

# **Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson**

## **Scarborough Centre Virtual Town Hall 3**

### **April 30, 2020**

Sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in my Virtual Town Hall on Thursday April 30. I was delighted hear your concerns, and ideas, and to respond to your COVID-19 related questions. Several residents expressed the need for expanding internet access in the community, providing financial assistance for businesses, improving help for the homeless and getting more clarity on when the City will reopen. I want to assure you that, as advised by our Medical Officer of Health, we are in the peak period of the outbreak's epidemiological curve. The curve is flattening and to keep it moving in the right direction, we must continue to practice physical and social distancing measures and to stay at home as much as possible.

Here are some of the key questions and concerns raised by residents, and my responses:

#### **Question1: Does the City have internet access plans for families?**

**Response:** The City has partnered with technology and telecommunications companies to provide free temporary internet access for many vulnerable Torontonians. These partnerships will provide free access for residents in lower-income neighbourhoods, seniors in long-term care homes and clients in many City-operated shelters. These initiatives will allow more people to connect online to social supports and vital services while still complying with directives to stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information please visit [toronto.ca/covid19](https://toronto.ca/covid19).

#### **Question 2: Is there an update on shelter and homelessness in Scarborough?**

**Response:** Currently, Ellesmere Community Centre and McGregor Park Community Centre are prepped and ready to be used as temporary shelters. Stephen Leacock Community Centre is also set to become a shelter. Warden Woods offers a 24hr respite site at 705 Progress Avenue in Scarborough.

There are also 3 Scarborough locations that are being opened to provide showers and washrooms for the venerable population. As of today, Scarborough Village, Commander Arena, and Malvern will be opening up to allow for people to use washrooms and showers.

The City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration has implemented a three tier strategy focused on prevention, mitigation, and recovery to respond to COVID-19. We have implemented this significant response because we know that many people experiencing homelessness have underlying chronic medical conditions that increase their risk from COVID-19 and this is a particularly vulnerable population. This is why the

City has taken swift and decisive action to mobilize an unprecedented response to protect people who are homeless.

### **Implementation plan for up to 250 modular supportive housing units released**

Mayor John Tory announced the proposed implementation plan for a modular supportive housing initiative to create 110 modular homes on two City-owned sites. The new modular homes are expected to be ready for occupancy by September 2020 and will provide stable, affordable housing and support services to individuals experiencing homelessness.

### **Question 3: How can I dispute a ticket that I believe was wrongly given?**

**Response:** In response to the COVID-19, new legislation and bylaws have been put in place which have not existed in the past. If you feel that you were wrongly ticketed, you have the option of requesting an early resolution meeting with a prosecutor and challenging it in court. You can do this by:

- requesting an early resolution meeting: you can go online, or mailing in a request for an early resolution meeting. While the Courts are currently closed, once they reopen you will be notified by mail of your early resolution date and details of where to attend. If the meeting with a prosecutor does not result in a resolution, the matter will be set down for trial at a later date.
- requesting a trial: all limitations periods and the time to request a trial have been temporarily suspended with the closure of the Courts. Once the City's Court Services offices reopen you can visit one of their offices to file a request for a trial.

Once the trial date is scheduled, you will receive a notice by mail of the time and place for your trial. The Court will conduct a trial to decide whether you committed the offence that gave rise to the ticket being issued.

### **Question 4: Will CurbTO also come Scarborough?**

**Response:** Not at the moment. City staff have worked to identify key hot spots where there are lineups or pinch points on sidewalks that public health and transportation officials have determined need to be addressed to continue to encourage physical distancing and protect overall public health. While this work will continue, the City will be rolling out fixes at an initial 10 spots across the city.

Primarily, the hot spots are where there is sidewalk crowding and temporary parking concerns around essential businesses. Grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants/bars and community agencies are increasingly offering pick-up, take-out and delivery services and have created store access queues to maintain physical distancing requirements as recommended by Toronto Public Health. This initiative which will expand to more than 100 locations across the city. Please visit [Toronto.ca/covid19](https://toronto.ca/covid19) for more information.

## **Question 5: Could you please clarify what is allowed in City parks and what isn't?**

**Response:** At this time, the park is not meant to be a destination like it used to be. People can walk/run, get some exercise and then keep moving. While visiting a park, people must practise physical distancing. Under the City's physical distancing bylaw, any two people who don't live together, who fail to keep two metres of distance between them in a park or public square, can receive a \$1,000 ticket.

