

# MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office



**DATE:** March 28, 2020

**TO:** Mayor and City Councilmembers

**THROUGH:** Steve McHarris, Interim City Manager

A handwritten signature of Steve McHarris.

**FROM:** Renee Lorentzen, Director of Recreation and Community Services  
Alex Andrade, Economic Development Director

**SUBJECT:** City of Milpitas Engagement with Silicon Valley Strong Initiative

## Overview:

In response to the COVID-19 virus public health emergency, Santa Clara County cities are organizing resources in an effort called Silicon Valley Strong. Silicon Valley Strong's mission is to provide our most vulnerable communities access to critical resources during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order and allow those able to assist in this time of crisis, to sign up to safely volunteer. This movement connects the County, cities, schools, nonprofits, private partners, churches, and community organizations in Silicon Valley. The City of San Jose is leading the effort at the request of, and with support from, Santa Clara County.

Silicon Valley Strong is intended to be a collaborative effort to encourage the community to stay informed and safely help one another. A website has been created that will serve as a hub with critical updates and resources for our vulnerable communities, including seniors 60+, medically compromised, and homeless residents. Following two informational startup meetings held in the past week, cities will be virtually meeting weekly starting March 30, 2020 to continue to identify resources and opportunities to populate the Silicon Valley Strong website.

Silicon Valley Strong's main program areas are being developed to include:

- Food Distribution
- Volunteerism Opportunities and Needs
- Silicon Valley Strong Fund
- Small Business Assistance
- Homelessness Prevention

Additional resources are being added daily to the Silicon Valley Strong website such as Health and Wellness guidance, Homeless Prevention resources, Funding Assistance, and 211 updates. Through the provided resources and opportunities on this website, Milpitas residents would be able to receive assistance with necessities like rent and food security. Local businesses would also be able to obtain valuable help with funding loans and expert advice. Participating cities will be working together to establish an outreach plan so that as many residents as possible are informed of the effort and have access to as many resources as possible.

City of Milpitas staff have already begun outreach to community-based organizations and businesses regarding needed resources and support. Communication to residents via social media and existing user databases on a variety of resources, and local and state mandates that impact the community well-being, is being shared.

Staff representing the City of Milpitas on this effort are Renee Lorentzen, Director of Recreation and Community Services (Administrative Lead) and Alex Andrade, Economic Development Director.

## **Silicon Valley Strong Resource Programs in Action**

### Volunteerism and Food Distribution

Staff has begun collaborating with the Milpitas Unified School District to jointly identify resource needs for the Milpitas community. Staff has also contacted two Milpitas food distributors, Milpitas Food Pantry and Second Harvest Food Bank via Cathedral of Faith Church, to identify their needs regarding food distribution.

Information about volunteer opportunities has been posted on the City's Social Media pages and those interested in volunteering have been asked to use the City's Milpitas Volunteer Program (MVP) online registration form. The City will also be utilizing existing volunteer pools like SAFE Team Members and MVP existing lists.

Staff has responded to emails received from Milpitas churches and community-based organizations seeking to participate and have informed them that they will be directly connected to organizations in need of volunteers to help distribute and/package the food. It should be noted that county-wide, cities are seeking volunteers under 65 years of age due to the recent mandates.

With the recent Shelter-in-Place order, all seniors 65 and older qualify for Meals on Wheels. Recreation and Community Services staff are contacting current lunch participants and Senior Center members to encourage them to sign up for Meals on Wheels services. Case Manager services at the Senior Center are still provided via phone.

## **Silicon Valley Strong Resource Programs in Development**

### Silicon Valley Strong Fund

Silicon Valley Strong leadership is developing a donation program that would partner with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) to accepting donations and award monies for resident, business and community-based organization assistance programs. Donations would be directed to SVCF, and donors could indicate a geographic preference for their donations. SVCF would partner with experts to ensure donations meet the greatest need.

