

# Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson

## Scarborough Centre Virtual Town Hall 5

### June 4, 2020

I would like to thank everyone who participated in my Virtual Town Hall on Thursday, June 4 with our special guest Mayor John Tory. Thanks for sharing your questions, ideas and concerns regarding COVID-19 recovery, racism and the police budget. Here are a few key messages presented by Mayor John Tory:

- Fight hard and stand up for your values and preserve your way of life especially given the COVID-19 threat.
- Support and strengthen each other during these challenging times.
- We acknowledge that anti-black racism and anti-indigenous racism exist in Toronto and other forms of hatred and discrimination in some cases which are systemic. I want to assure you that we are dealing with these issues. I pledge to provide the leadership necessary to make Toronto the most diverse City in the world.
- I am hopeful that we can work together for a brighter future.
- Remember to continue practising social and physical distancing and I look forward to celebrating with you soon.

Residents, let's also play our part by keeping in touch with your neighbours, friends and family online or by phone and looking out for those are who most vulnerable during this time. Here are some of the questions/concerns raised by residents and the responses:

**Question: I am requesting a fully public and completely independent investigation into the death of the 29-year-old woman, Regis Korchinski-Paquet. The cops involved in this incident must also be suspended and taken off our streets until we receive answers. Do you have an update on this matter?**

**Response:** An independent investigation is being conducted by the Special Investigations Unit on the tragic death of Regis Korchinski –Paquet. The investigation is expected to be transparent and includes frequent public updates which are not usually a feature of SIU investigations. So far, there are no updates and the SIU/police are not allowed to comment. I will provide an update when the information is made available.

**Question: I am expressing my outrage regarding the Toronto Police Service budget of \$1.076 billion from the total \$13.5 billion 2020 operational budget for the City of Toronto (an increase of 4% since 2019). We need an immediate redistribution of funds from policing to mental health and crisis supports that are completely unaffiliated from the police. I would like to see this large portion of my tax dollars reallocated into social services, health care, education, jobs, and city infrastructure. I would also like to see any budget that is allocated to Toronto Police Services made transparent and with a focus on harm reduction including the mandatory use of body cameras for all officers.**

**Response:** Mayor Tory is calling for the provincial and federal governments to step up on mental health funding and said the city is actively looking to purchase body cameras for officers and is expanding community outreach. He added that, “there is need to restore trust in police by having police officers in the community for years at a time, the same police officers actually walking through the neighbourhoods, developing relationships with people. Toronto has fewer police per capita than Vancouver, Montreal and most cities in the State – there also needs to be more money for mental health issues but this should not come out of the police budget, the onus should be on the province. This notion that we’re going to defund the police, is not a credible option. I don’t think anybody can realistically put his motion forward”.

**Question: Could you please provide information on the new CafeTO initiative?**

**Response:** On June 4<sup>th</sup>, the City of Toronto launched the CaféTO plan to help create more outdoor space for local restaurants and bars. The program will make it easier for restaurant and bar owners to open patios, to expand them, and to access additional space for physical distancing and for that matter revenue generation during the summer months ahead. The program will provide more outdoor dining areas by identifying space in the public right-of-way and expediting the current application and permitting process for sidewalk cafés and parklets.

Currently, restaurants and bars along with their patios remain closed due to provincial orders and public health recommendations. City staff are getting ready now so that we can act quickly to help restaurants and bars. A key feature of CaféTO will be to allow businesses to establish options for café configurations within the right-of-way and in accordance with public health guidelines. This may potentially include waiving regular permit and application fees in order to install the cafes. More information will be available next week on [toronto.ca/cafeto](http://toronto.ca/cafeto). Residents are encouraged to support Local restaurants, especially during these times.

**Question: Can the Mayor, Councillors, MPPs and MPs together advocate for the mandatory use of masks at stores, public places and parks? Social distancing and laboratory testing will not be enough to lower the cases (to zero) unless community spread has been stopped through strictly obeying social distancing and using a mask when people are outside.**

**Response:** On Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson moved a motion that, “City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with City Solicitor, the Medical Officer of Health and other City Officials as required, to report to the June 29 and 30, 2020 meeting of City Council on the ability of the City to require the wearing of masks or face coverings by the public within permitted businesses, offices and public gathering places so as to ensure that the re-opening of permitted businesses and activities is done in a manner which protects the health and safety of the public”. Residents are advised to wear non-medical face masks when maintaining a two-metre distance isn’t possible.

**Question: Active TO was passed without consultation of residents. How is this possible? Cedar Brae for example did not require Quiet Street. I oppose the reduction of Brimley Road lanes to accommodate bicycles. The increase in bicycle use will in no way match the frustration of vehicle drivers. The street will be more dangerous than before. Already the lowering of the speed limit on Brimley Road and McCowan Road has led to more tail-gating than ever. How could you make such a decision without consulting residents?**

**Response:** All the areas identified for bicycle lanes on the ActiveTO plan were already scheduled to be installed as per the City's Cycling Network Plan that was approved in 2016 and again in 2019. ActiveTO accelerated the installation of these plans. As people return to work, there will be those will be anxious to use public transit. We also do not want everyone driving to the Downtown core.

This initiative includes approximately 25 kilometres of new bikeways along with the final approval and acceleration of 15-kilometres of cycling routes previously planned for this year, for a total of approximately 40 kilometres of new on-street cycling lanes in 2020 to be installed. An expanded cycling network aims to allow people on bikes to move around Toronto safely, to better connect those on bikes to the places they need to go, and to mirror major transit routes to provide a safety valve for the TTC during the COVID-19 restart and recovery. The proposed plan includes flexibility so that the bikeway installations can be adjusted based on considerations such as changing traffic volumes and the evolving needs of residents and businesses in the wake of the pandemic.

My next Virtual Town Hall will be held on Thursday June 11<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm with Special Guest, 10 year old Darius Spence who recently shared his perspective on racism, bullying and misconduct in a compelling interview on Global news. This is also an opportunity for residents to voice their concerns, provide feedback and share their ideas on ways to improve our community.

Residents are encouraged to submit their questions or any pressing issue/s via email at [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 Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.

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).