



MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Ian Appleyard
Karen Boyd

SUBJECT: Update: Oakland's Safe Re-Opening Plan **DATE:** June 15, 2021

City Administrator
Approval

Date June 15, 2021

INFORMATION

As more people are getting vaccinated, COVID cases are dropping in California and [in Oakland](#). It's good news that the safe, free, and now widely available vaccines are making a big dent in the COVID crisis.

The State of California has moved beyond the Blueprint for a Safer Economy and fully reopened the economy. According to the [California Department of Public Health](#), this means that all sectors listed in the current [Blueprint Activities and Business Tiers Chart](#) may return to usual operations (with limited exceptions for Mega Events). Previous capacity limits on businesses and physical distancing requirements have been lifted, and mask guidance has been relaxed. [Alameda County has rescinded its local "Shelter in Place" order](#) in full alignment with the State. The San Francisco Chronicle published a helpful [visual guide](#) to the new rules.

What Does California's Reopening Mean for the City of Oakland?

Along with California's re-opening, many City programs and services are re-opening, too. Here are some examples of in-person services we are now offering the public:

- [Oakland Public Library](#)—The Main Library is open seven days a week; 15 neighborhood branches are open six days per week and until 8:00 pm two nights per week.
- Parks, Recreation and Youth Development
 - [Town Camp](#) is open! Town Camp is a fun and safe summer camp experience for youth ages 5-12 years old at 18 recreation centers citywide.
 - Two new outdoor fitness courts are open at Lowell and Arroyo Viejo parks.
 - Five [swimming pools](#) are open to the public: Lions, Temescal, Fremont, deFremery, and East Oakland Sports Center and Water Park.

- Boating and sailing camps, as well as boat rentals, are open and available at the Lake Merritt Boating Center.
- Parks and recreation facilities are available for [rentals](#).
- [Ace Kids Golf](#) is programming at Lake Chabot Golf Course.
- Tennis courts and playgrounds are open citywide.
- The “Town Park” Skate Park at deFremery and skate ramps at Rainbow and Montclair recreation centers are open.
- Junior Tennis Camp and the Oakland Neighborhood Basketball League will resume this summer.
- The Adult Softball League will start June 21.
- Senior Centers are open for food distribution and vaccination clinics, and will begin to open to Senior Center members by appointment.
- [Oakland Paratransit](#) is serving seniors and physically disabled residents.
- [Oakland Animal Services](#) is open to the public seven days a week from 11 am to 5 pm. Animal control officers respond to all calls from 7 am to 9:30 pm, and emergency calls via a stand-by officer the remaining hours.
- [Parking Citation Assistance Center](#) is open weekdays, 10 am – 2 pm
- Revenue offices continue to serve walk-in visitors.
- OPD offers a full range of services, including vehicle releases, police reports/records, towing abandoned vehicles.

For a number of direct service programs across the City, full re-opening will be contingent upon hiring part-time staff to fill the positions necessary to run those programs and services. City staff are working hard to fill those positions as quickly as possible.

City of Oakland Workplace Requirements

Even with the State of California lifting most restrictions, employers must continue to follow [Cal/OSHA standards](#). Currently all employees are required to wear masks indoors and maintain social distancing protocols. While Cal/OSHA is expected to revise its workplace guidance in the coming weeks, employers may continue to enforce public health best practices (masks, distancing) to maintain a safe & healthy workplace.

COVID is still circulating in our community, and a [significant percentage of the population \(about 40%\) is not fully vaccinated](#), including children under 12 (76.6% of eligible residents have had a least one shot). We are not asking employees or the public to reveal their vaccination status, so we must assume that people are unvaccinated and continue masking and physical distancing protocols to keep everyone safe.

The City of Oakland will continue to require employees and visitors to our facilities to wear cloth face coverings, **even those who are vaccinated**. See the City's [Face Covering Requirements](#) for more details. These requirements will be evaluated over time and as Cal/OSHA rules and public health guidance evolve.

A Silver Lining to the COVID Pandemic: More City Services Moved Online

One positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is that when the State-wide shelter-in-place order shuttered many City facilities in March 2020, City departments quickly pivoted to expanding services offered online. Here are some results:

- **Website traffic increased by 30%** at the outset of the pandemic (from March to June 2020), going from 705k unique visitors in 2019 to 1.15M over the same period in 2020).
- We launched a **COVID-19** webpage to serve as the clearing house of guidance and information, receiving over **187k unique views**.
 - 98k unique visitors were seeking COVID-19 testing information
 - In June 2020, 25k people used our online referral process to sign up for testing
 - 13k subscribers have received 43 emails with news and updates about service impacts
- We moved business services online, developing a business support page for all federal, state and local resources.
 - Since launch, this web page has had more than 33k unique visitors.
 - 46 Business Update emails have gone out in 5 different languages, helping businesses stay informed.
 - Launched an online permitting process for Flex Streets that has resulted in: 100 sidewalk cafes and parklets; 13 street closures; 14 permitted private spaces; 40+ mobile food trucks permits.
- The Planning & Building Department has significantly enhanced public access to an [array of online services](#).
- Finance launched a chatbot on the City's website in August. They have served more than 5k people, averaging a 0:44 second response time and a cumulative satisfaction rating of 4.1 out of 5 stars.

City Plans for Safe Re-opening of Public Facilities

As COVID restrictions are lifting, the City is beginning to safely re-open public facilities and restore in-person services that were curtailed during the COVID pandemic. Our goal is to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for employees and visitors alike.

It is important to acknowledge that City employees have been working throughout the pandemic and many never stopped reporting to work in person. The Administration is grateful to City staff for their dedication and service, working on the front lines to help our community during this extraordinary time.

