



Courtesy of the Office of Council President Brenda Jones

Detroit City Council Digital Outreach Meeting

March 31st, 2020

Fact Overview from City Faculty

Council President Brenda Jones, Detroit City Council

- When did COVID-19 first appear in the United States? The virus first appeared in the December of 2019, with the first case in the US over Super Bowl weekend.
- When did COVID-19 first appear in Detroit? The virus first appeared in Detroit three weeks ago.
- Who is affected? Currently individuals ages 40-69 are being affected most, with a 50/50 split of men and women.
- Who has been volunteering? Multiple departments across the city have been volunteering their time and resources. This includes medical professional and individuals doing data entry and administration work.
- A formal system for donating supplies has not been set up at this time, however, individuals can contact Hakim Berry to do so at 313-244-9514.





Denise Fair, MPH, FACHE, Chief Public Health Officer

- There have been 2,086 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 73 deaths currently in the state of Michigan.
- All fifty (50) states, as well as territories, have been impacted and infected by COVID-19 at this time.
- What is COVID-19? It is a new respiratory virus that replicates pneumonia symptoms and severe illness at times. Little is currently known about this virus; however, research is being conducted by health officials.
- Symptoms can occur anywhere from two (2) to fourteen (14) days, with symptoms including fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- To protect yourself and others from contracting COVID-19, wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer. Use a tissue or shirt sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Avoid contact with others, especially those who are sick, and limit activities and avoid large crowds/gatherings.
- Social distancing and staying home are key in combating COVID-19.
- COVID-19 can spread through coughing, sneezing, and touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.





- The biggest challenge has been COVID-19 being uncharted territory, information changing continuously (almost hourly), and communication being commenced through electronics and social media.
- Contact information for health authorities within the city are as follows:
 - dhdoutbreak@detroitmi.gov
 - detroitmi.gov/coronavirus
 - 24/7 phone hotline for the community to answer questions and concerns at 313-876-4000 (this line was created and launched within a matter of days).
 - Please contact primary care physician if feeling ill or if you believe you have come into contact with others who have COVID-19.

Hakim Berry, Director of Labor Relations, Chief Operating Officer for the City of Detroit

- The Mayor and his office have partnered with JP Morgan, as well as health facilities such as Henry Ford, Detroit Medical, and St. Joseph systems to provide service to the City of Detroit and surrounding communities.
- Drive-up and drive-thru centers have been implemented around the city, being centered at the state fairgrounds and functioning at least ten (10) hours a day. A prescription must be obtained from a primary physician to be tested at these centers. Test take roughly fifteen (15) minutes.
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- 12 or 13 health care providers have volunteered to work at the center, with assistance from 35+ city employees for traffic and additional services. The Department of Neighborhoods, Mayor's Office, General Services, Demolition Department, Councilmembers, and other departments are contributing time and resources, with rotating schedules.
- The city has also partnered with local health departments in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties, as well as the state health department, CDC, and Department of Neighborhoods to serve the public and combat COVID-19.
- Rapid testing kits have been produced for first responders and medical professionals that give instant results. It takes five (5) minutes for a positive result and thirteen (13) for a negative result. The test is administered through a swab.
- The City of Detroit lacks the supplies necessary to treat individuals and provide precaution for medical services and patients. These supplies include masks, gloves, and other personal protective equipment.
- The TCF Center is currently being converted by the Army Corps Engineers to accommodate critical patients who cannot be helped within a hospital due to limited bed capacity. Preparation began this week and is expected to be finished by the end of the week or within a few days.
- Greektown Casino has also been made available to assist first responders and accept equipment as it is provided.





Gary Brown, Director, Board of Water Commissioners, Director of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

- Water issues are still occurring within the City of Detroit during this time; however, certain precautions and programs are being enacted to combat these issues.
- To maintain social distancing, hygiene, and handwashing, water is crucial.
- A Restart Plan has been implemented to assist residents and citizens with having their water turned back on. This plan is \$25 per month to maintain running water within the home and the state can pick up the first month to assist consumers. Residents must contact DWSD to set up this plan at 313-386-9727. It will take 24-48 hours to turn on the water in the home.
- Building system databases are being used to obtain information regarding residents whose water has been shutoff.
 - 9000 addresses have been compiled, with knockers being left on doors with information regarding the Restart Plan.
 - 10,000 Detroiters have contacted DWSD, with 1,073 residents being enrolled.
 - To qualify, water must be off in the home and the individuals must be residing in the home.
 - If enrolled in the 10/30/50 or WRAP programs, individuals do not qualify for the Restart Plan.
 - It is currently unknown how many residents do not have water at this time.





- The biggest challenge is getting residents to enroll in the plan.
- Squatters within residences can also qualify to receive assistance too given the Governor's orders.
- Water is only being turned on at this point, not off.
- Great Lakes Water Authority and DWSD have partnered to combat water-related issues during this pandemic.
- State Water Board is hoping to pass legislation to diminish late fees and penalties for water bills through this plan.

Erin Casey, Assistant Director of Recreation

- Food and meal services are being provided to residents within the City of Detroit.
- The Recreation Department is assisting those in need by ensuring that the youth, elderly, and families are receiving meal kits and groceries.
- The recreation centers have been used for drive-up meal services and distribution. 18,000 meals have been given. Schools had closed on March 13th, 2020 and the services began on March 18th, 2020.
 - Families pull up to the curb and share how many children are in the household.
 - Breakfast and lunch are served in these kits.
 - One or two days-worth of meals can be given at a time, or Friday-Sunday meals can be given if needed.





