



City of Arts & Innovation

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City of Riverside Embracing Measures to Reduce Transmission of COVID-19

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside is embracing [recommendations from Gov. Newsom](#) and an order from the [Riverside County Department of Public Health](#) designed to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser on Thursday ordered the cancellation of public gatherings of [250 people or more](#) in Riverside County. Gov. Newsom included that recommendation in a series of preferred measures he released Wednesday evening. He also called for limiting gatherings of people who are at higher risk for COVID-19 to 10 people or fewer, and for delaying or canceling meetings where attendees cannot observe at least six feet of “social distancing” from one another.

There are eight cases of COVID-19 involving Riverside County residents, two of which involve Riverside County residents who are infected but have not returned to the area. The County Board of Supervisors unanimously ratified a local public health emergency declaration on Tuesday.

As a result of those developments, the City of Riverside is determining which public meetings should be cancelled or delayed in the near future. Some items on the agenda for remaining meetings will be removed if there is not a pressing need to take action on those items. At meetings that do occur, attendees will be encouraged to cover their mouths when coughing, wash their hands frequently, refrain from touching their faces, and stay at least six feet away from another person.

The six-foot social distancing recommendation is likely going to limit the number of people who can simultaneously attend a City Council meeting to about 50. City officials are determining how best to utilize the Council Chambers and the nearby lobby of City Hall when needed. Residents who want to weigh in on issues before the City Council but do not want to attend a public meeting are encouraged to use the “e-comment” feature [HERE](#)

The City is acting to protect the safety and security of its employees and members of the public who use city facilities while also allowing for the efficient and necessary operation of City government. The actions come at a time when major sporting events are being cancelled, Disneyland is closing for the first time since the Sept. 11 attacks, and sports and entertainment figures are being diagnosed.

“COVID-19 is very serious, so it is prudent for us to take these measures to minimize the impact that unnecessary exposure could have on our medical system,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “We want the public to be as safe as possible.”

The City will announce in coming days which public concerts, community gatherings and other events will be cancelled or postponed. The City also is encouraging residents to educate themselves about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including how to protect themselves and their families, by reviewing a new city webpage devoted to the topic.

The webpage – RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19 -- is stocked with the latest information about the virus, which recently was described for the first time as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. WHO defines a pandemic as the worldwide spread of a new disease for which most people do not have immunity.

“We all want to keep ourselves and our families healthy and safe, and good information is a key building block in that effort,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “For practical ways to reduce the spread of the virus, the website has the information you need to make smart choices about your family’s health.”

More than 1,200 people are infected with the virus in the U.S. and 36 people have died, according to the federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC). The Riverside County Department of Public Health remains the lead agency locally. Links to these agencies’ websites and many others at the local, state and federal levels can be found on the [city’s website](#). Topics on those linked websites include how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, what symptoms to look out for, and planning toolkits for businesses concerned about the health of their employees and customers.

The City of Riverside has a very active internal planning team tracking developments around the state, nation and world, then delving into how these developments could affect Riverside. This team, which includes city management, fire, police and emergency management personnel, is focused on how best to ensure that as many city services as possible remain active as we deal with the virus.

The team also is developing specific actions that could be undertaken based on pre-determined thresholds of infection if Riverside begins to see “community spread” of the virus in the city or in adjacent communities. Community spread is defined as person-to-person transmission of the virus without known exposure to an already-confirmed case.

“City leaders are actively monitoring the COVID-19 virus and are working closely with our partner agencies to ensure the public has access to the latest information,” City Manager Al Zelinka said. “We encourage all Riverside residents, students, employees and business owners to familiarize themselves with this information so they can make informed choices.”

The city is procuring additional supplies to prevent the spread of the virus and ensuring there is adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all applicable city staff, including first responders. Information is being regularly provided to two numbers -- 311 and 911 – that residents call for information or when they have an emergency, respectively.

Riverside residents are encouraged to sign up for RiversideAlert.com for critical City messages and alerts.