

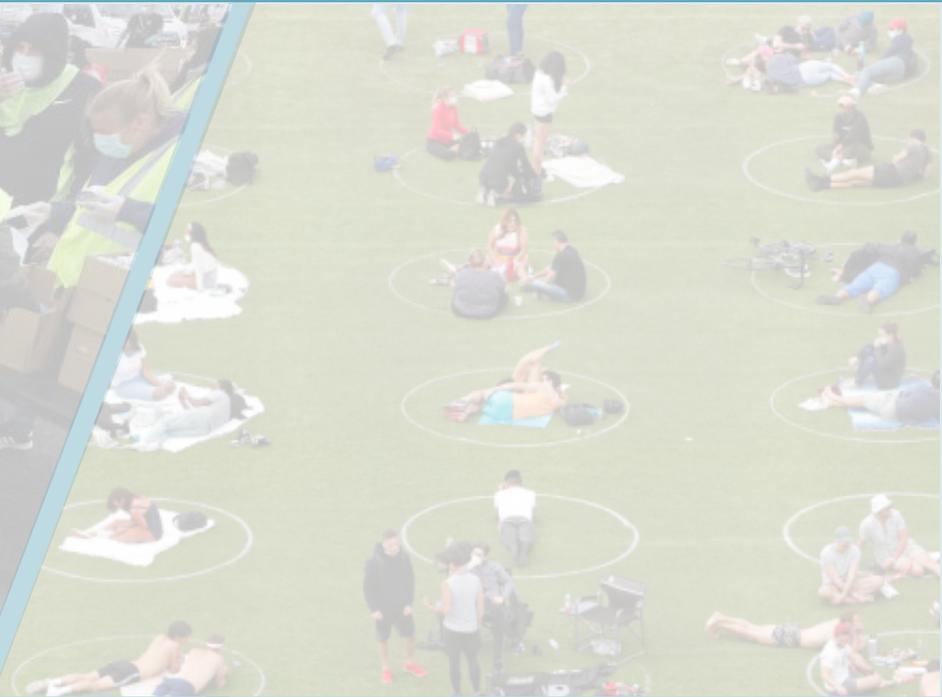


Regional Economic  
Development Councils

State of the Region:

# LONG ISLAND

*Recover, Rebuild, Reimagine*



2020 Recovery Plan

# Key Strategies for Economic Growth



**RECOVER** from the COVID-19 pandemic by rebuilding off a decade of successful strategies and consensus-driven accomplishments in ways that reimagine the region as a wealth-generating engine of equitable growth, embracing diversity, inspiring creativity and unleashing the potential of all its people.



**IDENTIFY** and support industry clusters, especially biotechnology, that possess the potential to bring together researchers, educators, investors, manufacturers and others in a collaborative effort to accelerate the commercialization of technical and scientific discovery and generate jobs at every rung of the employment ladder.



**CREATE** a cohesive education and workforce training strategy through partnerships among a range of stakeholders - business, trade groups, labor, government agencies, educational institutions, parents and students - with the goal of ensuring that workers from all of Long Island's communities are prepared to take advantage of new job opportunities in key economic growth sectors.



**DEVELOP** innovation and industry clusters in transformative locations across the region - including downtowns, brownfields and university, research and medical centers - by integrating the smart growth principles of transit-oriented development and vibrant community life.



**ENHANCE** and develop multi-faceted, interdisciplinary facilities aimed at incubating and accelerating the commercialization of innovative products generated at the region's premier research institutions, by linking scientists, engineers, and health and medical professionals to entrepreneurs and small businesses.



**REINVIGORATE** Long Island's manufacturing sector through continued transformation from traditional defense and aerospace work to advanced technology products, creating skilled, high-value jobs and a network of nimble companies that can develop synergistic partnerships with companies in other regions of the state.



**PRODUCE** a new generation of sustainable, well-paying jobs in the legacy sectors of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and tourism by enhancing the economic value of our parks, historic places, and arts venues and organizations, and expanding export opportunities, infrastructure, recreation facilities, research partnerships and workforce training.



**REBUILD** and expand infrastructure to improve job access, revitalize downtowns and transit HUBs, speed trade, and attract and retain dynamic regional businesses and highly-skilled workers.



**PROTECT** Long Island from the perils of climate change at the same time we encourage new "cleaner, greener" industries by leading collaborative regional efforts to harden our infrastructure, businesses and homes against the next major storm and to encourage transportation, energy and construction policies that reduce our vulnerability, as well as our carbon footprint.



**REVITALIZE** Long Island's poorest places by targeting the region's collective resources on new community-driven initiatives that can create jobs, homes and businesses and ensure that all communities are participating fully in the state's economic revitalization.



**AUGMENT** the export capacity of Long Island companies and attract foreign direct investment in the region by bringing together experienced exporters, relevant government agencies and our world class education and research institutions to identify and pursue potential business opportunities overseas.



**UNLEASH** the economic potential of unemployed and underemployed military veterans with creative new ways to provide information, job training and other skills that will honor their service and aid the region by helping them succeed as employees and entrepreneurs.

**ATTRACT** travelers from across the globe by leveraging Long Island's unique heritage and tourism assets to convey our rich contributions to American history, the arts, and culture.



## Regional Economic Development Councils

### MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS

September 25, 2020

Dear Commissioner Gertler,

The Long Island Regional Economic Development Council is pleased to present our pandemic-inspired 2020 Recovery Plan for Nassau and Suffolk Counties. We are proud, not only of the prodigious effort it took to produce this self-appraisal, but the extraordinary strength of our essential workers whose spirit permeates this report. It is to them – the first responders, health care providers, supermarket cashiers and so many others who risked their lives for their fellow Long Islanders – we dedicate our efforts.

Make no mistake, the pandemic has hit us hard. And it's still taking a terrible toll. But when we needed them most, the collaborative relationships and resilient institutions -- developed over a decade of Governor Andrew Cuomo's regional council system -- made it easier for key stakeholders to come together to assess the damage and prepare a plan to recover. In reimagining our future, we hope to build on the strong strategic foundation for generating employment and revenues.

We also have learned lessons that we thought we had previously learned -- about the vulnerability of our communities of color -- but the disparate health and economic impacts show how much we must do to have a true Equity Economy. And even as we struggle with the immediate threats of Covid-19 in all our communities, we are determined that any steps we take now will put us in a stronger for the future.

Bottom line: We plan to overcome all obstacles the way we have since the council's first year -- the way we won "top performer" in six of nine years - with data-driven, expert-developed plans that respect and reflect a broad range of stakeholders. We look forward to working with you to recover and rebuild our economy and communities.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Kevin S. Law, consisting of a stylized 'K' and 'L' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Kevin S. Law  
President & CEO, Long Island Association

A blue ink signature of Stuart Rabinowitz, featuring a stylized 'S' and 'R' with a long horizontal flourish.

Stuart Rabinowitz  
President, Hofstra University

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*Lieutenant Governor*

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*President, Long Island Association*

## Co-Vice Chairman

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**Anne D. Shybunko-Moore**  
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*County Executive, Suffolk County*

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## PART ONE

# Executive Summary

## TRAUMA AND TRIUMPH IN THE TIME OF COVID

### **Recovering and Rebuilding by Reimagining a Stronger Economy and Society**

**New Key Strategy:** *To recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by rebuilding upon a decade of data-driven strategies and collaborative accomplishments in ways that reimagine our suburbs as a wealth-generating engine of equitable growth, embracing diversity, inspiring creativity and unleashing the potential of all its people and places.*

The pandemic bent but didn't break us. And while the challenges of Covid-19 are not behind us, we are proud of the spirit, skill and sacrifice we brought to holding our economy together as we masked, distanced and hand-washed the virus to a flattened truce. We Long Islanders are, as Governor Cuomo likes to say, "New York tough." And we will not surrender to complacency or impatience as we fight to fend off another surge.

As you will read in our 2020 strategic update and recovery plan, the LIREDC will move forward by focusing on reigniting our manufacturing base, by jumpstarting mega-projects with transformative potential, by making childcare available to aid businesses and families, by advancing our innovation ecosystem through training, research and business support, by strengthening our downtowns with affordable, transit-accessible apartments, and by protecting our environment as *the* economic asset for tourism and farming.

If these broad, ambitious goals sound familiar, they are: In having laid a strong foundation for economic growth in the past decade, the LIREDC is not recovering from scratch. Aided by a new strategy and work groups, we will rebuild on the strategic bones of our last nine updates – and bring together hundreds of volunteers, from civic and business leaders to the council members themselves, who have continued to donate their expertise and experience in the time of our greatest need.

