

LAURA CURRAN  
NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXECUTIVE & LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

May 14, 2020

Dear Long Island Members of the New York Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board:

It is my pleasure to share with you the Interim Report of the Nassau County Coronavirus Economic Advisory Council.

The group represents diverse aspects of our economy, including small businesses, labor, non-profits and commercial interests. The Council has met with me and my team weekly since the start of this crisis, united in a commitment to public health and safety and to working toward the eventual rebuilding of the County's, and the region's, economy. I have relied on the Council's input and judgement throughout this challenging period.

As our collective attention turns to plans for re-opening, we wish to offer this review of the Council's deliberations, make recommendations for near-term re-openings that would boost the region's economic vitality, and outline some of the Council's planned next steps.

We appreciate your attention to the Council's views and look forward to continued collaboration in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Curran', is written over a white background.

Laura Curran

encl.



# NASSAU COUNTY CORONAVIRUS ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL INTERIM REPORT

May 14, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 16, 2020, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran convened an Economic Advisory Council including some of Long Island's top business and non-profit leaders and led by co-chairs – Hofstra University President, Stuart Rabinowitz and Nassau County IDA Chairman, Richard Kessel – to assist the County's effort to track and assess the business impacts and inform recovery strategies. Throughout this crisis the County Executive and the Economic Advisory Council have engaged on the local economic impacts while keeping an eye on the prospects for re-opening, based on a commitment to the preservation of public health and safety, first and foremost.

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Governor Cuomo outlined a process for re-opening the New York State economy on a regional basis. Based on the criteria outlined, the Long Island Region is not yet ready to begin the phased re-opening process. That said, as the attention of the State, our regional leaders, businesses and the public turns to re-opening, the Economic Advisory Council wishes to:

1. provide an overview on the Council's activities to date;
2. share key take-aways from Council meetings;
3. suggest additional businesses which could be deemed essential in the near term, while Long Island works to meet the State's health metrics for phased re-opening;
4. summarize the Governor's plan for regional re-opening; and
5. outline upcoming Council activities.

## 1. Council Activities

Beginning March 23, 2020, the County Executive and the Council have met weekly, discussing a range of issues and supporting the following activities:

- Launched a [website and business impact survey](#), created and conducted by Hofstra, to serve as a central repository of information and gather data on business impacts (in English and

Spanish). The survey has proved useful in the County's on-going advocacy efforts in Albany and Washington.

- With Nassau County IDA, engaged consulting firm HR&A to measure how each industry sector on Long Island and their workforce are faring – retail, hospitality, construction/development, healthcare, commercial real estate, manufacturers, higher education, non-profits and others. Suffolk County joined the study effort, to better inform a regional perspective and recovery strategy.
- Conducted sector-specific and individual meetings with business owners, labor leaders, trade associations, chambers of commerce in all fields including healthcare, construction, hospitality, retail, and real estate development.
- Discussed several proposals for relief or assistance to business, such as the ABLI/LIBI proposed extension of the May 10<sup>th</sup> school tax deadline [[effectuated by the Governor at the request of the County Executive](#)].
- Assisted businesses with challenges faced in connection with “essential” and “non-essential business” designations.
- Assisted businesses in understanding the process for the SBA Payroll Protection Program and other federal programs.
- Discussed the unique strains on the non-profits sector and the individuals served, and shared information about resources available through the “CARES Act” funding allocations.
- Collected and shared industry best practices including cleaning protocols, signage/branding and remodeling to allow for social distancing.
- Promoted available support for businesses and residents, such as from the Nassau County Bar Association.
- Facilitated a “Shop Safe, Shop Local” campaign sponsored by the CE, NC IDA and NCCC.
- Collaborated on donations of PPE to essential health care workers and first responders.

## 2. Key Council Meeting Take-Aways

- Federal-level business and municipal relief programs are essential to stabilize the region.
- Council members voiced support of tax relief, leading to discussions on strained State and County budgets (especially given heavy reliance on sales taxes) and further need for Federal intervention.
- County actions should be data driven and coordinated with Suffolk, as well as the local municipalities, given the porous nature of Long Island's economic “borders.”
- Special attention should be paid to supporting, rebuilding minority-owned businesses in underserved communities, especially given the disproportionate impact the virus has had in these communities.
- Non-profit social services agencies working to address human impacts of pandemic should not be forgotten.
- Businesses need near-term relief for rents, payroll and in longer term will need access to PPE, test supply chain.
- Businesses need to begin now to reshape the workplace, prepare their workforce, determine the extent to which operations can continue remotely.

- Higher education sector needs a solution to ensure the continued provision of vital education and workforce training that supports the current and future needs of region, as they play a critical role in promoting economic prosperity.
- Business, government and labor should work collaboratively on promoting cleaning protocols, use of PPE to ensure smooth re-opening procedures and help to restore public confidence.
- Main street businesses, the heart of Nassau’s economy, are shuttered; review of IDA authority with respect to ability to assist small businesses/retail sector should be undertaken.
- Long Island’s \$6.1 billion tourism and hospitality industry is devastated, greatly impacting the region’s revenues; requires a cohesive strategy for re-opening to welcome back residents and business.
- Crisis offers opportunity to look at regulatory policies and practices which slow development.

