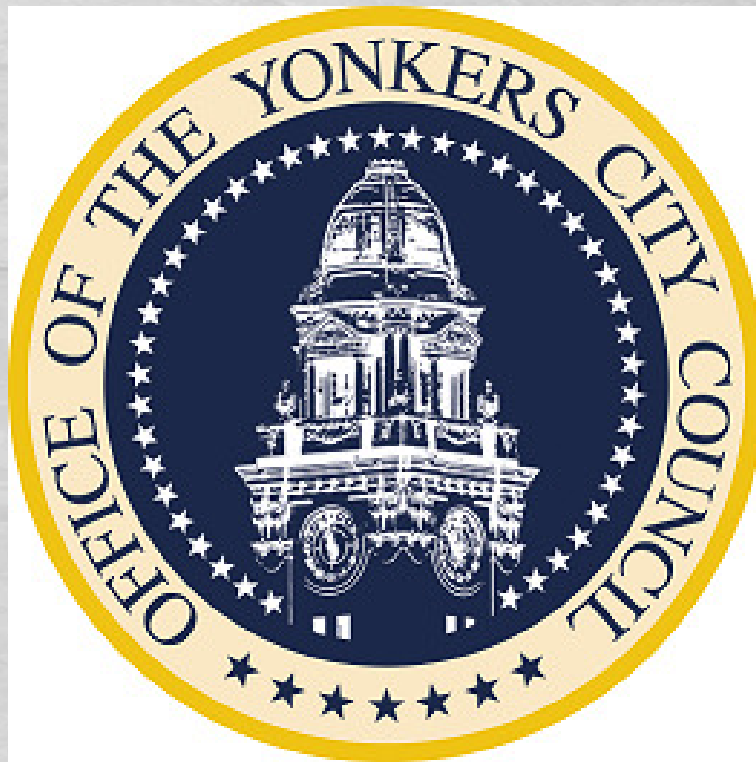


Yonkers Free Press

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Last week, a special meeting of the City Council was held to address several urgent issues arising from the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

YONKERS CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS CALL FOR COVID-19 MOBILE TESTING SITE IN YONKERS ANSWERED BY NEW YORK STATE

By ANAND SINGH

YONKERS, NY At city council meeting, a resolution was introduced by Councilwoman Shanae Williams (D1), cosponsored by City Council President Mike Khader, Majority

Leader Corazon Pineda-Isaac (D2), and Councilwoman Tasha Diaz (D3), calling on the New York State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo to open a mobile testing site for COVID-19 in Yonkers. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Council.

In response to the growing number of cases in Westchester, especially in Yonkers, the municipality with the highest number of confirmed cases at over 3,200 cases, the New York State Department of Health today opened an additional testing site in Yonkers at the St. Johns Riverside Hospital Parkcare Pavilion, located at 2 Park Avenue.

Council President Khader weighed in, saying, "I thank Governor Cuomo for acting quickly to answer the Council's call for action. I speak for all our residents when I say that this will help, and we are grateful. However, the latest data indicates that in the coming days, this site alone will not be enough. As the

fourth largest city in the state, we have many vulnerable residents, like our homeless population and seniors. More testing will not only help to protect them, it will work towards slowing the spread of COVID-19. I look forward to the day when we can say that all our residents have been tested."

Majority Leader Pineda-Isaac praised the move stating, "The testing site is mobile, so pedestrians and those that usually travel by bus can easily access the site to be tested. This is great news for Yonkers! Yonkers quickly surpassed New Rochelle as the county's hotspot for COVID-19 cases. It is only fitting that we get a mobile testing site here as well, to contain the spread of the virus among our city's most vulnerable populations. The 10701 zip code currently has almost 13 of the entire city's COVID-19 cases, so although we're starting here, the new mobile testing site will eventually be for all of Yonkers."

Minority Leader Mike Breen (D5) voiced his gratitude, but like other Councilmembers wanted to see more testing in the days to come said "I am appreciative that Governor Cuomo granted the City Council's request of a testing site, however, I am hopeful he will consider extending the testing to all Yonkers residents."

The new site will help expedite the testing of residents living in the 10701 zip code, the area with the highest population density in Yonkers. Social distancing may often be harder for residents to practice, making this one the areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The resolution's sponsor who represents the lion's share of this zip code urged her constituents to take advantage of this opportunity. "This mobile testing site is crucial for my constituency. I am both happy and grateful that Governor Cuomo and our State Delegation heard our call and placed a testing site in the 1st Council District in Yonkers" said Councilwoman Williams.

"I plead with my neighbors and constituents to get tested. Knowledge is power. You can protect yourselves and your families by getting tested. Before today, many residents were unable to get tested because they don't have health insur-

ance. With this mobile testing site testing is free for everyone. I strongly urge all my constituents to take full advantage of this testing site. Call the state health number for COVID19 and schedule an appointment now. The number is 888-364-3065. Remember, getting tested can save your life!"

Councilwoman Diaz also expressed her appreciation at the state's efforts in helping Yonkers to flatten the curve in Yonkers. "I am glad that Yonkers is getting a new testing site, especially in South Yonkers, because this area has the highest number of cases in the city," she stated. "As a lifelong Yonkers resident, I always want to ensure that the health, safety, and wellbeing of Yonkers residents is my number one priority."

Councilman John Rubbo (D4) shared similar sentiments of appreciation alongside the other Councilmembers, while offering a proposal to increase testing throughout the city. "I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for his impeccable leadership during this extremely difficult time in our State's history. His leadership has been second to none at a time when it is desperately needed both here in New York and more importantly, across our great Nation. The testing site in Yonkers is much needed

and is appreciated, but I propose that this site move around our city every 5 to 7 days to serve the entire City of Yonkers. The 10704 and 10705 zip codes have nearly 1,200 positive cases as of 416. My District covers a densely populated Bronx River Road apartment building row that should have testing available. It is my hope that this testing will ultimately cover the entire city."

Councilman Anthony Merante (D6) echoed the sentiments of his fellow Councilmembers stating, "I thank Governor Cuomo for granting the Yonkers City Council its request of a Yonkers testing site. The site is initially open to residents of the 10701 Zip Code as that is the area in the City with the largest number of infected residents. I look forward to testing being opened to the rest of our City as I believe that wide-spread testing is key to stop the spread."

The site will allow for residents without cars to walk up and be tested. Residents wishing to be tested must call the NYS COVID-19 hotline to make an appointment as the site is open by appointment only. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

The site's hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.