

City of Piedmont
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: April 6, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Sara Lillevand, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Report on the Impacts of the COVID 19 Emergency on the City of Piedmont

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID 19 pandemic has created unprecedented local, regional, national, and global impacts. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on impacts and responses specific to Alameda County and the City of Piedmont.

SITUATION STATUS

As of Thursday April 2, 2020 at noon, confirmed COVID 19 cases are as follows:

- 998,047 Global confirmed cases, 51,335 deaths
- 234,462 US confirmed cases, 5,607 deaths
- 10,018 California confirmed cases, 216 deaths
- 396 Alameda County confirmed cases, 9 deaths (includes Berkeley)

At this time, the United States is seeing an increase of approximately 15% in new cases per day and an increase of 20-30% in deaths per day. March 25 marked the day when the US first reached a total of 1000 deaths due to the COVID 19 outbreak. Less than one week later, on April 1st, the United States became the first nation to exceed 1000 COVID related fatalities in a single day.

Case numbers and deaths are reported by public health jurisdiction (Alameda County Public Health Department), not by city, so there are not any Piedmont specific numbers to report. The City of Berkeley is its own public health jurisdiction, so specific numbers are available within its borders. We have included Berkeley's reported cases and deaths in the Alameda County numbers above. The expected surge is anticipated to hit California in the next 14-21 days if the exponential growth in cases continues.

MOBILIZATION STATUS

The State of California has fully mobilized to meet the current and imminent threat from the pandemic. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is providing daily briefings to all jurisdictions. The California National Guard (CNG) continues increased support

to provide humanitarian assistance to augment food distribution through food bank and pantry locations. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is setting up field hospitals across the state including Santa Clara, San Mateo, and a pending site in Contra Costa County. The state is actively recruiting any medically trained personnel to augment the medical workforce with its California Health Corps.

Alameda County has activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to its highest level. The City of Piedmont has activated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and is fully integrated into Alameda County's EOC. We are participating in daily briefings, resource requests, and logistics and contingency planning. Piedmont's Emergency Operations Center is activated at Level 2 (Intermediate). All necessary positions are filled and communicating digitally. The City's Public Information Officer is engaged with the Alameda County Joint Information Center (JIC). The City's emergency operations are fully integrated into the county's operations, which is standard procedure in an emergency.

The Piedmont City Code designates the City Administrator as Director of Emergency Services. Our EOP is based on the national Incident Command System (ICS) and all positions have at least a primary and alternate designee. At the Level 2 activation level some personnel will have multiple functions/duties/titles.

The Command Staff is comprised of City Administrator Sara Lillevand, Assistant City Administrator / City Clerk John Tulloch, Fire Chief Bret Black, Chief of Police Jeremy Bowers, Director of Recreation Chelle Putzer, and Deputy City Clerk Lisa Argue. The command staff performs Public Information, Safety, Liaison, and other overlapping duties.

The General Staff is comprised of Chief of Police Jeremy Bowers, Police Support Services Commander Lisa Douglas, Police Captain Chris Monahan, Fire Chief Bret Black, Fire Captain Scott Barringer, Director of Planning & Building Kevin Jackson, Recreation Director Chelle Putzer, Director of Public Works Chester Nakahara, and Finance Director Mike Szczech. The general staff performs duties such as Finance, Emergency Response, Logistics, Public Works, Facility Cleaning, and other duties as assigned.

The city continues to maintain its ability to respond to emergencies and attend to required daily business. Our Police and Fire Departments have prepared contingency plans for various scenarios. The Fire Department is only responding to legitimate 911 emergencies, and has suspended all non-emergent interaction with the public. This is an effort to protect the health of first responders, and by doing so, their ability to respond to Piedmonters in distress. The City of Piedmont is equipped with enough supplies for a sustained surge in COVID 19 related incidents.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Following the Alameda County Health Officer's initial shelter in place order on March 16, 2020, staff made a determination as to which City services were deemed essential and how to continue to deliver essential services to the residents of Piedmont. With the revised Order #20-04 issued by the county on March 31, 2020, the City has further refined the definition of essential services

to comply with the order.