But even as the LIREDC has learned much about our resiliency and what we must do beyond mere recovery – about reimagining a stronger, more inclusive region – but we are also hurting in ways we never imagined.

By hitting Nassau-Suffolk harder than any region except New York City, killing over 4,200 Long Islanders as of August and shedding a higher percentage of jobs than the city, COVID-19 underscored chronic economic and social problems that have undermined our maturing suburb for decades. Thus, the LIREDC must be motivated by the hindsight that, year after year, we could have done more to protect our most vulnerable people from the pandemic's worst punishment. We don't ever want to have to acknowledge that again.

The pain has been palpable from the Montauk Lighthouse to the New York City line. In a matter of months, as we were enjoying one of the strongest economies ever, our unemployment rate exploded. In April 2020 Long Island hit an all-time monthly high in unemployment filings when 172,854 people joined the official jobless line. The unemployment rate rose to 16 percent, compared to 3.8 percent a year earlier, and the highest since the New York State Department of Labor began tracking it 30 years ago. And we know the official rate didn't reflect everyone who lost their livelihood. The latest numbers from the State Department of Labor indicate the total number of regional unemployment filings has reached 479,641.

In July 2019, when we wrote our last almost celebratory update, only 3.8 percent of Long Islanders were unemployed. More people – more than a million – had jobs than ever. This past July the rate was 13.8 percent, and that's higher than in the Great Recession and a point more than a month earlier. By comparison, the national rate was 10.5 percent. According to a [report by HR&A Associates](#), commissioned jointly by Nassau and Suffolk Counties, Long Island businesses shed 270,000 non-farm jobs, 21.1 percent, a point higher than NYC and 6.6 points higher than the nation. That amounts to \$21 billion in earnings losses and \$61 billion in reduced economic activity. Even more frightening, the job losses have already exceeded 400,000 – worse than the Great Depression.

The latest numbers from the State Department of Labor confirm that, in fact, our recovery may be slowing. Although our employment losses dropped with the reopening of businesses to 152,200 in August, we gained only 7,500 jobs compared to 17,800 in July. Even as we go back to our favorite barbershops and bistros with cautious doses of optimism and uncertainty, Long Islanders can still see the pain in thousands – yes thousands – of shops and restaurants that remain closed. And they can hear it in the pleas of

small business owners and their employees to help save them, our economic backbone, from oblivion. This is no hyperbole: Virtually every LI business recently surveyed will order layoffs by year's end; more than half already have. And the jobless claims keep coming.

The economic losses have left gaping holes in village, town and county sales and other tax coffers, which are showing up in record deficits. And in the absence of sufficient federal aid, these deficits, in turn, have limited the ability of local and state governments to deliver emergency services they normally do. They are needed, now more than ever: The crunch has cost many people their livelihoods, from business owners who saw the dreams and investments of a lifetime erased in a matter of months, to low-wage workers who struggle in good times and now must risk their lives in "essential" jobs or contend with reduced federal benefits. Or both.

The pain has been especially apparent in our poorer, segregated communities of color, that struggle even in the best of times. In addition to bearing a disproportionate share of deaths and job losses, minority and other lower-income households saw their children fall behind educationally for want of internet access – the "digital divide." A higher percentage of new immigrants and other minorities were essential workers who, reflecting another chronic insufficiency and bitter irony, had a harder time finding child care so they could do their jobs without worrying about their kids. Poorer minority families and their communities may recover more slowly economically than more prosperous whites owing to limited access to credit, employment opportunities and quality education.

Sadly, these and other obstacles to income and wealth building loomed large before the pandemic. In our 2019 strategic update, which seems so long ago, we recognized the need to do more to create an "equity economy." Based on a report from our disparities subcommittee, we included a number of suggestions to make this a reality. Now, as we see the disparate human and economic damage in Latino and especially Black neighborhoods, as well as hear the echoes of protests for racial justice, we know this cannot continue and we must do more, much more. It's the right and, for the economy, smart thing to do.

There is no question that Long Island has a long and winding road to economic recovery, much less redress racial disparities that threaten the region from reaching its full potential. But through it all, we've seen much to encourage that we can rebuild back strongly. In watching the countless acts of selflessness, from volunteers who comforted the hungry and lonely to the businesses and groups who donated computers to home-bound children, we have learned we can count on each other, on the compassion of our neighbors and the commitment of our local and state leadership.

And we know we need to reach across our borders more often – such as the spring summit between the Long Island Association and Partnership for the City of New York – to promote collaborative ventures that benefit the entire state. We are heartened to see – and grasp the significant opportunity in – the surge of city residents rediscovering why we love Long Island and investing in our more

spacious suburban homes and neighborhoods. The rapid ascension of the steel superstructure at Belmont Park, the future home of the New York Islanders, can serve as a tonic to those concerned about our ability to rebuild bigger and better – and faster. The same for the \$2 billion investment in wind farms nearing construction offshore to take us to a new energy future – and new economic opportunity. And, among many other exciting research facilities that will help us realize our dream of developing an Innovation Island, we can look forward to Brookhaven National Lab's \$2 billion Electron-Ion Collider providing jobs for decades.

With such a strong commercial, intellectual and altruistic foundation, we know Long Island will rise again.

The region will continue to persevere on the strength of relationships built through a decade of collaboration encouraged by the LIREDC – and on strong leadership in Albany, our county and town seats, and from business associations, not-for-profits and civic groups across the region. Putting aside parochialism, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and Suffolk's Steve Bellone have worked exceptionally well together, as have the town supervisors of both major parties who put aside partisan or parochial interests to communicate at least weekly. Both counties, as well as New York State Department of Transportation and localities, worked with village officials and owners to make public roads available for outdoor dining. Health departments in both counties and the State Liquor Authority created expedited permitting processes to facilitate outdoor dining.

Our heralded research institutions, accustomed to collaborations encouraged by the LIREDC, did what they could during the dark months of spring. They worked independently and together to innovate, such as genetic research at Cold Spring Harbor Labs and the 3D printing facilities at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research and at Stony Brook University to make PPE to protect our healthcare workers, diagnostic tests, and other devices. In the region's world-class labs, some nurtured by LIREDC-supported funding, engineers re-imagined, re-organized and improvised techniques and treatments on the fly. Brookhaven National Laboratory sourced tens of millions of dollars in contracts to fight the virus or support those on the front lines. After learning that health care workers were uncommonly thirsty after wearing heavy PPE all day, Nassau's Industrial Development Agency connected corporate donors to suppliers who delivered pallets of bottles to all Nassau hospitals. IDA's which normally provide tax breaks to spur large construction projects, pivoted to give away millions of dollars of PPE kits to small businesses.

From a decade of experience, we knew we could count on the staff at the regional Empire State Development office, and they didn't disappoint. They operated seemingly 24/7 in the opening weeks. And as part of the Governor's regional Control Board, made up of key REDC members, ESD remained a critical pivot point for information and decision-making. Their contributions to the quality of this report were incalculable.



Study group wearing mask - Shutterstock



Business zoom meeting stock photo

And above all, there was the inspiring selfless courage of our essential workers, everyone from the first responders and critical care professionals to the Main Street employees who stocked, prepared and delivered our food. Small business owners and their employees, often the lowest paid of workers, risked their lives to keep us going – literally, to keep some of us alive. They allowed many of us to “shelter in place” as part of the plan to “flatten the curve” so the region could carefully, as the scientific data dictated, reopen the economy.

Childcare providers deserve special mention for allowing fellow essential workers to save lives and deliver food to those of us able to work from home. Despite increased costs to keep their staff and children safe, and the customers who decided to keep their kids at home, the vast majority of childcare providers – especially those in communities of color – kept their doors open. And they did it well: Not a single LI childcare facility reported an outbreak. Even programs that closed continued to provide parents and children with food, diapers and other resources. As we emerge from the pandemic and long after, safe and affordable child care will remain an LI REDC priority – we can’t recover and rebound without it.

If the pain of the pandemic remains palpable, it also is serving as a unifying force. Since the start, we have “Zoomed” together, searching for synergistic partnerships to solve local and regional problems:

- Organizations representing businesses and not-for-profits, large and small, such as the Long Island Association and the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island, spread – and are still spreading – the word about resources available to their constituencies. Technical assistance was especially welcome by for-profit and not-for profit businesses unfamiliar with remote operations. Food banks across the region have seen an outpouring of support and demand. Among countless initiatives by adults and children alike, a GoFundMe campaign to support Community Action Southold Town with a goal of \$10,000 has so far raised over \$110,000.
- Local media shared their bullhorns widely, as the Spanish language website La Noticias has done for the devastated Latino community, and Newsday and the LIA with a series of business-focused webinars with federal officials. Vision Street Research, an MWBE, is an example of the many organizations that offered timely and insightful symposia on economic and social issues. If anything, more webinars and help-sites are springing up to assist the recovery and rebuilding.

