

September 2, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, Interim City Manager

Subject: Efforts to Help Schools Reopen Safely and to Reduce Daily New Cases of COVID19

REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202000984

On June 24, 2020, the Major Projects and Smart Government Committee referred the following for a report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Landsman, Beating COVID-19 and Helping to Reopen Schools Safely; We have lost 77 Cincinnatians to COVID-19 and our 14-day average of new cases remains close to Many efforts, including a requirement to wear masks, have helped to lower new cases. However, we are not currently beating COVID-19. Cases have spiked before, and we continue to get new cases every day. As a result, more people will lose their lives, our economy cannot fully reopen, and children and teachers cannot go back to school normally.; To change course, and to do so in a way that could help schools reopen safely, we must act now to significantly reduce if not eliminate daily new cases and hospitalizations.; As such, WE MOVE that the Administrations work with the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD), Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), and other regional and state partners to: * Supporting and Partnering with (CPS) on Reopening. In an effort to better support the district, attempt to... (BALANCE ON FILE IN CLERK'S OFFICE)

The following report details efforts made by the City of Cincinnati to support Cincinnati Public Schools and area businesses to reopen and to reduce daily new cases of COVID19.

SUPPORTING AND PARTNERING WITH CPS ON REOPENING.

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) instituted all day, 7am to 6pm, childcare at 18 facilities in addition to 4 facilities providing typical "after-school" care, 2pm to 6pm to support Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) fully remote start to the school year. Masks and temperature checks are required for entry at each facility and physical distancing guidelines will be observed with no more than 15 youth per room at any given time. 11 facilities will accept Ohio Department of Job and Family Service vouchers through the Publicly Funded

Child Care (PFCC) program with 7 other locations charging \$150 per week, per child, for enrollment. Only a portion of the voucher covers the total cost accrued by CRC for all-day childcare. The Administration has requested, via email and phone conversations, that CPS partner with the City to help defray the \$32k per week net cost to offer the program, not covered by voucher subsidy. CPS has yet to respond.

Registration launched August 21, 2020 and runs through September 18, 2020. However, CRC is prepared to continue the program if CPS extends virtual learning. Although programs at the Clifton and Oakley Recreational Centers are currently full, space is available at other sites. Location details are provided below and as of August 24, 2020, 333 students are enrolled, including 303 from CPS, of which 141 enrolled with a PFCC voucher. Each facility also serves as a food distribution site, serving CPS school breakfasts and lunches to eligible enrollees. The Administration has requested that CPS promote this program, but CPS has yet to respond.

All Day Childcare voucher sites:

- Bond Hill, Bush, Corryville, Evanston, Lincoln, Madisonville, Mckie, Millvale, Price Hill, Sayler Park, and Winton Hills
- 7am-6pm, Monday – Friday, Weekly fees vary per site based on state ratings

All Day Childcare non-voucher sites:

- Clifton, College Hill, Dunham, Hirsch, Oakley, Pleasant Ridge, and Mt. Washington
- 7am-6pm, Monday-Friday, \$150/child/week

Afterschool care only sites:

- Hartwell, Leblond, North Avondale, and Westwood Town Hall
- 2pm -6pm, Monday – Friday, \$65/child/week

CRC's goal is to provide a safe environment during school hours for youth to participate in CPS remote learning and enjoy supplemental recreational programming. To ensure that students can securely connect to their virtual classrooms, CRC is working with Cincinnati Bell to purchase WiFi hotspots for its facilities. These hotspots are temporary in order to provide immediate wi-fi needed for remote learning. Due to the number of sites that require permanent wi-fi upgrades, Cincinnati Bell will install wi-fi upgrades in a phased manner during the month of September. The Cincinnati Bell solution is estimated to cost \$120K for the one-time installation fees to permanently wire and install 21 Centers with new access points and needed equipment (excluding Dunham and Winton Hills which will require \$78k to run fiber/cable). Ongoing monthly cost for the permanent wi-fi upgrades are estimated to be \$4k per month for ongoing high-speed internet to all locations. CRC projects that permanent wi-fi upgrades in approximately seven recreation centers will be completed by the end of September 2020 with all recreation center completing permanent wi-fi upgrades by October 2020. The Administration requested that CPS partner with the City to assist in defraying a portion of the costs for the temporary WiFi hotspots, but CPS has yet to respond.

