

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno's City of Springfield COVID-19 Situational Update

Friday, August 7, 2020

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, in the best interests of our residents and business community, continues his daily morning meetings with his cabinet heads as they work 24/7 to facilitate and coordinate with all of our local, state, federal, and public and private partners in response to the COVID-19 situation.

Below are the most recent updates as reported from each City Departments.

Mayor's Office

- Continues to coordinate the city's efforts with all stakeholders (state, federal, hospital and medical facilities, public and private partners, etc.) in response of services and relief and recovery measures
- Continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely so that as the city begins with phased reopening aspects, the city does not ease prudent measures too early, which could potentially expose our residents to a second wave of the virus
- Continues to stress the need for additional target testing in order to build strong public, business, consumer, and hospital confidences to identify, isolate, contact trace, mitigate and heal potential hot spot areas
- City Hall and all municipal buildings have reopened, by appointment only and with additional restrictions, as part of the city's Phased reopening plans
 - Temperature checks and face coverings needed to enter city buildings
 - Continuing to encourage residents and businesses to conduct city related business by phone or through the city's website
 - City Hall utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Continues to coordinate with cabinet and department heads on reopening aspects of all municipal buildings
- Need for additional thermal infrared thermometers to assist with reopening aspects
- Heartfelt thank you to our Springfield Community for stepping up with PPE donations, allowing the city to outfit our dedicated police, fire and frontline workers with the appropriate safety equipment
- Mayor Sarno and cabinet heads continue to review Governor's Phase 3 reopening plan
- Governor Baker issued new Travel Order for all travelers entering Massachusetts that took effect on August 1st
 - Rhode Island taken off state safe travel / low-risk state list

- Mayor Domenic Sarno declared a state of emergency due to Tropical Storm Isaias, which had damaging winds at tropical storm or hurricane force levels. In addition, there was a major water main break, which has left most of the city either without water or with low pressure.
 - The City has experienced power outages across the city
 - DPW issued guidance on tree debris removal for city residents
 - City continues to work with Eversource and the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission to restore services to residents and businesses
 - Mayor Sarno spoke with Lt. Governor Polito about having the Massachusetts National Guard assist the City's Forestry Division with removing and cleaning tree debris from city streets
 - Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi will assist the City's Parks Department with cleaning up tree debris from city parks
 - City will continue to review, monitor and reassess the situation in case the need arises for shelters to be opened

Health

- Announced 13 total new cases of Springfield residents testing positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
- Total positive cases now at 2,871
 - City starting to see a leveling of cases, however we must remain vigilant
 - State has begun reporting probable new cases in addition to confirmed cases
 - 127 deaths of Springfield residents related to COVID-19
 - State has reclassified the 'causes of death' for prior deaths which may not have been attributed to COVID-19 related conditions and underlying health symptoms
 - 57 deaths reported from long term care facilities
 - 70 residential deaths
 - Ethnic breakdown of deaths:
 - 56 White – 44.1%
 - 29 Black – 23%
 - 40 Hispanic – 31.5%
 - 2 Asian – 1.6%
 - Average age of positives cases – 51 years old
 - Average age of hospitalizations – 68 years old
 - Average age of deaths – 81
 - 98.5% of deaths had underlining health conditions
- Continues to monitor potential COVID-19 cluster locations across the city, especially at our long-term care facilities.
- Continues to monitor stores and locations, and reviewing compliance with the Governor's public health order for face coverings and reopening aspects. Commissioner Caulton-Harris continues to personally visit a number of stores and locations
- Commissioner Caulton-Harris through the City of Springfield Board of Health issued Regulation on Face Coverings
 - Mandating face coverings for all persons (with exceptions) to wear a face covering while out in public and where social distancing is not possible
 - Requirements for businesses to adhere to the regulation

