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SAN FRANCISCO NEWS

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HOME DELIVERY \$50

MOVING IN RIGHT DIRECTION

SF MOVES TO YELLOW TIER, NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES ALLOWED TO REOPEN

By Angela Cordova

SAN FRANCISCO—San Francisco became the first major city in California to be classified as “yellow” in the state’s COVID-19 risk tier blueprint on Tuesday, October 20. It now allows most indoor businesses to open with modifications.

Mayor London Breed announced that with the new classification the city would now open “non-essential” businesses with a limited capacity. Non-essential offices can now operate with a 25 percent capacity and those that have less than 20 employees and enough space to maintain distance may exceed that limit. Indoor climbing gyms are also allowed to reopen with a 25 percent capacity, and all individuals must wear face coverings at all times.

The guidelines for businesses that have already reopened have also been modified. Fitness centers can now operate with a 25 percent capacity, and higher education institutions can hold outdoor classes with 25 people. Individuals at indoor personal services are able to remove their masks for a limited time in procedures such as waxing or skin treatments.



As part of the reopening plans, San Francisco expect to have outdoor bars operating by mid-November. Photo courtesy of Rahadian-syah.

The city also released a timeline for new activities that will resume. On November 3, San Francisco expects to reopen indoor pools and bowling alleys. That same day, the city plans to increase the capacity of dining establishments, places of worship, movie theaters, museums, zoos, aquariums, to 50 percent. Details on the activities can be found in the city’s reopening plan.

Schools will continue to reopen and some high-schools are on track to hold in-person classes by November. San Francisco’s goal is to have bars oper-

ating outdoors —without having to serve food—by mid-November.

In a statement, Mayor Breed said that San Franciscans have done a good job following public health guidance, and that this type of behavior must continue to ensure progress in the reopening of the city.

“San Franciscans have taken COVID-19 seriously from the very beginning, and thanks to everyone’s commitment to wearing face coverings and following public health guidance, we are able to keep moving forward with re-

opening. Today really is a sign of hope for our city and for our economic recovery,” said Mayor Breed. “Every step of the way we’ve made decisions through the lens of public health, and we will continue to do so going forward. We know new cases of COVID are rising in other parts of the country, so we cannot relax. We must remain vigilant. But I have faith in the people of San Francisco and in our approach to this virus. It won’t be easy and there are still tough months ahead, but I’m proud of the way this City has come together to fight this virus.”

City officials also said they expect that the reopening of more businesses will increase travel and contact in the city of San Francisco, which can elevate the spread of the virus. Public health officials said they will continue assessing key health indicators and ensure they have enough resources for those that might get sick. Officials added that while they recognize being classified in the minimal risk level by California, the reopening of San Francisco would depend on local health indicators and their state.

ROBOT CARS IN SAN FRANCISCO WITHOUT HUMAN BACKUPS

By Annie Wei

SAN FRANCISCO—General Motors’ Cruise autonomous vehicle unit announced on Thursday, October 15, that it will pull the human backup drivers from its self-driving cars in San Francisco by the end of the year.

Cruise CEO Dan Ammann said in a statement that California’s Department of Motor Vehicles gave the permit to the company on October 15, allowing its self-driving cars to travel on the streets without gasoline and with-

out humans in the cars.

“Burning fossil fuels is no way to build the future of transportation,” said Ammann. “All anyone will see is a car, silently driving by itself through the city. Not speeding. Not crashing. Just quietly cruising.”

Cruise’s spokesman Ray Wert said that the company has no exact date for starting a ride service as it is still waiting for further government permission.

Cruise plans to “go neighborhood-by-neighborhood in San Francisco and launch the driverless vehicles slowly before spreading to the entire city,” said Wert, adding that neighborhood meetings will be held to answer people’s questions.

The move from Cruise follows last week’s announcement from Waymo, a unit of Google parent Alphabet Inc. Waymo said that it will allow the general public to hitch a ride

in its driverless autonomous vehicles in Phoenix and hope to eventually expand the service to California.

“Personal, gasoline-powered vehicles spew nearly three times their own weight in carbon dioxide every year. Cruise cars spew none,” said Ammann. “The impact on our cities, our world, and our climate will be real and sooner than you might think.”

CITY PLANS TO EXTEND SANCTIONED HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS

By Allison Havermale

SAN FRANCISCO—The city of San Francisco is looking to build more sanctioned housing and shelters across the city for the homeless population. On Tuesday, October 20, Board of Supervisor Rafael Mandelman announced he plans to introduce new legislation that would force the city’s homeless department to calculate how many safe sleeping shelters would be needed to meet demand.

Once that number is determined, the city’s homeless department would be given 18 months to create the sites. The city has not specified how they will pay for it, or how much it will cost.

The first safe sleeping site for San Francisco’s homeless populations opened at the start of the pandemic, when shelters closed to reduce the spread. The new safe sleeping sites are wide enough to provide

enough space to social distance, and are also provided with hand-washing stations, restrooms, and social workers to look after the people housed in the sites. The sites are also meant to be cleaner and more private than a congregation of shelters on public streets.

The city has found that safe sleeping encampments are an easier and more affordable option for the city. According to city officials, shelters can cost millions of dol-

lars to construct and run each year, while the safe sleeping encampments are estimated to cost of \$700,000 a unit.

Statistics show that homeless populations prefer these sites to their previous situations. According to recent survey of 584 homeless individuals conducted by the Coalition on Homelessness, 58 percent of those surveyed said they prefer a “legal free campsite” compared to their existing shelters.