Vision Street Research

- Universities, such as Hofstra and its Ascend Long Island network, have refocused grants to help hard-hit minority enterprises; Vision LI worked with a variety of community groups such as the African American and the Hispanic Chambers of Commerce to provide webinars on the SBA's PPP program, EIDL and the state NY Forward Loan Program – in both English and Spanish. Unions have adapted training programs so a pipeline to advancement and prosperity continues.

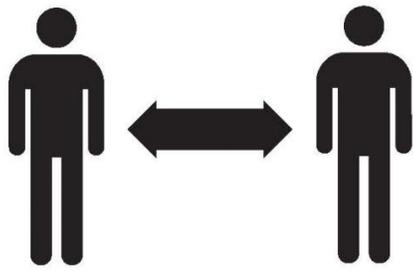
There should be no doubt that every new and revisited initiative must reflect principles of equitable growth. We can no longer tolerate a “digital divide” for children whose families can’t afford internet connections. We can no longer accept discriminatory housing and education practices or unequal health outcomes that long have punished Black and Latino families with deadly rates of diseases – and which contributed to higher Covid-19 mortality rates.

Moving forward, we have broken down our tasks and “asks” into immediate, intermediate and longer-term needs. And we have done so by sector and/or area of concern. Developed by our work groups and detailed at length in the sections below, some of the solutions will focus on:

- Immediately and permanently finding a regional means, possibly through BOCES or even private funding, to close the “digital divide” and overall resource gap at cash-strapped, high-need school districts so the mostly minority students don’t fall further behind. At minimum, every child who needs a computer and internet access should get it.
- Encouraging our manufacturers, whatever their specialty, to be able to pivot quickly to create products, such as ventilators and PPEs, to avert sudden shortages, as well as a government - created reserve pool of people and products that can be pressed into emergency service;
- Boosting our growing bio-tech firms and world-class research institutions to lead the world’s search for new vaccines and simultaneously build our innovation economy;
- Jump-starting development by at least temporarily easing antiquated rules that slow everything from affordable housing in village downtowns to mega-projects with thousands of jobs – and doing it by bringing local government, developers and residents together to determine how to better balance the economy, the environment and community needs;

- Reaching beyond our borders to collaborate more often with other regions, such as Discover Long Island’s partnership with its New York City counterparts targeting Australian and Canadian tourists to promote Long Island as New York City’s “Beachfront Backyard.”
- Leveraging the links between tourism and agriculture by immediately helping producers protect their crops, catches, and employees but in ways – from central processing facilities and promotional campaigns – that could strengthen their industries every season.
- Assuring that human service agencies, especially not-for-profits whose donations dry up in an economic catastrophe, have the resources to continue caring for the most vulnerable and remain a strong source of employment.
- Buttrussing the childcare industry so more facilities can keep their doors open, provide a safe and enriching experience for children, decent-paying jobs for caregivers, peace of mind for parents while they work, and a larger pool of employees for businesses.
- Retooling workforce and business/entrepreneurial development programs to get people back to work quickly, while bringing together educators and business operators to align curriculum with workplace needs so that under- and unemployed residents can qualify for well-paying jobs of the future.
- Creating a “justice-involved” task force to produce a pipeline of incarcerated and/or formerly incarcerated, as well as training and transportation programs to prepare the developmentally disabled, so that people capable of working can fill jobs that need to be filled.

Along with our state and regional partners, the LIREDC will provide the same strategic leadership that since 2011 has spurred an innovation economy around biotech, revived manufacturing around exports, and refocused tourism around the arts and agriculture. We are positioned – determined – to take on all the obstacles and opportunities presented by COVID-19. We are ready, as Governor Cuomo implored, to “reimagine our future” for the benefit of all.



**SOCIAL DISTANCING  
TO BE IN PLACE  
AT ALL TIMES**



**NO ADMITTANCE  
TO NON ESSENTIAL  
PERSONNEL**



**INCREASED HYGIENE  
PRACTICES TO BE  
OBSERVED**



**DAILY  
TEMPERATURE &  
HEALTH CHECKS**



**NO ADMITTANCE  
TO THOSE  
DISPLAYING  
SYMPTOMS**



**NO VAPING  
ALLOWED ON  
THIS SITE**

**PART TWO**

# **Overview of Covid-19 Related Impacts**

**Before Covid-19 crushed our economy, if not our spirit, data determined the LIREDC's strategic priorities and specific projects that propelled the region to record employment and robust revenues. As we rise to rebuild and recover, data is even more essential to preparing and executing our come back plans.**

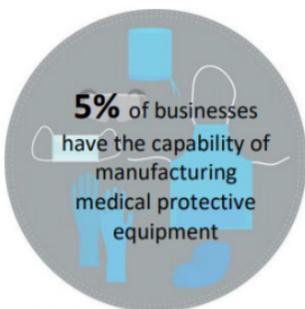
# Overview of COVID-19 Related Impacts

## A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT OF PAIN AND POSSIBILITY IN A PANDEMIC-RAVAGED REGION

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then what about a graphic that charts the devastating impact on thousands of businesses and millions of lives? The LIREDC calls it, in a word, critical.

The need to take an unsparing assessment of how much we are suffering is as essential as the courageous workers who showed up every day in pandemic-dangerous places to help so many others survive. The LIREDC has always relied on data – from scientific surveys to comments at our many town hall meetings; we have prided ourselves on never glossing over or hyping reality. And now, the challenges are so enormous that we can't afford not to know where things really stand. And what needs to be done to recover, rebuild and reimagine a more prosperous, just region.

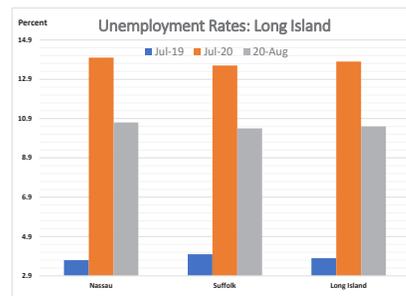
In Section II and Section III, we examine everything from the “20,000-foot view” of pandemic-related impacts and problems to the pain of individual business owners who suddenly saw their dreams and



investments of a lifetime disappear in a matter of months. While some businesses and research centers were able to pivot swiftly to offer products and services suddenly in demand, most suffered huge losses. (Only five percent of our makers were able to shift from their normal products and

produce PPE and other Covid-related supplies.) So the innovative map prepared by ESD staff reflects a landscape not of annual accomplishment but of pain.

It is a pain that we hope Washington, Albany and even our local governments understand cannot be eased without copious amounts of financial assistance and certain regulatory relief. It is no time to allow policymakers anywhere to cling to the myths of suburban wealth and wellness – that we are far more prosperous and problem-free than we really are and, thus, somehow don't need help. As the numbers show, we need a lot.

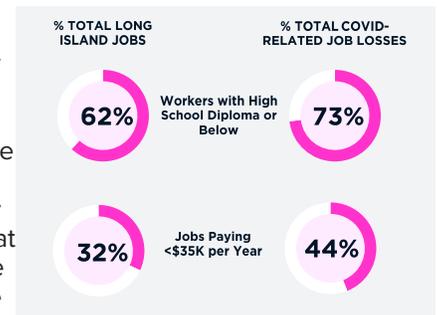


As the regional data demonstrates, Long Island went from record levels of employment and businesses operating across many sectors, to near-record

unemployment and business closings – all in a matter of months. Even as our Main Streets and commercial hubs are showing increasing signs of life, jobless claims keep climbing, and economists warn that the 270,000 jobs shed almost immediately could grow as high as 400,000. That's more likely if we see a Covid-19 resurgence that we are working harder than ever to head off. Then, as noted in Section I, the impact would look not like the Great Recession from which we've spent a decade recovering but the Great Depression.

The most up-to-date figures from the state Department of Labor show that, as of August, Long Island job losses dropped to 152,200 from a year earlier, but the gain of 7,500 in non-farm jobs isn't necessary good news.