- Law enforcement and public health officials will enforce regulation
- Mayor Sarno and HHS Commissioner Caulton-Harris continue to push and work with the state, local hospitals and healthcare facilities with community health outreach aspects to do much more symptomatic and asymptomatic testing, not only for homeless population, but for all targets
- Continuing with contact tracing aspects
- Announced the continued need and importance of adhering to all public health, personal hygiene and social distancing procedures. Still very important, even though hospitalization numbers are stable, public health is population based and community spread of the virus is still prevalent
- Homeless Triage facilities and operations – results showing tactical strategy is working
 - Total population tested - 189 individuals
 - 12 positives / 6.34%
 - Partnership with Baystate Health for testing at city's Homeless Triage Facility
 - Partnership with Mercy Medical for testing at the Salvation Army and Springfield Rescue Mission – Taylor Street and Mill Street site
- Last day of service for homeless triage facility was Saturday, June 13, 2020.
- Homeless triage tenting facility to be taken down July 30, 2020
 - Friends of the Homeless have worked with the city to establish a plan for the transition
- City of Springfield team collaborated with Mercy Hospital to test City of Northampton and the Town of Amherst homeless population in the western region – 172 individuals tested
- Continuing to review city's phased reopening plan
- City of Springfield COVID-19 hotline - (413) 750-3250 – staffed 7 days a week. 8:30am – 7pm.
- HHS is reminding residents that it is mosquito season and to take the proper precautions against EEE
- City will open cooling centers, when needed, and following all COVID-19 public health guidance
- As part of the Commonwealth's Stop the Spread initiative the City of Springfield and the state Department of Public Health, in partnership with AFC Urgent Care, Tapestry Health and Baystate Health, will open additional free testing sites – appointments will be needed
 - AFC Urgent Care, 415 Cooley Street
 - Monday through Friday 11-7pm & Saturday and Sunday 10-4pm – current turn-around time is 7-10 days
 - Tapestry Health – 3 sites total to open. Each site will only have a capacity to test 24
 - Friday, August 7, 2020 – South End Middle School
 - Tuesday, August 11, 2020 – Zanetti School
 - Friday, August 14, 2020 – Kennedy Middle School
 - Baystate Health
 - Date, time and location - TBA

Elder Affairs

- Continues to do wellness checks on a daily basis with people in senior housing complexes and associated with senior centers.
- Continues to deliver meals to seniors in need, including over the weekend.
- Senior Centers will currently remain closed during Phased reopening
 - Will continue to provide meals, outreach and wellness checks

- Over 8,000 meals have so far been delivered to seniors in need
- 1,500 cloth face coverings were made and will be distributed to seniors in need
- 5,000 masks to be delivered to Senior Centers for seniors
- Offering Zoom classes for seniors
- Reviewing future events for seniors
 - Drive-by Bingo
 - Trunk-or-Treat
 - Zoom classes and activities

DPW

- 0 employees out due to COVID-19
- Trash and recycling continue to be picked up
- Streets and Engineering continue to provide services
- Yard waste collection continues
- Street sweeping continues
- Construction projects continue to pick up
 - Street line painting
 - Street paving
 - Milling work
 - Pot holes
 - Sidewalks
- Weekly Construction projects for the week of August 10, 2020
 - Baird Trace – utility work
 - Brunswick Street – utility work
 - Cooley Street – utility work
 - Progress Street – utility work
 - Regal Street – utility work
 - Six Corner Project – traffic detour as final phases of work is completed at the roundabout
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects on Fridays

Eco Dev

- Continues to review and secure additional funding for restaurant and small business assistance grants.
 - Between First and Second Round of the “Prime the Pump” grant program, city has now awarded over \$725,000 in grants to Springfield businesses
 - 45% of grants from the “Prime the Pump” were to minority businesses
 - 58% of the first round of ‘Prime the Pump’ grants for restaurants were awarded and contracted to minority and women owned businesses
 - 21% minority owned
 - 8% women owned
 - 29% minority-women owned
 - 3rd Round of Prime the Pump awarded 84 grants totaling over \$500,000 for local small businesses
 - 4th Round of Prime the Pump awarded 14 grants to local non-profits totaling \$240,000.
 - The City of Springfield has now offered over \$1,500,000 between the four rounds of Prime the Pump to our local businesses

