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## Friday, November 27 Update

This week, [Ontario's Auditor General released a scathing report](#) of Doug Ford's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the report, we learned Ontario's response to COVID-19 was slow and reactive, that Ontario's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Williams, was barred from taking actions that could have saved lives and that the Ford government's testing, case management, and contact tracing were not performed quickly enough to contain the virus.

Back in October during the height of Vermont Squares COVID-19 outbreak, [I asked the Premier why test results were taking weeks and hospitals were waiting for the funds they needed](#). Instead of ramping up support, the Ford government swept my concerns under the rug.

[The Auditor General's report is clear.](#)

- Because of lab capacity failures, an estimated 119,000 Ontarians who had COVID-19 were not tested
- Ontario took longer than other jurisdictions to develop the necessary lab capacity to allow anyone with COVID-19 symptoms to be tested
- Hospitals were reluctant to ramp up and expand testing capacity – particularly in the summer leading up to the 2nd wave - because the government refused to assure them that their costs could be recuperated
- The optimal amount of turnaround time to prevent spread for testing results is one day. At no point has Ontario's average reached that target

[My full reaction here.](#)

I will continue to hold the government to account and demand COVID-19 recommendations to the Premier are public, so we can see what he's acting on, what he's ignoring, and what he's making up.

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Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

### My newsletter for this week includes:

#### Updates from Queen's Park

- [Share your thoughts and watch committee hearings on Bill 213](#)
- [Ontario government guts Conservation Authorities in Budget Bill 229](#)
- [Cap on food delivery fees is too little, too late](#)
- [NDP Bill would give cities more say in pot shops' location](#)
- [NDP MPP asks Human Rights Commissioner to weigh in on LTB hearings](#)
- [Homes You Can Afford: Housing Town Hall Update](#)

#### Opportunities to volunteer

- [Flyer Maildrop, Sunday Nov. 29, 2:00-4:30](#)
- [Mobilize Mondays! Monday Nov. 30 6:00pm-7:30pm](#)
- [Uni-Rose Community-Care Project/ Encampment Support Drive, Sunday, Dec. 5, 1:00-4:00pm](#)

#### Community News

- [GO Expansion Program: Virtual Open House Nov. 27 to Dec. 11](#)
- [Tenants Workshops this Weekend](#)
- [TDSB Ward Forum – Thursday, Dec. 3](#)
- [Welcome TOWinter](#)
- [Congratulations, Dr. Ramona Mahtani!](#)

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## Share your thoughts and watch committee hearings on Bill 213

Canada Christian College has applied for the ability to confer arts and science degrees in Ontario. The owner Charles McVety is well known for his [support of the Premier](#), his [anti-science views](#), and his [homophobic and anti-Islamic statements](#). Any college or university with the ability to grant academic degrees should follow the Ontario Human Rights code and Canadian Charter of Rights. From [questionable academic integrity](#) and [credentials](#), to [murky finances](#) and a lack of a transparent process, many concerns have been raised about this application.

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Associations, National Council of Canadian Muslims, Cheri di Novo, Geoff Schoenberg and all those who applied to speak in person.

If you missed the opportunity to speak, there's still time to have your say. The deadline to [provide a written submission is Monday November 30th at 7 pm.](#)



## Ontario government guts Conservation Authorities in Budget Bill 229

The Ford government is rewriting the rules for agencies that protect Ontario watersheds, undermining their powers and allowing developers to skip checks and balances.

In Ontario, 36 conservation authorities manage hazards like flood control and water quality, issue permits for construction in areas near crucial waterways and oversee conservation lands. The changes to the rules undermine the agencies' ability to ensure development in flood-plains is done safely.

The changes were nestled inside [Bill 229](#), a bill introduced to enact measures the government outlined in its 2020 budget.

According to Canadian Environmental Law Association, the proposed changes to conservation authorities in Bill 229 will seriously harm our ability to build climate resilience in Ontario.

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will hold public hearings for Bill 229 on Monday, November 30, 2020, Tuesday, December 1, 2020 and Wednesday, December 2, 2020.

