

December 4, 2020  
City of Manzanita Workshop  
Prologue

For the past ten months the Mayor and Manzanita City Council have devoted an enormous amount of time to learning about and managing the city's response to the SARS COV-2 or COVID 19 virus; Often in the face of very little or conflicting information from national, state and local sources. (These Weekly updates are to keep all of us informed about what is happening with the pandemic locally. The mayor's videos are providing a wider audience with what we know and promoting safety, the public works signage, the STR community defining engaging in safe practice protocols, and our merchants and restaurants complying with known safety protocols for our visitors. City government has done a lot, and a lot has been accomplished with the cooperation of the residents of the city.)

Manzanita and our adjacent communities and Tillamook County as a whole have been fortunate to have a low incidence of the disease up until now. Today, not unexpectedly, we are seeing an increase in the number of cases in Tillamook County and this is cause for concern.

### **SARS COV-2 in Manzanita—An Update**

This first week of December presents a difficult choice for the Council regarding actions we should take to protect of our residents from Covid-19 over the next month.

While Manzanita and our neighboring communities have had remarkably low rates of infection until this past September; that is no longer the case. Now we have to deal with the presence of the disease among our residents and the consequences of the influx of people during the holiday season. How we handle this will have a long term impact on the city!

Pandemic fatigue is real and there is increased restlessness to go back to 'normal'. Now is not the time.

One of our great risks that we face is that people from elsewhere will continue to think that the Tillamook Coast is a safe haven from the virus, and will have reduced restrictions. It is not a safe haven, and the newest data confirm the rapid expansion of positive cases in our area and our increased risk going forward. The second is that with the media announcements of vaccines, people will think the pandemic is over and they no longer need to exercise cautions of masks, washing, and distancing. This is where it is the responsibility of the Council to be prudent and take actions that continue to provide the best education and protection for our community by reinforcing these personal responsibility efforts and reassessing how we will manage visitors to the community. We have heard before whenever Manzanita needs help, a group of skilled citizens will step up to serve. This is true for this public health crisis. The Citizens Public Health ADVISORY Group is made up of our local residents with long professional careers in public health. In Addition to Dr. Holt, our group includes Dr. Margaret Steele, Dr. Patricia Johnson, Jeremy Sappington, and Madeline Olsen. Two ad-hoc members from the city council (Council President Linda Kozlowski and me) are also part of the group and two ad-hoc members from the Tillamook County Health Department, Robin Watts and Ed Colson.

I have said in these Friday meetings before we are largely on our own in this pandemic. We need to stay focused and informed. In using our local assets to help in dissecting the data, we can gain a better understanding of the risks today and the urgency of these risks. The one thing that we all know

is true, is that there will be no do-over, no going back to fix things later. Therefore, we need to be decisive in the actions of the council and the staff each day. I want to consider the options we have before us.

**Decision Options for the City Council:**

- a. Do we want to keep the current protocols of shutdown (freeze) and not proceed with the lifting of these restrictions by the state until the OHA modifies its recommendations in two weeks?
- b. Do we want to follow the current protocol for Moderate Risk and lift current restrictions now knowing that soon we will likely be required to set more stringent shutdown protocols? Is the whip-saw of our merchants on opening and then nearly immediately having to close down again or have even more restrictions worth it and fair to them?
- c. Do we return to our previous more stringent protocols from last spring now, which will likely reduce some of the infection rate in our community in the weeks and months ahead?

**Where Do we Stand Today?**

The newest designation from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) ranks Tillamook County as Moderate Risk. HOWEVER, this is based on information of the rate of positive tests and infections from now three weeks ago. Using more current scientific data from the OHA, Tillamook County is currently showing positive tests in the 10.2% which would put us in the EXTREME RISK category; and likely the OHA will make this call in the weeks ahead.

Unfortunately, the OHA, just yesterday changed its formula for calculating risk in the different counties. While yesterday the number of positive tests were 10.2%, today they re-calculated this at 4.5%, but we don't yet know how they will adjust the categories based on this change. They now say that they will begin to report data using the new system in a couple of weeks. So we will be without data on testing for this period.