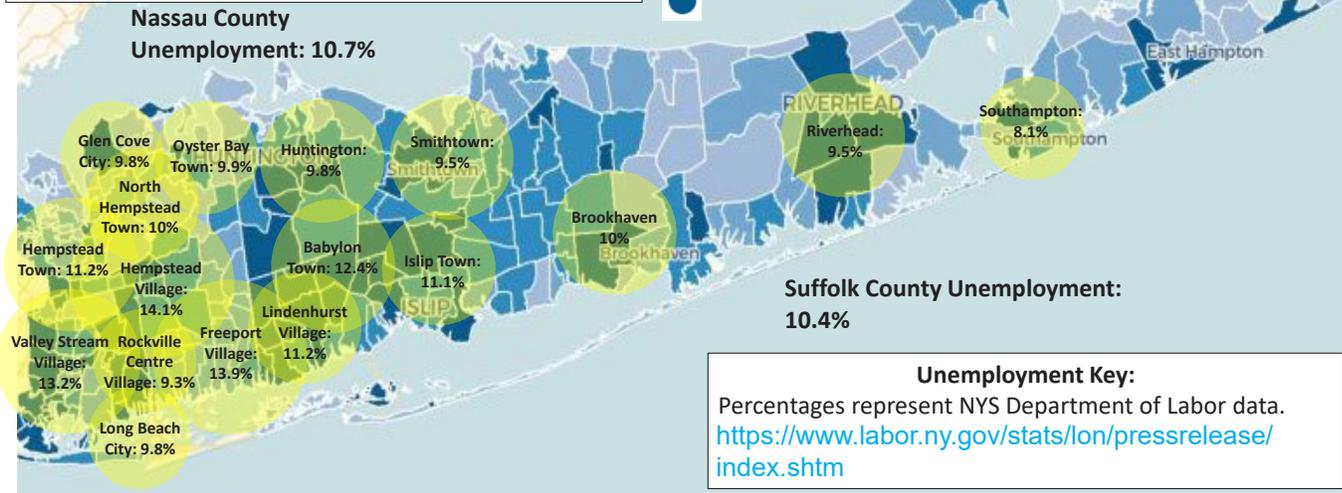
July saw 17,800 new jobs, a sign that our recovery is slowing. If the data doesn't tell us how to prepare for the worst possibilities, they certainly warn that we must. And the places where the numbers tell us



we were particularly unprepared – where we dropped the proverbial ball – are our communities of color.

The disparate devastation on our Black and Latino neighbors – the higher rates of infection, death, unemployment, housing discrimination, a “digital divide” that penalized poorer minority students who couldn't afford a computer or internet service – especially cries out for singular attention. (It's why we are doubling down on our commitment to confront and

**COVID-19 Key:**  
 Concentration of Covid-19 cases as reported by Newsday.  
<https://projects.newsday.com/long-island/tracking-the-coronavirus-on-long-island/>  
 Higher numbers represented by darker shades of blue.



overcome the race-based, economy-killing inequities that hurt the entire region in good times and were particularly punishing in minority communities during the pandemic.) Black and Latino people weren't the only Long Islanders whose race and ethnicity produced disparate impacts. Many Asians, particularly people and businesses owned (or believed to be) by Chinese-Americans, lost customers who blamed or somehow associated them with the "China virus". It's a subtext of the data, gleaned from our extensive and intensive outreach that is part of our "qualitative" data collection and lets us understand the human dimension behind the data.

That's important: Every one of the regional data points, presented in these charts, mirrors the pain and loss of real people. Every survey and study – every recommended policy or proposal to recover and rebuild – is only as valuable as it reveals the reality of our challenge. If they don't provide us a roadmap to every home and business in our region, then we can never achieve our objectives. In the end, we will and must be judged not on what we learn but what we do. The data, albeit an essential starting point, is only just that. So with eyes wide open and focused on all Long Islanders, let's begin!

	<b>% Long Island Jobs</b>	<b>% COVID Job Losses</b>
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		
High school or below	62%	73%
Less than 4-year degree	9%	9%
Bachelor's or above	29%	19%
<b>ON-THE-JOB TRAINING</b>		
Internship/residency	2%	1%
Apprenticeship	2%	3%
On-the-job training	59%	67%
None	37%	29%
<b>MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS</b>		
Less than \$35,000	32%	44%
\$35,000 to \$50,000	22%	23%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	22%	19%
\$75,000 to \$100,000	13%	8%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	9%	6%
\$150,000+	1%	1%



PART THREE

# Needs and Shortfalls of Regional Economy

The collaboration of the two counties in determining the devastating economic impact of Covid-19, as well as a joint set of policy priorities, set a strong example for regional cooperation and assured that we obtained reliable data to assess the Needs and Shortfalls of our economy.

# The Numbing Numbers

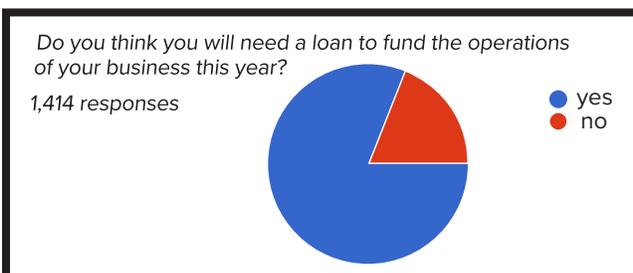
## TIMELY STATISTICS AND SURVEYS TELL A CHILLING STORY AND TARGET CHALLENGES

The LIREDC has always prided itself on its data-driven approach to planning. Knowing the numbers is the first step toward shaping strategies and setting priorities that can earn broad support for implementation. So, when Nassau County Executive Laura Curran decided early in the pandemic that she needed a clear picture of its economic impact, now and in the future, it's no surprise she turned to LIREDC co-chairs, Hofstra University President Stuart Rabinowitz and Long Island Association President Kevin Law. Given the LIREDC's reputation for consensus and collaboration, it also was no surprise that Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone decided to merge his own study with hers into a more effective bi-county effort.

Hofstra was tasked to put together a team that, pro bono, conducted two surveys of businesses so local leaders could identify, from a regional perspective down to the sector level, the extent of the damage and strategies for solving them. County officials particularly wanted evidence to prove their case for aid in Albany and Washington. They wanted to be sure that nobody assumed the pandemic had bypassed suburbia. The surveys were augmented by the work of HR&A Associates, a Manhattan-based economic forecasting firm, which won a competitive bid to take a deeper dive into the region's problems and prospects.

### Survey summary

Hofstra oversaw the creation and implementation of two in-depth internet surveys to assess the economic impact of the pandemic on businesses of all sizes on Long Island, in collaboration with the Nassau and Suffolk County executives and their economic development teams. The first survey closed on April 1, 2020, and the second on May 29, 2020, and the combined responses totaled over 2,700. The results were sobering, but not surprising – the shutdown as a result of COVID-19 had seriously strained the backbone of our economy, Long Island's small businesses. The majority of the respondents from both surveys mirrored our region as a whole: From Main Streets to shopping malls, the vast majority of our businesses had 10 or fewer employees. And the pain was pervasive.



The first [Hofstra survey](#) found that by April 1st, 56 percent of businesses already had to lay off employees and almost 100 percent said they would have to make layoffs by year end. More than 96 percent of owners said they were projecting a decrease in revenues for both the second quarter of 2020 and the entire fiscal year, and 81 percent reported they would need a loan to fund the operations this year. More than half projected they would operate at a loss.

The findings from the [second Hofstra survey](#) – almost two months later – was similarly bleak. More than half of the respondents were not designated an essential business, and 4 percent had already laid off employees. Fewer than 40 percent projected bringing back all workers after the NY Pause was lifted and 36 percent could not determine if they could. Only 3 percent of businesses who responded were not projecting a decrease in revenues. Over half secured a loan, and the majority were between \$500 - \$50,000. Some 46 percent experienced difficulty applying for a loan, and more than half had one pending with the SBA for more than a month. The challenges the businesses faced included a decrease in customers and having to close temporarily. Re-opening challenges included consumer confidence and the financial impact of a phased re-opening. More than 40 percent thought they would recover in 2021 and 34 percent in 2022. For over 70 percent of businesses, the Hofstra survey found the impact of COVID-19 was worse than what they expected.

### HR&A Report

In July 2020, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone announced the results of a comprehensive study from the respected HR&A Advisors analyzing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Long Island's economy, as well as recovery projections and strategies.

Astonishingly, the report revealed that Long Island was shedding jobs at a faster rate than New York City and all other suburban counties in the state. The report also confirmed that a disproportionate share of the 220,000 jobs lost across Long Island included low-paying jobs, workers with low levels of education and workers of color. Other key findings included:

- Long Island businesses shed 270,000 jobs during the first 2 months of the crisis.
- Businesses recouped 48,000 jobs in May, as some economic activity curtailed during the pandemic resumed.
- Continued supply chain disruptions and reductions in consumer demand are expected to result in an additional job loss beyond

those recorded to-date. Total job losses in 2020 are expected to reach 375,000 relative to pre-COVID levels.

