



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER DIRECTION TO STAFF TO PREPARE A REOPENING PLAN FOR CITY HALL AND OTHER CITY FACILITIES, AND DIRECTION TO STAFF ON JULY 4 BLOCK PARTY PERMITS AND OTHER OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

Within the State of California Stay-At-Home emergency orders, business segments are slowly being allowed to reopen, subject to restrictions and with modified operations. On May 18th, Governor Newsom revised the criteria for counties to allow for expanded Stage 2 business activities. As such, Los Angeles County certified its compliance with the new criteria on May 26 and businesses within the expanded Stage 2 business listing (i.e. - retail, shopping centers, dine-in restaurants, and offices) were able to begin to reopen with modifications. All of the business closures in Carson were directed by the State and reinforced by Los Angeles County, and businesses were not closed pursuant to any local action by the City of Carson.

As city halls in Southern California begin to reopen to the public over the next couple of weeks, cities are considering ways of imposing anti-viral protocols meant to control the spread of the new coronavirus. The push, part of the state's move to gradually restart public life, doesn't mean a return to pre-pandemic normal. The City of Carson wants to open for routine public business, such as applying for building permits or paying for business licenses, as well as eventually returning to providing parks and recreation services and the opening the Community Center and its programs.

In addition to the physical changes the City will need to make in the building to enforce social distancing and increase safety, the City will need to examine a number of its employment policies regarding telecommuting, illness reporting and quarantining, use of sick leave, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and long-term public access to the building.

Below is an outline of the elements of a return-to-work program that encompasses a description of necessary building changes, changes to cleaning protocols, a rethinking of how work is done in the building, changes to interaction with the public. These

would work hand in hand with an internal (employee-focused) and external (public-focused) communication strategy to inform all the stakeholders about what has changed and what has remained the same.

This guide is for City Hall only, but will be adapted with further guidance from the CDC, the State of California, and the Los Angeles County Health Department on public assembly areas such as parks and the Community Center, and guidelines will be drafted specific to those facilities.

Additionally, regardless of the industry sector, the City of Carson desires to support businesses as they begin to reopen. The CDC, State, and County all offer guidelines to aid in planning for the safety and well-being of employees, customers, and all those interacting with businesses in California. The California Department of Industrial Relations and CalOSHA have published a series of guidance booklets and checklists that are useful for businesses seeking to reopen. An example of one, for Office Businesses, is attached as Exhibit 1. These booklets can be uploaded to the City's website for the local business community to access.

II. RECOMMENDATION

TAKE the following actions:

1. DISCUSS and provide direction to staff on the draft reopening plan for Carson City Hall, provide input on the reopening of other City facilities including parks and recreation facilities, and on the outreach and public information efforts to provide information to local businesses about their opportunities to reopen under the current State guidelines.
2. DISCUSS and provide direction to staff on other activities outside City facilities that may have been or may be impacted by continued social distancing orders, such as Block Party permits for July 4th, street sweeping, and other code enforcement activities.
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III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE any other action the Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

The Emergency Services Act, Gov't Code § 8550 et seq. confers broad powers on the governor of California to enact such orders as may be necessary, in situation of great peril, to protect life and property. On May 18, the Governor issued guidelines for a phased plan to reopen the State. The Governor's phased plan includes the following stages:

STAGE 1: Safety and preparedness; Make workplaces safe for our essential workers.

STAGE 2: Lower-risk workplaces; gradually reopen retail (curbside only), child care, manufacturing & logistics. Later, relax retail restrictions, adapt & reopen schools, offices & limited hospitality, personal services.

STAGE 3: Higher-risk workplaces; Adapt and reopen movie theaters, religious services, and more personal & hospitality services.

STAGE 4: End of Stay Home Order; Reopen areas of highest risk: e.g. concerts, conventions, sports arenas.