Activities in the Moderate Risk Category	Activities in the Extreme Risk Category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor gatherings max 8 people, 2 households</li> <li>• Outdoor gatherings max 10, no household limit</li> <li>• Indoor dining at 50% capacity, outdoors 150 max</li> <li>• Gyms, fitness centers, pools at 50% capacity</li> <li>• Indoor entertainment facilities at 50% capacity</li> <li>• Retail shops, groceries, pharmacies at 75% capacity</li> <li>• Indoor/outdoor shopping malls at 75%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor gatherings max 6 people, 2 households</li> <li>• Outdoor gatherings max 6 people, 2 households</li> <li>• Takeout dining recommended, outdoors 50 max</li> <li>• Gyms, fitness centers, pools closed</li> <li>• Indoor entertainment facilities closed</li> <li>• Retail shops, groceries, pharmacies at 50% capacity</li> <li>• Indoor/outdoor shopping malls at 50% capacity</li> <li>• Faith institutions at 25% capacity (100)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capacity</li> <li>Faith institutions at 50% capacity (150 max indoors)</li> <li>Outdoor recreation/entertainment centers 150 max</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>max indoors)</li> <li>Outdoor recreation/entertainment centers 50 max</li> </ul>
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There is no category for protocols for how to address motels and other short term accommodations other than the indoor gathering restrictions. Nor is their guidance on how to educate people to 'stay at home' protocols.

**How is this risk determined?**

**Criteria for Each Risk Category Tier for Oregon Counties, Dec. 3, 2020**

Disease Activity	Lower Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Extreme Risk
Rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 over 14 days (counties with 30,000 or more people)	<50.0	50.0 to <100.0	100.0 to <200.0	≥200.0
-or-				
Number of COVID-19 cases over 14 days (counties with less than 30,000 people)	<30	30 to <45	45 to <60	≥60
-and-				
Percentage test positivity over previous 14 days	<5.0%	5.0% to <8.0%	8.0% to <10.0%	≥10.0%

Tillamook County Health Department does not have a resident staff to interpret the local raw data and is dependent on the delayed information they get from the Oregon Health Authority, OHA. On the North Tillamook Citizens Health Advisory Committee we do have a qualified epidemiologist and other public health professionals who are monitoring the data daily from the OHA on Tillamook County and are advising and warning us to what to expect. They are doing the analyses and calculations that provide the projections we are sharing with the Council for their decision-making.

These risk categories are determined by a county’s statistics on two Covid-19 indicators: 1) the rate or number of new cases over the most recent 14 days, and 2) the percentage of Covid-19 tests that are positive over the previous 14 days.

Because the population of Tillamook County is under 30,000, our county is evaluated on the number of

new cases rather than the rate of new cases, as well as the percentage test positivity.

For the first two weeks of this new protocol (12/3 – 12/16) Tillamook County has been classified by the state as being in the “Moderate Risk” category. Although as the more recent data below indicate, this is moderate risk ranking is unlikely to continue as the testing today shows that we are already meeting the standard for the Extreme Risk category.

SLIDE FOR PERFORMANCE ON METRICS

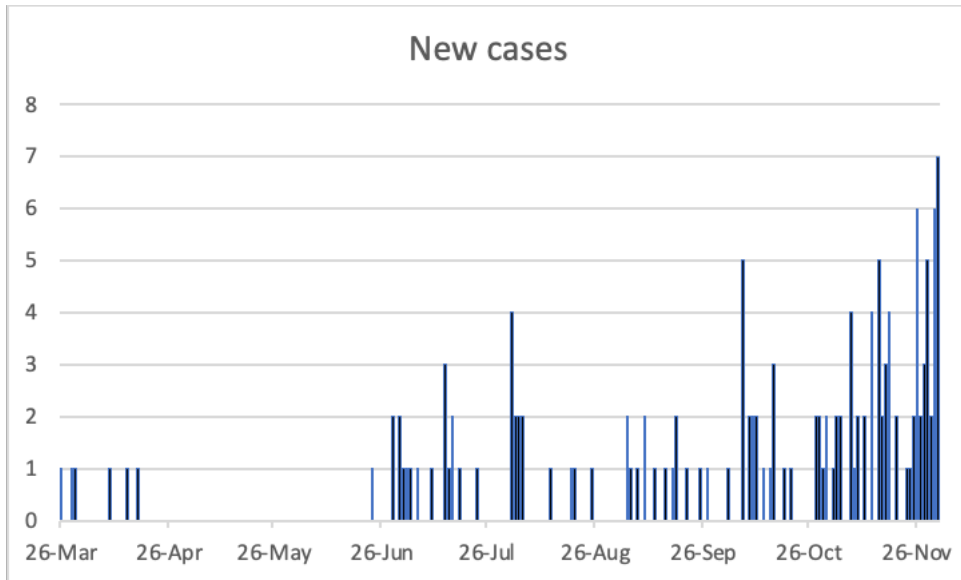
**Tillamook County performance on metrics  
determining risk category tier**

- **Number of Covid-19 cases over 14 days:**  
11/15-11/28      **31**
  
- **Percent test positivity over past 14 days:**  
11/15-11/28      **10.2%**  
(24 positive tests out of 236 tests  
done on county residents)

According to information available on the Oregon Health Authority website, Tillamook County had 31 reported Covid-19 cases in the 14 days ending 11/28. During this period, 10.2% of the Covid-19 tests done on county residents have been positive (24 positive tests out of 236 tests done).

