

ITEM#: 2  
DATE: 07-21-20

## **COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN CITY BUILDINGS, CYRIDE BUSES, AND PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The City Council discussed mandating face coverings in City buildings during its July 14 meeting. During the closure of City offices and buildings, steps were taken in late April to adopt and implement a face covering/mask policy for all City employees. The policy included providing employees with face coverings/masks and requiring them to be worn in the following situations unless safety protocols indicate otherwise:

- Walking in hallways of City buildings.
- When in work settings where social distancing is not feasible (e.g. close or shared workspaces, shared vehicles, etc.).
- Working in public spaces

If an employee is able to maintain social distancing in an office or other workspace, wearing a face covering/mask is not necessary; however, when the employee leaves that isolated workspace, they need to wear a face covering/mask. Employees may certainly wear a face covering/mask more frequently than the requirements indicate.

Upon re-opening City offices and buildings on July 1, the Governor's public health proclamation was still in effect. In an effort to promote the message of healthy behaviors and set the expectations of conducting business in City buildings, signage was created for all City buildings and prominently displayed including the message that face coverings/masks are "encouraged". This message has evolved into face coverings/masks are "expected" in order to more clearly convey the healthy behavior expectations (Attachment A). Face coverings/masks are made available for customers needing one.

### **CITY BUILDINGS:**

Although City buildings are re-opened for business, there are several plans in place to help keep staff and customers healthy. Those plans include withholding facility tours through the end of the calendar year, limiting conference room use to City meetings only and using social distancing standards within each conference room, and installing

protective equipment such as sneeze guards, hand sanitizer, floor decals, and signage throughout buildings.

In recent weeks, the number of COVID-19 positive cases significantly increased in Story County prompting the need for increased awareness, education, and additional mitigation measures. Consistent messaging is something needed throughout the community and one of the ways to respond to this is by collaborating with Iowa State University on its Cyclones Care Campaign and the 4 pillars of healthy behaviors (Attachment B):

- Wear a face covering
- Distance 6 feet (2M) apart
- Wash your hands often
- Stay home if you are ill

Iowa State University has announced its requirement for wearing face coverings on campus (indoors and outdoors) and area businesses are implementing similar policies. A face covering requirement policy adopted for City buildings would align us with the local medical community and many of our other partners. Thus, sending an important and consistent message to the community.

### **CYRIDE BUSES:**

Many citizens including ISU students are dependent upon public transportation, and CyRide, the City's transit agency, helps meet that need. CyRide follows current City policy with regards to when and where employees are to wear face coverings including the bus drivers wearing them while on duty. **The buses are City property so a face covering requirement for those who ride on CyRide could be included in the same mandate as City buildings.**

However, it's important to note that the management of CyRide is a collaborative effort with ISU and ISU Student Government. Both entities provide funding and have representatives on the Transit Board. The Council has delegated rulemaking authority to the Transit Board on matters such as the use and management of the buses, and the health and welfare (e.g. face coverings) of staff. The Council could mandate face coverings on CyRide buses, but this would essentially be taking back or "un-delegating" from the Transit Board's rulemaking authority regarding this one subject. A more advisable approach, should the City Council want to mandate face coverings on CyRide buses, would be request that the Ames Transit Agency Board of Directors adopt such a mandate.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES:**

If the Council decides to require face coverings/masks in all City buildings, the question arises regarding activities conducted in each of these buildings, specifically Parks and Recreation (P & R) activities. With the reopening of P & R buildings (Ames/ISU Ice Arena, Municipal Pool, Homewood Clubhouse, Community Center), customers were

encouraged and now expected to wear face coverings when in the buildings. However, if the customer was engaged in a physical activity (skating, swimming, golfing, fitness class, etc.), masks have been optional. The wearing of face coverings has varied depending on the building and activity and the differences are shown below:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>% of People Wearing Face Coverings When Entering/Exiting the Bldg</b>	<b>% of People Wearing Face Coverings During the Activity</b>
Ice Arena	Figure Skating Club*	100%	100%
Ice Arena	Ames Minor Hockey	50%	0-5%
Ice Arena	Adult Hockey	80%	10%
Community Center	Fitness Classes	90%	0-5%
Community Center	Walk-in	80%	NA
Community Center	Other Classes	50%	0-5%
Homewood	Clubhouse	10%	0-5%
Municipal Pool	Lap Swimming	90%	0%
Municipal Pool	Swim Lessons	70%	0%

\*The Figure Skating Club requires masks be worn.