CRC is also partnering with Envision Children to provide onsite tutors at each facility. Although CRC staff are not expected to provide direct classroom instruction, CRC staff will provide supervised homework assistance and cultural, STEM, arts, sports, fitness and

wellness programs. Finally, any child receiving Special Education services through an individualized educational program (IEP) or 504 rehabilitation plan, can request an accommodation from CRC Division of Therapeutic Recreation.

INCREASED ENFORCEMENT TO ADDRESS NON-COMPLIANCE.

Since March 2020, the Cincinnati Health Department's (CHD) Environmental Health Inspection team of Sanitarians have enforced orders issued by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director.

Under the State's "Stay at Home" order, CHD Sanitarians responded to complaints related to business operation violations and guided essential businesses on how to safely operate under COVID19. When the stay at home order lifted and more businesses re-opened, complaints shifted to concerns over a lack of social distancing and proper cleaning. These complaints remain steady and occasionally increase with new business sectors reopening or as new laws or regulations are introduced.

On July 8, 2020, the ODH public facial covering order went into effect followed by the City's facial covering ordinance on July 9. Contrary to past directives that regulated businesses, the state and local mandates require the general public to wear a facial covering.

There are a few stark differences between the local ordinance and the state order that CHD Sanitarians must navigate. These differences include the beginning age that public facial covering violations can be enforced, the required areas for facial covering, when such mandates will conclude, and the penalties for violation. For example:

Cincinnati Facial Covering Ordinance

- Required for all individuals 6 years of age or older
- Only pertains to indoor public spaces.
- In effect until the pandemic ends.
- Includes a less punitive civil citation option of \$25.00.

ODH Order

- Pertains to individuals 10 years of age and older
- Includes outdoor public areas, when not 6 feet apart – unless with members of the same household.
- In effect until the Governor's Executive Order expires or the order is rescinded or modified by ODH.
- Includes a penalty of up to 90 days in jail, and/or a \$750.00 fine

In general, local ordinances and laws take precedence if more stringent; however, the City Law Department is currently reviewing the two mandates to determine if there are conflicts and assisting CHD on a case-by-case basis on enforcement protocols.

As of August 24, 2020, CHD Sanitarians responded to approximately 1050 complaints with over 90% of these complaints addressed and closed. Complaint response includes:

- Contacting the business owner to communicate that a complaint has been received
- Educating the business owner regarding compliance requirements and confirming that the business owner has a plan to comply, which may include a requirement for compliance documentation.

- Following up with the business owner to close the complaint or to issue a letter or civil fine if non-compliant.

To date no civil citations have been issued and only 5 letters have been released, with contacted businesses resolving their violation without further action needed.

During passage of the July 3, 2020, public face covering ordinance, Cincinnati City Council directed the administration to first provide education and guidance before issuing citations. In response, CHD adopted the following protocol for public mask complaint enforcement:

- When approaching an offender, an inspector will politely engage and offer a mask while educating the violator on the importance of wearing a facial covering.
- If the offender refuses the mask, a verbal warning and penalty information is provided.
- If all avenues to achieve compliance have been exhausted, a civil citation may be issued.
- If the offender is no longer present in the location, education is provided to the manager or point of contact onsite. These points of contact receive information about the ordinance parameters and the establishment's rights and responsibilities to create restrictive policies and procedural guidelines. The inspector may provide or identify a resource to obtain a copy of the applicable ordinances, a mask poster to display in the window of the establishment, or other materials as needed upon the visit.
- For any in-person visits after hours or in potentially unsafe situations, Cincinnati Police are contacted for assistance.

Under normal circumstances, Sanitarians are required to respond to urgent environmental complaints within one business day. These complaints pertain to issues such as no heat, no water, food sanitation and post restaurant fire inspections. With the additional requirement to enforce COVID-19 related mandates, Sanitarians are challenged to address these priority complaints within 24 hours. Therefore, face covering complaints are not necessarily at the level of immediate response and it is unlikely that an inspector will arrive to the scene of a complaint before a violator leaves the location or can be offered a mask. In result, no citations for facial covering violations have been issued to date.

Whereas, CHD Sanitarians respond to Health-related code enforcement, since July 31, 2020, the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) has handled local enforcement of Gov. DeWine's executive order to require all bars and restaurants in Ohio close by 10 p.m. Enforcement of this order is a complaint-driven process and mirrors existing CPD policy for the enforcement of State liquor laws. Under this process, residents alert the City of possible violations of the order by calling CPD's non-emergency number at (513) 765-1212. To date, CPD has received only a small number of reports regarding after-hours liquor service. Upon receipt, such reports are referred to CPD Vice Squad and the Ohio Investigative Unit for further investigation.