If you wish to comment on the Bill, please [send a written submission by 7:00 p.m. \(EST\) on Wednesday, December 2, 2020.](#)

Earlier this fall MPP Catherine Fife joined me for a Round Table on Small Business, where we heard from many in the restaurant industry about the financial strain delivery fee apps are putting on local businesses. Our offices jointly started a petition to "[Cap the App](#)", requesting the government impose restrictions on delivery service charges.

This week the government announced a 15% cap on delivery fees, but only for regions where indoor dining service is prohibited. Thousands of restaurants across the province do not have the same protection, and this gesture has come far too late for many small business owners.

[MPP Fife raised these concerns in the Legislature this week, and her statement can be found here.](#)

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## NDP Bill would give cities more say in pot shops' location

This week, NDP MPP Marit Stiles [tabled a bill](#) that would give Ontario's municipalities a say in the location and density of private cannabis stores within their communities.

COVID-19 and a lack of government support for small businesses have fundamentally changed our main streets. In many places, cannabis retail outlets have proliferated and replaced the diversity of shops and services that make a strong, varied local economy. Communities should be able to benefit from legalization without losing the diversity and character of local neighbourhoods.

Serena Purdy, Co-Chair of [Friends of Kensington Market](#), provided the following statement in support of this Bill:

"As a community we have already experienced one wave of clustered illegal dispensaries that left many empty storefronts in their wake...It is unreasonable for any community to absorb the considerable economic and community safety impact of a large number of stores within a small geographical area. Giving local communities a greater say in where and how many cannabis shops are concentrated in an area, as this bill seeks to do, would help ensure the character and diversity of neighbourhoods like Kensington Market are protected."

I fully support this Bill. In July, [I sent a letter](#) to Attorney General Doug Downey and Jean Major CEO of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) calling for Legislation governing the cannabis retail application process that considers matters of density, and proximity to other stores as part of the regular assessment process.

## NDP MPP asks Human Rights Commissioner to weigh in on LTB hearings

Every day my office hears from people who have had challenges dealing with the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). Virtual proceedings are making it very difficult for tenants to participate fairly. The LTB's virtual operations have been increasingly reported for systematic procedural unfairness, particularly impacting people with disabilities, those lacking access to technology and those facing language barriers.

My colleague, Ontario NDP critic for Tenant Rights, MPP Suze Morrison (Toronto Centre) has [written to the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner](#) asking her to advise on whether the current virtual operations of the LTB violate the Ontario Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights.

If you have participated in a virtual LTB hearing and have been treated unfairly, please write to my office at [JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca).




**Homes You Can Afford**  
**A Housing Town Hall**

An opportunity to hear from you about a new housing policy platform for Ontario

**Thursday, November 26, 6 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom**

  
**Jessica Bell**  
MPP University-Rosedale

  
**Sara Singh**  
MPP Brampton Centre

  
**Melissa Jean-Baptiste**  
Housing Lawyer

[www.jessicabellmpp.ca/homesyoucanafford](http://www.jessicabellmpp.ca/homesyoucanafford)

## Homes You Can Afford: Housing Town Hall Update

Last night I hosted a Homes You can Afford town hall with NDP Housing Critic Sara Singh and Melissa Jean-Baptiste Vadja, lawyer and affordable housing advocate. From the questions and comments, it's clear we have an affordable housing crisis in University-Rosedale. Attendees shared their experiences struggling to find accessible homes, struggling to find affordable places to live, and struggling to feel secure in their lease.

We need practical solutions that will keep folks housed long-term like rent control and renoviction protections, making it easier for folks to buy their first home and support for seniors who want to live in their home longer. For more information on the Ontario NDP' Homes You Can Afford platform, [follow this link](#).

Thank You to all who sent in questions and attended. A special Thank You to my two guests for sharing their expertise and practical suggestions. 🙏

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## Flyer Maildrop, Sunday Nov. 29 2:00-4:30

Join our community flyering session this Sunday from 2:00 to 4:30.

