

# COVID After Action Report

## Public Safety & Human Services Committee

June 14, 2022

OEM Director Curry Mayer



# After Action Process

- After an emergency response or exercise - review operations
- Normal part of process to ensure strengths and areas where improvement needed captured
- Not a “grade” or process for pointing out what went wrong
- Ensures continuous improvement
- Seattle ahead of Regional partners in process
  - Some recommendations based on actions partners will take.

# Overview

- EOC Coordination began in January 2020
- Biweekly responder surveys spring and summer 2020
- Supplemental Emergency Management Performance Grant in September 2020
- BERK, Inc under contract between September 2020-December 2021
- Wave 1 Rapid Assessment in November 2020

# Final Report, December 2021

- Based on:
  - 60+ interviewees,
  - Pulse check surveys,
  - Input from AAR Committee
- Focus on *citywide coordination*—many departments/functions did their own assessment
- Reviewed by Disaster Management Committee(DMC) – early 2022
- **Approved by Emergency Executive Board (EEB) – March 2022**

# Unique Nature of COVID Emergency

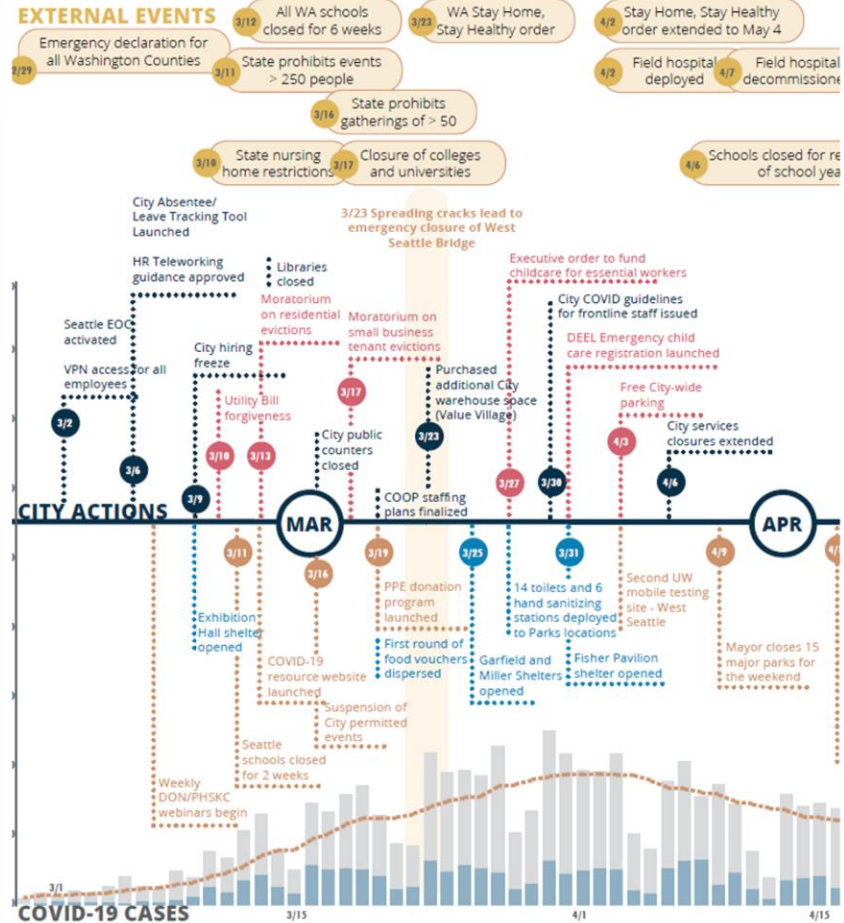
- Seattle first city in the nation to respond
- Public Health was the lead agency
- Guidance evolved at all levels of government
- Impact on all aspects of life – new policies for work environment
- EOC operations virtual
- Global scale meant resources for PPE, vaccines, and cleaning supplies exhausted quickly
- Duration compounded all factors

# Major Findings

- Strong commitment to science-based approach—strong public health outcomes
- Unprecedented number of policy decisions
- Citywide Logistics improvements
- Focus on equity in community services
- Shift to remote operations
- Challenges with internal coordination and staff equity

## Seattle COVID-19 Response: Summary of Major Milestones

March - June 2020 | Last Updated December 22, 2021 | *Note: Some, but not all external events and actions*



