



Eugene City Manager's Office

Community Letter About Preparedness for COVID-19

Friday, April 3, 2020

Dear Eugene,

I started my day reading a Nelson Mandela quote to staff in our Emergency Operations Center. His message of perseverance was simple, "It always seems impossible until it's done." I know many of you are in that place of feeling this is impossible when there's no clear end in sight. I've had moments of feeling that way, too. Luckily, I'm surrounded by an incredible team of co-workers, friends and family. I hope you have a team helping you through this time.

This week we've had 15 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lane County. While we are all hearing reports that staying at home is working, I hope we can all double down and stick with it. This is not going to be fast or easy, but it may be the most important work we do together as a community. Please continue with your diligent physical distancing and hand washing. I can't even count how many times I've said, "Wash your hands, don't touch your face." And yet, I still catch myself touching my face. My own hands are my worst enemy.

We adjusted our Emergency Operations Center to prepare for a longer-term response. We have two teams alternating four-day, ten-hour shifts, and today was the first day Eugene Springfield Fire Chief Chris Heppel took a break from being our incident commander. Today and through the weekend we are being led by Eugene Police Chief Chris Skinner. We're in great hands. He brings excellent leadership, experience and an awesome sense of humor to a very serious job. We all need a little of that.

A few updates for this week:

Community and personal wellbeing are critical. This week we added a [Community Wellbeing](#) page to our COVID-19 web pages. This section provides resources for mental health support, helpful articles, and "physical distancing fun."

Working in collaboration, your city governments, school districts, YMCA and other childcare partners are providing emergency childcare services during the COVID-19 crisis. At this time, there is only capacity to offer this service to our first responders and essential workers.

I've continued to talk with many small business owners, including a [one-hour Facebook Live and Zoom webinar/interview with the Eugene Chamber of Commerce](#). I know you are scared and need resources. We're working on an economic recovery plan and are doing our best to keep our website [fresh with resources](#) available for you.

All of us are safer staying in place, and our mobile homeless outreach teams are staffed, out in the field [providing basic needs assistance](#) to some of our most vulnerable, unhoused people in Eugene. Teams are also monitoring the current situation throughout the unhoused community and providing information

regarding available shelter options. In the coming days, the City will provide information about the creation of a centralized distribution site where unhoused individuals can get necessary supplies to shelter in place.

With a focus on increasing hygiene in the community, the City continues to add to the number of publicly available restrooms. This week, we installed an additional 25 portable restrooms. This brings the total number of portable restrooms distributed around the city to nearly 40. There are also approximately 50 handwashing stations through Eugene. You can view locations of all of the portable restrooms and handwashing stations through our [online mapping portal](#).

While most of our facilities are closed to the public, we are still providing services in new and innovative ways. We have staff reviewing plans from home, doing inspections by phone, and we even have a [community virtual talent show](#) being curated by the Hult Center. And of course, our first responders are responding, and they'll always be here to help keep you safe.

As we enter this next week of staying home and saving lives, I hope you will all find new ways to connect and find the strength to support yourselves, your friends and families. We're all in this together.

In community spirit,

Sarah Medary
City Manager Pro Tem

Previous Letters

- [Community Letter from March 27, 2020](#)
- [Community Letter from March 20, 2020](#)
- [Community Letter from March 13, 2020](#)
- [Community Letter from March 7, 2020](#)