

# Mayor Jesse Arreguín's Virtual Town Hall Summary

May 9, 2020



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## Tracking Berkeley's Cases

As of Saturday, May 9, there are [66 COVID-19 cases and one death in Berkeley](#). 1,418 tests have been conducted with a positive rate of 4.6%. We are conducting on average 39 tests a day, but are aiming to expand this to 240 tests a day. A pilot program was conducted this week where all residents and employees at a skilled nursing facility were tested. All results came back negative, and plan to expand this to other facilities next week.

Anyone who lives or works in Berkeley and is symptomatic can get a test. Appointments can be made by **calling 510-981-5380**. The line is open Mondays-Fridays from 9am-4pm, available in English and Spanish. The site conducts PCR tests, which is a nasal swab that identifies if you currently are infected by the virus. Tests results take 1-2 days.

The City currently has five people working on contact tracing. While all cases have had contact tracing, the City is currently training more city workers to do this job, aiming to have 15 contact tracers.

## The Pathway to Reopening

Berkeley and six Bay Area counties [continue to enforce the current Shelter in Place Order](#), even with statewide regulations being relaxed on certain businesses. Simply

put, the region is not at the point where we are ready to move to the next phase, but efforts are underway to reach that point. [Under state guidelines](#), jurisdictions need to reach a number of tests and contact tracing (as mentioned above, we plan for 240 tests daily and 15 contact tracers), in addition to other requirements mentioned in the link such as hospitalization rates and capacity, social distancing protocols, and access to protective equipment. Efforts are underway by the City to develop a plan that will ultimately move us forward to the next phase, guided by the latest science and data. Moving too quickly risks a crippling surge in new cases, which is why we must continue to follow the Shelter in Place Order.

### **Clarifying Mask Requirements**

Masks are required when you are inside or in line of an essential business, working at an essential business, seeking healthcare, or using public transit or taxis/rideshare. Masks are highly recommended, but not required when you are outside walking or in a park. Everyone should carry a mask at all times. If you do not have a mask, find a police officer who can provide you with one. [Click here for more information on masks.](#)

### **Homeless Update**

We are working with various Lifelong Medical Care, Bay Area Community Services, Mental Health, and Public Health to provide resources, medical checks, and essential information to our unhoused community. A full list of available services can be [found here](#).

The STAIR Center has reopened, and social distancing protocols have been implemented in all shelters. While accommodations at La Quinta Inn fell through, we are continuing to identify potential hotels in Berkeley, while providing accommodations at Oakland hotels as part of the County's implementation of Project Roomkey, in addition to trailers located in Berkeley.

### **Business Update**

Businesses can find information on support from various sources, including federal, state, and local [here](#). The City has provided guidance and information to essential businesses on how to implement social distancing measures, which can be [found here](#).

## **Budget Update**

The City is expected to have a [\\$25.5 million deficit](#). These are preliminary numbers based on current data, but could change depending on the length of the shelter in place order's impact on businesses, and other decisions such as whether or not the University opens for in-class instruction in the fall. The City currently has a hiring freeze and is looking at deferrals. The [Budget & Finance Policy Committee](#) is continuing its budget discussions on Monday, with the full Council making such decisions in June.

## **New City Email Answers Your COVID-19 Questions**

The City has launched a new email address where you can ask your questions about COVID-19. You can send your questions to [covid19@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:covid19@cityofberkeley.info). Staff are monitoring this account and will respond to your questions. Note that this is a different tool that is not related to the questions that we answer during the town halls (details on that below).

As always, you can find the latest updates and information about City services, the Shelter in Place Order, case and testing statistics, and other useful information on the [City's COVID-19 page](#)

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**Next Virtual Town Hall**  
**Saturday, May 16, 12pm**  
**Ask a question and watch live at [jessearreguin.com](https://jessearreguin.com)**