

The Oregonian

Multnomah County, Portland suspend evictions during coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/multnomah-county-portland-suspend-evictions-during-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

Updated Mar 17, 2020; Posted Mar 17, 2020
By Everton Bailey Jr. and Molly Harbarger

Multnomah County landlords temporarily won't be able to evict tenants who can't pay rent due to coronavirus.

County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Tuesday that they have signed emergency orders that ban eviction of tenants who fall behind on rent due to coronavirus-related challenges.

They also announced the county will open hundreds of new shelter beds in public buildings and other spaces for people experiencing homelessness and Portland's economic development agency will provide \$150,000 in grant to aid businesses in Portland's Jade District along Southeast 82nd Avenue, one of the city's largest concentrations of Asian Americans. They said city and county government meetings will be held virtually for the time being.

Under the temporary eviction moratoriums, tenants will have up to six months after the city and county state of emergencies end to repay any rent they owe, officials said. The city's declaration ends March 26 and the county on April 10. The moratoriums apply to people whose jobs are shut down, whose work hours are reduced, who miss work to provide child care due to school closures or who are unable to work because they or a relative are sick from the virus.

Tenants will have to provide letters of proof from their employer, school, doctor or other source to verify their hardship. They also have to notify their landlords on or before the day rent is due that they can't pay, officials said. No late fees can be charged and landlords who don't comply with the order could be sued and liable for civil damages as well as other sanctions.

"Yes, everyone should pay their rent on time," Kafoury said. "But for people who are losing their wages due to COVID-19 and find themselves unable to pay rent, we want you to be able to stay in your home."

Kafoury said discussions are underway with the state courts and county sheriff's office "to make changes that will keep people housed during this emergency." She did not elaborate on what those changes would be.

On Monday, Multnomah County Circuit Court suspended all eviction hearings and trials that were scheduled through March 27 and indicated they will be rescheduled for after March 30.

Wheeler called on Oregon legislators to increase rental assistance programs statewide. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on Tuesday said she doesn't have any immediate plans to issue a statewide ban on evictions related to coronavirus.

Kafoury said the county will continue to offer motel vouchers for some people who are in shelters and hotels and motels will be banned from refusing occupancy to any of them. She also said some of the

newly opened beds will provide space for people who show symptoms of coronavirus and allow them to recuperate.

Wheeler said the grant money for small businesses is being made available first to Portland's Jade District because the shopping and dining district, centered on Southeast 82nd Avenue and Division Street, is home to many Asian business owners, some of whom seen their revenue drop by as much as 60% amid the coronavirus crisis. There are plans to expand the aid to other businesses throughout the city in the future, Wheeler.

Affected business owners should call 503-823-4000 or email cityinfo@portlandoregon.gov for more information, he said.

Wheeler said a city task force was created Monday dedicated to coming up with ideas to help ailing small and large Portland employers and employees. A commercial eviction prevention strategy and other financial relief are also in the works and city officials plan to meet with bank authorities to see if aid can be provided for Portland landlords, Wheeler said.

The mayor said he was proud to hear stories from all over the city of people providing meals and other help to one another during the outbreak.

"We're in this together. You're not alone," Wheeler said. "We will get through this and we'll get through it together."

On Monday, Home Forward, the Multnomah County housing authority, announced the same moratorium on evictions for its own buildings.

The moratorium doesn't go far enough, said Margot Black, co-chair of Portland Tenants United and candidate for City Council. She wants total rent forgiveness -- meaning that renters wouldn't have to pay back the rent they miss during the state of emergency.

"When this recession or depression hits, we're not going to be able to pay rent for a long time," Black said. "It's not like when things get back to normal, whatever that normal looks like, we can carry a six month rent debt with us and figure out a payment plan."

Protesters interrupted Tuesday press conference to demand that same, including one person who threatened to cough on Wheeler.

In the week before the moratorium, the landlord lobbying group Multifamily NW sent a letter to state officials calling for financial assistance rather than an eviction ban. The assistance would be given to renters or landlords.

Deborah Imse, the group's executive director, also called on state leaders Tuesday to follow the local eviction moratorium with rental assistance to prevent rental property foreclosures.

Wheeler acknowledged that forgoing rent payments for six months could hurt some landlords. He said the city of Portland will be calling on banks and credit unions to extend loan repayment timelines in some circumstances.

Oregon has 51 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday morning. The state's only death from the virus occurred Saturday when 70-year-old man died at the Portland Veterans' Affairs Medical Center. Two other people have died from the virus in Clark County, Washington.

Gov. Kate Brown on Monday banned gatherings statewide of more than 25 people for at least a month and ordered restaurants and bars to either close or exclusively serve takeout to slow the spread of coronavirus.

The news comes after Kafoury and Wheeler issued state of emergency declarations last week to allow the county and city to request state assistance and make other emergency provisions.

Both Multnomah County and Portland have announced they are keeping winter shelters open for people experiencing homelessness and providing motel vouchers for people experiencing symptoms. Portland has installed nearly two-dozen mobile hand-washing stations and toilets throughout the city, and the Portland Water Bureau has suspended disconnecting service for those who can't pay their water bills during the state of emergency.

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly as well as several candidates for city council and renters and labor advocates had publicly called for an eviction moratorium before they were issued Tuesday. Portland joins cities that include Boston, San Francisco and Seattle that have also announced eviction moratoriums.

Eudaly in a statement said Tuesday's announcements were "a vital and urgent step toward stabilizing our community amid an emergency." She said she believes more work needs to be done to protect impacted workers and the local economy including free COVID-19 testing for everyone, home mortgage forbearances, and financial support for all workers and affected small businesses.

"This effort is going to require action at every level of government," Eudaly said. "I know the work is underway on much of it."

Wheeler's office said after Tuesday's news conference that the city council would plan to vote Wednesday to adopt a version of the county's eviction moratorium policy that would apply within Portland city limits.

"The joint county-city adoption of a single policy will ensure that community members and landlords are clear about their rights and responsibilities during this event," a mayor's office spokesperson said.

[Read the county's executive rule related to a moratorium on residential tenant evictions](#)

Portland police closing 2 of its three precincts to the public to stem coronavirus spread

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/portland-police-closing-2-of-its-three-precincts-to-the-public-to-stem-coronavirus-spread.html>

Updated Mar 17, 2020; Posted Mar 17, 2020

By Maxine Bernstein

The Portland Police Bureau on Tuesday decided to close two of its three precincts to the public to try to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

East and North precincts will be closed to the public, but the precincts' officers will continue to respond to calls for emergency services.

