

MEMORANDUM

Office of the City Manager



DATE: January 22, 2021
TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
THROUGH: Steve McHarris, City Manager *Steve McHarris*
FROM: Brian Sherrard, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Mobile Testing Transition to Vaccine Distribution

Background

The City of Milpitas is proud to have proactively pursued the implementation of a community-based testing facility that prioritized vulnerable populations. As the only city in Santa Clara County to create an innovative mobile testing unit utilizing a Fire Department ambulance as a testing base, staff facilitated appointments, line control, and operated patient intake and appointment verification at the library fixed site and pop-up sites at the Sports and Community Centers. The City-run mobile unit complemented the other testing sites in Milpitas run by the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health but supported by City staff and housed in a City-owned facility. The expansion of mobile testing created a convenient testing option for residents who are not able to visit a fixed test site and for residents who want to be tested. The mobile unit began testing residents on May 27, 2020 and continued five days per week at various locations throughout the City. In a span of eight months, the testing unit has tested over 15,000 people.

Transition to Vaccine Distribution

The City has been staffing the mobile testing unit with voluntary hours for eight months. After careful review, it became clear that the current model is no longer sustainable because of shifting needs and priorities. As a result, the City will be ceasing COVID-19 mobile testing operations beginning January 22, 2021. In line with expanding vaccine access to more community members, the City will be collaborating with Santa Clara County and transition mobile testing to vaccine distribution. City staff will immediately focus personnel, equipment and other resources to vaccination efforts. As vaccine supplies ramp up in the weeks and months ahead, the City is building capacity. Although the shift in resources will reduce the testing capacity, the transition to vaccine distribution will increase the number of vaccines available to be dispersed to the community. Wearing masks and social distancing help lessen the chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines work with immune systems, so it can fight the virus when one is exposed. The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC recommendations and County mandatory guidelines will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

The City remains committed to providing testing to employees through the mobile site. Additionally, the City's Fire and Police Departments will continue to provide support at the County Fairgrounds vaccination clinic. In the weeks ahead, Milpitas community members can avail of free testing through the County. Anyone seeking a test can find more information via the County COVID-19 site or visiting <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/covid19-testing.aspx>.

The City will continue staff support at the Santa Clara County Testing sites in Milpitas, so that residents have multiple opportunities to get tested. The Sports Center pop-up testing site is operational two days a month, and City staff has secured two (2) days a week with the County for a new testing site at the Milpitas Community Center. The Library Testing site will conclude its operations on January 21, 2021.

Next Steps

The City Council will receive updates as more information about the vaccine distribution becomes available.