



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

MAYOR RANDALL L. WOODFIN

Mayor Woodfin declares state of emergency in connection to the threat of COVID-19

Birmingham, Alabama (March 16, 2020) – Mayor Randall L. Woodfin today declared a state of emergency for the City of Birmingham, urging the public to avoid gatherings of 25 or more people, among other matters.

“Based on the information we have received from public health experts, I have determined it is in the best interest of the public and the City of Birmingham to recommend there be no in-person events that consist of 25 people or more in the City of Birmingham to reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19,” Mayor Woodfin said during a virtual news conference today. “This decision has not been taken lightly, but after multiple conversations with our public health experts, we are committed to continuing to strive to provide our residents with essential city services while still protecting the health and welfare of our employees.”

Council President William Parker said that the Birmingham City Council will meet on Tuesday, March 17 at 9:30 a.m. Parker said they will work tirelessly as “Team Birmingham” to provide a safe Birmingham and ensure that Birmingham moves forward. Attendees are to practice social distancing during this meeting, which means that attendees will not sit side by side.

Mayor Woodfin added that the city has determined that all city employees, except those who provide essential city services, will work from home beginning at 7 a.m., on Tuesday, March 17.

Essential city services include most employees within the Birmingham Police Department, Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service, Public Works and 911.

Birmingham City Hall will not be closed, but those essential departments will be open and operate on a reduced crew. Individuals needing to obtain business licenses, permits or pay fees will be able to do so. All employees will continue to work and receive pay during this period.

Josh Carpenter, director of the city’s Office of Innovation and Economic Opportunity, said that in the next 24 hours, the city will roll out an economic stimulus package to support small businesses and their employees. “More information will be available soon. But for now, small business should visit www.bhamstrong.com for information,” Carpenter said.

The city has established a text message system to keep residents informed of developments on COVID-19. Text the keyword **BHMCVID**, one word, to 888-777.

There is also a Spanish language text system. To use it, text **BHMCVID19** to 888-777.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, boards with Birmingham Park and Rec and Arlington Historic House today voted to close their facilities to the public. These closures are immediate. Out of an abundance of caution, the venues will cancel all public events, programming and gatherings until further notice.

The Birmingham Park and Recreation facilities include the fitness center, recreation and community centers, Highland Park Racquet Club, George Ward Tennis Center, James Lewis Tennis Center, Boswell-Highland Park and Roebuck-Hawkins golf courses, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, and Legion Field Stadium. These venues will be closed through April 6 for the safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff.

The Southern Museum of Flight also decided today that it will remain closed until further notice. As a reminder, the Birmingham Public Library and the Birmingham Museum of Art previously announced that they will be closed to the public.

The city's Transportation Department had planned to host a Transportation Town Hall meeting on Thursday, March 19 at the Don Hawkins Rec Center. However, that meeting has been postponed. Also, the District 3 Town Hall meeting that was set for Monday, March 30 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens has been postponed. Birmingham City Schools will be closed until April 6. For updates on COVID-19 issues related to BCS, please go [here](#).

Fire Chief Cory D. Moon said today that Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service employees are ready to handle calls, and that a new brochure has been created for residents to know what to expect when they call 911 and what to do to protect themselves and family against COVID-19. (See attachments.)

For coronavirus updates from the City of Birmingham, please visit www.birminghamal.gov/coronavirus.

To see the whole news conference with Mayor Woodfin, please go [here](#). (If you are trying to view this via a city desktop, the Facebook video will be blocked. You will need to access via a non-city device.)