Fee Waiver Request

City of Edmonton ATIA Request 2026-G-0598

Please see below detailing OIPC Fee Waiver in the Public Interest Criteria submissions related to the above-noted request.

My justification for this request is under ATIA Section 96(5)(b), i.e., *The head of a public body may excuse the applicant from paying all or part of a fee if, in the opinion of the head, the record relates to a matter of public interest, including the environment or public health or safety.*

1. Will the records contribute to the public understanding of, or to debate on or resolution of a matter or issue that is of concern to the public or a sector of the public, or that would be, if the public knew about it?

The Mayor and Administration repeatedly characterized the snowfall of December 2025 as a once-in-30-year event, implying that it was extremely infrequent, and justifying the City's inadequate response to snow clearing in residential areas. He further characterized that month's conditions as "unprecedented". I expect that if the general public knew that this characterization was misleading – that the recorded depth of snowfall has historically occurred on average every six or seven winters (i.e., something that the City should reasonably be prepared for), there would be greater concern raised by the public.

My interest is primarily in whether technical staff at the City presented a fulsome meteorological analysis to the Mayor and Administration – in which case the blame would be on the Mayor and Administration for misleading the public – or whether technical staff failed in their duty to provide that information.

1(a) Have others besides the applicant sought or expressed an interest in the records?

I am unaware of any others who have requested this specific information. However, it is of a technical nature, and I would expect that the information provided by the Mayor and Administration, and uncritically passed on by the news media, would be accepted without question by most laymen. The fact that no others recognized that statements by the Mayor and Administration were misleading should not give them a pass.

1(b) Are there other indicators that the public has or would have an interest in the records?

Contemporaneous communications of the Mayor, Council, and Administration in January 2026 testify to the public interest in this information.

- The Mayor made frequent public statements, including social media posts on Facebook and Substack.
- One Councillor (Aaron Paquette) created an entire web page on his personal domain, devoted to the topic. Another (Jon Morgan) created frequent Facebook posts on the topic.
- The City Administration issued frequent Public Service Announcements during the period mid-December to late January, on this topic.
- City Council devoted an entire Subcommittee meeting to the topic on 31 August 2026.

Unfortunately, all of these communications were rife with misinformation. The public deserves to be informed. In fact, the City's Snow and Ice Policy explicitly identifies as a guiding principle:

> *"**Public Awareness and Understanding:** The City of Edmonton will take a leadership role in increasing public awareness of winter maintenance activities and commit to transparency on how it impacts citizens."*

The City has failed to abide by that principle.

2. Is the applicant motivated by commercial or other private interests or purposes, or by a concern on behalf of the public, or a sector of the public?

The triggers for my request are as follows:

- My wife was seriously injured and spent six weeks in hospital as a result of the City's mismanagement of snow and ice last winter. Over eight months later she is still recovering from that injury. This prompted me to take a much closer look at the City's related Policies, Procedures, actions and public communications.
- During my wife's medical experience, we became aware that the City's mismanagement of Snow and Ice had resulted in delays and interruption of emergency services, in violation of the City's Snow and Ice Policy. This resonated in our own experience, where my son and I were actually needed to assist EMS personnel in loading my wife's stretcher into the ambulance, due to icy and rutted conditions on the residential street where she was injured.
- My only other current interest is related to a Professional Practice complaint that I have filed with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA). Given that City Operations is led by a professional engineer (Deputy City Manager) and many of its staff are professional engineers, I assert that they failed in their professional responsibility to protect the public, and also to practice in an ethical matter (i.e., provide true and factual information to the public).

- My belief is that the – somewhere within the City's inner workings – someone completed a meteorological assessment. What that assessment says is presently unknown to me. However, the assessment and any communications associated with it, should identify who decided to represent the conditions of December 2025 as the 30-year snowfall.
- I do reserve the right to pursue legal action against the City, its leadership, and its employees. However, I would prefer not to go down that path and would hope that release of the requested information to the public will contribute to holding those responsible accountable.

2(a) Do the records relate to a conflict between the applicant and government?

As noted above, any conflict is presently limited to the APEGA Professional Practice complaint. I presented this complaint to APEGA in June 2026, met with their investigator in person in September 2026, and was informed that collection of material to support the complaint was my responsibility, not theirs. That prompted the ATIA requests that I currently have pending.

APEGA also required that I name specific persons associated with the complaint. The City's opaque organization (e.g., only senior leadership org charts available; supporting documents not public; available documents such as the City's Snow and Ice Procedure approved by the City Manager but authorship unknown) makes this impossible without fulfilment of this ATIA request.

2(b) What is the likelihood the applicant will disseminate the contents of the records?

If the provided documents reveal unprofessional or unskilled practice on the part of an APEGA professional member, they will be provided to APEGA for their further investigation.

If the provided documents reveal intentional misleading conduct by the City Administration and/or elected officials, I will disseminate that information to the best of my ability, including providing said information to local journalists, and via my own social media.

3. If the records are about the process or functioning of government, will they contribute to open, transparent and accountable government?

Emphatically, yes. The actions of the City in December 2025 and January 2026 caused personal harm and property damage; City communications were very much aimed at glossing things over and telling everyone that "they tried their best". In fact, City Operations gave themselves a 100% rating for residential snow clearing in an annual

report released in August 2026. My belief – based on technical analysis of historical climate records – is that the Mayor and Administration's characterization of snowfall conditions as extreme and "unprecedented" was part of the effort to avoid accountability.

Release of this information to the public is likely to contribute to accountability and to help meet the City's Snow and Ice Policy Guiding Principle of transparency.

3(a) Do the records contain information that will show how the public body reached or will reach a decision?

Yes. The underlying analysis that I have requested, as well as subsequent communications, should show how the Mayor and Administration decided to present this misleading information (one-in-30-year event; "unprecedented") to the public, and who was responsible for that decision.

3(b) Are the records desirable for the purpose of subjecting the activities of a public body to scrutiny?

Yes, as identified above.

3(c) Will the records shed light on an activity of a public body that have been called into question?

The City's response to snowfall in December 2025 and January 2026 has been the subject of news articles (i.e., https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/lorne-gunter-edmontons-response-didnt-match-exceptional-snowfall) and indeed, the Mayor himself confessed "we need to do better" (https://andrewknack.substack.com/p/leading-the-change-for-safer-winter). Release of these records will shed light on the City's communication effort during a period where the City failed to properly manage their resources to protect its citizens.