



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jason Simpson, Acting City Manager

Date: April 27, 2021

Subject: Continued Existence of a Local Emergency (COVID-19)

Recommendation

1. Find the need to continue the local emergency related to COVID-19 consistent with the findings and proclamations set forth in Resolutions No. 2020-18 and No. 2020-52; and
2. Direct staff to pursue available County, State, or Federal government disaster assistance based on the continued declaration of a local emergency; and
3. Continue activation and implementation of the emergency operations plan's response and recovery which authorizes the City to furnish or receive aid and assistance under existing mutual aid agreements.

Background

The Governor of California proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 4, 2020, due to the introduction of COVID-19 in the State of California. On March 8, 2020, the Riverside County Public Health Officer declared a local health emergency based on an imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of COVID-19 in Riverside County, which declaration was ratified by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on March 10, 2020.

On March 17, 2020, the City Manager, in his capacity as Disaster Director, proclaimed a local emergency throughout the City of Lake Elsinore, finding that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property existed in the City related to the COVID-19 outbreak and that efforts required to prepare for, respond to, mitigate and recover from the increasing spread of COVID-19 imposed extraordinary demands which exceed the City's resources and are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the City.

On March 24, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-18 Ratifying The Proclamation Of Local Emergency And Proclaiming The Existence Of A Local Emergency (COVID-19), and on June 9, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-52 finding and proclaiming the continued existence of a local emergency (COVID-19).

Under the State's "Blueprint for a Safer Economy," every county in California is assigned to a tier based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate. The four tiers are yellow, orange, red and purple. Yellow indicates minimal COVID-19 spread and allows for nearly all businesses to reopen indoor operations (as long as physical distancing and face-covering requirements are in place). Purple means there is widespread COVID-19 transmission. Exhibit "A" shows the metrics and activities associated with each tier.

Discussion

The City of Lake Elsinore is subject to State and County public health orders that restrict and/or impose guidelines to conduct certain activities. These restrictions apply regardless of the City's proclamation of a local emergency. However, the declaration of a local emergency provides a legal basis for requesting and obtaining County, State, or Federal government disaster assistance. The declaration also activates the emergency operations plan's response and recovery aspects and authorizes the City to furnish or receive aid and assistance under existing mutual aid agreements.

Following the adoption by the City Council of the Proclamation of Local Emergency, State law and the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code require the City Council to periodically review the necessity for continuing the local emergency until the emergency is terminated. The City Council found the continued local emergency existed at its March 23, 2021 meeting. Since that time, Riverside transitioned from the "Substantial (Red) Tier" to the "Moderate (Orange) Tier." While key metrics are trending downward, COVID-19 remains a severe threat to public health in the City of Lake Elsinore, County of Riverside, and the State of California.

As of April 22, 2021, California reported 3.73 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, resulting in 61,170 deaths.

As of April 21, 2021, the County of Riverside reported 297,631 confirmed cases and 4,547 deaths in the County and 7,312 confirmed cases and 75 deaths in the City of Lake Elsinore.

Governor Newsom has suggested that there may be a lifting of restrictions on June 15 if certain conditions are present: Beyond the Blueprint for a Safer Economy (ca.gov). It is not clear from the Administration at this point that the June 15 target date for eliminating the tiered reopening structure is the same date that the state declaration of emergency will be rescinded or that related executive orders will be rescinded, including those orders which suspended certain provisions of the Brown Act. The City will continue to monitor these issues and advise the City Council and the community as to how and when the State envisions the unwinding process to begin.

Attachment: Blueprint for a Safer Economy - Activity and Business Tiers (March 11, 2021)