hours (sometimes a whole day) before, no sooner to have the windrow plow drive by after the job was already done. Or perhaps the frequent occurrence of the windrow plow clearing one half of the driveway and leaving a massive snowbank that would be impossible for non-commercial equipment to clear. What about the impact to seniors living on regional roads, like my 95-year-old father, who has previously enjoyed the benefit of the Senior's Windrow Program, indispensable to an elderly person living independently – a service that has become the casualty of the windrow program that: 1) excludes residences on regional roads and, 2) no longer supports seniors who have fallen through the cracks of an abysmally undertaken program that many taxpayers didn't support in the first place.

On a more recent and personal note, here are some screenshots from the videos I have included with this email which reflect the condition of our roadways AFTER being plowed. They clearly outline the condition of roadways in my neighbourhood, but I can attest that this scenario has been reproduced throughout Richmond Hill, sometimes with far worse implications. The snowbanks left behind by each subsequent visit from the windrow plow, have continued to migrate so far out into the roadway that it has become impossible for two vehicles to pass side-by-side in many areas.



Since these snowbanks are never pushed back by the larger snowplows during subsequent snowfalls, it effectively adds about 6-10 feet of additional 'driveway' we now must clear BEFORE reaching the windrow itself (the removal of which is fraught with its own challenges, as outlined above). What used to be a task some of us would gladly take on as a natural part of home ownership (I personally don't mind shovelling) has become a Sisyphean task – push the giant boulder up the hill, watch it roll back down again before you reach the top – rinse and repeat.

The stories (and the frustration) are real. How did we get here?

As a resident, I can say that it feels as though we were sold a bill of goods for over \$4 Million. The more important questions are, "Why?" and "Who benefits?" Certainly, the answer to the second question cannot be, *'the residents'*. The evidence simply doesn't support it.

To provide a thorough answer to both questions, ***I am requesting that council add an amendment to Councillor Liu's motion, to include a formal request for a full financial audit of the windrow program as well.*** It's not enough to simply examine the operational reasons why it's not working (and that's an understatement). The taxpaying residents of Richmond Hill deserve to know exactly how the millions of dollars are being spent – and where. **At a time when increased accountability and transparency are being demanded by our community, I don't believe this to be an unreasonable request.**

Thank you for taking time to read my comments. I send my sincere hope for thoughtful and fair deliberations about this issue that affects so many members of our community in a variety of ways.

Sincerely,

Adriana Pisano Beaumont

(Please see videos attached to this correspondence for additional context)

Video Links:

Wicker snow removal Feb 11 2022 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rmU-m02Y0bJm8cw7-tGkaxbQhtHh3-bl/view?usp=sharing>

Brass snow removal Jan

2022 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M1EMx6DW7EhpLry3hhifGecA5c1VzVQF/view?usp=sharing>