

CITY OF SOLDOTNA
RESOLUTION 2021-036

A RESOLUTION REQUIRING THAT MASKS BE WORN IN PUBLIC INDOOR PORTIONS OF
CITY-OWNED BUILDINGS, WHILE THE CENTRAL KENAI PENINSULA IS EXPERIENCING
SUBSTANTIAL OR HIGH TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19

WHEREAS, on July 27, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their public health recommendations given new evidence on the highly transmissible B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant of the virus that causes COVID-19, which is now the dominant variant circulating in Alaska and around the United States; and

WHEREAS, the CDC's updated guidance includes a recommendation that all people, including fully vaccinated people, wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC notes that until vaccination coverage is high, communities and organizations should regularly assess the need for prevention strategies, based on five critical factors, including: 1) level of SARS-CoV-2 community transmission; 2) health system capacity; 3) vaccination coverage; 4) capacity for early detection of increases in COVID-19 cases; and 5) populations at risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, despite drops in case counts this spring and early summer, all regions of the Kenai Peninsula Borough have seen a marked increase in COVID-19 cases over the past two months, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough is currently in high alert status for per capita incidence of new cases of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association, as well as representatives from Central Peninsula Hospital, have expressed concerns about the capacity of our local health care system to respond to rapid increases in COVID-19 cases and related hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recognizes that increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage remains the most important public health action to end the pandemic. Vaccination coverage in the greater Soldotna area remains lower than other portions of the state, with Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) data indicating that approximately 33% of Alaska residents in the greater Soldotna area, and 37% of residents across the Kenai Peninsula are fully vaccinated against COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, 64% of Kenai Peninsula residents age 65 and older, a group at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, are fully vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, children under the age of 12 are not eligible for vaccination at this time and the CDC recommends implementing other protection strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, the CDC reports that proven effective strategies against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) transmission, beyond vaccination, include using masks consistently and correctly, maximizing ventilation, maintaining physical distance, and avoiding crowds; and

WHEREAS, basic public health measures such as staying home when sick, handwashing, and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces are also encouraged; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City of Soldotna and its residents to update protocols at city buildings to align with new public health guidance, in order to minimize preventable illness and death during the current surge of COVID-19 cases;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLDOTNA, ALASKA:

- Section 1. When the central Kenai Peninsula is in the substantial or high alert level for community transmission of COVID-19, as defined in Section 2, all persons shall wear a mask while in public indoor portions of City-owned buildings.
- Section 2. Substantial or high alert occurs when either of the following two criteria is met: there are more than 50 new cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 persons in the central Kenai Peninsula over the past 7 days; or the percentage of positive COVID-19 tests in the past 7 days exceeds 8%.
- Section 3. City of Soldotna buildings covered under this policy include the main lobby and Council Chambers of Soldotna City Hall, the Soldotna Public Library, the Soldotna Regional Sports Complex, and the public lobby or customer areas of the Soldotna Police Department, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Maintenance Shop.
- Section 4. The City Manager has authority to interpret and apply limited exceptions to this policy (e.g. individuals removing their mask or face covering to eat or drink, individuals performing an activity that cannot be conducted or safely conducted while wearing a mask, individuals who cannot tolerate a mask due to physical or mental disability, etc.). This policy shall not apply to children under the age of 2 years.
- Section 5. In addition to wearing masks, people entering City facilities are encouraged to practice other effective strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including: maintaining physical distance, avoiding crowds, and practicing basic public health measures such as staying home when sick, handwashing, and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
- Section 6. This resolution shall become effective Monday, August 16, 2021 at 8:00 a.m., and shall remain in effect until either repealed or amended by the City Council.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THIS 11TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2021.

Paul J. Whitney, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michelle M. Saner, MMC, City Clerk

Yes:
No:
Absent: