



Eugene City Manager's Office

Community Letter About Preparedness for COVID-19

Friday, April 10, 2020

Dear Eugene,

One of the things that has always nourished my soul is music. I started making mixed tapes for friends the minute I got my first cassette recorder. I still make mixed tapes, but now they are on Spotify. Today I'm listening to my Soul Café mix and one of my favs, [Rise Up by Andra Day](#). Her words are also my words to you, "...I'll rise up, in spite of the ache, I'll rise up and I'll do it a thousand times again, for you..." For those that have told me this week that they can't do this anymore, this song's for you.

I'm ending the week filled with hope. The steps we've all taken to physically distance and keep our hands clean and off our faces appears to be working, or at least helping. While the peak of our infection rate is modeled to be several weeks out, we currently have 35 confirmed cases and the daily infection rates for the last few days have been less than 3/day.

I can't say loud enough or strong enough that this is the time to really just stay home unless there is an essential reason not to.

As sunny and awesome as it is right now in Eugene, we are still in a pandemic. Step outside, go for a walk, enjoy the sun, but please keep your physical distance to keep that peak down as low as possible. As a reminder, the recommendation is to maintain at least a 6 feet distance.

A few updates for the week:

As you likely know, the [CDC recommends wearing cloth face masks or coverings](#) where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas with widespread community transmission. I've had a few donated to me and am wearing them as suggested. It's kind of fun actually. I look ridiculous and feel like I'm heading in to rob someone's toilet paper supply with puppies on my face.

You probably also know that [Governor Kate Brown extended Oregon's school closure](#) through the end of the school year, but you may not have heard the good news that the [Eugene Public Library is expanding free online access](#) to support Eugene area students and community members.

We're continuing to support our business community with information they need to navigate this challenging time. We've updated the [COVID-19 Info for Businesses webpage](#). The page now includes tabs for Federal CARES Act & Other Disaster Relief, Governor's Executive Orders Affect Businesses, Layoffs, and Resources to Support Ongoing Operations. I've been talking to many business owners and am inspired by their resiliency of spirit in a completely unexpected and devastating time. Shopping locally has never been more important than it is today.

While things are moving a little slower as we prioritize “flattening the curve,” we’re moving forward with capital construction projects like the [Riverfront Park](#) development and the two-way bikeway on 13th Avenue. I’ve seen photos of the pre-construction meeting at the riverfront and was happy to see a lot of physical distancing being embraced. We’re happy to keep people working when they can do so in a safe manner.

Mayor Lucy Vinis has continued to record short videos of information and encouragement which can be viewed on our [YouTube Channel](#). One of the most recent videos highlights the [City’s response to support people experiencing homelessness](#) during the pandemic.

Our communications team is continuing to expand messaging and this week sent a community update by email to over 64,000 newsletter subscribers. We’ve seen a significant increase in web visits and know you are seeking as much accurate information as possible. You can [see the update on our website](#) and [sign up for future emails](#).

Earlier this week, our City team established two [designated temporary shelter sites](#) for some of our most vulnerable and unhoused community members. We are working in coordination with [White Bird Clinic](#), which is placing residents at the designated temporary shelter sites, as well as managing the sites. We’re utilizing the parking lots of our closed community centers and plan to keep them in place through the length of the Governor’s Executive Order to Stay Home, Save Lives.

White Bird is also operating a distribution site for supplies and our mobile outreach teams are out connecting with the unhoused to help keep them safely in place.

You can read [so much more on our website](#), and I never really intended this to be a newsletter. It feels important to highlight a few things, but I mostly want you to know that your City is fully engaged in keeping you safe and informed. I spend my days on multiple communication platforms. I move from Microsoft Teams to Zoom to phone and back again. While our team in the emergency operations center is fully engaged in the “now” of this event, I’m thinking a lot about the “later” and the longer term impacts we’ll be facing together.

And, like many of you, I’ve decided I need to learn how to make sourdough too.

I’ll close with more words of Andra Day:

All we need, all we need is hope
And for that we have each other
And for that we have each other
We will rise
We will rise

In community spirit,

Sarah Medary
City Manager Pro Tem

Previous Letters

- [Community Letter from April 3, 2020](#)
- [Community Letter from March 27, 2020](#)

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