



# Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Grisanti and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Mary Linden, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Steve McClary, Interim City Manager

Date prepared: February 9, 2022 Meeting date: February 28, 2022

Subject: Consideration of the Resumption of In-Person Meetings

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** 1) Receive an update on the current State and County public health regulations; and 2) Consider options for the resumption of in-person public meetings and give direction to staff as needed.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact for this recommended action. Depending on what direction Council provides on the resumption of in-person meetings, additional funding may be necessary to fund staff overtime costs needed to facilitate public meetings in Fiscal Year 2021-2022 that was not previously included in the Adopted Budget.

**WORK PLAN:** This item was included as item 1a in the Adopted Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

**DISCUSSION:** The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH) continues to track COVID-19 cases, including those resulting from variants of the virus. Los Angeles County is beginning to see a decline in the numbers of newly infected individuals, the test positivity rate, and hospitalizations, and it is likely the peak of Omicron transmission in the County has passed. Unfortunately, deaths remain at an elevated level. Although numbers have declined, case numbers are still extraordinarily high. Despite the decline in the test positivity rate, approximately one out of eight people in Los Angeles County who are tested for COVID-19 are infected.

On February 7, the California Department of Public Health announced changes to the State's mask mandate. Effective February 16, only unvaccinated persons will be required to wear a mask in all indoor public settings. Fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to continue indoor masking when the risk may be high.

The State's lifting of the mandate will not apply to counties with their own local mask orders, such as Los Angeles County. On February 9, LADPH stated the following:

"Once LA County enters post surge (when COVID daily hospitalizations drop below 2,500 for 7 consecutive days), masking will no longer be required in outdoor spaces at outdoor Mega Events or in outdoor spaces at childcare facilities and K-12 schools. The masking requirement at indoor establishments will continue until:

- LA County has two consecutive weeks at or below Moderate Transmission (10-49.99 new cases/100,000 persons in the past seven days), as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention OR
- Vaccines have been available for children under age five for eight weeks; AND
- No emerging reports of significantly circulating new variants of concern that threaten vaccine effectiveness.

Per state regulations, indoor masking at K-12 schools, childcare facilities, youth settings, healthcare settings, correctional facilities, homeless and emergency shelters, and cooling centers is still required.

Additionally, per federal regulations, masking when riding public transit and in transportation is still required."

On February 9, LADPH reported 103 new deaths, bringing the total number of deaths in Los Angeles County to 29,609. LADPH has identified a total 2,740,700 positive cases of COVID-19 across all areas of the County. The seven-day average is 171,145 individuals tested with a positivity rate of 6.99%. Residents are reminded that they are still legally required to self-isolate if they have a positive COVID test result, and that vaccinated close contacts with symptoms and unvaccinated close contacts need to be quarantined.

The Council may still wish to consider resuming in-person or hybrid meetings (available in-person and virtually). In making that determination, the following must be considered:

- All persons in attendance at in-person meetings, including Councilmembers, staff, and members of the public, will be required to wear a mask at all times while in City Hall in compliance with the County Health Officer Order.
- One month's public noticing of the change back to in-person meetings is required. If direction is given at the February 28, meeting, the earliest possible in-person meeting would be April 11.

- Hybrid Meetings – If the Council wants to have hybrid meetings, the City Clerk would bring back a report outlining the plan for how hybrid meetings would operate. If that report was presented at the March 28 meeting, the first hybrid meeting could be held on April 11, unless Council proposes significant changes to the plan. It is important to note that hybrid meetings would require additional staffing for running both the in-person meeting and monitoring the virtual meeting using Zoom and PrimeGov. Current County masking requirements for in-person meetings would also apply to all those physically attending a hybrid meeting.
- Council Chambers preparation – Approximately two to three weeks are needed to get the cameras and lighting system in the Council Chambers serviced.

If the Council chooses to hold in-person or hybrid meetings, it is recommended that the Planning Commission conduct its meetings in the same manner. It is not recommended that the other Commissions and Committees conduct hybrid meetings.

ATTACHMENTS: None.