I want to start by extending my sincere hope that you and your loved ones are healthy. We are going through very challenging times, and I think each of us has had some good days and some rough ones. We know that the physical, mental health and economic impacts of COVID-19 will be with us for some time. While there are still a lot of uncertainties, I am thankful for the many ways that this community has come together. We are social distancing but we are not self-isolating. We are checking on our neighbors with phone calls, running errands for those who can’t safely do so on their own, creating art for others to enjoy and virtually meeting with friends and family. Simple acts of kindness and connection mean more today than ever, and the Redwood City community reminds me daily that together, we will get through this.

In this special edition of our newsletter, we wanted to share information about The Three R’s of our pandemic response. With you, we are striving to:

**Respond** to immediate community needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular care for seniors and vulnerable residents.

**Restore** community cultural, economic, and social vitality in partnership with community organizations and businesses.

**Reimagine** public services in light of evolving community needs and financial resources.

I think many of us have been awed by the selfless work of front line workers in our community over the last few months. City staff are among them, as well as those working in health care, education, food supply, social services and more. Many others have offered financial support and encouragement. More than ever, we know that building community takes all of us. Thank you for doing your part.

Please be well,

Melissa Stevenson Diaz,  
City Manager
City Initiates Call Center to Connect with Business Community

Redwood City businesses are vitally important to our community. We understand that the coronavirus pandemic is not only a health crisis, but also an economic crisis for the City’s 6,600+ businesses.

In an effort to support the City’s business community, staff set up a Business Community Outreach Call Center. We have just one full-time position in our Economic Development Division, and recruited staff from our Library Department to personally reach out to every single Redwood City business to connect, listen, and provide needed resources and information. They also responded to many emails and answered inquiries from concerned businesses.

Recognizing that the success of small businesses contributes to Redwood City’s economic vitality, the City Council approved the contribution of $300,000 to the San Mateo County Strong (SMC Strong) Fund’s Small Business Grant Program. The donation will be earmarked to support Redwood City small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an additional business support, the City developed a dedicated coronavirus business resource web page (www.redwoodcity.org/CovidBusinessResources), which includes local, state, federal and corporate programs for businesses of all sizes. City staff created a map of essential businesses, such as open restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies, childcare for essential workers, food pantries, and other important information. The map is an accessible tool for businesses to show they are open and operating, and for residents to easily identify and support them. To accommodate restaurants offering delivery/take-out options downtown, temporary vehicle access has been granted on Theater Way and parking spots adjacent to restaurants have been dedicated to curbside pickup. The City is partnering with the Redwood City - San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Group, Redwood City Improvement Association and San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) to support and assist our local business community. This includes supporting outside dining.

We send out regular newsletters via email with helpful informational updates and resources. Sign up for the digital newsletter here: www.redwoodcity.org/newsletters. We encourage residents to support our local business community.

Help for our Homeless and Unstably Housed Population

ESSENTIAL SERVICES
Fair Oaks Community Center (FOCC) has maintained staffing with safety modifications in place so we can continue providing human services, including emergency food, homeless support services, safety net information and referral services. We shifted some of our Parks and Library staff to the FOCC to operate a Call Center, with multiple languages available. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please call (650) 780-7500. If you don’t have a phone, you can come to the main door where staff will greet you and give you further direction.

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our homeless and unstably housed population, the City placed 14 portable restrooms and 20 hand washing stations to identified homeless and RV areas around the City, which are serviced frequently. Additionally, we have staffed the Homeless Shower Program at Hoover Pool and have been supporting StreetLife Ministries volunteers with supplies to provide to those who need them. St. Vincent de Paul continues to distribute food and hygiene bags for our homeless community daily.

SAFE PARKING PROGRAM
Over the past several months, City staff have been working with the City Council Safe Parking Ad Hoc Committee on proposed safe parking recommendations. As a multi-phased project, the goal is to ensure public health and safety, protecting our environment and assisting RV-motorhome residents with transitioning to long-term housing.