CPD also responds to complaints of large house parties. With students returning to area universities, CPD is proactively working to prevent large off-campus gatherings. Specifically, District Five, the primary law enforcement agency surrounding the University of Cincinnati (UC), is collaborating with UC to disseminate COVID19 materials to the

student body. This information is shared through social media, classroom settings, and signage throughout the campus. UC expects approximately 70% of their student body to undergo online learning for the 2020/2021 school year. Although most students will be learning remotely, District Five anticipates an increase in complaints and has proactively identified locations likely for large gatherings, such as specific streets and area parks. In response, District Five provided the Cincinnati Park Board with recommendations for altering the physical characteristics of certain areas and their operations to prevent large congregations. And, when District Five officers respond to these designated areas, body worn cameras will be immediately activated. Observation of criminal activity will be addressed onsite and all video footage of large gatherings is provided to the Health Department for review and further enforcement.

In addition, the District Five Neighborhood Liaison Unit, in conjunction with UC Police and UC Student Affairs, continues to engage off campus students and remind them of good neighbor skills and the potential administrative and/or criminal sanctions that could be of consequence through the University or City law enforcement. The District Five Neighborhood Liaison Unit is also communicating with property owners and landlords whose premises are observed with frequent large crowds. In order to minimize these crowds and promote social distancing, adjacent property owners are informed of the Department's chronic nuisance program and its ability to address negative community impacts such as disorderly conduct and curfew violations. CPD will continue to work with local universities and neighborhoods, including UC and uptown neighborhoods, as necessary to address similar concerns.

To improve or increase enforcement, technology upgrades are needed. The City's current permitting system is several decades old and presently undergoing a multi-year upgrade to meet the demands of current operations. Upgrades for CHD are estimated to cost between \$100K to \$1M to obtain a centralized software application that can be used for all environmental enforcement, including COVID-19. The Accela migration for CHD was quoted at \$800K to \$900K; however, other options such as Health Space, geared toward sanitarian inspection applications and license processing, is an estimated \$100K to \$200K. Hardware would be an additional estimated \$50K. This cost would not include needed resources for additional educational materials or mask distribution in target areas, that cost could range between \$1k to \$15k depending upon the volume of masks ordered.

Despite some challenges, overall, enforcement is going well. CHD Sanitarians are working in tandem with CPD, while conferring with the Solicitor's Office as new information and guidance is released from the State.

MAKE IT EASIER TO OPEN OUTDOOR SPACES.

As the country works to recover from the devastation of COVID-19, the City of Cincinnati continues its work with neighborhood leadership, residents, and private business owners to help Cincinnatians return to a sense of normalcy in their day-to-day lives.

One way the City has responded has been with the development of the Outdoor Dining Program. This pilot program is an expedited permit process that enables restaurants and bars to temporarily expand their outdoor dining and service areas onto the public right-of-way (public sidewalk or street) or into privately owned parking facilities. This effort requires

a team of City staff across several departments to expedite application review and onsite inspections. Specifically, CHD Environmental Health Sanitarians visit applicant sites to educate business owners and ensure public health regulations are followed. To date, the City has approved 59 street dining applications and 14 private property applications.

Also, under the joint emergency order No. 13, issued by Mayor John Cranley and City Health Commissioner Melba R. Moore, the City Manager's Office created the "Safe and Healthy Schools," program. Launched August 6, 2020, the program allows existing schools providing pre-K through 12 grade instruction to temporarily expand their facilities for the 2020/2021 school year. Much like the Outdoor Dining Program, the Safe and Healthy Schools program suspends certain City laws that govern the use and development of land in order to address public health concerns. Program details are attached. Although the Administration worked to create this mechanism for area schools, specifically CPS, to quickly expand their facilities for reopening, as of August 24, 2020, CPS has yet to take advantage of the opportunity or communicate any intent to do so.

The above efforts have focused on "reducing or eliminating permitting fees and bureaucracy" where possible, and it will continue to be a goal the City Manager's Office when pursuing future opportunities for promoting access to outdoor spaces. However, it should be noted, that the City is limited by state building code and similar laws and orders in what barriers may be removed by local authority. Further, because permit fees are collected to offset the expense the City incurs in delivering services, there is a direct budget impact associated with eliminating fees.

In addition to complaint response and inspections, Environmental Health Sanitarians also provide courtesy reviews of re-opening plans across multiple business sectors. This service complements efforts by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to help local businesses survive closure and reopen. For April, May, and June DCED deferred all loan payments under its MicroCity Loan program and helped propagate messages by area partners about available funding. Through its vast network, DCED helped spread the word to area businesses about local grant opportunities, relief funding, and small business administration and paycheck protection program assistance.

