



# Suze Morrison

## MPP TORONTO CENTRE

October 1, 2021

Hon. Merilee Fullerton  
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
7th Flr, 438 University Ave,  
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

### **Re: Building Pandemic Resilience into Ontario Trillium Foundation Grants**

Dear Hon. Merilee Fullerton,

I am writing to ask that the Ontario Trillium Foundation explore how its funding streams can be adapted to address community resilience as we recover from COVID-19, particularly dedicated funding to support organizations that activate outdoor community spaces.

COVID-19 laid bare the vulnerabilities in Ontario's economic and social infrastructure to pandemics. In the last 20 years, Ontario has faced two pandemics (SARS-COV-1 and SARS-COV-2). It is reasonable to expect that pandemics will become a part of Ontario's future for years to come.

In large urban centres, like my riding of Toronto Centre, the realities of a pandemic mean that our outdoor public spaces become a lifeline for social connection. Activities in our parks, curbside patios, and public spaces mean that residents without private back yards or balconies are able to access safe outdoor spaces to maintain connections with their communities and social networks.

The Friends of Allan Garden (FOAG) are a perfect example of the kind of organization whose work builds pandemic resilience. FOAG works in the historic Allan Gardens park in Toronto's downtown east. They build community engagement in an outdoor space that has the potential to host partially or entirely outdoor gatherings for community building and education.

Organizations that can run outdoor events need more support. In future pandemics, having organizations with deep community connections and established capacity to transition as many community events to the outdoors is essential. Organizations like FOAG can help maintain this preparedness - but they need to be supported to recover from the pandemic and build that capacity.

Community organizations across Ontario need more funding made available through the Ontario Trillium Foundation to do this work.

A just recovery from COVID-19 must take the lessons learned from organizations like FOAG. I hope you will ensure that future grants help build an Ontario that is more immune to pandemics - including building capacity in organizations that are uniquely positioned to activate safe public spaces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suze Morrison".

Suze Morrison  
MPP, Toronto Centre