



# The Week in Review

City Manager Grace K. Leung

March 19, 2021

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## Upcoming Events

**Monday, March 22**  
**Housing Element Update**  
**Virtual Workshop**  
[\(Register here\)](#)  
6 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 23**  
**City Council Study Session**  
[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)  
4 p.m.  
[\(Insider's Guide\)](#)

**Tuesday, March 23**  
**City Council Regular Meeting**  
[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)  
6 p.m.  
[\(Insider's Guide\)](#)

**Thursday, March 25**  
**Zoning Administrator Meeting**  
[\(See agenda for instructions on how to participate\)](#)  
10 a.m.

Community members,

Thanks to steadily decreasing COVID-19 cases and an increase in vaccination distribution among lower-income communities throughout the state, Orange County was able to enter the Red Tier earlier than expected, on Sunday, March 14.

As a result, Newport Beach's restaurants were able to open for indoor service with modifications, indoor gyms and fitness centers could open indoors with limited capacity, and other businesses can now operate with fewer restrictions. The City's Central Library is expanding capacity, and we are reopening the Mariner's branch beginning Monday, March 22.

In addition, the State has permitted breweries, wineries and distilleries that do not serve food to open for outdoor service in the Purple and Red tiers, with modifications. Bars that do not serve meals, however, must remain closed in both tiers.

For the most recent information on business operations and activities allowed in the Red Tier, visit the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) website, or [this chart](#) from the California Department of Public Health.

There was more good news this week: Orange County's latest COVID-19 metrics hint at a short stay in the Red Tier. This week's numbers are very close to the Orange Tier threshold, which would allow for expanded capacity at restaurants, outdoor bar service, and some outdoor live events.

This week, Orange County's 7-day average daily case number decreased to 4.0, just a fraction above the 3.9 needed for the Orange Tier. The other two key metrics also decreased: the positivity rate (the percentage of positive tests among those tested) was at 2.2%, and the health equity metric decreased to 3.5%.

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

If these numbers hold, Newport Beach could be well on the way to a robust resumption of activity and business operations very soon.

Here is updated vaccine information and resources as of March 19:

- More than 1 million people have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Orange County (this number includes first and second doses). More than 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Orange County via Othena. For those who are eligible and have not received a vaccine yet, the County encourages patience as appointments are based on vaccine availability.
- People ages 16–64 with underlying medical conditions are now eligible for vaccination per State guidelines. Those individuals will need to attest that they have one of the identified conditions when scheduling an appointment.
- While many people who live or work in Orange County currently do not yet meet the State’s eligibility for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, they are advised to register now at [www.Othena.com](http://www.Othena.com) to be placed in the virtual waiting room to be notified when it is their turn.
- The County is accepting vaccination registrations by phone for those who lack access to technology. The Orange County Health Care Agency hotline, (714) 834-2000 can provide assistance with Othena registration and support.
- There are several vaccination options. Even if you are registered with the County’s Othena platform, 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](#).
- 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 18, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Newport Beach was 3,678 and the total cases in Orange County was 249,181. The number of recovered COVID-19 patients countywide as of March 18 was 240,465. These figures are provided to Orange County by the California Department of Public Health.

### **Housing Element Update Advisory Committee (HEUAC) Meeting Recap**

On Wednesday, March 17, 2021, the City’s Housing Element Update Advisory Committee (HEAUC) held a meeting via Zoom.

The HEUAC began the business portion of the meeting by receiving a short overview of zoning overlays. City staff shared how overlays may be a helpful tool in meeting the State’s requirement to rezone identified properties for housing development within three years of adopting the Housing Element. The HEUAC discussed aspects, such as the ability to have parcel-by-parcel regulations in an overlay, to require housing for a certain income level, and to have a development cap that would limit new housing to only that needed for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

The HEUAC then moved into a presentation on how to navigate and review the [initial draft](#) of the Housing Element. Committee members provided some feedback but noted that they would be providing more formal written comments. These comments will be presented at the next HEUAC meeting on March 31, 2021. The public in attendance also provided input on the initial draft. Some highlights of the feedback include making the document more accessible and easier to review, increasing the planned number of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), dispersing affordable units throughout the different areas, tightening up the inventory to lessen the buffer, and a request to recommend that future sites respect the site plane ordinance.

The HEUAC finished the meeting with an informational item regarding the upcoming schedule for the update.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2021, where it is anticipated the HEUAC will dive deeper into the initial draft Housing Element update. For more information on the HEUAC, please check out its webpage [here](#).

As a reminder, the initial draft of the Housing Element is posted and available for review at: [www.newportbeachca.gov/DraftHEUpdate](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/DraftHEUpdate) until April 30, 2021. Please send all comments to City staff at [GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:GPUUpdate@newportbeachca.gov).

### **Community Invited to March 22 Online Housing Workshop**

The City is inviting and encouraging the community to provide input on the future of housing in Newport Beach with respect to the State mandate to plan for 4,845 new housing units of varying affordability levels.

