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## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council                      **DATE:** April 20, 2020  
**FROM:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager/Emergency Services Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager/Emergency Services Director  
**SUBJECT:** Update on City's COVID-19 Response

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an update on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide input to staff.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The City continues to carefully monitor the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and following the direction of the County Public Health Department in coordination with other local agencies. The City is committed to responding appropriately to address community needs with the public health and safety of the community as the highest priority. The following is an update on the overall status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the county as well as the City's continued response to this situation since the last Council meeting on April 6:

#### **County Status**

As of April 19, the county has 132 confirmed COVID-19 cases with two current hospitalizations and 18 individuals at home and 111 individuals recovered from the virus. Half of the confirmed cases are in North County with 33 in Paso Robles and another 30 in Atascadero and Templeton. In South County, there have been 18 confirmed cases in Arroyo Grande with another 12 in Nipomo and 5 in Pismo Beach. Grover Beach is not listed individually as only cities with 5 or more confirmed cases are shown separately. Overall, the number of new cases per day has dropped to an average of 2.4 since April 5 which indicates the county's progress in "flattening the curve" through public health actions over the past month including the "shelter at home" order and physical distance requirements.

Over the last two weeks, the County has continued to focus much of its efforts on preparing the Alternate Care Site (ACS) at Cal Poly for COVID-19 patients who are too sick to stay at home but do not require hospitalization and the related resources. The ACS can hold up nearly 1,000 patients in several locations that have been repurposed from recreational uses to a highly sensitive medical environment. The facility was opened on schedule on April 8 and currently does not have any patients given the decrease in new cases mentioned above though could potentially house patients from neighboring counties as the pandemic continues.

In addition to the ACS, the County continues to spend considerable effort on creating safe accommodations for the homeless during the COVID-19 crisis. The County continues to operate three safe parking areas at the Coastal Dunes County campground in Oceano, Los Osos County Library, and Veterans Hall in San Luis Obispo for RVs, motor homes, and other vehicles to stay at night with access to bathrooms and showers. All three locations have been utilized on a nightly

basis particularly the Oceano location which has had up to 20 vehicles with an occupancy of 35 individuals. This location was recently expanded from 20 spaces to 30 to accommodate the nightly demand and is staffed by County Probation employees and other Disaster Services Workers. The County is also carrying out "wellness checks" at local meal service locations including the People's Kitchen at LifePoint Church in Grover Beach where homeless individuals exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be tested and temporarily housed in a hotel if they test positive.

Lastly, on April 17 the County extended its "shelter at home" order through May 16 with a two-week review period. The County is also working on a plan to reopen businesses and communities in general in a safe and responsible manner given our county's success in "flattening the curve." The County is engaging with local stakeholders in two different planning processes, a longer-term economic development approach given the COVID-19 pandemic in partnership with the regional economic development group REACH and a more immediate phased reopening plan developed by local health and legal experts. This phased reopening plan will build on the President's guidelines for reopening along with the Governor's six-point reopening framework. The County reopening plan will be reviewed this week by a cross section of community stakeholders from each city along with key groups such as the faith community, education, tourism, hospitality, building and design, transportation, manufacturing, agriculture, and general business. The goal is to have a safe and responsible plan for reopening the county for when the county can lift its "shelter at home" order with authorization from the State. The County is also considering steps to ease some existing restrictions prior to full lifting of the "shelter at home" order.

### **City Response Update**

The City has continued its approach of focusing on providing essential services in accordance with both the countywide and statewide orders:

- Police patrol and dispatch
- Fire and emergency medical services (provided by the Five Cities Fire Authority)
- Water treatment and water/wastewater distribution
- Infrastructure projects
- Stormwater response
- Permit review and issuance for applicable residential and commercial permits

City facilities including City Hall and Community Centers remain closed to public access and as an employee workplace with City staff primarily working from home to continue providing services to the best of their ability. Facility closures also include park facilities such as playgrounds, sports courts, and the skate park to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus in conjunction with the County's "shelter at home" order. Individuals can still access outdoor park areas while adhering to physical distance requirements. The Police Station and Corporation Yard remain in operation given their essential services function. 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.

The City organization has continued to perform capably in a mostly virtual service delivery model aside from field operations. Our employees have continued to carry out the work of City government and using creative approaches and technology tools to overcome the challenge of having physical distance from other employees and our customers. Our maintenance and public safety colleagues who are in the field every day deserve continued recognition for their work to make sure our city is safe and well-maintained. The City is taking steps to support and protect our employees through adhering to the "shelter at home" order, ensuring physical distance is carried

out on the job, and providing necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks as employees have been directed to wear masks when interacting with the public given public health considerations. City departments are also working on a plan for reopening City departments and facilities in a safe manner for the public and our employees consistent with the County's efforts.

The City also continues to track the growing economic impacts caused by the necessary public health actions including financial impacts to City revenues. The Council's action to waive late penalties for utility payments and Transient Occupancy Tax payments from February-May has been appreciated by the community as numerous customers have commented on this when speaking with staff. I continue to work with the South County Chambers of Commerce to coordinate efforts to support the business community and the Chamber will present an update on its efforts at the May 18<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. With regards to long-term economic impacts from the COVID-19 crisis, there are differing perspectives about these impacts though there will be some impact on City revenues and staff is tracking this closely for this fiscal year along with next fiscal year FY 2020-21. Staff will present financial projections and updated budget information at the May 4<sup>th</sup> Council meeting prior to finalizing and distributing the proposed budget for FY 2020-21.

Lastly, the Grover Beach community has continued to do a great job in adhering to the "shelter at home" order and only going out to take care of essential activities. This adherence needs to continue for the time being to continue our county's success in "flattening the curve" before our communities can safely reopen. This success in preventing a greater occurrence of the virus has not just happened on its own but has been the result of deliberative planning, conscious decisions based on public health needs, and community adherence. The City will continue sending this message in public outreach including social media and website posts and physical distance signage at parks along with a postcard mailed out to households in early April. To help with community spirit, the Parks and Recreation Department has led several social media-based initiatives using hashtags including #GBSpringSpirit featuring spring decorations at home, #GBHugaTreeChallenge celebrating Arbor Day, and #GBtogether demonstrating community vitality and inclusion. The #GBtogether initiative involves yard signs created by the City and available at various parks and City facilities that residents and businesses can display in their yards or windows to convey positive energy in these challenging times.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact from this item.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Receive an update on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide input to staff; or
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

### **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.