

The Oregonian

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/portland-area-parks-and-playgrounds-stay-open-amid-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

Portland area parks and playgrounds stay open amid coronavirus outbreak

*By Jamie Hale | The Oregonian/OregonLive
March 19, 2020*

Parents and kids itching for a little time outside during the coronavirus outbreak in Oregon can rest assured that local parks will remain open for the time being.

Parks across the Portland metropolitan area were still open as of Wednesday, and parks officials made assurances that they will stay that way as long as possible.

“We’ve heard a lot from families and from parents about how the kids need to get some energy out,” said Holly Thompson, spokeswoman for the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Department. “Please feel free if you need to get a breath of fresh air, if you’re healthy, if you’re not symptomatic.”

Thompson echoed guidance from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management. “Actually, being outside is a healthy thing to do in this environment,” said Paula Fasano Negele, a spokeswoman for the agency. “You’re social distancing when you’re outdoors, it’s good for your mental health, and it’s good for your physical health right now, so I think it’s probably a good thing to do.”

On Friday, the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Department closed all park buildings, including pools, community centers and offices. All upcoming events, classes and spring break camps were also canceled. Parks and playgrounds, however, remain open.

Thompson said the department is following advice from state, county and federal public health officials, and will follow their lead on whether or not to make additional closures. For now, though, there’s no plan to shut down parks completely.

“The parks and trails are open, and we strongly encourage people to follow social distancing,” she said.

In case you still need a reminder about those public health guidelines: Don’t go out if you feel sick, wash your hands frequently, and be sure to stay at least six feet from other people.

Restrooms, portable toilets and playground equipment also remain open, places where the virus could linger for two to three days, according to a study released Tuesday by the National Institutes of Health.

While the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Department cleans restrooms often, portable toilets and playground equipment remain on original cleaning schedules that occur less frequently.

Thompson said her parks department is recommending people bring their own sanitary wipes to clean off playground equipment, as well as door handles and portable toilets, before using them.

The same advice applies at parks in Portland.

Mount Tabor

A family spends a sunny day at Mount Tabor in southeast Portland, in this 2016 file photo. Jamie Hale/The Oregonian

Portland Parks and Recreation officials said its parks and playground equipment also remain open, but that playground equipment cannot be sanitized.

“We encourage people to follow Multnomah County personal hygiene and social distancing guidance,” said Tim Collier, director of communications for Portland parks. “Sports fields, walking paths and trails are alternative outdoor activity options.”

On Monday, Portland Parks and Recreation announced closures of all indoor recreation facilities, including art centers, sports centers and pools. All upcoming events were also canceled.

Metro, which operates several parks around the Portland area, also announced a few closures amid the coronavirus outbreak, including the campground at Oxbow Regional Park as well as all welcome centers and its office at Blue Lake Regional Park.

Otherwise the parks remain open, with some additional cleaning and wiping down of high-touch points, spokeswoman Kimberlee Ables said. Their approach is to be vigilant about hygiene without discouraging people from visiting parks.

“We know that getting outside and being in nature can soothe that stress and anxiety,” Ables said.

That’s also the goal of those who manage Forest Park in Portland, one of the largest urban forests in the United States.

While officially managed by Portland Parks and Recreation, much of Forest Park is maintained by the Forest Park Conservancy, a nonprofit that works with volunteers to manage the 80 miles of trail that wind through the park – including the famed 30-mile Wildwood Trail.

Last week, the organization canceled all of its upcoming work parties due to the coronavirus outbreak, though Forest Park remains open.

Kady Davis, a spokeswoman for the organization, said Forest Park will probably need a lot of trail-work volunteers come summer, but for now people should just get out and enjoy the park.

“It’s a really great way to feel like you’re connected to nature still, and that the earth is still moving forward,” Davis said. “It can be really soothing and important for the soul.”

Nearly \$200,000 in grants could reach Portland small businesses hurt by coronavirus next week

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/nearly-200000-in-grants-could-reach-portland-small-businesses-hurt-by-coronavirus-next-week.html>

*By Everton Bailey Jr.
March 19, 2020*

Asian- and Pacific Islander-owned small businesses in some parts of Portland could receive grants as early as next week to help them weather the coronavirus outbreak.

The city will contribute \$140,000 through its economic development agency Prosper Portland, and the remaining \$50,000 will come from nonprofit Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, which will

also be distributing the funds. All businesses in the Jade District, the shopping and dining district centered on Southeast 82nd Avenue and Division Street, and Old Town Chinatown in Northwest Portland are eligible to apply for the grants and Asian and Pacific Islander owned businesses will get top priority, said Duncan Hwang, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon's associate director.

