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**Thursday, April 2, 2020**

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## Response to Council Members' Requests from March 23, 2020 Policy Meeting

At the March 23, 2020 City Council Policy meeting, Council members requested staff to follow up on several questions about the presentation on the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This report provides a response to a number of questions asked during the meeting. Staff continues to research answers to other questions asked by Council members and will submit that information as it becomes available in the future.

### Summary

This report responds to several of the questions related to the COVID-19 health crisis asked by Council members during the Council Policy meeting.

1. Councilman Nowakowski asked if the City has a method for communicating with employees.

Answer: The City has been producing daily email messages to employees. Recently, City Management has also begun to produce podcast communications featuring updates about the operations of the City. Additionally, as part of its emergency notification system, the City has a text messaging system that is sent to all employees who have signed up. While a great number of employees are part of the emergency text messaging system, the system requires employees to provide a personal cell phone number to receive messages, and not all employees have been willing to provide this information. City departments are also sending frequent messages targeted to their staff and workgroups.

2. Vice Mayor Guardado requested information about whether capital improvement projects for the city would be placed on hold in the case of a national shut down.

Answer: The City has classified projects of mission critical departments into two categories, "essential" - indicating its need to be continued no matter the state of emergency; and "place on hold" - indicating that if at any time a state of emergency were to be declared the City would temporarily pause the project at this time. Any discussion would be made by City Council.

3. Councilman DiCiccio requested the current paving projects by Street Transportation be accelerated if possible, during this time.

Answer: The Street Transportation Department has an approved five-year pavement maintenance program, which includes the \$200 million advancement and acceleration of paving projects on the City's arterial and major collector streets. The funding sources associated with the program are finite and the release of funds to support this program is also on a set schedule. Additionally, the schedule for paving of City streets is published for our residents, but also for utility companies and developers who the City has sought close coordination between our paving projects and their planned work in City streets. Within these funding, scheduling, and coordination efforts, the Street Transportation Department to the extent possible, will work to accelerate its planned paving projects. It should be noted that the Street Transportation Department already kicked off its 2020 paving season in February.

4. Vice Mayor Guardado requested information about the status of the number of masks and gloves in inventory.

Answer: The Finance Department has been purchasing as many items as they can find for first responders using local emergency rules to by-pass regular procurement methods. Police and Fire have nearly 80,000 gloves and masks (PPE) on hand. Fire also has enough supplies and is prioritizing the usage of supplies they do have and use by first screening calls for COVID-19 needs. Fire and Police have merged their caches of PPE supplies. Each department is modelling distribution levels for the appropriate amount to be distributed every day. Finance has attempted to purchase more masks, but suppliers are stating that orders have been purchased by the Federal government.

5. Councilmember Garcia asked about the leave policies for employees and vendors at their airport.

Answer: The City continues to be in constant communication with vendors and employees. Policies are in place to allow City employees and vendors the flexibility they need to handle the current situation. Through the current procurement process the City continues to get as many cleaning supplies and make them available to employees. As of right now, there are no reports of significant labor shortages being reported by vendors at the airport. Leave policies for employees have been significantly altered to allow employees to use any accrued leave they have as well as to borrow against future leave accruals if necessary. The City is currently providing additional leave to any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 or has a member of their household who tests positive. Additionally, on April 1 the City implemented the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) leave provisions that will soon be providing additional leave options for more employees.

6. Councilwoman Pastor asked if an employee who is infected could work from home instead of taking leave and for further clarification on the current leave policy for City employees.

Answer: Currently departments are advised to encourage employees to work from home where practicable; not every position in the City is able to be done remotely. Many employees like police officers, firefighters, solid waste equipment operators and others are unable to work from home. In general, during this health emergency, if at least 50 percent of an employee's duties can be performed remotely they may be considered to work from home in close consultation with Human Resources and the City Manager's Office. This option, while recommended, is at the discretion of the department head. If an employee requests to take leave related to a potential illness, they are permitted to take leave from any of their current leave banks. Beginning on March 11, any leave taken by an employee will not be counted as an unscheduled incident as it related to leave policy violations.

Additionally, if any employee with depleted or exhausted leave banks should communicate with their supervisor and will be permitted to take unpaid leave if they choose or they may also borrow against future leave accruals up to a maximum of 80 hours of additional leave for full-time employees or 40 hours of leave for part-time employees.

If an employee is staying home due to the COVID-19 situation and their position is deemed to be eligible for telework, the employee will be allowed to telework instead of utilizing their leave. The FFCRA also provides leaves provisions for people who test positive for COVID-19.

7. During the discussion about leave for employees, Councilwoman Pastor asked if employees whose facilities have been closed in response to the healthcare crisis could use leave time.

