



The Week in Review

City Manager Grace K. Leung
May 1, 2020

Upcoming Events

City Facilities Closed Through May 10, 2020. City Staff Will Continue to Provide Services by Phone, Email and Through the Web.

Saturday, May 2
City Council Special Meeting
City Council Chambers
[\(Instructions for participating remotely\)](#)
9 a.m.

Thursday, May 7
Planning Commission Meeting
[The meeting will be closed to the public. Click here for special COVID-19 participation instructions.](#)

To Our Community:

On Thursday, Governor Gavin Newsom [issued a directive](#) to temporarily close all Orange County beaches as part of the State's COVID-19 response. The directive takes effect today (Friday, May 1).

The Governor's order effectively overrides a Tuesday decision by the Newport Beach City Council to keep the beaches open for recreation and exercise, to provide for the physical and mental well-being of residents.

The City was preparing to increase the public safety presence at the beaches and adjacent neighborhoods to ensure adherence to the Governor's Stay at Home order. However, the City is responding to the Governor's order that was issued Thursday.

The Newport Beach City Council met Thursday evening in closed session to discuss the City's response. Following the meeting, Mayor Will O'Neill expressed confidence in the City's continued ability to protect and serve residents during these trying times.

The Governor's brief and general directive raises enforcement questions, O'Neill said, that will require further clarification from the Governor's office and state Office of Emergency Services. The City's public safety officers will strive to educate the public on the Governor's directive and we are hopeful that citations will be unnecessary.

The City Council will hold a separate special meeting on Saturday, May 2 to discuss legal options to challenge the directive. For the special meeting agenda, [click here](#).

COVID-19 News and Resources

Please visit newportbeachca.gov/covid19 for the latest City news and useful web resources, including information about the federal, state, and county resources available to help

Visit the City's website for a complete listing of meetings and events at newportbeachca.gov/events.

[small businesses](#) and [workers](#) that have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis. We also have a [page of free resources](#) available through the Newport Beach Public Library and local organizations like SCORE, including online learning and business databases.

Visit the [Orange County Health Care Agency's COVID-19](#) web page for countywide information, including the number of local cases. You can also follow the City on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and look for alerts from our City staff on [Nextdoor](#).

How many COVID-19 cases are there in Newport Beach?

The County of Orange posts reported COVID-19 cases by city at <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus>. The number as of May 1, 2020 is 98 cases in Newport Beach out of 2,537 cases total in Orange County. The County has informed cities that this information reflects the place of residence for those who have tested positive, not necessarily where the transmission occurred. Also, the data does not reflect all COVID-19 transmissions in a given community. Those who are asymptomatic and have mild cases may not be tested, and are therefore not reflected in the data. Regardless of the case count in any particular city, it is important for all residents to practice social distancing as directed by the Governor and the Orange County Health Officer. Doing so will help to reduce the spread of infection, ease the burden on our hospital and healthcare system, and protect those most vulnerable in our county.

OC COVID-19 Screening and Testing Network

The Orange County Health Care Agency has released a list of FDA-approved testing sites for County residents who are showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Please visit the County's web site [at this link](#) for a list of approved testing locations.

Areas that Are Closed or Have Limited Access

Under the Governor's order issued Thursday, all beaches in Newport Beach are closed.

Beach parking lots will remain closed, as well as the piers, the Oceanfront Boardwalk on the Balboa Peninsula, the Balboa Island Bayfront Walkway, and the Wedge beach area. Outdoor recreation facilities will also remain closed, including tennis, basketball and pickleball courts, playground equipment, and soccer and baseball fields.

Under Gov. Gavin Newsom's "stay at home" directive, residents are to stay at home except for work at essential businesses, short trips to essential businesses such as the grocery store or pharmacy, and exercising within their neighborhood or close to home under social distancing guidelines.

In Corona del Mar, the City has closed off the typically congested grassy areas along Ocean Boulevard, including Inspiration Point and Lookout Point. The Goldenrod footbridge is also closed as its narrow walkway makes social distancing difficult. The Buck Gully trail is closed.

Back Bay Drive also remains closed to vehicular traffic, providing more room for recreational users to maintain at least six feet of separation from others.

City parks remain open, with the exception of West Jetty Park. Park amenities are closed, however, including playgrounds, fitness equipment, fields (baseball, soccer, multi-use), all courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball, handball and volleyball) and the dog park.

Outdoor Warning System Tested

City contractors conducted a test of Newport Beach's new outdoor warning system between noon and 1 p.m. on Friday, May 1. The volumes will be adjusted as further tests are conducted. The City will be testing the system once a month, on the first Friday of the month, around noon.

CDD First Quarter Report (January – March 2020)

The Community Development Department First Quarter Activity Report is now available at www.newportbeachca.gov/cdd. The report compiles operational statistics to illustrate the volume of business activity that the Department handles on a quarterly basis. The first quarter of 2020 started in high gear after the holiday break. The Building Division was busy reviewing all the projects that were submitted prior to the Building Standard Codes that became effective on January 1, 2020. In early March, as activity decreased due to the Covid-19 closure, CDD staff worked out logistics on how to safely maintain development services for the community. Staff deployed a [Project Submittal Instructional website](#) to provide alternatives to the public to submit projects online, or through a "bin" drop-off and pick-up system for applications and plans.