The Silicon Valley Strong Fund would provide financial assistance to three key groups:

1. Residents, with a focus on those who are at the highest risk of displacement due to illness, caregiving, loss of work hours, and loss of income, both individuals and families with children.
2. Businesses, with a focus on small businesses and microbusinesses that are at risk of closure due to loss of clientele or health and safety restrictions.
3. Community-based organizations, including the unique needs of arts and culture organizations and the impacts to the many other nonprofits serving the vast needs of our diverse community.

A portion of the Silicon Valley Strong Fund specific to the business community would immediately support struggling self-employed and small business owners would be provided. SVCF will partner with the Opportunity Fund, California's largest nonprofit microlender, to ensure critical capital remains

available to these entities throughout this crisis. This new fund will reach hundreds of small businesses throughout the Bay Area and whole of California.

Technical assistance as well as loan and grant funding are intended to provide relief and/or liquidity for self-employed individuals and small businesses. The type of support provided by Opportunity Fund to each business will depend on the business' current situation and may include:

- Loan Payment Relief: For some businesses, three months of loan payments may be forgiven. For other small businesses, one to three months of loan payments may be skipped and added to the end of the loan, payable when the loan matures.
- Affordable Capital: For small businesses that may need new money, a grant may be offered in which 50 percent of the grant amount would go to providing a loan with extended terms and 50 percent would go to a savings account in the name of the borrower.
- Expert Advice: Small business owners will receive technical assistance, including business plan restructuring, bill payment relief, financial and tax advice, marketing strategies, human resource and layoff aversion support and legal support related to contractual obligations.
- Opportunity Fund: Will partner with other Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) in California that are lending to small businesses in their communities and don't have the scale, experience or capacity to support their borrowers during these times.

## Existing Resources and Staff Efforts linked to Silicon Valley Strong

### Housing

Assistance to low-income Santa Clara County residents with a documented loss of income related to COVID-19 impacts due to health, employment, or school/childcare closures is available. Assistance offers up to \$4,000 per month, per household. The program was created by Destination Home, Sacred Heart, and funded through grants from local corporations, foundations, and local governments, and individuals.

The Silicon Valley Strong website will link residents with resources to ensure they remain housed during the COVID-19 crisis. The Building Safety and Housing Department staff have developed a comprehensive resource webpage with a variety of resources for the community, including a link to Silicon Valley Strong, and will continue to add additional homeless prevention resources as they become available. COVID-19 assistance programs can be found on the webpage, as well as program flyers, contact information, and additional homeless prevention resources. This information will be shared with the Silicon Valley Strong leadership to be shared on the effort's webpage(s). The new City page can be viewed here at [City of Milpitas Housing Resource](#).

### Community-Based/Non-Profit Organizations

City staff will be convening community partners, including non-profits and faith-based organizations to understand needs and resources in Milpitas related to COVID-19. This effort will position the City to have a more robust connection between the Silicon Valley Strong initiative and long-standing community partners and will also provide opportunity for organizations to report resource needs to the City.

## Next Steps

All cities participating in the effort will have a link to their COVID-19 information page on the [Silicon Valley Strong website](#). Milpitas' [COVID-19 Information page](#) currently features Silicon Valley Strong under its Community Resources section. Participating cities will be working together to establish an outreach plan so that all residents are informed of the effort and have access to as many resources as possible. Milpitas has several established outreach opportunities such as Recreation customer email lists, business license lists, social media pages, website, and media relations.

A list of Milpitas' partnerships and resources available during the shelter in place order is being developed and will be sent to Silicon Valley Strong for addition to their webpage. These resources could include, but not be limited to, Senior Lunch Program, rental assistance, small business resources, social media and website page sharing, and nonprofit food distribution sites.

Updates on the City's contributions and measurable impacts to the betterment of Milpitas' most vulnerable populations will be reported to the City Council through the City Manager's Office. We anticipate a follow up memo detailing the launch of the Silicon Valley Strong Fund and subsequent programs within the next two weeks.

To view the current Silicon Valley Strong website please use this link: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/mayor-and-city-council/mayor-s-office/silicon-valley-strong>.