



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: MARCH 31, 2020**

FROM: AL ZELINKA **WARDS: ALL**
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

SUBJECT: REVIEW THE ORDER FOR THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF ALL BARS, BREWERIES AND WINERIES, AND RESTRICTIONS ON RESTAURANTS TO OPERATE AT FIFTY PERCENT OCCUPANCY WITH SIX FEET SOCIAL DISTANCING THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020 AS A CAUTIONARY MEASURE TO SLOW DOWN THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

ISSUES:

Review the Order for the temporary closure of all bars, breweries and wineries and restrictions on restaurants to operate at fifty percent occupancy with six feet social distancing through March 31, 2020 as a cautionary measure to slow down the spread of COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Review the Order for the temporary closure of all bars, breweries and wineries and restrictions on restaurants to operate at fifty percent occupancy with six feet social distancing through March 31, 2020 as a cautionary measure to slow down the spread of COVID-19; and
2. Provide direction to the Director of Emergency Services regarding the continuation or modification of the Order for bars, breweries, wineries and restaurants.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

The California Emergency Services Act (Government Code section 8550, et seq.), Government Code section 8630, and Riverside Municipal Code sections 2.68.010 and 9.20.060 empower the Director of Emergency Services and the Riverside City Council to proclaim a Local Emergency when the City Council is not in session when there exist conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of the City of Riverside which are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the City and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat. Said proclamation must be ratified by the City council within seven (7) days.

BACKGROUND:

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency for the State of California as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On March 11, 2020, Governor Newsom issued his policy recommending the cancellation of public gatherings of 250 people or more and limitations on gatherings of people who are at higher risk for COVID-19 to 10 people or fewer, and delaying or canceling meetings where attendees cannot observe at least six (6) feet of “social distance” from one another.

On March 8, 2020, the Riverside County’s Public Health Officer declared a local health emergency based on an imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of a Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Riverside County. On March 10, 2020, the County of Riverside ratified the local emergency.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency.

On March 13, 2020, the City of Riverside declared a local emergency to increase its efforts to protect the public from COVID-19. The City of Riverside’s proclamation of local emergency notes that “there exists conditions of a disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons or property within the territorial limits of the City of Riverside that are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the City for the reason of COVID-19.” The declaration of local emergency was ratified by the City Council on March 17, 2020.

On March 16, 2020, the Riverside County Public Health Officer, by Order, cancelled all gatherings with expected presence of 10 individuals based on an imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of COVID-19 in Riverside County.

On March 16, 2020, Governor Newsom issued additional policy recommendations further restricting gatherings, for example, requesting that restaurants be closed for in-restaurant seated dining, and should be open only to drive-through or other pick-up/delivery options.

DISCUSSION:

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has advised that COVID-19 spreads easily from person to person and has issued guidelines recommending that the public adopt policies and routines to enable social distancing wherever possible. As of the writing of this report on March 19, 2020, there are 207,855 confirmed cases of COVID-19 resulting in 8,648 deaths in 166 countries, including 16 cases and three deaths in Riverside County. We are gaining more understanding of COVID-19’s epidemiology, clinical course, immunogenicity, and other factors as time progresses, and the situation is changing daily.

It is critical that the City of Riverside do everything necessary to reduce the likelihood of exposure to COVID-19, thereby slowing the spread of COVID-19 in communities worldwide. As the presence of individuals increases, the difficulty and magnitude of tracing individuals who may have been exposed to a case rises exponentially, increasing the likelihood that such gatherings will impair efforts at mitigating the spread of illness.

In an effort to slow down the spread of COVID-19, on March 16, 2020, the Director of Emergency Services ordered the temporary closure of bars, breweries and wineries and called for restaurants and cafes to be closed for in-restaurant seated dining and only be open to drive-through or other pick-up/delivery options for 60 days unless terminated or extended by the City Council.

On March 17, 2020, the City Council altered the order and determined that restaurants may remain open at 50 percent of their capacity as long as they adhere to six feet social distancing norms. Restaurants are still required to observe the March 16, 2020 order of the Riverside County Public Health Officer that limits gatherings to no more than 10 people in each subdivided room of a building. These changes were made to minimize the impact to local businesses to the extent possible while protecting the most vulnerable. The Order was effective immediately and through March 31, 2020.

The City Council directed the City Manager to return on March 31, 2020 to review the Order and determine if it should be modified or extended beyond the initial two-week period.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of extending the Order is significant but unknown at this time.

Prepared by: Al Zelinka, Director of Emergency Services

Attachments:

1. City Order for Bars, Breweries, Wineries and Restaurants – March 18, 2020
2. County Order Cancelling Gatherings Above 10 Individuals – March 16, 2020