Answer: The City currently allows an individual whose work facility has been closed to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus to be paid at their regular rate if they are available to respond to a call for their assistance or a return to work. If that person were to be unavailable to work, for illness or because they were on vacation during that time, they would have to utilize leave.

8. Councilwoman Pastor asked if an employee who had recently traveled to a country designated as a Tier 3 country by the CDC would be required to self-quarantine and if the City would require the individual to utilize their personal leave.

Answer: Under the City's current policy if an employee travelled to a Tier 3 designated country after March 11, 2020, the employee would either need to be allowed to telework, provided their position is telework compatible or they would need to use their leave.

9. Considering the number of employees who would be begin telecommuting to work, Councilman Nowakowski asked what steps have been taken to evaluate positions for telecommuting and if security measures are being taken to protect City infrastructure.

Answer: Each department is evaluating their staff positions for the ability to telecommute. For those positions that are eligible the Information Technology Services Department (ITS) is evaluating security of each individual workstation for employees before they are permitted to telework. In some instances departments have or can issue a mobile workstation that is secure to the employee. In other cases where an employee is requesting to use a personal workstation, ITS is evaluating those requests in a manner as to maintain the security infrastructure protecting City information. Each department, and City staff, continue to evaluate data and security systems and workstation requirements for an employee to perform their job in order to increase teleworking across the city.

10. Councilman DiCiccio asked if there was a plan in place if the hospitals in Phoenix require overflow space for patients.

Answer: The City's Emergency Operations Office is in close communications with hospitals. Dashboard information is shared by hospitals throughout the region with Fire and those capacities are communicated frequently. Through various other modes the City is in close communication with the hospitals providing resources, and stands ready to provide additional facilities if needed.

**Responsible Department**

This item is submitted by the City Manager's Office.



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## Community Budget Questions Summary March 2020

### Summary

Each year, staff tracks comments on the City's budget. The City Manager's Trial Budget was scheduled to be presented to the City Council on March 17, 2020, with budget hearings scheduled to begin April 2, 2020. However, due to current restrictions on public gatherings, we unfortunately had to cancel our normal and customary community budget hearings and the Trial Budget is being revised due to the economic downturn.

Based on the revised budget adoption schedule discussed at the March 26, 2020 Council Policy Meeting, staff will return with additional information on April 2 and April 6. On April 2, staff will plan to walk the City Council through four different budget scenarios modeling the impact of COVID 19 on our General Fund revenues. Staff will then come back on Monday, April 6 with a revised Trial Budget that addresses the anticipated negative impact that COVID 19 is having on the City's revenue streams. We very much value the feedback and community engagement we receive in our community budget hearings. Unfortunately this year we will have to use a different format and a compressed schedule to accomplish this goal. Once those decisions have been made we will update the calendar on the website. As always residents can continue to provide feedback by calling 602-262-4800 or email us at [budget.research@phoenix.gov](mailto:budget.research@phoenix.gov). Additionally, Budget and Research continues to promote the FundPHX interactive budget tool, available at [phoenix.gov/FundPHX](http://phoenix.gov/FundPHX).

**Attachment A** transmits a summary of the electronic and voicemail comments regarding the budget for March 2020.

### Responsible Department

This item is submitted by City Manager Ed Zuercher and the Budget and Research Department.

**ATTACHMENT A**



**City of Phoenix**

**To:** Ed Zuercher  
City Manager

**Date:** March 31, 2020

**From:** Jeff Barton  
Budget and Research Department Director

**Subject:** BUDGET QUESTIONS SUMMARY MARCH 2020

This report transmits a summary of the electronic and voice mail comments regarding the budget for March 2020.

Residents can access additional information at [phoenix.gov/Budget](http://phoenix.gov/Budget).



**SUMMARY MINUTES**  
**VOICEMAIL, ELECTRONIC, AND WRITTEN BUDGET COMMENTS**  
**Responded to March 2020**

1. Booker Henry sent an email to express support for sidewalk installation on the east and west sides of 16th Street from South Mountain Avenue to Dobbins Street. He would like to have this approved as a Capital Improvement Project.
2. Mandy Jones sent an email to express support for parks maintenance and funding at 55th Avenue and Samantha Way.
3. Sherrine Hayward sent an email to express support for funding services for those impacted by special needs; specifically, funding Daring Adventure's inclusive and adaptive recreation program so that it's services can continue for city of Phoenix residents.
4. Allison Ross sent an email to express support for funding services for those impacted by special needs; specifically, funding Daring Adventure's inclusive and adaptive recreation program so that it's services can continue for city of Phoenix residents.
5. Dorothy Williams sent an email to express support for taxing churches to help fund the budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Khala Stanfield  
Management Assistant II