The City leadership team has—and continues to—closely follow the developments of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), working in partnership with Linn County Public Health, our medical community, and other community partners.

Human Resources
- City staff developed emergency operations and continuity of operations plans, to prepare for the increase in coronavirus cases in Iowa and specifically Cedar Rapids. Both plans are important to make sure the employees stay safe and that we have a plan to continue to provide essential services to our community.
- Human Resources has been working with departments to implement alternative staffing plans to help with social distancing while performing essential work throughout the city, including staggering shifts, creating new shifts, providing a work from home option, rotating crews, and redirecting labor to areas in need of additional support.
- They have also been working with individual employees who have been impacted in some way to ensure they are paid correctly and receive the time off that they need.
- In Mid-March we implemented City sponsored COVID pay for up to 2 weeks for qualifying reasons.
- On April 1, the new Federal Law took effect, providing paid time off for Employee illness, caring for family member(s), self-isolating, caring for child whose school or place of care is closed.
- We have been working to provide consistent communication with union leadership and all employees to keep them informed as the situation evolves.

Finance
The City of Cedar Rapids continues to review both short-term and long-term financial impacts due to COVID-19. Some of the actions taken by the City in April included the following:
- Waiving of April 2020 monthly parking charges (estimated cost $200K)
- Temporary closing of DoubleTree Hotel
- Temporary closing of City Facilities (i.e. City Hall, Community Service Center (CSC), Ground Transportation Center, IMon Ice Arena, Paramount Theatre, McGrath Amphitheater).
- In April, the City offered the use of IMon Ice Arena to HACAP Food Reservoir for setting up volunteer lines to pack food boxes.

Long-term financial impacts to the City currently being reviewed include:
- Flood mitigation sales tax
- Streets local option sales tax
- Road use tax
- Hotel motel tax
- Opening City golf courses
- Opening City swimming pools
- Impact of lower federal interest rates on City investments

Economic Development/Business Support
The Economic Development team is working on a number of different fronts to provide information related to the Covid-19 virus as well as to maintain our normal day-to-day operations.
- The City is leading a team of EDO partners to stay up to date on services and resources provided locally for business assistance referrals. Our joint tracking shows nearly 1200 businesses have been contacted to date by City/EA/Main Street.
• Partnering with the Gazette to maintain a database of the most up-to-date, relevant information on programs and assistance available to employers
• Working with the incident command team to help disseminate business recovery information to the broader Linn County area
• Assisting Linn County Public Health with employer outreach
• Sending out mass email communication to businesses about resources related to COVID-19, and updating the City’s ED portal to reflect new information
• Putting together resource guides for dislocated workers, compiling/disseminating information on workplace safety practices and helpful webinars
• Conducting one-on-one outreach to developers, business owners, employers: over 400 contacts made
• Researching economic trends and conditions, evaluating CARES program language and distributing information
• Communicating with State and local agencies including Linn County, Linn County EMA, IEDA and IFA
• Continuation of communication for prospective economic development projects
• Continuing conversations related to development projects that are currently underway

