



## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council      **DATE:** December 7, 2020  
**FROM:** Matthew Bronson City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Response Update and Business Grant Assistance

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an update on the countywide and City response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide policy concurrence on additional business grant assistance given economic impacts from related closures and restrictions.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The City continues its work in addressing the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic following the direction of the County Public Health Department in coordination with other local agencies. The following is an update on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the county as well as the City's continued response since the last Council meeting on November 16.

#### **Countywide Status**

As of December 4, San Luis Obispo County has 6,540 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 14 current hospitalizations and 779 individuals at home and 5,700 individuals recovered (approximately 87%). This is a 35% increase in the number of new cases in the past three weeks along with a slight increase in the number of hospitalizations. These trends track with increased case numbers in surrounding counties including Monterey (15,765), Santa Barbara (11,845), Kern (43,355), and Kings (6,025). Approximately 40% (2,752) of the confirmed cases in this county are in North County with 1,590 in Paso Robles and 1,162 in Atascadero, Templeton, and elsewhere. Approximately 30% (2,092) of cases are in the central part of the county with the vast majority (1,527) in San Luis Obispo. In South County, there has been a total of 1,374 confirmed cases (approximately 20% of countywide cases) with 477 in Nipomo, 397 in Arroyo Grande, 222 in Grover Beach, 178 in Oceano, and 99 in Pismo Beach. On a South County comparison, case numbers in Grover Beach per 1,000 residents (16.4) continue to be lower than Arroyo Grande (22.3) and Oceano (24.7) though higher than Pismo Beach (12.2). Over the past three weeks, there has been a 26% increase in new cases in Grover Beach.

As highlighted in earlier updates, the State is using an approach called the *Blueprint for a Safer Economy* to determine what businesses can and cannot open safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the *Blueprint*, every county in the state is assigned to a tier based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate. As originally determined, counties must remain in a tier for at least three weeks before moving forward. Data is reviewed weekly and tiers are updated on Tuesdays. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier's criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county's metrics worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier. Table 1 below is a listing of the four tiers of the *Blueprint* approach and the two metrics used to determine placement (new cases per 100,000 population and percentage of positive tests):

Table 1

County risk level	New cases	Positive tests
<p><b>WIDESPREAD</b></p> <p>Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed</p>	<p><b>More than 7</b></p> <p>daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>More than 8%</b></p> <p>Positive tests</p>
<p><b>SUBSTANTIAL</b></p> <p>Some non-essential indoor business operations are closed</p>	<p><b>4 - 7</b></p> <p>daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>5 - 8%</b></p> <p>Positive tests</p>
<p><b>MODERATE</b></p> <p>Some indoor business operations are open with modifications</p>	<p><b>1 - 3.9</b></p> <p>daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>2 - 4.9%</b></p> <p>Positive tests</p>
<p><b>MINIMAL</b></p> <p>Most indoor business operations are open with modifications</p>	<p><b>Less than 1</b></p> <p>daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>Less than 2%</b></p> <p>Positive tests</p>

This tiered approach has been in place since August where SLO County was originally placed in the “purple” or “Widespread” tier with most indoor business operations closed but was moved in late September to the “red” or “Substantial” tier which allowed for 50% indoor occupancy for retail, indoor dining of up to 25% occupancy, indoor activities at gyms and fitness centers of up to 10% occupancy, indoor operations at personal care services, and other indoor uses. However, over the past three weeks, there has been a significant change in the State’s approach to COVID-19 given rapidly rising case numbers as well as hospitalizations and death rates. First, SLO County was placed back into the purple or Widespread tier on November 16 given worsening metrics which triggered further restrictions on businesses and gatherings along with more rapid review of health metrics and resulting placement on the tiers. Second, all counties within the purple or Widespread tier on November 21 were included in a Limited Stay Home Order to stop non-essential activities between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. such as outdoor dining and gatherings. This order had limited applicability to Grover Beach since there are few establishments in the city operating later in the evening.

