

MEMORANDUM

Office of the City Manager



DATE: November 17, 2020
TO: Mayor and Council
THROUGH: Steve McHarris, City Manager *Steve McHarris*
FROM: Ashwini Kantak, Assistant City Manager *Ashwini Kantak*
SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus/COVID-19 Update #29

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 November 7 discussed updates on the opening of an innovative new laboratory in California that will increase the state's COVID-19 testing capacity, reduce test turnaround time and create hundreds of new California jobs. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director, Dr. Anthony Fauci also discussed the five things that would drastically alter the future months: universal wearing of masks, physical distancing, avoiding congregated settings and crowds, doing things more outdoors instead of indoors and washing hands.

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:

State

State of California Moves Back to Purple Tier

Governor Gavin Newsom announced that most California counties will transition to the State's most restrictive COVID-19 tier amid an alarming surge in cases. Forty-one counties, which comprise over 94% of the state's population, will be in the Purple Tier, effective November 17. Governor Newsom emphasized that California is experiencing the fastest increase in cases, faster than the rate the State experienced at the outset of the July surge.

Mandatory Directive Under Purple Tier

The State moved the County of Santa Clara into the Purple Tier (Tier One), the most restrictive tier in the State's "[Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#)." The changes are effective at 12:01 am on November 17, 2020. Under the Purple Tier, the following businesses and activities are prohibited from operating indoors: dining, gatherings (including movie showings, political events, weddings, funerals, and places

of worship), gyms and fitness facilities, family entertainment centers, cardrooms, museums, zoos, and aquariums. These businesses and activities may proceed outdoors only with modifications. Shopping malls and all retail establishments must reduce to a maximum of 25 percent capacity and continue to provide safety modifications. Additionally, schools that have not opened cannot open but schools that have already started operations can continue as long as they follow the State and County guidelines.

Travel Advisory for Non-Essential Travel

The incidence of COVID-19 is increasing in many states and countries. In addition, travel itself can be a risk for exposure to COVID-19, particularly travel through shared conveyance such as air, bus or rail travel. Californians are encouraged to stay home or in their region and avoid non-essential travel to other states or countries.

Persons arriving in California from other states or countries, including returning California residents, should practice self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival. These individuals should limit their interactions to their immediate household.

Update on Vaccine Trials

According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, vaccinations could begin in the United States in the second half of December, starting with high-risk groups and becoming available for the rest of the population in Spring.

California has a working group that will set state guidelines. Santa Clara County will also work with local community partners in setting priorities. Additionally, experts expect priority to go first to healthcare workers. Next would be essential workers in close contact with high-risk populations and the most vulnerable such as nursing home residents. Last priority is the general population. The following unknown factors will also influence the County's overall distribution strategy: effect on immunocompromised individuals, long term side effects, effect on individuals with pre-existing conditions and efficacy period.

County

Capacity Limitations

The County's new Mandatory Directive on Capacity Limitations describe the additional capacity limitations for businesses, entities, and activities under the Purple Tier. As always, Santa Clara County residents and businesses must follow both the State and County Health Officer Orders and where there is a conflict between the two, the stricter Order must be followed.

Free Influenza Test Now Included With COVID-19 Testing

Free COVID-19 testing facilities at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds and the rotating city-based sites now include a test for influenza, offering an added benefit with no additional cost, inconvenience, or additional procedure. The combination tests are also available at Valley Medical Center clinics for those showing symptoms.

Appointment-only COVID-19 testing including the influenza test will be conducted at sites in Milpitas, Mountain View, Cupertino, Campbell, and Palo Alto. Appointments can be made starting seven days in advance of the testing date until all slots are reserved at www.sccfreetest.org. Appointment-based testing

is also available in San José at the Fairgrounds, with appointments now available five days in advance. Testing is free at all these sites, and there is no added cost for flu testing.

City of Milpitas

Mental Health Support

In coordination with Milpitas Hope, County of Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services and CASSY, the City of Milpitas will be hosting Town Halls on November 16 and November 18 at 6:30PM on Dealing with Stress and Depression during COVID-19. Focusing on Teens and Parents, each Town Hall features diverse panel members that will speak to their own experiences, coping strategies and additional resources for those struggling and needing one on one support during this difficult time. Additional Town Halls are being scheduled for the first of the year in other languages as well. All events are offered virtually via Zoom.

Purple Tier Impact to Local Businesses

Impact to the Milpitas business community include the closure of indoor dining, as well as the closure of all indoor activities associated with gyms, museums, places of worship and movie theaters. Food delivery and takeout services are still allowed under the Purple Tier, which continue to provide significant help to restaurants especially after the Milpitas City Council approved an [Urgency Ordinance](#) to cap third-party food delivery service fees on local restaurants. Outdoor dining is still an option for restaurants.

Shopping malls and all retail establishments must reduce to a maximum of 25 percent capacity. City staff has informed Great Mall management of the restrictions associated with the move to the Purple Tier and its impact to its retailers. Grocery store capacity must be limited to 50 percent, while hotels, lodging and personal care services, such as hair and nail salons and barbershops can continue to remain open indoors with modifications. The State's [website](#) includes information regarding the Purple Tier and its impact on businesses and activities.

Milpitas Small Business Spotlight Program

Between November 14 and 15, City staff began production work associated with capturing the stories of the first group of Small Business Spotlight Program winners – Montessori School of Silicon Valley, AJR Watch Repai and Isha Diagnostics. The next video shoot is scheduled for early December and will feature Beausejoir Hair and Nails, Rainbow Childhood Development Center and Prisha Pediatrics. The first professionally produced Spotlight video will be available in December and will be shared through the City's website and social media channels as a Shop Local Campaign.

Extended Eviction Moratorium for Small Businesses

For small business tenants who qualify for protection under the County's Ordinance, the eviction moratorium has been extended through March 31, 2021. Small business tenants have up to 6 months after the moratorium expires or terminates to repay at least 50% of the past-due rent, and up to 12 months after the moratorium expires or terminates to repay in full the past-due rent. Civil fines and penalties, monetary damages and injunctive relief may be imposed on landlords who seek to retaliate or deny small business tenants of their rights and protections under the Ordinance. Small business representatives can view this [page](#) for eligibility requirements, paperwork illustrating substantial loss of income or out-of-pocket for medical expenses due to COVID-19, and more information.

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:** Starting with the October 6 City Council meeting, live, audio-only comments at public meetings was introduced. This was based on requests from the Council and community. The majority of Board, Commission, and Subcommittee meetings are transitioning to this new format to engage live public participation. The public may livestream the meeting on the City's [Website](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube channel](#) if not able to attend the live virtual meeting.
- **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 in Santa Clara County. However, construction activities must implement mandatory risk reduction measures, and comply with the [Mandatory Directive for Construction Projects](#). For detailed City service descriptions, refer to the latest [Permit Center and Inspection Services Information Flyer](#).

- **Recreation and Community Services:** All community programs and gatherings remain 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.