Nonprofits and national franchises aren't eligible.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler first announced the grants on Tuesday and it's one of the city's first responses to help businesses seeing lower revenue related to coronavirus. Wheeler said there are plans to later expand financial aid to other businesses around the city, but that Asian business owners in Southeast Portland's Jade District have been among the most impacted and some have seen their revenue drop by as much as 60% in recent weeks.

Online applications in English and Vietnamese were made available Wednesday. Duncan said the documents will also be put forth in Chinese and Spanish. The nonprofit is accepting the applications at covidsupport@apano.org.

Businesses can receive up to \$10,000 in aid. Hwang said there are nearly 300 businesses in the Jade District alone, and he estimated around two-thirds are Asian- or Pacific Islander-owned. He said the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon has also been soliciting donations to help Jade District workers impacted by COVID-19 because of layoffs or reduced hours. He said it's raised at least \$6,000. Many of the workers affected are low-income immigrants, he said.

Grant applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Monday. A selection committee made up of representatives of Portland Community College's Southeast campus, Harrison Park School, Old Town Chinatown and other representatives will evaluate the applications with criteria that include supporting businesses most impacted by the coronavirus outbreak, at-risk commercial renters and immigrant-owned businesses, Hwang said. Organizers plan to announce grant recipients next Wednesday and then give out the money within 2 to 3 days.

"This is meant to be an extra tool to help businesses make it until there's a federal stimulus or something else coming from a state level that can support businesses that are in trouble," Hwang said. He said he knew of some businesses in those areas whose monthly rent is around \$10,000, for example.

Hwang attributed business declines in those areas since January to xenophobia and misplaced fear based on the geographic origin of the virus. He said his nonprofit and other outreach groups have been asking for the city's support over the last six to eight weeks to help impacted businesses.

"We think this is a great step to have the mayor and the city make this kind of investment and really responsive to the community," Hwang said. "But we also want our city and state governments to really work on a plan that will support and lift up all businesses being impacted."

First coronavirus-related emergency homeless shelter to open in North Portland

<https://www.oregonlive.com/coronavirus/2020/03/first-coronavirus-related-emergency-homeless-shelter-to-open-in-north-portland.html>

*By Molly Harbarger
March 18, 2020*

The first 120 of at least 400 emergency homeless shelter beds are expected to open Thursday in a North Portland community center.

The Charles Jordan Community Center will take residents from other shelters that are struggling to distance beds appropriately. People are staying longer in homeless shelters right now, which means that Multnomah County's original plan of leaving beds empty as residents leave to gradually build in social distance has become impossible.

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury announced Tuesday that she planned to add hundreds of additional beds by the end of the week through the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services.

The Charles Jordan center, a Portland Parks and Recreation property that was left empty after the state's ban on large gatherings and the subsequent city state of emergency, has showers, bathrooms and other facilities needed for short-term human residency.

The county expects to announce another shelter opening Thursday with the aim of 400 beds by Friday, with more to come.

The Charles Jordan center and additional shelters that come on line will be staffed by shelter providers already contracted with the Joint Office, such as Transition Projects and Do Good Multnomah. The county also plans to send out a call for employees from across county departments to volunteer, as is done during severe weather emergencies.

Homeless people are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19 because many have respiratory infections and weakened immune systems from harsh living conditions. They also have few resources to stay hygienic enough to prevent illness and no place to go to recover.

Homelessness in Portland
Coronavirus could hit Oregon homeless population particularly hard

Experts say COVID-19 could be deadly for homeless people across Oregon who already face many more health risks and have fewer ways to protect themselves.

The Joint Office plans to eventually add shelters that will hold people who show symptoms of coronavirus but aren't diagnosed and one with medical staff on hand for people who are diagnosed but not sick enough to stay hospitalized.

The Portland Tribune

Portland considers shelter in place order to curb virus

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457353-372894-portland-considers-shelter-in-place-order-to-curb-virus-pwoff>

March 19, 2020

Wheeler is seeking guidance from public health officials before taking action and will be deferring to their recommendation. The city of Portland is considering a shelter in place order in an effort to limit the spread of the coronavirus. A spokesperson for the office of Mayor Ted Wheeler said Wednesday the mayor is considering all local options but a shelter in place is not currently in effect.

"Everything related to public health must be on the table," said Eileen Park with the mayor's office.

Park said Wheeler is seeking guidance from public health officials before taking action and will be deferring to their recommendation.

Misinformation taps into COVID-19 drinking water scare

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/457209-372825-misinformation-taps-into-covid-19-drinking-water-scare>

March 19, 2020

City water bureau officials jumped in to make sure everyone understood that the virus isn't spread through tap water.

