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## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council                      **DATE:** April 6, 2020  
**FROM:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager/Emergency Services Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager/Emergency Services Director  
**SUBJECT:** Update on City's COVID-19 Response

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an update on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide input to staff.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The City continues to carefully monitor the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and following the direction of the County Public Health Department in coordination with other local agencies. This is a significant public health situation that the City is responding to address community needs with the public health and safety of the community as the highest priority. The following is an update on the overall status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the county as well as the City's continued response to this situation:

#### **County Status**

As of April 5, the county has 95 confirmed COVID-19 cases with four current hospitalizations including three in intensive care. The county had its first death from the virus over the weekend while 25 individuals are at home and 65 individuals have recovered from the virus. More than half of the confirmed cases are in North County with 27 in Paso Robles and another 25 in Atascadero and Templeton. In South County, there have been 13 confirmed cases in Arroyo Grande with another 5 in Nipomo while Grover Beach and Pismo Beach are not listed individually as only cities with 5 or more confirmed cases are shown separately.

The County has focused much of its efforts recently on developing the Alternate Care Site (ACS) at Cal Poly. This facility at the campus recreation center is designed as a middle ground for COVID-19 patients who are too sick to stay at home but do not require hospitalization and the related resources. The ACS can hold up nearly 1,000 patients in several locations that have been repurposed from recreational uses to a highly sensitive medical environment. I had the opportunity to join other City Managers and Mayors from across the county in touring the facility on April 3 prior to its anticipated phase one opening date of April 8. The facility was put together in the span of two weeks through a public-private partnership of the County, Cal Poly, Cal Fire, Trust Automation, Thoma Electric, RRM Design, and others. The facility will be ready to house patients from this county along with neighboring counties and potentially from elsewhere in California given the anticipated increase of COVID-19 patients in the coming weeks.

In addition to the ACS, the County is spending considerable effort on creating safe accommodations for the homeless during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The County is operating three safe parking areas for RVs, motor homes, and other vehicles to stay at night with

access to bathrooms and showers. This action was taken in light of the closure of local gyms under the County's "shelter at home" order as many homeless individuals were using the shower facilities at these local gyms. The three safe parking areas are at the Coastal Dunes County campground in Oceano, Los Osos County Library, and Veterans Hall in San Luis Obispo. In conjunction with these facilities, the seven cities have temporarily stopped issuing citations for overnight parking but instead are steering these vehicles to the nearest safe parking area. Most cities including Grover Beach are still enforcing the 72-hour parking limitation to ensure that vehicles do not remain in one location for over three days. The County is also working with two hotels to temporarily house homeless individuals who show symptoms of COVID-19 and is working with cities on ways to carry out the State's recent proposal of housing at-risk homeless individuals in area hotels.

### City Response Update

The City has continued its approach of focusing on providing essential services in accordance with both the countywide and statewide orders:

- Police patrol and dispatch
- Fire and emergency medical services (provided by the Five Cities Fire Authority)
- Water treatment and water/wastewater distribution
- Infrastructure projects
- Stormwater response
- Permit review and issuance for applicable residential and commercial permits

City facilities including City Hall and Community Centers remain closed to public access and as an employee workplace with City staff primarily working from home to continue providing services to the best of their ability. Facility closures also include park facilities such as playgrounds, sports courts, and the skate park to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus in conjunction with the County's "shelter at home" order. Individuals can still access outdoor park areas while adhering to physical distance requirements. The Police Station and Corporation Yard remain in operation given their essential services function. The public can call the City's main telephone line at (805) 473-4550 or send an email to [cityhall@groverbeach.org](mailto:cityhall@groverbeach.org) to ask questions or get more information about the City's response or services during this time.

The City organization has continued to perform capably in a mostly virtual service delivery model aside from field operations. We have a strong City team and our employees have continued to carry out the work of City government and using creative approaches and technology tools to overcome the challenge of having physical distance from other employees and our customers. Our maintenance and public safety colleagues who are in the field every day deserve particular recognition for their work to make sure our city is safe and well-maintained. The City is taking steps to support and protect our employees through adhering to the "shelter at home" order, ensuring physical distance is carried out on the job, and providing necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks when appropriate.

The City also continues to track the growing economic impacts caused by the necessary public health actions and take necessary steps in response. The recent actions taken by the Council to waive late penalties for utility payments and Transient Occupancy Tax payments for four months are examples of these steps to support businesses as well as households. I am working with the South County Chambers of Commerce to coordinate efforts to support the business community and I recently approved an advancement of funding approved this fiscal year for their economic development work to assist them in providing this support. I am also serving on a regional task

force supporting the County's business recovery efforts working with public and private sector leaders. While there are differing economic perspectives about the long-term economic impacts from the COVID-19 crisis, there will be an impact on City revenues at least in the short-term and staff is tracking this closely in updating financial projections for this fiscal year along with next fiscal year FY 2020-21. As an example, the Governor recently announced a sales tax deferral for small businesses that would offer short-term tax relief to businesses but could significantly impact local government funding for essential services unless the State could provide funding support. Staff will present updated budget information at the May 4, 2020 Council meeting prior to finalizing and distributing the proposed budget for FY 2020-21.

Lastly, the Grover Beach community has done a great job in adhering to the "shelter at home" order and only going out to take care of essential activities. While there are occasional reports of individuals and groups still using closed sports courts and playgrounds at City parks, these reports are relatively infrequent and individuals have dispersed when asked by City staff. This adherence by our community needs to continue to reduce the spread of COVID-19 given the anticipated peak of in the coming weeks and the City will continue sending this message in public outreach including physical distance signage at parks and a postcard that will go out to every household later this week. To help raise community spirit, the Parks and Recreation Department has started a social media campaign called [#GBSpringSpirit](#) where families can post a photo of their family's most creative way to celebrate spring. Entries need to be posted by April 9 with the three most spirited entries announced on April 10. Staff is working on other ways for the community to show its spirit and convey positive energy in these challenging times.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact from this item.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Receive an update on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide input to staff; or
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

### **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.