

Headlines

News from University Place City Hall



April 8, 2020

A Message from City Manager Steve Sugg

It has been an extraordinary few weeks since we all became more familiar with the COVID-19 virus. I wanted to bring you up-to-date on how your City government continues to serve you while keeping us all safe and compliant with the Governor's "Stay Home - Stay Healthy" order.

City Operations

As you know, City Hall is closed to the public. A limited number of our staff is reporting to work at City facilities. Some staff report to City facilities only occasionally, to gather needed documents or perform certain tasks that cannot be done remotely. But I want to assure you that even though most of our staff is at home, they are working hard to continue to provide City services.



We are still accepting, processing and issuing building permits. We have been in touch with a number of contractors, who have responded favorably (under the circumstances) to our outreach and education efforts. We continue to support essential businesses and provide most of the services that our residents expect. We are also looking for a technical solution that will enable us to hold our City Council meetings remotely as well. We hope to have this in place by May 1.

This week, our sweeper is cleaning our arterial streets to collect potential pollutants, contaminants and debris before they get into the storm drainage system. This critical monthly function has reduced the amount of debris collected from our storm system by 50 percent and is part of our efforts to protect Puget Sound's waters and to meet our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements.

City Finances

I want to assure you that, like most of us are doing in our personal lives, your City government also is preparing for the financial impacts of this crisis. The Council has budgeted conservatively over the years. We have added very few new positions since we eliminated one-third of our staffing during the Great Recession. As a result, we are leanly staffed and have been able to establish healthy reserves to deal with a short-term crisis. We will not have a problem paying our bills. However, it is difficult to forecast the duration of this crisis or what a recovery will look like.

With that in mind, we have looked at our budget and identified areas that we think are most susceptible to an economic downturn. There is a high degree of uncertainty. But we cannot wait until the revenue reduction occurs to act. As a result, I have instructed my department heads to identify areas where we might be able to reduce expenditures as a precautionary measure. We will implement those reductions (over \$1 million) immediately. And we will be looking at additional reductions for next year's budget.

How We Can Help Each Other

Please support local businesses and order needed items online, rather than driving to other communities to purchase goods and services. Purchasing locally will not only help local businesses, the sales tax dollars you pay also will help support local essential services.

Visit our **website** where we have compiled (and continue to update) a list of links to additional information as well as critical community resources such as meal sites for students, mental health support, utility and tax payment deferrals and much more. Please be sure to share this information with your neighbors, especially if they are elderly or disabled. This crisis will pass, but until it does, we must watch out for each other, encourage each other and focus on the future, where better days await.

Helping Our Neighbors in Need

This week, Governor Jay Inslee announced the formation of a fund specifically dedicated to supporting Washington food banks, whose reserves have been depleted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort is called **WA Food Fund** and is being managed by Philanthropy Northwest, a network of philanthropic organizations committed to helping communities across the Northwest.



The effort will combine small individual donations with business and foundation dollars to create maximum impact. Those donations will then be directed to organizations that deliver food to every food bank across Washington, including Northwest Harvest, which serves our local food bank, Nourish Pierce County.

Whether you choose to donate to the WA Food Fund or directly to Nourish Pierce County to help cover its food purchases, rent, utilities, etc., you can make a difference to those who are struggling to get through each day of this pandemic. If you are able, please take a moment to help a neighbor in need.

If you would like to volunteer:

- Northwest Nourish (Mason United Methodist Church, 2710 N. Madison St., Tacoma) needs volunteers on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Volunteers do not need to commit to the entire time frame. Even a few hours would be helpful. Visit **Nourish Pierce County** for more details.

U.P. Public Safety Officials Provide Guidance on Governor's Executive Orders

Governor Jay Inslee has extended the State of Washington's "**Stay Home, Stay Healthy**" order, which bans all gatherings and temporarily shuts non-essential businesses, through May 4. U.P. residents are encouraged to visit the **Governor's Office COVID-19 website** for the latest and most accurate updates. This is particularly important for those, including business owners, who are wondering what are considered "**essential**" and "**non-essential**" businesses.

The City of U.P. does not have the personnel to respond to calls regarding suspected violations of the essential business rule. Instead, residents are encouraged to use the **Governor's online reporting system** to document businesses that they suspect may be violating the order.