Specific guidance is available for counties to be able to meet the criteria for reopening sooner. The State also provides guidance for restaurants and shopping malls and a large number of other industries. Currently, Los Angeles County is in Stage 2B, meaning that restrictions have been somewhat relaxed on retail and restaurants and other workplaces, but that the following businesses are not permitted to open statewide or are permitted under significant capacity restrictions: Personal Services nail salons, tattoo parlors, gyms and fitness studios; Hospitality services, such as bars, wineries, tasting rooms and lounges; Entertainment venues, such as movie theaters, gaming, gambling, and arcade venues, and pro sports, indoor museums and gallery spaces, zoos, and libraries; Community centers, public pools, playgrounds, and picnic areas; Religious services and cultural ceremonies; Nightclubs; Concert venues; Live audience sports; Festivals; Theme parks; Hotels/lodging for leisure and tourism. These will open in Stage 3.

Cities are considering ways of imposing anti-viral protocols at their city halls meant to control the spread of the new coronavirus. The changes will come from changes in behavior, changes to the facilities themselves, and adoption of new HR guidelines that will allow the City to manage the challenge of enforcing social distancing and being attentive to the needs of the public at the same time. For example, at many cities, residents will be allowed to enter City Hall but only after they are tested by a no-contact, infrared thermometer. This is the same protocol used by the City of Carson for the past month for its own employees.

Visitors also must wear face masks and use service counters one at a time. Plexiglass dividers will now serve as sneeze guards between city staff and members of the public, and extra masks and hand sanitizer will be provided at the entrance to assist with compliance. Arrows on the City Hall floor will mark an ideal flow of foot traffic to encourage six feet of space between people, and City workers will have to follow the same rules. This will be the “new normal” in Carson.

Below are draft guidelines developed by Staff for consideration by the Disaster Council and the City Council for the reopening of City Hall. The plan for the reopening of parks and recreational programs relies on a programmatic review of which programs it will be possible to operate this year and meet social distancing and capacity reduction guidelines. The same applies to the Community Center, as the approval of large events comes near the end of the guidelines.

CITY HALL ENTRY/RECEPTION

The City will implement guidelines to control building ingress and egress and promote ongoing safety and precautionary measures at those points. These include:

Managing the Number of People in the Building

1. While City Hall, if open, needs to remain available to all members of the public, in order to maintain social distancing practices, a visitor protocol should be established. Visitors who intend to visit City Hall should contact either the relevant department or the main City Hall number and schedule an appointment with the department or an arrival time with the receptionist.
2. Ensure security guards and receptionists are informed of protocol. Security guards should have step-by-step instructions and should be trained to politely and firmly encourage visitors to maintain 6 foot distancing and mask protocol. Be clear as to protocol around dissent.
3. Clearly communicate procedures to departments and ensure departments provide their visitors with a phone number to call in the event of an anomaly. Departments should be encouraged to inform their visitors of procedures in advance of visit to diffuse potential misunderstandings and negative experiences.
4. Guests will be asked to register at reception desk and wait outside the building to be called by the department.

Entrance Protocol

1. Reduce the number of entrances to direct occupants to use protected routes. All visitors will be required to enter the main entryway by the receptionist desk and proceed to the receptionist. The door facing Carson Street and Founders Fountain will once again be closed to the public, except for ADA access.
2. Face coverings or face masks must be worn at all times by employees and visitors according to City and County orders. Provide masks to building guests if they do not have their own.
3. Temperature screening. Public and employees will be allowed to enter only after they are tested by a no-contact, infrared thermometer. Anyone found to have a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees will be turned away.
4. Encourage people to not come to City Hall if they feel sick.

LOBBY/PUBLIC SPACES

1. Social distancing in lobby and public areas will be enforced, as noted above.
2. Hand sanitizer shall be provided at doorways, both inside and outside.
3. Install plexiglass screens between guests and reception desk personnel.
4. Install plexiglass screens at HR/Business License Counter, City Treasurer's Office, Building & Safety Department, Planning/Engineering Counter, and City Clerk's Office.
5. Lobby furniture will be removed to reduce public touch-points.
6. Floor mats will be regularly sanitized.
7. Clockwise or counterclockwise one-way circulation routes will be implemented. Designate and signpost the direction of foot-traffic in main circulation paths: corridors, stairs, and entries.
8. Mark increments of acceptable social distance on floors where queues could form.

