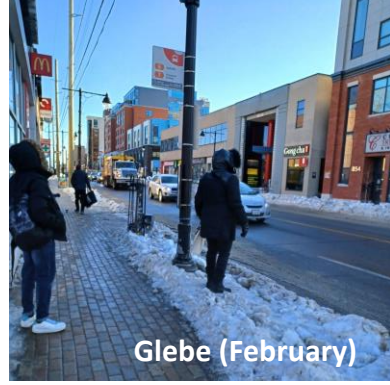




Snow Mole Report 2022: How Safe is Winter Walking in Ottawa?



Glebe (February)



Kinburn (February)

Download Report: coaottawa.ca/snow-moles-2022

Pedestrians First!

We advocate for improved snow clearing policies and practices and to promote a Pedestrians First approach by the City. The top priorities are safety and accessibility for pedestrians, especially older adults and people who use mobility devices.

For more information on the City of Ottawa's Winter Maintenance Quality Standards (WMQS), go to: engage.ottawa.ca/wmqs.

Snow Mole Campaign

In 2018, the COA launched the Snow Mole Campaign after a couple of years of all-seasons "pedestrian safety" audits were completed across the city in partnership with community associations. It was named to identify with winter moles who burrow under the snow for safety, as well as 'mole' agents who work undercover to collect evidence.

Benefits of Winter Walking

Better Mood



Brain Boost



Healthy Heart



2022 Snow Mole Findings

Pedestrians continue to experience barriers and safety hazards while winter walking in Ottawa. Between January 1 and March 31, we received

270 Snow Mole audits

101 open-ended comments

130 photos



Demographics

73% were over 65

75% walked alone

Mobility Devices

10% used a walking or mobility aid

31% used ice grips

17% used walking poles

But what might be just an inconvenience for some can be a serious issue for seniors and those with mobility issues. Some might be afraid to even step out the door. There are so many different reasons that people should be able to get outside, whether it's to get groceries, go to the doctor, meet up with friends or just to go for a walk.

**Min Ku, Chair, PS&W Subcommittee
Ottawa Citizen, December 7, 2021**

Although many people reported **safe walking surfaces,**

streets - 70% were cleared more often and safer to walk on than

sidewalks - 56%

stairs/steps - 56%

ramps - 51%

43% noted a handrail on **stairs or steps**

Walking on a street or road because...

73% no sidewalks or path

71% too much snow and/or ice

72% street/road were plowed and safer

12% noted a handrail on **ramps**

Of those who used **crosswalks/intersections,**

61% noted street was clear enough to cross safely

32% were unable to reach the pedestrian walk button

8% did not have enough time to cross the street safely

Only **48%** of **benches** were cleared

Other safety concerns were **bus stops, ice, and sidewalk conditions/infrastructure issues**



87% reported **fear of falling** sometimes keeps them from going out

Westboro (March)

Main reason for falls:
High snowbanks

Top Ten Recommendations

- 1. Prioritize** Pedestrians First in City's snow clearing policies and practices.
- 2. Provide** awareness and safety training for sidewalk plow operators.
- 3. Plow** for complete pedestrian trips.
- 4. Remove** high snowbanks on residential streets.
- 5. Increase** frequency of applying salt, grit, and sand to roads and sidewalks.
- 6. Address** ice buildup problems.
- 7. Improve** safe winter access to parks and community amenities.
- 8. Collect and report** on the incidence/location of outdoor winter falls and injuries.
- 9. Clear** snow and ice from benches.
- 10. Improve** sidewalk infrastructure to encourage safe age-friendly walking.

"If you see something, say something."
Karen Scott, Ottawa Disability Coalition

Call 311 to report any hazards or problems needing immediate attention.



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