



# The Week in Review

City Manager Grace K. Leung

March 5, 2021

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## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, March 9**

### **City Council Study Session**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

4 p.m.

[\(Insider's Guide\)](#)

**Tuesday, March 9**

### **City Council Regular Meeting**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

6:30 p.m.

[\(Insider's Guide\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 10**

### **Harbor Commission Meeting**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

5 - 9 p.m.

**Thursday, March 11**

### **Zoning Administrator Meeting**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

10 a.m.

**Thursday, March 11**

### **Finance Committee Meeting**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

3 - 5 p.m.

**Thursday, March 11**

### **City Arts Commission Meeting**

[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)

5 p.m.

Community members,

Orange County barely missed the Red Tier COVID-19 metrics this week, but the news was still very good. If the trends continue, we could expect to see fewer restrictions – and resume activities such as indoor dining with reduced capacity – as soon as this month.

This week, Orange County's 7-day average daily case number decreased to 7.6, an encouraging drop from last week's 11.9 (and remember, it was in the high 60s in mid-January). The average case number needs to be 7.0 or less to enter the Red Tier, so we are very close. The other two key metrics also showed impressive improvements; in fact, those numbers are within the even less restrictive Orange Tier threshold. The County's positivity rate (the percentage of positive tests among those tested) dropped to 3.9%, down from 5.4% last week. The health equity metric decreased to 5%. Under the state's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#), Orange County must maintain Red Tier-level metrics for two weeks in order to be placed in the Red Tier.

Here is updated vaccine information and resources as of March 5:

- The Disneyland Super POD (point of dispensing) vaccination site was temporarily closed this week to be reconfigured for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lanes and in-car vaccinations. The reconfigured Disneyland site is expected to reopen on Monday, March 8. The site will have less capacity than the County's other POD sites and is intended to serve people who require an ADA-accessible option. The County's three other PODs – Anaheim Convention Center, Soka University and Santa Ana College – remain open.
- The County is now accepting vaccination registrations by phone for those who lack access to technology. The Orange

Visit the City's website for a complete listing of meetings and events at [newportbeachca.gov/events](https://newportbeachca.gov/events).

County Health Care Agency hotline, (714) 834-2000 can provide assistance with Othena registration and support. Those with computer and smartphone access are still encouraged to register through the Othena.com platform.

- The County has added a feature to the Othena platform that allows patients to manage vaccination schedule and records for multiple family members. Look for the “Family Feature” at Othena.com.
- Vaccine eligibility in Orange County remains in [Phase 1B](#), under state guidelines, a group that includes educators, food service, grocery and agriculture workers, child care providers and emergency services workers. The County will reevaluate expanding eligibility to more populations weekly as more vaccine doses become available.
- Following approval by the Food and Drug Administration last weekend, Johnson & Johnson has begun shipping 4 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine across the nation. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one shot and does not need ultra-cold storage. It is expected to help speed up vaccination efforts in Orange County and throughout California.
- The County’s Othena system is not the only vaccination option, as distribution to hospitals, clinics and pharmacies increases. Even if you are registered with Othena, you can also register with the state’s “My Turn” system, administered by Blue Shield, and find other resources at [this link](#). Orange County has developed a similar vaccine resource web page at this link: [COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Channels | Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(ochealthinfo.com\)](#).
- You can subscribe to Orange County’s weekly OC COVID19 Vaccine Facts newsletter [at this link](#). Scroll down until you see the subscribe button and enter your email.

### **COVID-19 Cases in Newport Beach**

As of March 4, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Newport Beach was 3,617 and the total cases in Orange County was 247,140. The number of recovered COVID-19 patients countywide as of March 4 was 234,853. These figures are provided to Orange County by the California Department of Public Health.

### **New Ambassadors to Increase Boardwalk Safety**

The City’s newest ambassadors are on patrol at the Oceanfront Boardwalk. The City has contracted with CSC, a private company, to provide staffing for a new Boardwalk Ambassador program in Newport Beach. The focus of the Ambassador Program is to improve the quality of life for residents and enhance visitors’ experience on the Peninsula by ensuring compliance with City municipal codes and Oceanfront Boardwalk safety rules. The ambassadors will also provide friendly advice, guidance, and directions to visitors in need of assistance. The ambassadors will be highly visible, approachable, and professionally uniformed. They are unarmed, but work closely with the Newport Beach Police Department. They will generally operate in two teams of two ambassadors, and patrol the Boardwalk and pier areas on foot, mostly on Saturdays and Sundays between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., but more often during holidays and the summertime. The City is introducing this as a pilot program, and if successful, the City may pursue a longer-term contract.