# Purpose & Structure of Report

- Identification of strengths, lessons learned, areas of improvement
- Three core criteria
  - Effectiveness of city response – overall response was effective. Deep dives - seven functional areas
  - Efficiency – Did city make effective use of resources, staff time, partner time – report highlights efficiency recommendations
  - Equity – Was response equitable for staff, residents and other stakeholders – analysis considers how limited resources targeted to those with greatest need.
- Eight Sections = Deep Dive focus areas

# Functional Deep Dives

1. Policy Setting and Operational Coordination
2. Continuity of Operations
3. Logistics and Supply Chain Management
4. Public Information
5. Testing and Vaccination
6. Social and Human Services
7. Support for Businesses and Economic Recovery
8. Staff Redeployment



# 1. Policy Setting & Operational Coordination successes

- Mayor's Office served as policy setting body
  - Followed science and consistent with City, County & State messaging and actions
- Rapid creation of new personnel policies
- Strong policy focus on equity & social justice
- Cabinet met via conference call daily to consult with Mayor's Office.
- Mayor's Office actively reached out to other levels of government for alignment.

# 1. Policy Setting & Operational Coordination Recommendations

- Increase the accessibility of emergency planning documents
- Train and exercise plans and procedures
- Establish plans for rapid decision making
  - Use of Incident Command System (ICS)
  - Identify experts early
- Strengthen selection, authority and visibility of EOC reps

# Policy Setting & Operational Coordination Recommendations (2)

- Virtual coordination caused info-sharing challenges
  - Review & revise info sharing protocols
  - Strengthen & practice project management tools for virtual environment
  - Expand use of Teams & programs other than email
- Reliance on external partners requires role clarification

# 2. Continuity of Operations Successes

- OEM led effort to update Department COOPs
  - Pre-COVID
- Rapid deployment of technology & staff pivots led to ability to continue essential services
- ITD rapidly deployed laptops – remote work support
- New programs & policies to support employees
- SDHR developed tools to optimize approach to staffing

## 2. Continuity of Operations recommendations

- Department Directors involved in writing, approval, & training of Dept COOPS
- Regular review and discussion of Citywide COG by leadership
- Codify pandemic driven changes to Departmental COOP & align with emergency management planning



# Continuity of Operations recommendations (2)

- Continue expansion of City use of technology tools (WebEx)
  - Schedule quarterly seminars with Dept Directors
- Use technology & provide in person services for residents
- Continued grace for flexible schedule & work/life balance
- Improve employee communications
  - Align staff communication strategies with best practices for operational coordination

# 3. Logistics & Supply Chain Management successes

- FAS implemented policy & protocols for ordering and distributing of supplies
- FAS, OEM, & other departments set up mass testing and vaccination sites, including Lumen Field
- New logistics management mechanisms and 30k sq. ft. warehouse space



# 3. Logistics & Supply Chain Management Recommendations

- Align City, County & State Logistics staff to reconcile challenges
- Retain centralized purchasing and warehousing functions for key supplies in future emergencies
- Need to preserve budget to maintain supply of equipment & materials
  - No reserve funding; Department orders come out of Dept budgets





# Logistics & Supply Chain Management recommendations (2)

- Improve coordination between purchasing and finance functions
  - CBO now has access to WebEOC
  - HSD – resource request practice in Cascadia exercise
  - Updated training for EOC reps
  - Expanding Dept use of WebEOC in disasters

# Public Information successes4.

- Coordination between Governor's Office, KC Exec. Office, Seattle MO, & PHSKC exemplary for public messaging
- Concerted effort to reach BIPOC and LEP communities
- City assisted PHSKC with staffing for their Joint information Center (JIC).



# 4. Public Information Recommendations

- Establish more formalized function for information sharing with County & State
  - Establish liaison sharing procedure ahead of next disaster
- City Joint Information Center (JIC) staff participation in Regional exercises
- JIC staff needed from all city departments
- Identify additional JIC supervisory staff
- Formalize opening/closing of JIC
- Need for more accessible communication methods
- Depts need to write, socialize, and practice language access plans



# 5. Testing & Vaccination Successes

- City's testing and vaccination programs were a model both regionally & nationally.
- Within five months, Fire expanded from 1<sup>st</sup> responders to nursing home, mobile teams and community sites
- City stood up vaccine clinics; mobile teams, pop-up sites, in-home, and fixed sites
- 260,000 vaccines to 134,000 people over 7 months
  - Reached high numbers of BIPOC individuals of all ages.



