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Wednesday June 17 COVID-19 Update

Dear neighbour,

This week, I introduced 33 changes to [Bill 171](#), the Building Transit Faster Act, a bill which allows construction companies to run roughshod over municipalities, businesses, and residents as they build transit.

We need to build transit, and we need to build it right. The amendments I introduced included community benefits agreements to ensure projects hire equitably and benefit local neighbourhoods, a fair expropriations process, a residents bill of rights during construction to protect them from unreasonable noise and vibration, a fair environmental assessment process, and compensation for businesses harmed by the impact of transit construction. **The Ford Government voted all of them down.**

Transit planning should follow the mantra: measure twice and cut once. This government is trying to measure and cut at the same time. No good will come from that. You can send a message to Ford calling for a better Ontario Line [here](#).

On a more celebratory note, we're in the middle of Pride month and I want to wish you all a **Happy Pride!** The origin and history of Pride is one of people standing up for justice, at great personal cost. Though Pride looks very different this year from others, I see the tradition and history of Pride reflected loud and clear in University-Rosedale this year - in the streets, in online protests, and in the quieter acts of resistance, solidarity, and mutual support all around us.

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hosted by the Ontario NDP on June 25th, from 6:00-7:00pm. This will be a chance to come together virtually while showcasing 2SLGBTQIA+ artists from across the province.

Please continue to [self-monitor](#) for any symptoms of COVID-19, [get tested](#) if necessary, wear a mask when in public, and [maintain](#) social distance with those outside of your circle.

Yours,



Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

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Social circles of up to 10 people now allowed

The Ontario Government is now encouraging Ontarians to establish a social "circle" of up to 10 people who can interact and come into close contact with one another without physical distancing, even if they are not in the same household. You may have heard them also referred to as 'cohorts' or 'bubbles'. Here is a [practical step-by-step guide](#) on how to apply the social circle guidelines to your life.

In short, a social circle is a way to reconnect with loved ones and friends in a manner that controls the spread of infection. They are groups of up to 10 people who all mutually agree to limit their close-contact interactions within that group. Social circles are different from the guidelines for gatherings, which have also increased from 5 to 10 people. Here's the difference as described in the government's [announcement](#):

Social circles: No more than 10 people who commit to one circle only and can interact and come into close contact with one another without physical distancing. Social circles will support the mental health and well-being of Ontarians and help reduce social isolation.

Social gatherings: Up to 10 people gatherings allowed, but physical distancing of at least two metres should be maintained. For example, the expansion of

respecting physical distancing advice.



Act now to ensure child care reopens safely and affordably

There's no economic recovery without child care. I'm advocating for the provincial government to step in and ensure child care can reopen in a way that is safe and affordable. Yesterday [I asked the Premier directly](#) how this government expects child care centres to reopen without the support they need.

[Send a message to Premier Ford and Education Minister Lecce](#) to demand increased funding and other supports so operators can provide safe, quality, child care without facing permanent shut down or hiking fees for parents. Know families impacted by the reopening of daycare? Please help spread the word. Facebook link [here](#) and twitter link [here](#).

A phased approach to reopening city-run child care

safety measures.

Toronto is in financial trouble

COVID-19 has left the City of Toronto with a 1.5 billion dollar shortfall this year, and since provincial law forbids municipalities from running deficits, the City is left with an impossible choice between cutting services or drastically raising taxes.

If the Ford Government doesn't step up soon, the City's Budget Office will have to dramatically raise taxes. [One estimate](#) calculates a whopping 47% increase in order to make up the shortfall, or face devastating cuts to core services like child care, fire, shelters, and transit. This could also mean the loss of as many as 19,184 city staff.

That's why I joined my fellow Toronto NDP MPPs in asking Ford to act before it's too late. You can read our full letter [here](#).

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) will be extended for another two months

The federal government announced yesterday that the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which was due to expire soon for many, [will be extended for another 8 weeks](#) for those who still can't work. Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is [calling on the government](#) to extend CERB by at least four months, plus create a long-term plan to repair Canada's employment insurance (EI) program, so that it better supports Canadians unable to work.

New data dashboard shows where we are in fight against COVID-19

COVID-19 recovery. The COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard is now live on the City's [COVID-19 information webpage](#).

These indicators focus on criteria in the four following areas:

1: Virus Spread and Containment: Includes numbers on new COVID-19 cases and trends, the number of local outbreaks, and hospitalizations.

2: Laboratory Testing: Refers to lab testing trends, including the processing time for completing and reporting a test, and the percent of all tests that are positive.

3: Health System Capacity: Refers to acute and critical care capacity in local hospitals, including ICU bed and ventilator capacity.

4: Public Health System Capacity: Refers to indicators that monitor how quickly we are following up on positive COVID-19 cases and their close contacts, for testing and self-isolation.

