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MAYOR'S OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

City Extends Emergency Disaster Declaration

Mayor Turner Cancels City Events Through April and Announces New Public Meeting Guidelines

March 17, 2020 -- In a special called meeting Tuesday morning, Mayor Sylvester Turner and Houston City Council members voted to indefinitely extend the proclamation of a local state of disaster due to a public health disaster for the City of Houston.

The measure passed 15-1 with District G Council Member Greg Travis voting against it.

The order allows Mayor Turner to make decisions to work with the county, state, and federal officials to contain and mitigate COVID-19 spread and protect members of the public.

"As a city, we must work together. This is a crisis that is going to be with us for several weeks, if not several months," Mayor Turner said. "It is gravely important for us to take definitive steps to slow the COVID-19 spread. The measures we have put in place will help save lives."

Last week, Mayor Turner signed the disaster declaration, which was in effect for seven days.

Mayor Turner also announced Tuesday:

- All city-produced, sponsored and permitted events are canceled through the end of April.
- Starting Tuesday, March 24, no proclamation presentations will be made during the city council public session
- The city of Houston remains open for business. However, employees are encouraged to limit exposure to members of the public and handle business online, if possible
- City of Houston Department Directors have the discretion to allow employees to work from home/telecommute
- The Houston Public Library will remain closed through the end of March. The HPL suspension includes all public programs and events. However, free online resources and digital services are available 24/7 with a

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MY Link Library Card at www.houstonlibrary.org, including e-books and e-audiobooks, streaming TV, movie and music services, online classes and tutoring, and databases.

On Monday, Mayor Turner ordered all city of Houston bars, nightclubs, and restaurant dining rooms in the city of Houston to close for 15 days.

Restaurants may only offer take-out, pick-up, and delivery options for 15 days. However, customers may still go inside a restaurant dining room or at a fast-food establishment, to place a carryout order.

The city of Houston expects to begin COVID-19 testing this week. Mayor Turner will announce the testing site procedures and logistics later this week.

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