ISSUE DATE:
May 11, 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Last Friday, California transitioned into Stage 2 of Gov. Newsom's four-stage plan to reopen the economy. This is welcome news, as retail and other businesses have begun to open with conditions in place to ensure the safety of patrons and employees. It's as though a small glimmer of light has appeared, hinting ever so gently at the end of this pandemic.

Even more good news: The Temple City community remains engaged with City Hall. Over the past few weeks, we've received numerous questions about how the pandemic will affect City services and the City budget, whether the City has plans to provide financial assistance to the community and what all this means for our upcoming summer programming. I'm happy to provide answers to those questions below.

If you have any other questions about how the City is responding to the coronavirus crisis, please email me at tchavez@templecity.us. I look forward to the dialogue and feedback.

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1. **How will the financial impacts of COVID-19 affect City services and funding levels?**

   There's no doubt we'll see an impact on our revenues, but as to what degree, we're still uncertain. We should have a better idea in early 2021, when property and sales tax receipts come in and we're able to better assess the effects of the shutdown on local businesses and services.

   As we move into the next fiscal year, we're cautiously optimistic we'll remain financially stable. One major benefit of Temple City being a bedroom (or primarily residential) community is that we don't have to rely on a large sales tax base that's dependent on malls, auto dealerships or even tourism.

   Thankfully, our fiscally conservative approach will allow us to stay financially afloat. Temple City's robust General Fund reserve—worth about $18 million, or a year of our City's operating costs—is available to help fill gaps in funding for essential services. Having such a resource is a rarity for most local governments.

   Our budget focus for the 2020-21 fiscal year is to maintain current service levels. One exception: Our parks and recreation function will encounter several (hopefully temporary) operational changes as the implications of COVID-19 dictate how we provide community and recreational programming moving forward.

   We're currently modeling some financial projections to better determine what the impacts of COVID-19 could be on City finances over the next two to three years. Those findings will be

communicated to the city council in early June when staffers present a recommended budget. We encourage you to learn more and join the conversation by emailing pio@templecity.us.

2. Are there any plans for the City to help Temple Citians affected by the financial crisis?

Absolutely. We're all in this together.

Adding to our recent passage of a citywide eviction moratorium to help those financially affected by COVID-19, we've so far allocated $123,000 in federal funds to help provide financial assistance to residents and businesses in need. We're currently drafting guidelines for how those programs will work and who will be eligible for funding; more discussion will occur at the May 19 city council meeting. Information on financial assistance programs will be distributed to the community within the next three weeks, with the goal of launching by early June.

While we know the funds can only go so far, our hope is these initial programs will serve as a starting point for gauging how much more funding is needed for the community before exploring additional options.

The City is also considering deferring business license fees and reducing some development-related costs to help the local business and development community. A menu of options will soon be presented to the city council for possible approval in mid-June. More information will be communicated as it's made available.

In the meantime, I urge members of Temple City's business community to reach out to our community partner, the Temple City Chamber of Commerce, for assistance in identifying and navigating available funding programs to prevent business closures and further layoffs, as well as to receive updated information on resources related to worker unemployment claims, payment deferral programs and more. They're really a wealth of information. To contact the chamber, call (626) 286-3101 or email info@templecitychamber.com.

Finally, for our residents: If you need help navigating available community resources like food banks, cash assistance programs or even mental health services, please dial 2-1-1 or (800) 339-6993. This hotline, manned 24/7 by trained resource advisors, offers information and referrals for all health and human services within LA County. And of course, City Hall is always ready to help at (626) 285-2171.

3. What's going on with summer programming? Will there be classes, concerts at the park, etc.?

As of now, the City's recreational programming and other special events are canceled indefinitely. This was a tough decision to make, but we made sure to take into account both state and federal recommendations, projections for how the pandemic will trend this summer, and consultations with other cities and public health partners. While we understand the community's disappointment, our top priority is the collective health and safety of all Temple Citians.

Nevertheless, we encourage you to stay connected and active by visiting our virtual recreation center at **templecity.us/vrc**, where you'll find online exercise classes, children's activities and much more. We've even entered into a partnership with Microsoft to provide our residents with free enrichment workshops, including literacy and coding programs for kids and courses for adults

looking to start their own businesses or get a better handle on LinkedIn, to name just a few examples. To register, visit **templecity.us/workshops**.

The (virtual) show will also go on for select community-favorite events like this year's Temple City's Got Talent, as well as for a few of our scheduled summer concerts, all from the comfort of your own living room. For more details, connect with us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (**ConnectwithTC**).

While we continue to explore other virtual recreation offerings, please feel welcome to enjoy some fresh air in our city parks. Just remember to keep practicing social distancing to ensure a healthy, safe experience for yourself and others.

In closing, although these are trying times for all of us, please continue to take comfort in the many good things in our lives that bring positivity: the beautiful sunrises, the glorious sunsets, a friendly wave to our neighbors out for a walk, sharing games with our children and the enjoyment of a good book.

Like most of you, I have found myself watching more television these days. A popular home improvement show used the quote, "Today's curse is tomorrow's blessing." What a poignant description of our world today, but a reminder of what we will work toward for our future.

May God bless all of you and our first responders. Stay safe, stay strong and stay brave.



Tom Chavez
Mayor