Phase I of the project is already in progress, including street sweeping/cleanups in hotspot areas once a month, vouchers for RV dwellers to properly dispose of grey/black water and community outreach meetings with neighborhoods and RV-motorhome residents.

Ad Hoc Committee recommendations include implementing a temporary RV-motorhome on-street parking permit program, standing up an off-street parking facility, revising parking ordinances and offering resources for long-term housing options. For the most current information, visit www.redwoodcity.org/adhoc.

Have ideas or feedback? Email us at safeparking@redwoodcity.org

Rental Assistance for Licensed Family Child Care Home Providers

On May 4, 2020, the City Council set aside $100,000 of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) fund for emergency rental assistance, to help Redwood City’s licensed family child care home providers who have experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19. If you are a licensed family child care home provider, live in Redwood City, and are in need of rental assistance due to COVID-19, please submit an online application at www.redwoodcity.org/housinghelp. Once we have reviewed your application and uploaded documents, we will contact you. Please be patient as it could take a few weeks for us to respond to your application.
Rental Assistance Efforts to Support Families and Individuals

Housing is one of the City’s top strategic priorities and it has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the biggest securities people can have during this time of crisis is a roof over their heads. To support the City’s most vulnerable renters, the City Council took action in March to fund a COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Fund. The program is managed by the Fair Oaks Community Center to help households, including childcare providers, who have experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19 and have no other alternative sources of income, such as paid leave or unemployment insurance.

By the first week of May, the City received more than 1,100 applications—quadruple the number of applications (250) typically received in an entire year. The City had to dramatically shift how we process applications due to the sheer volume of requests, including moving from our typical personal assistance to an automated online process. As of May 6, the City expected to receive approximately $2 million in total funding through City contributions, Federal Community Development Block Grant funds, San Mateo County Strong, and from the average grant totaling $2,000, it is expected that the City will be able to assist approximately 1,000 households.

Renters who may be worried about being evicted if their rent is not paid on time should also be aware that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors passed a countywide emergency eviction moratorium on March 24, 2020. This moratorium prevents landlords from evicting tenants for non-payment of rent due to COVID-19 impacts. Tenants should notify their landlords with written verification if they are unable to pay all or a portion of their rent due to COVID-19. For more information about the moratorium, visit https://housing.smcgov.org/
covid-19-smc-eviction-regulations.

Additionally, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors enacted an emergency regulation temporarily banning rent increases countywide on certain residential properties where the tenant demonstrates an inability to pay as a direct result of COVID-19. The moratorium is in effect from May 31 to June 30, unless extended by the Board of Supervisors, and applies to all notices of rent increases served after April 28, 2020. This means that landlords wishing to increase rent must provide the tenant with written notice of his or her rights, and the tenant then has 14 days to provide written documentation that he or she is unable to pay as a direct result of COVID-19.

You can also read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the regulation at https://bit.ly/2SEayql.

The City’s dedicated coronavirus Housing Resources web page also contains more resources and information for tenants, landlords, homeowners and more, and can be found by visiting www.redwoodcity.org/HousingHelp.

Help for Our Seniors

FREE SENIOR LUNCH PROGRAM
The Veterans Memorial Senior Center (1455 Madison Avenue) provides lunch pick-up Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for seniors ages 60 and up. The City also offers home delivery throughout Redwood City. Please call (650) 780-7259 to make your reservation and hear the daily menu option. Please remember to make your reservation by 7 p.m. the evening before to get a meal the next day.

NEED TO TALK?
Need to let us know that you need help? Need someone to talk to? Know of a senior in need? Please call or email us! Contact Sophy Sam at sssam@redwoodcity.org or (650) 780-7270, or Anna Carlos at acarlos@redwoodcity.org or (650) 780-7270 or (650) 670-2206. If you get their voicemail, please leave a message with your phone number and they will set up a time to talk about your concerns over the phone.