Central Precinct, located at 1111 S.W. Second Ave. in downtown Portland, will remain open to the public and staffed 24 hours a day.

"The life safety of our community members and our staff remains our highest priority," Chief Jami Resch said in a statement. "We are gathering information and adapting our response protocol in a flexible and thoughtful manner in order to best meet the public safety needs of our community."

On Friday, Portland police announced the bureau would reduce the number of non-emergency calls that officers respond to in person. Instead, the bureau is encouraging community members to report non-emergencies either by phone or online.

"Our members continue to respond to emergency calls for service effectively and we appreciate those in the community who have filed reports online or by phone," the chief said. "Our collective efforts are strengthening our community's resilience during this critical time."

Between Feb. 11 and March 11, the bureau received 2,331 online reports, while patrol officers have handled 30,349 calls for service, some by phone and some in-person, according to the bureau.

The public should still call 9-1-1 for any life-threatening matter or crime in progress. Non-emergency reports can be made through dispatch at 503-823-3333.

People also can access information on the bureau's website to determine if a report can be taken online or not. If it involves firearms, a stolen vehicle or a case with known suspects, it can't be taken online, according to the website.

City of Portland's lawyers call lawsuit claim that police condone fascists 'outrageous,' urge court to toss it

<https://www.oregonlive.com/crime/2020/03/city-of-portlands-lawyers-call-lawsuit-claim-that-police-condone-fascists-outrageous-and-urge-court-to-toss-it.html>

Updated Mar 16, 6:34 PM; Posted Mar 16, 6:30 PM

By Maxine Bernstein | The Oregonian/OregonLive

Lawyers for the city of Portland urged a judge Monday to throw out claims in a lawsuit that allege police used excessive force indiscriminately against anti-fascist protesters in an August 2018 protest while protecting Patriot Prayer demonstrators.

"That the city somehow condones or sympathizes with fascists is simply an outrageous claim that should be properly stricken," Deputy City Attorney Michael Jeter argued in a hearing conducted by phone before U.S. Magistrate Judge Stacie F. Beckerman.

"It unnecessarily impugns the character of the city and its officers. It's scandalous and has no business being in the lawsuit."

In October, three protesters who said they were assaulted by Portland police during the Aug. 4, 2018, demonstration downtown against Patriot Prayer filed a federal civil rights suit against the city and police. One of the protesters said a police flash-bang grenade struck the back of his head and penetrated his helmet and his skull.

The protesters contend that the city has a practice of using militarized force, including the firing of 'aerial distraction devices,' against left-wing or counter-fascist protesters to punish them for their political speech while not using force against right-wing protesters, such as the Proud Boys or Patriot Prayer.

Attorney Juan Chavez, representing two of the plaintiffs, Aaron Anthony Cantu and Tracy Molina, said police used force against counter-protesters with little provocation.

Cantu said he suffered a traumatic brain injury from a flash-bang grenade when police fired into a passive crowd.

Molina was holding a sign that read, “Hey Racists Stop Making Your Ignorance Our Problem Grow Up or Go Home” and was trying to get on the sidewalk near Southwest Columbia and First Avenue when police were trying to disperse the counter-protesters, according to the suit.

Co-plaintiff James Mattox says police fired a rubber-tipped projectile as he was moving away from officers, “waving his anarchist shield, flipping off the officers and shouting profanities,” the suit says.

He was hit first in his upper thigh, picked up the projectile, held it in the air and shouted, “Look you missed!” according to the suit. He was then shot again, in the right arm, the suit says.

Jeter said the plaintiffs’ claims are too broad, unclear, lack specific facts and should be thrown out or they should be ordered to file an amended complaint.

The suit alleges that conservative leader Joey Gibson of Patriot Prayer exploited the protests and that the city had a “history of coordinating with Gibson and his right-wing supporters to organize Portland Police Bureau for security at Patriot Prayer’s events.”

Attorney James Buchal, who represents Gibson in a separate civil case in Multnomah County Circuit Court, urged the court on behalf of the National Police Association to allow the Delaware-based, nonprofit group that supports law enforcement to file a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Portland police.

“NPA believes that its briefing will benefit the Court by providing a broader perspective concerning the critical issues relating to police use of force during public unrest,” Buchal wrote.

“The NPA considers this case to be of special significance in that the use of less than lethal force is a crucial but often misunderstood tool used by police departments to combat dangerous public disorder,” wrote Ed Hutchison, president of the National Police Association, in a signed declaration filed in court. “The NPA advocates the use of force by police when public safety is jeopardized by anti-police organizations such as Antifa and their sympathizers.”

But attorneys from both sides of the case said the National Police Association’s involvement isn’t needed or warranted.

“We objected to them joining this case as an amicus,” said Deputy City Attorney Robert T. Yamachika. “Someone is offering the city help, but we’re probably good without it.”

Buchal is representing Gibson in a civil case in state court filed by Abram Goldman-Armstrong, owner of Cider Riot, who has accused Gibson and others of vandalizing or conspiring to vandalize the cidery, intentionally interfering with its ability to make money and sparking a May 1 melee outside the bar.

Coronavirus concerns reduce staff access to Portland City Hall, other city buildings

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/coronavirus-concerns-reduce-staff-access-to-portland-city-hall-other-buildings.html>

*Updated Mar 16, 5:05 PM; Posted Mar 16, 4:42 PM
By Everton Bailey Jr.*

Portland plans to reduce staff access to City Hall and other city buildings for at least a week starting Tuesday.

According to a letter to all city employees by Chief Administrative Officer Tom Rinehart, only staff deemed critical to the city's day-to-day operations will be allowed into city buildings while a Portland state of emergency is in effect. The declaration was issued last Thursday by Mayor Ted Wheeler and scheduled to remain in effect until March 26 but could be extended.

City Council members, bureau directors, emergency response and security officers and some members of customer services teams will be among those designated as critical staff, according to Rinehart. Employees who don't fall into that category will have their badge access temporarily turned off.

"All employees who are able to telework will be mandated to do so," Rinehart said in the email. "By the end of today, employees should collect all equipment they might need to telework and any personal items they need to access during the closure."

Several bureaus have modified how they operate since last week to limit public contact as much as possible. Wheeler said last week that non-essential city gatherings should be cancelled or postponed to protect city employees and visitors, and he said the city would also stop city employee non-mandatory traveling for meetings or conferences and encourage more working remotely.

The Police Bureau officials, for example, said officers will take more non-emergency police reports over the phone for cases that don't require face-to-face interaction, and Housing Bureau officials said it was temporarily suspending person-to-person customer service in favor of public contact via phone, email, fax or U.S. mail.

