



Report to City Council

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Steven B. Quintanilla, City Attorney

AGENDA DATE: February 26, 2026

TITLE: REPORT ON STATUS OF MORENO VALLEY MALL CLOSURE

TITLE SUMMARY: REPORT ON STATUS OF MORENO VALLEY MALL CLOSURE

DISTRICT: District 1

Recommendation(s)

That the City Council:

1. Consider the Reports of the Fire Chief, City Attorney and other Staff regarding the status of the Moreno Valley Mall Closure.
2. Ask any questions of Staff;
3. Hear public comments;
4. Direct Staff to answer any questions; and
5. Receive and File the Reports.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Special Meeting is to provide the City Council and interested parties with a comprehensive report on the status of the closure of the Moreno Valley Mall, and to provide answers to any questions as directed by the City Council.

DISCUSSION

In a letter, dated January 16, 2026, addressed to Mr. Matt Ilbak, Chief Executive Officer of IGP Business Group, the presumed owner of the Mall, he was informed by the City

Attorney that various fire protection systems were demolished, removed, or modified without prior approval by the Moreno Valley Fire Department, which included basic life-saving devices such as fire alarms and fire sprinklers. In addition, the letter indicated that there were several pending violations associated with unpermitted high-piled storage in and along the Mall's interior walk aisles, which would hinder and/or prevent safe access and evacuation during a fire emergency. Moreover, the letter informed Mr. Ilbak that the City's Community Enhancement and Neighborhood Services Division had issued 88 code violation citations since 2019, which included citations for unpermitted construction, the lack of required certificates of occupancy, deteriorated parking areas due to cracked pavement and curbing, inadequate and incomplete parking and lane striping, insufficient parking lot lighting, accumulation of trash and debris, inadequate landscape maintenance made evident by the many dead and missing plants and damaged curbing, graffiti, lack of appropriate business licenses,, etc. The letter also reminded Mr. Ilbak that the operation of the Mall's escalators continued to remain intermittent, indicating that some more repair work may be necessary to ensure their safe use by the public.

After not receiving a response to the January 16 letter, the City Attorney dispatched a follow-up letter, dated February 26, 2026, to Mr. Ilbak informing him that despite all of the notices, correspondence and citations sent to his attention and the conversations various City staff and the Fire Department personnel have had with him and/or representatives of the Mall, regarding the aforementioned violations, it appeared that he remained committed to either ignoring their existence and/or disregarding the seriousness of the violations, although many of the violations clearly posed immediate risks to the health and safety of the Mall's employees, the Mall's retail tenants, the tenants' employees, and members of the general public which include the Mall's shoppers and visitors.

In light of the lack of any responses from the Mall with respect to the multitude of violations they were provided notice of in the form of official notices of violation, citations, correspondence, inspections, visits, phone conferences, and personal meetings, the City Attorney informed Mr. Ilbak that pursuant to the City's enforcement powers under applicable California law and the Moreno Valley Municipal Code, the City would continue to pursue a range of civil enforcement remedies to obtain compliance with all pending Municipal Code and California Building Code violations, which include, but are not limited to:

1. Administrative citations and fines;
2. Civil penalties;
3. Abatement proceedings;
4. Injunctive relief; and
5. Recovery of enforcement costs and attorney's fees where authorized by statute or ordinance.

It is important to note that the order to close the Mall is not directly related to the violations of the Moreno Valley Municipal Code or the California Building Code. Instead, the closure of the Mall was based on numerous Fire Code violations which the Fire Marshall determined require immediate attention to ensure that the Mall is safe for the tenants, employees, shoppers, and the other members of the visiting public.

