



MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office

DATE: August 10, 2020
TO: Mayor and Council
THROUGH: Steve McHarris, City Manager *Steve McHarris*
FROM: Ashwini Kantak, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus/COVID-19 Update #19

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 to 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 July 14 discussed updates on County and State guidelines, including the State's "County Monitoring List" and Santa Clara County's status on the list.

As the lead agency on public health, the County is regularly updating its guidance, which is available in five different languages and can be viewed [here](#). The County also has a [data dashboard](#) that is updated with all the latest information. The City continues to work closely with the County to ensure the safety and security of our community.

Key Updates:

Status of current COVID-19 data – due to a significant and unresolved problem with the State of California Cal REDIE reporting system, the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department, as well as County Public Health departments statewide, are experiencing significant underreporting of COVID-19 testing results. Because of these reporting issues, the information presented in County and State data dashboards since Mid-July 2020 is incomplete and likely does not reflect the infectious spread within the community. The effects of underreporting include erroneous case infection rates, test positivity rate and inhibits contact tracing in a timely fashion. The State is working on diagnosing the issues and resolving the problems with the reporting system and will make no changes to the County Monitoring List status until the reporting issues are resolved.

The [Santa Clara County eviction moratorium](#) protecting residential and small business tenants is in effect through August 31, and may be extended to September 30 by the County Board of Supervisors. For more information on this and the resources and assistance the City provides to the community, please see the [housing resources](#) webpage.

The City mobile testing unit continues to test daily, Monday-Friday at locations throughout the City. To date, the mobile test unit has tested nearly 3,500 people. As expected, the positivity rate of the mobile testing unit began to increase in July and has now leveled off at about 3-5%. Additionally, the percentage of Milpitas residents and workers tested has dropped from 90% in May and June to approximately 70% currently. With consistent results in 24 hours, the mobile testing unit has also been requested to assist military personnel and first responders throughout Santa Clara County. The testing

unit continues to focus on vulnerable populations in the City, including residential care facilities and senior mobile home parks with visits to these facilities scheduled every month.

Employee Self-Health Check App

On July 30, 2020, the City of Milpitas launched a self-health check app to ensure the safety of City staff and personnel, as well as the public. This app replaces the use of a Google-based self-health check form launched in early May that City staff had been using for safe reporting to work practices. The new app is to be used by all City employees and personnel who are entering City Hall or other City facilities as part of their essential work, except for Police and Fire, which have existing protocols in place. All employees entering a City facility, or a work site will use the app to respond to health questions based on CDC guidelines. If employees report certain symptoms, they will be contacted by HR to determine the appropriate response and whether the employee should report to the workplace or remain home.

The City held a Zoom webinar town hall on Thursday, August 6, to explain the use of the app and health protocols. Over 130 employees attended the town hall, a recording is also available on the intranet. The app can be found [here](#) and on the City's intranet, and will help create a safer workplace for the essential employees who cannot telework.

Microenterprise Grant Program

The recently approved Microenterprise Grant Program, funded by CDBG, is being implemented in partnership with [Enterprise Foundation](#) acting as the City of Milpitas' fiscal agent and administrator. Staff is building a webpage for the application process and will be launching the program shortly with a press release and Constant Contact message to businesses to coordinate and raise awareness about the program. Eligible business applications will be entered into a lottery system, with the ultimate selection of 38 grant recipients.

The City of Milpitas also has a Virtual Business Assistance Center, which can be reached through email at businessassistance@ci.milpitas.ca.gov, and offers assistance in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

Outdoor Businesses

Effective July 29, 2020, the State of California issued new industry guidance to allow certain local businesses to re-open with outdoor operations only. To assist local businesses in setting up outdoor operations on a temporary basis, the City of Milpitas has established specific Guidelines for Temporary Outdoor Personal Services (hair and nail salons), Gyms and Fitness Facilities, and Public Gatherings. The Planning Department is now accepting and reviewing electronic applications, free of charge. Prior to setting up outdoor operations, business owners must submit an application to the City of Milpitas Planning Department and receive confirmation of registration, and must also complete and submit a Social Distancing Protocol to the County and comply with requirements from the County Health Officer designed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Summer Day Camps

The City of Milpitas held six weeks of safe and fun socially distanced day camp programs at Cardoza Park, providing childcare to Milpitas families with close to seventy children enrolled over the six weeks. These day camps offered much-needed childcare to local parents, including essential workers, during these summer months.