Portland Parks & Recreation officials said Friday that all city-run indoor community and arts centers, swimming pools and sports facilities were closed for the rest of the month. The bureau announced Monday that the closures would be extended two more weeks and tentatively reopen April 15.

All city council budget work sessions scheduled for this week have been cancelled. No official announcement has been made Monday regarding Wednesday's city council meeting.

Portland parks closing indoor pools, community centers due to coronavirus concerns

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/portland-parks-closing-indoor-pools-community-centers-due-to-coronavirus-concerns.html>

*Updated Mar 13, 2020; Posted Mar 13, 2020
By Everton Bailey Jr.*

Portland Parks & Recreation officials announced Friday that the city is closing all indoor community and arts centers, swimming pools and sports facilities for the rest of the month due to coronavirus concerns.

The city's parks, playgrounds, trails, natural areas and public golf courses will stay open, but officials urge visitors to avoid gatherings and keep outdoor events to less than 250 people, which Gov. Kate Brown ordered Thursday to help reduce chances of transmitting the virus.

The bureau estimates reopening indoor facilities on April 1.

The announcement comes a day after Mayor Ted Wheeler declared a state of emergency. Wheeler told all city bureaus to carry out measures to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Several city bureaus have announced adjustments on staff interactions with the public due to the public health emergency.

The Portland Police Bureau said officers won't attend community engagement events and that more officers will take non-emergency police reports over the phone. Officers will continue to appear in person for life-threatening calls or to respond to calls that can't be taken handled via phone or online.

Bureau officials are encouraging people to file nonemergency police reports online rather than in person, if possible.

The Portland Housing Bureau said it will temporarily suspend person-to-person customer service, urging people to contact the agency via phone, email, fax or mail. City archives and records management staff in the Auditor's Office will take research requests by appointment only and visitors should call or email ahead of time.

The Office of Community and Civic Life is restricting hours at City Hall from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. from Monday to Wednesday and accepting visits from the public only via appointments. People seeking liquor licenses can do so via mail and liquor license renewal payments can be made online. Applications for noise complaints or variances also must be submitted online.

The Portland Tribune

Public barred from Portland City Council, Multnomah County Commission meetings

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457031-372669-public-barred-from-portland-city-council-multnomah-county-commission-meetings-pwoff>

Jim Redden

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

The Portland City Council and Multnomah County Commission will not allow the public to personally attend their hearings to limit the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

The Metro Council is considering similar restrictions, but has not yet made such a decision.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has banned gatherings of more than 25 people in the state with limited exceptions, like child care facilities.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and County Chair Deborah Kafoury announced the changes during a morning press conference about responses to the novel coronavirus on Tuesday, March 17. They referred to future hearings being "virtual" and "remote."

Wheeler said council hearings soon will accomodate "real time public input," however.

Kafoury said she was immediately postponing consideration of all non-essential matters. Wheeler did not say what the council might not consider.

The city council and county commission hearings will be steamed live on the governments' website and shown on community access TV. They are both urging the public to submit testimony online.

Metro is also urging the public to submit testimony online as it considers whether to the public at its hearings.

Wheeler also announced Monday:

- Only employees designated as critical for the day-to-day operations will be able to access City of Portland buildings for the duration of our State of Emergency.
- Most City managed buildings will be closed to the public for public health reasons, and all employees who are able to telework are doing so right now.

Protesters to Portland mayor: Freeze rents or face our cough

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457007-372642-protesters-to-portland-mayor-freeze-rents-or-face-our-cough>

Zane Sparling

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Not good enough.

That was the message from a band of protesters — who hijacked a Portland press conference and demanded an immediate rent freeze amidst the ongoing global pandemic.

Multnomah County chair Deborah Kafoury and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler were in the middle of announcing a temporary halt on evictions during the outbreak of COVID-19, the disease caused by a new strain of the coronavirus.

Then the event — held Tuesday, March 17 at McCoy Health Department Headquarters — went off the rails.

"Neither the virus nor the housing crisis will disappear at the end of the month, or in three months, or in six months," a black-clad demonstrator said after wresting control of the podium about halfway through the 40-minute briefing.

"Freezing rent until the economy can safely recover is the only way to keep thousands more Portlanders off the streets," the protester continued, to a chorus of cheers from other supporters off camera. "Flatten the curve! Freeze the rents!"

<https://www.facebook.com/MultCo/videos/651576895677602/>

The disruption was watched live by thousands livestreaming the press conference or watching an online broadcast from local news stations.

"This is not a council session," responded Mayor Wheeler, who is well acquainted with shouted outbursts from onlookers at City Hall. "You need to go outside."

That elicited a uniquely COVID action from a protester: "I should just come to you and cough on you, what are you going to do about that?"

While not specifically identifying themselves, the protesters appear to be affiliated with a document calling for a rent freeze, which has been circulating online recently. Protesters said at least 17,000 have signed the petition so far.

The demonstrators were eventually shown the door, allowing gathered reporters to continue asking questions. County spokeswoman Julie Sullivan-Springhetti says authorities will keep press events closed to the public going forward.

"Disruptive and threatening behavior is harmful, counterproductive, and could be criminal," Sullivan-Springhetti told the Tribune. "Threatening to give people COVID and then repeatedly coughing in the face of a young security guard and reporters who have to show up to do their job is shocking and unacceptable."

Portland, county leaders unveil plans to help homeless, tenants, businesses

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/456906-372561-portland-county-leaders-unveil-plans-to-help-homeless-tenants-businesses-pwoff>

*Nick Budnick
Tuesday, March 17, 2020*

Portland and Multnomah County residential renters cannot be evicted until the current COVID-19 emergency is over, after which they will have six months to pay their back rent, County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Mayor Ted Wheeler said in a Tuesday, March 17, press conference.

The county also will be using vacant public buildings to set up hundreds of new shelter beds to accommodate homeless people while adhering to social distancing guidelines to lower the spread of the coronavirus.

The ban on evictions, which Kafoury announced on social media the night before, is just one of several measures the two local leaders said they're putting into place to protect housed and houseless residents, businesses and workers from the health and economic impacts of the pandemic.

Efforts to reach homeless

Kafoury said teams of outreach workers have been reaching out to the area's homeless population with supplies and information.

"In the past five days, they've reached more than 1,700 people in every part of this county," she said.

"Crisis exposes the character of a community," she added. "And people all across Multnomah County continue to show up to serve their community. During these extraordinary times, we will meet people where they need to be met. We will protect each other. In this county, we will not stop looking out for each other."

Wheeler, for his part, called on the Oregon Legislature to increase rent assistance for all Oregonians.