Police
• We have worked hard to ensure our Police Department has the proper protective equipment needed to stay safe. The department continues to respond to calls and ensure the safety of Cedar Rapids residents.
• PD developed a continuity of operations plan with one element of this plan involving emergency staffing. The trigger points for emergency staffing could occur if there is a police staffing reduction of 50 percent and/or there is significant community event(s) that requires adjustment of staffing such as significant community spread or community unrest. The current goal of the Police Department is to continue with the normal schedule through this event.
• The City’s Joint Communications Agency (police/fire dispatch) continues to ask specific questions of callers to determine whether an Isolation Alert (ISO-Alert) should be communicated to firefighters and police officers. Dispatchers are also telling callers to step outside of their home and meet officers outside, if feasible, for police calls for service.
• In addition to the isolation alert, police officers have been equipped with personal protective equipment. There is also an exposure reporting procedure and a process for handling contaminated clothing. Although officers have made contact with 44 individuals that may have had COVID-19, there has been no police employee that is symptomatic or tested positive for COVID-19 at this time. Employees that may have been exposed are monitored, including having their temperature taken.
• Police Department website has an online reporting portal so that community members can complete a form to report a crime (not in progress) or to make a report request. Most public records requests can be accepted over the telephone or electronically, and provided to the requestor electronically. This innovative solution has minimized exposure to officers.
• Police calls for service have increased compared to the same dates in 2018 and 2019. From March 16-29, 2020, there were 6,095 calls for service compared 5,785 in 2019 and 5,961 in 2018. The top calls for service were business checks, extra patrol requests, and focused patrols in 2019. Officers conducted 539 business checks in a recent weekend to make sure that they were compliant with the Public Health Emergency Proclamation and also to actively patrol businesses that are closed to deter burglaries or other crimes.
• Arrests are down since the COVID-19 emergency, with 159 arrests from March 16-29, 2020 compared to 300 in 2019 and 288 in 2018. Simple and serious misdemeanors are being diverted from jail, if possible.
• All arrestees will have additional screening for COVID-19 before acceptance into the Linn County Jail. Officers have been instructed to arrest by citation those arrested for simple and serious misdemeanors, except for domestic abuse and operating while intoxicated. This does not apply to those arrested by warrant for probation/parole violations or as the result of a failure to appear.
• By order of Juvenile Justice, youth charged with simple and serious misdemeanors will not be taken to detention for detainment unless the youth is actively assaultive.

Animal Care & Control
• The shelter is closed to the public, but adoptions are still occurring by appointment only.
• Lost or missing animals recovered by Animal Care and Control may be reclaimed by the owner; however, the owner must call ahead first.
• Owner surrender of animals through is suspended through May 15 (with the exception of owner-requested euthanasia).
• Cats obtained through humane live traps will not be accepted until the shelter re-opens.

Fire
• Our Fire Department personnel is provided the resources and support they need to do their job and serve the community.
• The Fire Department has developed a continuity of operations plan that includes a plan for emergency staffing, if required. The emergency staffing plan could be implemented if illness or positive exposures requiring quarantining results in reductions in available response personnel. At this time, the Fire Department is maintaining normal shift staffing. If there is a particular shift impacted more than another shift, the plan can move firefighters to different shifts to make sure there is adequate personnel. By using the proper protective equipment available and through revisions of our response protocols with regards to COVID-19 exposures, we seek to maintain proper fire, medical and rescue response capabilities.
• The City of Cedar Rapids is part of a Unified Command Structure for COVID-19 response that includes Linn County Public Health, Linn County government, Mercy Medical Center, UnityPoint-St. Luke’s Hospital, Grant Wood Area Education Association (school district representation) and the Linn County Sheriff’s Office. Unified command is used when multiple agencies are involved in the response to an incident such this COVID-19 pandemic.
• Unified Command brings together all the Incident Commanders of all major organizations involved in order to coordinate an effective response while at the same time carrying out our own jurisdictional duties and responsibilities. Members of the Unified Command work together to develop a common set of incident objectives and strategies, share information, maximize the use of available resources, and enhance the efficiency of the individual response organizations.
• Long-term care facilities and skilled nursing homes are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. The Unified Command developed a plan to assist long-term care facilities and nursing homes manage the spread of COVID-19.
• Firefighters and police officers are taking steps to reduce the risk of exposure. Firefighters are going to maximize personal protective equipment as they enter these facilities, including the use of gloves, glasses, respirators, gowns and face shields. Police officers and firefighters are staging at high-risk calls unless needed by Area Ambulance Service personnel or staff that is assisting.
• A Fire Department committee was established to research and recommend several methods to decontaminate disposable Personal Protective Equipment to extend the protective life of the equipment and maintain inventory considering the nationwide shortage of PPE.

Utilities
• The City’s Water plants continue to operate and drinking water remains safe, as our treatment process is effective in eliminating coronavirus. The virus has not been found to transmit through water.
• Important garbage and recycling services continue, with implementing some changes in order to protect those employees.
• Contractor work has been limited to essential work only. Non-operations personnel are to refrain from entering operations control rooms unless essential and necessary.
• Several divisions are operating with limited staff, including customer service, meter shop, distribution. Employees have transitioned to work-from-home where possible.
• We understand this is a difficult time for many of our residents, so we have suspended any water shut offs so no resident will be without water service during this time. We have not initiated any service account disconnections “shutoffs” due to delinquency since March 16.
• Short and long-term financial impacts to several key customer account metrics is under review.

