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## Tuesday September 15 Update

Dear Neighbour,

I returned to the Ontario Legislature this week, against an ominous backdrop of growing COVID-19 cases. The second wave has arrived. We are calling on the Ford Government to release a comprehensive plan for the second wave, including listening to public health experts, making school safer, ensuring that testing meets demand, and bolstering our healthcare system so it can manage both COVID-19 patients and regular health care needs, including surgeries.

We must remain diligent. I urge you to carefully follow all the public health recommendations, including physical distancing, washing your hands, and wearing a mask indoors.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jessica Bell'.

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

### My newsletter for this week includes:

- [Share your thoughts on the return to school using my online survey](#)
- [I am calling for more testing sites as kids go back to school, lines grow](#)
- [Toronto now requiring short term rentals to register with the city](#)
- [U of T reopening plan generates controversy](#)
- [Temporary bike lanes are a welcome addition, but need to be permanent](#)



## Share your thoughts on the return to school using my online survey

With a mixture of anxiety and relief, I dropped my son off for his first day of senior kindergarten this morning.

It is absolutely critical that we continue our work to fight for safe schools. That is why I am asking for your input into [a survey to help me better understand what you are noticing and what you are feeling about the return to school](#). Your answers will be used in the aggregate, and I will not be evaluating individual responses. I will use the results of this survey to highlight your concerns in the

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The survey will accept responses until Sept 30th, 2020.



## I am calling for more testing sites as kids go back to school, lines grow

Last week I began receiving reports from residents concerned about long wait times at local COVID-19 testing sites, Toronto Western and Women's College hospitals. On Friday, I visited the Women's College Hospital's testing centre where I saw long lines and spoke with residents who were waiting for up to four hours for a test.

Waiting for hours on end is impossible for many and as temperatures drop, will become unsafe. As positive cases continue to climb in Ontario and more than two million students and staff head back to school, we need to expand testing capacity and ensure testing is accessible for everyone.

[More on the NDP's statement here.](#)

## Toronto now requiring short-term rentals to register with the city

As part of a broader effort to regulate short-term rentals across the city, [Toronto is now requiring anyone renting out their home for 28 days or less](#) to register with the city. Short-term rentals are now only allowed in your primary residence.

Taking steps to regulate short-term rentals like AirBnb is a critical step in tackling Toronto's housing affordability crisis because it will return units to the long-term rental market and prevent new investment properties from being turned into illegal short-term rentals.

Those currently renting out their homes or planning to do so [must be registered with the city by December 31](#). Please contact 311 if you want to initiate a complaint against an illegal AirBnB listing. Our office is also able to assist.



## U of Toronto reopening plan generates controversy

As the University of Toronto (U of T) announced its reopening plans, I was contacted by a number of faculty, staff, and teaching assistants, including CUPE 3902 and the University of Toronto Faculty Association, who expressed concern about the University of Toronto's decision to partially open the university to in-person classes, instead of following the lead of other colleges and universities, such as York University, and staying online for the fall.

This is [CUPE 3902's petition](#) to the University of Toronto calling for a pause on in-person learning, teaching, librarianship and other academic work until the safety of faculty and students can be guaranteed. I have also communicated your concerns directly to University of Toronto leadership.

I do not want the reopening of the University of Toronto to facilitate the spread of COVID19 on campus and within the University-Rosedale community, similar to what we are seeing with the reopening of colleges in the United States. Staff, faculty, students deserve to be safe at work.

Negotiations with staff and the University of Toronto continue to progress. Please reach out to my office if you have questions or concerns about this important safety issue.



## Temporary bike lanes are a welcome addition, but need to be permanent

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practice physical distancing as more people return to their commutes in the coming weeks and months. [I fully support this plan.](#)

Last Wednesday, I, along with Councillor Layton and Councillor Wong-Tam, attended the Bloor East Neighbourhood Association's ribbon cutting of the new Bloor East bike lane. The Bloor East Neighbourhood Association has been fighting for a bike lane along Bloor East for nearly a decade.

Despite bike lane infrastructure being key to Toronto's [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#), the bike lane expansions under the ActiveTO program are considered temporary and we could lose them by next summer.

Please tell Mayor John Tory just how important these bike lanes are to our health, our safety and our city by emailing him at [mayor\\_tory@toronto.ca](mailto:mayor_tory@toronto.ca). Don't forget to also CC my office [JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca)!

[I will continue to push for the Ontario Government to do its part to make our roads safe for all](#), including expanding the use of safety cameras, introducing a Vision Zero plan, and introducing tougher penalties on rule-breaking drivers who injure or kill a pedestrian or cyclist.

## Time to turn city golf courses into parks and more

[Did you know the City of Toronto owns seven golf courses?](#) On Monday, the City's Government Management Committee voted to extend the life of five of the City of Toronto golf courses for another two years. These golf courses are Dentonia Park, Don Valley, Humber Valley, Scarlett Woods and Tam O'Shanter. This decision will now go to City Council for full approval on September 30.

### Now is the time to take action.

In this pandemic, access to public space is in short supply and many of our city's residents are struggling to make ends meet. It is unfair to limit the use of city land to those who can afford to pay up to \$75 on a game of golf. Despite the high cost to play, the city's golf courses are expensive to maintain and do not generate revenue for the city. With over 100 golf courses in the GTA available for public use, the popularity of city-run golf courses is in a steady decline.

Now is the time to contact the City and urge them to convert these golf courses into parks during the pandemic, and then launch a public consultation to decide how our city-owned land should be best used for the public good.

Send a message to your City Councillor and [Mayor John Tory](#) today.

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**Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available**

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As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at [jbell-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbell-co@ndp.on.ca)



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