



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report



(ID # 11192)

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 3/16/2020

Summary Title: Covid-19 Public Safety Response Update and Emergency Proclamation

Title: Update Regarding City Responses to COVID-19, Including Community Education and City Service Changes; Ratification of Proclamation of Local Emergency

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) Adopt a Resolution (Attachment A) ratifying the Director of Emergency Services' (City Manager) Proclamation of Local Emergency on March 12, 2020 due to the presence and community spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Santa Clara County; and
- (2) Receive an update on the City's response to the community spread of COVID-19, including community education and outreach, service changes, and coordination with local partners.

BACKGROUND

Proclamation. On March 12, 2020 the City Manager, acting as the Director of Emergency Services, issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency regarding the presence and community spread of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, in Santa Clara County and our region. The Proclamation allows the City to exercise extraordinary police powers, should these be needed; provides immunity for emergency actions; authorizes issuance of certain necessary orders and regulations; activates pre-established emergency processes; and is a prerequisite for requesting state or federal assistance related to the emergency, should such assistance become available.

City Response. In the weeks since COVID-19 was detected and found to be transmitting via community spread, City staff have taken the following actions to promote community safety and address existing and potential impacts on City operations and services.

To limit the potential spread of respiratory viruses and safeguard those at highest risk of catching COVID-19, the City of Palo Alto announced a series of actions to keep the community safe during this time of heightened public health risk. In response to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department recent guidance to cancel large events in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the County, the City is postponing, cancelling or modifying over 30 events and programs from now until March 31, 2020. In addition, the City is encouraging all community members to keep our community safe by preventing the spread of respiratory viruses including COVID-19 by staying home if sick, use hygiene best practices including washing your hands, calling your health practitioner before going to the hospital if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and maintaining other healthy lifestyle approaches. Help our most vulnerable community members stay safe during this public health emergency by demonstrating that hygiene is important for everyone.

The City is continuing its work to provide essential services through thoughtful planning for several impact scenarios. The City has already implemented several operational changes in response to the COVID-19 public health risk, including supplying protective gear for field staff, expanding 911 dispatcher protocols to support Police, Fire, emergency medical first responders, and Utilities staff, providing more hand sanitizer stations and enhanced cleaning in public facilities. The City is evaluating modifications to service delivery and other efforts to maintain City staffing levels and providing essential services through thoughtful planning for several impact scenarios. The City anticipates more details to be released later this week on longer-term planning and potential service delivery modifications.

The City continues to track and monitor the public health situation in our community, including participating in the Santa Clara County briefings as well as monitoring advisories issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The City's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has also been in contact with Stanford Health Care and other hospitals and clinics to coordinate on preparation and contingency planning.

Additional Information on Cancellation or Postponing of City Events. The City's event and program cancellations and postponements approach includes evaluating events now through March 31, 2020. With the COVID-19 situation evolving worldwide, the City may expand the time period of its cancellation approach at any time. At this time, City Council meetings and Board and Commission meetings are proceeding as scheduled, though these meetings may see some adjustments to accommodate the Santa Clara County Public Health Department guidance on social distancing. The City's consideration of cancelled or postponed events includes the following general guidelines and may include several other factors not listed. General guidelines include events with an estimated attendance of over 100 people, or the event attendance is unknown but could draw a larger attendance; events over 100 people could also be modified and continue if changes can accommodate social distancing guidance; events that typically attract at-risk populations including community members over the age of 50 to 80 and other groups at highest risk, which include community members over the age of 80 or those with preexisting health conditions such as lung disease or cancer.

The City is also evaluating cancelling or postponing other events or programs with less than 100 people attending on a case by case basis, where the event cannot achieve social distancing recommended by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which means that attendees are not able to stay six feet from one another during the program/event. The City is also adjusting ticketing where possible to implement social distancing at certain events.