Building Services/Development Services
• Building Services expanded our permit intake process to include online submissions and drop box submissions (at front door of City Services).
• We have expanded our ability to take in drawings electronically through file transfer intake portal.
• Between Building Services and Development Services, we have expanded our electronic plan review process in order to keep as many projects moving forward.
• Building Services has increased our enrollment of applicants, citizens and contractors to our online payment system in order to keep permit approval and permit issuance as streamlined as possible.
• Permit Technicians are still taking calls, assisting customers and issuing permits either from their home or from the office.
• A majority of the building trade inspection staff is either working from home or basing their daily operation from home.
• A portion of the staff is coordinating with applicants, citizens and contactors with scheduling any inspections either in person or through other means, while they work from home. These staff are also responsible for performing inspections by reviewing Face Time, Zoom, Photographs and Video in coordination with the applicant, citizen or contactor to determine code compliance. These staff are also hosting Zoom meetings with contactors as they “walk the construction site” to offer code inspections, while at the same time, interacting with Blue Beam drawing review software in “real time.”
• A portion of the remaining staff is still performing in person inspections. These in person inspections have been limited to projects that are entirely on the exterior (footings, decks, window replacements, etc.) or projects of new construction, both Commercial and Residential, which are unoccupied.
• We also have staff available to take calls and answer questions concerning code related items, process or any general questions.
In March, revenue generated from all building permit fees were $231,322.00. The average revenue of Building Services for March over the last 10 years is $201,248.00. This revenue is 11% over the 10-year average and is $55,000 over revenue generated in the same month last year (March of 2019).

In March, there was 29 million dollars in reported valuation of construction. The reported valuation for March of 2019 was 29.4 million dollars. This was very consistent with the reported valuation in March of last year. This reported valuation includes two Woda Anderson Greene 24-unit apartment buildings (Miller Ave. SW) and VHA Outpatient Clinic (Dalton Way SW), Kirkwood-Iowa Hall Renovation (Kirkwood Blvd. SW), among many other projects.

In March, there were 677 building trade permits issued, 1074 building trade inspections completed, and Development Services received 22 Administrative Site Plans, Concept Plans, Preliminary Plats, Final Plats and Rezoning applications.

In addition, Development Services is currently working on Loftus lumber, 400 on 2nd, and Mega Park Rezoning that were submitted prior to March and are currently in progress.

Thus far, in April (first six business days of the month) the revenue generated from all building permit fees is $45,000.00. The average revenue of Building Services for April over the last 10 years is $223,000.00.

Thus far, in April there has been $5,758,119.61 in reported valuation of construction, 194 building trade permits issued, and 319 building trade inspections.

So far in April, Development Services has received 11 Administrative Site Plans, Concept Plans, Preliminary Plats, Final Plats and Rezoning applications. It is encouraging to see continued interest in new projects during this time.

Public Works

The Public Works Department has undertaken several measures to keep operations moving forward while also fighting the spread of COVID-19. This includes cleaning equipment, spreading crews out, and maintaining social distancing.

The Right-of-Way division continues to accept online applications for permits.

Bid openings continue to move forward on future projects. For safety, bid openings have transitioned to conference and video calls.

Department-wide measures include:

- Vehicles are cleaned and sanitized at the end of each shift
- Employees are assigned a primary vehicle and take separate vehicles to job sites when possible
- Conduct work in smaller teams, practicing social distancing in the field
- PPE provided
- Employees are assigned a hand-held radio, rather than sharing
- Work is completed by a single group. For example, previously the concrete crew would complete the road work, followed by the sewer crew to complete the manhole work. Now, the concrete crew will complete the entire project to reduce interactions between crew members
- Staggered punch in/punch out at time clocks to spread crews out and maintain distance
- Many divisions have spread shifts out to reduce interaction of crew members and maintain social distancing in the garage and other facilities. This means some maintenance tasks, such as street sweeping, are being done during overnight hours or weekends, reducing the number of crew members working at the same time
- Engineering and office staff is working remotely
Construction is also continuing to move forward, including approximately 30 Paving for Progress projects, as well as Flood Control Projects, including flood gates in NewBo and Downtown, a levee segment in NewBo, and a floodwall in Kingston Village.