### **People can walk/run/bike in the following areas:**

- Park and ravine green spaces, Beaches, Trails, Boardwalks and Dogs can be walked on-leash

### **People can also:**

- Fish (with a licence)
- Boat, kayak, canoe

### **Closed City park amenities include:**

- Playgrounds, play structures and equipment
- Sports facilities and multi-use fields
- Basketball courts
- Baseball diamonds
- Tennis, platform tennis, table tennis and pickleball courts
- Soccer fields
- Off-leash dog areas
- Skateboard and BMX parks
- Picnic areas and shelters
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Greenhouses, nurseries and conservatories
- Zoos and farms
- Parking lots
- Golf courses and frisbee golf locations
- Allotment and community gardens
- Ice rinks (with or without ice)
- Park washrooms/shelters
- Marinas

### **What about park benches?**

The focus of enforcement has now shifted away from issuing charges to individuals solely for the use of park benches as a place for temporary respite. The focus in relation to the use of park benches will be on individuals who are not in compliance with the prohibitions on social and public gatherings, and who do not practise physical distancing while using park benches.

Benches are not destinations where people should begin to congregate. Benches are not sanitized. People may unknowingly spread the virus by sneezing or touching the bench when the next person comes along, sits down and touches the bench.

**Question 6: Who is eligible for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and will all companies be qualified for 75% for up the 12 weeks?**

**Response:** The Government has implemented the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) to help employers keep and re-hire workers amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19. This economic measure provides a subsidy of 75% of an eligible employee's weekly earnings, to a maximum of \$847 per employee per week, to eligible employers, for up to 12 weeks. Retroactive to March 15, 2020, the CEWS will prevent further job losses and encourage employers to re-hire workers previously laid off as a result of COVID-19. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is administering the CEWS on behalf of the Government.

All claims that are approved through the CRA's automated verification process will be sent for payment on May 5, so that payments being made through direct deposit should begin to appear in employers' accounts as of May 7. Some applications will require a secondary verification, done manually, and in these cases the CRA may contact employers to verify information. It is expected that these secondary verifications will take no more than 72 hours in the vast majority of cases.

The CRA has again partnered with financial institutions to enroll Canadian employers for direct deposit, and employers can now register business payroll accounts for direct deposit with the CRA through their bank portals.

Signing up for direct deposit will enable employers whose applications are approved to receive their CEWS payments quickly and securely. Employers can sign up for direct deposit with their financial institutions even after applying for the CEWS.

**Question 7: The Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separation poses a number of challenges for residents. Do you have any updates on this project?**

**Response:** I had a conference call with landowners to discuss the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separation project at Progress Avenue and William Kitchen Road. The project poses a number of challenges for pedestrians, landowners, traffic and safety in our community. The frequency of go trains travelling along the corridor will be 7 minute intervals. We will continue to work with City staff, Metrolinx and Toronto & Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and on solutions for property and business owners.

**Question 8: The Federal Government announced the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance for small businesses. What period would this cover?**

**Response:** The CECRA will be available to eligible small businesses, meaning small business tenants that pay less than \$50,000 per month in rent, that have temporarily ceased operations or experienced a 70% drop in pre-COVID-19 revenues, and which rent their commercial space from mortgaged property owners. This includes non-profit and charitable organizations. It appears that the CECRA will be in place by mid-May,

meaning that it will provide retroactive relief for April and May and further relief for June, 2020.

The CECRA will provide forgivable loans to qualifying, commercial property owners to cover 50% of the rent otherwise payable by eligible small businesses during April, May and June. These loans will be forgiven if the owner agrees to reduce their tenant's rent by at least 75% for the three months. The CECRA requires that the rent forgiveness agreements include the following terms:

**Question 9: Is there help provided for pets during covid19? Do you know if there is any covid19 testing taking place for pets?**

**Response:** Toronto Animal Services (TAS) is offering advice and assistance to pet owners who are experiencing hardship and struggling to care and provide necessities for their pets due to COVID-19.

There is no evidence that pets can transmit COVID-19 to people.

Toronto Animal Services will be providing assistance to pet owners from low income households who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Assistance will be provided with the purchase of pet food and supplies, such as cat litter and pee pads.