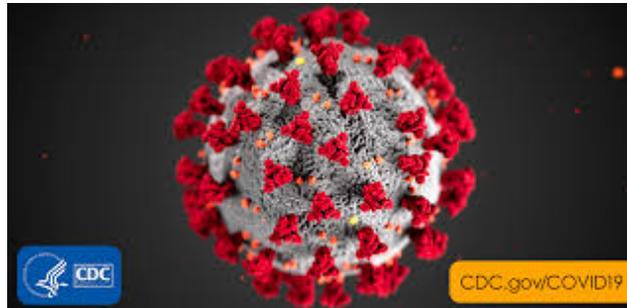
U.P. Chief of Police Greg Premo says the University Place Police Department is not conducting active patrols or investigations on potential violations of the Governor's Stay at Home order or Social Distancing directive. The department's goal is one of education to help the public understand the provisions of the orders. "Our officers typically will not respond to complaints about individuals violating the order unless the situation requires a police response for other reasons," Premo said. Citizens can always call the non-emergency number at 253.798.4721, however, if they are concerned about activity that appears to violate the official order.

"We recognize that these are difficult times for everyone and the provisions of the orders can be challenging, therefore we will continue to educate and encourage everyone to follow the rules so we can put this pandemic behind us sooner rather than later," Premo said.

COVID-19 Business Resources page

The City of University Place Economic Development Department is making every effort to support the local economy so that it can move forward when the pandemic breaks. It has created a special **COVID-19 Business Support page on the City of U.P. website**.

Business owners are encouraged to refer to it often for updates. It includes critical information on federal, state and local resources available to area businesses.



Last week, the department also sent an e-blast to U.P. businesses inviting them to participate in a brief survey to assess the current state of the local business community. Businesses are asked to take a few minutes to respond.

The Planning and Development Services Department remains up and running for business permitting and inspection needs, although the process has been adjusted to reflect social distancing requirements to keep staff and customers safe. Call 253.460.5406 for more information.

COVID-19 Resource Pages

- **COVID-19 Information and Resources**
- **COVID-19 Resources for Businesses**

2020 Census: Do It Today!

Every 10 years, the @uscensusbureau undertakes a mammoth task: counting all the people residing in the United States. This count affects the allocation of funding for our community's public resources (e.g., roads, hospitals, schools), how we plan for the future, and our voice in government. It has never been easier to self-respond on your own – whether online, over the phone or by mail – without ever having to meet a census taker. Learn more about the importance of the #2020Census and how to take it today: 2020census.gov.



University Place Receives CAFR Award

The City of University Place's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the year ended 2018 was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The Government Finance Officers Association is a major professional association servicing the needs of nearly 19,000 appointed and elected local, state, and provincial-level government officials and other finance practitioners. It provides top quality publications, training programs, services, and products designed to enhance the skills and performance of those responsible for government finance policy and management.



Government Finance Officers Association

Certificate of
Achievement
for Excellence
in Financial
Reporting

Presented to

City of University Place
Washington

For its Comprehensive Annual
Financial Report
for the Fiscal Year Ended

December 31, 2018

Christopher P. Morrell

Executive Director/CEO

Duck Daze Cancelled

The City of University Place has made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Duck Daze, which had been planned for June 6, 2020.

The event requires months of planning and preparations between City staff and vendors. Given that we are currently under a Stay at Home order, we are unable to begin these efforts and we are unsure of when the order will be lifted, which makes any planning efforts even more difficult.

We will continue to review the feasibility of our incorporating some aspects of the festival into other events later in the year. Watch for updates in Headlines and on the City's **website**, **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram** accounts.



Upcoming Events

DUE TO COVID-19

**Upcoming
City events are
cancelled or
postponed until
further notice**

Including but not limited to: Jazz in the Village, Meet UP with the Mayor, Public Safety Forum, Classes and Academy

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social media sites!**



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University Place City Council



Mayor Caroline Belleci



**Mayor Pro Tem
Steve Worthington**



**Council Member
Javier Figueroa**



**Council Member
Kent Keel**



**Council Member
Ken Grassi**



**Council Member Pro Tem
Howard Lee**



**Council Member
Denise McCluskey**



**Council Member
Stan Flemming**

