



PATHFINDER

"We do have to strike a balance between opening ... back up, ... and making sure we are not experiencing an unmanageable surge in new cases with severe illness and death," Public Health Officer Dr. Henning Ansorg

Teamwork Matters

A message from
the City Manager



Jason Stilwell

During this extraordinary time, I want to again express how proud I am of our employees and of our community. Santa Marians are experiencing stress, witnessing civil unrest around the world, and residents are using their First Amendment rights to assemble and protest.

This pandemic highlights the importance of taking personal responsibility for limiting the spread of COVID-19, and to support each other. Wear masks, wash your hands with soap and water, sanitize surfaces, and practice social distancing.

The County Health Order is allowing businesses to safely reopen. We are working toward reopening City departments and public facilities. This takes careful planning. All of them will not reopen at once. There are public health and budgetary reasons. Physical space limitations within some buildings means we cannot guarantee social distancing, so we are studying options.

Each Department Director who manages various facilities is responsible for attesting in writing that they meet the reopening safeguards, including personal protective equipment and social distancing for employees and customers. Thanks to our Mellissa Guerrero and Human Resources team who are updating our reopening plans. Ultimately, I will sign off to approve.

Examples of physical limitations where public counters are in spaces too small to guarantee social distancing with many customers are: the City Attorney's Office, Community Development, Finance, Fire, and City Manager's Office. At some locations, the City may install clear barriers (like seen at stores) and again place spacing markers on the floor.

Our reopening committee, of which Elena Morelos is an integral part, continues to evaluate how to bring employees back from teleworking at home. Stay tuned for updates.

I also want to express appreciation for many of our local service organizations as well as the very kind and generous individuals stepping up to provide services to community members who are currently isolated, and to others in need. As is the Santa Maria way, people from all walks of life joined together to help.

This is an extremely difficult time for our business community and I'm asking everyone to continue to support our many wonderful small local businesses as much as possible. Reopening will be difficult for many and we have missed them being open.

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce is updating its excellent website to assist businesses, as is the City on its website. For your springtime gift-giving needs, consider purchasing online gift cards from your favorite local vendors; and when you go out and about, be sure to check for all that can be found at perhaps somewhat unusual locations for your weekly shopping needs.

Continue to be calm, sensible, reasonable, and follow the guidance by our local, State, and Federal authorities. I sincerely wish everyone in our community and beyond continued good health. Be safe, be calm, and please, always be kind. Thank you.

Jason