SENIOR CARE CONCERNS
Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County, Inc. is committed to working with residents, families, facilities and stakeholders to create a community dedicated to protecting the rights of all residents living in long-term care in San Mateo County. Ombudsman Services creates immediate change for residents through its hands-on advocacy efforts, addressing issues that range from quality of care to egregious abuse.

Phone: (650) 780-5707
Email: ossmc@ossmc.org
Website: https://ossmc.org
Crisis Line: (800) 231-4024

STAY HEALTHY AND ACTIVE
Looking for ways to move, clear your mind, and stay motivated while you are sheltering in place? Check out these ideas!

• Stay in touch with Scott & Sang of our Adaptive P.E. Program’s YouTube channel with videos for seniors and others who need modified gentle exercise. Videos currently offered include Adaptive Yoga, Neuromuscular Parkinsons Training, Evening Weight loss, and Circuit Class.

• Need a TheraBand workout? Download Adaptive P.E.’s TheraBand workout from the City’s Parks, Recreation and Community Services website at www.redwoodcity.org/prccscovid.

• Find meditation and other mindfulness lessons to reduce stress at www.calm.com.

• TV channels PBS and KPJK (channel 17) offer Sit and be Fit shows at 7 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Monday-Friday, featuring seated exercises.

• Try doing some moderate-paced walking in your home, hallway or neighborhood to keep your aerobic conditioning up.
OTHER WAYS WE ARE HELPING

UTILITIES
In March, the City announced that we would not shut off water service to any residential customer while the shelter-in-place order was in effect. On June 22, the City Council will consider one-time credits to sewer and water customers. In addition, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has taken action to support people who are suffering economically due to COVID-19. This includes:

• Reducing residential and business energy bills over the coming months by utilizing the California Climate Credit. Find more information here: www.cpuc.ca.gov/ClimateCredit.

• Suspending renewal requirements for key low-income programs, including California LifeLine, California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE), and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA). Find more information here: https://bit.ly/3ehiaZq.

• Requiring energy, water, sewer and communications companies to halt customer disconnections for non-payment (i.e., PG&E, AT&T, Comcast, Metro PCS, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon, etc.) For more information go here: www.cpuc.ca.gov/covid.

• Educating the public on tips for reducing energy usage via the Energy Upgrade California marketing platform. For more information go here: www.energyupgradeca.org.

FOOD SERVICES
We know that this is a difficult time for everyone, and we want to make sure that you know, if you need food, there is help. Below are some resources for those who need assistance with getting food.

Resources
• Meals on Wheels (meal delivery for older adults) - https://www.penvol.org/mealsonwheels/

• Second Harvest Food Bank (bagged groceries) - https://www.shfb.org/health-and-safety/

• San Mateo County Cal Fresh Program - https://hsa.smcgov.org/calfresh

• Redwood City School District (meals for students) - https://www.rcsdk8.net/

• Great Plates Delivered – Residents are encouraged to call (800) 675-8437 to speak to multi-lingual San Mateo County staff and apply for free meal delivery services from local restaurants

EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Information from March 2020 to May 2020

| 10,280 | TOTAL NUMBER OF SENIOR LUNCHES SERVED AND DELIVERED |
| 2,175  | NUMBER OF BAGS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION BY PROJECT READ |
| 500    | GROCERIES BEING DELIVERED TO FAMILIES MONTHLY THROUGH FAMILY HARVEST AND BROWN BAG LUNCH PROGRAM |
| 40     | NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECEIVING GROCERIES PER DAY THROUGH SECOND HARVEST AND ST. VINCENT DE PAUL |

RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES
In March the Redwood City Fire Department visited all residential care facilities—more than 70—in Redwood City and San Carlos. They delivered health and safety information on preventing the spread of the virus while at work, such as rooming guidelines and staffing and facility guidelines. It also includes helpful self-care tips for caregivers at skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly, assisted living facilities, board and care facilities, home health facilities, long-term care facilities and intermediate care facilities. San Mateo County staff are working closely with senior facilities and you can learn more about their efforts at https://www.smcgov.org/senior-resources.