The list of Fire Code violations is lengthy, but the main violations which prompted the Fire Department to order the immediate closure of the Mall (until all of the violations are properly abated) are directly related to the Mall's failure to provide inspection, testing, and maintenance documentation, as required by the California Fire Code and the National Fire Protection Association Code, for various Fire/Life Safety Systems. This is necessary to ensure that all such systems are in proper working condition during a Fire Emergency and Fire Evacuation. The systems of concern to the Fire Department include the Mall's:

- Fire Sprinkler System
- Fire Alarm System
- Smoke Control System
- Fire Doors
- Fire Standpipe System
- Fire/Smoke Dampers
- Emergency Generators
- Emergency Lighting
- Emergency Exit Lighting

In addition to the above, the Fire Department, during its inspections, identified a multitude of issues in designated areas of the Mall which need to be immediately addressed for fire safety reasons. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Some locks need to be removed, repaired, or replaced on certain exit doors that are intended to be used for evacuation purposes in case of a fire emergency and evacuation.
- Some signage needs to be repaired or replaced at certain exit doors that are intended to be used for evacuation purposes in case of a fire emergency.
- Updated keys and key codes for all emergency communications rooms must be included in all Knox boxes, which is a wall-mounted lockbox that holds building keys or access devices to allow Fire personnel and other emergency responders to quickly enter the Mall without forced entry during a fire emergency.
- A multitude of smoke detectors must be cleaned of dust buildup or replaced.
- Various fire extinguishers must be thoroughly inspected to ensure that they work properly in case of a fire emergency.
- Piles of storage must be removed from certain corridors and near certain exit doors that can hinder evacuation during a fire emergency.
- Various repairs must be made to certain fire-rated doors to ensure that they adequately resist fire and smoke for a specified period, protecting occupants and property while maintaining structural integrity during a fire emergency.
- All fire-rated doors must be equipped with self-closing hardware and smoke seals to ensure that they adequately resist fire and smoke for a specified period during a fire emergency.
- Certain repairs must be made to all penetrations in all fire-rated walls to ensure that they adequately resist fire and smoke for a specified period during a fire emergency.

- Certain illuminated signs at exit doors needed for evacuation during a fire emergency must be repaired or replaced.
- All fire-rated door components and service egress hardware need to be replaced, repaired, installed, and inspected to ensure that all fire-rated doors operate with minimal working weight to ensure they are easily operable during a fire emergency and evacuation.
- The main Fire Alarm Control Unit in the Fire Command Room must be diagnosed to ensure that the Unit is fully functional.
- Regular annual service for the emergency radio in the Fire Command Room needs to be scheduled and conducted.
- The Emergency Generators need to be diagnosed and tested, and all problem conditions must be corrected to ensure that they are fully functional during a fire and other types of emergencies.
- An updated key for the interior door inside the Fire Control Room must be provided.
- All storage must be removed from the Electrical Room.
- Electrical panel block-outs must be provided for all breaker panels in the Electrical Room.
- All missing locks and latches for the electrical panel doors in the electrical room must be repaired or replaced.
- All exposed electrical junction boxes along walls and ceilings must be properly covered.
- All exposed fire alarm wire in junction boxes near ceilings must be covered.
- The use of electrical extension cords in lieu of permanently installed electrical outlets must cease immediately.

In light of the multitude of violations of the Fire Code and the Moreno Valley Municipal Code, should the Mall refuse to make any good faith efforts toward resolving the pending violations, the City Attorney may recommend that the City Council authorize the City Attorney to file a request for the judicial appointment of a receiver over the Property to:

1. Take full control and possession of the Property;
2. Manage operations and collect rents or other income;
3. Secure, repair, and rehabilitate the Property;
4. Pay outstanding bills necessary to bring the Property into compliance;
5. Borrow funds to complete required work; and
6. Record a super-priority lien against the Property to secure repayment of receiver expenses and any costs incurred by the City to gain compliance.

While there has been some progress toward compliance with respect to the pending Life Safety and Fire Protection items that resulted in the closure of the Mall, several items remain outstanding.

In the meantime, the City Attorney has been in constant communication with the Mall's recently retained attorneys who have been very helpful and cooperative with helping move this matter in the right direction, and the City Attorney has reassured the Mall's legal counsel that the City remains committed to expeditiously processing any necessary permit applications, conducting any necessary inspections and providing any technical

assistance so long as the Mall Owner/Management remains diligent in proceeding toward correcting, resolving and/or abating the remaining Life Safety and Fire Protection violations.

Attachments:

Letter from City Manager and City Attorney to Mr. Matt Ilbak, dated January 16, 2026

Letter from City Attorney to Mr. Matt Ilbak, dated February 19, 2026

Notice & Order, dated February 19, 2026

Order to Vacate, dated February 19, 2026