A nervous and virus-rattled public is asking this question across the country: Can you get the COVID-19 virus from drinking tap water? Nope.

A few Portlanders have asked the city water bureau that question in the past couple of days. There's a lot of misinformation flying around about the very contagious coronavirus, and bureau officials jumped in Tuesday, March 17, to make sure everyone understood that the virus isn't spread through tap water.

"Tap water continues to be safe to drink," bureau officials said in a press advisory sent Tuesday to local media outlets.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency said the COVID-19 virus has not been detected in public drinking water. "Based on current evidence, the risk to water supplies is low," EPA officials said in a statement. "Americans can continue to use and drink water from their tap as usual."

Portland Water Bureau Public Information Officer Jaymee Cuti said the city's drinking water systems were treated with disinfectants that would block or remove the virus causing serious respiratory ailments. The city also follows EPA and Oregon Health Authority water treatment requirements, Cuti said, and "regularly tests throughout the drinking water system make sure the water remains safe."

During the past year, tests on the city's Bull Run water supply had turned up cryptosporidium, but no serious viruses. Anyone with concerns can call the bureau's Water Quality Line, 503-823-7525, or email questions to WBWaterLine@portlandoregon.gov. Bureau officials sent the tap water advisory because a bureau manager heard misinformation about the virus and city water supplies and feared it could cause concern, Cuti said. Portland isn't alone. Cities across the nation have sent similar messages assuring customers tap water was safe to drink. Portland's Bull Run water is used by nearly two dozen cities and water districts in three Portland-area counties.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Is Poised to Enact Shelter in Place Rules

<https://www.portlandmercury.com/blogtown/2020/03/19/28168177/portland-is-poised-to-enact-shelter-in-place-rules>

by Alex Zielinski
Mar 19, 2020

This morning, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown told reporters she's not planning on mandating a statewide "shelter in place" order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

After speaking to public health officials Wednesday evening, Brown said, she believed the state's "current focus should be on communicating the social distancing measures" that are already in place.

The City of Portland, however, is prepared to take swifter action. The city's already drafted an emergency ordinance directing Portlanders to shelter in place—or, stay in their home and away from others as much as possible during the city's state of emergency tied to COVID-19. The ordinance is loosely based on shelter in place rules instituted by San Francisco on Tuesday.

"We are planning for multiple contingencies because we need to be," says Sonia Schmanski, deputy chief of staff for Mayor Ted Wheeler.

On Wednesday evening, local public health officials told Wheeler and County Chair Deborah Kafoury that the order was not yet necessary. But, Schmanski says, the city's prepared for that guidance to change.

"This situation changes hour by hour, and we cannot afford to not be ready if we need to act," Schmanski says. "We continue to look to state and county public health officials for guidance on possible measures."

If the city does announce a shelter in place directive, that wouldn't mean Portlanders couldn't leave their homes.

"Shelter in place order is not a lockdown," says Schmanski. "It means if you don't have to be out, don't be out. All kinds of activity and businesses are still allowed. Walk your dog, go for a run, go take care of your mom if you need to, go to grocery store, go get gas—just please don't have a big party."

In a tweet previewing the proposed ruling, Wheeler explained that the order wouldn't apply to "essential" businesses like, "hospitals, grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, farms, gas stations, auto repair shops, hardware stores, banks [and] credit unions, dry cleaners, delivery services, take-out, manufacturing," and others.

Schmanski says other Oregon cities and jurisdictions have requested copies of Portland's draft ordinance in hopes of replicating the ruling when needed. But the city's hoping a larger jurisdiction—whether that's the federal, state, or county governments—will take the lead on this decision, to ensure it covers more than just people living inside Portland's city limits.

"We hope additional measures are coordinated and led by our jurisdictional partners," Schmanski says. "We feel urgent."

Willamette Week

The City of Portland is Preparing a Shelter-In-Place Order

<https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2020/03/18/the-city-of-portland-is-preparing-a-shelter-in-place-order/>

By Nigel Jaquiss

Published March 18 at 4:49 PM \ Updated March 19, 2020

The city of Portland is considering a shelter-in-place policy, similar to the policy that counties in northern California imposed on 7 million people in the Bay Area on March 16.

Portland's policy, developed by Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, is currently in draft form. It's about 10 pages long, but the effect of it would be to order all Portland residents to stay in their homes, except for trips to work for those workers deemed essential; trips to grocery stores or medical facilities; or exercise, provided people maintain six feet of distance between themselves and others. (Homeless residents would be exempted but urged to seek government resources to prevent them from getting ill.)