For building inspections, staff took advantage of smartphone video technology to conduct interior inspections. Code Enforcement experienced a 10 percent uptick in new cases and 3 percent increase in inspections while maintaining their response time service levels. Both the Planning Division and the System and Administrative Division were also temporarily affected by the closure in early March, as most planning applications require a public hearing for approval. Planning and Administrative staff worked with the City's Information Technology division to accommodate virtual meetings for the Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator. Lastly during the closure, administrative staff has maintained its customer services levels by being attentive to phone calls and providing important information on the City's website.

Mayor Sends Letter to HCD

On April 24, 2020, Mayor O'Neill sent a letter to the new Director, Gustavo Velasquez, of the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with an amended request for assistance to extend the deadline for the upcoming 6th Cycle Housing Element. The Housing Element deadline set for October 2021 was already anticipated to be a challenging target given the extraordinary Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) allocation of 4,832 units the City is set to receive and required to plan for. Under normal circumstances, these updates require significant leg work, public outreach, community involvement, and dozens of community meetings. In addition, preparation of costly and time-consuming environmental documentation is required. As a result of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, cities will have a much more difficult time preparing a Housing Element prior to the deadline. Throughout the State, cities have shut their city halls to the public, furloughed employees while facing substantial budget crisis, and have had to revise their approach to public outreach. Despite these new challenges, cities cannot afford to ignore the Housing Element deadline due to the significant new financial consequences of up to \$600,000 per month for noncompliance. A copy of the letter and other City of Newport Beach correspondence related to the City's housing efforts are accessible online at: www.newportbeachca.gov/housingactionplan

Treasury Report Update

The March 2020 Treasury Report is available on the City's website at: www.newportbeachca.gov/treasury.

As of March, the City's portfolio totaled just over \$300 million, from all sources. Roughly \$55 million of this portfolio was highly liquid, meaning it was available for cash flows associated with day-to-day operations and cash funding of major construction expenditures.

The short-term portfolio (\$230 million) had a weighted average effective maturity of 1.95 years. The trailing twelve months' total return was 4.80%. Our benchmark for the same period, the BAML 1-3 Year Treasury index, returned 5.42%. The income yield on the portfolio, a better measure of income derived from the portfolio, was 2.21%.

Homelessness Update

Addressing homelessness continues to be a priority in the City's ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) response. City Net, the City's contracted social services provider, continues to assist people experiencing homelessness. Their outreach efforts, coordinated with the City and County's resources, provide housing, health care and other opportunities. City Net case managers practice proper social distancing and take protective measures to protect the health of the community. The City's Homeless Liaison Officer and the Homeless Coordinator continue to interact with those experiencing homelessness in Newport Beach. Staff distributes personal protective equipment during street outreach and helps people find shelter and healthcare through the City Net case managers. Regardless of housing status, everyone is encouraged to practice social distancing, ensure proper hygiene, and avoid congregating.

Success Stories:

Last week, the City Net case managers connected several people experiencing homelessness to appropriate social services agencies in Orange County, including:

- Assisting several people at the Newport Transportation Center and the Balboa Pier area apply for a State-issued Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. The EBT system is used in California for the delivery, redemption, and reconciliation of issued public assistance benefits, such as CalFresh, CalWORKs, and other food and cash aid benefits. The program, established in 2004, provides up to \$125 a person a month to purchase food.
- Collaborating with Volunteers of America to help an at-risk Veteran client who was previously at the Newport Transportation Center into a motel where they are now healthy and safe. Established in 1896, the Volunteers of America is a faith-based nonprofit that provides affordable housing for low-income people.
- Completing three new Vulnerability Intake assessments (VI-SPDAT) at the Newport Pier with a woman and a couple seeking shelter. City Net utilizes the Vulnerability Index intake assessment to screen clients on a number of factors to determine proper placement in the County's Continuum of Care system. Some factors include age, health issues, and length of time being unsheltered.
- Providing hygiene kits, food packs, clothes and supportive services for clients

The City Net hotline number is (714) 451-6198. Those who call the hotline may leave a detailed voicemail message for themselves or others in need and City Net staff will respond within 48 hours. If immediate assistance is needed, people are advised to call the County's Crisis Prevention Hotline at (877) 7-CRISIS or (877) 727-4747.

Citywide Facility Painting Project

The Public Works and Recreation Departments took advantage of the City closure to refresh the paint in some of the more heavily used recreation facilities. Painting was performed under an on-call contract at the Community Youth Center, Victor Jorgensen Center, and Marina Park.

Beach Restroom Electrical Panel Replacement

The Public Works Department recently completed electrical panel work at six of the City's most used restrooms (15th Street, 58th Street, Balboa Pier, Channel Place, Newport Pier, and Washington Street) in preparation for the summer season. JPT Construction Inc. was awarded the contract to replace deteriorated electrical panels. These panels were 25 – 30+ years old and were in poor condition due to exposure to marine air. The project replaced these panels and upgraded them to commercial grade boxes with a higher corrosion resistance. The project was completed well under the project schedule and due to the wintertime period no disruption to public use was experienced.