An interactive, virtual workshop will be hosted on Monday, March 22, 2021, at 6 p.m. via Zoom. This workshop will provide an overview on what to expect when reviewing the draft Housing Element and how to navigate it. As touched on above, the City is requesting comments on this draft by April 30, 2021, and the draft is available [here](#).

To register please visit [www.NewportTogether.com](http://www.NewportTogether.com) or click [here](#). There will be many opportunities to provide input moving forward. The Planning Commission and City Council will also be reviewing the documents at study sessions in April.

Stay tuned for more information. The City appreciates the community's engagement and participation in this unprecedented process!

### **Library Update**

Based on recommendations from the County of Orange and in concurrence with guidelines issued by the state of California, Newport Beach Public Library is pleased to announce that patron capacity at the Central Library has increased to 50%, effective Tuesday, March 16. Mariners Branch will open on Monday, March 22, also at 50% capacity.

The Library will continue to offer a "grab and go" business model. Patrons can browse the shelves, check out materials, and manage accounts. A limited number of public computers will be available to ensure social distancing. Until restrictions on gatherings and building capacity are lifted, the use of seating areas, study rooms, and program spaces will be prohibited.

In accordance with guidelines from the State of California, Newport Beach Public Library is implementing a variety of precautions to make the environment as safe as possible for staff and the public upon reopening. Both the Central Library and Mariners Branch are equipped with Plexiglass barriers at public service desks, social distancing demarcation signage, and hand-sanitizers. For safety purposes, staff and visitors must wear face masks and maintain safe physical distancing.

The Library will continue to offer Curbside Service at Balboa and Corona del Mar branches, telephone reference, and the Library e-Branch to facilitate social distancing at the Library. No programs will be offered at this time.

### **New Coyote Tracking Partnership**

For the past five years, the Police Department's Animal Control Unit has encouraged residents to report coyote sightings online on the Police Department's website. This system, which was designed by PD staff, allowed our Animal Control Officers to track and respond to sightings in Newport Beach, but did not offer interoperability with surrounding cities. In order to better collaborate with our surrounding agency partners, and to provide a more interactive interface for our residents, we have transitioned to a regional system created and maintained by the University of California called *Coyote Cacher*. By contributing data to this UC system, we will be helping academic researchers better understand urban

coyotes. This will in turn benefit the City and its residents by allowing us to employ scientifically proven solutions as they become available.

Anyone who would like to report a coyote sighting or encounter can still visit the Police Department's website, which will link them to *Coyote Cacher*. The system can also be accessed directly by clicking [here](#). This website offers maps, updated in real time, of sightings reported. Residents can also sign up for email alerts for immediate notification of coyote activity in their zip code.

As we enter the springtime, we would like to remind residents that coyote activity will be increasing as new pups are born. For tips on how to keep your small pets safe, and how to discourage coyotes from frequenting your neighborhood, please click [here](#).

### **Corona del Mar Library & Fire Station No. 5 wins the 2020 ASCE Outstanding Sustainable Engineering Project Award**

The Corona del Mar Fire Station No. 5 and Library Replacement Project (Fibrary) has been selected as the recipient of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Orange County Branch (ASCE OC) 2020 Outstanding Sustainable Engineering Project Award. This innovative project linked two separate and very different city facilities on adjoining properties creating a building superior to any one entity. The site layout and building design conform to the basic functions of a library, which are quiet study, popular library materials, and children's services and concurrently serve as an essential emergency services facility. The vision, design, and construction are unique to this facility. This project should serve as a model for Southern California where space is costly and limited.

### **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Update**

Household hazardous waste (HHW) products often contain dangerous chemicals that need to be handled carefully to minimize their exposure to the natural environment. To mitigate disposal of these items in the regular trash, the City offers a door-to-door pick up service to our residents free of charge. Items can include cleaning supplies, paint, motor oil, universal waste (batteries, fluorescent lamps, light bulbs) or electronic waste. Residents can call 949-625-6735 to schedule a pickup.

### **Upcoming Electronic Waste and Shredding Event**

Each year in California hundreds of thousands of computers, monitors, copiers, fax machines, printers, televisions, and other electronic items become "obsolete" in the eyes of consumers. Rapid advances in technology and an expanding demand for new features accelerate the generation of "old" electronic equipment ("e-waste"). The result is a growing challenge for residents as they search for ways to reuse, recycle, or properly dispose of this equipment. Since electronic waste is generated so frequently and in large amounts, the City also provides bi-annual electronic waste collection events along with paper shredding. This year we will be holding shred and e-waste events on April 24 at the Harbor Day School parking lot located at 3343 Pacific View Drive.

### **Summer Beach Preparations**

Spring Break is around the corner, signaling the start of our summer beach preparations, which include:

- Removing wind fencing installed over the winter to prevent sand blowing on the streets and boardwalk.
- The log boom installed at the San Diego Creek (BackBay) to keep trash from spreading on our bays will be removed.
- Trash cans that were removed during the winter to paint and clean will be installed back on the heavy traffic areas.
- Broken fire rings were removed and replaced as needed. The remaining fire rings were given a coat of paint during the winter and are now ready for use.

Public Works staff and crew start preparations early to ensure a safe and enjoyable summer season for residents and visitors alike.

