



DATE: January 11, 2021

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Joyce Nichols, Assistant City Manager, 452-4225
City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Pandemic

Patty Hayes, Director of Public Health – Seattle & King County, will provide an update on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts in King County. She serves as the Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer of the King County Board of Health. The Board of Health is an 11-member board composed of three health professionals and eight elected officials who serve for terms of one to three years. Bellevue City Councilmember Janice Zahn serves as an alternate on the Board representing the Sound Cities Association.

Over the last few weeks there has been a dramatic increase in reported cases of COVID-19 across King County. It is critical that people continue to take basic precautions to prevent the spread of the virus—stay home as much as possible, avoid large gatherings, wear a mask and wash your hands—as these are still the most effective ways to minimize risk of infection. With the approval and roll-out of two vaccines, there are now better tools to prevent the virus.

Ms. Hayes will provide an update on the number of cases in King County, the impact of the latest surge on hospital and critical care facilities, testing, and the roll-out of the vaccines. With the distribution of the vaccines and their reported efficacy in preventing the virus, there is indeed cause for hope that an end to the pandemic may be in sight during 2021.

On January 5, Governor Jay Inslee announced a new path to reopening the state when the current temporary restrictions expire on January 11. According to the new plan, regions across the state, including King County, will enter Phase 1 of “Healthy Washington” on January 11. In Phase 1, most areas will continue to operate as under the current temporary restrictions. However, some additional fitness, entertainment and sports activities will be allowed at a limited capacity. The goal of the new path is to balance fighting COVID-19 and saving lives with safely reopening the economy and vaccinating as many people as possible.

To move to Phase 2 of the Healthy Washington plan and reopen more businesses and activities, our region must meet four metrics associated with regional hospital capacity and admissions, case rates and test positivity. Ms. Hayes will discuss the plan and its impact on King County residents and businesses.

Following the presentation, there will be an opportunity for Council questions.