He said the city has set up a task force to explore all options to help suffering businesses. Meanwhile, many places such as the Portland Building will be closed to the public. City employees who can work from home are now required to do so.

He said the city is exploring a strategy to protect commercial tenants from eviction and also is asking banks and credit unions to help landlords with mortgage issues due to cash flow issues

He said Prosper Portland — formerly the Portland Development Commission — is tapping \$150,000 in grants dedicated to Jade District businesses to help them with impacts of the emergency, and is exploring options to help businesses in other areas as well.

"We're already moving with a sense of urgency," he said.

Wheeler was asked about opening Wapato jail, as former Gov. John Kitzhaber suggested over the weekend. The Portland Tribune reported Monday that Wheeler already has been discussing the idea with building owner Jordan Schnitzer. "Everything's on the table in a time of crisis," Wheeler said. "There are many offers that are coming to the city, into the county. We're gratefully accepting all of those offers of assistance."

Both the city and the county have suspended rules allowing in-person participation in public meetings, which will occur remotely.

Testing problems

Multnomah County Health Officer Jennifer Vines said the county is down to a two-week supply of gowns, gloves and masks for health care workers.

She said local officials' ability to test people for the coronavirus, which already is low, could suffer further due to lack of supplies. Testing will be focused on symptomatic people with high risk of spreading: for instance, those living in long-term care, shelter, correctional facilities.

"I understand the fear that people have," she said. "I share it. I would ask that we resist finger pointing and second guessing. It's a very difficult situation. I would hope that we could all channel our energy into practical solutions and helping out at the individual and community level where we can."

Portland curtails homeless camp sweeps during outbreak

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/456931-372604-portland-curtails-homeless-camp-sweeps-during-outbreak-pwoff>

Rebecca Ellis/OPB

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

The city of Portland has decided to cut down on the number of homeless campsites it dismantles each week, citing fears that it could worsen an outbreak of COVID-19 among the region's already vulnerable homeless population.

City officials said they're weighing the public health risks posed by continuing to clear out these campsites, which could scatter people who are potentially infected with COVID-19 throughout the city, with those posed by letting high-risk campsites go untouched by work crews.

On Friday, the city's Office of Management and Finance, in charge of cleaning and clearing out people from Portland's campsites, finalized a new protocol meant to balance the two: Throughout the crisis,

the city will stop cleaning and dispersing sites that are usually posted weekly - these are "high impact areas" that require "routine maintenance," according to a city release.

Examples of these areas include St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and a strip from Northwest 3rd Avenue to 6th in Old Town, according to Jonny Lewis, a program specialist with the city's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program.

However, the program will continue clearing out campsites that pose the greatest public health risk. Those are camps that score above a 65 on a risk assessment test, which takes into account factors such as the amount of trash on site, the presence of human waste and evidence of drug use, according to Lewis. In the past, he said, the office had singled out campsites that scored a 51 and above.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of the story by OPB, a news partner of the *Portland Tribune*.

OPB

Portland, Multnomah County Enact Temporary Moratorium on Evictions

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/portland-multnomah-county-moratorium-evictions-coronavirus/>

By Rebecca Ellis

March 17, 2020 5:36 p.m.

As the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic continue to mount, Portland and Multnomah County leaders announced Tuesday they will place a moratorium on most residential evictions for the duration of the crisis.

In an effort to keep people in their homes through the state of emergency issued by the county, landlords will not be able to evict people who have fallen behind on rent payments. Those who are behind due to a loss of income related to COVID-19 will be given a six month grace period to pay back their rent after the state of emergency is over. There will be no late fees. Those who can't pay their rent or mortgage for reasons unrelated to the virus will not be at risk of eviction - but they will not have the six month period to make the payments.

The order takes effect Tuesday.

"For people who are losing their wages due to COVID-19 and find themselves unable to pay rent, we want you to be able to stay in your home," said County Chair Deborah Kafoury at a Tuesday press conference announcing the moratorium. "Nobody at risk of homelessness should be removed from their home during this crisis or because of this crisis."

In a prime example of the mile a minute nature in which policy decisions are being made during the pandemic, Mayor Ted Wheeler had originally joined Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury at Tuesday's press conference to announce the city's own moratorium on evictions. That rule was scratched an hour after the conference, as it became clearer that the county's moratorium superseded the one created by the city, thereby making Portland's own version unnecessary. Tomorrow, the city will vote to adopt the county's moratorium within city limits.

Multnomah County's state of emergency is set to expire April 10, though officials expect it will run longer. County court hearings on eviction proceedings are expected to be suspended until the end of April, according to the executive order.

In instating a moratorium on evictions, the county follows the lead of lawmakers in Los Angeles, New York, San Jose and San Francisco, who have pressed for temporary eviction bans. That list could soon grow. On Monday evening, California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order giving local governments across the state the authority to stop evictions for renters and homeowners.

In order to be eligible for the moratorium, Multnomah County residents must demonstrate substantial loss of income as a result of the pandemic through "documentation or other objectively verifiable means," according to the executive order issued by the county. Renters need to let landlords know they won't be paying on or before the first day rent is due.

Penalties for landlords who disobey the executive order are still being hammered out. The Multnomah County attorney's office has been asked to draft an ordinance that will impose retroactive fines and penalties.

The county order comes on the heels of a widely-circulated petition by local renter's rights group Portland Tenants United, asking for a ban on all evictions during the emergency. The head of the group, Margot Black, said she felt the order crafted in response fell far short of what the group had demanded.

Black said she felt the hastily-crafted order had gaping holes in it that could affect people's livelihoods and offered little in terms of real relief to renters. She said she was concerned renters could still be evicted for reasons unrelated to their failure to make rent. She was worried about the fate of tenants unlucky enough to be evicted one day before the moratorium, who now could live through the pandemic on the streets. And she said she had serious doubts about whether renters, deprived of steady wages potentially for months, could realistically come up with the missing rent money in the six months allotted to them.

"This idea that if you just have six months you can go scrape up a few grand is just so tone deaf," she said. "It's just now how most of the world works."

A handful of protesters in the audience of Tuesday's press conference made it clear they, too, felt the policy didn't go far enough to relieve the pain renters across the city were poised to feel as a result of the pandemic. One person temporarily interrupted the press conference and stood in front of the podium demanding a rent freeze until the economy's in full recovery. Another threatened to cough on the mayor.

Multnomah County Communications Director Julie Sullivan-Springhetti said in a statement after the conference that she found such actions "shocking and unacceptable."