A third change, a Regional Stay Home Order (Regional Order) announced on December 3, has much more significance to the city and SLO County in general. This order shown in Attachment 1 goes into effect in regions with less than 15% ICU capacity. The order puts further restrictions on private gatherings, closes many business sectors except for critical infrastructure and retail, requires 100% masking and physical distancing in all others, and places significant restrictions on other sectors such as only allowing takeout and delivery for restaurants. Attachment 2 includes a listing of these closures and restrictions. The order will remain in effect for at least three weeks and after that period will be lifted when a region’s projected ICU capacity meets or exceeds 15% for a four-week period which is assessed on a weekly basis. The state is divided into five regions

for the purpose of this Regional Order based on existing mutual aid and health care support with SLO County placed into the Southern California region along with Santa Barbara, Ventura, and other counties south to the Mexico border as shown in Attachment 3. On the evening of December 4, ICU capacity in the Southern California region was 13% which triggered the Regional Order to be issued on December 5 along with a similar order in the San Joaquin Valley region with implementation of the order with related closures and restrictions scheduled to go into effect beginning on December 6. Additional information is available through the State's website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/> or at the County's website at <https://www.readyslo.org/en/index.aspx#>.

### **Business Assistance**

This is a very difficult situation for our entire community particularly local businesses which have already experienced significant financial challenges from previous and existing restrictions. The City will need to continue its role of achieving community compliance with State and local orders with a focus on education and awareness with enforcement action as a last resort if other steps are not successful. It is critical for us as a community to achieve the goal of reducing the transmission of COVID-19 this winter and the resulting impact on our health care system as our county prepares to receive and distribute a vaccine that will eventually end the pandemic in this next year. At the same time, it is also critical to support our business community in this particularly difficult period through individual purchases from local businesses along with assistance from the City. The City has previously carried out two rounds of business assistance microgrants to help businesses through CARES Act funds, SB 1090 Diablo Canyon closure funds, and General Fund funds which has funded in total approximately \$250,000 in grants of \$5,000-\$10,000 to 40 local businesses in our community. Funding assistance has also been provided by the Federal and State governments though the timing and scope of future funding is undetermined at this time.

Given the Major City Goal of Economic Development and the significant economic impacts from the Regional Order, staff is seeking Council policy concurrence for the City to fund another round of business grants to provide immediate funding support for affected businesses with the implementation of this order. Staff is proposing to allocate up to \$500,000 in General Fund reserves for this purpose that would be reimbursed by expected tax revenues this fiscal year from Measure F-20 once the tax measure goes into effect on April 1, 2021 pending adoption of the related tax ordinance in a separate agenda item. Measure F-20 was a general tax measure to provide general revenues to address community needs which include business support and assistance. Using expected proceeds from this measure to support businesses would be an example of addressing an emergent community need with these funds. The City of San Luis Obispo is taking a similar approach with its approved tax measure in considering use of expected funds this year to support economic recovery with a City Council item scheduled for December 8.

Pending concurrence from the Council, staff would work once again with the South County Chambers of Commerce to coordinate the grant application and review process with an online application available on December 8. Any business in Grover Beach could apply with a recommended priority given to businesses most directly affected by the regional order such as personal care services and hair salons along with restaurants as well as businesses that have not yet received City grant funding. The recommended grant amount would be up to \$7,500 and intended to cover employee costs, rent, utilities, or other operating expenses. Applications would be due on December 14 with a similar City-Chamber review process used in previous grant processes and checks distributed to recipients by December 18 with grant reporting due to the City by March 31, 2021. Recipients would need to have a valid Business Tax Certificate and commit to following State and local public health requirements. Lastly, staff would incorporate this allocation from General Fund reserves and reimbursement from expected Measure F-20 revenues as a mid-year adjustment brought to the Council for approval in 2021.

