COVID-19 Community Update

Your Actions Save Lives - Our collective efforts are continually needed to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We must continue to practice physical distancing, wear a face covering, follow public health directives and get tested.

Effective June 18, 2020, the State of California now requires the use of face coverings in indoor and outdoor settings (where physical distancing is not practical and with limited exceptions) anywhere outside of private homes, according to a new state directive tied to the State’s Executive Order.

In addition, San Luis Obispo County health officials are asking residents to avoid social gatherings, consistent with the State Health Officer order. Case investigations have identified cases spread between different households at holiday gatherings, birthday parties, graduation parties, and other medium or small-sized get-togethers.

On July 13, the State took additional action to protect community health and safety in response to the rapidly rising cases of COVID-19 by ordering the closure of or limiting operations to outdoor services of bars, pubs, breweries, wine tasting venues, gyms and fitness centers, places of worship, indoor protests, offices for non critical infrastructure sectors, personal care services, hair salons and barber shops, and indoor malls.

For more information from the City’s response to COVID-19, please visit www.slocity.org/covid19. The City is committed to keeping our community informed.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force

In June, the City Council approved a statement regarding recent tragic events, the community’s response, and intentions to address past and current systemic racism. In response to community input, the Council appropriated $160,000 to fund programs that support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) in the community.

In addition, the City Council appointed Mayor Heidi Harmon and City Council Member Erica A. Stewart to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. The Task Force will be comprised of 9-13 members who have a strong connection to San Luis Obispo and want to advance DE&I in the community by engaging community leaders and change agents to:

1) Focus on activities that support marginalized racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.
2) Collect information and insight about advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in San Luis Obispo.
3) Develop a notice of funding availability to support diversity, equity and inclusion work of proven organizations and best practices for change.
4) Provide guidance and a foundation for creating a potential 2021-2023 diversity, equity and inclusion focused Major City Goal.
5) Strengthen the focus and role of the City’s Human Relations Commission to support the City’s vision.
Open SLO: Enjoy Outdoor Dining and Community Spaces in Downtown

In July, the City of San Luis Obispo kicked off the Open SLO experience, a new pilot program to expand the use of city streets and public spaces to help support the economic recovery of local businesses and provide additional opportunities for responsible physical distancing within our community. Open SLO includes a variety of strategies allowing local restaurants and retailers to expand their footprints into the street, use of Mission Plaza and other city-owned spaces for take-out dining downtown, addition of parklets to expand sidewalk space, and other quick-build strategies to improve safety and access for residents jogging, bicycling and strolling in their neighborhoods. Open SLO activities are an inclusive environment and ALL community members are welcome.

Open SLO is not intended to encourage large gatherings or crowds, but to simply provide additional public space for residents and visitors to dine, shop, stroll, and enjoy Downtown San Luis Obispo as they normally would. As with visiting any public place during these times, it is important that guests continue to follow guidance from the San Luis Obispo County Health Department and take adequate precautions to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19. Guests should maintain six-foot distance from others where feasible and are highly encouraged to wear protective face coverings. All outdoor tables will be sanitized frequently, hand washing stations will be provided at several locations, and face masks will be made available for those who did not have their own.

Mission Plaza is open daily from 11am – 8pm for the public to enjoy take-out dining outdoors. The block of Monterey Street between Chorro and Morro Streets will be closed to car traffic in one direction (eastbound only) for the foreseeable future, allowing for outdoor dining on half the street, while preserving traffic circulation, commercial and passenger loading on the westbound side.

The City has established a streamlined permit process for downtown businesses to request permission to place tables and chairs and/or retail displays within the public right-of-way during Open SLO street closures. Businesses will be responsible for providing their own equipment and complying with all regulatory and permitting requirements established by the County Public Health Department, and Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). Please contact the city at OpenSLO@slocity.org for more information.
Housing Element Update

Over the past year, community members have provided input through online surveys, public workshops and meetings on the City’s Housing Element Update. Based upon that input, the City of San Luis Obispo’s Community Development Department has released its Draft Housing Element Update for public review.

The Draft Housing element represents a wide range of community perspectives on housing, reflects the changing needs, resources and conditions in the community, and responds to changes in state and federal housing law. The Housing Element is an element of the City’s General Plan and is the only element that must be updated on a set schedule and then certified by the State. The City’s Housing Element update is due for completion by December 2020.

The Draft Housing Element is available on the City’s website and hard copies are available by appointment only at the Community Development Department, located at 919 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

To make an appointment or to provide direct feedback regarding the Draft Housing Element, please email Rachel Cohen, Associate Planner, at rcohen@slocity.org or by phone at (805) 781-7574.

Water Resource Recovery Facility

The City of San Luis Obispo’s Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) has been undergoing a comprehensive upgrade—called SLO Water Plus. Current activities include:

• Crushing and recycling materials onsite to repurpose in construction
• Excavation for the new Membrane bioreactor – this will help the City to produce near drinking water quality effluent and recycled water
• Demolition of many existing underground utilities to prepare for new construction – nearly 100 years and multiple generations of infrastructure to navigate
• Demolition and installation of equipment for the primary clarifiers – refurbishing a mechanical treatment system originally installed in the early 1940’s

Fun Fact: a very large crane is onsite to support major construction - the crane is so large it requires coordination and clearance with the SLO airport!

For more information about WRRF visit https://www.slowrrfproject.org/ or sign up for project alerts here https://www.slowrrfproject.org/

Marsh Street Bridge Replacement Project Update

Souza Construction, and their drilling subcontractor, Condon-Johnson, are now working on the installation of the underground piles that will be the structure foundation system for the new bridge and retaining walls. Pile drilling and installation will take several weeks and is the necessary first step before the bridge abutment footing construction can begin.

Construction of the new bridge began in May 2020 and is expected to be complete in January 2021. This 9-month duration may be extended if unforeseen delays occur during the construction work. While it will be inconvenient and at times frustrating, the construction of the new bridge requires the closure of Marsh Street to vehicles and pedestrians from the bridge to the Santa Rosa Street intersection. Because Marsh Street is a main corridor heading into Downtown SLO, signage will start at the Highway 101 off-ramp and continue along Marsh Street toalert motorists of the closure and provide a number of options to detour around the construction site. The street signals along Marsh Street will be adjusted to accommodate the detour.

For more information about the Marsh Street Bridge Replacement Project, click here.
2020 Roadway Sealing Project

The Roadway Sealing Project kicked off in late July and is expected to be completed in mid-October 2020. The project, funded by the Local Revenue Measure (Measure G), will invest $1.5M to revitalize and enhance safety of more than 19 miles of roads in certain neighborhoods throughout the City. The project involves applying a slurry sealant and new striping to a variety of roads located throughout the City.

Among the neighborhoods and streets in the project area include Buchon, Calle Joaquin, Granada, High, Islay, Leff, Oceanaire, Margarita, Peach, Pismo, Sandercock and South. The Bob Jones Bike Trail between Prado and Los Osos Valley Road as well as the Emerson Park Parking Lot will also undergo sealing and striping.

Roads will remain open, but community members and commuters should expect intermittent lane closures and delays during weekday daylight hours.

This project provides a number of benefits to the community, including:
• Slurry sealing roadways that will revitalize the existing pavement, bridging cracks and providing an all-weather driving surface
• Roadway striping improvements that focus on providing enhanced safety and equity to cyclists and pedestrians improving multi-modal transportation
• Installation of speed humps along portions of High Street and Pismo Street to reduce vehicle speeds and enhance safety

For more information, visit slocity.org

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