"Disruptive and threatening behavior is harmful, counterproductive and could be criminal," wrote Sullivan-Springhetti, adding that a protester had also repeatedly coughed in the face of a young security guard.

The moratorium will likely result in a loss of cash flow for landlords. Last Friday, the head of landlord trade group Multifamily NW, Deborah Imse, warned the city needed a "comprehensive solution" to maintaining housing stability during this crisis.

"It makes no sense to halt evictions if it leads to a wave of foreclosures on rental properties," Imse wrote.

At Tuesday's conference, Wheeler said the city was working on it. He said the city's meeting with its banking partners on Thursday to discuss how landlords and building owners could be given coverage to endure the expected loss of cash.

"Just as we are asking building owners and landlords to make sacrifices, we're going to ask our local banking and credit union partners to make sacrifices as well," he said.

City and County officials also used the press conference as a chance to unveil other steps they were taking to mitigate the impacts of the virus.

Kafoury said the county will begin opening hundreds of new shelter beds that will allow officials to follow the current county guidelines, which ask all shelters to create a six foot buffer around the beds of people showing symptoms of COVID-19: coughing, fever, shortness of breath. Shelter operators have warned they will not be able to follow this guidance without making extra space by cutting shelter capacity. She said these beds will be opened by the end of the week, possibly opening in some of the public buildings that have recently been shut down for the duration of the crisis.

Wheeler announced, as of Monday, he'd created a Portland-focused task force dedicated to helping small and large employers reeling from the economic impacts of the virus. The mayor said the city was making \$150,000 worth of grants available for the Jade District Neighborhood Prosperity Network to get assistance to businesses as quickly as possible as that is the area that has been among the hardest impacted by the economic downturn.

Wheeler said, anecdotally, he's heard stories of business in the area losing as much as 40% to 60% in profits since the beginning of this crisis.

The mayor also said he's observed people taking the CDC's social distancing recommendations seriously and expects the closure of bars and restaurants across the state will help.

Asked if the city was considering shelter in place rules implemented Monday in six Bay Area counties, Wheeler said it is still an option.

"This is a crisis that is changing by the day," he said. "I am taking my guidance from public health officials and medical experts and at this point they have not made that recommendation, but everything remains on the table as an option going forward."

Portland Will Cut Back On Homeless Campsite Sweeps During COVID-19 Crisis

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/portland-homeless-campsite-sweeps-during-coronavirus-crisis/>

By Rebecca Ellis

March 16, 2020 4:14 p.m.

The city of Portland has decided to cut down on the number of homeless campsites it dismantles each week, citing fears that it could worsen an outbreak of COVID-19 among the region's already vulnerable homeless population.

City officials said they're weighing the public health risks posed by continuing to clear out these campsites, which could scatter people who are potentially infected with COVID-19 throughout the city, with those posed by letting high-risk campsites go untouched by work crews.

On Friday, the city's Office of Management and Finance, in charge of cleaning and clearing out people from Portland's campsites, finalized a new protocol meant to balance the two: Throughout the crisis, the city will stop cleaning and dispersing sites that are usually posted weekly - these are "high impact areas" that require "routine maintenance," according to a [city release](#).

Examples of these areas include St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and a strip from Northwest 3rd Avenue to 6th in Old Town, according to Jonny Lewis, a program specialist with the city's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program.

However, the program will continue clearing out campsites that pose the greatest public health risk. Those are camps that score above a 65 on a risk assessment test, which takes into account factors such as the amount of trash on site, the presence of human waste and evidence of drug use, according to Lewis. In the past, he said, the office had singled out campsites that scored a 51 and above.

"There's still a need for us to manage our public spaces," he said. "But we need to be doing that more responsibly, especially in light of this pandemic."

He said it's difficult to get a clear read yet on how many fewer campsites will be cleaned per week due to the new protocol.

Denis Theriault, a spokesperson for Multnomah County, said county health officials had encouraged the city to curtail its campsite clean ups. It's the same logic, he said, that leads to potentially sick people — and their families — quarantining at home.

"You wouldn't want family members going into different houses," he said. "You'd want them to stay together and isolate together."

Otherwise, the county could see a far worse version of what they experienced last summer, where there was a surge in HIV across the population of people experiencing homelessness, fueled by infectious people staying on the move.

"They would set up a different network with new people and that created a way for an illness to spread," Theriault said.

Some [activists have called](#) for a full moratorium on sweeps similar to a plan in San Jose. Last Tuesday, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo announced the city had temporarily stopped efforts to dismantle camps. Santa Clara County is [reportedly considering something similar](#).

Kaia Sand, the executive director of homeless advocacy nonprofit Street Roots, [has asked for an end to campsite sweeps](#), saying that they uproot and traumatize people experiencing homelessness and leave them with nowhere to turn.

Sand said while she'd be in favor of a moratorium, she felt the new protocol was a clear step in the right direction.

"We're very pleased that we're cutting back on sweeps. People that are unhoused already have diminished support in a crisis like this," she said. "I'm glad we're making progress."

The Skanner

Portland to Put Homeless in Public Buildings, End Evictions

<https://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/29741-portland-to-put-homeless-in-public-buildings-end-evictions>

GILLIAN FLACCUS and ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press
Published: 17 March 2020

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Authorities in Multnomah County announced Tuesday that they will be opening hundreds of new shelter beds in public buildings throughout the city to try to stem the spread of the coronavirus in the homeless community.

Relief for homeless

The most vulnerable homeless residents have been given vouchers for hotel and motel rooms and those businesses will not be allowed to kick them out or turn people away, said Deborah Kafoury, chair of the Multnomah County Board of Supervisors.

Local government will also open spaces for homeless people with the coronavirus to recuperate indoors, she said.

Volunteers have made contact with 1,700 people living on the streets or in their cars in the past week throughout the county to provide information about the coronavirus and to offer services, Kafoury said.

“What if you don’t have a place where you can self-quarantine? What happens when the libraries close, the cafes aren’t open and public spaces are no longer available?” she said at a news conference announcing the initiatives.

“These are people who simply don’t have the option to close the front door and hope that the worst won’t come.”

Evictions suspended

The city and county are also jointly suspending evictions for those who can’t pay the rent due to COVID-19 for as long as the crisis lasts, said Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Renters will have six months to repay their back rent after the city and county lift the state of emergency.

Those who will qualify for the eviction moratorium are renters who have lost jobs or had reduced hours due to business closures; who have been out of work to watch children who are out of school; or who have been sick with the coronavirus or have a family member who is ill.

The city and county are coordinating with the Oregon courts and local sheriff’s officials to make sure no one is evicted.

“Many people are in fear and we understand that,” Wheeler said.