## **City Response Update**

The City continues to provide services to our community in accordance with statewide orders and public health guidelines though City facilities including City Hall and Community Centers remain closed to public access. City employees work predominantly remotely in accordance with public health guidance on offices while continuing to provide services for the public. The public can call the City's main telephone line at (805) 473-4550 or send an email to [cityhall@groverbeach.org](mailto:cityhall@groverbeach.org) to ask questions or get more information about the City's response or services during this time. Given the Regional Order, City playgrounds will be closed with the sports courts and the skate park remaining open for now though inability of users to follow public health requirements may lead to closure of these facilities as well. At this time, there is no timeframe for resuming public access to City facilities including the public counter at City Hall and walk-in visits to the Community Center along with in-person Council and Commission meetings as public health guidance will inform the timeframe for safe public access.

Similar to the cancelation of the Sizzlin' Summer Concert Series this summer, the City has cancelled in-person fall and winter events including the Holiday Parade to discourage large group gatherings. However, the City has put on a series of virtual holiday events including a Pumpkin Carving and Decorating contest, Halloween House Decorating contest, Thanksgiving Thankfulness entries, and virtual Holiday Tree Lighting with the Holiday of Lights Decorating contest currently underway.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Council has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Receive an update on the countywide and City response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide policy concurrence on additional business grant assistance; or
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

## **Attachments**

1. Regional Stay Home Order Text
2. Regional Stay Home Order Closures and Restrictions
3. Map of Regions



SANDRA SHEWRY, MPH,MSW

*Acting Director*

ERICA S. PAN, MD,MPH

*Acting State Health Officer*

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**California Department of Public Health**



GAVIN NEWSOM

*Governor*

**Regional Stay At Home Order**  
**12/03/2020**

Upon assessment of the recent, unprecedented rise in the rate of increase in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and test positivity rates across California, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is taking immediate actions to prevent the spread of the virus.

The State, like the nation, continues to record an unprecedented surge in the level of community spread of COVID-19. California implemented an accelerated application of the Blueprint Framework metrics on November 16 and a limited Stay at Home Order issued on November 19. However, in the interim, the number of new cases per day has increased by over 112%, (from 8,743 to 18,588) and the rate of rise of new cases per day continues to increase dramatically. The number of new hospital admissions has increased from 777 on November 15, to 1,651 on December 2, and because of the lag between case identification and hospitalizations, we can only expect these numbers to increase.

Current projections show that without additional intervention to slow the spread of COVID-19, the number of available adult Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in the State of California will be at capacity in mid-December. This is a sign that the rate of rise in cases, if it continues, is at risk of overwhelming the ability of California hospitals to deliver healthcare to its residents suffering from COVID-19 and from other illnesses requiring hospital care. ICU beds are a critical resource for individuals who need the most advanced support and care and the ability to add additional ICU capacity is limited by the lack of available ICU nurses and physicians as a result of the nationwide surge in hospitalizations and ICU admissions.

Because the rate of increases in new cases continues to escalate and threatens to overwhelm the state's hospital system, further aggressive action is necessary to respond to the quickly evolving situation. While vaccines are promising future interventions, they are not available to address the immediate risks to healthcare delivery in the current surge. The immediate aggressive institution of additional non-pharmaceutical public health interventions is critical to avoid further overwhelming hospitals and to prevent the need to ration care.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, as Acting State Public Health Officer of the State of California, order:**

