



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council **DATE:** October 25, 2021
FROM: Matthew Bronson, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Matthew Bronson, City Manager
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Response Update

RECOMMENDATION

Receive an update on the countywide and City response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 regular Council meeting on October 12.

As of October 5, San Luis Obispo County has 28,910 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 14 current hospitalizations including five in the ICU and 649 individuals at home and 27,906 individuals recovered (approximately 97%). This is only a 2% increase in cases over the past two weeks with a 33% reduction in hospitalizations and nearly a 50% reduction in active cases. The number of active cases is the lowest level in the past two months before the increase in cases due to the Delta variant.

In South County, there has been a total of 7,028 confirmed cases (approximately 24% of countywide cases) with 2,195 in Arroyo Grande, 2,163 in Nipomo, 1,253 in Grover Beach, 903 in Oceano, and 512 in Pismo Beach. Current case numbers in Grover Beach per 1,000 residents (93) continue to be lower than Arroyo Grande (122), Nipomo (123), and Oceano (125) though higher than Pismo Beach (62). There has been approximately a 2% increase in cases in Grover Beach over the past two weeks which is similar to the countywide trends in case numbers.

Conditions in the county and throughout the state have continued to improve over the past two weeks following the peak of COVID-19 metrics of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in September from the Delta variant. California has one of the lowest rates of transmission of any state along with one of the highest vaccination rates. Locally, the County's mask order for indoor public spaces remains in effect ([9.1.2021-Health-Order-6---Mask-Mandate.pdf](https://www.emergencyslo.org/9.1.2021-Health-Order-6---Mask-Mandate.pdf)) and covers all businesses, government offices, churches, and other indoor facilities with limited exemptions such as working alone in an office or room, actively eating or drinking, or specific medical reasons.

While there is no specified end date to the mask order, the County announced on October 20 the two criteria the Public Health Officer will use to determine when to lift the mask order: 1) reaching the yellow or "moderate" level of COVID-19 transmission as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and staying there for at least 10 days and 2) having low and stable rate of hospitalizations where area hospitals are able to meet the needs of patients. Currently San Luis Obispo County

is in the orange or “substantial” level of COVID-19 transmission so the transmission criteria has not yet been met despite the downward trend in hospitalizations. The intent behind continuing the mask order for now is to protect hospital capacity going into the winter months when there is still substantial transmission of COVID-19 in the community. Complaints about lack of mask usage in businesses within the city are forwarded to the Code Compliance Officer for response which focuses on outreach and education with a goal of achieving voluntary compliance.

As of October 18, County Public Health has administered 174,545 total doses of the vaccine in addition to doses administered by private pharmacies. Approximately 66% of residents in San Luis Obispo County eligible for the vaccine (12 years of age and up) have been fully vaccinated with 72% partially vaccinated and 28% unvaccinated. In zip code 93433 which comprises Grover Beach, 60% of eligible individuals are fully vaccinated with 67% partially vaccinated. The vaccination rate in Grover Beach continues to increase but remains below the countywide average and the City continues to work with the County on outreach and mobile clinics in addition to the Public Health clinic at 286 South 16th Street. One of the County’s three testing sites is also located in Grover Beach at 1336 Ramona Avenue.

City Hall counter hours are now 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday to provide in-person public access during normal business hours in addition to access electronically though email or on the City’s website or over the phone. The counter is closed on Fridays to allow additional time for staff to process applications, issue permits, and carry out other administrative tasks. Council meetings continue to be virtual for now with a call-in function available for the public to make comments. However, given continued improvement in COVID-19 conditions, staff is beginning to prepare for a return to in-person meetings particularly once the mask order requiring usage in indoor public spaces is lifted.

Lastly, the City is continuing with planned special events in a safe outdoor setting with modifications as needed. Upcoming special events include the Halloween event on October 29 and South County Holiday Parade and Santa’s Workshop in Ramona Park on December 4.

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 response to the COVID-19 pandemic; or
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.