The number of cases in the last two weeks would put Tillamook County in the “Moderate Risk” category, but the high percentage of tests that are positive means that Tillamook County should be in the “Extreme Risk” category, but the number of cases is now also rising at a fast rate.

**How bad is the current surge in terms of the number of cases in Tillamook County.**



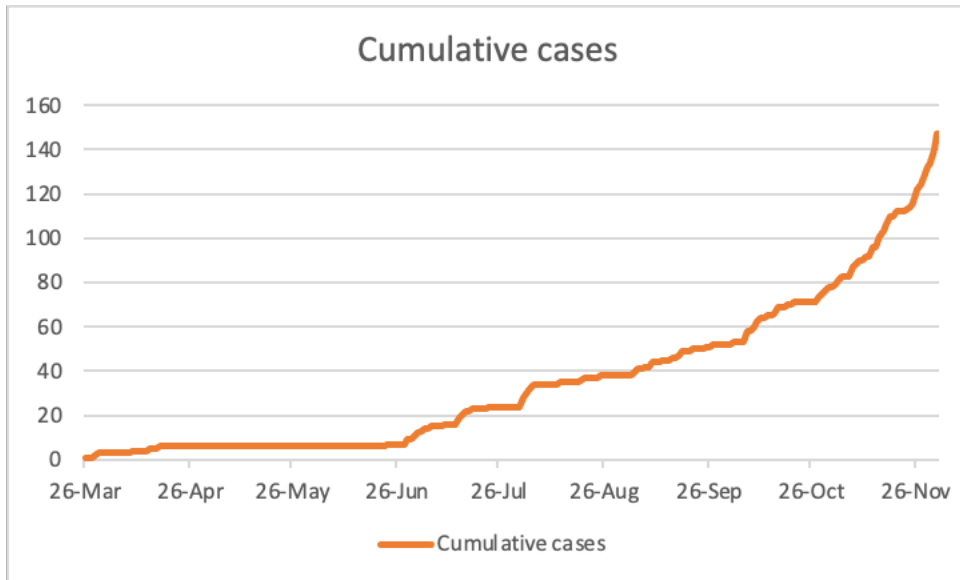
### What do we know about the rate of increase in cases?

- Tillamook County’s first case was reported on March 26. There were few cases until July, and new cases were stable in July, August and September, with 14-15 reported in each of these months. New cases nearly doubled in October, with 26 reported. New cases more than doubled in November, to 56.
- Tillamook County has reported 31 new cases in the past 7 days, with the highest-ever number reported on 12/2, Wednesday (7 new cases). If there are no changes in personal behaviors or county protocols, we might expect a more than doubling of cases this month, resulting in more new Tillamook County cases in December alone (137) than there have been in all previous months of the pandemic combined (132)
- The data are reported only for Tillamook County residents. If a visitor comes to Manzanita and then tests positive, their positive test result is reported in the county of their primary residence, not in Tillamook County, even though they may have contracted or spread the disease through their interactions in Manzanita.
- Additional explanations can be found from the wastewater testing. When we look at the data from BioBot Analytics. From their analysis, we have seen the virus concentration go from undetectable in October 2020, to a normalized virus concentration of 44,556 per liter in the November 16, 2020 sample, and 109,652 per liter in the sample taken on November 23, 2020. The increase in these standard indicators shows the increased presence of the virus in our wastewater and are additional data supporting what we are seeing in the increase in infection rate and positive testing rate as reported by the OHA. Unlike testing, this wastewater data includes not only residents but visitors to our community.

We know that infected individuals can shed SARS-CoV-2 regardless of whether they have symptoms. Moreover, infected individuals shed the virus most frequently immediately after contracting COVID-19 and usually start shedding the virus seven days before they show symptoms.

