

# CITY OF BEND'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

## 5 THINGS TO KNOW – *MAYORAL EDITION*

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*“During this uncertain time, we want to be sure that our community has answers to the important questions being asked about the City of Bend’s response to COVID-19, and the City’s role in the reopening of our community.”*  
- Sally Russell, Mayor of Bend

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### ***WHAT HAS BEEN THE CITY’S FOCUS IN SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?***

The City of Bend has been focused on four main objectives in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic: 1) Creating a safe work environment for employees while continuing to provide core services, 2) Reducing community risk, 3) Supporting the public health system so it can increase access to testing and care, and 4) Building community and economic resiliency.

### ***WHY ARE SHORT TERM RENTALS STILL PERMITTED WHEN OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN HAS ISSUED A “STAY HOME, SAVE LIVES” ORDER?***

Many constituents are worried about the risk of visitors bringing COVID-19 into our community. The City Manager issued an Administrative Order [strongly dissuading non-essential travel to Bend](#). The Council discussed whether to restrict short term rentals, but ultimately chose not to vote on a potential resolution because it lacked enough support to pass. At around 15% occupancy, based on the most recent data, it appears that people are generally not traveling to Bend right now. We understand that more of those rooms are being used by people traveling for essential services, folks in the medical industry, and/or those quarantining from their families because of possible contact with someone who tested positive with COVID-19. You can view the Council’s discussion [here](#).

### ***DISCOURAGING TOURISM IS NOT ENOUGH. CAN THE CITY ESTABLISH A TRAVEL BAN ON TOURISM?***

Unfortunately, as a local government, the City cannot restrict travel to Bend. Some states have enacted limited restrictions on travelers from some COVID hotspots, including temporary quarantine requirements. Because individuals have a fundamental constitutional right to travel between states, we believe both inter- and intra- state travel is most appropriately addressed at the State level by the Governor.



## ***THE BEND CITY COUNCIL EXTENDED THE LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY UNTIL MAY 20, BUT OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN EXTENDED THE STATE'S EMERGENCY DECLARATION THROUGH JULY 6. WHAT DO THESE MEAN?***

[The City's emergency declaration](#) allows more flexibility and authorization for the City Manager to take actions to help protect the health and safety of the community, through a number of means from limiting access to public places, to buying items or services related to health and safety without normal procurement procedures that can take additional time. It also says:

- The City will not send shut-off notices or shut off water for non-payment of unpaid water bills while this emergency is in place.
- All permitted special events are canceled during this emergency, and no new permits will be issued.
- Some restrictions, processes and fees will be temporarily relaxed to support businesses and those in need of transitional housing.

The State's declaration of emergency allows the state maintain operational flexibility and access to more resources for the state that are unavailable in non-emergency situations. The Governor's orders (such as [Executive Order 20-12](#)) set statewide guidelines describing the "Stay Home, Save Lives" rules meant for all of us to prevent the spread of the virus. On May 7, 2020, the Governor issued new guidance that could allow some counties to begin limited, phased reopening as soon as May 15.

### ***WHAT IS THE CITY'S ROLE IN REOPENING BEND?***

On May 7, Gov. Brown released new details for her [plan](#) to reopen Oregon. This plan includes a phased approach to reopening the state, with guidelines for local governments to follow as they consider strategies to reopen their economies. The suggested guidelines for reopening Oregon are driven by health information and largely dependent on County and Regional planning efforts. The Deschutes County Commissioners, along with the County's Public Health and Emergency Management staff, have finalized their plan "[Deschutes County COVID-19 Recovery Framework](#)," requesting to reopen businesses and communities in Deschutes County. This plan must now be approved by the Governor before it can be implemented. The City of Bend's role in this process included informing these plans by collecting and relaying input from local residents and businesses.

The City of Bend, with partners from Redmond and both of our business organizations, conducted a series of [business focus group listening sessions](#) to understand what exactly the business community needs from their local governments. We have a team of people at the City working to support our businesses.



(Businesses with questions about reopening can call the City of Bend's Business Assistance Hotline at 541-323-7151.)

At this time, the City has not imposed restrictions on whether or how local businesses or community members must conduct business or other activities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City's role involves coordinating with community members and other governmental entities, including the Deschutes County and the State of Oregon, to ensure that information is effectively communicated and understood.



**Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities**

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc. please contact Makayla Oliver, Community Relations Manager at [moliver@bendoregon.gov](mailto:moliver@bendoregon.gov) or (541) 323-8571; Relay Users Dial 7-1-1.

