



The Week in Review

City Manager Grace K. Leung

March 26, 2021

Upcoming Events

**Monday, March 29 – Monday,
May 3, 2021**

[City of Newport Beach 2021
Scholarship Program](#)

**Wednesday, March 31
Housing Element Update
Advisory Committee**

[\(Register here\)](#)

6 p.m.

Friday, April 2

[Monthly Test of City's Outdoor
Warning Notification System](#)

12 p.m.

Community members,

There was significant progress this week in both the COVID-19 case counts and vaccination rollout in Orange County and the State.

First, a bit of local good news: A partnership between the City of Newport Beach and Hoag Hospital delivered 300 vaccine doses to members of our senior community at the OASIS Senior Center on Tuesday, March 23. Our staff reached out to Newport Beach seniors who had not had a first dose, because of various challenges accessing the County supersites. It was tremendously gratifying to be able to host a local clinic at OASIS, and I'm thankful to Hoag Hospital and our dedicated Newport Beach Fire Department staff for making that happen.

At the county level, Orange County's metrics continued to improve and we could enter the Orange Tier of the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) as early as March 31. This would give a huge boost to our local businesses, as restaurants could expand indoor capacity to 50%, and bars that do not serve food could offer outdoor service. For more information on the Orange Tier and current Red Tier status, please see [this chart](#) from the California Department of Public Health.

This week, Orange County's 7-day average daily case number decreased to 3.5, which puts us squarely in the Orange Tier. The other two key metrics also showed improvement within the Orange Tier: the positivity rate (the percentage of positive tests among those tested) was at 2.1%, and the health equity metric decreased to 3.2%.

Vaccinations continue to roll out at a strong, steady pace. Nearly 1.3 million people in Orange County have received at least one dose, and statewide, the number is up to nearly 16 million people. On Friday, Gov. Newsom announced that the state will expand eligibility to all those age 50 and older beginning April 1, and all those 16 and older beginning April 15.

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

Here is updated vaccine information and resources as of March 25:

- Vaccine eligibility, [under State guidelines](#), currently includes Phases 1A, 1B, and people ages 16 to 64 with underlying medical conditions and/or disabilities. As noted above, this will expand to all adults by mid-April.
- While many people who live or work in Orange County currently do not yet meet the State's eligibility for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, they are advised to register now at www.Othena.com to be placed in the virtual waiting room to be notified when it is their turn.
- There are several vaccination options. Even if you are registered with the County's Othena platform, you can also register with the state's "My Turn" system, administered by Blue Shield, at [this link](#). Orange County has developed a similar [vaccine resource web page](#).
- You can subscribe to Orange County's weekly OC COVID19 Vaccine Facts newsletter [at this link](#). Scroll down until you see the subscribe button and enter your email address.

COVID-19 Cases in Newport Beach

As of March 25, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Newport Beach was 3,712 and the total cases in Orange County was 249,939. The number of recovered COVID-19 patients countywide as of March 25 was 241,908. These figures are provided to Orange County by the California Department of Public Health.

Temporary Business License Tax Waiver Approved by Council

By a unanimous vote of the City Council on Tuesday, March 23, Newport Beach will waive annual business license taxes for businesses within the city that were forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic by order of the State. The one-year waiver applies for business license tax renewals processed between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. The temporary tax waiver is one of the ways the City is helping support local businesses as they begin to emerge from the pandemic.

The waiver will apply to about 1,850 "commercially based" businesses, of 9,000 such businesses in Newport Beach (about 25,000 businesses have City permits, including home-based businesses and those doing business in the city but located elsewhere). Commercially based businesses include retail stores, hair and beauty shops, gyms and fitness centers, restaurants and bars, museums and art galleries, and private schools. To qualify, a business would have had to close at least once during the pandemic and could not offer its services virtually.

Housing Element Update Advisory Committee Meeting Next Week: March 31

On Wednesday, March 31, 2021, at 6 p.m., the City's Housing Element Update Advisory Committee (HEAUC) will hold a meeting virtually via Zoom. The HEUAC is anticipated to do the following:

- Hear updates from the active subcommittees and receive and file final memorandums prepared by some of the subcommittees over the past months.
- Review and discuss the initial draft of the Housing Element update and provide direction to staff.

The agenda for this meeting will be posted online [here](#). The public is welcomed and encouraged to participate remotely via [Zoom](#).

The HEUAC is scheduled to meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month on an as-needed basis. For more information on the HEUAC, please check out its webpage [here](#).

As a reminder, the initial draft of the Housing Element is posted and available for review at: www.newportbeachca.gov/DraftHEUpdate until April 30, 2021. Please send all comments to City staff at GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov.

Community Invited to April 5 Online Circulation Element Workshop

The City is inviting and encouraging the community to provide input on the future of mobility and transportation in Newport Beach.

An interactive, virtual workshop will be hosted on Monday, April 5, 2021, at 6 p.m. via Zoom. This workshop will provide an overview on what to expect when reviewing the draft Circulation Element and how to navigate it. The City is requesting comments on this draft by April 30, 2021. The draft is available [here](#).

To register, please visit www.NewportTogether.com or click [here](#).

Over this summer, a complete traffic analysis will also be prepared as part of the analysis of both the Housing and Circulation Element updates. The analysis will evaluate the inclusion of all housing units anticipated by the draft Housing Element. Along with the Circulation Element update, City staff and its consultant team will be working on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which will provide for additional public input opportunities.

This is the very first draft of the [document](#). There will be plenty of opportunities to help shape it before its adoption by the City Council later this year. The entire community is encouraged to participate and review the document.

Stay tuned for more information. The City appreciates the community's engagement and participation in this unprecedented process!

Homelessness Update

Addressing homelessness continues to be a priority in the City's ongoing COVID-19 response, and City staff works closely with our contractor City Net, and our regional partners throughout the county and state. 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. For immediate assistance, call the County's Crisis Prevention Hotline at (877) 7-CRISIS or (877) 727-4747.

The City discourages panhandling in favor of targeted assistance through the Good Giving Program. Donations received through the program enable staff to purchase items such as bicycles, work boots, and small household items for newly housed people. All donations are tax deductible. If you would like more information, or to donate, please visit our [Good Giving Program web page](#).

Success Stories

- County case managers are now assisting the 17 people recently placed into the new Yale Transitional Center in Santa Ana. Many of those people had been staying by the Newport Pier. The Yale Center provides shelter for as many as 425 people experiencing homelessness and provides case managers who locate appropriate housing, assist with job searches, and provide other on-site services.
- City Net, Illumination Foundation, and Share Our Selves collaborated to create a housing plan for a man staying in his truck by the Newport Pier. Illumination Foundation, established in Orange in 2008, provides housing and healthcare to end homelessness throughout Orange County. Share Our Selves provides medical and dental care, access to a food pantry, postal service, and other social services for low-income individuals and families in Orange County.
- City Net staff and the City's Homeless Liaison Officer are assisting three elderly people staying in a motel with an upcoming transition into a new motel in late March due to a change in motel ownership. City Net staff continues to provide food gift cards, support, and case management to several people sheltering in motels while they await placement into permanent, supportive housing.

Back Bay Drive Reopens

As of Tuesday, March 23, Back Bay Drive is open to vehicles. The closure to vehicles due to COVID-19, and more recently due to a landslide, has been lifted and full access has been re-established between San Joaquin Hills Road and Eastbluff Drive. Remediation work on the hillside was completed by Park Newport and coordinated with the City.