- Top seven industry sectors with the most job losses on Long Island:
  - o Hospitality: 82,000
  - o Healthcare/Social Assist.: 59,000
  - o Retail: 52,000
  - o Construction: 37,000
  - o Administrative + Waste Services: 27,000
  - o Personal Services: 26,000
  - o Real Estate: 24,000
- 68 percent of all job losses are in sectors paying less than the regional average annual wage of \$61,600.
- 73 percent of job losses are among workers with a high school diploma.
- The region's lowest-paying sector—hospitality—experienced the greatest decline during initial months of the crisis, with employment down two-thirds.
- Hispanic and Latino workers make up a disproportionate share of hospitality workers on Long Island (27 percent vs. 17 percent of all workers), underscoring disparate impacts felt among minority populations.

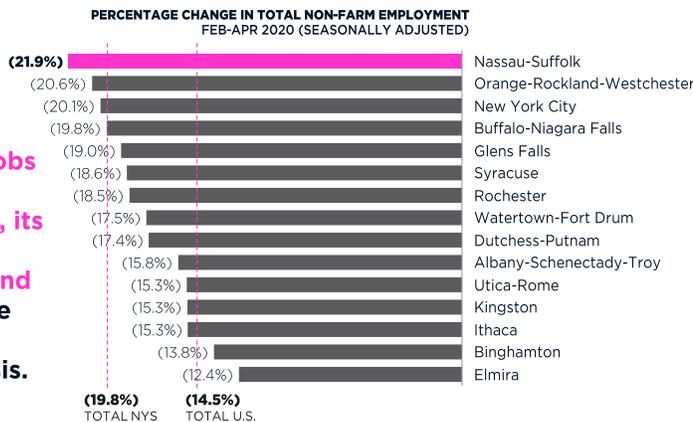
- In addition to bearing a disproportionate share of job losses, lower-income households and communities of color may suffer from slower recovery rates owing to pre-existing inequities such as limited access to credit and employment opportunities.
- The 375,000 net job losses (vs. pre COVID levels) will result in \$21 billion in earnings losses among Long Island workers and \$61 billion in reduced economic activity.
- 8 percent of small businesses (<25 employees) in Nassau County may close this year, compared to 3 percent of businesses with more than 25 employees.
- 50 percent of businesses in Suffolk have closed temporarily; 1 percent of businesses have closed permanently
- 12 percent of real estate firms report that 21 percent- 50 percent of tenants are closing down their business.
- One-third of industrial businesses on Long Island are at risk of closing.

COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**SHOCK**

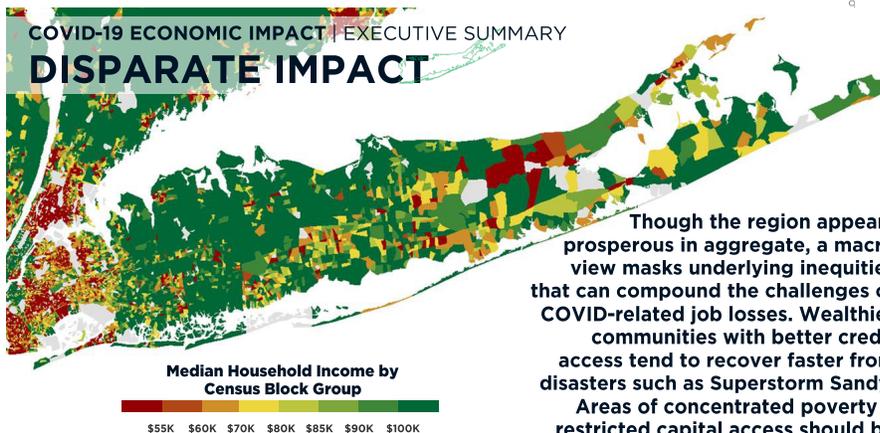
**Long Island businesses shed jobs at a faster rate compared to NYC, its northern suburbs, New York State, and the U.S. as a whole during the initial months of the crisis.**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



It's a hellacious landscape but the reports have provided a map for identifying the biggest obstacles and navigating around them – together.

HRA



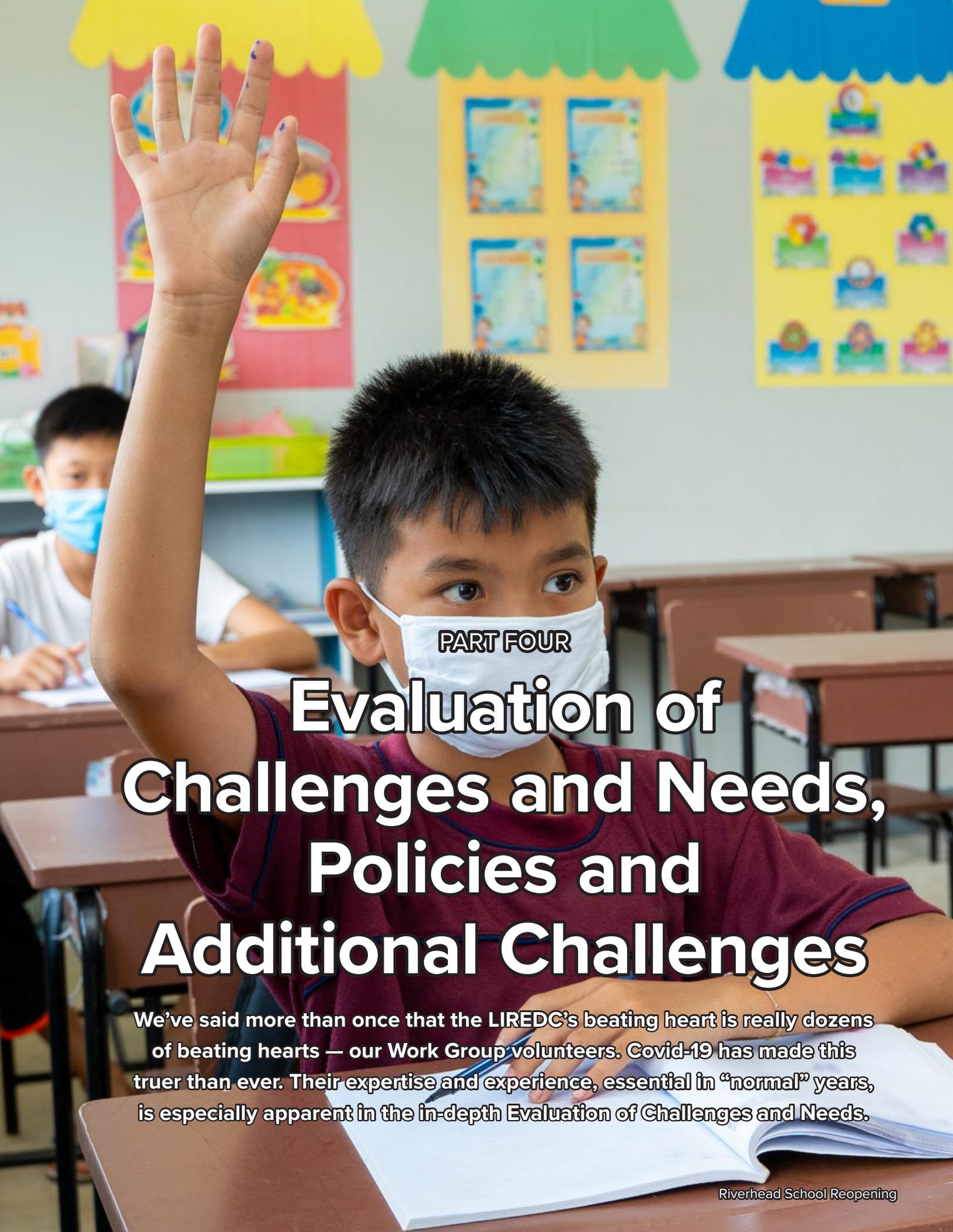
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Long Island Credit Profile, 2017

HRA

Though the region appears prosperous in aggregate, a macro view masks underlying inequities that can compound the challenges of COVID-related job losses. Wealthier communities with better credit access tend to recover faster from disasters such as Superstorm Sandy. Areas of concentrated poverty + restricted capital access should be considered as part of place-based approaches to COVID recovery.



Job loss numbers on Long Island due to Corona Virus Pandemic - CBS News



PART FOUR

# Evaluation of Challenges and Needs, Policies and Additional Challenges

We've said more than once that the LIREDC's beating heart is really dozens of beating hearts — our Work Group volunteers. Covid-19 has made this truer than ever. Their expertise and experience, essential in “normal” years, is especially apparent in the in-depth Evaluation of Challenges and Needs.