- Mayor Sarno, Congressman Richard Neal and CDO Tim Sheehan joined with President and CEO of Way Finders Peter Gagliardi to announce that the city has partnered with Way Finders to provide Springfield residents, who qualify under HUD guidelines, with mortgage, rent and utility assistance and relief. Total allotted funding is \$2 million
- Continues to review and identify Federal stimulus funding to focus on local efforts for relief and recovery for our residents and small businesses
- Continues to work with HUD for spending of CDBG funds through the C.A.R.E. Act
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Tracking local, state and national unemployment trends and numbers
 - 4.4% unemployment rate in March 2020 for the City of Springfield
 - 20.3% unemployment rate in April 2020
 - Current unemployment rate as of May 16, 2020 by zip code
 - 01104 28%
 - 01107 29.9%
 - 01103 32.7%
 - 01105 33.8%
 - 01108 26.8%
 - 01109 28.8%
 - 01119 26.2%
 - 01118 21.8%
 - 01151 29.9%
 - 01128 22.4%
 - 01129 22.9%
 - 15.1% for the state
 - National unemployment rate
 - 14.7% - April
 - 13.3% - May
 - 11.1% - June
- Continues to review and work on economic development projects across the city.
- Reviewing and seeking clarification with HUD that jobs created or retained by an assisted business can be presumed to be Low Moderate Income if the job and the business are located in an area that meets certain criteria such as:
 - Has a 20% poverty rate (30% for CBD) and the area evidences pervasive poverty and general distress
- Continuing to review funding program for workforce training development

Elections

- Working with Facilities Division and Health Department to coordinate early voting locations at City Hall and at the Clodo Concepcion Community Center (Greenleaf)
- US Census Bureau's Western Mass Team hosted Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Events at various locations throughout the city from July 27 – August 2, 2020

Finance

- Provided an update to Mayor and cabinet heads on the projected revenue shortfalls on the federal, state and municipal levels. Reviewed the expected budgetary constraints for the city's FY 20 and FY21 budgets
 - Potentially looking at a loss of \$11.4 million in state local aid

- Continues to explore all public and private means in which to secure additional PPE's for our Police and Fire Departments and our first responders and frontline personnel
- Continues to monitor all federal and state relief and recovery funding and reimbursement mechanisms
 - Springfield eligible for \$13.6 million from the state as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Recovery Security (CARES) Act's Coronavirus Relief Fund for states and municipalities
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Implementing strategic spending measures to identify areas of need, relief and recovery while also trying to maintain city services for residents and business community.
- Continuing to review and monitor with the Assessor's Department how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect local real estate sales as recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds and the city's own local assessments of real estate.
 - Real estate sales for residential and commercial properties could potentially be affected due to the coronavirus outbreak, which would in turn, could have potentially negative results for the city's local assessment of property values potentially as soon as the FY21 budget
- Continues to monitor lost revenue – city and state
 - \$4.9 million in lost revenue in FY20 – city
 - \$800,000 in lost revenue FY21 – city
 - \$6.1 million in deficit spending – city
- Continues proactive meetings with Josh Norman of GP Strategies to track, identify, and implement relief and recovery reimbursement aspects.
- Continuing to review and monitor all city capital projects to keep them on track to the best of our ability and to extend deadlines if needed
 - 31 Elm / Court Square Project
 - Civic Center Parking Garage
 - Police HQ
 - Pynchon Plaza
- The fiscal year 2021 budget was submitted by Mayor Sarno and CAFO TJ Plante on Friday June 12th with no layoffs and no cuts to service. The recommended FY21 budget totals \$728.6 million, a \$36.9 million or 5.3% increase over the FY20 adopted budget.
 - Excluding key non-discretionary obligation items, the city budget (minus School Department) shrunk by \$1.2 million or -0.7%

Libraries

- Open for curbside pickup only and by appointment
 - As of June, 2020 – over 1,000 curbside appointments fulfilled
- Beginning printing of PPE masks on 3D printers
- Continuing to answer reference questions by phone and email
- Continuing to offer story times on social media sites
- Continuing to help residents access e-books and streaming movies and music on their devices
- Continuing to help residents learn, research, and explore, using our digital subscriptions and apps (language learning, grant searches, business research, children's homework help, etc.)