ELEVATOR

1. Signs encouraging social distancing will be displayed near elevator.
2. Number of passengers will be limited to a number that allows for appropriate social distancing. Signage in the cab and floor markings indicating where users should stand will be installed.
3. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed near elevator and users encouraged to sanitize

hands prior to touching elevator call pads.

4. Review elevator cleaning processes and update to ensure on-going cleaning of high touch surfaces like elevator panels / buttons

SIGNAGE

1. Explain building access rules and other protocols that impact how occupants use and move throughout the building
2. Install signage, directional arrows on floors and stanchions to advise occupants of the pattern. The pattern will ensure occupants do not pass one another and will keep distance.
3. Consider strategically posting signs promoting social distancing at building entrances, lobby, security desk, and loading docks.
4. Remind staff how to stay safe and keep others safe in the workplace by maintaining social distancing, following new meeting guidelines, hand washing reminders, the use of virtual collaboration tools rather than meeting rooms and so forth.

CONFERENCE ROOMS AND MEETINGS SPACES (e.g. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS)

1. Consider removing or relocating chairs to maintain 6 foot spacing in conference areas. Consider blocking selected seats in Council Chambers to enforce same.
2. Establish protocol for any conference areas that remain open to ensure social distancing. Ensure that such areas are stocked with disinfectant wipes and that there is time allotted for appropriate cleaning between uses. All occupants are to adequately wipe down the area after use.
3. Practice a clockwise flow in all amenity spaces and conference rooms.
4. Encourage Departments to develop their own protocols internally around their own

conference room uses, coffee/lunch areas, phone booths, and shared workstations.

5. Establish increased common area/amenity cleaning protocol with specific instructions.

SPACE USE/DENSITY MONITORING IN WORK SPACES

1. Work from Home for non-essential employees to reduce the density of personnel.
2. Add panels between desks including height adjustable panels for sit/stand desks.
3. Specify seat assignments for employees to ensure minimum work distances.
4. Implement a strict clean-desk policy so that non-essential items are not stored on the desk, but rather enclosed in cabinets or drawers.
5. Unless stringent cleaning protocols are enforced and, if possible, avoid sharing of desks.

In-person meetings

1. Coach employees to critically evaluate the requirement for in-person meetings.
2. Limit the number of attendees at in-person meetings and limit to spaces that accommodate safe distances and consider eliminating in-person meetings with external guests.
3. Host large team/staff meetings via video conference rather than in-person.

Individual seats

1. If desks or work areas are shared, advise individuals to sanitize all surfaces upon arrival at that seat. Supply disinfectants in the immediate proximity of each desk.

2. Add desks to spaces previously used for group activities (convert training or meeting rooms into desk areas).
3. Add places for individuals to store and secure their own items separately from others (i.e., individual coat hooks rather than coat closets used by the group).
4. Increase space between desks.

Meeting and shared spaces

1. Decommission or re-purpose large gathering spaces, or reduce capacity of spaces-e.g., remove some chairs from large meeting rooms.
2. Prohibit shared use of small rooms by groups and convert to single occupant use only.
3. Calculate the maximum capacity of each room by dividing the net usable area by the square of the locally acceptable social distance (e.g., for a 6' social distance: a 200 SF room divided by 36 SF would have a recalculated maximum capacity of 5 people). Communicate this capacity via signage and room reservation tools.

Workplace kitchen and meal preparation areas

1. Encourage occupants to bring food and beverage items from home and manage them individually.
2. Minimize touch-points by removing coffee pots and the like.
3. Eliminate open food items.
4. Provide prepackaged items in containers.
5. Increase frequency of cleaning appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves.