# The Child Care Conundrum for Parents and Providers

## MORE HIGH-QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE SLOTS ARE NEEDED BUT FEWER ARE AVAILABLE

Childcare providers are the pandemic’s unsung heroes, the essential workers – overwhelmingly low-paid people of color – who made it possible for others to save lives in hospitals and deliver products to those sheltered at home.

The vast majority of providers remained open to safely care for children. The child care industry was deemed essential from the very beginning of the pandemic – and the industry rose to the challenge. Almost 70 percent of providers on Long Island have kept their doors open throughout the PAUSE; nearer to 90 percent in communities of color where infection rates were among the highest but far fewer residents were able to work from home and care for their own kids.

Large school-age childcare programs partnered with school districts whose classrooms had been closed, which created havoc for working parents. SCOPE and the YMCA-LI offered full-day care for children ages 4 – 12 (most at no cost to the family).

Despite the hard work and commitment, childcare providers are struggling more than ever to keep their doors open. New requirements, decreased enrollment, reduced capacity and general uncertainty have put childcare programs in financial risk with a very uncertain future.

### Background

To understand the impact that Covid-19 has had on the childcare industry, it is important to recognize the challenges facing childcare programs prior to the pandemic.

As emphasized in the LIREDC 2019 Progress Report, which highlighted the importance and perils of the industry, the system was financially distressed and facing a crisis. Childcare programs operated on razor thin margins, while parents struggled to afford the cost. Child care is highly regulated in order to keep children safe, so providers cannot control their cost drivers. Since most childcare programs rely mostly on parent fees for revenue, it is a challenging business model in the best of circumstances. Fees must cover all overhead expenses, staffing, insurance, supplies, etc., while most parents can’t afford price increases to cover rising costs for well-trained staff, better equipment, rent, utilities and others.

The onset of Covid-19 exacerbated these challenges. In order to keep children and staff safe and to follow the precautions put in place by the Department of Health, childcare programs had to reduce the number of children for whom they could care, significantly reducing the revenue of providers – but without reducing overall costs. If anything, providers had to spend more to earn less. Many parents also pulled their children out of child care when schools closed and businesses let employees work from home.

The loss of revenue from the mandatory decrease in the number of children, and the loss of paying parents who kept children home has devastated the industry. Based on [a survey conducted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) in June 2020, 64 percent of New York programs have engaged in layoffs, furloughs or pay cuts, and 51 percent are at risk of closing within 6 months without additional public support. This will make childcare slots harder to find and more expensive.

### Racial and Gender Inequities

The racial and gender disparities laid bare by the pandemic also applied to the childcare industry – well before the first New Yorker was infected. Any transition to an equity economy must put child care front and center.

Approximately 40 percent of the childcare workforce nationally are people of color (it is estimated to be higher in New York State). This is in stark contrast to the K-12 teaching workforce, in which more than 80 percent of teachers are white.

In general, child care is a low-wage field. Sixty-five percent of the childcare workforce in New York is receiving a public benefit due to the low wages. More than 70 percent of the workforce earns less than \$15/ hour; while 75 percent of African-American childcare workers and 79 percent of Hispanic earn less than \$15/hour. Yet, these are the providers that were more likely to remain open and caring for children during the pandemic.

Child Care Workforce Earning less than Minimum Wage		
% of Child Care Workforce Earning Less than \$15/hr	% of African-American Workforce Earning Less than \$15/hr	% of Latino Workforce Earning Less than \$15/hr
70%	75%	79%

In New York, home-based providers in lower-income communities were more likely to have remained open during the pandemic, while child care centers in higher-income communities were more likely to have closed, at least temporarily. This is due to the need of parents in lower-income communities to go to work – many as essential workers; while many parents in higher income communities were able to work from home or had the cushion to afford a loss of income.

While the child care system struggles and many are facing imminent closure, the need for child care has grown and changed dramatically over the past few months. Child care is expected to fill the gaps created by school closures – but it does not have the resources or infrastructure to fully meet this new demand.

While financial support has been coming there is a still a need. Only 15 percent of child care providers received the Paycheck Protection Program Loan, compared to more than half of other businesses. In April, New York received \$164 million from the federal CARES package specifically for child care with \$30 million disbursed as of September 13, 2020. Currently \$65 million is in the process of being disbursed to child care programs, and on September 14, 2020 Governor Cuomo announced the final installment of \$88 million which includes unspent funds from the first two rounds of Cares Act funding allocations to help child care programs adjust to the sector changes as a result of COVID and to provide child care scholarships to essential workers earning less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level. As many programs have lost as much as \$10,000 - \$20,000 in revenue each month since March in a sector that does not have a cushion, significantly more funding is needed to stabilize the industry.

The majority of the childcare workforce is also women (approximately 80 percent). And, it is women who are most likely to bear the burden of the lack of safe, affordable child care. It is a vicious, race- and gender-based conundrum that affects families up and down the economic ladder.

According to a [survey](#) conducted in June 2020 by Care.com, 47 percent of parents who use child care are more concerned about cost now than they were prior to the pandemic. A separate survey conducted by Bankrate found that 23 percent of mothers expect they'll have limited career opportunities due to a lack of work/life balance, 22 percent think they will have to cut their hours at work to help a child with remote learning, and 16 percent said they'll have additional childcare expenses so they can continue to work.

Increasing families' ability to afford child care through subsidy and scholarships (immediate actions), and moving toward a comprehensively affordable child care system (longer term actions) provides multiple benefits in both the immediate and long term. These type of investments will:

## THE CHILD CARE COUNCIL OF SUFFOLK COUNTY



JENNIFER ROJAS

Even before the pandemic, child care on Long Island was in crisis. The LIREDC's 2019 annual report noted just that: The lack of access to affordable, high-quality early learning opportunities made it harder for parents to work and businesses to rely on their employees. The paucity of investments in the industry, including reimbursement rates for lower income families, created a cascading effect of lower wages, high-turnover and little capital available for expansion, training and new equipment.

Covid-19 exacerbated everything – especially for “essential workers” who had no choice but to leave home and work. And the heightened crisis meant the Child Care Council of Suffolk and its counterpart in Nassau had their helping hands even fuller.

“The Council, with our partners, worked tirelessly to support to our child care providers during the pandemic so they could safely remain open and caring for the children of essential workers,” said Jennifer Rojas, executive director of the Suffolk council and co-chair of the LIREDC's child care committee. “We distributed thousands of pieces of PPE to child care programs and offered virtual technical assistance and support. We also elevated the needs and challenges of child care providers to the state and federal leaders, and implemented the \$164 million federal child care CARES program on behalf of the state.”

Jennifer earned her ties beyond Long Island by serving on Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul's statewide committee dedicated to reimagining and, hopefully, reforming the way children of working parents are cared for. One of Jennifer's goals, for Long Island and beyond, is to see child care elevated as a desirable, well-paying job filled with highly trained people dedicated to children. But that means persuading government, business and parents to make increasing the quality of child care a higher priority than it seems to be.

“Child care now more than ever has been recognized as being essential to our workforce and our economy,” said Jennifer. “Yet, too many Long Island families are unable to afford the cost of care. Child care subsidies are too limited and penalize parents who begin to earn more money.”

Forty-three years ago, Jennifer's mother had a child care subsidy that enabled her to go to work and college. “That's too long for the system to remain stagnant and ineffective.”

- Support the child care industry which has lost millions in revenue due to new restrictions in capacity, loss of paying families and increased costs to comply with COVID regulations. With almost 9,000 Long Islanders employed in this industry, this type of investment will keep them employed with family-sustaining wages, while also helping children and families.
- Make quality, safe child care affordable to all working families, facilitating increased participation in the workforce by parents – especially women.
- Boost the local economy with a \$1.95 economic multiplier for every \$1 spent on child care. (See report on the [Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry on Long Island](#) with analysis conducted by the Long Island Association’s Chief Economist.) Multiple national studies by economists have found the longer-term return on investment to be as much as \$13 for every \$1 invested.

Despite being in the epicenter of the outbreak and caring for children of essential workers (thus, higher risk) – there were no outbreaks of Covid-19 in any of the child care programs on Long Island. Even programs that could not stay open continued to support their families and children – providing food, diapers and other resources. Many offered online reading and games and advice for parents.

Without safe, affordable child care for working families, Long Island’s economy will not fully recover from the economic crisis resulting from Covid-19. It is essential – as essential as its workers – not only to recover but to rise and thrive.

***Like all our sector work groups, the Childcare team identified current and potential problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs***

IMMEDIATE NEEDS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS	LONG-TERM NEEDS
<p><b>Keep childcare programs open, safe and affordable.</b></p> <p>Reduced enrollment and capacity means programs operating with less revenue; some losing as much as \$10,000 in revenue per month. All programs need flexible operating funds to remain open and financially viable.</p> <p>Advocate for the recommendations contained in the <a href="#">2019 LIREDC Progress Report</a> on child care and the recommendations of the state Child Care Availability Task Force. The goal is to make quality child care universally affordable for all working families, so that no family spends more than 10 percent of gross income on it.</p>	<p><b>Help working parents afford safe child care.</b></p> <p>For some, child care is needed for school-age children who would have attended school prior to the pandemic. For others, childcare remains unaffordable at \$15,000 - \$18,000 per year.</p> <p>Offer additional scholarships or facilitated enrollment for families that earn up to at least 400 percent of the federal poverty level.</p> <p>Provide tax credits for commercial landlords who provide space for child care centers in their buildings and for employers who subsidize employee costs.</p>	<p><b>Universally affordable, high-quality child care.</b></p> <p>Quality child care is essential to our economy, to women’s participation in the workforce and to the positive development of our youngest children. The U.S. is the only western nation to lack a comprehensive and affordable system.</p> <p>Implement and fund the recommendations of the state taskforce and the LIREDC Progress Report. Monitor the on-ground and aggregate experiences to develop best practices and processes.</p> <p>Explore additional subsidies for Long Island that recognize regional cost differences and salary demands.</p> <p><b>Create early childhood workforce pipeline.</b></p> <p>Identify mechanisms to increase the childcare workforce pipeline by increasing salaries for child care workers to a livable wage (thus lowering reliance on public benefits such as SNAP and Medicaid).</p>

# Diversity and Inclusion as a Strategy for Growth

## STRIKING DOWN STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM BENEFITS THE ENTIRE REGION

*America's First Suburb remains a Tale of Two Suburbs. That even as we are setting records for job creation... Long Island's poverty rate has been rising and we continue to be one of the nation's most racially segregated regions... The consequences of this social and economic isolation... can be seen in deep disparities in everything from health outcomes and educational achievement to income levels and housing quality.*

—LIREDC 2019 Strategic Update

We thought we got it.

After Governor Cuomo requested that all the regional councils reconsider their strategies through the lens of diversity and inclusion, the LIREDC did just that. Although we could say with some pride that our decade of economic development included initiatives and even a project evaluation system aimed at closing race-based disparities, we acknowledged in our [2019 plan](#) that we hadn't done enough. We pledged to do more to promote equity in every sector – and not as a patronizing nod to political correctness but as a super-charging strategy for economic growth.

“If we truly want to walk the talk of diversity and inclusion,” the report declared, “we and all our stakeholders in government, business, labor, not-for-profits and civics – need to do more to break down the barriers that block these communities from the economic mainstream.”

Then came the Covid-19 pandemic. And after only weeks of watching the disparate devastation affecting health in Black and Latino communities that continues today it was clear we didn't fully understand their vulnerability to the challenges of systemic and structural racism.

But now we know, and if there ever were excuses for not doing more to encourage an Equity Economy, the pandemic swept them away. That's why, this year, at our first public meeting, the LIREDC created a formal Disparities Work Group. That's a step up from last year when we empaneled a more informal committee that examined issues of diversity and inclusion and offered ideas for reviewing our programs and procedures.

“The principles of equitable growth make sense whether the goal is to turn Long Island into a center for the research and fabrication of clean energy, especially wind power, or to encourage young farmers to stay with the soil,” said the 2019 report, titled [Breaking Down Barriers](#). “That's because embracing diversity and inclusion is its own form of smart growth. Compassion can and does boost profits. Study after study of corporations and other facets of economic life show that a diverse workforce – whether in the C Suite or on the factory floor – unleashes creativity and productivity. More and more companies have concluded that diversity is simply better for business.”

It still is, but what has changed for us and many others around the country, is the urgency to translate tough words into transformative action. So our work for equity doesn't just continue. Whether it's to prevent realtors from racially “steering” minorities from white neighborhoods ([as detailed in a powerful Newsday series](#)), or to insure that more Blacks and Latinos are trained and retained in high-paying high-tech jobs of the future, or that schools hire more teachers of color as role models for non-white and white students alike, our work is just beginning.

The 2019 panel and 2020 disparities work group were comprised of some of the same people, including professionals who have dedicated their careers to erasing racial injustice. Then as now, they were influenced by a seminal 2017 study of the steep economic cost of racism on Long Island. “To build a sustainable Long Island economy, public, private, and nonprofit leaders... must commit to advancing policies and strategies that increase health equity, wealth, and economic resilience of all Long Islanders,” according to [Empowering Black Long Island: How Equity Is Key to the Future of Nassau and Suffolk Counties](#). “Despite the region's achievements, the American dream that Long Island was built to fulfill remains out of reach for many residents, particularly Black families...”

A region can't call itself equitable, the report went on to say, until “all residents can participate in the region's economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources. Equity is not only a moral imperative, but makes good business sense.”

Covid-19 was bad business for all Long Islanders but far more so for communities of color. Newsday analyses of COVID-19 infection and unemployment

*This article was excerpted from the Long Island Herald.*

## **BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES STRUGGLE AMID THE PANDEMIC**

By Claire Blaha  
Posted August 26, 2020

Sydney Perry, owner of Sydney's Sweets, a custom cake and dessert shop in West Hempstead, struggled with running her business in the midst of the pandemic and Black Lives Matters protests. "In the midst of working without our usual staff capacity, we also had to manage homeschooling and keeping our seven-year-old child occupied while with us," she said. "It has been a challenge."

As a Black-owned business that relies heavily on large celebratory gatherings that are now uncommon, Sydney's Sweets started selling cake jars to bring in revenue, scaled down staff and ended her walk-in service.

Similarly, Latricea Branch, who owns Rich in Health 516, had to close her Uniondale outlet because she couldn't find enough people to work and faced other costs. "Staffing issues was one of the main things, but we also had to readjust seating and put glass barriers up, just trying to remain safe." She was able to reopen recently when the Covid-19 infection rate dropped...

On top of it all, many minority business owners have to endure racism and prejudice... "Sometimes people are a little bit more judgmental," Branch said.

Perry, of Sydney's Sweets, said she has not experienced overt racism, but she did struggle to start her business. "One challenge we faced as a Black-owned business is the inability to obtain bank loans for our initial opening and expansion," she said. "Black-owned businesses across the nation have harder times obtaining bank loans."

Minority-owned businesses are often presented with significant challenges, such as operating with less capital, training and access to markets, according to Richard Hayes, an associate professor of management and entrepreneurship at Hofstra University. He also is part of Ascend Long Island, a research program that aims to increase the capacity of minority-owned businesses...

Because of the BLM Movement, awareness of the struggles faced by Black business owners has increased, Hayes said. "I think this heightened awareness will definitely have more of a long-term effect in



trying to allow folks to say that not only do we want to have political change, but we want to have that economic change."

Sydney Perry, who owns Sydney's Sweets in West Hempstead.

rates showed some of the highest in Black and Latino neighborhoods. African Americans make up about 12percent of Nassau's population and had a virus death rate of 19percent, the greatest disparity among racial and ethnic groups. In Suffolk County, Blacks were just under 8percent of the population and suffered 12percent of the deaths. These disparities were driven by unequal access to health care – long before the pandemic – and the inability to work from home in white collar jobs.

It wasn't just minority employees who took a deadly beating. "Many, many small businesses are owned by minorities and depend on their businesses to feed their families – and they are barely surviving day to day," said Noreen Carro, a co-chair of the Disparities Work Group who owns a printing businesses based in Valley Stream. "They're on the brink of breaking and losing their American Dream."

In fact, due to lack of access to business networks and loans, minority-owned businesses suffered greater losses and closures than their white counterparts. This didn't just hurt communities of color; the losses in tax revenues and disposable income in their neighborhoods reverberated throughout our economic ecosystem.

Shifting the paradigm won't be easy, but it will never happen without affirmative steps among many stakeholders. What's clear is that larger organizations – local governments, school districts, industry leaders across all sectors – especially must lend a hand. They can start by helping more smaller minority entrepreneurs to obtain more lucrative contracts – whether for PPE during the pandemic or a range of other products and services after. Some major businesses and governments, including Nassau, Suffolk, Northwell and PSEG, are doing just that through Hofstra's Ascend Long Island. Principally funded by JP Morgan Chase, which supports similar programs around the country, Ascend trains, mentors and provides access to capital for existing MBEs. The bigger organizations get more out of their participation than feeling good about themselves. They've also acted smartly by increasing the number of potential bidders on contracts and thus driving down their procurement costs.