Bagged Groceries
• St. Francis Center Mondays through Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 151 Buckingham Ave, Redwood City
• Salvation Army - Tuesdays through Thursdays, 9 a.m.-Noon, 660 Veterans Ave., Redwood City
• Boys & Girls Club - Wednesdays 5:30-7 p.m., 1109 Hilton St., Redwood City

Bagged Lunches
• Padua Dining Room at Saint Anthony’s Church - Mondays through Saturdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Curbside pickup only. Serving anyone who needs food. 3500 Middlefield Rd, Menlo Park
• Cassia House- Sundays, 1:30-3 p.m., Serving anyone, 420 Cassia St., Redwood City

Hot Meals
• Boys and Girls Club (drive-through hot meals) - Mondays through Fridays, 6-7 p.m., 1109 Hilton St., Redwood City
• Streetlife Ministries (to-go boxes of food and hygiene kits) - Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:30p.m., Rise City Church Parking Lot, 1305 Middlefield Rd, Redwood City

EMERGENCY FOOD SERVICES
Fair Oaks Community Center, M-F, 3-5 p.m.
Pick-up: call 650-780-7500 and go to 2600 Middlefield Rd., Redwood City
Playing, Learning and Growing While Sheltering in Place

Redwood City Public Library (RCPL) and Redwood City Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) are doing what they do best during this pandemic—offering services and recommendations for curious minds and active bodies. We are here for you and your education, fitness, and play needs.

**LIBRARY VIRTUAL PROGRAMS**

If you are missing library storytime, never fear, RCPL librarians are back with their prerecorded series, Online Stories and Play. Tune in at 11 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to listen to these wonderful stories. Spanish speakers can join the online Libros y Café book club to read and relax in good company. With a library card, you can access virtual offerings such as The New York Times Online, digital magazines, eBooks and eAudiobooks, and streaming movies. The library’s Brainfuse Online Tutoring service offers homework help available 1–10 p.m. daily in English and Spanish. For those of you wishing to connect, the library recently released the Community Memory Project, a way for you to share your reflections and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit [www.redwoodcity.org/LibraryCOVID19](http://www.redwoodcity.org/LibraryCOVID19) to find these programs and resources for kids, teens and adults.

**PARKS & RECREATION VIRTUAL PROGRAMS**

Did you know we have a Virtual Recreation Center chalk-full of activities? The site’s online learning section has a growing list of resources to help you and your family stay engaged and active through this challenging time. Be sure to look for classes run by our very own Parks & Recreation contractors, such as Dragon Theatre and My First Art Class!

The Fitness and Wellness page also connects you with excellent wellness resources on a local level. Kids can get active with Super Soccer Stars online classes, and adults can dance with Parks & Recreation’s Zumba instructor. To visit the PRCS site, go here [www.redwoodcity.org/PRCSCovid](http://www.redwoodcity.org/PRCSCovid). Enjoy more hand-picked activities from our own curated local resources, and important information regarding special City projects, events, updates, and more on our blog here: [www.redwoodcityparksblog.com](http://www.redwoodcityparksblog.com).

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**Slow Streets Pilot Program**

The City Council approved the Slow Streets Pilot Program on April 27, 2020, temporarily designating some low-traffic neighborhood streets primarily for physical activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This program aims to increase the safety of walking, biking, and rolling on the designated streets by providing more space for physical distancing and reducing the clustering of foot traffic on sidewalks.

**WHAT THE PROGRAM DOES**

- Increases space for physical activity while abiding by social distancing protocols
- Maintains local access to homes and businesses
- Maintains emergency and delivery access

**WHAT THE PROGRAM DOES NOT**

- Provide space for people to congregate with friends or neighbors
- Install barricades and signage at every intersection (only select streets that have been identified)

**WHAT STREETS ARE INCLUDED IN PHASE 1?**

There are 10 streets included in the first phase of the Slow Streets Pilot Program. A printable map, as well as an online interactive map, can be found by visiting [www.redwoodcity.org/slowstreets](http://www.redwoodcity.org/slowstreets). In total, there are 5 miles of temporary soft closures (2.5% of total streets in the City).