Masks to become mandatory on the TTC

On the advice of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, the TTC intends to make face coverings mandatory as of July 2. This can help to stop the spread of germs and respiratory droplets to those around you when physical distancing is challenging, reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the city. Exemptions will be made for children under two years of age and for those who have medical considerations or are unable to put on or take off a face covering. The TTC will be providing one million non-medical masks to transit riders, with a targeted distribution focus for priority and vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Temperature screenings now required for air travel

The Minister of Transport announced that the Government of Canada [will now require temperature screenings for all passengers](#) travelling to Canada or travellers departing Canadian airports for either international or domestic destinations.

Advocating to prevent *all* commercial evictions during COVID-19

While I was pleased last week that the Ford Government responded to months of advocacy by committing to move forward with a temporary eviction ban, the bill as written only protects businesses who qualify for the federal CECRA, but whose landlords refuse to apply for it – meaning they must have a whopping 70 per cent reduction in income. The bill is also retroactive to just June 3, leaving out all the commercial tenants whose eviction notices arrived between March and June 3.

That is why I support my colleagues in pushing for [two crucial changes to the legislation](#), to ensure it includes all businesses in a legislated moratorium on commercial evictions during the pandemic, and making that protection retroactive to mid-March.

Key provisions of the Environmental Bill of Rights reinstated

Key provisions of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) were reinstated today. They had been quietly revoked in April, under the pretext of COVID-19, allowing the government to make environmental decisions without informing the public. Thank you to the many people, including hundreds in University-Rosedale, who advocated on this issue and wrote to my office. In light of this government's ongoing attempts to claw back the environmental standards, we will be watching closely to make sure they do not attempt further attacks on the province's environmental protections.

New guide for employers on

plan

The Ontario Government has provided a [new general workplace guide](#), which will help employers develop a safety plan to better protect workers, customers and clients. The new downloadable toolkit offers tips on how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as more people get back on the job during Stage 2 of the reopening of the province.

Launch of SwimTO to help Torontonians access water this summer

The City of Toronto has announced [SwimTO](#) – a plan to help ensure that all Torontonians can safely access outdoor aquatic recreation and cool down during hot summer temperatures as the city begins to reopen. City staff are preparing now so that the City's beaches, outdoor pools, wading pools, and splash pads can safely operate when the Province allows Toronto to enter Stage Two of reopening.

While Toronto beaches have remained open throughout the pandemic in the same way green spaces in parks have been open, as part of the SwimTO plan, lifeguards will return to six of Toronto's swimming beaches as of Monday, June 22.

New guidelines released for weddings and funerals

The Ontario Government [has extended the number of people allowed to attend an indoor wedding or funeral ceremony](#) to a maximum of 30 per cent capacity of the ceremony venue. Wedding and funeral ceremonies taking place outdoors will be limited to 50 attendees. For both indoor and outdoor ceremonies, those attending must follow proper health and safety advice, including practising physical distancing from people who are not from the same household or their established 10-person social circle.

Culture and heritage sector up next in the Finance Committee's review of the impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's economy

Culture and Heritage will be the next sector considered during the Finance Committee's review of the impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's Economy.

If you would like to make a deputation before the committee, the deadline to request to appear is this Thursday June 18th at 5:00pm. The signup page is [here](#) (choose "Yes", then, on the dropdown menu, select "Study of the recommendations relating to the Economic and Fiscal Update Act 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on certain sectors of the economy" and follow the prompts.) Please let me know if you will be deputing.

Pandemic pay continues to be delayed

Close to 400,000 frontline workers in Ontario [have not received the pandemic pay Doug Ford promised](#) them two months ago. For many weeks, I have joined my colleagues in [pressing the government to ensure workers receive their much-deserved raise immediately](#), that it apply to all frontline workers, and for those top-ups to be retroactive to the start of the pandemic.

Pushing for transparency in important COVID-19 provincial decisions

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and the list of high-risk long-term care homes. Unfortunately, the committee creating the post-COVID-19 economic recovery plan for Ontario has now moved critical decisions into closed door meetings. I echo my colleague Ontario NDP House Leader Gilles Bisson in [denouncing this pattern of secrecy](#).

City of Toronto working on a plan to reopen farmers' markets

Toronto Mayor John Tory announced that the City of Toronto is working with market organizers [to safely reopen farmers' markets](#) usually located on 22 City sites. Toronto Public Health has prepared public health guidelines for farmers' markets organizers and vendors to help ensure the markets can open while reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. These guidelines include recommendations for crowd control, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and cleaning.

Today's COVID kindness feature

Today I'm so pleased to highlight **The People's Pantry**, a grassroots Toronto community response to COVID19. Since March, this mutual aid effort has been providing hot meals and grocery care packages to thousands of people across Toronto and the GTA impacted by COVID-19: free of charge, no questions asked, delivered to your door.

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Ellie and Yann are two of the hundreds of people who have put a lot of love into baking, cooking, delivering as well as back-end coordinating of the People's Pantry..and it shows!

Donate in support of the People's Pantry [here](#). **Request food** [here](#). **Volunteer** to help out [here](#). **Connect** with them and their community on facebook [here](#).

Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca



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