“Extraordinary times require extraordinary actions.”

Gov. Kate Brown on Monday banned on-site consumption at bars and restaurants around the state for at least four weeks in a bid to slow the spread of the new coronavirus and said gatherings will be limited to 25 people or fewer.

Restaurants can still offer takeout or delivery but the ban on in-restaurant dining is intended to give teeth to guidance on social distancing to slow transmission of COVID-19. Oregon is the latest state to make such a sweeping order and joins the ranks of Washington state, Illinois, Massachusetts and Ohio, among others.

Brown also strongly urged other small businesses to close as well unless they can offer some sort of takeout option for the services they provide. The order exempts grocery stores, pharmacies, retail stores and gyms.

The orders will be a huge blow to Oregon's economy and signs of the shutdown were already apparent Tuesday morning. Parking lots outside coffee shops normally bustling with customers were almost empty and restaurants were shuttered and dark.

Gov. Kate Brown said Tuesday she is pulling together an economic advisory council to assess the impact on Oregon's economy and suggest ways to bolster it.

"As we together work through this new reality of social distancing, I recognize that Oregon's businesses are at the forefront, and in the initial stages of an economic slow-down," she said Tuesday. "This will only increase with time."

School lunches during closures

She also said 150 of the state's 197 school districts are providing students with free and reduced-price lunch despite school closures statewide.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

Oregon has 47 confirmed cases. One person has died. Officials late Monday announced four more cases at a Veterans' Home that would be added to the state's total number of cases on Tuesday. The home has 13 residents and a staff member who have tested positive.

PPB Addresses Call Response Amidst COVID-19 Concerns

<https://www.theskanner.com/news/newsbriefs/29729-ppb-addresses-call-response-amidst-covid-19-concerns>

By The Skanner News

Published: 13 March 2020

In ongoing efforts to perform essential functions to protect and serve the public, the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) is taking several proactive measures to keep its members and the community safe.

In a statement, the PPB says their number one goal and priority is to respond as quickly as possible to life-threatening emergencies. They are currently taking all calls for service, yet are encouraging other forms of reporting to follow social distancing guidelines. PPB members will continue to respond in-person to calls where there is a life safety issue or if it is a call that cannot be taken online or by phone due to the nature of the call. Criminal investigations will continue.

Given the current situation with the COVID-19 virus and the recommendations from the CDC, they are taking the following steps:

- PPB has recently expanded online reporting guidelines so more community members can file a police report online rather than in-person. This process is easy and crime victims get their reports quicker. It also frees officers up to focus on emergency calls for service.
- When possible, and there is not a life-safety issue, PPB officers will be taking reports over the telephone. This will reduce the possible transmission of the virus to its members or to the public from Bureau members, as carriers may not even know they have the virus and are inadvertently transmitting it.
- Temporarily suspending our presence at community engagement events.
- Planning for various possibilities, such as if staffing is significantly impacted by sick members.
- Increasing the cleaning schedule of PPB workspaces to protect members and the public.

The public is asked to:

- Encourage all victims who can file a crime report online to do so. For more information about what can be reported online and how to do so, visit this link: [this page](#). The public can also use the non-emergency line at (503) 823-3333.
- Expect Officers or Public Safety Support Specialists (PS3s) to make contact by phone.
- Stay informed by knowing where to find information. (See important links below).

“Portland Police Bureau members are working collaboratively with our partners to prepare for and mitigate the spread of COVID-19,” said Chief Jami Resch. “We value our face-to-face interactions with the public, but recognize the need to do our part to protect the public and our members. We will continue to keep the public informed with relevant information and we appreciate the public’s understanding of our need to limit face-to-face contacts for the benefit of all.”

The Multnomah County has posted a webpage addressing COVID-19 concerns, best practices, and other pertinent information [here](#).

The Oregon Health Authority has also posted valuable information at [this link](#).

211info is taking calls from the public with questions re: COVID-19. Individuals can call 211 for information. This is not a medical resource, but a good place to get information.

The Mercury

Portland Renters in Public Housing Shielded From Evictions Due to Coronavirus-Related Financial Impacts

<https://www.portlandmercury.com/blogtown/2020/03/17/28157550/portland-renters-in-public-housing-shielded-from-evictions-due-to-coronavirus-related-financial-impacts>

by [Alex Zielinski](#)
Mar 17, 2020 at 8:41 am

Home Forward, the public housing authority for Multnomah County, has issued a moratorium on all evictions for its tenants who cannot pay rent because of the coronavirus' financial impacts.

"The moratorium will prevent households from being evicted or from having to pay fees for late or non-payment of rent, due to loss of income related to COVID-19," reads a Tuesday morning **press release** from Home Forward. It will last until May 31, "with future extensions possible."

According to the announcement, those living in Home Forward's 6,980 units of public housing will only be exempt from payments if they can prove that they've been financially burdened by COVID-19's spread. "For example," the press release reads, "their place of work closed or they are at home without sick pay."

The moratorium does not erase rent payments, but delays them for later repayment. Tenants who are granted this emergency rent relief will be required to start repaying missed rent on June 1, 2020, unless the agency extends its moratorium.

The moratorium also does not apply to the approximately 9,390 tenants who pay rent to a private landlord with a housing choice voucher through Home Forward (also known as Section 8 rent assistance).

"We are appealing private market landlords to follow suit," says Monica Fourcher, spokesperson for Home Forward. "But we can't force them to."

The announcement comes a day after Multnomah County Circuit Court announced **all eviction hearings would be delayed** until at least March 30, and hours before a scheduled 9 am Tuesday press conference, where Portland and Multnomah County officials expect to make an announcement on more widespread housing protections related to COVID-19's economic impacts.

Willamette Week

Portland-Area Elected Officials Won't Enforce Evictions During the COVID-19 Shutdown

<https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2020/03/16/portland-area-elected-officials-wont-enforce-evictions-during-the-covid-19-shutdown/>

By Rachel Monahan

Published March 16 at 8:01 PM

Updated March 16 at 11:27 PM

It's yet another indication of how dramatically the new coronavirus is upending the normal course of life, local elected officials will announce details tomorrow of a plan to halt evictions.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Multnomah County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury will announce the eviction moratorium. Kafoury broke the news early this evening on Twitter. Officials are expected to explain the mechanism for halting the enforcement of evictions at 9 am Tuesday.

The halt on evictions is intended to keep renters housed as many places of employment—including restaurants and bars—shut down en masse under government order.