Comments received from camp parents via a mid-program survey included:

“Camp was different this year but it’s a blessing for my kids to go out and have activities outside of home. They enjoyed the activities and staffs were very careful to make sure everyone sanitizes their hands and practice social distancing.”

“Thank you for taking all of the precautions necessary to keep them safe and still have a fun summer. Definitely the highlight of Cora's summer!”

Food Distribution

August 5 marked the 100th day of Senior “To Go” Lunch Service under the Shelter-In-Place Order. During these 100 days, 7,553 hot and healthy lunches have been served to seniors. Since the Order went into place, over 115 seniors and counting have signed up for the Senior Nutrition Program and have started receiving meals.

In partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, the City has helped manage seven (7) Second Harvest Food Bank food distributions, handing out over 13,000 boxes of food and filling close to 350 volunteer spots since the beginning of the Shelter-In-Place. Recreation employees also assisted with school district food distribution for low income families, helping hand out over 4,000 meals before the beginning of summer break.

Rent Relief

The City of Milpitas’s rent relief program is well underway after City Council approved \$200,000 toward the program. 130 residents have been assisted, and \$183,839.22 has been awarded in relief packages that are being disbursed through Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. This program offers rent relief to high-risk groups, including families with dependent children under 18, seniors over 55, victims of domestic violence, subsidized housing tenants, and emancipated youth age 18-24.

Community Partnerships

The City continues its community partner outreach to provide first responders with needed protective equipment, including hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, non-latex gloves, N95 face masks, and simple face masks in their original packaging. All donations for first responders can be dropped off at any Milpitas fire station.

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).

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.

Current Status 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.

- **Police Department Public Lobby:** The Milpitas Police Department lobby is open during business hours, 8 AM to 5 PM. Supplemental safety measures are in place to ensure the safety of our staff and visitors. Community members can contact the non-emergency number (408-586-2400) for any further questions.
- **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 gathering space arrangements. The public may livestream the meeting on the City's [Website](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube channel](#), as well as 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 meeting virtually.
- **City Employees:** The City is continuing to have employees work in person or remotely on essential services and other City functions. City staff has developed a self-check protocol that enables the safety of all employees. The protocols apply to all employees who are regularly coming to work to perform an essential service and may interact with the community or with other employees. Each City Department is responsible to coordinate the process for their respective employees. The self-check protocols are based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and will be updated according to any changes to CDC guidance.
- **Permit Center and Inspection Services:** Although the Permit Center located at City Hall is closed for in-person services, staff continues to provide permit and plan review services via email, website information, telephone, and tele or web conferencing. All construction is currently allowed as indicated in the latest Santa Clara County Public Health Order. However, construction activities must implement mandatory risk reduction measures and comply with the [Mandatory Directive for Construction Projects](#) effective July 13. For detailed City service descriptions, refer to the latest [Permit Center and Inspection Services Information Flyer](#).

- **Recreation and Community Services:** All Recreation programs, classes, and facilities have been carefully evaluated to ensure public safety as programming restarts. The City has developed [an approach](#) for summer Recreation programming to restart that upholds guidance and best practices from County public health authorities. Parks are available for passive recreation only, and all Park playgrounds, picnic areas, and other shared spaces are taped off and closed to the public. All community programs and gatherings are cancelled until further notice, including private rentals in City facilities and park picnic areas. The Senior Center remains closed for programming. The center offers “to-go” lunches, as a continuation of its Senior Nutrition Lunch Program.
- **Other City Services:** Water, sewer, stormwater, and traffic signal operation services continue to operate at normal levels. 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 that are allowed under the County order. Staff 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. The City has established a virtual Utility Call Center from employees’ homes to ensure continuity of services. Meter reading staff will continue to respond to water service calls and maintain the City’s meter reading schedule.
- **Volunteers:** The City's Milpitas Volunteer Program (MVP) continues to recruit volunteers for various community support efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community members looking to register as a volunteer and receive regular monthly updates on local volunteer needs can [visit our volunteer page](#).

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 through our social media accounts on Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter.