How to Build Back New Jersey Communities Better

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Once in a Century Opportunity to Build Back Our Communities Better

More than COVID-19

Series of Overlapping Crises:

• Pandemic

• Economic and Fiscal Fallout

• Protests for Racial and Economic Justice

Opportunity to Build Back Better

Address Long Standing Challenges of

• Large and Small Cities, Suburbs and Rural Areas

Substantial Opportunity for New Jersey Communities

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Time to Act Is Now

- Our Communities Will Survive

- Urbanization > than Pandemics

- Crisis Creates Opportunity for Communities of all Shapes and Sizes

- Sets the Stage to Build Better, More Inclusive and Resilient Communities

- Time to Act with Intentionality Is Now

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Hotspots for the Virus Have Shifted

From Global Cities
- New York Metro Area, including New Jersey

And Industrial Centers, Jet Set Places
- Wuhan and Detroit, Aspen and the Alps

To the Sunbelt
- Miami/Florida, Phoenix/Arizona, Houston/Texas

And Suburbs and Rural Communities
- 40% of suburbs of large metro areas have higher COVID per capita rates than central cities
- Rural rate of COVID-19 exceeds national average
- Late August, 70% of new COVID-19 cases coming from Red States

Developing Countries and Cities
- Brazil, India, Russia/Moscow, Mexico/Mexico City and others

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Crisis Reflects and Reinforces Divides of Race and Class

Racial Divide

(COVID-19 Rates Compared to Whites)

African-Americans:

- 2.6 times cases

- 4.7 times hospitalizations

- 2 times deaths

Hispanic/Latino:

- 2.8 times cases

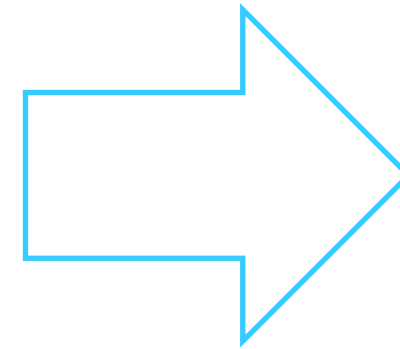- 4.6 times hospitalizations

- 1.1 times deaths

- **People of color account for 6 in 10 COIVD-19 cases in NJ**

Workplace Divide

- Remote workers can shelter in place

- But **50 million** workers perform high-risk frontline jobs

- Three-quarters of front-line workers in NYC are minority

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Density Debate and COVID-19

- **Density blamed early** in the COVID-19 outbreak, as virus ravaged big cities like New York, London, Madrid, and others

  - But virus hit denser places first

  - Not density per se but global connectivity

Recent Research:

- **No evidence** that denser places have been **more susceptible** to COVID-19 than small towns or rural places

- Density has been key offsetting factor

- **Denser places have been more effective** at mitigation, social distancing, and providing effective health care

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More Than Density

Not people per square mile, but people per square foot

| Overcrowding | Poverty | Work | Race |

How the Crisis Will Reshape Our Communities

- Not a Disruption

- Crisis Accelerates Trends Already in Place

- Pull Factors: To the Suburbs, Smaller Metros, and Rural Areas

- Push Factors: To Bigger Cities

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Pull Factors: Remote Work

Big Shift

Before Pandemic:
- 10-12% of American workforce 2% full-time

Early Pandemic:
- Half to two-thirds of U.S. workers

Now:
- 50% of educated professionals now in April, down from 68% high

Post-Pandemic

- 20% of workforce continuing to work remote full-time

- Another 30% will work part-time

Opportunity

- Could shift some talent to rural and suburban communities

- Smaller cities

- Initiatives like Tulsa Remote

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Pull Factors:
Out to Suburbs and Rural Areas

- Families to suburbs
  - Accelerates and compresses family formation moves

- Remote work

- Fear of transit

- Desire for private amenities like backyards/play areas

- Rural gentrification

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Push Factors:
In Towards Cities and Urban Cores

- Young people to cities.

- Young people 25-34 accounted for 50% of population increase in closed-in urban neighborhoods since 2010.

- Clusters like high-tech, finance, media and entertainment require proximity.

- Walkable/bikeable areas close to leading industry clusters may become more desirable.

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Current Crisis as a Resetting Moment:

Creates the Possibility to Rebuild Our Communities Better

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Time to Focus on Economic Recovery

Our Communities Have Been Playing Catch Up

Time to be Proactive

Initial Phase ➡ Reopening ➡ Economic Recovery
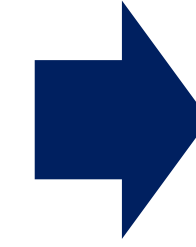
Initial Phase

- Emphasis on Public Health

- Lockdowns

- Social Distancing

Reopening

- Stop and Start

Economic Recovery

- Time to focus is now

- Natural disaster at mass scale

- Recovery planning

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New Jersey's Opportunity

- Remote work and pull factors create opportunity to **remake older cities and suburban** communities.

- Opportunity to **reinvigorate NJ cities** – Newark, New Brunswick, Trenton, Paterson, Camden and more - as regional office centers.

- **Recast abandoned malls** and old suburban office parks.

- **Regional Rebalancing** – Shift to Hub and Spoke corporate systems.

- Create 15-Minute Neighborhoods **and Complete Communities.**

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Redesign Streets and Open Spaces

Redesign public space for health and safety

Retrofit streets bikes, walkability

Remake parking lots for needed activities

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Reimagine Governance

Create new regional governance models

Forge partnerships of cities, suburbs, and rural areas

Incentivize innovative partnerships and collaborations

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Upgrade Jobs for Frontline Workers

More than 1.7M NJ workers in low-wage service jobs, 45% of workers

Higher wages, benefits, and better working conditions

Embrace the Goods Jobs Strategy

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Address and Close Racial Gaps and Inequalities

Crisis hits hardest at the advantaged

Focus on racial and economic equity

Comprehensive community development for disadvantaged neighborhoods

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Once in a Century Opportunity for New Jersey Communities

- To Build Back Better.

- Long-run strategy for prosperous, inclusive, just, and resilient communities.

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Together We Can Build a Better Future

Discussion

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