



Mayor Brindle's
COVID-19 Update
April 8, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there are 47,437 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, with another 1,362 still under investigation. Currently, the County reports 4,831 cases, with Westfield's case total now at 104 to date. For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.
- For the second day in a row, it pains me to report additional fatalities among our residents -- a 89 year-old female and an 88 year-old male -- bringing the total number of deaths in Westfield to seven. When people are losing their lives and leaving loved ones behind, small measures that pose a temporary inconvenience to the rest of us are surely tolerable. It is these residents we've lost who I keep top of mind, along with the ill and the vulnerable, when making decisions to help slow the spread of this horrible virus.

STATE UPDATES

- Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order today to further enforce social distancing in several capacities. As of 8:00PM on Friday, all non-essential construction across New Jersey will cease indefinitely, with exceptions for projects at hospitals and schools, in the transportation and public utility sector, the building of affordable housing, other individual housing sites that can adhere to strict limits on the number of workers on-site, and other limited instances.
- The order also states that all essential retail must indefinitely limit the number of customers allowed in their stores to no more than 50% of their approved capacity. Additional safety measures must also be taken, such as face coverings for customers and employees, special shopping hours for high-risk individuals, physical barriers between customers/cashiers/baggers, and regularly sanitized areas used by employees.
- Separately, the Governor signed an Executive Order moving the date of New Jersey's primary elections from Tuesday, June 2 to Tuesday, July 7 to ensure that every voter can participate without endangering their health or safety.
- The State has launched an online portal for people with experience in a variety of technology fields who wish to help. For more information, please visit covid19.nj.gov/tech. There is also an immediate need for people with experience as a Chief Nursing Officer or Chief Medical Officer to help lead the State's field medical stations, as well as physicians and respiratory therapists (covid19.nj.gov/volunteer).

LOCAL UPDATES

- All Westfield businesses are invited to join the DWC's virtual town hall tomorrow at 9:00AM to discuss resources for small businesses impacted by COVID-19, including loans, relief packages, and other assistance available from the State and the US Small Business Administration. The session will be moderated by DWC Executive Director Bob Zuckerman, and will also include remarks from Congressman Tom Malinowski, as well as input from David Margulies, Regional Director, NJ Small Business Development Center; Paul Ceppi, Managing Director, Business Development, NJ Economic Development Authority; Tom Jardim, Partner, and Scott Salmon, Counsel, Jardim, Meisner & Susser, P.C.; and myself. To register for participation, email the DWC at info@westfieldtoday.com.
- I know it feels like the world is standing still in many respects, but please know that positive progress continues to be made on some key efforts, despite our current circumstances. Earlier this week, the Planning Board held its first ever virtual meeting. While no applications were heard, several very important resolutions were passed which will have significant bearing on the future of our Town, and our downtown in particular. This week, we also had our paving contractors begin work on the ADA-compliant ramps and resurfacing of pathways in Mindowaskin Park, which was paid for in our 2018 capital budget. Utility companies continue to coordinate with NJ Transit to make progress on the water and electrical infrastructure work at the train station kiosk. And the Town Council will meet on Tuesday night to carry on and keep key initiatives moving forward. Many thanks to our Town employees and Council members who continue to press ahead with resourcefulness for the benefit of our residents throughout this new, temporary normal.

- In addition to the thanks we've given to our medical community and first responders, I'm reminded today by a resident to highlight our shared gratitude for the utility workers who have kept our essential services like gas, water, and electricity running, as well as the ability to use phones and the Internet to stay connected during this difficult time. In addition, our grocery store and pharmacy employees have made it possible for us to obtain our essential items under trying circumstances. Thanks to all of you for continuing to perform these critical roles for the rest of us.

I want to close by wishing our Jewish community Chag Sameach as you begin the observance of Passover. While this year brings great uncertainty, the message of Passover reminds us all of the true spirit of strength, courage, and resilience. Although many will be unable to physically be with loved ones tonight, please know that all of us here in Westfield send you our best wishes for a meaningful holiday.