



Legislation Text

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Discussion

SUBJECT:

UPDATE ON CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

This item is being added at the request of Mayor Albert Robles.

As of March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the Novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, as a pandemic. So far, it has spread to over 121,000 people across the world. Locally, there are at least 28 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County and Health Officials are advising that we will see many more cases of COVID-19 in LA County in the coming weeks.

The City of Carson was previously the subject of a hoax on social media related to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Vigilance is needed and reasonable and appropriate measures should be implemented to alleviate concerns and, to the extent possible, minimize and slow the spread of the virus in our City so that medical facilities don't get overwhelmed and are able to assist those who are most in need of medical services.

In addition to the measures discussed below, the City Council may want to consider allowing the City Manager some degree of discretion to act outside of her authority in consultation with the Mayor or an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the City Council to address emergent situations.

II. RECOMMENDATION

DISCUSS measures that have been put in place and provide staff with further direction.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE any other action the Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

As of March 11, 2020, The World Health Organization declared this virus to be pandemic. The number of confirmed cases in the United States is 938, with 28 in Los Angeles County. The President of the United States added Europe to its list of destinations that are banned for travel. This list currently includes Iran and the highest level travel advisory for Italy and South Korea.

As of March 12, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom advised Californians to postpone or cancel all large gatherings until at least the end of March to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. Public events should be limited to no more than 250 people and should not proceed unless organizers could ensure at least 6 feet of distance between attendees. Other public gatherings of people who are at high risk of contracting the virus should be kept to 10 or less as a pre-cautionary measure.

The symptoms of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, which can progress to severe illness requiring hospitalization. The elderly and individuals with compromised immune systems are most at risk and may die.

To prevent or control the spread of the virus within the City and among City employees, the following measures are being implemented effective immediately:

1. All non-essential out of town business trips for staff are cancelled until further notice, with exceptions for essential travel determined by the City Manager or her designee.
2. Large City events to be held over the next 30 days, including the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Day, Autism Walk (5K) and Cesar Chavez Celebration are cancelled until further notice.
3. City functions involving the most vulnerable segments of the population, particularly senior citizens, are cancelled until further notice. Steps will be taken, where possible, to minimize impacts to residents resulting from these cancellations. The City Council will reevaluate at the next City Council meeting on April 7, 2020.
4. Employees will be required to take their temperature everyday before coming into work and if a fever is present, the employee shall stay home until directed otherwise by their physician.

5. Staff will be purchasing hand held thermometers and distributing throughout City Hall, Corporate Yard and Parks to ensure both residents and employees are able to take their temperatures confirming their health status.

6. Residents who have made private event reservations at the Community Center will be allowed to cancel and receive a refund of their deposit. The City retains its authority to cancel these events for health reasons and to protect the public welfare.

7. Hand sanitizers will be placed in all public areas.

8. Whenever possible, the City will make remote meeting options available to avoid large gatherings. City Council direction is requested regarding City Council meetings.

To help ease employees' concerns, the City is taking the following steps:

1. Communicate regular updates via City email and postings on the intranet.

2. Utilize the City's **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. This benefit is available to all City employees and their families. Employees may call EAP at any time 24-7 with their concerns. Managers may also call EAP for management advice. The EAP call number is 877-622-4327.

3. Employees who are concerned that they may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, may also call **The Company Nurse**, the City's injury and illness reporting portal, at 1-877-854-6877 (Search Code QS943). A trained professional will advise whether immediate medical attention is needed.

4. Remind employees to protect themselves:
 - Stay home when sick.
 - Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community (approximately 6 feet). This is especially important for people who are at

higher risk of getting very sick.

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If there is no tissue, use sleeve (not hands). Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer right after.
- Facemasks are most effective when used by people who are sick and by health care workers and those providing direct care to someone who is sick.
- Get a flu shot to prevent influenza if you have not done so this season.

The situation is evolving rapidly. Executive management will be monitoring new developments and will take further actions, if needed.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

The City Manager currently has a signing authority up to \$25,000. Due to the emerging needs of this pandemic, the Council is asked to increase the City Manager's signing authority up to \$100,000 specifically for purchases to assist in procuring services, equipment or other resources to address the spread of the coronavirus or related to emergency operations. Staff is currently purchasing bulk items for current and future needs such as Mobile Emergency Operations Units (MEOUs) priced at \$8,000 per unit to provide the City the ability to activate an Emergency Operations Center from anywhere in the City. The City's Public Safety Department previously purchased two MEOUs in 2019 in preparation for emergency disaster preparedness.

The LA County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) notified the City of Carson that it would need to analyze, evaluate and quantify the Initial Damage Estimate (IDE) for emergency response and operational support expenses due to LA County declaring a public emergency. Staff had 48 hours to provide a detailed report assessing the City's needs resulting in an estimated \$1.8M in potential recovery of funding which was submitted by March 11, 2020 deadline.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Area E Disaster Management Office - COVID-19 Public Health Situation Summary (pgs. 4-41)
2. CSUDH Memorandum dated March 11, 2020 (pgs. 42-44)
3. Administrator Carson Community of Schools email dated March 11, 2020 (pgs. 45-46)
4. Article re: City of Long Beach(Pgs. 47-50)

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