Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, May 05, 2020

Discussion

SUBJECT:

COVID-19 UPDATE (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

The novel coronavirus currently designated COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China in December 2019. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. On January 31, 2020, the United States Health and Human Services Secretary declared this global outbreak a public health emergency for the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced on February 25, 2020 that community spread of COVID-19 was likely to occur in the United States.

The State of California proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 4, 2020, and Los Angeles County declared a Local Health Emergency as well that same day. On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20, declaring that state and local public health officials may, as they deem necessary in the interest of public health, issue guidance limiting or recommending limitations upon attendance at public assemblies, conferences, or other mass events, which could cause the cancellation of such gatherings through no fault or responsibility of the parties involved, thereby constituting a force majeure. On March 13, 2020, President Trump Declared a National State of Emergency.

On March 15, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reported that, as of that date, California had almost 500 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 11 of which had resulted in death. CDPH also reported that approximately 11,100 Californians who returned to the United States after travel were self-monitoring. On March 16, 2020, the World Health Organization reported that, as of that date, there were more than 180,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, over 7,000 of which had resulted in death across 148 countries.

Due to the rapid spread of the disease and high level of deaths, the lack of scientific data on its transmission and the lack of a vaccine, on March 17, 2020, the City declared that a local emergency now exists throughout the City (Resolution 20-053). Under Government Code Section 8630, the City Council has authority to proclaim the existence of a local

emergency.

II. RECOMMENDATION

DISCUSS and PROVIDE DIRECTION.

III. ALTERNATIVES

None.

IV. BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2020, the City Council unanimously voted (5-0) to declare a local emergency in response to COVID-19. The declaration of a local emergency enables the City to be more efficient and effective in its response to the outbreak, puts in place a framework that supports the continuity of essential public safety services, seeks and utilizes mutual aid, and ensures the City has all available tools at its disposal to keep the community safe. The declaration also allows the City to seek reimbursement of funds from the State and Federal government.

In addition to the declaration of a local emergency, the City Council established the Carson Disaster Council (CMC Section 3702), which immediately began meeting twice a week. Actions taken by the Disaster Council to enable the City to expeditiously address needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic are reported on the City's website at ci.carson.ca.us.

The members of the Carson Disaster Council are as follows:

- **Mayor**, Albert Robles - Chairman;
- **City Manager**, Sharon Landers - Director of Emergency Preparedness & Vice Chairman;
- **Assistant City Manager**, John Raymond - Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness; and
- **LA Sheriff's Captain**, Jason Skeen - Disaster Council Representative.

All City facilities were closed to the public, events and programs were canceled, and City employees were either directed not to report to work or to remain in a working capacity based on roles and functions that best supports the City's Emergency Plan. The employees who were directed to continue working were those needed to fulfill public safety, infrastructure maintenance, certain public services, and internal support. The City also implemented an emergency telecommute policy for employees reporting to work who

qualify.

To provide additional COVID-19 updates to our community, with the concurrence of the City Council, the Mayor has scheduled Special City Council Meetings on all Tuesdays where there is not a regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Discussed below are the many initiatives and programs initiated by the Disaster Council and the City Council since the Declaration of Emergency.

#CoverCarson

At its meeting of April 2, 2020, the Disaster Council issued an order mandating that anyone who is outside while in Carson or within certain businesses wear a facemask. This requirement was ratified by a unanimous vote of the City Council (5-0) on April 7, 2020 (Resolution No. 20-067).

To publicize the City's mandate, using social media, a campaign and slogan to wear facemasks has been initiated #CoverCarson. Please note that in no way is this requirement intended to supersede the safer at home measures that are still in effect.

This mandate adds a new layer of protection to current safety protocols based upon updated reports that facemasks provide a crucial layer of protection to the healthy and may help reduce the possibility that infected individuals would unwittingly spread of the virus into the air.

To ensure that residents who haven't been able to make or purchase a mask can get one, the City purchased 10,000 cloth masks that it is distributing at high traffic essential businesses and through our deputies and Code Enforcement Officers.

Free COVID Testing in Carson

At a Special City Council Meeting held on April 21, 2020, the City Council approved a collaboration with US Health Fairs (Private Non-Profit) to provide a free Drive-Thru testing center located at the Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center beginning on April, 27, 2020 at 9:00am.

