

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

February 15, 2022

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SUBJECT: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FUTURE COVID-19 SURGES

The City has experienced a number of COVID-19 surges. Each surge has posed unique challenges for the community, the nation and the world. We have all learned a lot along the way. As we had seen with the the two most recent COVID-19 variants, there is always more to learn and to be even better prepared in the future.

The City typically yields to Tarrant County Public Health (City's primary public health provider) and traditional healthcare networks to provide health services to the community. When disaster strikes, the City will activate the Joint Emergency Operations Center (JEOC) to assist these agencies and to fill gaps created by a much higher demand for service.

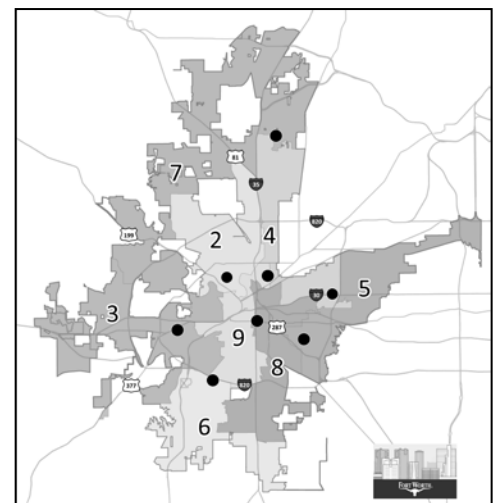
When vaccines became available in early 2021, the City formed collaborative partnerships for large-scale vaccine operations sites at Texas Motor Speedway, FWISD Farrington Field, and Wilkerson-Grienes Athletic Center. Smaller, stationary and mobile teams were also deployed to offer testing and vaccinations throughout the city. Site locations were planned in conjunction with other community providers to avoid duplication of efforts. When demand/gaps increase, plans are executed to offer more sites and services. As demand decreases, sites/services are temporarily taken offline to conserve staff resources and funding.

Community Testing Options

At this time, the Federal Government has started offering rapid antigen tests for the general public and schools. The public can access this valuable resource by requesting the tests via online or by calling a designated phone number. In addition, the City of Fort Worth's COVID-19 team has been working closely with community center staff, schools and other organizations that serve children. As with other major developments in the pandemic fight, the team has been working to identify and fill any service gaps; plan additional resources; and collaborate on messaging, response and service delivery.

In February 2022, the City will be piloting the distribution of rapid tests. Rapid tests will be provided from parking lots at eight selected libraries, one per Council District. Self-testing continues to be one of several ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 along with getting vaccinated, receiving a booster dose, wearing a well-fitted mask indoors, and social distancing. Home tests can be completed in 15 minutes, allowing people to know their COVID-19 status and act accordingly.

- Northside Library, 601 Park St (District 2)
- Ridglea Library, 3628 Bernie Anderson (District 3)
- East Regional Library, 6301 Bridge St. (District 4)
- East Berry Library, 4300 E. Berry St. (District 5)
- Wedgewood Library, 3816 Kimberly Ln. (District 6)
- Golden Triangle Library, 4264 Golden Triangle Blvd. (District 7)
- Ella Mae Shamblee Library, 1062 Evans Ave. (District 8)
- Riverside Library, 2913 Yucca Ave. (District 9)



Recipients will be limited to four (4) rapid tests, while supplies last. This will help to fill the gap while the federal distribution is occurring, to provide additional relief for the Omicron variant, and to enable the City

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to gain experience at a new type of service delivery for the next surge/gap. The cost to distribute 8,000 rapid tests will be approximately \$100,000 plus staffing at each location.

Future Actions

As indicated with previous surges, the City has a strategic plan in place to match an increase in demand for COVID-19 technical guidance, testing and vaccines. Anyone needing assistance with COVID-19 resources can call our dedicated COVID-19 hotline for assistance: (817) 392-8478.

Looking forward, the City will need to remain focused on the basics of resting staff during quieter periods, so they are available during staffing shortages/increased demands, insuring a strategic stockpile of PPE/testing/vaccine supplies, building additional capacity with healthcare systems/providers, and planning future needs/solutions with community and government partners. This includes moving, when the time is right, many of the JEOC functions back to public health agencies.

In the meantime, it is recognized that future variants and surges will continue to be unique. This will require a continued conversation with healthcare providers, hospitals, first responders, researchers and others to accurately predict the impact of the variant and prepare solutions. There is no panacea here, experts from all over the world face the same challenge when new variants arise – communities learn over time and cannot predict what the next one will be or what it will do specifically. The best defense we have is to continue to push an offense of greater vaccine use, vaccine boosters, reasonable mitigation measures like masking and distancing, and finding safer ways to perform jobs, attend school, be with our families and live our lives.

Questions on this material should be addressed to Brandon Bennett, Code Compliance Director at 817-392-6322.

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City Manager