# 5. Testing & Vaccination Recommendations

- Maintain a state of readiness for 1<sup>st</sup> responders – administer tests & vaccines
- Maintain an inventory of 12 weeks supply of person protective equipment (PPE)
- Advocate for legislative change to hasten process for 1<sup>st</sup> responders to provide tests & vaccines
- Develop local funding plan for operations



# Testing & Vaccination recommendations (2)

- Explore additional spots for drive- thru testing
- Stockpile generic testing materials
- Develop plans for priority setting & logistics for vaccine delivery
- Formalize roles with regional partners
- Streamline contracts and purchasing



# Testing & Vaccination recommendations (3)

- Establish parallel messaging for online and direct delivery for non-tech
- Engage ADA compliance resources within FAS to increase accessibility of sites
- Continue investments in community navigation – use models from OIRA, DON, PHSKC, & community orgs.
- Work with partners for single phone info line



# Testing & Vaccination recommendations (4)

- Invest in public education and trust building prior to next event
- Maintain three-pronged approach to reach most vulnerable
  - Mobile teams
  - Community hubs (Rainier Beach, West Seattle)
  - High volume sites (Lumen Field)





# 6. Social & Human Services Successes

- Services for Aging, Disabled populations; mass care shelter & hygiene for those experiencing homelessness, emergency childcare
  - Rapid de-intensified shelter sites
  - Deployed more hygiene stations
  - Vouchers for 1 million meals – homeless
  - 1 million meals served to older adults
- DEEL – AAR led to new Emergency Childcare Plan



## 6. Social & Human Services Recommendations

- Involve community partners in plans and exercises for pandemic operations
- Include community partners in purchasing, logistics and access to PPE through city
- Develop plans for accessing resources such as National Guard for emergency operations
- Public Health emergency included new external partners
  - Multi-cultural planning & exercises needed



# 6. Social & Human Services Recommendations (2)

- Lack of pre-existing infrastructure & resources hampered City's ability to scale programs
  - Influx of American Rescue Plan funds \$300 mil
    - Digital equity, childcare, housing, homelessness services
- Continued investment in foundation infrastructure needed



# 7. Support for Business & Economic Recovery Successes

- Small Business Stabilization Fund (SBSF) provided 10K in grants for business with 25 or fewer employees
  - BIPOC owners – 66% - rounds 1 & 5, & round for restaurants/bars
- City's paid sick leave and safe time for those still working
- New ordinances for gig workers
- Strong interdepartmental coordination for technical support for small businesses
  - Social distancing, capacity limits, operating in public right of way
- Public Space activations; Welcome Back Weeks, support to downtown businesses



# 7. Support for Business & Economic Recovery Recommendations

- Capture lessons learned to target support to business owners not supported by state or federal programs
- Hold listening sessions with large employers to understand where they need support
- Institutionalize processes to expand SPSF
- Maintain Race & Social Justice Index, Displacement Risk Index, and other data for targeting limited resources



# 7. Support for Business & Economic Recovery Recommendations (2)

- Document interdepartmental actions for support to businesses, labor, housing, food security, childcare
- Expand communications & technical assistance for business owners who speak languages other than English
- Expand workforce development & retraining
  - Emergency staffing plan needed – OED & Labor Standards
- Further leverage interdepartmental collaborations & community partners for access to resources – understand community needs



# 8. Staff Redeployment Successes

- Early in pandemic, redeployment was personal – issued by individuals – staff responded
- Later, agreements signed by City & Labor reps
- ITD developed technology platform for large scale redeployment of staff



# 8. Staff Redeployment Recommendations

- Shared understanding of need for redeployments during emergency response
- Establish template agreements with Labor for redeployment
- Augment technology platform
  - Inventory of skill sets
  - Define skill sets most needed
  - Practice redeployment in exercises
- Update enterprise systems and centralize HR functions





# Improvement Plan

- Developed with Department input
  - Strategic Working Group (SWG)
  - Timeline included
- Actions based on recommendations in each section (Deep Dive)
- Lead and supporting departments
- Many improvement items will be addressed in infectious disease plan update
- Others pertain to Emergency Operations Plan update



# Next Steps

- Input on partner jurisdictions'/organizations' AARs
  - Seattle's AAR started first
- Continue work on Improvement Items
  - Emergency Operations Plan Revision
  - Infectious Disease Plan revision (aligned with Public Health)



**Questions...**