

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-0031

A resolution expressing the City Council's support for the safe restart of economic and social activity in the Spokane area and commitment to keep Spokane open within accepted public health and economic criteria.

WHEREAS, the City of Spokane has a strong record of compliance with Washington's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, and as a result, has likely avoided thousands of cases of COVID-19 and hundreds of deaths; and

WHEREAS, Spokane has also preserved its essential hospital and intensive care unit capacity while serving as the key transportation and commercial hub for the Inland Northwest which brings with it even greater infection risk than the counties and cities surrounding Spokane; and

WHEREAS, lacking a vaccine and any natural immunity, Spokane residents are vulnerable to infection brought here from nearby eastern Washington counties of Benton, Franklin and Yakima, which are experiencing extremely high rates of COVID-19 infections and are able to travel to Spokane; and

WHEREAS, Spokane employers and workers are ready to get back to work with basic safety and security standards in place; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has adopted the "Safe Start Washington" program which allows reopening over four phases based on public health guidance; and

WHEREAS, the Safe Start program allows different regions in the state to seek a variance from the Washington State Secretary of Health that allows early advancement to the next phase; and

WHEREAS, once Spokane has advanced to Phase 2, it will still be vulnerable to increased infections from people traveling to Spokane from other states and counties that don't maintain the safe practices demonstrated by Spokane;

WHEREAS, the Public Health Officer and the Board of the Spokane Regional Health District have recommended in writing that Spokane receive consideration for advancing to Phase 2 ahead of the rest of the State of Washington; and

WHEREAS, any decision to grant Spokane or any other county a variance will be made by the Washington State Secretary of Health based on public health criteria in consultation with local health officers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Spokane agrees to comply with the Safe Start Washington's four-phase plan to reopen all communities across the State of Washington with strategies that are transparent and a timeline that is informed by public health data and practical economic considerations, including variances from the

Secretary of Health for those regions that demonstrate the capacity to sufficiently identify, contain and prevent future infections.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the City of Spokane has identified the following policy needs in order to preserve a more open economy *after* it has reopened:

1. Spokane needs sufficient test kits and materials to test all people exhibiting potential symptoms of COVID-19 and the individuals who are identified as recently having contact with them, and local processing of those tests to identify and isolate newly infected local patients.
2. Spokane needs a corps of contact tracers, who can be trained, supervised by the health district along with assigned national guard members and state employees, who would be able to promptly contact all newly identified patients, identify individuals they have potentially contacted, and then contact those people to promptly have them tested and/or isolated.
3. Spokane needs a centralized method for the procurement and provision of personal protective equipment, preferably manufactured locally, so that local businesses can safely conduct business operations and their employees and customers can have confidence that they can safely participate in commerce.
4. Spokane needs a corps of public health COVID-19 business resistance consultants/inspectors, trained and supervised by the health district, who, much like current health district inspectors who educate companies engaged in food preparation, would work closely with industry groups and individual businesses to educate them on applicable COVID-19 resistant business practices and eventually offer voluntary certification to interested businesses.
5. Spokane needs to reopen private and public childcare centers sufficient for all employees who need childcare, to help identify resources to reimburse childcare providers for increased cleaning supplies, increased staffing and reduced maximum children due to physical distancing, health care insurance for employees, robust sick leave pay and likely hazard pay similar to grocery workers until the economy is fully reopened and physical distancing requirements have returned to normal.

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City of Spokane supports the opinion of the Spokane Regional Health District's Health Officer and the Spokane Regional Health District Board that Spokane is ready for consideration of a variance from the Washington State Secretary of Health under the applicable criteria for a community the size of Spokane.

ADOPTED by the City Council this ____ day of May, 2020.

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Assistant City Attorney