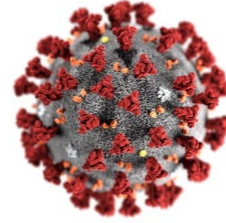




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update March 15, 2020



I want to thank all of you for your concern, diligence, offers to help, and questions about this evolving situation. Clearly, we are in uncharted territory as our lives are all temporarily disrupted by this pandemic.

I remain in constant contact with officials at the State and County levels, and also with our Town leadership to ensure we are making the best decisions we can for the community with the information available to us. Today I have updates on several fronts:

CONFIRMED CASES

As of today, there are 100 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, four of which are in Union County. As you know, we now have one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Westfield -- a resident in their 40s who remains stable and is managing symptoms at home. The process of case investigation and contact tracing was immediately initiated by our Health Department, and notification to all other individuals who have been identified as close contacts has occurred within Westfield and the surrounding areas. These individuals have been asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. I know you all join me in keeping this resident and family in your prayers during this very difficult time.

ADDITIONAL CLOSURES

In order to prioritize public health above all else, we will need to implement restrictions within Westfield to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Town Hall and all other municipal buildings will be closed to the public, effective Tuesday, March 17, with the exception of the entrance to the Police Department, where we will continue to provide a drop box for payments.

While our parks will remain open for those looking to spend family time outdoors, all Town playgrounds and fields (as well as those on Westfield Public Schools' properties) will be closed to discourage organized group gatherings, effective immediately. Please comply with these closures voluntarily so that we do not have to utilize valuable WPD resources enforcing them.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

I want to extend enormous thanks to our business owners for all of their efforts to keep their doors open and serve our community, as well as to our residents for their ongoing commitment to Westfield's businesses.

Because these are unprecedented times calling for unprecedented measures, effective March 17, we will be closing foot traffic within all non-essential businesses in the downtown Special Improvement District (SID), with the exception of pharmacies, health care providers, and grocery stores. We are allowing for restaurant pick up and deliveries as outlined below.

We are also asking all non-essential businesses outside of the downtown SID with any public interaction to voluntarily comply with this request -- including restaurants, shops, gyms and day care centers that have continued to remain open to the public. Dental offices should be open for emergency services only.

While we have not yet taken the additional step of declaring a State of Emergency that would legally allow for these closures, we are prepared to do so if we believe the public is endangered.

I recognize how difficult this is for our businesses, but in consultation with various professionals, it is clear that we cannot afford to wait any longer to further mitigate the spread of this pandemic.

That said, I am committed to ensuring that we use every Town resource at our disposal to assist our business community in the following ways:

VIRTUAL DOWNTOWN AND PARKING UPDATE

While our businesses will be closed to foot traffic, the Town and the DWC are working together to establish a Virtual Downtown model that promotes all restaurants and retailers providing phone/email/online ordering, as well as delivery and storefront/curbside pick up. To that end, the Westfield Police Department will be suspending all parking meter enforcement until further notice for better access to curbside pick-up in support of our businesses, and our three parking enforcement officers will be refocused to help facilitate an efficient process for all. Information regarding pick up and delivery options for our downtown restaurants will be available on the DWC website at <https://www.westfieldtoday.com>.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thank you to the many residents who have reached out with offers to volunteer and demonstrate the very essence of community during this uncertain time. We will be working with a local non-profit organization to set up a fund to support those in need, including the elderly, displaced hourly workers, and those who are sick, which may include providing meals to those affected. As plans materialize, my hope is to use some of these funds to purchase meals from various downtown establishments to drive as much local business as possible.

With all of these volunteer offers, we must take great care about how we manage any effort that involves handling food or delivering essentials to people. I am working closely with Chief Battiloro to formulate a plan to have our School Resource Officers and Parking Enforcement Officers redirected to support community service needs, and I will communicate more details as they are finalized.

Thank you for continuing to look out for one another, and for Westfield overall. Stay healthy and safe.