Meet up with Jessica and community volunteers to deliver flyers to mailboxes in the riding. The flyer includes information on how the office of Jessica Bell can help during the pandemic and how to support our latest community-care project. We ask you to wear a mask and follow [Public Health guidelines](#). Please confirm your attendance by emailing [JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca) and we will send you location details. Sunday's forecast is sunny and 8 degrees. ☀



## Mobilize Mondays! Nov. 30 6:00pm-7:30pm

Many in our community are facing additional challenges due to COVID-19. Our office has access to resources and information to share, and with your help we will be able to reach more people. We will meet up via Zoom, chat, hear updates from Jessica and make outreach calls using Callhub to our neighbours in University-Rosedale. Email [JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JBell-CO@ndp.on.ca) to express your interest and receive more information on "Mobilize Mondays." 📞



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UNIVERSITY-ROSEDALE'S NDP RIDING ASSOCIATIONS PRESENTS

# UNIVERSITY-ROSEDALE ENCAMPMENT SUPPORT DRIVE: PICK UP EDITION

Dec 5 & 6, 2020 | Location: Your Porch

Priority Items

New sleeping bags | New and used tents (pref. 6+ person)  
Large tarps | Clean blankets | Fire extinguishers  
Packs of socks and underwear for all genders  
Hand & feet warmers | gloves

Gift cards to Tim Hortons, Shoppers Drug Mart, Sobeys and Freshco

if you do not have these items and would like to do so, you  
can donate to the encampment support network via patreon  
patreon.com/esntoronto @esn.to.4real @esn\_to

SCAN ME

SIGN UP  
HERE

## Uni-Rose Community-Care Project/Encampment Support Drive, Sunday Dec. 5 1:00-4:00pm

Many in our community who are experiencing homelessness and facing additional challenges due to the pandemic. Crowding at underfunded emergency and refugee shelters was at crisis levels before COVID-19, and the pandemic has made this crisis more acute. Physical distancing measures are impossible within the cramped shared spaces, and we know hundreds of people are taking shelter in tents and makeshift enclosures throughout our city.

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housing so everyone has a safe affordable home. As we advocate for bold long-term solutions it is very important to keep people alive right now. That is why we are responding to a call out from the Encampment Support Network to fundraise and gather supplies for those who are experiencing homelessness.

Our Encampment Support Drive this month will be a pick-up edition: **our drivers will come to you!**

On Sunday, December 6th, we're asking folks to leave their donations for Encampment Support Network on their porch or by their door. Someone will come by for a contactless pick-up and drop your donation off to the Encampment Support Network.

[Fill out this form and we will be in touch via email to arrange your donation pick-up!](#)

Have a car and a few hours to spare? Drive for us! [Fill out the form and we will get back to you with more details](#). Drivers will be provided with a detailed route of their pick-up spots. We are offering fuel reimbursement for volunteers. 🚗

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## GO Expansion Program: Virtual Open House Nov. 27 to Dec. 11

Metrolinx will be hosting a virtual open house from November 27 to December 11, 2020, for six elements as part of the GO Expansion program:

New Track and Facilities Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP); Scarborough Junction Grade Separation TPAP; Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations TPAP; Network-Wide Structures Project (Addendum to the Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion TPAP 2017); to the GO Rail Network Electrification TPAP 2017; and Union Station Trainshed – Heritage Conservation.

For further information, [please see this flyer](#). 🚆



Announcing the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations'

# VIRTUAL TENANT SCHOOL



**Free legal workshops for tenants via Zoom**

Taught by staff from community legal clinics and  
the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations

**November 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020,  
2 – 3:30 PM**



- ✓ Learn to organize tenants effectively
- ✓ Learning how City Hall operates

Tenant Organizing  
Date: Saturday, November 28  
Time: 2:00-3:30 PM

Working with Government  
Sunday, November 29  
2:00-3:30 PM

To register and receive your Zoom invite, go to  
<https://forms.gle/KSPPhnanN3cy5RYKW7> for the online registration  
form or contact Joeita Gupta at [joeita@torontotenants.org](mailto:joeita@torontotenants.org) or  
**416-413-9442**. For more information: [www.torontotenants.org](http://www.torontotenants.org)

## Tenants Workshops this Weekend

The [Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations](http://www.torontotenants.org) is offering a Virtual Tenant School this weekend, Saturday and Sunday.

