



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update May 1, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there are 121,190 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, with another 583 still under investigation. Currently, the County reports 12,779 cases, with Westfield reporting another three cases for 232 to date.
- The Westfield Regional Health Department notes that the positive cases have ranged in age from 13 through 99, with 37 cases that required hospitalization.
- As always, a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers is available online at the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

STATE, AND COUNTY UPDATES

- Today, Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order allowing residents to use video conferencing technology for marriage/civil union licenses, marriage/civil union ceremonies, and working papers for minors -- allowing these important milestones to move forward safely.
- On this first day of the month, the Governor reminded renters that they are now able to have their security deposit used to cover rent, either in part or in full. In addition, no renters are to be threatened with eviction throughout this emergency. Additional information for landlords and tenants can be found here: covid19.nj.gov/renter.

LOCAL UPDATES

- Remember that tomorrow we resume Saturday hours at the Conservation Center from 9:00AM - 3:00PM. Permits are available for purchase online through 8:00AM tomorrow. As this will be the first Saturday opening of the season, with good weather expected, there may be a wait to enter, so we thank you in advance for your patience as the DPW does a wonderful job of keeping things moving as smoothly as possible.
- As you know, we are reopening our parks and fields tomorrow for passive recreational purposes only. As a reminder, that means the following:
 - Parking lots will remain closed. We ask that, in using the parks and fields, you walk or bike to nearby locations as part of the ongoing stay at home order that discourages all non-essential travel.
 - Restrooms will be closed, as will all playgrounds, basketball, tennis, and pickleball courts.
 - Only individual activities are permitted, such as walking, jogging, and bicycling; for these activities, individuals may be accompanied by family members, caretakers, or other household members.
 - Organized sports, fitness classes, or other gatherings are not permitted.

Note that fields 1 and 2 at Tamaques will be fenced off due to seeding, aeration, and maintenance. In addition, Mindowaskin Park will remain closed until further notice due to current construction to restore the pathways.

The Westfield Police Department will be present to ensure there are no gatherings or flagrant violations of social distancing, and they will be strictly enforcing the parking restrictions, which will include a temporary no parking order extending the entire length of the west side of Dickson Drive, from Willow Grove Road to the entrance of Tamaques Park. The Scotch Plains Police Department will also be implementing temporary no parking orders on the streets off of Lamberts Mill Road adjacent to Tamaques Park.

I firmly believe in the benefits of getting outside and enjoying a change of scenery, and I know that many of us eagerly await the chance to spend some time in the parks after what surely can feel like cabin fever as the stay at home order continues. However, I want to underscore that we have just one effective tool at our disposal right now to slow the rate of community spread: proper social distancing. And it's working, as evidenced by the gradually declining rate of hospitalizations. I want to thank all of you for the great job you've done; we have asked a lot of you to completely change your daily lives, and you have delivered by putting others above yourselves.

As this first reopening occurs tomorrow, let's please not lose sight of this selfless mindset. As several hundred people across New Jersey continue to die from COVID-19 every day, let's continue to treat this situation with the gravity it deserves by staying the course -- maintain your distance from others, wear a face covering when needed, and refrain from any and all gatherings. I can't stress enough how critical it is that we all follow the guidelines for the benefit of the community.

I'm planning to host a Virtual Town Hall within the next week, so that we can have a more interactive discussion about questions in the community and also take a look at some of our local COVID-19 data -- more details will be available in the coming days. In the meantime, I wish you all a great weekend in this wonderful spring weather. Please, let's all enjoy it responsibly.