### **Short-Term Rental Complaint Hotline**

The City is reminding residents that they can resolve complaints and non-emergency issues related to short-term rental housing with a live service available 24 hours a day, every day. The service can be reached at **949-718-3443**. Answering service operators will communicate complaints to the property owner or a designee as soon as they are received. The service will also help the City track the volume and types of short-term rental issues that impact neighborhoods. Residents are encouraged to call the answering service for any non-emergency issue that occurs on a short-term rental property, such as

loud parties, noise, parking, trash concerns, and occupancy limit violations. All emergency calls should still be placed to 911. For more information, please visit the [City's short-term rental web page](#).

### **Initial Draft of Housing Element Available March 10, 2021**

City staff and its consultant team have been working with the Housing Element Update Advisory Committee (HEUAC) and the community over the past eight months to prepare an initial draft of the updated General Plan Housing Element. As a reminder, this effort is required by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in response to the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation of 4,845 new housing units for Newport Beach.

The initial draft will be made available online next week on March 10, 2021. The HEUAC will also be discussing this draft at its Wednesday, March 17, 2021, meeting and again at a special meeting on March 31, 2021. Please provide your comments on the initial draft no later than April 30, 2021. A revised version is anticipated to be available for review late Spring 2021.

A virtual public workshop will be held on Monday, March 22, 2021. The Planning Commission and City Council will review the draft document in a study session at their April meetings. In May 2021, the City will transmit a progress draft to HCD for a preliminary 60-day review.

This is the very first draft of the document. There will be many more opportunities to help shape the draft General Plan Housing Element before its State-mandated adoption date in October 2021. The entire community is encouraged to participate and review it. For more information, please visit [www.NewportTogether.com](http://www.NewportTogether.com) and register to receive notifications by email and sign up for the March 22 workshop.

If you have any questions or to submit comments, please reach out to City staff by emailing [GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov).

### **Initial Draft of Circulation Element Available March 12, 2021**

Much like the Housing Element update, City staff and its consultant team have been working with the Planning Commission and the community over the past eight months to prepare an initial draft of the updated General Plan Circulation Element. The Element is being updated simultaneously with the Housing Element to comply with new mandates, such as “complete streets.” It is also being refreshed to reflect the community’s vision on trending transportation matters, including electric vehicles (EV), rideshare services (e.g., Uber and Lyft), public transportation, telecommuting, as well as parking and parking lot management.

The initial draft will be made available online next week on March 12, 2021. The Planning Commission will also be discussing this draft at its Thursday, March 18, 2021, meeting. A virtual public workshop will be held on Monday, April 5, 2021. Please provide your comments on the initial draft no later than April 30, 2021. A revised version is anticipated to be available for review late Spring 2021.

Along with the Circulation Element update, City staff and its consultant team will be working on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which will provide for additional public input opportunities.

This is the very first draft of the document. There will be plenty of opportunities to help shape it before its adoption by City Council later this year. The entire community is encouraged to participate and review it. For more information, please visit [www.NewportTogether.com](http://www.NewportTogether.com) and register to receive notifications by email.

If you have any questions, please reach out to City staff by emailing [GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov).

The City greatly appreciates the community’s continued participation and engagement in this challenging and unprecedented update process.

## **CDBG Economic Development Grant Program**

The City will issue the first set of checks to recipients of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Economic Development Grant Program this week. Funds received under the Federal CARES Act stimulus program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were allocated to a new economic development program in mid-2020, to assist small businesses located in Newport Beach who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications continue to be reviewed for compliance with HUD's stringent income and documentation requirements and more grant checks will be issued in the coming weeks and months. The application period is closed, but more information about the program can be found on the City's website at: [www.newportbeachca.gov/CDBGEDGrant](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/CDBGEDGrant).

## **Treasury Report**

The December 2020 Treasury Report is available on the City's website at: [www.newportbeachca.gov/treasury](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/treasury).

As of December, the City's portfolio totaled about \$317.2 million. Approximately \$91.1 million of the portfolio was invested in very liquid investments available for day-to-day operations and major construction expenditures.

The short-term portfolio (\$210.9 million) had a weighted average effective maturity of 1.79 years. The trailing twelve months' total return was 3.37%. Our benchmark for the same period, the ICE BofA 1-3 Year Treasury index, returned 3.10%. The income return on the portfolio, a better measure of income earned from the portfolio, was 2.12%.

