



CITY OF POMONA

COUNCIL REPORT

April 6, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: James Makshanoff, City Manager

Submitted By: Linda Matthews, Human Resources/Risk Management

SUBJECT: NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council receive an update regarding the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide direction as needed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On March 16, 2020, City Council proclaimed a local emergency due to the introduction of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) into the United States and Los Angeles County. This report provides an update regarding the City's response to date and allows the Council the opportunity to provide further direction as needed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

A significant amount of staff time has been devoted to response to COVID-19. There were no comprehensive costs estimates available as of the preparation of this staff report. The estimated general fund cost of continuing to pay part-time employees who are not able to perform their duties is roughly estimated to be approximately \$75,000 per pay period, subject to further analysis.

DISCUSSION:

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. As of Monday, March 30, 2020, COVID-19 has spread globally to 199 countries, infecting more than 775,300 persons and resulting in the death of more than 37,080 individuals worldwide. In California the confirmed cases total 6,498 and 135 deaths, including 2,474 cases and 44 deaths in Los Angeles County. There is four (4) confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the City of Pomona.

The City of Pomona is following guidelines set by the State of California and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health related to COVID-19. Los Angeles County's Safer at Home Order was issued on March 19, 2020 and remains in effect until April 19, 2020. This order requires

that all non-essential businesses temporarily close. On March 26, 2020, the County also closed all trails and beaches in an effort to encourage social distancing. The County's actions essentially align with the State of California's Stay at Home order.

The City of Pomona has taken numerous actions in support of these orders. The impact on City services include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Essential services will continue to be provided. This includes such services as police; trash pick-up; water resources operations; utilities customer service; rental assistance; development permits; essential maintenance operations; and minimal essential support services such as paying bills, payroll, human resources, risk management, and City administration.
2. All non-essential events have been cancelled until further notice.
3. Community programs such as after school programs have been temporarily discontinued and community centers have been closed.
4. Senior programs have been discontinued, but lunches are still being provided to eligible seniors via pick-up or, where possible, delivery.
5. The Library has been temporarily closed.
6. City Hall and other facilities have been temporarily closed to the public, with services accessed through phone, e-mail, and mail. There is also a drop box outside of City Hall.
7. All commission meetings have been cancelled until further notice.
8. City Council meetings will be conducted remotely.

City Staffing Impacts

City employees recognize that their services are essential and have continued to perform their jobs with focus and dedication. Departments are implementing telecommuting where possible. Where employees have to enter the worksite, departments are encouraging social distancing. Some examples of social distancing including separating employee workspaces, reducing the number of meetings; holding meetings via telephone or other electronic meeting applications such as GoTo meeting and Zoom; and alternating shifts.

There is a subset of full-time and part-time employees who are not able to telecommute; or that telecommuting is not available for the full number of hours. The City is obligated to continue paying full-time employees; however part-time employees do not have a guaranteed number of hours and a decision needed to be made quickly regarding whether to reduce these employees' hours. In support of the Safer at Home order, the City has continued to pay these employees for staying at home. This practice is in effect until at least April 19, 2020. Most importantly, this decision supports the overall public health goal of "flattening the curve" by slowing the spread of COVID-19 to avoid overwhelming the health care system. From a business perspective, continuing to pay these employees will also help retain employees in anticipation of operations being restored and helps provide some economic stability.

Other Actions Taken in Support of the COVID-19 Response

On March 19, 2020 at the direction of the City of Pomona Mayor and City Council, City Manager and Director of Emergency Services James Makshanoff, issued an Executive Order (Order) enacting a temporary moratorium on foreclosures and evictions due to non-payment of rent by

residential and commercial tenants impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Additionally, the Order suspended any City utility shutoffs due to non-payment, the issuance of parking citations, and any associated penalties or fees for delinquent payment. The Order, signed and effective as of on March 19, 2020 is included as Attachment 1 for reference.

The week of March 16, 2020, City playgrounds were closed and the public was notified via signs and caution tape that was placed around the playground. In an effort to improve compliance with the closure, on March 27 and 28, the swings and basketball hoops were removed from the most frequently used parks (Ralph Welch, Washington, Ganesha, Kennedy, Willie White, and Palomares Parks). Staff anticipates completing the removal of swings and basketball hoops in parks throughout the City the week of March 30, 2020.

The City is partnering with Pomona Valley Transit Authority to deliver meals to eligible vulnerable residents who are advised to stay at home.

The City is regularly communicating updates to the public via the City website, Facebook and Twitter.

Next Steps

Next action steps include evaluating impact of the federal legislation that has passed, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) recently passed by the Federal government. The City will also continue to evaluate the budgetary impacts of COVID-19. Finally, the City will continue follow the direction from the County, State and Federal public health officials and determine how to best support our employees and community given the resources available to the City.

Prepared by: Linda Matthews, Human Resources/Risk Management Director

Attachment No 1: Executive Order Enacting Temporary Moratorium on Foreclosures and Evictions