Deliveries

1. All deliveries at City Hall should be made at a central receiving station downstairs (including Fedex) and items disinfected centrally. Assign delivery management and sterilization as a task to specific employees only.
2. For longer-term planning, consider shortwave ultraviolet light sterilizing rooms/booths.
3. Limit food deliveries to City Hall for the time being to minimize unnecessary traffic.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE, IT PERSONNEL AND CONTRACTORS

1. All building maintenance employees and outside contractors are to be tasked with maintaining necessary distancing with each other and when interacting with other City Hall employees and the public.
2. Consider staggered staff schedules (hours, shifts, and days worked).
3. Consider specified work assignments for employees to ensure minimum work distances being adhered to by staff.
4. Limit in-person meetings with third party contractors.
5. Ensure there is adequate supply of face masks, hand sanitizers and disinfecting products available on site.
6. Clean and disinfect all shared equipment, tools, radios, IT equipment and spaces before and after use. Ensure that disinfecting supplies are available in each area.
7. Require departments to submit work requests through iWorQ order or IT work order system.

8. Coordinate time for maintenance employees to complete work requests in an office space to ensure distancing. If not possible, work to be scheduled after hours with ownership approval is there is an associated added cost.
9. Establish when construction workers should enter/exit building to avoid conflicts during regular work hours.
10. Update rules and regulations around construction protocol to address masks, breaks, access and post-construction cleaning.

CLEANING FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES

The City will ensure common areas, entry points to the building, lobbies, elevators and public restrooms are frequently cleaned and disinfected and have visible presence of cleaning personnel. We will pay particular attention to door handles/knobs, light switches, staff rooms, desktops, washrooms and other high touch surfaces and ensure that the custodial staff is following the latest guidelines for proper cleaning and maintenance of workspaces. The City has already posted signs encouraging hand washing in all restrooms.

- Doors: Wipe knobs often and place hand sanitizer near entrances/exits.
- Stair railings: Wipe and clean these surfaces at least daily.
- Elevator buttons: Sanitize hands and place hand sanitizer in high-traffic areas.
- Conference tables: Wipe tables, phones, etc. before each meeting.
- Lobby areas: Wipe hard surfaces and provide hand sanitizer for guests.
- Copy stations: Sanitize or wash hands when using common office machines.
- Water cooler/kitchen space: Wipe all surfaces, even if they appear to be clean.
- Reception: Provide hand sanitizer in public or common areas.

In addition to providing disinfectant sprays or wipes adjacent to each touch-point, staff is considering the following range of precautions to reduce touch-points:

Light/power switches:

- Affix signage to remind occupants to keep switches 'on' all day
- Install movement detectors to activate light switches
- Provide wall-mounted disinfectant dispensers

Doors and drawers:

- Remove non-essential doors
- Remove door handles if viable

Collaboration tools:

- Remove shared conference phones and encourage the use of personal mobile phones or laptop softphones for teleconferences.
- Remove whiteboard pens and erasers and encourage individuals to bring and manage their own
- Provide whiteboard cleaning solution and disposable wipes adjacent to every board
- Remove remote control handsets and provide instructions for manual equipment use instead

Chairs:

- Remove unnecessary fabric upholstered chairs
- Consider plastic wrapping fabric upholstery for ease of cleaning
- Affix notices to each chair reminding occupants to avoid or disinfect touch-points

Shared equipment (printers, copiers):

- Reduce the quantity of printers and copiers to dissuade printing

PPE and Cleaning

- Provide receptacles for used/discarded PPE
- Develop new protocols for collecting and disposing of large quantities of potentially contaminated waste (especially if single-use PPE becomes common in the workplace).

REOPENING OTHER CITY FACILITIES

Parks and Recreation

The plan for the reopening of parks and recreational facilities will rely on a programmatic review of which programs it will be possible to operate this year and meet social distancing and capacity reduction guidelines. Staff is in the process of developing a plan for reopening outdoor sports and recreation in accordance with County guidelines and will bring a plan to the Disaster Council for consideration and recommendation to the City Council.

Kids Programs

The City operates childcare programs, which have their own guidelines under the State

plan, and gyms and fitness centers are able to open in Stage 3. The City has already opened the exterior of its parks to allow walking, running and jogging, but not buildings have been opened yet, nor have playground structures been allowed to open. The same applies to the Community Center, as the approval of large events comes near the end of the guidelines. While Facilities Maintenance has been in the buildings during the shutdown (and getting caught up on some much-needed deferred maintenance items), the buildings should still be treated as reopening a closed building, with extra facility inspection necessary.

