

ACONA Meeting Notes November 18, 2020

After introductions, the following topics were covered:

Getting Prepared for the Next Fire

Speaker: Chief Kristian Litz, LA County Fire Department

Notification: LA County Alert system: alert.lacounty.gov. If there is a need to evacuate, the Fire Department will send out alerts.

- Hardening the structure. Defensible space: Make sure there's nothing flammable. In the area around your house. Embers are the greatest danger. They can fly in through attic vents if the vents aren't equipped with metal mesh covering. (Note that this will keep embers out, but if your eaves are on fire the wire mesh won't keep the attic from burning. If you have to leave, close all your windows, but leave the back door unlocked if possible so the Fire Department can get in if your house is on fire. Don't need to shut off utilities. Fire Department will take turn off if it's necessary. If you have electric pumps for water tanks, then leave the electricity on. Curtains should be removed because the heat of the fire could ignite them. Shutters are okay; they should be closed.
- Fire Department brings in water tenders. If you have a water tank, make sure the area is clear so the Fire Department can get access. Swimming pools are a great source of water. If you have to leave, unlock the gate to the pool area.
- Pack what you need ahead of time. Make sure you include medications, clean clothes, computers and media in what you pack. Put them in your car so you can just drive away. Don't forget pets if you have to evacuate. Stay calm. Priority for fires is perimeter control, but as soon as structures are threatened, focus moves to structures
- Sheriff's Department is mostly doing the notifications. They send a text to notify people that they have to evacuate.
- Comment: The next fire code will specify no flammable material within 5 feet of the house. Will probably be a rule in two years and you probably won't be able to get a permit without complying.
- Firesafe vents: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire/Prepare/Building/Vents/>

Homelessness in Altadena

Speaker: Dana Rae Vanderford, Homelessness Policy Deputy, LA County

- 2020 homeless count: 49 people in Altadena; 84% unsheltered (living in cars, vans, RVs, or on the street). Homeless count is usually done in January but because of Covid the way it's carried out may have to change. Anticipate more homelessness as a result of Covid's effect on the economy.
- Project Roomkey: Funded by FEMA. To bring highly vulnerable (re Covid), unsheltered homeless into motels and hotels. Across the county 4500 people were able to be sheltered. Several sites in Pasadena, several in San Gabriel Valley. None in Altadena, but Altadena homeless are eligible. Project is ramping down. Anyone who was housed will be offered housing alternatives.
- Project Homekey: State funding to acquire hotel and motel housing. Path to sustainable housing. Ten sites, most now Project Roomkey sites, will be purchased.
- Recovery Rehousing Plans: Covid has brought home how untenable it is to have so many unsheltered homeless. Target: 15,000 people, prioritizing vulnerable individuals.
- How to get people into the program: la-hop.org site can be used to make a referral.
- Mental health resources: All Project Roomkey sites are staffed with trained individuals to address mental and physical health and transition to more permanent housing.
- How to help folk living in the canyons even if they're happy there (service resistance): Still trying to connect those folk with services — resources, housing.

- How are you dealing with NIMBY? Confusing supportive housing with homeless shelters.: Talk to the neighbors and educate them about the difference and address their concerns and fears.
- What is available locally: If you are in the San Gabriel Valley you are potentially eligible for services. Dana is working with smaller cohorts of cities to provide housing for local homeless (i.e., local prioritization), to combat the fear that supportive housing will be a magnet for homeless everywhere in the county.
- Dana's email address: dvanderford@bos.lacounty.gov

COVID Update

Speaker: Millicent Wilson, M.D., Disaster Training Specialist

- County numbers are high. Positivity rate is about 5%. In the US, there have been over a quarter-million fatalities. Goal is to flatten the curve so that we're under the health care system's capacity (many states are now over capacity). Three C's: Avoid Crowded places, Confined spaces, Close contact with those you don't live with. Do: wear a mask, wash hands, clean/disinfect.
- Infected individuals could potentially be infectious from 5-30 days.
- 1 in 580 in LA county are infectious to others (data from week of Nov. 11)
- People who are asymptomatic can also be spreaders.
- R (transmission rate) is at 1.18 right now (increasing; was 1.03). Anything above 1 is not good.
- LA County has 73 emergency (911) hospitals.
- South LA and East LA have high spread rates. San Gabriel Valley is also rather high, but could be bleed-over from East LA (hospital admissions)
- LA County is resource rich: has an adequate number of staffed ICU beds; there is still plenty of excess capacity; also have plenty of ventilators.
- Vaccines are coming: 2-3 (Pfizer, Moderna, Astra Zeneca) will be here probably before the end of the year. Emergency authorization use will probably be granted next week. Logistics problem: Have to be stored at really cold temperatures (Pfizer at -100F). Not all hospitals have that refrigeration capability. (No, they don't inject it at that temperature — it's brought to room temp but has a limited use window once that happens: 5-24 hours depending on the vaccine.) Vaccination will be provided in phases (see slide). General public probably won't have access until April or May.
- Treatment options: Bamlanivimab monoclonal antibody and Remdesivir anti-viral medication are available (or on the way).
- Potential Covid hot spots: Holiday gatherings, schools reopening.
- How long will the vaccines impart immunity? Still learning this. More info over time. Don't know yet if this will be a one-time vaccine or will have to be given annually like the flu vaccine.
- Testing wait times were an hour in Altadena this week.

Q&A

(Incorporated in the notes above.)