Parks and Facilities

- Consulting with Bob Kirchherr, CSP, Principal and Indoor Air Quality and Industrial Hygienist for O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun Engineering Associate to review the city's air systems at all municipal buildings – police and fire HQ, City Hall, Schools, etc.
- Continuing the deep cleaning of all city buildings and facilities
- Continuing to monitor city parks on social distancing aspects
- Installing signs at city parks reminding residents to wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible
- Reviewing and implementing plans and procedures for cleaning measures and maintenance of city parks for reopening phase
- Continuing to review potential alternate site locations for homeless triage tenting facility and population surge facility for short-term and long-term aspects pending the duration of pandemic if needed
 - Homeless triage tenting facility to be taken down July 30, 2020
- Continuing to review the city's phased reopening plan based on the Governors guidance and recommendations
 - Reviewing all protocols and procedures for short and long term reopening aspects
 - Reviewing and preparing for the reopening of city facilities for the summer, if public health and safety permits
 - Phase I
 - Parks continue to be open for passive recreation
 - Golf courses are open with restrictions
 - Tennis courts open with restrictions
 - Park toll booths will reopen
 - Farmers markets with restrictions
 - Forest Park Zoo
 - Park picnics will be allowed with restrictions
 - Riverfront boating and kayak rents with restrictions
 - Phase II
 - No summer camps
 - Pools and beaches to remain closed
 - Playgrounds to reopen
 - Splash pads to reopen
 - Phase III
 - Outdoor performance venues – with restrictions;
 - Museums, cultural and historical sites;
 - Certain indoor recreational activities with low potential for contact – with restrictions;
 - Certain sports may hold games and practices – with restrictions
 - King Philip's Stockade, Carriage House and Emma's Place are open for renting for private functions, with restrictions
- Continues to review the health measures and facility needs for municipal buildings during city's phased reopening - will adhere to state guidance and recommendations
 - Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
 - Temperature check for employees and visitors before entering municipal buildings
 - Hand sanitizer at each entrance and exit

- Limiting entrances and exits to a minimum within building and fire code
- Install protective health and safety measures at locations where the public gathers and interacts with city staff
- Reviewing air flow and ventilation systems in public buildings
- Installing pedestrian traffic flow signs and 6 feet distancing floor decals in municipal buildings
- Providing city employees with proper PPE's to preserve workforce
- Coordinating with each city department to identify the needs for Phased reopening

Public Safety

Fire

- 0 out due to coronavirus
- 3 have been called up and activated by Massachusetts National Guard
- Smoke detector inspections began Monday, June 15, 2020 for homes and daycares
- Announced Food Drive to help residents in need. Non-perishable food items can be donated and dropped off at city fire stations. Residents are encouraged to call ahead or ring the doorbell and to leave items at the door for social distancing aspects.
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Responded to several local fires
 - SFD reminds residents to be mindful and careful with smoking materials and other flammable items
- Commissioner BJ Calvi held a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to address the increase in fireworks across the city.
 - Reminded residents that buying, using and having fireworks is illegal in the Commonwealth and the City and if caught the fireworks will be seized and citations will be issued
 - Asked residents to be mindful of individuals with PTSD and those with animals
 - Reminded residents that fireworks do present a potential fire hazard and could accidentally start fires

Police

- Personnel Status
 - 2 out due to coronavirus
 - 12 out due to injury
 - 16 have retired as of January 1, 2020
 - 8 pending retirements
 - 11 called up and activated by Massachusetts National Guard
 - Focusing on department's mental health and stress relief aspects for officers
- Continues to provide anti-crime activity
 - Commissioner Clapprood has established a special fireworks detail to respond to the increase in calls of fireworks throughout the city
 - Numerous fireworks have been seized and citations have been issued
 - Heightened patrols with Sheriff's Department in city parks
 - Increase traffic enforcement – including special details with State Police to deter dirt bikes and drag racing activities
 - Increase attention on breaking and entering crimes – residential and commercial properties
 - Increase in domestic and restraining orders

- Increase in mental health related calls for service – more Behavioral Health Network (BHN) staff added
- Continues with positive community outreach activities where possible.
- Working with the Health Department on local enforcement aspects of Governor’s face covering order which took effect on Wednesday, May 6, 2020
- Continues to review and implement the city’s phased reopening plans for the Police Department facilities for access for the public for LTC applications and renewals, traffic accident reports and other license/permit needs by appointment
- SPD utilizing body-worn cameras and should have the full department outfitted with the body-worn cameras by the end of the summer. Training for the body-worn cameras had begun for officers on May 20, 2020 and the first phase of cameras were active, tested and in use on May 26, 2020
- The National Guard and State Police continue to work alongside SPD
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects on Fridays

Schools

- To date, Sodexo has served 2,047,282 meals to Springfield Public Schools students since the program began on March 12th (meals included breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks)
 - 17 school sites
 - Additional site at Smead Arena / Central High School added to complement the Oasis Food Bank on Fridays
- Continues to distribute laptops to students for remote learning – over 10,000 are currently being given out, including to our homeless students, on top of the 7,000 our students had already been using prior to pandemic
- Following new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines for remote learning and enrichment
- Continue to implement remote learning aspects for the remainder of the academic year and summer learning programs
 - School Committee adopted the recommendation of Superintendent Dan Warwick, as schools have been closed since mid-March and are now out for the rest of the academic year per Governor Baker’s order last week, for a Credit / No Credit grading system for the 4th Quarter
 - New grading policy was sent out to students and families
 - Implementing remote summer and enrichment learning programs
- Congratulations to Class of 2020 lawn signs placed throughout the city in support of our high school seniors during these challenging and difficult times
- Virtual graduations for Class of 2020 have taken place.
- Reviewing, along with state officials and other School Superintendents, a phased reopening plan for next academic year
- Commonwealth announced initial plans for reopening of schools for next academic year. School districts are to prepare three reopening plans: Continued remote learning, full reopening, and a hybrid version of both. Public health data will determine which plan will be implemented. Some of the guidance includes:
 - All adults and students in grade 2 and above need to wear masks
 - Social distancing will be 3 feet instead of 6 feet

- Schools are to utilize libraries, gyms, cafeterias, etc., to socially distance classrooms
- Student and teacher movement in between classrooms being review
- Springfield School Committee voted on Thursday, August 6, 2020 to open fully remote for the first marking period, with a plan to reassess the school model at that time.
 - School Committee had previously voted to push the start date for the 2020-2021 school year back two weeks
 - The original start to the school year had students in grades 1 - 12 scheduled to return August 31, 2020 and students in kindergarten to start one week after that and pre-kindergarteners the week after kindergarten. The new start dates for grades 1 - 12 will be September 15, 2020. Kindergarten will start September 21, 2020 and pre-kindergarteners on September 28, 2020.
- Industrial Hygienist will review all school buildings for protect and mitigate the safety of employees and students
- DESE announced major changes for the 2020-2021 school year
 - School year will start two weeks later and no later than Sept. 16, 2020
 - School busing will be changed by reducing the capacity of riders to accommodate social distancing protocols
 - Protocols for checking in school coronavirus-like symptoms for staff and students

Law/HR/Labor

- Continues to assist and advise all departments on pertinent city business
- Continues to review and monitor all federal and state legislation pertaining to COVID-19
- Reviewing potential guidelines, protocols and procedures for city employees to return to work in phases as the city beings to reopen under controlled safety and health measures
 - To protect and preserve our workforce – health and safety measures and protocols, and work place safety standards are being drafted for reopening phase for city employees and the public at all municipal facilities
- Continue to review Governor Baker’s Four-Phased reopening plan
- Reviewing with cabinet and department heads for reopening aspects
 - Provided training material for city employees to adjust to modified workplace standards as part of the city’s phased reopening plan based on CDC and health guidelines
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Licensing Department now accepting applications from establishments to offer outside table service for food and alcohol as part of the Governor’s Phase II reopening plans
- Issued updated temporary vacation policy to city employees regarding out of state and out of country travel to protect and preserve our workforce
- Continues to advise city employees of Governor Baker’s Travel Order which took effect August 1, 2020 and any changes made to the order

Misc.

Food Bank

- Continue Oasis Food Pantry operations on Friday’s 10-2pm through John Foley, Sodexo, School Department, Mayor’s Office, DPW, SPD and Food Bank of Western Mass – serving over 3,500 families with food and milk distribution at Central High School and Smead Arena parking lot