- The Department has also partnered with Gleaners for bi-weekly grocery distribution, providing enough groceries to last two weeks.
- Pre-registered seniors can pick up five frozen meals from the site. If not registered, they can enroll on site.
- There is currently a home delivery waitlist.
- Aids, such as neighbors and friends, can pick up meals for individuals who are unable to do so themselves.

Public Q & A

1. What is DWSD doing about working and running water, sewage back-up, etc.?

There have been 112 water and basement flooding complaints from residents. Crews are currently out to resolve many of these issues today. Cameras are being inserted into sewers and pipeline so monitor issues, however, 60% of the time it is private sewer lines causing these issues. The average sewer lines are ninety (90) years old, and if the failing is through a private line, then it is the homeowners responsibility to resolve the issue. DWSD determines whether an individual home is affected or an entire block. DWSD only repairs city sewer lines.

2. How can Detroiters without service share that information with the city?

Gary Brown can be contacted and schedule a time to come out to speak with the public about their concerns. Inspections and surveys of the home can also be completed at this time. Issues costing up to \$1000 can be fixed by the city and DWSD to assist residents during this time. 50% of customers below





the poverty line, including, renters qualify to participate in the Restart Plan, and can be added to the plan for a second year to pay off any owed balances.

3. What precautions should individuals take after being in contact with those who have passed away from COVID-19 in the home or have been exposed to individuals who are infected?

Monitor your symptoms for fourteen (14) days. If you believe you are sick or infected, contact your primary care physician Detroit Health Department. If not severe, isolate and maintain social distancing. High risk individuals and severe cases must contact their doctor or Detroit-Wayne Mental Health Authority for assistance.

4. How is the city handling drive-up testing for those without insurance or a primary physician?

The Mayor has launched new provider networks for those with or without insurance. To access this information go to detroitmi.gov/coronavirus, twenty providers have already been listed. All Detroiters have access regardless of insurance. Drive-thru testing sites are free of charge and care providers will determine the cost of prescriptions for individuals.

5. A resident is suffering from continuous flooding and issues from a line in their home/yard.

Private plumbers have tried fixing the issue, but nothing has worked. What should they do? It is believed that a private lateral sewer line has collapsed. DWSD can come out and inspect the area with a camera, as well as direct the resident where to get assistance in fixing the issue. Fifty plumbers are on standby and the city is looking for residents who do not have water.





6. Is there a way for prescriptions to be immediately filled to receive testing for those who have been exposed to infected individuals?

Prescriptions and testing are only administered to those experiencing symptoms for COVID-19.

Individuals must begin with a primary care exam to determine if testing is needed.

7. What is DWSD doing to ensure that orders are being enforced? What is the policy for individuals turning on their own water with water keys without penalties?

There is no shortage of plumbers and DWSD is reporting the Governor Whitmer on a daily basis regarding water issues in the City of Detroit. Every resident within the database is being contacted, but the department is also relying on community input and engagement. Having personal water keys is illegal, please contact DWSD to assist in turning on water for willing participants.

8. What is being done to aid elderly tenants and those dealing with slumlords during this time?

It is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure that water is running in the home and the city is trying to hold people accountable. Suing can be done if needed and trouble occurs, especially with slumlords. After COVID-19 passes, individuals need to be on the property legally and DWSD will provide assistance for that and ensure that accounts are created, and meters are installed.

9. Are there funds for supporting water turn-on throughout the city?

Yes, funding are present. Individuals need to call in and enroll in the programs provided.





10. How is Zoom being safely used during city conference meetings?

The city is monitoring individuals on the calls and following IP address for individuals causing issues during the call, which will be further investigated if need be.

11. Can councilmembers be in contact with water right groups and activist to implement a subsidized water programs or suspend water rates until COVID-19 ends?

\$1.5 billion is needed for water assistance, however, that was removed from the stimulus package.

Federal funding is needed for those programs and city budgets have been suffering from the pandemic.

Casino money and tax dollars are currently not being received by the city.

12. How is the virus being maintained amid the homeless population? What is being done to assist impoverished communities in Wayne County?

The housing Revitalization Department is working to help the homeless population by providing quarantine locations. There are currently 11,000 homeless individuals in the City of Detroit. Individuals with elevated fevers are being sent to these locations, with transportation services provided from hospitals to these locations. The city is making this a priority and HRD has partnered with Wayne State University for providing testing shelter, which had launched on March 30th, 2020 at Salvation Army sites.





13. Is there contact information for grief counseling?

There is currently not a specific line for grief counseling, however, individuals can contact the Detroit-Wayne Integrated Health Center at 1-800-241-4949 for additional support and services.

Closing Comments

Fair –

- Stay home to slow the spread of the virus and take extra precaution.
- Call the health department with any questions or concerns.
- Thank you to essential workers during this pandemic.

Casey –

- Please do not use park amenities, fitness equipment, or park shelters.
- Follow park and recreation rules; practice social distancing when at the parks.
- Please stay home if able.
- Meal distribution is trying to be expanded and a meal dashboard is expected to launch later this week.

Brown –

- Identify water crises throughout the city and contact DWSD with any questions or concerns.