First and foremost in essential services is public safety. Staff has been intentional and proactive to take measures to prevent our first responders from becoming ill. Beginning March 6th, the City made a series of changes to our operations and facility access in order to prevent any non-essential contact between the public and our police and fire personnel. These included the closure of the City's EOC room and the entire fire department to the public. Over the past month, our public safety departments have made adjustments to a wide array of operations and protocols to safeguard our ability to respond to emergencies by protecting to the extent possible the health of police and fire employees. All in-person, non-essential public safety services have been suspended (dog licenses, citation sign-offs, report requests, VIN verifications). Requests that can be completed electronically by administrative staff who are working remotely continue to be processed. In addition, police and fire have established contingencies through existing county mutual aid processes should they experience significant staffing impacts due to COVID 19 exposure and/or actual illnesses. However, it is important to note that relying on mutual aid is tenuous given that county, regional and state resources are affected by this pandemic thus reducing personnel resources for all.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) continues to provide an array of essential services including emergency on-call response to sanitary and storm sewer back-ups, as well as urgent or emergency maintenance of City's streets, curbs/gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, street signage and painting, traffic signals, and street trees, and other tasks as necessary. The Public Works staff continues to interface with the various utility companies that provide and maintain water, power, gas, and telecommunications services to Piedmonters. The Facilities Maintenance Division continues to provide on-call services to manage the City's facilities and continues to proceed with projects deemed essential infrastructure. With the new restrictions of Order #20-04, the Parks Division affected the closure of all parks and will continue to maintain the closures until the ban is lifted. Also, the Parks Division continues to work with Terra Landscaping in repurposing their efforts to concentrate on only essential services, which includes amongst other tasks, working with the fire department on weed and debris removal for fire safety, clearing debris and installing measures for erosion control, and irrigation maintenance for water conservation. Finally, one of the most essential services provided by DPW during the COVID 19 outbreak is regular intensive cleaning to provide a clean and safe workplace for City employees performing essential service work in City facilities.

The Planning and Building Department continues to accept and process planning and building permit applications, in accordance with requirements of California's Permit Streamlining Act, which, to date, has not been suspended. Most services related to these applications are being provided through email and telephone communications, and the submission of electronic documents. Those that cannot are being executed in conformance with social distancing requirements as required by the Alameda County Public Health Department. Together with Public Works, the Planning & Building Department is also working with Republic Services to maintain essential service levels for Piedmont residents and the City with respect to waste and recycling services.

NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Piedmont City Hall is closed to the public and non-essential services are not being provided. Examples of these suspended services include processing of business licenses, most Recreation Department services, and others.

The Alameda County Health Officer's order #20-04 on March 31, 2020 deemed most residential construction as non-essential. We are working with the City Attorney's office to determine whether there are any projects in Piedmont which would be considered essential and would be allowed to continue. Initial analysis indicates that none of the construction projects in Piedmont with current active building permits meet the requirements to be considered an essential activity and the contractors and owners will likely be advised that they must secure their sites and stop work immediately.

In order to protect the health of its workforce, Republic Services has suspended nonessential services, including the collection of items not contained in service carts such as bulky waste, overflow greenwaste and recyclables, and illegal dumping. Materials contained in service carts and bins will still be collected. Additional carts for organics and recyclables may be requested at no additional cost.

The Alameda County Health Officer's order #20-04 on March 31, 2020 also deemed most work by arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar services professionals as nonessential. Such work for the purpose of upkeep or cosmetic purposes is deemed nonessential and is not allowed.

The Piedmont Unified School District has determined that the work on the new STEAM building at Piedmont High School is an essential government function and work will continue on this project, over which the City has no jurisdiction.

REMOTE WORKFORCE

Currently, all but two of our non-safety full-time City employees are teleworking with full remote access to their workstations. Two members of staff remain at City Hall, which is closed to the public, to answer resident inquiries by phone and email. Three staff members come to City Hall one day each week to finish essential tasks that cannot be fully completed remotely (payroll, accounts payable).