While things are certainly trending in the right direction, the global pandemic is not over. The virus is still circulating in our community, many residents are not yet vaccinated, and some, like children under 12, are ineligible to receive the vaccine. For these reasons, **The City is taking a safe, cautious, intentional, equitable, and thoughtful approach to re-opening.**

The Human Resources Management Department has convened an interdepartmental Safe Re-Opening Task Force to guide the City through the process. The Task Force includes participation from departments across the City, including:

- Employee Relations—communications with labor partners
- Risk Management—compliance with Federal, State, and County regulations and guidelines
- Public Works—maintaining safe and healthy facilities
- Communications—keeping employees, elected officials, and public informed

The Task Force is following these principles to guide their planning and decision making:

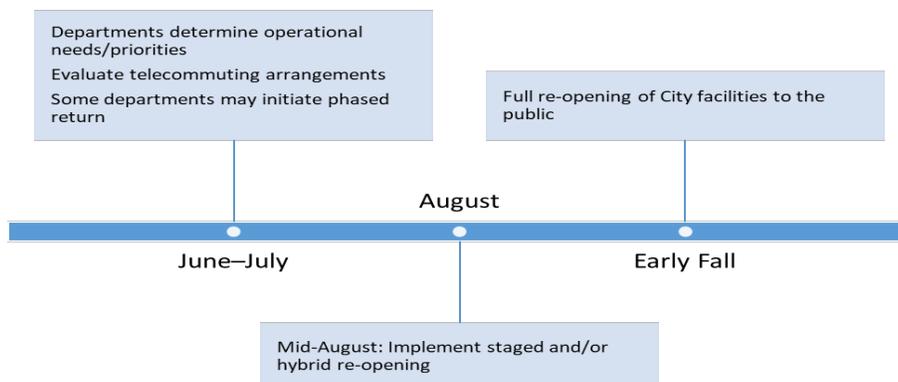
- Acknowledge that many City employees have never stopped reporting to work in person
- Evaluate our efforts through an equity lens
- Focus on employee health and safety
- Maintain open communication and transparency
- Use consistent application of policies and procedures

Slowly, some departments are beginning to return to in-person service based on operational needs and guided by public health requirements established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the California Department of Public Health, Cal/OSHA, and the Alameda County Public Health Department.

Each Department may safely re-open office workspaces at its own pace. Depending on operational and business needs, this may include implementation of a phased or hybrid approach. City employees provide essential services and can be called back to the office at any time.

Tentative Timeline

Below is a tentative timeframe to implement a gradual re-opening of City facilities and resume in-person service delivery; this timeline is preliminary and subject to change:



Ensuring Workplace Safety

Thanks to the diligence and professionalism of staff who reported in person, and the training and support provided by the City's Public Works and Risk Management staff, even at the height of the pandemic the City had no workplace COVID outbreaks or superspreader events, and conditions are improving every day.

Public Works has installed hands-free temperature scan devices for employees and visitors to conduct self-service health checks when entering, set up hand sanitizing stations throughout City buildings, and installed plexiglass dividers at public contact points and in conference rooms.

New Telecommuting Program Launched

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that telecommuting—an arrangement that allows eligible City of Oakland employees to work in a designated area outside the office—can benefit employees, departments, and the community. Benefits include:

- Ability to function during a Shelter-in-Place or other emergencies when the regular worksite is inaccessible
- Increased productivity
- Efficient use of City resources, including office space
- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees
- Greater flexibility for employees and departments
- Improved employee morale and job satisfaction
- Reduced employee absenteeism
- Reduced employee commute time and costs
- Decreased energy consumption, air pollution, traffic and parking congestion, and transit overcrowding.

The City is transitioning away from the temporary telecommuting program that was adopted in March 2020 during the Shelter-in-Place Order. A new [Employee Telecommute Policy/Administrative Instruction](#) was developed to provide policy guidance to Departments and employees on the [new ongoing telecommute program](#).

Departments are instructed to consider all eligible employees' requests to telecommute. All employees must adhere to the Telecommute policy and arrangement; telecommuting is a privilege, not a right.

Employees who are interested in an on-going telecommuting arrangement will need to submit a new application and agreement which must be approved by the Departments. The application period opened on June 14 and closes on July 2.

Legislative Planning: Public Meetings and Emergency Ordinances

The Administration will work closely with the City Council President to consider how and when to resume holding public meetings in person, with consideration given to a potential hybrid model to provide the public with an option for continued remote/online participation. At the beginning of the pandemic, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order suspending certain Ralph M. Brown Act rules and allowing local and state legislative bodies to hold public meetings via teleconference and to make meetings accessible electronically; currently that Executive Order remains in place.

The City Attorney will review and advise the Administration about emergency ordinances, orders, and declarations that remain in place which should be revised or rescinded in alignment with Alameda County and the State of California.

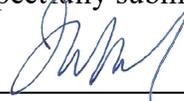
Updates and Communication Going Forward

The global pandemic is not over, variants of the COVID-19 virus continue to emerge, and public health guidance continues to evolve, all which will require the City to monitor new developments and revise our operations in an ongoing and flexible manner for the foreseeable future.

We have committed to provide plenty of advanced notice about milestones as we begin to re-open our in-person services to the public inside our City facilities. The Administration will use the following tools to keep the City Council, City employees, and the public informed:

- Regular Information Memos to the City Council with updates about services, re-opening timelines, constraints
- Frequent email updates to City staff which elected officials can use to keep their constituents updated
- Continuous updates to the City's [website](#)
- Press releases at major milestones

Respectfully submitted,



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InfoMemo re Oakland Safe Re-Opening Plan 06.15.21

Final Audit Report

2021-06-15

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