

Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson

Scarborough Centre Virtual Town Hall 4

May 7, 2020

Thanks to everyone who participated in my Virtual Town Hall on Thursday May 7. It was a pleasure hearing your concerns, ideas, and to respond to your COVID-19 related questions. Several residents expressed concerns about when the economy will reopen and the need for government assistance with property taxes, rent and homelessness. I want to assure you that, the City of Toronto, Federal Government and our Provincial Government are working hard to put plans in place for the safe recovery of businesses and to address the needs of residents. Please continue to play your part by practising physical and social distancing, washing your hands and keeping your surroundings clean.

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

Question1: Should bathroom facilities at say, ONroute not be considered essential? I speak for those truck drivers working tirelessly to transport much needed supplies. The lack of the facilities must be unspeakably difficult for these people.

Response: ONroute is considered an essential business in accordance with the Government of Ontario's list of designated essential workplaces and, as such, all 23 travel plazas remain open offering 24/7 access to washrooms, fuel, parking and food/beverage via take-out, grab and go, and drive-through services. All dining and seating areas are closed in accordance with the Government of Ontario's State of Emergency direction.

Question 2: Can MLS inspect private properties (e.g. Grocery Stores) and to issue orders, requiring the owner to pick up/ clean the plastic gloves and masks that have been littered on the private side of their property?

Response: This isn't something MLS would handle. MLS will only enforce illegal dumping where there is a witness account of the dumper, licence plate, etc. They cannot investigate without any evidence to go on. Generally, residents are advised to provide photos as proof of their complaint to MLS. Also, this is not something SWM would attend to as it is on private property. When non-essential services resume if this is still, the resident can contact 3-1-1.

Question 3: Can off-peak Hydro rates be extended past May 7th since we are all still home?

Response: The provincial government has extended the off-peak rate of 10.1¢/kWh until May 31st. All time-of-use (TOU) electricity residential and small commercial customers will continue to be billed at the off-peak rate for all electricity until the end of May. This is automatically applied for TOU customers.

Question 4: Why was the Midland and Lawrence mosque allowed to broadcast their call to prayer outside in the evening for Ramadan?

Response: The City has amended its noise by-law to allow for the call to prayer during the month of Ramadan. This will end on May 24th. (The call to prayer duration is 2-3 minutes).

Question 5: I noticed that there are homeless tents being removed in the City especially in the Parkdale area. Why is that so?

Response: The City has developed a three tier approach to strengthening prevention against COVID-19 in the emergency shelter system. These tiers are prevention, mitigation, and recovery. The City has rapidly implemented this plan, mobilizing response on an urgent basis, to be as prepared and stay one step ahead of a very rapidly evolving situation. The City is taking these steps 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. For more information on the City's COVID-19 response, please visit [Toronto.ca/covid19](https://toronto.ca/covid19) where updates are posted weekly.

Question 6: Question: Why are Zoo employees getting a cut in salary when other frontline workers are getting top-ups to their pay?

Response: The Zoo has been losing revenue. The Zoo and their union has come to an agreement regarding salary adjustments. It's a business decision that both parties have agreed to. The Zoo is an independent entity so the City does not administer the business of the zoo.

Question 7: Why are my property taxes not being taken out of my account when I sent in post-dated cheques or paid at bank?

Response: The 60-day grace period for property tax, utility bill payments and late penalties extended by the City during the COVID-19 response ends on May 15. There are important changes to instalment amounts and due dates for customers on all payment schedules. All customers will receive a mailed notification of their revised interim bill due dates. Final tax bills will be mailed in mid-May as usual.

Property taxes for the remainder of 2020 will be due on the following dates:

□ Two-instalment plan: August 4 □ Six-instalment plan: June 1, July 2, August 4, September 1 and October 1 □ Eleven-instalment plan: June 15, July 15, August 17, September 15, October 15, November 16 and December 15.

Customers on the 11-instalment plan will have their original May and June interim instalment amounts combined with the final billing and spread evenly over July through December payments.

Customers who are already enrolled in the City's pre-authorized payment plan don't have to reenroll – payments will start again automatically on the new due date.

Customers who have sent the City post-dated cheques do not need to re-send cheques

for the revised due dates, as any cheques previously submitted will be processed on the new due dates. Any cheques received after April 1, 2020 will be cashed according to the date on the cheque. Those who pay their taxes via their mortgage payment should contact their mortgage company or financial institution to understand how this grace period will affect their mortgage amount and/or mortgage payment schedule. For utility bill customers, due dates appearing on utility bills have been automatically adjusted to reflect the 60-day grace period.

Question 8: There was an anti-lockdown protest on Queen's Park, could you comment on what caused it and what steps were taken to address this?

Response: Toronto Police were at the demonstration keeping the peace. Officers had very good cooperation from the organizer who actually assisted the officers in delivering a physical distancing messaging to the group. Towards the end of the demonstration a small group of individuals not connected to the organizers showed up and were problematic. No tickets were issued to anyone, however, officers may follow up at a later date with the problematic group and look at enforcement options.

Question 9: Do you have an update on the upcoming changes at Kennedy GO Station? Response: As part of construction of the future Eglinton Crosstown LRT, improvements are also being made to the GO Transit Stouffville Corridor at Kennedy GO Station. Improvements include building a new west platform; rebuilding the existing east platform; constructing a new ticketing building for the GO Station; and building a new south pedestrian underpass. The new west platform will be ready to use in June 2020. Crews will then close the existing east platform and start rebuilding it. To facilitate this work, pedestrians will be reroute through the Kennedy TTC Station to the temporary west GO Transit platform. Our constructor, CTS is currently seeking all necessary approvals to perform this work.

Decommissioning monitoring Wells Crews will begin decommissioning monitoring wells between Lebovic Avenue to Midland Avenue starting from April 30 onwards. They will start at Lebovic and working their way east towards Midland. It is expected that each well will take approximately two hours to decommission. Some wells will require temporary lane reductions in the area and PDOs or traffic control personnel will be on-site where necessary.

Question 10: I heard that there will be permanent shelters and Sidewalk and Curb Installation at Eglinton East Crosstown. Could you please provide details on this?

Response: Crews will install the final two permanent shelters at Pharmacy Ave and Eglinton as early as April 27. The work for the pharmacy shelters will be extended to Friday, May 8. Glazing on the shelters and work on the benches remains. As soon as it is safe to do so, they will remove the lane closure.

Boulevard Restoration Boulevard restoration works/driveway tie-ins will be moving in front of 2354-2356 and 2360 Eglinton Ave East beginning as early as May 6 for approximately three weeks. Partial driveway closures will be experienced at these properties

Permanent Sidewalk and Curb Installation Starting from April 15, crews will install permanent curbs and sidewalks on the north and south side of Eglinton between Birchmount and Kennedy. This work will begin east of Birchmount and continue in sections moving eastward to Kennedy. There will be rolling lane closures in the eastbound and westbound curb lane.

Road Resurfacing on Antrim Crescent east of Kennedy Road the City of Toronto is planning to replace damaged curbs and/or sidewalks and resurface Antrim Crescent from Kennedy Road up to, but excluding the cul-de-sac. Our inspection of the road shows that it needs resurfacing and sections of damaged curb and/or sidewalk need to be replaced to bring them to a state of good repair.

Next Virtual Town Hall- May 14, 2020

The Virtual Town Halls will be held this and every Thursday from 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm (until further notice), to discuss how we can stay safe and play our part in keeping each other healthy and our strong. This is also an opportunity for you to voice your concerns, provide feedback and share your ideas.

Please submit your questions or concerns to councillor_thompson@toronto.ca

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.