The focus of the sessions will be learning how to organize effectively and how to work with City Hall to fight for your rights.

[Click here to register.](https://forms.gle/KSPPhnanN3cy5RYKW7) 

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TDSB Trustee Chris Moise's Ward Forum will be held on Thursday December 3rd 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The agenda includes an update from Trustee Moise, special presentations on wellness during COVID-19 and the election of a Ward 10 PIAC Alternate. Attendees need to register at least 24 hours in advance; [registration and details here.](#) 🗳️

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## Welcome TOWinter

The City of Toronto launched its Welcome TOWinter Parks Plan this week, which offers safe ways for people to enjoy the outdoors this winter. These new initiatives include: eight snow loops at City-run golf courses for walking or snowshoeing, 54 outdoor rinks with an on-line registration system and guided outdoor walk fit programmes.

[For more details, click here.](#) ❄️

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## Congratulations, Dr. Ramona Mahtani!

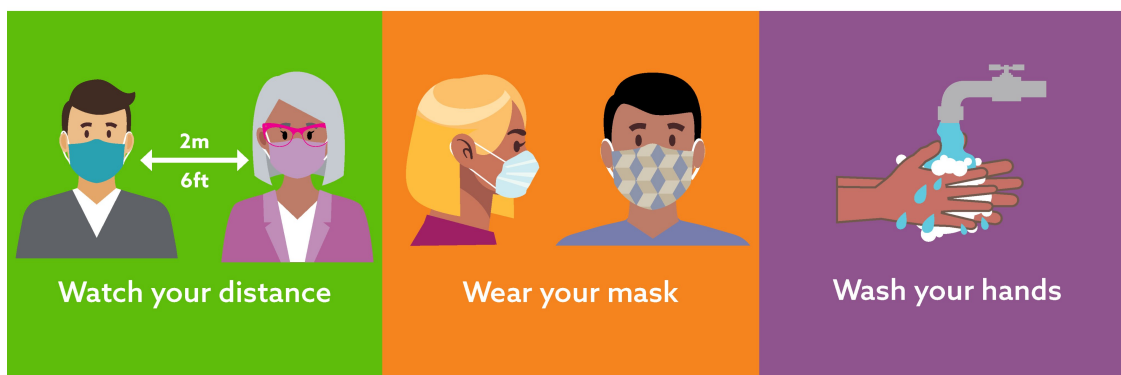
We are proud to announce Dr. Ramona Mahtani has received the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's 2021 Council Award following a nomination from our office.

lives. Dr. Mahtani provided compassionate care not only to patients but to their families. She performed virtual rounds on every single resident up to 2 times per day every day and continues to provide care to those residents now.

Thank you, Dr. Mahtani for your hard work, dedication and relentless compassion. 🙏

## 3 STEPS FOR SELF-PROTECTION

We all have a role to play to reduce COVID-19 spread & keep our city safer:



[TORONTO.CA/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/covid19)

 **Toronto** Public Health

## Now is the time to follow public health guidelines

As COVID-19 cases climb in Ontario, please consider these reminders from Toronto Public Health to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

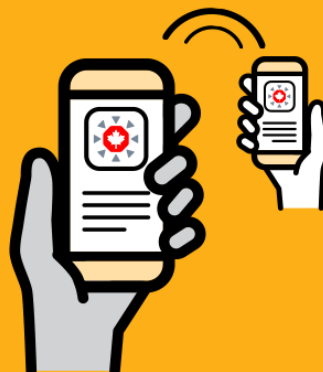
The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed:

- Limit non-essential trips out of your home and follow [travel advice](#)
- Keep [two metres \(six feet\) distance](#) from others
- [Wear a mask or face covering](#) in indoor public spaces and when you can't keep physical distance
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based (70-90 per cent) hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell

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downloaded the app and I encourage you to do the same.

**Protect your  
community.  
Download the  
COVID Alert app.**



Canada

**Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: [www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus](http://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](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca)



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