Informing the Community on the Latest Local Developments. The leading agency focused on public health and responding to the COVID-19 outbreak is the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department. Santa Clara County Public Health Department guidance seeks to limit the community spread of COVID-19 and includes guidance for employers and the public to keep our community's safe. Both Santa Clara County and San Mateo County are using 211 as a "call center" for persons with questions about COVID-19. Community members can also text "coronavirus" to 211211 for information and updates. There is also a public information phone number to gain updates by calling (408) 885-3980. In addition, the City has set up a dedicated webpage and other communications efforts, including placing posters at high use public facilities and printed materials, sending email communications and digital updates, sharing details via social media and more approaches to help inform and provide tools to help keep our community safe. The webpage link is www.cityofpaloalto.org/coronavirus

DISCUSSION

Proclamation. A Proclamation of Local Emergency provides the authority to:

- Provide and request mutual aid from state and other governmental agencies consistent with the provisions of local ordinances, resolutions, emergency plans, and agreements.
- Promulgate orders and regulations and exercise emergency police powers necessary to provide for protection of life and property.

Under state and local law, Council must adopt a Resolution ratifying the Director of Emergency Services' (City Manager's) Proclamation of Local Emergency issued on March 12, 2020. Thereafter, Council must review the need for continuing the emergency at least once every 60 days and formally terminate the emergency when conditions warrant. Staff recommends the Council adopt the Resolution found at Attachment A.

Update on City Response. At Monday's meeting, staff will provide an updated report on developments and actions taken regarding the rapidly changing circumstances related to COVID-19, including its communication and education activities, modification of City services, and coordination with local partners.

Based on the County's infection case reports and expanded guidance and recommendations, the City has determined that a large part of its workforce and resident population continue to be at risk of contracting COVID-19. In order to slow the spread of the virus and ensure

appropriate mitigation measures are in place as this situation evolves, additional changes in services are being considered and adjustments may be made.

Some of the most recognizable and immediate service changes going into effect in this period are reduced face-to-face customer service interaction between the public and staff. Where possible the City is encouraging the public to call, email or make an appointment with City staff.

Implementing Service Changes to slow the spread of COVID-19

Several service changes are implemented as of today or are going into effect over the next several days. Full implementation if not stated will occur Monday, March 16. The City may announce other service and operations changes as this situation evolves. For a full list of service changes, a dedicated webpage is set up at www.cityofpaloalto.org/coronavirus, and this list will be updated as needed.

Changes to Police Operations and Customer Service: The Police Department is requesting that members of the public who are ill to stay home and call the police department at (650) 329-2413 for non-essential customer service requests. The City has discontinued police public tours and police and fire ride-a-longs/sit-a-longs of non-employees. The City is modifying patrol operations for non-emergency police calls for service that can be completed via phone/video. Officers will use all methods available to limit face-to-face public contact and ensure social distancing of six feet when available.

Changes to Community Services Operations and Customer Service: The (temporary) Junior Museum and Zoo will be closed as of Friday, March 13. Children's Theatre performances have been postponed until June. The Rinconada Pool is closed as of today, March 12. Other front counter customer support will be suspended and adjusted to encourage interaction by appointment only, by phone at (650) 463-4900 or email at csd@cityofpaloalto.org, where ever possible.

Changes to Library Operations and Customer Service: Palo Alto's libraries extended check-outs to May 1 and is temporarily disabling some of the computers to ensure social distance between users. Other front counter customer support will be adjusted to encourage interaction by appointment only, by phone or email, where ever possible.

Changes to Development Center Operations and Customer Service: Access to the City's Development Center will be by appointment only by calling (650) 329-2496. Non-essential business will be conducted by phone or video conference.