1. CDPH will evaluate public health based on Regions, responsive to hospital capacity for persons resident in those Regions.
2. CDPH will evaluate the adult ICU bed capacity for each Region and identify on [covid19.ca.gov](https://covid19.ca.gov) any Regions for which that capacity is less than 15%. When that capacity is less than 15%, the following terms (the Terms of this Order) will apply.
  - a. All gatherings with members of other households are prohibited in the Region except as expressly permitted herein.
  - b. All individuals living in the Region shall stay home or at their place of residence except as necessary to conduct activities associated with the operation, maintenance, or usage of critical infrastructure,<sup>1</sup> as required by law, or as specifically permitted in this order.
  - c. [Worship](#) and [political expression](#) are permitted outdoors, consistent with existing guidance for those activities.
  - d. Critical infrastructure sectors may operate and must continue to modify operations pursuant to the [applicable sector guidance](#).
  - e. [Guidance](#) related to schools remain in effect and unchanged. Accordingly, when this Order takes effect in a Region, schools that have previously reopened for in-person instruction may remain open, and schools may continue to bring students back for in-person instruction under the [Elementary School Waiver Process](#) or [Cohorting Guidance](#).
  - f. In order to reduce congestion and the resulting increase in risk of transmission of COVID-19 in critical infrastructure retailers, all retailers may operate indoors at no more than 20% capacity and must follow the [guidance for retailers](#). All access to retail must be strictly metered to ensure compliance with the limit on capacity. The sale of food, beverages, and alcohol for in-store consumption is prohibited.
  - g. To promote and protect the physical and mental well-being of people in California, outdoor recreation facilities may continue to operate. Those facilities may not sell food or drink for on-site consumption. Overnight stays at

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://covid19.ca.gov/essential-workforce/> for full list of California's Critical Infrastructure workforce.



9. When operative in a Region, the Terms of this Order supersede any conflicting terms in other CDPH orders, directives, or guidance. Specifically, for those Regions with ICU bed capacity triggering this order, the Terms of this Order shall supersede the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) and all guidance (other than guidance for critical infrastructure sectors) during the operative period. In all Regions that are not subject to the restrictions in this order, the [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) and all guidance shall remain in effect.
  
10. This order is issued pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 120125, 120130(c), 120135, 120140, 120145, 120175, 120195 and 131080; EO N-60-20, N-25-20, and other authority provided for under the Emergency Services Act; and other applicable law.



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Erica S. Pan, MD, MPH  
Acting State Public Health Officer  
California Department of Public Health



### Rev 12/3/20

The Regional Stay Home Order would be in effect for 3 weeks after the trigger and instructs Californians to stay at home as much as possible to limit the mixing with other households that can lead to COVID-19 spread. It allows access to (and travel for) critical services and allows outdoor activities to preserve Californians' physical and mental health. This limited closure will help stop the surge and prevent overwhelming regional ICU capacity.

In any region that triggers a Regional Stay Home Order because it drops below 15% ICU capacity, the following sectors must close:

- Indoor and outdoor playgrounds
- Indoor recreational facilities
- Hair salons and barbershops
- Personal care services
- Museums, zoos, and aquariums
- Movie theaters
- Wineries
- Bars, breweries, and distilleries
- Family entertainment centers
- Cardrooms and satellite wagering
- [Limited services](#)
- Live audience sports
- Amusement parks

The following sectors will have additional modifications in addition to 100% masking and physical distancing:

- **Outdoor recreational facilities:** Allow outdoor operation only without any food, drink or alcohol sales. Additionally, overnight stays at campgrounds will not be permitted.
- **Retail:** Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- **Shopping centers:** Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- **Hotels and lodging:** Allow to open for critical infrastructure support only.
- **Restaurants:** Allow only for take-out, pick-up, or delivery.
- **Offices:** Allow remote only except for critical infrastructure sectors where remote working is not possible.
- **Places of worship and political expression:** Allow outdoor services only.
- **Entertainment production including professional sports:** Allow operation without live audiences. Additionally, testing protocol and "bubbles" are highly encouraged.

The following sectors are allowed to remain open when a remote option is not possible with appropriate infectious disease preventative measures including 100% masking and physical distancing:

- Critical infrastructure
- Schools
- Non-urgent medical and dental care
- Child care and pre-K



# THE REGIONS

- Northern California: Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity
- Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma
- Greater Sacramento: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba
- San Joaquin Valley: Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Benito, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, Tuolumne
- Southern California: Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura

[covid19.ca.gov](https://covid19.ca.gov)