Pet owners who require assistance can contact Toronto Animal Services by doing one of the below:

- Filling in and submitting a survey
- Emailing [taspartnerships@toronto.ca](mailto:taspartnerships@toronto.ca)
- Calling 416-338-0934 between noon and 4 p.m.

**Question: Are we allowed to go to High Park to watch the cherry blossom?**

**Response:** No, the City of Toronto has closed High Park since Thursday, April 30. During the park closure, residents will be able to enjoy the cherry blossom bloom virtually. Throughout the closure period, the City will provide a continuous livestream of the cherry tree grove in High Park, plus multiple live events and videos featuring virtual walk-throughs of the blossoming Sakura (cherry blossom) trees. BloomCam, the continuous live stream, is now live: [toronto.ca/cherryblossoms](https://toronto.ca/cherryblossoms)

**Question:** I would like to donate to Dorset park food bank. Do you have an idea of what items are needed at the Hub?

WE ARE SEEKING DONATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO HELP MEET INCREASED DEMAND DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

- CEREAL (COLD CEREAL & OATMEAL)
- DRY PASTA
- PASTA SAUCE & CANNED TOMATOES
- PLAIN RICE
- CRACKERS, COOKIES & SNACKS
- CANNED VEGETABLES & FRUITS
- CANNED OR DRY SOUPS
- CANNED & DRY BEANS
- CANNED TUNA & SALMON
- NON-PERISHABLE JUICES
- INSTANT COFFEE & TEA BAGS
- OIL & SUGAR
- GLUCERNA & ENSURE
- BABY DIAPERS, FORMULA AND WIPES
- ADULT DIAPERS
- SOAP & TOOTHPASTE
- LARGE REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

**\*\* HEALTHY ITEMS PREFERRED**

TO DONATE, PLEASE CONTACT KIRSTEN AT  
416-292-6912 EXT. 304 OR  
WKIRSTEN@AGINCOURTCOMMUNITYSERVICES.COM

WE ARE LOCATED AT 1911 KENNEDY RD, UNIT 105

**acsa** AGINCOURT COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

### **Additional Resources:**

#### **Ontario Guiding Principles to Reopen the Province**

Today, the Ontario government released its three-phased plan to reopen our Province. The framework outlines the criteria Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will use to advise the government on the loosening of emergency measures, as well as guiding principles for the safe, gradual reopening of businesses, services and public spaces. The framework also provides details of an outreach strategy, led by the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, to help inform the restart of the provincial economy.

Public health officials will carefully monitor each stage for two to four weeks, as they assess the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak to determine if it is necessary to change course to maintain public health. Here is a summary of the stages:

- **Stage 1:** For businesses that were ordered to close or restrict operations, opening select workplaces that can immediately modify operations to meet public health guidance. Opening some outdoor spaces like parks and allowing for a greater number of individuals to attend some events. Hospitals would also begin to offer some non-urgent and scheduled surgeries, and other health care services.

- **Stage 2:** Opening more workplaces, based on risk assessments, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces. Some larger public gatherings would be allowed, and more outdoor spaces would open.
- **Stage 3:** Opening of all workplaces responsibly and further relaxing of restrictions on public gatherings

Throughout each stage, continued protections for vulnerable populations must be in place, along with the continued practice of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and significant mitigation plans to limit health risks.

### **Next Virtual Town Hall- May 7, 2020**

My Virtual Town Halls will be held this, and every Thursday from 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm (until further notice), to discuss issues pertaining to living through the COVID-19 period. This is an opportunity for you to voice your concerns to me directly, provide your feedback on the City's actions and services, and to share your ideas with me and the community.

I encourage you to submit your questions or any pressing issues via email to [councillor\\_thompson@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_thompson@toronto.ca) or by Instagram at [@councillor\\_thompson](https://www.instagram.com/councillor_thompson) or Twitter [@Thompson\\_37](https://twitter.com/Thompson_37), no later than 5:00 PM on the Wednesday before each meeting.

To join the meeting, register on Eventbrite [@deputymayorvirtualtownhall](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/deputymayorvirtualtownhall) and you will receive the WebEx link and meeting ID. If you do not receive the link by Wednesday evening at 5:00pm of each week, please contact my office at 416-397-9274 or by email at [councillor\\_thompson@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_thompson@toronto.ca).