Changes to City Hall Customer Service Changes: City Hall's first floor lobby customer service hours and staffing will be modified. Access to Real Estate transactions are by appointment only. Revenue collections customer service and Residential Parking Program permits approach will be modified, services are offered by appointment, by phone, email, and online. Revenue Collections customers can call (650) 329-2317 or email revcoll@cityofpaloalto.org. Real Estate

Customers can call (650) 329-2264 or email real.property@cityofpaloalto.org. Residential Permit Parking Program transactions can be serviced online at <https://paloalto.parkingguide.com/audience-type/downtown-residential-parking/>

Changes to Utilities Operations and Customer Service: Changes to Utilities operations and customer services includes suspending meter reads accessible only through the backyards of resident customers or facilities requiring security access. All other meter reads will be estimated for billing purposes. Utility Development Services Center and Utilities Engineering customer service is by appointment only at Elwell Court. For Electric service, contact (650) 566-4500. For Water, Gas and Wastewater service, contact (650) 566-4501. Utilities Customer Service at City Hall on the Ground floor, 2nd and 3rd floors are suspended at this time with customer service available through the call center and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) at (650) 329-2161, online customer account service at <https://mycpau.cityofpaloalto.org>, email and in-person by appointment only at UtilitiesCustomerService@cityofpaloalto.org.

Changes to the City Council Meetings and Other Boards and Commission Meetings: City Council meetings are currently scheduled to proceed in Council Chambers on Monday evenings; however, the public is encouraged to submit their comments via email to city.council@cityofpaloalto.org and to watch the live broadcast of the meeting [here or on TV Channels 26 or 29](#). If you must attend, community members are asked to follow meeting etiquette and social distancing that includes sitting six feet away from others, not shaking hands, and waiting until the podium is clear to speak. The public will be asked to assemble in the Community Room at City Hall, once the Council Chambers adjusted capacity is full. Members of the public who wish to address Council will be called to do so at the appropriate time. Similar approaches will be implemented for all Boards and Commissions meetings.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The City has set up a dedicated webpage and other communications efforts, including placing posters at high use public facilities and other printed materials distributed to libraries and community centers and other means, sending email communications and digital updates, sharing details via social media including Nextdoor, and other approaches to help inform and provide tools to help keep our community safe.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is exempt from environmental review by statute. See CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, Emergency Projects Undertaken for Specific Actions Necessary to Prevent or Mitigate an Emergency.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Emergency Proc covid 19
- Resolution Ratifying Local Emergency due to Covid-19

City of Palo Alto

Proclamation of Local Emergency

WHEREAS, Sections 2.12.050 of the City of Palo Alto Municipal Code empowers the Director of Emergency Services (City Manager) or the Assistant Director of Emergency Services (Office of Emergency Services Chief) to proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when said City is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity and the City Council is not in session; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Emergency Services (City Manager) of the City of Palo Alto does hereby find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within the City, caused by a novel coronavirus, designated "COVID-19," which was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019, and has spread globally to more than 118 countries, areas or territories; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has designated COVID-19 a Global Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has infected more than 125,288 people and caused more than 4,614 deaths worldwide, including a total of 177 positive cases and three deaths in California, 48 confirmed infections and 1 death in Santa Clara County; and

WHEREAS, many cases in California and the Bay Area have been contracted through community transmission; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department have urged local government, employers, organizations and individuals to take preventative actions to slow the spread of the virus and mitigate its effects, including observing good personal hygiene practices, social distancing, cancelling unnecessary travel and large gatherings, and working from home where possible; and

WHEREAS, the City of Palo Alto has implemented daily communication to inform residents and connect them with County Public Health and the CDC guidance; urged residents to practice good personal hygiene and social distancing; cancelled or postponed large events; encouraged remote work where possible; and modified non-essential services to protect employees and the public, while maintaining City services; and

WHEREAS, these conditions are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Palo Alto is not in session and cannot immediately be called into session;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists throughout the City of Palo Alto; and

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the emergency organization of the City shall be those prescribed by state law and by ordinances and resolutions of this City; and that this emergency proclamation shall expire in 7 days after issuance unless confirmed and ratified by the governing body of the City of Palo Alto.

