



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: **Council Member Catherine Ushka**
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: **Resolution - Encouraging the residents of the City of Tacoma to use face coverings or masks when in public spaces - June 30, 2020**
DATE: 6/25/2020

SUMMARY & PURPOSE:

A resolution that says residents of the City of Tacoma are encouraged to comply with Governor Inslee’s order to wear face coverings or masks when they are in outdoor or indoor public areas, when they do not meet the exemption criteria, especially when they cannot maintain a physical distance of six feet from others; and that the City Council will use its influence and communication channels to encourage all residents of the City to wear face coverings in public, practice good hygiene and sanitation, limit travel, and follow recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

[Council Member Catherine Ushka]

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Council Member Lillian Hunter
Council Member Robert Thoms
Council Member Catherine Ushka

BACKGROUND:

This Council Member’s Recommendation is Based On:

On February 29, 2020, the Governor of the state of Washington issued Proclamation 20-05, declaring a public health state of emergency for all counties in Washington State due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19. On March 23, 2020, the Governor issued Proclamation 20-25 which extended the state of emergency, established the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order, and prohibited all people from leaving their homes except for those engaged in or obtaining essential services. On March 12, 2020, the City of Tacoma proclaimed a State of Emergency related to COVID-19. The Governor subsequently provided a Safe Start four-phase recovery plan to restart business and modify physical distancing requirements when disease activity is adequately suppressed and readiness in key areas is achieved. On June 5, 2020, the Secretary of Health approved Pierce County’s application to move to Phase 2 of the state’s Safe Start recovery plan, which allows for modified restrictions on businesses and other areas of public life. Effective June 8, 2020, the Governor required all employees to wear face coverings at work if they are not working alone or cannot maintain physical distance. Effective June 26, the Governor will require statewide mandatory face coverings when in a public space.

There will be specific exemptions for those who may be adversely impacted by wearing a facial covering, and these exemptions include those with certain medical conditions and children under the age of two, who should not wear a face covering. Children aged two, three and four are encouraged, but not required, to wear a face covering in public with the assistance and supervision of an adult. Individuals may remove face coverings under certain circumstances, including while eating or drinking at a restaurant; while communicating with a person who is Deaf or hard of hearing; and while outdoors in public areas, provided that a distance of six feet is maintained from people who are not members of their household.

Cases of COVID-19 in Pierce County are once again on the rise, with an infection rate of 31.5 per 100,000 residents in the last 14 days, as of June 24, 2020. In order to protect the health of our residents and our economy, it is vital for our community to commit to acting in ways that avoid risking our hard-fought progress, and even with the relaxed restrictions, it is more



important than ever to engage in activities to prevent the spread of disease, such as maintaining physical distance of six feet from others, practicing good hygiene, staying home when sick, and wearing a face covering.

Given the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, wearing a face covering over the nose and mouth designed to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets provides an extra layer of protection, especially when one cannot easily keep physical distance from others. Wearing a face covering protects the health of others in our community, because a significant portion of people who have COVID-19 do not show symptoms and can spread the virus before realizing they are sick, unknowingly endangering the lives of loved ones and essential workers.

The City of Tacoma received 70,000 masks from our Sister City of Fuzhou, China and is partnering with local community groups to distribute them to communities within the City in the greatest need through organizations such as shelters for the unhoused, Tacoma Public Schools, community and senior centers, Tacoma community food banks, home healthcare providers, day care providers. Of the 70,000 masks donated from Sister Cities, 13,800 will specifically be distributed to underrepresented communities most impacted by Covid-19, after consultation with and in coordination with community organizations representing and serving these communities.

The City partners with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to coordinate and amplify public health messages, including messages around wearing masks and practicing social distancing;

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Tacoma Pierce County Board of Health passed a resolution on June 17, 2020, encouraging the residents of Pierce County to use face coverings or masks when they are in public spaces. Tacoma City Council Members have also heard from their constituents a need to amplify messaging about how important wearing masks is to the health of the entire community.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Public health data shows infection rates disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander communities. According to the CDC, long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put some members of racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting COVID-19 or experiencing severe illness, regardless of age.

Livability: Moderate Opportunity

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
1. Pass no resolution	None	Could reduce compliance with the requirement to use face coverings in public spaces



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:

Council Members use their influence and communication channels to encourage all residents of the City to wear face coverings in public, practice good hygiene and sanitation, limit travel, and follow recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:

Pass this resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.