

Good afternoon. You've got 91.9 KPTZ tuned on your FM dial or computer – here in Port Townsend Washington. I am Simon Jaynes, bringing you your local news for April 21, 2022.

The two week case rate for COVID-19 in Jefferson County is 329 per 100,000, placing the risk of transmission decidedly in the “High” Category according to the Department of Public Health. At this level, it is strongly recommended everyone wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask in public, indoor settings. Jefferson county reported 10 new cases since yesterday bringing our total case count since the beginning of the pandemic to 3,353. Currently in Jefferson County, free at-home COVID-19 test kits are being offered for people with symptoms or those who were in close contact. They can be picked up at the following locations: The Brinnon Fire Department, Discovery Bay Fire Department, Jefferson County Library & Bookmobile, and the Jefferson County Public Health Office. You can find the most up to date health guidance at <https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org> and, if needed, you can follow instructions there for reporting a positive at-home test result.

This week, two more public spaces have seen masking requirements lifted after the Monday Federal Court decision in Florida that struck down federal mask mandates for airplanes. Jefferson Transit announced Tuesday afternoon that they are no longer requiring masks on their vehicles or facilities, as did the Washington State Ferries.

At the Board of County Commissioners meeting on Monday, OlyCAP was granted a lease with option to buy for the land housing the Caswell-Brown Village Encampment. The village was started last fall as an emergency measure and a way to move campers from the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. But OlyCAP and other local support networks have always seen the site as a long-term resource with the potential to provide basic shelter needs and prevent suffering among the un-housed population locally. Gaining a lease agreement and site control is a major step toward this goal for OlyCAP, as it gives them the designation to apply for considerable state funding to expand the village.

The county commissioners allocated \$1 million last year to purchase the land – a 28-acre site near the Port Townsend City Limits and the Paper Mill. At their April 4 meeting, the BOCC unanimously voted to spend another \$500,000 toward utility improvements at the village and this week it was noted that another \$300,000 is needed for construction to continue. With the lease in place, OlyCAP and the Department of Housing and Community Development have a larger suite of funding options to pursue – from county to state and federal programs. The village currently provides living space for 23 adults and 1 child. A septic system, electrical, and water hookups will be necessary amenities if the encampment is to eventually house its planed capacity of 50 people.

Traffic on Washington Street is once again diverted this week between Walker and Pierce Streets near the Jefferson County Courthouse. The city is installing its final revisions to the two traffic circles aimed at slowing cars on the street. The traffic circles themselves were finished in March. This week the cutting, footing work and concrete pouring for the two curbs that will keep cars from veering into the shoulder is underway. As of this morning, city crews are planning to utilize a break in the extremely wet weather conditions later today, to finalize the curbs and the section of road should only be closed through the end of Friday at the latest.

The Port Townsend City Council voted unanimously on Monday to create a permitting pathway for business owners looking to put a Streatery in front of their business in uptown or downtown Port Townsend. The City and Port Townsend Main Street program have done considerable research, testing, and polling of citizens about the tent-like outdoor dining structures. There has been mixed feedback from local residents, but the majority polled seem to see the structures as beneficial additions to the business district, rather than temporary measures that their detractors describe them as, that take up already limited parking spaces downtown. During the city council's Monday, April 18 business meeting, councilmembers voted to make the streateries part of a long-term plan. The new rules would clarify permitting aspects, create an annual deadline and lottery system to limit the amount of streateries, and provide city standards for upkeep.

That's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday, and at 5pm Monday through Friday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Simon Jaynes, thanks for listening and have a great day