If you’d like to suggest a street for consideration, volunteer to help have a requested change to a street, or have overall feedback, please email slowstreets@redwoodcity.org.
 Feeling Anxious, Overwhelmed or Depressed? You Are Not Alone

San Mateo County Health and the City of Redwood City support the well-being of our community’s family, friends and colleagues. When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress. These signs of stress are normal and you are not alone in feeling this way. During an infectious disease outbreak, it is particularly important to care for your own physical and mental health so you have the resources to support others affected by the situation.

Below are some resources that provide free, confidential and immediate emotional support available 24/7 via phone, text or chat to anyone in emotional distress or a suicidal crisis. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, call 9-1-1 or see the County’s crisis services page.

CRISIS/SUICIDE HOTLINE & TEXT
1 (800) 273-TALK (8255) or (650) 579-0350
1 (888) 628-9454 Spanish speakers (En Español)
1 (800) 273-8255 Veterans Crisis Line
1 (800) 985-5990 Disaster Distress Helpline or text TALKWITHUS to 6746

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - If you’re thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one who might be suicidal, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States. More information can be found at https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/.

Crisis Text Line - Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support. Text BAY to 741741 to reach a crisis counselor. Learn how it works at www.crisistextline.org.

Peer-Run Warm Line - A 24/7 non-emergency resource for anyone in California seeking emotional support. Call 1 (855) 845-7415 or chat online at www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline/.

Domestic Violence Hotline – 1 (800) 799-7233 (SAFE), available 24/7.

CORA (Communities Overcoming Relationship Abuse) -
1 (800) 300-1080, available 24/7.
Kara - Grief support for children, teens, families and adults (650) 321-5272.

Please remember that you are not alone. The City and these community organizations are doing everything we can to help everyone through this pandemic.

We are focused on Redwood City’s economic vitality, communications and community building, supporting vulnerable populations, and organizational sustainability for City operations.

We want to help businesses adapt their operations to support public health so that they can reopen as quickly as possible. This could include using public streets and sidewalks, private parking lots for outdoor dining and retail, and supporting takeout and delivery activities. We’re also striving to support child care businesses knowing that child care is critical for many to be able to return to work.

We want to continue to build community even though our physical interactions will be different. This includes gradually reopening parks within safety guidelines and finding new ways to support cultural celebrations and public art.

We want to care for seniors, children, and youth, people who are homeless, and those with economic, mobility and health challenges. We know we will need to continue to reshape our services for seniors and children, and partner with school districts and food access programs. We want to help everyone in our community to have safe housing.

We want our employees and members of the public to interact safely in City facilities, and are supporting online services and remote work as well as physical changes in our buildings.

Here are some of the ways we’re working to restore community vitality.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY: Neighborhood Associations

One great way to connect with your local community is through the Redwood City Neighborhood Associations. Especially since we aren’t able to connect physically with our neighbors and friends, becoming involved with your Neighborhood Association is a way to virtually be with them. Many of the Neighborhood Associations continue to have meetings that you can join! Not sure which Neighborhood Association you belong to? Follow the link below for more information, including how to connect directly with your Neighborhood Association Chair: www.redwoodcity.org/NeighborhoodAssociations.

Unfortunately, that means we won’t be able to enjoy seeing you this summer at events that we all look forward to and love, like the 4th of July activities and Music in the Square. As we plan for an extended time of physical distancing, we are dreaming up new ways to support community celebrations and engagement. If you have ideas on how we can celebrate — from a safe distance — email us at social@redwoodcity.org.