**The lesson here is that we cannot fight the virus from behind; we are chasing it now, it is**

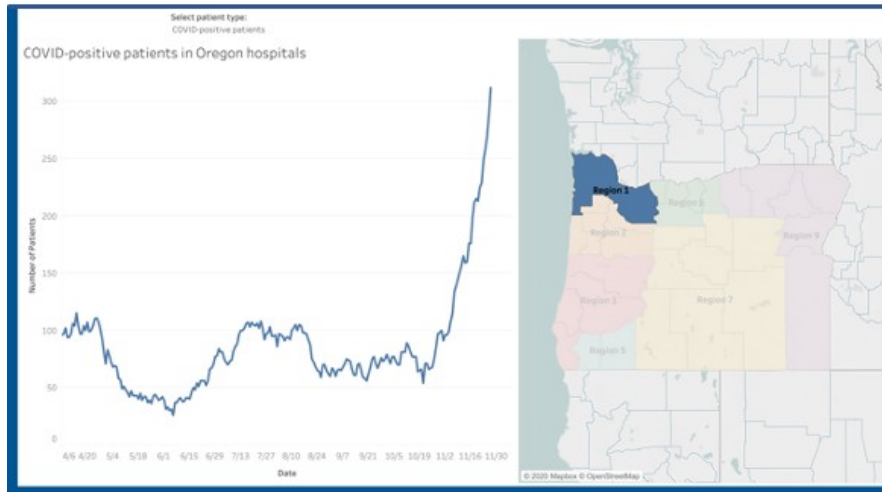
already two weeks in front of us and will stay in front of us if we do not take PREVENTIVE actions.



- This is another way to look at the same information presented on the previous page. This graph shows the cumulative (or total) number of cases that have been reported in Tillamook County since the first case was reported on March 26.
- What you can see more easily from this graph is the speed at which new cases occur – much faster now than it was prior to October. The nearly vertical line for November indicates that the rate at which new cases occur is accelerating dramatically.

**Why is the accelerating rate of Covid-19 cases of concern in Tillamook county?** What resources are available to our residents who become ill?

## Covid-19 Hospitalizations in Oregon Region 1 (includes Tillamook County)



Over 1/4 of the county's residents are age 65 or older, as are over 1/3 of Manzanita's residents. Older people are much more likely need to be hospitalized if they get infected with the coronavirus than young people are.

### **The risk of not having access to hospital beds is a real issue for our residents.**

The problem is complicated by the fact that Oregon has the fewest number of hospital beds per capita of any state in the nation.

Tillamook County has only one hospital, with 25 beds maximum, (And only staffing for 17 beds) so hospitalizations our residents is often elsewhere. The state considers our county part of Region 1 when determining hospital capacity. This includes Clatsop, Tillamook, Columbia, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties. As you can see, the number of people in our region who are hospitalized with Covid-19 has skyrocketed in the last 4 weeks from these five counties, to over 300. Currently there are 183 non-ICU beds available (out of 1903 total non-ICU beds in the region), and 72 ICU beds available (out of 329 ICU beds). Our region will soon be out of available hospital beds if the number of new Covid-19 cases needing hospitalization increases as projected and anticipated. Hospitals in our Region 1 have already begun to limit elective surgery to save hospital beds for Covid-19 patients.

We hear that most people recover from the virus, especially youth and young adults. But what too few people are talking about is the 'other' cost of this disease. 35% of the people of all ages who have the virus and recover have long term effects that in many cases interferes with their ability to work or live a normal life. Chronic fatigue, neurological problems brain fog and pain, and kidney and stomach/intestinal chronic disorders are being documented as lasting for months and we don't know yet how long these effects will last or how to treat them.

We have one tool to protect our community. That, as everyone here knows by now, is continuing the emphasis on personal responsibility and expecting people to stay home and use masks, hand washing and social distancing to stay healthy.

As I heard this week from a Manzanita store owner: The residents of Manzanita are wonderful and will do everything to keep our businesses going, but I am tired of arguing with the visitors, especially from other states, that masks and other safety measures are required in my store. I prefer it when they walk out tell me they are disgusted with my rules. I need to keep my staff and myself safe and would do just fine without the visitors right now. I want to live see the other end of the virus period bring our community back.

Yesterday, I saw a NYTimes article using an index that tracks policy responses to the pandemic. This article analyzed outbreaks in each state relative to the states most recent containment measures. It should be no surprise that the surge is worst now in places where leaders neglected to keep up forceful virus containment efforts or failed to implement basic measures like mask mandates. Outbreaks were comparatively smaller in states where the efforts to contain the virus were stronger over the summer and fall.

From this information, we can again ask what are the Decision Options for the City Council:

- a. Do we want to keep the current protocols of shutdown (freeze) and not proceed with the recent lifting of these restrictions by the state until the OHA modifies its recommendations in two weeks?
- b. Do we want to follow the current protocol for Moderate Risk and lift current restrictions now knowing that soon we will likely be required to set more stringent shutdown protocols? Is the whip-saw of our merchants on opening and then nearly immediately having to close down again or have even more restrictions worth it and fair to them?
- c. Do we return to our previous more stringent protocols from the spring now, which will likely reduce some of the infection rate in our community in the weeks and months ahead?

The answer to this, more than almost any other, is a moral decision. What shall we do?

Submitted by Councilor Thomas Aschenbrener in conjunction with the North Tillamook County Citizens Public Health Advisory Group.