DCED has also teamed up with the African American Chamber and other partners to plan virtual conferences aimed at educating local businesses on strategies for handling times of crisis. Interested companies can register for the September 14, 2020, conference by visiting: <https://hopin.to/events/wmb2020>.

Along with DCED's efforts to support local businesses, the City Manager's Office works with the CPD Special Events Unit to help event producers navigate restrictions by the State and make necessary changes to their event proposals for permitting. For example, the Cincinnati Heritage Event, "Black Family Reunion," is typically a large two day festival; however, due to COVID19 concerns and restrictions, the City worked with the event producer to permit the event as a motorcade type COVID19 testing site with the distribution of sponsorship gift bags to participants. Although many large events have been canceled this year and Cincinnati's local special events do not mirror prior year experiences, the City continues to work with the events community to find creative solutions when possible.

Finally, to help local businesses, the City of Cincinnati participates in “Restart Cincinnati,” a regional task force comprised of the Cincinnati Regional Chamber, the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee, and REDI Cincinnati, focused on economic recovery under COVID19. This partnership includes assistance by the City’s Office of Performance and Data Analytics for the creation of a public dashboard detailing where local businesses may obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) resources. These resources can be found at <https://restartcincinnati.com/>

EXPAND, COORDINATE, AND MAKE PUBLIC TRACING EFFORTS.

As of August 3, 2020, the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) has hired 26 new contact tracers, for a total of 50 Full-time-employee positions (FTE). Included within the 50 FTEs are trained contact tracers provided by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to supplement CHD internal resources. Specifically, 5 communicable disease nurses (CHD FT staff); 12 dental staff (CHD FT staff reassigned while the dental sites are not open); 26 contract employees (FT); and 7 FTE ODH staff (11 total contact tracers FT/PT) make up the total number of staff dedicated toward contact tracing. The number of ODH staff may shift depending on jurisdiction need and surges in other city or county jurisdictions. Beginning September 8, 2020, contact tracing efforts will be supported by a full-time liaison from the City Manager’s office.

Within the slated 50FTE contact tracers, 5 contact tracers are specifically assigned to CPS, 3 to non-public schools and 3 to area universities. UC is conducting their own contact tracing as well; however, CHD is working with UC to determine how UC/City contact tracing information will be shared.

In addition to increased staffing, CHD revised the interview format for positive case investigations. This new format now captures data about large gatherings. This data will help CPD and CHD Sanitarians identify areas of concerns for response. This data is also available on the CHD website tab for COVID19 Case tracking. The large gathering data is based on asking the positive cases where they have been in the two weeks prior to the investigation. This gives CHD an idea of specific places that may have had frequent visitors. CHD then shares this information with Environmental Health to conduct an inspection or consultation with the business if needed. It is also shared with CPD if criminal enforcement is necessary. It does not mean transmission occurred at the large gathering, but it does help give a big picture understanding to the CHD/CPD team. It also helps stimulate thought for a positive case client to identify with whom they may have been within close contact.

CHD is also working with The Health Collaborative (THC) to determine the positivity rate for the City of Cincinnati using regional Hospital Lab data. CHD has worked with THC and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center closely since the start of the pandemic. Previously, percent positives were only calculated for the region. Now, CHD can determine percent positives for Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati. THC has data on the number of tests daily which is used to calculate the percent positive. Based on standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the threshold for positivity should be below 5%. Calculating this data point for Hamilton County and the City helps determine the prevalence of disease in our community, enabling targeted response and spread prevention.

SUMMARY

In response to CPS starting the new school year fully remote, CRC is offering families an all-day childcare option; however, CPS has not responded to requests to assist in promoting the program or contributing funding to help defray costs. The City created the Safe and Healthy Schools program, allowing CPS to receive expedited approvals to expand their facilities; however, as of August 24, 2020, CPS has yet to take advantage of this opportunity.

The City of Cincinnati will continue to work with community partners to help stop the spread of COVID19. As UC students return to the area, CPD is proactively engaging residents and encouraging neighbors to call with nuisance complaints about large gatherings and to help identify areas of concern for targeted enforcement. As new regulations or orders are administered by the State or local officials, CHD Sanitarians adapt and respond accordingly and help local businesses navigate these regulations. Through education, enforcement, and increased contact tracing, the City of Cincinnati is actively working to lessen the public health and economic impact of COVID19.