This endeavor, funded through the Private Non-Profit, may be the first in Southern California and the second City worldwide, to provide free testing to all residents even if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms. This collaboration follows the press conference held by the Carson City Council one week prior, on April 20, 2020, announcing that the Los Angeles County Public Health Department opened a free testing center at Harbor General Hospital, which is in an unincorporated area immediately adjacent to Carson.

The ability to provide free testing to Carson residents has been of paramount interest for the City. LA County is only able to provide 350 test kits per day. US Health Fairs has offered to provide up to 1000 a day at a test site here in the City of Carson.

As of the preparation of this report on April 30, 2020, Los Angeles County Public Health

Department has reported 238 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the City of Carson, with 23,182 cases within Los Angeles County (which includes cases reported by the Long Beach and Pasadena Health Departments). One should assume that this underreports the actual spread of the virus since those who are do not display symptoms or are otherwise mildly impacted have not been tested.

Subsidized LYFT

To assist Carson residents with transportation to essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has recently partnered with Lyft to provide subsidized rides through June 30, 2020. By entering the promotional code "LyftCarson" into the Lyft app, participants get 50% off the cost of their ride up to a maximum City subsidy of $10. Each participant receives twenty (20) rides per month. The promotional code will only apply the discount for rides that start AND end within the boundaries of the City. Flyers and instructions are being distributed and additional information is available on the City's website. Funding comes from two sources: Proposition C and Air Quality Management District (AQMD). Ridership data will be reviewed by Staff to determine the effectiveness of the partnership and any opportunities for improvement.

Food Programs for Seniors

Immediately following the Declaration of Emergency, the City Administration mobilized a Grab 'n Go lunch program for seniors. Several weeks ago, we kicked off the Carson Essentials To-Go Program, a grocery delivery program in partnership with Norms. This program has received funding by the Watson Land Company, the Carson Company and the Carson Community Foundations.

In addition, the City, in partnership with the Lighthouse, YMCA Meals on Wheels, and the ERB Foundation, is providing meals and food kits to seniors and homebound residents.

Small Business Programs

City Council allocated $75,000 for a contract with California Community Economic Development Association (non-profit) to provide assistance to Carson businesses applying for loans via the CARES Act and other state or federal loan programs including the City's own Carson Loan Program funded with $500,000.

Other Actions by the City

The City continues to work with local, state and federal health officials (including the Center for Disease Control and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health) to receive guidance and coordinate potential response regarding the novel coronavirus.

In addition to those initiatives listing above, the City has taken many other proactive actions to protect and provide service to the community:

- Activating the City's EOC at a level 3 to coordinate the City's response to COVID -19 with local, state and federal agencies.

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- Tracking expenditures for FEMA and Cal OES Cost Recovery. Funding for most of the City's initiatives have been from the City's General Funds. We will apply for reimbursement to the extent allowable from FEMA and Cal OES for costs associated with combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA may reimburse the City for up to 75 percent of the costs associated with pandemic effort.
- Created an informational website (<http://covid19.carson.ca.us/>), which is updated daily.
- City Council adopted resolution 20-070 to publicize the passage of the statewide protections to the City's residents against the risk of eviction from their homes during the COVID-19 state of emergency
- City Council adopted resolution 20-2006U to enact prohibitions against price-gauging during and for 60 days after the declared state emergency
- The Carson COVID-19 Task Force continues to connect with vulnerable residents through the Resource Hotline Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- On April 6, 2020, the Disaster Council issued an emergency moratorium prohibiting rent increases at all Carson mobile home parks during the declared local emergency period related to COVID-19.
- City staff continues to explore grant opportunities and funding from the state and federal governments as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

Staff costs are being incurred by the City for the coordination, surveillance, communication, and management of the COVID-19 local emergency, as well as costs for procuring related services and supplies. City costs are either being covered by existing department appropriations or new City Council appropriations from the General Fund. All costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic are being tracked separately in the City's Disaster Fund so that the City can pursue any available Federal and State reimbursement for eligible City costs incurred.

VI. EXHIBITS

None

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