



# City of Temecula

## City Council/City Manager

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May 13, 2020

V. Manuel Perez, Chairman  
Board of Supervisors, County of Riverside  
County Administrative Center  
4080 Lemon Street, 5th Floor  
Riverside, California 92501

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF MODIFIED PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES IN  
CORRELATION TO COMMUNITY RECOVERY**

Dear Chairman Perez:

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is an unprecedented global pandemic. The response from our nation and state has also been unprecedented. First responders and healthcare workers have done a tremendous job in responding to this health emergency. Workers on the front lines in other sectors continue to deliver important services under challenging conditions. Well-meaning residents responded in droves to stay-at-home orders and public health measures, including social distancing and facial coverings. Local governments, including cities and counties, stepped up to provide meals and food banks to serve residents in need. Community leaders provided support and resources for residents and businesses alike. Philanthropic organizations and individuals donated heavily to testing, research and related medical efforts to combat COVID-19. In our state, and specifically our region, due to the efforts of many, initial projections of the impact on the healthcare system and individuals have been mitigated.

Unfortunately, as we have seen success from the public health perspective, we have also seen a steady erosion of our economic existence as a community. Residents are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage and feed their families due to the loss of employment. A once thriving and vibrant business community is laying off employees and permanently shutting their doors. Here in Temecula, Old Town with its once lively restaurants and boutiques, is eerily looking like a ghost town. The Promenade, a hub of activity for the young and young at heart, with shopping, dining and entertainment, appears to be vacant. A \$1.2 billion tourism industry has been decimated with empty hotels and closed wineries. Monetary assistance for many segments of our community either is not available or has not come to fruition. We believe the region consisting of Temecula, Murrieta and Temecula Wine Country meet the criteria for a subregion.

While we have seen glimmers of hope to address the economic crisis and reopen our nation, to date these efforts simply are not making a difference in the very real lives and struggle of our residents. We appreciate the phased reopening plans that have been publicly shared by the federal and state governments. On a real-time basis, these plans are not providing our residents

with the ability to pay bills and buy groceries. Only steady employment that results in a livable wage and paycheck can do that. That is why we are imploring you and your Board of Supervisor colleagues, to help our residents by strongly advocating for reopening segments of our community as quickly as possible with specified public health measures in place.

We recognize the importance of continuing to adhere to public health measures while reopening. This is imperative to not only contain COVID-19, but also for the overall health and wellness of our community in the long run. Social distancing, facial coverings, disinfection, sanitation, and other efforts can be reasonably made and maintained at prescribed levels under the guidance of the CDC. At this time, our City is in the recovery phase of the disease curve. We have experienced a decline in the number of COVID-19 patients that require hospitalization over the past month, we have more than sufficient hospital and critical care beds, and adequate supplies of PPE. We have not experienced any confirmed COVID-19 related deaths in the City of Temecula. While this is very encouraging news, we are prepared to resume stricter public health measures should our City or region experience an increase in the number of confirmed cases or experience a lack of capacity within our hospital and health care system. We also acknowledge that public health measures may change rapidly on the recommendations and orders of public health officials and the State, and it is incumbent upon the City and community to remain flexible in adjusting any reopening efforts accordingly.

Health and wellness during this pandemic extend beyond the physical needs that can be safely met by our physicians and hospitals. It extends to the mental health of our residents. We have endured months of social isolation which can increase the risk of depression, anxiety and suicide. This, combined with the loss of work, having children at home full-time, and lack of access to coping strategies can be devastating and lead to suffering. We implore you to provide our residents with the hope that they will be able to return to live and work in this vibrant community in a safe phased manner in the immediate and near future.

A few weeks ago, both the federal and state administration released their guidelines for reopening. At the federal level, the administration set forth specific gating criteria followed by three phases to reopening. At the state level, the administration set forth six-indicators followed by four phases to reopening. As such, it was incumbent upon local governments to also be ready, nimble and prepared to reopen, knowing that dates have yet to be determined and phasing may change along the way. When the Governor subsequently announced an ability to accelerate reopening through a plan approved by the Board of Supervisors and attested to by the Public Health Officer, we were hopeful of what was coming next. Unfortunately, that hope was lost when the criteria for acceleration was released and reflected unrealistic metrics for a county of our size and populous. The only opportunity for meaningful forward progress in our community at this point is for the State to either change its criteria for acceleration or allow our County to approve accelerated plans by subregions within the County. Working with surrounding counties in similar situations through coalitions, our professional associations for cities and counties, and other community and industry stakeholders, can lead to this change.

The City Council feels strongly that all businesses be deemed essential.

The City Council also feels strongly that all houses of worship be allowed to provide in-person worship services and be deemed essential.

We know that you too are envisioning a reopening of our region to alleviate community suffering. As such, we remain ready to stand with you in action and advocacy to get our community back on its feet. To start, we are sharing our Community Recovery and Reopening Plan with you. In partnership with our community leaders, and local business and tourism industry, we have spent weeks discussing and developing thoughtful recommendations for your consideration and community use. Those efforts are reflected in the attached plan which is a living and breathing document subject to change in a world where change is rapid and inevitable. We are hopeful that you will find this document to be helpful in your deliberations with internal and external stakeholders as we pursue reopening. We look forward to engaging with you on this important regional effort.

Sincerely,



James Stewart, Mayor



Maryann Edwards, Mayor Pro Tempore



Mike Nagg, Council Member



Matt Rahn, Council Member



Zak Schwank, Council Member

- C: Board of Supervisors, Riverside County  
Economic Recovery Task Force, Riverside County  
Third District Task Force, Riverside County  
Assembly Member Marie Waldron  
Governor Gavin Newsom  
Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce  
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