## **City Recycling Programs Update**

Public Works is continuing to expand the City's recycling programs. The City has completed improvements on commercial recycling and is now focusing on expanding the residential recycling program. The next steps include improving efficiency and increasing the quality of recyclable materials through the distribution of blue-top cans to residents who do not yet have this container. Source separation at the curb through the use of blue-top cans provides recyclable material that has less contamination, and therefore a higher quality material for recycling. The City's service provider, CR&R, has blue-top carts available to all residents upon request. If you do not have a blue-top cart, please contact CR&R at 949-625-6735, or on the [web at this link](#). We encourage residents to utilize the blue-top cans to increase environmental sustainability and reduce the amount of material sent to landfills.

## **Annual Concrete Reconstruction Program**

The City of Newport Beach Public Works Department is currently completing the annual concrete reconstruction program. This program addresses damaged concrete curbs, gutters, sidewalks and driveway approaches in preparation of the asphalt slurry seal program. The City will also be reconstructing failed asphalt pavement at various locations prior to slurry sealing the streets. This year's program covers Balboa Peninsula, Lido Isle, Newport Shores and Superior Heights. The Slurry Seal Program is scheduled to begin in April. Thank you for your patience as we complete these essential street improvement projects.

## **Homelessness Update**

Addressing homelessness continues to be a priority in the City's ongoing COVID-19 response, and City staff works closely with our contractor City Net, and our regional partners throughout the county and state. The City Net hotline number is (714) 451-6198. Those who call the hotline may leave a detailed voicemail message for themselves or others in need and City Net staff will respond within 48 hours. For immediate assistance, call the County's Crisis Prevention Hotline at (877) 7-CRISIS or (877) 727-4747.

City staff presented an update on homeless strategies at a City Council Study Session on February 23. The presentation highlighted the City's team approach toward addressing homelessness and the City's success in helping formerly homeless individuals find jobs and permanent housing. You can view the presentation [at this link](#).

The City discourages panhandling in favor of targeted assistance through the Good Giving Program. Donations received through the program enable staff to purchase items such as bicycles, work boots, and small household items for newly housed people. All donations are tax deductible. If you would like more information, or to donate, please visit our [Good Giving Program web page](#).

### Success Stories

- The City's Homeless Liaison Officer placed 10 people, several of whom had been staying by the Newport Pier, into the new Yale Transitional Center in Santa Ana. The County of Orange opened the center last month. The facility provides shelter for as many as 425 people experiencing homelessness and provides case managers who locate appropriate housing, assist with job searches, and provide other on-site services.
- City Net staff placed three people into the County's Yale Transitional Center. One person was living in her car by the Balboa Pier, one was staying by the Balboa Pier, and a third was staying by the Newport Transportation Center.
- City Net staff facilitated an early retirement interview with the Social Security Administration for a man staying by the Balboa Pier. He is now receiving monthly income and is seeking permanent housing.
- The Homeless Liaison Officer placed an honorably discharged veteran into a motel as he awaits a housing voucher. The veteran qualifies for a Housing and Urban Development Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) voucher. The HUD-VASH voucher provides rental assistance for homeless veterans, with supportive case management.

### **Insider's Guide for the Newport Beach City Council Meeting on March 9, 2021**

Our next City Council meeting is Tuesday, March 9. Items that may be of interest are highlighted below. The entire agenda, and all reports, can be viewed [here](#).

There will be a Study Session at **4 p.m.**:

- City staff will present an overview of the City's code enforcement program. The presentation will include code enforcement data, procedures, the top complaints received, and enforcement of short-term lodging regulations.
- Preliminary Capital Improvement Projects will be reviewed and discussed by the Council. This will be an "early look" at potential new projects and proposed funding for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

The Regular Meeting begins at **6:30 p.m.** The following are items of note:

Public Hearings include:

- In a public hearing continued from the February 23 Council meeting, Council will review a proposed zoning code amendment that would allow wine tasting rooms within an industrial zone. The industrial zone is located in the southwest area of the City, near 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Placentia Avenue. The current zoning limits eating and drinking establishments to take-out service and caps indoor seating at six people. The amendment would allow businesses to sell and serve wine, and allow expanded seating capacity based on parking availability and building and fire codes.
- Council review and potential approval of a conceptual design and funding plan for a new Newport Beach Junior Lifeguard Building, to be constructed south of the Balboa Pier. The review will include an updated conceptual plan and exterior architectural style, environmental

document, cost estimate, and funding agreement with the Newport Beach Junior Lifeguard Foundation. Staff is also requesting Council approval to prepare a Coastal Development Permit application and seek bids for construction. Under the proposal before the Council, the \$4.9 million building would be funded with \$2.05 million from the City's General Fund, \$1.75 million from the Foundation, and \$1.1 million captured over the next several years by eliminating the participant fee subsidy. If approved, the building will replace a temporary Junior Lifeguard facility and provide space for City recreational programs and facility rentals in the Junior Lifeguard off-season.

