



MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office

DATE: March 24, 2020
TO: Mayor and Council
THROUGH: Steve McHarris, Interim City Manager *Steve McHarris*
FROM: Ashwini Kantak, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus/COVID-19 Update

The health of our employees, residents, and businesses remains the highest priority for the City of Milpitas.

OVERVIEW

The City of Milpitas continues to implement its response and plans regarding the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and the COVID-19 disease in Santa Clara County in collaboration with the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health. The previous Council update on March 17 discussed the closure of City Hall, and the City's measures to ensure continuity of essential services and City Council meetings.

At the March 17 City Council meeting, the City Council unanimously ratified the declaration of an emergency initiated by the Interim City Manager on March 12. The City Council also unanimously approved Temporary Emergency Pay for all employees, full time and part time, who do not have work or are unable to do so. This pay became effective March 17 and will continue through April 7. At the March 17 Council meeting, the Council also approved the establishment of an Economic Development Subcommittee. Councilmembers Montano and Dominguez were appointed to serve on the Subcommittee; the first meeting is scheduled on March 24. The purpose of this Subcommittee is to explore small business loan and relief programs.

Following the County of Santa Clara's shelter in place order to slow the spread of COVID-19, on March 19, the Governor of California issued a statewide shelter in place [order](#). Given the measures the City already implemented following the County's directive, staff is evaluating whether there need to be any changes or updates to our approach.

This is a rapidly evolving situation that is changing daily. As the lead agency on public health the County is regularly updating its guidance, which can be viewed [here](#).

MILPITAS RESPONSE AND PREPARATIONS

The City of Milpitas continues to operate at Stage 5 (Extremely High Response) of our Pandemic Management Plan. Operating at Stage 5 translates into the suspension of all non-essential City programs and services, the closure of City facilities, and full activation of the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). An Information Memo was sent to the City Council on March 22, related to the City's [EOC operations](#).

Our City's response will enable us to fulfill the four priorities of our Pandemic Response Plan:

1. **Protecting Our People:** Ensuring the safety and well-being of our employees.
2. **Continuity of Essential City Operations:** Sustaining delivery of critical City services.
3. **Effective Communication:** Ensuring timely and consistent communication internally with our employees and externally with our community.
4. **Support the Santa Clara County Public Health Department:** Provide resource and communication support to assist the County Public Health Officer, the County, and all our partners in mutual commitment to protect the people of our communities.

Update on City Services and Operations:

All City facilities are closed to the public until further notice. The Office of Emergency Services continues to operate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at a full activation level.

- **Public Meetings:** City Council meetings will continue to be set up for Council and required staff to call in. Due to the State's relaxation of the Brown Act, there will be no publicly accessible viewing space established. The public may livestream the meeting on the City's Facebook and virtually provide [public comments](#) during the meeting. The majority of Board, Commission, and Committee meetings are cancelled or postponed until further notice. Accommodations are being made to hold any essential meetings virtually.
- **City Employees:** We continue to provide regular updates to City of Milpitas employees. On March 23, 2020 the City Manager sent an update to all City Employees regarding the [preliminary projected Fiscal Impact](#) and assured the employees that no significant service changes (except as related to COVID-19) or position reductions were imminent and that the status quo would continue at least through April 7. The City Manager is also personally reaching out to Milpitas employee union leadership throughout this week. The City is continuing to have employees work in person or remotely on essential services and other City functions and for those employees who are unable to work, the City is providing Temporary Emergency Pay through April 7, 2020.
- **Milpitas Fire Department:** The Fire Department's field operations continue to operate at normal levels. As of this update, 5 sworn personnel have tested positive, and 8 personnel who may have been exposed are being monitored and are quarantined. A [News Release dated March 23](#) was sent to the media, Council, and City employees and has been posted on the City's website. The City will continue to provide updates to these numbers.
- **Milpitas Police Department:** The Police Department's field operations continue to operate at normal levels. As noted in a [News Release](#) and communication to the Council, a crossing guard has tested positive. Police Officers have been directed to contact those in violation of the Public Health Order and to gain compliance. If needed, officers are prepared to issue citations for violating the order. The most recent information is two police officers are showing virus symptoms and are quarantined at their homes. One officer received COVID-19 testing, late yesterday, and another will receive a test on Wednesday.

- **Business Assistance:** The Office of Economic Development has been proactively reaching out to Milpitas businesses with information and resources. Updated information is available through the [Economic Development website](#). Staff is also offering assistance to small businesses to access Small Business Administration loans. An [Information Memo](#) on business assistance was sent to the Council on March 24. The first Economic Development Subcommittee meeting will also be held on March 24 to discuss additional options to assist the business community. Please see agenda [here](#).
- **Permit Center and Inspection Services:** Although the Permit Center located at City Hall is closed for all in-person service, staff continues to provide permit and plan review services via online, email, website information, telephone, and tele or web conferencing. Building inspection and fire inspection services continue to be available for new housing construction, health care-related facilities, and emergency or life safety installations. Please see detailed service options [here](#).
- **Recreation and Community Services:** All Park playgrounds have been taped off and are closed to the public as of March 23, until further notice. Information about these closures was posted on the City's Social Media pages on Saturday, March 21, and are posted at each playground site. Parks are still available for passive recreation. As of March 24, all tennis courts and basketball courts will not be available for public use. All community programs and gatherings are cancelled until further notice, including private rentals in city facilities and park picnic areas. The Senior Nutrition Program will continue to provide To-Go lunches to seniors. Social distancing measures for the Nutrition Program have been in place since Wednesday, March 18. Staff is also coordinating with Milpitas Unified School District to provide information and request services through the Silicon Valley Strong effort.
- **Public Works:** Water, sewer, stormwater, and traffic signal operation services continue to operate at normal levels. In the interest of public health concerns, the City will be deferring all utility shut offs until after the emergency has ended. Staff also continues to provide maintenance services for facilities, fleet, parks, enhanced cleaning for some City facilities, emergency services for trees and streets, and Underground Service Alert services for construction projects. Staff also continues to work with Milpitas Sanitation to ensure adequate staffing is available for solid waste collection in the City. Public Works staff are also working to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations for all public works services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant global economic impacts. On March 20, [an Information Memo](#) outlining a preliminary analysis of the fiscal impact of COVID-19 was sent to the City Council. On March 20, an Information Memo outlining a preliminary analysis of the fiscal impact of COVID-19 was sent to the City Council. Although the preliminary impact is estimated between \$16 and \$20 million over the next 16 months, staff intends to address this shortfall for now without service level changes and position reductions, other than those taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City Manager will institute a temporary hiring and expenditure freeze (except for COVID-19 response activities) and other essential activities to generate savings and boost our reserves. Our hope is that the substantial economic impact will be short-lived.

As the economic impact related to COVID-19 continues to evolve, staff is monitoring its impact on the City's budget. Staff plans to bring forward budget adjustment recommendations for the current fiscal year at the May 5th City Council meeting. Additionally, the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Proposed Budget will include significant revenue reductions offset with recommended actions to balance next year's budget.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The City will continue to update its [COVID-19 webpage](#) that has been established specifically for information about coronavirus. We will also be providing regular public updates on Tuesdays and Fridays (or more often as needed) through our social media accounts on Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter.