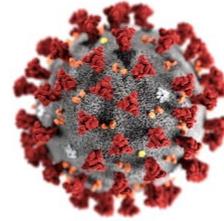




Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update December 15, 2020



- As I've previously indicated, I am providing Westfield's COVID-19 case updates each Friday, when we receive the data from the Department of Health, which includes rapid test results. On a statewide basis, today the seven-day average for daily positive tests in New Jersey is down 7% from a week ago, but remains 33% higher than a month ago. Hospitalizations today are at their highest level since mid-May, with the highest number of deaths since mid-June.
- Today, the first COVID-19 vaccines were administered in New Jersey to health care workers at six hospitals. The State has received approximately 76,000 initial doses, which will be prioritized for health care workers and long-term care residents and staff. As more vaccine shipments arrive, the vaccination program is expected to become much more robust over the coming weeks. Governor Murphy noted that, to reach "herd immunity" among adults in New Jersey, at least 70% of adults (about 4.7 million) need to be vaccinated. It is incumbent upon all of us to continue to take the necessary precautions in the meantime to slow the spread of the virus. The Department of Health has released a COVID-19 vaccination webpage that includes FAQs, the Vaccination Plan, and an executive summary of the plan at www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml.
- Union County will hold two food distribution events for County residents to aid those affected by COVID-19. A drive-up distribution will be held on Saturday, December 19, beginning at 9:00AM at Kean University (1000 Morris Avenue in Union Township), and a walk-up distribution will be held at 1:30PM on Saturday at the Union County Division of Social Services building (342 Westminster Avenue in Elizabeth). For more details, visit wp.me/p4sLwl-mMy.

LOCAL UPDATES

- The National Weather Service has issued a Winter Storm Warning for the area beginning Wednesday at 2:00PM. While forecasted snow totals continue to be updated, heavy snow is expected locally, with possible wind gusts of up to 45MPH. Public Works will begin pre-treating roadways throughout Town Wednesday morning in anticipation of the storm.

As a reminder, parking is prohibited on any street in Westfield when three or more inches of snow have fallen, until snowfall stops and the entire width of the road has been plowed. Under these circumstances, the shoveling or blowing of snow into a plowed street is also banned. Downtown residents who have "Nite Owl" permits are permitted to park in the long term spaces in Lot #4 (behind Baron's Drugs) during snow events. The list of all winter weather parking rules, including alternate side parking areas, is posted at www.westfieldnj.gov/snow.

The DPW typically begins plowing once three inches of snow have accumulated. In just one pass through Town, they plow 400 miles of travel lanes, shoulders and parking lots. Please be patient as they complete the necessary work to safely clear the roadways. Please stay off the roads while plowing is underway, remove your cars from the streets, and be sure that all sidewalks are cleared within 24 hours after the snow has stopped falling.

The Town will provide updates throughout the storm, including plowing alerts and public safety information, on our website and social media channels, as well as through Nixle (enroll in alerts by texting "07090" to 888777).

- In anticipation of the storm, the Department of Public Works suspended leaf collection today in order to prepare all salting and snow removal equipment. Leaf collection is also expected to be suspended on Wednesday and Thursday. The leaf collection crews have completed the majority of the second pass throughout Town, with a small portion of Zone 5 remaining, as well as Zone 6 and parts of Zone 10. Pickup will resume as soon as the roadways are clear of the snow to complete the second pass, and to do a third pass and street sweeping as weather permits.

Our recycling provider, Giordano, will be providing us with an update tomorrow morning regarding any scheduling impacts related to the incoming storm. We will share that information on our website and on social media.

The Conservation Center has extended its seasonal hours to run through Sunday, December 20 (9:00 - 2:30 on weekdays, and 9:00 - 3:00 on Saturday/Sunday) for the deposit of recycling and leaves, no permit required.

- I want to reiterate my thanks to our Town employees who worked tirelessly this past weekend to ensure everyone's safety following the water main break on East Broad Street early Saturday morning. The Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments did an exceptional job, as did Town Engineer Kris McAloon and Construction Official Frank Vuoso. We are fortunate to have very strong working relationships with our local utility companies that both Kris and Town Administrator Jim Gildea have built over the years, and we are all very grateful that the situation was addressed swiftly by NJ American Water and PSE&G without any injuries.

That said, it was an unfortunate blow to our local businesses on one of the busiest shopping weekends of the year. Thank you to everyone who has continued to shop local during this critical time. The DWC's new partnership with Beyond Main makes it even easier to keep your holiday spending in our downtown by shopping online at <https://beyondmain.com/g/downtown-westfield>. Now that the parklets have been dismantled due to the winter storm, our restaurants face additional challenges going into the winter months. Please remember how critical their take out and delivery business will continue to be in the coming months as they weather these unprecedented circumstances.

- This is the final week of the "Be the Light" fundraiser to combat local hunger! I am thrilled to announce that the Westfield Foundation has generously offered to match \$10,000 in donations toward this important cause. If you haven't already done so, now is your chance to donate or place an online auction bid for the items donated by John Rzeznik through December 19. For more information on how you can help, please visit westfieldunitedfund.org.

Please stay safe during this winter storm.