PART TIME STAFF

Starting March 16, 2020, on a limited-term, if work performed by part-time staff ceased due to facility or program closures, the City filled regular work hours with other assignments to the degree possible. If the City was unable to create other work assignments, staff was paid their regular hourly rate for all scheduled hours between March 16 and March 31, 2020. Effective April 1, 2020, employees may request leave as provided by the newly enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FCCRA), which provides emergency paid sick leave and public health emergency leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

FACILITY CLOSURES

The City began closing facilities prior to the Alameda County Health Official's order of March 16th. As of the writing of this report, the following City facilities are closed:

- All Parks and Recreational Facilities
- Piedmont City Hall
- Piedmont Police Department
- Piedmont Fire Department
- Piedmont Recreation Department
- Veterans Memorial Building
- Schoolmates Sites
- Piedmont Community Hall
- Lower Level Community Hall
- 801 Magnolia East Wing
- Piedmont Playschool at Hampton Park
- Piedmont Center for the Arts (Building Owned by the City, but leased to a private organization.)
- Dress Best for Less Marking Room (Carriage House) (Building Owned by the City, but rented to a private organization.)

FISCAL IMPACTS RELATED TO COVID 19:

In the short term, decreased revenues directly related to COVID 19 have significantly altered the FY 19-20 midyear projections presented by Finance Director Mike Szczech to the Council on February 3, 2020. FY 19/20 General Fund revenues are now projected to be \$1.4 million below budget and \$2.0 million below midyear projections. The projection assumes the following:

- The cancellation of all recreation programs and facility events through June 30.
- Transfer tax receipts will be limited to the number of homes currently on the market or in escrow (9).

Despite some unplanned expenditures such as IT equipment for teleworking, personal protective equipment and overtime, overall expenditures are projected to be \$1.0 M lower than anticipated at midyear primarily due to decreased Recreation Department contract program expenses and part-time salaries, and in addition, unrelated to COVID 19, overall lower than budgeted payroll and health insurance costs.

In summary, COVID 19 is likely to have roughly a \$1 million dollar negative impact on this fiscal year.

Our fiduciary funds, which include Police and Fire Pension Fund, Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Fund, and Pension Stabilization Funds (PARS) have each seen declines for the Fiscal Year to date period at March 31, 2020 in the 5%-7% range. As these funds have a long term horizon and are directly affected by changes in the financial markets, it remains to be seen what impact, if any, the current market downturn will have.

Our CalPERS pension costs for FY 19-20 and FY 20-21 will not be affected as our contributions and unfunded liability payment for these periods have already been determined. If the financial

markets do not recover, our costs will be adversely impacted beginning with FY 21-22.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City has been working to keep residents informed with up to date and factual information about the COVID 19 outbreak through various channels. A [COVID 19 Information and Resources](#) page has been created on the City's website. It contains information on how the COVID 19 outbreak and the shelter in place order affect the daily lives of Piedmonters. Staff is keeping this page updated with the best information available in this ever changing landscape. Staff is also utilizing the City and Police Department's social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor to ensure residents are aware when additional information comes out. The City also is utilizing the Constant Contact email system in an effort to ensure we are reaching as many community members as possible. Staff has also utilized the AC Alert notification system to get urgent information out to residents.

Residents are invited to follow the City's social media outlets below:

- [City of Piedmont Facebook](#)
- [City of Piedmont Twitter](#)
- [City of Piedmont YouTube](#)

- [Piedmont Police Department Facebook](#)
- [Piedmont Police Department Instagram](#)

Residents can also sign up for the [AC Alert Notification System](#) to receive alerts from the City of Piedmont and Alameda County. Residents can also subscribe to the [City's Constant Contact Email updates](#).

For more information on Covid-19, please see:

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [California Coronavirus Response](#)
- [Alameda County Public Health Department](#)