### 3. Essential Business Determinations

The County Executive and this Council appreciate the State’s on-going review of permitted “essential” businesses, as defined and outlined in [Executive Order 202](#). Over the past few weeks, we have seen the re-opening of marinas, golf courses and auto sales by appointment. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Governor also announced that certain [low-risk businesses and activities may resume operations](#) statewide on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, including landscaping and gardening work, outdoor recreation such as tennis and drive-in movie theaters. Given the positive boost these announcements have had on the collective spirit and vitality of our economy, the Council wishes to recommend the following additional businesses/industry sectors as ripe for consideration:

- ❖ **Construction** – all residential construction, followed by unoccupied and secure private construction sites and solar power installation projects.
  - Rationale:
    - Standardized operations and safety protocols currently exist in the construction industry whether public or private sector
    - High impact job-generating industry
- ❖ **Health Care** – to include additional categories of medically necessary elective care and surgeries
  - Rationale:
    - As hospitals manage through the COVID crisis, attention has turned to resuming surgeries and procedures which may have been deemed “elective” at start of the crisis but due to passage of time may be more urgently needed
    - These include surgery for heart disease, cancer-related procedures, procedures aimed at relieving chronic pain
    - Hospitals have already implemented precautions to protect against virus spread
    - Expanding surgeries/procedures important for public health and economic health

- ❖ **Retail** – extend curbside retail to allow main street shops, malls to sell goods and by-appointment sales
  - Rationale:
    - Select essential retail able to operate with reduced staffing; this is working
    - Neighboring states opening retail to curbside (NJ) and general (CT)
    - LI retailers well-positioned to take the next steps in a safe manner
  
- ❖ **Non-profit Outdoor Gardens:** re-opening of certain non-profit/private outdoor gardens, followed by a measured approach to re-opening indoor “touch-free” museums (utilizing public controlled, time-ticketing measures)
  - Rationale:
    - Would offer additional avenues for public enjoyment and activities beyond the public beaches and parks, helping to alleviate density

## 4. NY Forward Re-Opening Plan

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Governor Cuomo released the ["NY Forward Reopening" Plan](#) to guide each of New York's 10 regions in meeting certain metrics to allow for a [phased process for specific industries](#) to re-open by sector. As of today, Long Island is meeting 5 out of the 7 metrics laid out by the state:

- ✓ 14-day decline in net hospitalizations
- ✓ Share of total hospital beds available (30% threshold)
- ✓ Share of ICE beds available (30% threshold)
- ✓ 30 per 1,000 residents tested monthly
- ✓ At least 30 contact tracers per 100k residents (NYS is hiring contract tracers and expects Long Island to meet this metric)
  
- X 14-day decline in hospital deaths or fewer than 5 deaths (3-day average)
- X New hospitalizations (under 2 per 100K residents (3-day rolling average).

[Regional Control Rooms](#) have been created, tasked with monitoring how the situation develops over each phase of reopening and to be “circuit breaker ready” to reduce or slow down activities as needed. In addition to County Executive Laura Curran and County Executive Steve Bellone, the Long Island Regional Control Room members are:

- Eric Gertler, ESD President and CEO (Regional Captain)
- Kevin Law, REDC Co-Chair, LIA President/CEO\*
- John Durso, President of the Long Island Federation of Labor/LIA Board Member\*
- Tracey Edwards, Long Island Regional Director of the NAACP

\*Economic Advisory Council member

As part of the re-opening planning process, Long Island businesses should familiarize themselves with *new industry specific guidelines* and “business safety plan templates” available on the ESD website. There is a process for businesses to “affirm” that they will operate

according to New York State guidance for social distancing, safe workplace, protection of employees and customers. [NYS Re-Opening in phases guidance, process.](#)

## 5. Economic Advisory Council Next Steps

- Spearhead, with Hofstra, a second business impact survey with emphasis on business needs for reopening, and availability and usefulness of Federal relief programs, grants and loans for businesses; and widening distribution to ensure more participation in the survey by non-profits and businesses in underserved communities;
- Publish HR&A's Nassau + Suffolk COVID-19 Economic Impact Initial Report [including baseline and industry-specific data and trends – expected within the next two weeks]. Report will be used to continue to make the case for Federal support;
- Communicate the latest information concerning re-opening protocols, best practices and relevant governmental requirements through the EAC website, PSA's and social media;
- Support the County Executive as she participates in the Governor's "Reimagine New York" Task Force, charged with developing longer-term strategies for rebuilding the economy.

## Members of the COVID-19 Economic Advisory Council

- Co-Chairs: Stuart Rabinowitz, Hofstra University and Richard Kessel, Nassau County IDA
- Phil Andrews, Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce
- Jamie Bogenschutz, YES Community Counseling Center
- John Cameron, Long Island Regional Planning Council
- Charles Chan, Harvest International Commercial Real Estate
- Kevin Dahill, Nassau Suffolk Hospital Council & Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York
- John Durso, Long Island Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
- Wayne Grossé, Bethpage Federal Credit Union
- Dennis Grossman, Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce
- Zeeshan Hamid, New York South Asian Chamber
- Kevin Law, Long Island Association
- Loren Lostritto, Steel Equities
- Kristen Jarnagin, Discover Long Island
- Alan Mindel, Samar Hospitality
- Richard Monti, Crest Hollow Country Club
- Jonathan Otto, MetroCapital Realty
- Bennett Rechler, We're Group
- Jay Roewe, HBO
- Kyle Strober, Association for a Better Long Island
- Luis Vasquez, Long Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Jermaine Williams, Nassau Community College