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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Friday, April 17, 2020

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Statement from Mayor Andy Schor Regarding “Gridlock” Protests

Michigan residents always have the right to protest at the Capitol Building, but they do not have the right to violate the rights of City of Lansing workers and residents.

The City of Lansing is familiar with protests, as there have been many in recent years. But these protests are usually limited to the Capitol Building property downtown. While many people stayed in their cars to protest at the Capitol, some “gridlock protesters” went further and took their frustrations out on the entire City of Lansing by including our downtown, neighborhoods and corridors. Some also left their cars and engaged in outside protesting (as protected by the First Amendment) but refused to socially distance and follow CDC recommendations as required in the Executive Order. Demonstrators not practicing social distancing put the safety of Lansing residents, first responders and their respective communities at risk.

As such, the City of Lansing will be taking the following precautions for future “gridlock protests”:

1. The City of Lansing will seek mutual aid assistance from other police, fire, and EMS agencies throughout the region. Lansing Police still have to provide public safety throughout the city and cannot dedicate all available police to the downtown, so we will seek assistance from others to ensure necessary coverage downtown.
2. Lansing Police will monitor Lansing ordinance violations and cite offenders when we have available officers and as possible to ensure officer safety. Violations such as excessive noise, purposely blocking roads, and public urination or defecation, and others.
3. Lansing Police will also look for social distancing violations on City streets and warn and/or cite people as appropriate. While the Capitol grounds are state property and the Michigan State Police have jurisdiction over enforcement, Lansing Police will provide mutual aid when requested.
4. Lansing emergency vehicles will again be positioned throughout the city to ensure emergency response effectiveness.

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5. The City of Lansing and Downtown Lansing Inc. will alert downtown businesses and workers of the protest, so they can make alternate plans if necessary.
6. The City of Lansing will do our best to prevent the protestors from affecting neighborhoods.

Lansing is proud to be the Capital City and I strongly believe in the right for people to protest their government. However, the right to protest does not include violating the rights of others or breaking local laws. Nor does it include preventing public safety from getting to emergencies.

We will always allow legal protesting, but we will be on vigilant watch for violations of the rights of our residents, workers and others who are just doing their jobs and living their lives.

We will get through this uncertain time together. Thank you to everyone who continues to follow the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Order. Because of you, fewer people are getting sick, which is saving lives. Adhering to the Executive Order as best we can will allow us to return to our normal lives as soon as it's safe to do so.

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