Last week, City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and council candidate Margot Black, a co-founder of Portland Tenants United, had held a press conference to call for an eviction moratorium. Mayoral

candidate Sarah Iannarone had done the same earlier in the week. The three represent the left flank of solidly blue Portland politics. (Portland Tenants United had 6,105 signatures to a petition calling for a moratorium.)

At the same time, other elected officials have called for the same halt to evictions. County Commissioner Sharon Meieran and even city council candidate Loretta Smith, a former county commissioner who is known as a business-friendly centrist, had also called for a moratorium.

It's not an unheard-of decision. Across the country, other cities have done the same: Seattle, San Francisco and Miami have also halted evictions.

Tomorrow morning, I'll be making an announcement on an eviction moratorium in Multnomah County with @tedwheeler. Housing security is a critical public health strategy during the #COVID19 pandemic, and we're committed to helping people maintain the stability of a home.

<https://twitter.com/multco/status/1239727715697086465> ...

Portland Business Journal

Prosper Portland provides new details for Jade District grant program

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2020/03/18/prosper-portland-provides-new-details-for-jade.html>

*By Malia Spencer
March 19, 2020*

The small business grant program aimed at businesses in Portland's Jade District totals \$115,000 and expects to issue \$10,000 grants to 15 businesses, according to Prosper Portland, which is funding the program through a contract with the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon.

The grant program announced Tuesday is the first city response to small businesses who are reporting difficult conditions as consumers stay home and crowds are banned during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The city had been in discussions with APANO prior to the first COVID-19 cases surfacing in Oregon. With news of the disease spreading in Asia, many Chinese-owned businesses were experiencing xenophobia and discrimination, said Chi Nguyen, executive director of APANO.

"Since January, our small businesses have been suffering economically as a result of discrimination. Between racial slurs to the destruction of property, it has been an incredibly rough start to 2020 for many job-creating small businesses we consider the anchors of the Jade District," she said in an email.

APANO will be administering the funds, according to Prosper. The funds are not limited to the Jade District, but Jade District businesses will be a top priority. Eligibility is focused on Asian and Pacific Islander-owned businesses. APANO also has a Jade District COVID Relief Fund that it is taking

donations for. The funds will be used to help community members have lost wages because of reduced hours and layoffs at Jade District businesses.

In announcing the program, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said he hoped it would be a template for a larger city program in other business districts.

APANO has a steering committee established to oversee the programming and the grant making, Nguyen said. It met Tuesday night.

The mayor's office asked interested business owners to contact cityinfo@portlandoregon.gov.

Wapato jail could become part of Portland's coronavirus response

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2020/03/17/wapato-jail-could-become-part-of-portlands.html>

*By Jonathan Bach
March 18, 2020*

The former Wapato Corrections Facility may become a component of Portland's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Former Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber suggested in a blog post Sunday that the jail be used to expand capacity for patients who test positive for the coronavirus but don't need intensive care unit-level attention. Most recently the push has been for Wapato to become a 228-bed services center for people experiencing homelessness called Bybee Lakes Hope Center.

"There is no reason why this capacity could not still be used for the original purpose once the pandemic is over and, indeed, some of the investments in the facility that would be needed in the short term might be an asset to the long-term goal around homelessness," Kitzhaber wrote.

The site is owned by Portland developer Jordan Schnitzer, who has voiced support for the idea to use Wapato for the coronavirus response, according to a story in the Portland Tribune.

"Jordan Schnitzer and I have been in touch and talking about Wapato as it may relate to the COVID-19 outbreak," Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said in an emailed statement.

"Given the emergent nature and urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must be innovative, visionary and think out of the box," Wheeler said. "I am having conversations with the Joint Office of Homeless Services and public health officials, and all options are on the table — including Wapato, should it be a viable solution."

Portland launches \$150K small biz grant for Jade District, with possible expansion to others

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2020/03/17/portland-launches-150k-small-biz-grant-for-jade.html>

By Malia Spencer

Mar 17, 2020, 11:06am PDT Updated Mar 17, 2020, 3:37pm PDT

The city of Portland launched a grant program within the Jade District for \$150,000 for businesses seeing a drop in revenue due to COVID-19 restrictions, Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Tuesday morning.

These grants will first be available to the businesses in the Jade District, the area east of S.E. 82 Avenue to I-205 and from S.E. Division Street to S.E. Powell Boulevard.

Business owners who think they might qualify can call 503-823-4000 or email cityinfo@portlandoregon.gov.

The city is starting with the Jade District because it has been hardest hit so far and the city had already started working with partners to figure out a financing package, Wheeler said.

“We have heard anecdotally stories of business (in the Jade District) being off 40 to 60 percent since the beginning of this crisis,” Wheeler said, noting the district is home to many Asian and Pacific Islander-owned businesses. As coronavirus and COVID-19 has spread there has been unfounded fear of patronizing Asian businesses, according to media reports.

The city wants to broaden this program to other business districts and sees this program as a template for elsewhere, Wheeler said. The city is moving forward with this program now because it had the funding ready in an effort to move quickly instead of waiting to roll out a broader more comprehensive plan.

Wheeler said he has created a taskforce with large and small employers who have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. He said he is meeting with downtown property owners on Thursday and is meeting with the business community as well.

“Every option is on the table to support resilience,” he said.

Local businesses have been looking for some sort of city or state response to the economic impact COVID-19 is having on revenue as people are encouraged to stay home and establishments like bars and restaurants are restricted to only takeout and delivery business.

The group Built Oregon, which offers resources for consumer products, has been surveying the state’s small businesses to gather data on how businesses are being affected. The Oregon Entrepreneurs Network also has a list of resources for founders.

At Revant Optics, founder and CEO Jason Bolt has already seen a significant business repercussions from the economic shock surrounding the global outbreak of coronavirus and COVID-19.

Last week, the replacement sunglasses lens startup saw a 27 percent decrease to budget week-over-week, he said. Prior to that the company was running 5 percent over budget.

He described the effect as dramatic and noted the company, which sells direct to consumers online, saw a 25 percent decrease in web traffic last week.

It’s just one story of what will be many as small businesses scramble to figure out how to survive this unprecedented economic reality.

Bolt said he started evaluating contingency plans for business continuity about three weeks ago once it became evident the virus was spreading in Seattle.

"We prioritized areas that have the most significant impact on revenue if they go down," he said.

For Revant, that means lens production. The company produces about 60 percent of its lenses in a facility in the Central Eastside. The production and quality assurance teams can't work remotely, like the rest of the company. So, Revant instituted the social distancing guidelines from the CDC and is now deep cleaning the facility four times a week.

The company has told anyone feeling symptoms or those who have high-risk family members can take paid time off. Bolt is meeting with his finance team to figure out how long he can afford to offer this added sick leave.

