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His Worship Mayor Andrew Knack and Members of Edmonton City Council
Via email: andrew.knack@edmonton.ca; city.clerk@edmonton.ca

Subject: Open Letter from the Edmonton Public School Board: Investing in Student Safety in the 2027–2030 Budget

Dear Mayor Knack and City Councillors,

Every school day, tens of thousands of Edmonton students walk, roll, and travel through our neighbourhoods to get to and from school. Keeping these children safe is a shared responsibility. Every decision we make on street design and winter snow clearing directly shapes the daily lives of Edmonton families.

As City Council deliberates on the 2027–2030 Budget, the Edmonton Public School Board urges you to prioritize the safety and accessibility of Edmonton's school communities by approving two distinct, high-impact investments:

1. Enhanced School-Zone Snow Clearing ($2.1 million annual operating investment | Operating Budget, p. 1004)
2. Safe Mobility Strategy 2027–2030: Scenario 2 ($161.4 million initial capital investment and $5.5 million annually | Operating Budget, p. 990; Capital Budget, p. 675)

Edmonton is at a critical crossroads in road safety.

In 2025, our city recorded 32 traffic-related fatalities, which is the highest number since Council adopted Vision Zero in 2015. This past winter also underscored how vulnerable our school zones are to severe weather. Edmonton experienced its snowiest December on record, leaving massive windrows that obstructed sightlines, impacted traffic congestion, and affected accessibility. As our city grows, increasing traffic volumes put greater pressure on neighbourhood and arterial streets. This makes thoughtful street design, reliable snow clearing, community education and engagement, and preventative infrastructure more important than ever.

New findings released this month by the CAA/AMA, monitored school crossings across Canada, including six in Edmonton. Monitored crosswalks averaged **4.5 pedestrian-vehicle near misses per day**, affecting 1 in 84 pedestrians. The study demonstrates that targeted road design makes a measurable difference:

controlled intersections had 20 times fewer near-misses, zebra markings reduced turning-vehicle conflicts by 56%, and crossings without reduced-speed signage experienced 67% more conflicts.

Thankfully, Edmonton already has a proven blueprint for making school zones safer.

- **Enhanced School-Zone Snow Clearing**: In an Edmonton winter, snow removal around schools is a critical safety and accessibility issue, not a matter of convenience. During heavy snowfall seasons, windrows pile up to chest height, obstructing sightlines for drivers and children, blocking drop-off and accessible parking zones, and forcing young students to climb over snowbanks into active traffic lanes. Approving the $2.1 million operating package will increase windrow removal in designated school zones from once to three times per season, dramatically improving visibility, accessibility, and congestion during peak pick-up and drop-off hours.

- **Safe Mobility Strategy 2027–2030 (Scenario 2)**: Reactive, one-off fixes after a collision occurs are not enough to protect vulnerable road users. As City Safe Mobility leadership noted in response to the AMA findings, investments in zebra crossings, flashing beacons, signage, and school pilots are essential to advancing Vision Zero. Approving Scenario 2 funds the strategy's dedicated, place-based School Safety program, equipping the City to take a proactive, city-wide approach through traffic calming, safer crossings, speed management, and expanded windrow-free zones around schools. It also allows the City to scale up proven school pilots, such as Highlands School, where flashing 30 km/h beacons along 118 Avenue reduced average vehicle speeds by 14%. Selecting a reduced funding scenario would leave too many known high-risk school zones and adjacent arterial corridors unaddressed.

The Safe Mobility Strategy rightly recognizes that lasting safety improvements depend on working together across the City, school divisions, and local communities. Edmonton Public Schools brings direct, on-the-ground insight into the daily traffic and winter accessibility challenges facing students, families, and staff. We are committed to sharing local insight, helping identify high-priority school zones, supporting public education initiatives, and standing alongside Council to communicate the value of these investments to Edmontonians.

Preventative investments today save lives, reduce congestion, and support active, healthy neighbourhoods for all Edmontonians.

We respectfully ask the City Council to pass both the Enhanced School-Zone Snow Clearing package and Scenario 2 of the Safe Mobility Strategy in the 2027–2030 Budget, and we look forward to continuing our partnership to keep Edmonton's children safe.

Sincerely,



Holly Nichol, Board Chair
On Behalf of the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees
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