CELEBRATING AT A DISTANCE
Because of the severity of this pandemic, our public health officials have advised that it will likely take quite some time before large social gatherings can safely take place.
Remote City Services

Even though most City facilities are closed to the public, we are still here to serve you! Members of the public may still contact City services remotely, as follows:

• Planning Division, including permits and plan check review services. Please call (650) 780-7234 or email planning@redwoodcity.org.

• Building Regulation and Code Enforcement, including permits and plan check review services. Please call (650) 780-7350 or email permits@redwoodcity.org.

• Engineering and Transportation, including permit and plan check review services. Please call (650) 780-7380 or email encroachment@redwoodcity.org.

• Financial questions including accounts payable, claims, and taxes. Please call (650) 780-7070 or email finance@redwoodcity.org. Phone hours are 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

• Revenue Services, including residential, commercial billing and customer service, and Business and Residential Services, including business license, monthly parking permits. Please call (650) 780-7210 or email revenueservices@redwoodcity.org. Phone hours are 9 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

• Library customer service for general questions. Please call (650) 780-7018, extension 4 or rclinfo@redwoodcity.org. Curbside Pick-up Service is available at the Downtown Library and our 2020 Summer Learning Challenge has officially kicked-off! Find out more at www.redwoodcity.org/library.

• Parks, Recreation and Community Services general information. Please visit www.redwoodcity.org/prcscovid19 for the most up-to-date information.

• City Hall’s Customer Information Center may be reached by calling (650) 780-7000.

City Hall Renovations

When you next visit City Hall, we will look a little different. Construction has begun to support public health and employee health, and a new Customer Information Desk is being constructed so we can provide an enhanced customer experience. We also have plans to install an automated check-in system, upgraded informational signage and kiosks. We are looking forward to serving our community in a more efficient way, while also keeping each other safe. Changes are also underway at other City facilities to help us interact safely.

REIMAGINE

As we look ahead, we know that the recession will result in reduced resources for City services, and we also know that new community needs are emerging. We estimate we will have a $10 million deficit next year, which is about 6% of our operating budget. Although forecasting future revenues in this uncertain climate is more art than science, we are using information from hotels, local businesses and building permit applications to help us forecast potential financial impacts for the City due to COVID-19.

In the short term, we have reduced non-essential expenditures and delayed filling vacant positions. We continue to closely monitor revenue and cash flow and do not need to use reserves at this time. Thanks to the City’s strong history of fiscal responsibility, we have time to assess the depth and duration of the financial challenges before us. In turn, this helps us to make strategic decisions about how best to match our resources to community needs.

We are developing several financial scenarios based on potential economic recovery patterns, and we will continue to update the City Council and community on our financial status. The Fiscal Year 2020-21 Recommended Budget will essentially “roll over” current expenditures and we will return to the City Council by October 2020 to adjust expenditures when the revenue picture is clear. The Recommended Budget will be presented to the City Council for adoption on June 22, 2020.
At the time this newsletter went to print, our nation was rocked by protests regarding George Floyd’s death while in police custody in Minneapolis, and ongoing concerns regarding police use of force and racism.

We have received many inquiries about our policies around training and use of force by our Police Department. For many years, the Redwood City Police Department has worked to build relationships and mutual understanding, striving to serve in partnership with our diverse community. They have also been doing the hard work to examine bias that we all carry, to respond with empathy in critical mental health incidents, and to develop new models to de-escalate violent situations and resolve them with less force.

Please visit [www.redwoodcity.org/communitypolicing](http://www.redwoodcity.org/communitypolicing) to learn more about the Redwood City Police Department’s policies and training of all police personnel, as well as view a recording of a recent Virtual Town Hall on community policing. We are working to provide opportunities to listen and to have dialogue regarding these important issues. Please check our social media feed or sign up for electronic newletters here ([https://www.redwoodcity.org/city-hall/sign-up-for-newsletters](https://www.redwoodcity.org/city-hall/sign-up-for-newsletters)) to learn more as plans evolve.

Together, we can strive to ensure all members of our community are respected and can thrive. Together, we can advance equality. Together, we have the power to make positive change happen.