Wheeler's office declined to comment on the draft policy but WW has learned the city has circulated it to Multnomah County officials. As WW previously reported, Wheeler and Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury have pushed aggressively for various policy choices aimed at slowing the spread of the epidemic, prodding Gov. Kate Brown to move more aggressively.

The purpose of a shelter-in-place order is to close down non-essential government offices and businesses and impress upon the population the seriousness of social distancing in slowing the pandemic.

"With this order in place, you will still be able to get food, care for relatives, run necessary errands and conduct the essential parts of your life," Dr Grant Colfax, the director of the San Francisco department of public health, told The Guardian newspaper yesterday. "You will still be able to walk your dog or go on a hike alone or with someone you live with or even with another person as long as you keep six feet between you."

Several countries, including China, Italy, Spain and France, have previously issued such orders. Some medical officials in Oregon have urged movement toward such a policy in conference calls with elected officials but officials have been reluctant here, as they have been in other states, such as New York, to restrict citizens' mobility.

Multnomah County spokeswoman Julie Sullivan-Springhetti says the county is working to on a variety of fronts but isn't focused on imposing a shelter-in-place policy.

"We are pushing social distancing hard," Sullivan-Springhetti says. "We are ramping up education for businesses on how they can stay open with a take out model."

"We are helping get hospital systems ready for the surge and supporting childcare work for essential workers," Sullivan-Springhetti adds.

A study produced by health researchers at Imperial College in London March 16 found that drastic measures will be required to suppress the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In the UK and US context, suppression will minimally require a combination of social distancing of the entire population, home isolation of cases and household quarantine of their family members. This may need to be supplemented by school and university closures, though it should be recognised that such closures may have negative impacts on health systems," the study found.

Who Would Be Allowed to Leave the House if Portland Orders Shelter in Place? The Mayor Explains His Plan

<https://www.wweek.com/news/2020/03/19/wheeler-still-considering-implementation-of-shelter-in-place-order-for-social-distancing/>

*By Nigel Jaquiss
March 19, 2020*

Mayor Ted Wheeler issued a statement early this afternoon, updating Portlanders on his current thinking about whether to issue a "shelter in place" order to strengthen social distancing measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.

In California, the cities of Fresno and Palm Springs issued shelter in place policies today, joining Bay Area and central coast counties. Gov. Kate Brown told reporters this morning she is not ready to issue such an order state-wide.

Here is Wheeler's statement on the city's draft shelter in place policy:

This is a fast-moving pandemic. The situation is changing hour-by-hour.

We want to stay ahead of the virus and are planning for every contingency.

On matters of social distancing and other public health measures, we are in very close consultation with public health and medical experts. We are relying on their guidance.

We are considering further social distancing measures, including a directive to community members to stay at home except for essential purposes.

In the event that a shelter in place order is required, we want to have a thoughtful approach ready to implement.

We can't afford to get caught flat-footed. Days, or even hours, can make a difference.

A shelter in place order doesn't mean people are locked in their homes.

It means that if they don't have to be out, they won't be.

In the current draft, things that would be allowed include:

Trips to the grocery store, the pharmacy, the doctor, the vet. Take out food with appropriate social distancing.

Taking the dog for a walk, going for a hike or a jog, with appropriate social distancing.

Caring for a family member or a pet in another household.

In this framework many businesses are considered essential.

These include healthcare, grocery stores, farmers markets, food banks, farming, gas stations, auto repair shops, hardware stores, banks and credit unions, dry cleaners, delivery services, take-out, lots of manufacturing, and more.

This list isn't exhaustive, but it gives a sense of what the status quo would be during a shelter in place situation.

I will continue to communicate with my County and State partners, and to consult with public health and medical experts.

And I will keep the community updated as this situation evolves.

Portland Business Journal

The 10 critical items Portland's first responders need to fight the pandemic

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2020/03/19/the-10-critical-items-portlands-first-responders.html>

By Andy Giegerich
Mar 19, 2020

Portland's Fire & Rescue division and Multnomah County have put out an urgent call for 10 items that will help first responders and the health system respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

The entities want the community to donate unused personal protective equipment. The items are:

- Latex free gloves
- Procedural masks
- Surgical masks
- N95 respirators and N95 filters
- Other respirators such as P100's, PAPR's and PAPR supplies and parts
- Face shields
- Splash shields
- Gowns
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfecting wipes

The groups are contacting medical pros who are no longer operating, as well as construction industry leaders who might provide dust masks and respirators.

Donated equipment can be dropped off between noon and 4 p.m. weekdays at the Portland Fire & Rescue location at 1300 S.E. Gideon St. and at Multnomah County headquarters, 501 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., at the Sixth Avenue loading dock.

Items are also being collected at the Department of Corrections building in Salem.