## **Grunion Season Preparations**

The first full moon of grunion season occurred early this week, which signifies the beginning of grunion runs this season. California grunion come ashore to spawn from March through August during the time of the nightly high tides and within a couple of hours afterwards. They surf the waves onto sandy beaches during full and new moons, where they bury and fertilize eggs in the sand. The grunions then ride the next set of waves back out to sea.

Grunion are easily startled by human beach activity, so it is advisable to remain quiet while awaiting their arrival.

Grunion season presents our Beach Maintenance Crew with the opportunity to clean the beaches manually, not utilizing machinery below the tideline where the Grunion lay their eggs. Large debris like poles, logs, and plywood that wash up onshore from the Santa Ana River and San Diego Creek are manually picked up.

Coincidentally, during the spring, staff attends the annual training on Beach Ecology Coalition on Grunion and Snowy Plover Preservation, to remind and update our protocol in protecting the Snowy Plover and the Grunion.

The full schedule and grunion fishing laws are posted at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website at [www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov).

## **Concrete Alley and Street Replacement Project**

The Concrete Alley and Street Replacement project is now underway. The Public Works project includes reconstructing alleys within Assessment District No. 117 (AD 117), in Corona del Mar, and alleys and streets on the Balboa Peninsula, that have been affected by recent utility undergrounding and utility replacement work. S&H Civilworks, the City's contractor for the project, began reconstruction of the alleys in AD 117 last week and will complete all work within AD 117 prior to starting construction activities on the Balboa Peninsula. Additionally, construction will be performed in multiple phases to minimize inconvenience to residents and businesses. Project completion is scheduled for June 2021.

In related news, S&H Civilworks recently completed reconstruction of the concrete street pavement on Montero Avenue and Alvarado Place. This work also included constructing new landscaped parkways along Montero Avenue and a portion of Alvarado Place. Landscaping was completed on March 5, 2021, and residents can now enjoy their new streets and parkways!

## **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.

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 17 people, several of whom had been staying by the Newport Pier, into the new Yale Transitional Center in Santa Ana. An elderly man who stayed by the Balboa Pier is now sheltered in a motel as he awaits placement into the Yale shelter. The



new 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 one person into the County's Yale Transitional Center and added five people to the waiting list.
- The Homeless Liaison Officer helped reunite an elderly woman with her family in Texas. The woman lived in her car for four years in Newport Beach and Costa Mesa.
- The Homeless Liaison Officer, City Net staff, and Share Our Selves collaborated to place a couple into a medical detoxification program. The couple is now enrolled in the County's Coordinated Entry System to secure housing. Share Our Selves, established in Costa Mesa in 1970, emphasizes care of the whole person. Share Our Selves provides medical and dental care, access to a food pantry, postal service, and other social services for low-income individuals and families in Orange County.
- City Net staff continues to provide food gift cards, support, and case management to several people sheltering in motels while they await placement into permanent, supportive housing.

### **Insider's Guide for the Newport Beach City Council Meeting on March 23, 2021**

Our next City Council meeting is Tuesday, March 23. 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.:

- Representatives from the City's Harbor Commission will present the results of a recent study on Newport Harbor that examined the types of stakeholders that use the harbor.

The Regular Meeting begins at 6 p.m. and the following are items of note:

On the Consent Calendar is:

- Two separate resolutions that would request time extensions for the City to spend Orange County Transportation Authority Measure M2 grant funding. The first is an OCTA grant to fund a feasibility study examining local transportation options to increase mobility at Balboa Island and Corona Del Mar. Because COVID-19 has reduced the use of public transportation and altered travel patterns, the City is requesting to delay the study until the 2023 fiscal year. The second grant is to partially fund the Newport Bay Trash Interceptor project, which will collect debris from the San Diego Creek before it reaches the bay, harbor and ocean waters. Because of COVID-19 related construction delays, the City is requesting a one-time, 24-month extension.
- Authorizing the submittal of the City's 2020 General Plan update progress report and Housing Element annual progress report to the State of California. The City is required by State law to prepare and submit an annual report on the status of General Plan implementation.
- The Council will receive the results of the City's annual independent financial audit. The audit was conducted by the firm CliftonLarsonAllen LLP for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Public Hearings and Current Business include:

- A proposed increase in residential recycling fees to partially offset additional costs of meeting new state mandates. California state law requires that every household, business and multi-family property recycle their organic waste beginning January 1, 2022. To partially offset the increased costs, the Council will consider a proposal to increase recycling fees. For most Newport Beach households, the fees would increase from \$3 a month to \$6.28 a month. Households in the Newport Coast area, which do not currently pay a recycling fee, would pay \$5.86 per month. Organics recycling is mandated by the state to reduce the volume of waste transported to landfills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from organic waste decomposition. The recycling fee was last updated in 2009.

- To assist Newport Beach businesses with pandemic recovery, the Council will consider a one-year waiver of business license fees for Newport Beach businesses that were forced to close because of COVID-19. The waiver would apply to business license tax renewals for businesses that were required to close by order of the state of California at any time during the pandemic. The waiver would apply for renewals processed between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022.