Dated: _____ By: _____

Edward Shikada

Director of Emergency Services

NOT YET APPROVED

Resolution No. _____

A Resolution of the City of Palo Alto Ratifying and Continuing
the Proclamation of Existence of a Local Emergency Issued by
the Director of Emergency Services

RECITALS

- A. Sections 2.12.050 of Chapter 2.12 (Emergency Organization and Functions) of Title 2 (Administrative Code) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code empowers the Director of the Emergency Services (City Manager or Designee) to proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency if the Council of the City of Palo Alto (“City”) is not in session, and requires that the City Council shall take action to ratify the proclamation within seven (7) days thereafter, or the proclamation shall have no further force or effect; and
- B. Under California Government Code Section 8680.9, a local emergency is a condition of extreme peril to persons or property proclaimed as such by the governing body of the local agency affected by a natural or manmade disaster; and
- C. The purpose of a local emergency proclamation is to provide extraordinary police powers, immunity for emergency actions, authorize issuance of orders and regulations, and activate pre-established emergency provisions; and
- D. A local emergency proclamation is a prerequisite for requesting state or federal assistance; and
- E. Conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within the City, based on the following:
 - 1. A novel coronavirus, designated “COVID-19,” which was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019, and has spread globally to more than 118 countries, areas or territories.
 - 2. The World Health Organization has designated COVID-19 a Global Pandemic.
 - 3. COVID-19 has infected more than 125,288 people and caused more than 4,614 deaths worldwide, including a total of 177 positive cases and three deaths in California, 48 confirmed infections and 1 death in Santa Clara County.
 - 4. Many cases in California and the Bay Area have been contracted through community transmission.
 - 5. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department have urged local government,

NOT YET APPROVED

employers, organizations and individuals to take preventative actions to slow the spread of the virus and mitigate its effects, including observing good personal hygiene practices, social distancing, cancelling unnecessary travel and large gatherings, and working from home where possible.

6. The City of Palo Alto has implemented daily communication to inform residents and connect them with County Public Health and the CDC guidance; urged residents to practice good personal hygiene and social distancing; cancelled or postponed large events; encouraged remote work where possible; and modified non-essential services to protect employees and the public, while maintaining City services.
 7. The efforts required to prepare for, respond to, mitigate, and recover from the emergency conditions caused by COVID-19 have imposed or will impose extraordinary requirements and expenses on the City, which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the City.
- F. The City Council does hereby find that the above described conditions of extreme peril did warrant and necessitate the proclamation of the existence of a local emergency in the City; and
- G. California Government Code, Title 2, Division 1, Chapter 7.5 - California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) allows that with the Proclamation of a Local Emergency the City may seek financial assistance and may request reimbursement of the significant expenses incurred during response, if approved by the Director of the California Office of Emergency Services or Concurrence or Governor's Proclamation; and
- H. On March 12, 2020, the Director of Emergency Services issued a proclamation, attached hereto, declaring the existence of a local emergency within the City; and
- I. The associated emergency conditions are on-going and the emergency should not be terminated at this time;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the City of Palo Alto RESOLVES as follows:

SECTION 1. The Proclamation of Existence of a Local Emergency, as issued by the Director of Emergency Services on March 12, 2020, attached hereto, is hereby ratified and confirmed.

SECTION 2. The City Council has reviewed the need for continuing the declaration of local emergency and finds based on substantial evidence that the public interest and necessity require the continuance of the proclamation of local emergency related to COVID-19.

NOT YET APPROVED

SECTION 3. Said local emergency shall be deemed to continue to exist until terminated by the City Council of the City of Palo Alto.

SECTION 4. The Director of the Office of Emergency Services is hereby directed to report to the City Council within sixty (60) days on the need for further continuing the local emergency.

SECTION 5. The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution is statutorily exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15269, Emergency Projects Undertaken for Specific Actions Necessary to Prevent or Mitigate an Emergency.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED:

City Attorney

City Manager

Director of Emergency Operations

Director of Administrative Services



City of Palo Alto

Proclamation of Local Emergency

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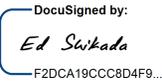
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Dated: 3/12/2020

By:  F2DCA19CCC8D4F9...

Edward Shikada
City Manager
Director of Emergency Services