When re-opening programs, staff anticipated most people would opt not to wear face coverings when participating in programs. This assumption is based on information provided by the CDC which states that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Provided below is CDC's guidance as it relates to the City's Parks and Recreation activities.

- People should not wear cloth face coverings while engaged in activities that may cause the cloth face covering to become wet, like when swimming at the beach or pool. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe. For activities like swimming, it is particularly important to maintain physical distance from others when in the water.
- People who are engaged in high intensity activities, like running, cycling, may not be able to wear a cloth face covering if it causes difficulty breathing. If unable to wear a cloth face covering, consider conducting the activity in a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where it is possible to maintain physical distance from others.

Although the CDC in bullet Number 2 above states participants in high intensity activities may not be able to wear a mask, it needs noting that the intensity of the workouts is participant specific. What may look low intensity to the casual observer, may in fact be high intensity based on a participants age, physical condition, and/or underlying medical issues. That said, there are some Parks and Recreation programs that participants may be able to wear face coverings including Yoga, Silver Sneakers, and Sylvan classes (Robotics, Coding, etc.). Please note that since Parks and Recreation activities are held

in non-city buildings, participants may be bound by requirements implemented by other entities (e.g. Ames Community School District).

**In order to promote a safe environment for our participants without wearing face coverings, staff is relying on social distancing.** This has been accomplished by limiting the number of people in a class, marking the floor where participants need to stand, and having more time in between classes to avoid participants needing to cross paths when entering and exiting. Additionally, some classes have been moved outdoors to provide more space for social distancing.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. City Council, based on CDC guidance, could do the following effective July 27, 2020:
  - a. Require the wearing of face coverings in all City buildings, and
  - b. Allow staff to determine which Parks and Recreation activities participants are required to wear face coverings, and
  - c. Direct staff to make face coverings available to customers in City buildings who don't have one, and
  - d. Request that the Transit Board to mandate that all riders wear face coverings on CyRide buses.
  
2. City Council could do the following effective July 27, 2020:
  - a. Require face coverings in all City buildings, and
  - b. Require face coverings for all Parks and Recreation indoor activity participants, except swimming related activities in the water, and
  - c. Direct staff to make face coverings available to customers in City buildings who don't have one, and
  - d. Request the Transit Board to mandate that all riders wear face coverings on CyRide buses.
  
3. Direct staff to continue the current approach of:
  - a. Expecting, but not requiring, customers to wear face coverings in City buildings, including CyRide buses, and

- b. Allowing Parks and Recreation participants the option of wearing a face covering during activities, and
  - c. Making face coverings available to customers who don't have one.
4. Delay in making a decision on requiring face coverings in City buildings and for Parks and Recreation activities participants until City Council adopts the criteria that will be utilized to determine whether or not to require face coverings community-wide should the Governor grant authority to the Council.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The public health concerns associated with COVID-19 are expected to continue indefinitely and CDC guidance points to the benefits of wearing face coverings to protect one's self and those in close proximity. A face covering requirement in City buildings helps promote a consistent message throughout the community about healthy behaviors.

The wide variety of potential activities being offered through Parks and Recreation can make it difficult to implement and enforce a one size fits all policy regarding face coverings. Based on the above information, it may be reasonable to require gymnastics participants to wear cloth face coverings, but not participants in a cycling class. **It may be prudent to allow staff to determine which activity participants are to wear face coverings and which ones not using the CDC guidance on cloth face coverings.**

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.



*Smart Choice*

**FACE  
MASKS  
EXPECTED**





**WEAR**  
A FACE COVERING



**DISTANCE**  
6 FEET (2M) APART



**WASH**  
YOUR HANDS OFTEN



**STAY HOME**  
IF YOU ARE ILL