Community Development
Our community Development Department is serving citizens during this time by providing a number of Service Enhancements, including
- Funding additional space for the Overflow Shelter for those that require isolation or quarantine.
- Alignment of resources with community needs
  - Facilitated conference call with the Continuum of Care service providers to identify immediate, mid-term, and long-term needs of our most vulnerable populations.
  - Led a conference call with Linn County staff and service providers that will receive direct funding through the CARES Act and established a database of resources, including lead agencies, program requirements, and estimated date of availability.
- Contacted state and federal funding agencies, as guidance on recovery programs are being written, to avoid barriers to getting the funds to those in need.
- Worked with HACAP to provide the ice arena for them to box food packages that are being provided to residents.
- Coordinated volunteer project for City workers to sew masks for City employees that need them - materials for 250 masks were picked up the first day they were available. Any additional masks will be donated to hospitals or other service providers.

The department is also keeping ongoing work moving, including
- Gaining unanimous approval on two annexation requests at the State’s City Development Board.
- Preparing amendments to the zoning code to improve the process, while still achieving the desired end results and encouraging private investment.
- Hosting HPC/VAC meetings virtually to keep historic renovation and public art projects moving

Parks and Recreation
Parks and Recreation Department has:
- Closed facilities including the Northwest Recreation Center, Bender Pool, Tait Cummins Sports Complex, Tuma Sports Complex, Ushers Ferry Historic Village and Lodge, Veterans Tennis Center, and Ellis, Jones and Twin Pines Golf Courses
- It has also closed park amenities where social distancing could not be achieved including playgrounds, outdoor exercise stations, basketball courts, baseball fields, volleyball and sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, and Riverside Skate Park
- Staff is taping playground equipment entrances daily to warn of closure and checking that closure signs are up.
- The department is maintaining remaining open facilities with use that is up to four times normal for this time of the year. These facilities include trails, park green spaces, dog parks, disc golf courses, and Gardner Golf Course.
- Department staff has converted loop trails to one way to encourage social distancing.
- Signage will be up by this weekend with trail use guidelines to remind the public of social distancing and trail etiquette while trail use is high.
- Staff has canceled or postponed Recreation programs through April and offered credits or refunds for canceled programs.
Noelridge Farmer’s Market, the opening of Old MacDonald’s Farm in Bever Park, and the park season opening for use of restrooms and water has been postponed.

Non permanent trash cans have been removed from park areas.

Staff has promoted safe use at parks including bringing hand sanitizer and carrying out trash.

Office staff was moved to work from home with one staff member remaining at CSC and one staff member remaining at NW Recreation to process refunds and payments.

Forestry staff members have been moved to small work groups at three locations to limit potential exposure.

Staff has created videos and activities with recreation and health content that are posted to the Department’s Facebook page to help families at home with resources.

Ongoing messaging about social distancing and following CDC guidelines have been shared routinely on Parks and Recreation social media.

No new seasonal staff members have been hired since March 16.

Staff continues to review upcoming programs to make additional contingency plans as needed for May and summer activities.

**Transit**

Transit service has been suspended through April 30, and the Ground Transportation Building is currently closed.

While we felt it was prudent to suspend Transit Service, we were very pleased to be able to contract with Horizons – NTS to provide daytime rides in addition to the nighttime transportation service they provide year-round. As Horizons has reported, while they have less capacity than our Transit service, they are glad that they have been able to provide rides to all customers who work at essential work places.

More details about how the city is responding during this crisis is available on the City’s website on our dedicated COVID-19 page at [cedar-rapids.org](http://cedar-rapids.org).

Like all other businesses in the community and throughout the country and the world, this situation has changed the way we work. Our community is counting on us to continue essential services and provide needed support, while also protecting the health and wellbeing of our employees and their families.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our city employees for their continued dedication to the City of Cedar Rapids and our community. I also want to thank Cedar Rapids employers and citizens for the work and sacrifice they are making during this time in order to keep our community healthy.