



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council **DATE:** November 22, 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 November 8.

As of November 16, San Luis Obispo County has 29,957 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 13 current hospitalizations including three in the ICU and 239 individuals at home and 29,353 individuals recovered (approximately 98%). This is only a 1.6% increase in total cases over the past two weeks and a 15% decrease in active cases and nearly a 50% decrease in hospitalizations. The number of active cases continues to be at the lowest level since late July before the Delta variant uptick. While the 14-day average number of new daily cases is stable at 34, this is still a higher number than at this time a year ago before the winter surge began.

In South County, there has been a total of 7,320 confirmed cases (approximately 25% of countywide cases) with 2,324 in Arroyo Grande, 2,286 in Nipomo, 1,315 in Grover Beach, 936 in Oceano, and 538 in Pismo Beach. Current case numbers in Grover Beach per 1,000 residents (97) continue to be lower than Arroyo Grande (129), Nipomo (130), and Oceano (130) though higher than Pismo Beach (66). There has been approximately a 3% increase in cases in Grover Beach over the past two weeks which is higher than the countywide trends in case numbers.

Conditions in the county and throughout the state are stable after a significant decline from the peak of COVID-19 metrics of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in September with 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 \(emergencyslo.org\)](#)) 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.

The County's announcement on October 20 about the two criteria the Public Health Officer will use to determine when to lift the mask order remains in effect. These two criteria are 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 and stable 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 November 15, County Public Health has administered 177,969 total doses of the vaccine in addition to doses administered by private pharmacies. Vaccines are now available for everyone ages 5 and up with boosters also available for those who received their vaccination six months ago. Approximately 62% of residents in San Luis Obispo County ages 5 and up have been fully vaccinated with 69% of residents partially vaccinated and 31% unvaccinated. The rate of vaccination in the county is increasing slowly towards the desired goal of 70%-80% of residents fully vaccinated. 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 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 through 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 planning 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 such as the recent Halloween event in October. Upcoming special events include the 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.