"On the defense side we've done a good job. As far as generating added revenue we know what we need to do to protect our team and react if different areas of the business slow," he said. "It becomes cash preservation. How do we manage cash — cash is becoming tight for a lot of businesses."

Bolt considers himself lucky so far since his business is online and direct to consumer. He has been talking to friends in restaurants and physical retail who aren't as fortunate. One colleague told Bolt that he has already talked to his staff about cutting payroll or shutting down.

"I heard from four people about shutting through June or July," Bolt said.

Bolt is hoping state or local government leaders will see the needs of business and offer some sort of lifeline.

Portland, Multnomah County enact eviction moratoriums amid coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2020/03/17/portland-multnomah-county-enact-eviction.html>

By Jonathan Bach

Mar 17, 2020, 9:50am PDT Updated Mar 17, 2020, 3:01pm PDT

Portland and Multnomah County are enacting emergency moratoriums on rental evictions as the coronavirus pandemic creates the potential for residents to lose substantial amounts of income and miss rent payments.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said on Tuesday that the city's moratorium will affect residential evictions. It was not immediately clear whether Multnomah County's eviction moratorium, announced by Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury, was for commercial and residential evictions.

Wheeler said the city's moratorium applies to people who suffer "substantial loss of income due to COVID-19 by way of job loss, job closure, reduction in work hours, missing work due to a child's school closure and missing work due to illness ... of yourself or a family member."

Rent payments owed to landlords will continue accruing under the moratorium, the mayor said. "This is not a forgiveness of rent."

The dual edicts aim to soften the economic blow of the outbreak to residents. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on Monday said restaurants and bars will be limited to carry-out and delivery for four weeks, a ban that could put servers and many others out of work. Oregon has at least 65 people who have tested positive for COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus. At least one person, a 70-year old Multnomah County resident, has died in Oregon of the disease.

"Yes, everyone should pay their rent on time, but for people who are losing their wages due to COVID-19 and find themselves unable to pay rent, we want you to be able to stay in your home," Kafoury said.

Officials are working with state courts and sheriff's officials to keep residents in housing, she said. After the emergency is over, she said, residents will get six months to pay back whatever they owe. Portland's grace period is the same.

Prosper Portland, the city's urban renewal agency, also is deferring rent payments for commercial tenants and loan repayments for borrowers for the coming three months, he said.

Real estate industry representatives called for rental assistance. "We continue offer support and assistance to the City and Multnomah County during the current situation," Multifamily NW Executive Director Deborah Imse said in a statement after the moratoriums were unveiled. Multifamily NW is a real estate association. "For the sake of our region's housing supply, it is critical that state leaders follow this announcement with immediate and meaningful rental assistance to prevent a wave of rental property foreclosures."

The county chair also announced that in the coming week, new shelter beds totaling in the "hundreds" will start to become available for people experiencing homelessness. The beds will follow social distancing guidelines, she said, with public buildings and other spaces being used.

"Most of those beds will allow shelter residents to maintain social distancing guidelines, and the rest of those beds will help us shelter people with symptoms of COVID-19," Kafoury said.

Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland suspends walk-in permit services

<https://djcoregon.com/news/2020/03/16/updated-portland-suspends-walk-permit-services/>

*By: Sam Tenney
March 16, 2020*

Updated: The Bureau of Development Services has announced that its Development Services Center will now be closed to the public starting today, and remain closed until further notice. In addition, no new permit applications will be received except for projects related to healthcare, life safety, wireless facilities and essential city services. Plan review for projects with current permits will continue.

According to a press release sent Monday evening, customers should expect a slowdown of review timelines as bureau staff work remotely and precedence is given to emergency permitting.

Following emergency permits, precedence will be given first to projects that have had permits issued and are under construction, that need revisions or deferred submittals reviewed, then to projects that have permit application under review, but the permit has not been issued.

Other new permit applications will not be accepted at this time, except for new single-family residential and batch permits; those permits will receive the lowest priority.

Early assistance and other land use services including zoning verification, property line adjustments, lot and zoning confirmations can be submitted via email or mailed with a check. Land use and final plat applications can be submitted with check payments via mail.

Portland's Bureau of Development Services will temporarily halt in-person permitting operations this week in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Customer areas on the first and second floors of the Development Services Center, at 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave., will close from Wednesday through the end of the week, during which time BDS staff will prepare a scheduled drop-off system for permit applications.

Beginning March 23, walk-in services to at the permit center will be suspended. City staff will field questions about projects and property via phone and email, with a turnaround goal of one to two business days. Trade permits can be submitted via the city's Development Hub PDX online portal, via fax, or dropped off without appointment on the first floor of the Development Services Center.

Services offered at the second-floor Permitting Services Center, which handles check sheet responses and facility permits, will be modified. Approved plans will be available for pick-up during regular business hours. People will be able to drop off new single-family residential and batch permits. In some instances, people will be able to check out plans in order to respond to check sheets off-site.

The bureau is exploring options for conducting remote inspections and postponing nonessential inspections, and is requesting that customers wait 72 hours to schedule an inspection if anybody at the inspection site shows signs of illness. Customers may still request inspections through the bureau's Interactive Voice Response system.

The bureau's website will be updated with more information as conditions change.

Builders start \$25.8M bridge project in North Portland

<https://djcoregon.com/news/2020/03/18/builders-start-25-8m-bridge-project-north-portland/>

*By: Chuck Slothower
March 18, 2020*

Construction has begun in North Portland on the North Rivergate Boulevard Overcrossing – a bridge over railroad tracks intended to relieve traffic congestion caused by trains blocking roads.

The \$25.8 million project will provide a crossing over North Rivergate Boulevard in the Rivergate Industrial District. Railroad traffic can affect vehicle circulation in the area for up to four hours a day, the Portland Bureau of Transportation stated in a news release.

A combination of federal, state and local dollars, including a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant that was given to the Port of Portland in 2016, are being used to pay for the project. Metro, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the city of Portland (transportation system development charges) are also contributing money.

The general contractor for the North Rivergate Boulevard Overcrossing is Vancouver, Washington-based Cascade Bridge. Participating subcontractors include McDonald Excavating, Northstar Electrical Contractors, JBL Signs and Roger Langeliers Construction Co.

Rivergate Boulevard is now closed from North Lombard Street to North Time Oil Road. Traffic is being detoured from North Burgard Road to North Time Oil Road for the duration of the closure – about a year, according to PBOT's expectations. Local access to the properties within the closure area will be maintained via new access roads for the construction period.

The bridge is scheduled to be completed in spring 2021.