



# Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

June 11, 2021

Dear Neighbours,

In recent weeks, my team and I have been in conversation with many community members regarding the large number of visitors to Trinity Bellwoods Park, especially as the summer weather heats up. While many people come to enjoy the park and get outside, recently there have been large gatherings, parties, and demonstrations that have resulted in loud and disruptive amplified noise, excessive litter, and human waste. I've also heard from residents and visitors to the park of who have felt threatened and unsafe. These occurrences are not acceptable, and they impact everyone's ability to enjoy the park and our surrounding community.

Over the past year, our city's parks and outdoor spaces have become especially important. With public health directives asking that people not socialize indoors due to increased risk of COVID-19 transmission, our parks are, for many Torontonians who don't have access to private outdoor space, the only place to safely see friends and family, and to get exercise and fresh air. As a result, many of the parks across our city have seen significant increases in the volume of visitors.

I know that this increase in use has created new challenges for residents who live near parks, including Trinity Bellwoods. There have been incidents with large gatherings and parties with inadequate physical distancing and aggressive behaviour. Unfortunately, Trinity Bellwoods has also been a regular weekend destination for "anti-mask" protests, adding to the issues of noise, litter, and aggressive behaviour confronting park visitors and local residents.

We all have a responsibility to keep our park amenities clean, safe, and accessible for everyone. Trinity Bellwoods serves a large downtown area, and all users must be mindful of our neighbours when in this space. The status quo is unacceptable. It's everyone's responsibility to clean up after themselves, keep noise to a reasonable level, and ensure that our parks can be enjoyed by all. It's also the City's role to do more.

I have been convening twice-weekly meetings with the City's Integrated Enforcement Team to push for more regular and visible enforcement presence at the Park to counteract these gatherings and events. Yesterday I spoke again with representatives from the Toronto Police Service and City staff, and shared our community's concerns. I have now confirmed that additional dedicated enforcement will be present in Trinity Bellwoods this upcoming weekend from the afternoon through the late evening. Officers from 14 Division will be on-site throughout the weekend, along with the City's bylaw officers, with a specific mandate to address issues related to amplified music or noise, gatherings that exceed 10 people, and aggressive or destructive activity.

The City of Toronto is responsible for effectively accommodating the large numbers of people who would like to responsibly enjoy Trinity Bellwoods and other destination parks downtown. In recent weeks, the City has taken the following steps to respond to the park's heavy use:

- Park washrooms are all open except for the north building, which is being repaired. Five portable toilets are installed in the meantime. Washrooms in the adjacent community centre are also open.
- 20 additional waste bins have been added in the park, and City staff are continuously monitoring the use of the waste bins and portable toilets for additional need.
- City staff have adjusted work plans to send additional resources to clean up the park after heavy use on weekends.
- Physical distancing circles have been painted in the grass to help people follow public health guidelines.
- Trinity Bellwoods is a priority park for regular attendance by the Toronto Police and bylaw enforcement. This past weekend, 18 tickets were issued to people for liquor licence and COVID-19 bylaw offences, as well as amplified sound. Set fines for COVID-related offenses are \$750-\$1,000.

Following direction from City Council earlier this week, our Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will also increase the number of accessible portable toilets with sinks acquired for use in parks this summer by 50. These portable toilets and sinks will be installed in park areas that have received complaints about public urination and with a large number of park users, and will be cleaned twice per day in accordance with public health guidelines.

The City is continuing to implement programs like ActiveTO, which is designed to give people more space for physical distancing while getting outside for exercise and fresh air, and CafeTO, which provides local restaurants with patio space for when we transition into Stage 1 of the Province's Re-Opening Plan. I will continue to advocate for more opportunities for greenspace and parkland in our community, while working with City staff and bylaw enforcement to monitor and address complaints regarding upkeep and activity at Trinity Bellwoods.

If you have a complaint or a concern about activity occurring in Trinity Bellwoods, you can always reach out to my office. However, the following City contacts can provide an immediate response to certain issues:

**311 Toronto:** 3-1-1 | 416-338-0889 (TTY)

- Report amplified sound
- Excessive litter
- Damage to park grounds and equipment

**Police Non-Emergency Line:** 416-808-2222 | 416-467-0493 (TTY)

- Report crimes where no person is in immediate danger (i.e. theft, vandalism, fraud), as well as excessive noise if is the result of a protest, large gathering, or demonstration

**Toronto Fire Services General Inquiries:** 416-338-9050 | [fire@toronto.ca](mailto:fire@toronto.ca)

- Report or ask questions regarding fire safety issues in parks or public areas

**911:** In an emergency, always dial 9-1-1 (fires, crimes in progress, medical emergencies requiring an ambulance)

Visit [www.toronto.ca/COVID-19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID-19) for information on the COVID-19 response and resources.

As we prepare for re-opening, it's especially important that we all continue to look out for one another, and be respectful of our neighbours and our community. I will continue to promote this message and to provide Ward 10 residents with updates on actions underway to keep our parks and shared spaces welcoming and accessible for everyone. For regular updates, sign up for my email newsletter at [joecressy.com/newsletter](http://joecressy.com/newsletter)

Sincerely,



Joe Cressy