

For Immediate Release
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City of Richmond Responding to Coronavirus Pandemic

March 30, 2020 – With the coronavirus pandemic continuing to escalate and the Contra Costa County Health Services’ “shelter in place” order in its third week, the City of Richmond is addressing the impacts of this ongoing health crisis on a local level.

“We’re working hard and doing all we can to address this unprecedented situation,” said Richmond Mayor Tom Butt. *“I want to reinforce to everyone in Richmond that this pandemic is deadly serious - but we’ll get through it by everyone doing the right things: stay at home unless it’s essential to go out; maintain social distancing; wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently; avoid touching your face; and cough into your elbow; and avoid congregating.”*

To help maintain social distancing and minimize the potential for spread of the virus, City Hall and other City offices are closed to the public. A number of City administrative staff are working remotely and/or on an alternating basis, which may cause delays in some responses and services. The City’s permit and building inspection functions are continuing on a modified basis, in compliance with the Health Officer’s order. Permit applications are being received electronically, by mail, and by appointment. Public Works, as an essential service, is fully operational. All libraries are closed, and the City’s recreation programs are cancelled. City Council meetings are proceeding via teleconferencing (visit ci.richmond.ca.us).

As a measure to address extreme financial impacts from the pandemic resulting in the inability to pay rent, the City has implemented an Emergency Order Prohibiting Evictions, which is in place for the duration of the local emergency/shelter in place order.

The Richmond Police Department is fully operational, and is working to implement high visibility patrols in order to help reassure the community, and provide critical public safety services during these exceptional circumstances. Officers are also helping to inform and educate community members about the shelter in place order, as well as the required closure of non-essential businesses. In addition, the Police Department has taken steps to ensure sufficient officers are available if any officers get sick, including rotating teams at home, and working with neighboring cities on a mutual aid basis if needed.

The Fire Department is carefully tracking its calls for services and responses in order to better identify when a call may have the potential for involving the coronavirus and requiring modified response protocols, making the situation safer for fire crews and for the community. Fire staff are also helping people to understand the pandemic situation and learn appropriate personal safety practices. This is of particular importance when responding to calls involving homeless individuals, who likely don’t have the same access to this information as others in the community.

The City and its Housing Authority are working to ensure the safety of residents in City public housing buildings, including cleaning/disinfecting of common areas if deemed necessary. In some public housing buildings, the Housing Authority is working to arrange for meal delivery to some of the more vulnerable residents. Hand-sanitizer stations are available, and where there are elevators residents are asked to limit the number of people in the elevator in order to keep personal contact to a minimum.

Mayor Butt also reminds the community about the Contra Costa County Health Services' order that non-essential businesses must remain closed, for the safety of the general public. Among other businesses, this order applies to night clubs, bars, spas, gyms, and fitness centers. Further, restaurants may be open for take-out and/or delivery only. This order is supported by the Richmond Police Department and the City's Code Enforcement Unit – for more information see coronavirus.cchealth.org/for-businesses.

“Protecting the public health and reducing the spread of coronavirus is everyone’s responsibility,” noted Mayor Butt. *“Businesses need to fully comply with County Health’s order – to do otherwise is reckless and irresponsible, and threatens all other efforts to reduce the spread of this deadly virus.”*

More information for Richmond residents is online at ci.richmond.ca.us by clicking on the “Coronavirus Info” link.

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