Since the initiation of the Covid-19 quarantine that suspended Kids Club/Summer Day Camp Early Childhood Education, and all senior programs, Community Services staff has been discussing the various ways they will operate once State and County restrictions are lifted. In the case of Kids Club and Early Childhood, current State of California guidelines dictate a child-to-teacher ratio of 10 children to 1 instructor. As both programs are offered at multiple locations and with participation levels approximately twice or greater as this ratio, the COVID-19 pandemic will require a reduction in the number served, and a re-engineering of operations. The changes include socially distanced use of all areas of City facilities, regularly scheduled cleaning of spaces used by the children, solo or staggered play times, designated drop off and pick-up locations and designated entry and exit doors. Another option that staff continues to develop contains an education and social experience through the means of technology. There are a number of programs that can be implemented via online for Kids Club/Summer Day Camp and Early Childhood Education. This will require assistance from our partners with Information Technology, but the fundamental aspects of the program is obtainable.

Senior Programs

All senior programs will require similar levels of creativity, as a significant portion of the City's elderly population both have pre-existing conditions, but still require the social aspects of these programs to maintain their emotional well-being. A unique option for consideration for seniors would be a "Telephonic Bingo." This would be regulated to residents of Carson only and would adhere to social (physical) distancing protocols while having a social and fulfilling experience. Staff recommends that all senior programs on site be paused until further notice as the City wants to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our seniors and under the Federal, State and County orders seniors and other vulnerable high risk populations are still required to shelter-at-home. Once those restrictions have been lifted, there are a few proposals that could be realized. Some of those options for consideration are decreasing the number of program participants while increasing the number of sessions offered, requiring reservations or appointments for certain services and reducing the number of staff supporting seniors to be consistent with the number of seniors in the program. The budget impact of these proposals is unknown until we develop comprehensive programs.

DISCUSSION OF OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY NOT IN CITY FACILITIES

One issue for the City Council to discuss is other types of activities that are administered by the City, but which do not fall neatly into one of the categories of businesses and activities outlined in the State or County reopening guidelines, such as July 4 Block Party (street closure) applications. Typically the City receives dozens of applications from

residents to hold block parties on July 4, and they go through Public Works with the event permit application. The Council has considered whether to allow safe and sane fireworks, and has allowed their sale to proceed this year. The Block Party/Street Closure presents a different set of issues, including the size of the gathering, maintaining social distancing, whether other sorts of activities may be included (such as the rental of a bounce house or other high-touch/close-contact activity), shared food (e.g. potlucks or barbecues). Citizens are already calling to inquire. If the City is allowing fireworks, street closure/block party activities do provide some measure of traffic safety, but people should be extra vigilant to not spread the coronavirus to their neighbors.

Finally, other activities in the City have had some effects due to concerns about the coronavirus and the lockdown orders which have forced most people to remain in their homes. NES, the street sweeping contractor, has not reported any significant issues with street sweeping in Carson although there have been some citizen complaints. In addition, concerns about dealing with the virus and worker safety have forced some changes to the pickup of items at illegal dumping sites (i.e. on the sidewalk).

V. FISCAL IMPACT

The City will bear some additional costs to install plexiglass dividers, hand sanitizer dispensers, disposable face masks, floor markings, stanchions (if necessary) for lobby and public areas. Making remote meetings routine, even for workers in City hall, may require upgrades to the City's IT technology. Changes to how City Council meetings operate with many fewer people in the Council Chambers will require some additional technology (especially if lobby furniture is removed and other conference rooms have capacity limitations). There will be ADA considerations for these decisions. City Council meetings may need to accommodate increased public participation via the internet, even at the point City Council is physically present. We expect there to be additional costs associated with reopening parks and recreational equipment, and kids and senior programs. All of these costs are still being determined and tabulated.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Draft City Hall Reopening Plan (pgs. 13-20)
2. Cal OSHA Guidance on Reopening Office-based Businesses (pgs. 21-27)

1.

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