

COMMUNITY NEWS RELEASE:
March 17, 2020



City Opens Emergency Operations Center Council Issues Emergency Proclamation in Response to COVID-19

San Mateo, CA – With a shelter in place order now in effect across most Bay Area counties, the City of San Mateo opened its emergency operations center and proclaimed a local emergency as officials mobilize resources to support the community.

The City is working closely with the County of San Mateo to support residents and businesses as everyone adapts to the County Health Officer's order, which limits activities to only the most essential needs.

On Monday, March 16, the City Council unanimously passed a resolution proclaiming a local emergency. The designation gives the City flexibility to leverage resources and help ensure critical services continue. Additionally, it allows the City to request mutual aid from regional, State and other governmental entities. The City of San Mateo activated a multi-agency Emergency Operations Center along with Belmont, Foster City and the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department.

"As we all adjust to these unprecedented but important public health orders in our community, we're coordinating closely with our neighbors, partners at the County, and local nonprofits to make sure we support our community, especially the most vulnerable who may need assistance while remaining at home," said Mayor Joe Goethals. "It's been wonderful to see our community's response and how folks want to step up to help volunteer. We're working on connecting people to resources and opportunities to support their community."

The San Mateo-based nonprofit Samaritan House is currently open to provide essential services, and additional health precautions and screenings are in place. Those who are low-risk and able to volunteer are asked to contact Samaritan House at volunteering@samaritanhouse.org. They're currently looking for people who can assist with food preparation and/or transport. In addition to monetary donations, at this time they're in need of pre-packaged food, toilet paper, paper towels, sleeping bags, diapers, pull-ups, baby wipes, formula, baby food, tents, cleaning products, cases of water and toiletries. Visit www.samaritanhouse.org for more information.

Under the County Health Officer's order, businesses essential for the health and safety of the public will remain open. These include grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, banks, child care facilities, convenience stores and more. Residents and businesses are encouraged to visit www.smcgov.org to review the order and for FAQs on what is covered under the County Health Officer's Shelter in Place Order. The San Mateo County Economic Development Association is also offering guidance for businesses and employers at www.samceda.org. Businesses can also email healthorderFAQ@smcgov.org for information about the legal interpretation of the order.

"While our day-to-day lives will be impacted in the coming weeks, we can find comfort in the things that will remain consistent. We can still enjoy walks outdoors, run necessary errands, and spend time with loved ones while maintaining safety precautions and being mindful of social distancing," Goethals said.

As of Monday, March 16 and in accordance with the Health Officer's order, the City has limited operations to essential services and closed City buildings to the public. To protect the health of our staff and residents, the City is taking extensive steps to reduce the spread of the virus.

In compliance with the County Health Officer's order to Shelter-in-Place, effective on March 17 through April 7, the City of San Mateo will only be providing essential services including public safety, wastewater treatment, and critical infrastructure maintenance. We have also closed City facilities to the public including libraries, community centers and City Hall. Parks and open space remain open. All events have been cancelled through April 7. More details about impacts to City services are available at www.cityofsanmateo.org/coronavirus.

The City has also increased police patrols and first responders are taking precautions when responding to calls. Residents are encouraged to call 2-1-1 for non-medical information about the coronavirus and the County Health Officer's order.

"I'm grateful for the folks serving as emergency responders, health care workers, and those helping to ensure our communities remain safe and protected," Goethals said. "The best thing we can do to support them in this effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus, is to follow the instructions of public safety officials and stay home as much as possible."

Everyone is encouraged to stay informed with accurate information from official sources. Please visit the County of San Mateo's website at www.smcgov.org and the Centers for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov for up-to-date information about the coronavirus. Community members can also call 2-1-1 to receive non-medical information 24/7 in 180 languages.

Stay Safe, Stay Home & Stay Positive

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