The pandemic's price certainly cost poorer, intensely segregated minority students. More so than their wealthier white counterparts, many Black and Latino students fell on the wrong side of the "digital divide" that defined Haves and Have Nots before the Covid-19 virus. "Prior to the pandemic an individual's socio-economic status and race were strong predictors of access to a quality education," said Dr. Roberto Joseph, a member of the Disparities Work Group and a Hofstra education professor. "Now they are also predictors of accessing that education remotely, due to lack of computers, Wi-Fi and the experience using them. So, if you are poor/Black/Latino living on Long Island the odds are against you."

A simple, immediate solution to the technology gap between high - and low-need schools? Elaine Gross, Disparities Work Group Co-chair and President of ERASE Racism, suggested that remote classes in the wealthier, more technically proficient schools could be opened to students in high-need ones. And online courses taught by the many exceptional minority teachers could be beamed to districts that have virtually none.

Beyond the practical value is the symbolic: Such sharing would amount to functional integration, bringing white and non-white students together to study, and providing cross-cultural experiences for students and teachers. In the absence of any serious effort to desegregate our school system, much less consolidate simply for costs, any inter-racial and inter-district cooperation can be seen as progress.

Another longer-term solution in high-need districts is the “Community Schools” model: “Community Schools serve, not just as academic entities, but as “opportunity hubs” for entire neighborhoods—bringing together a range of agencies, services and providers to address the specific needs and interests of students, families and residents,” said Lisa Tyson, a Disparities Work Group Member and head of the Long Island Progressive Coalition

The Disparities Work Group came up with many other ideas for improving housing, transportation, health care and the not-for-profit human service providers that were especially hindered at a time people most needed them. These ideas appear throughout the 2020 update. And that’s as it should be. Every aspect of the LIREDC’s work – every strategy, every sector, every proposal for building or training – must be evaluated for its advancement of diversity and inclusion. When we say we see equity as a growth strategy, we mean it.



New paeLong Island will start the first phase of reopening on Wednesday. Elected officials, business owners and patrons talk about this milestone. Newsday’s Cecilia Dowd has more in Tuesday’s daily coronavirus wrap-up. Credit: Newsday staff; Facebook / Governor Andrew Cuomo, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone



Cornwell Avenue School Principal Deanna Sinito checked students in for their first day of school. Courtesy West Hempstead school district



Pre-Covid Community Schools - Adobe Stock Photo



Pre-Covid Long Island Progressive Coalition Unity Rally – 10/2/14

# Downtown Main Street Problems and Possibilities

## SMALL BUSINESS AID AND AMBITION IS THE KEY TO OUR COVID-19 COMEBACK

For centuries, village downtowns were Long Island's heart and soul. Economically and socially, they remain so. But Main Streets are starting to evolve. And over the last decade, more and more communities have heard the call of the LIREDC and other Smart Growth, Transit Oriented Development advocates for affordable housing near commuter rail stations. More and more have embraced a "new suburban dream" of preserving their single-family neighborhoods – but around a revitalized, reimagined core of exciting attractions that coax visitors from their cars and money from their pockets.

LIREDC has supported tens of millions of dollars in construction that is changing the trajectory of communities, especially some of our most underserved. Just six months ago, with vacancy rates and joblessness down at the sub-basement level, Long Island's diverse network of mostly small villages added up to a powerful economic engine. Their character (and characters) brought a charm and cohesion that were the essence of Long Island.

Then came Covid-19.

Yes, some Main Street businesses prospered, able to promote must-have products and services suddenly in demand. Some businesses, adequately capitalized and connected to federal, state and local aid networks, were able to survive until customers returned. They were aided by County and Town initiatives, such as the partnership between the Nassau and Suffolk IDAs and Discover LI to promote Long Island [Downtown Travel Pass](#), which encourages Long Islanders to take "staycations."

Many villages, notably Farmingdale, Patchogue and Greenport, saw local officials work closely with restaurateurs, the New York State Liquor Authority and Department of Transportation to safely close roads and fast-track expanded outdoor dining. Hempstead Town Supervisor Donald Clavin allocated copious amounts of the town's federal Cares Act funds for safety equipment and supplies sent to many institutions. Learning how thirsty health care workers were wearing heavy PPE all day, Nassau's IDA connected corporate donors to suppliers that delivered pallets of bottles to all Nassau hospitals. IDAs, which normally provide tax breaks to spur large construction projects, pivoted to give away

millions of dollars of PPE kits to small businesses. Similarly, Suffolk County recognizing the emergent need for PPE equipment opened up sites across the county to collect donations from businesses and vendors of personal protective equipment for first responders, emergency services and health care workers. Over 282,000 masks, lab coats, and gloves were collected as part of this effort.

But most downtown businesses, stuck with unmovable inventory, unavailable employees and new health and safety rules, took a beating. Thousands of doors may never reopen. And without financial support, the consequences will continue to be catastrophic.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the lack of public understanding – whether, when and where it was safe to go outside and how to properly protect themselves – prompted many consumers to rely on national internet businesses or big box stores. Businesses deemed "non-essential" were forced to wait before they could reopen. Employees had to subsist on benefits or seek employment elsewhere. In addition to public fear, other obstacles to overcome for businesses included compliance with new state and federal guidelines and the difficulty and cost of obtaining PPE.

Face-to-face personal service businesses (such as barbershops) were hit hardest. Retail (such as clothing) lost even more ground to big box stores and online competition. So, it was adapt or die. If the "little guy" on Main Street wasn't already selling online or quick to adapt and connect to their audience, they were effectively closed with zero income for three to four months. Popular restaurants able to connect to multiple delivery options fared better. Some food establishments saw digital food platforms bring them new take-out customers they may keep.

All Long Islanders are especially proud of the essential workers who risked their health and even lives to keep can't-live-without products flowing through "contactless delivery." The hope is that these men and women will continue to be valued. And that the Main Streets where so many of them worked will receive the support they need, from their appreciative customers and more flexible government agencies, to rebuild better than ever.

## FARMINGDALE VILLAGE RECOVERY

MAYOR RALPH EKSTRAND

“Thank you!”

Everywhere he goes in this thriving “smart-growth” village, which revitalized around “transit-oriented development” and attention to downtown merchants and shoppers, Mayor Ralph Ekstrand finds someone to thank for their efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic.



But the Covid “curve” wasn’t flattened without a lot of pain and sacrifice. “Initially upon learning of the rising danger we canceled the St. Patrick’s Day parade” whose popularity made this a very tough decision. But residents had confidence in the mayor’s judgement and looked to him for leadership, as well as reliable information.

“Updates were issued via robocalls and emails for all safety and containment recommendations,” said Mayor Ekstrand. “Masks were given out to Senior complexes in the Village and on the Village Green to residents. The Trustees and I also delivered masks to Seniors unable to get to the Village Green. Additionally, thousands of Masks were provided to merchants for their patrons.”

The work didn’t end there. “Village Hall was thoroughly sanitized,” he added. “All interfaces with the public now have Plexiglass barriers, masks are required for entry, and there is regular sanitizing of counter surfaces, door knobs and handles.”

Public Village Meetings were made accessible online. A-frame signs regarding safety protocols were designed placed throughout the village encouraging social distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitizing.

“We know it’s been a challenge,” he said. “But from what the data shows, everything we are doing seems to be helping!”

What merchants and their customers seemed to appreciate most was how the village worked closely with them on a plan for outside dining. They developed a map to designate where they could set up on streets and loading zones.

As Mayor Ekstrand put it, “Daler spirit was high!” One source of pride was the Split the Bill NY Program. The Sidgmore Family Foundation stepped forward to subsidize dining in in the village as a downtown pilot. “Split the Bill NY was a huge success; \$20,000 was exhausted in two days.”

And for that, as well as the cooperation of merchants and residents in observing health and safety regulations – and for collaborating to bring the village back to life – all Mayor Ekstrand had to say was “Thank you!”

*This article was excerpted from The Suffolk Times*

## GREENPORT’S PARKLETS PLAN CELEBRATED AS A PANDEMIC SUCCESS STORY

BY TIM GANNON

“It’s like a dream come true,” said former Greenport Mayor Dave Kapell as he looked out at tables filled with diners on Front Street Friday afternoon.

Since Memorial Day weekend the Village has used “parklets” on what was formerly parking spaces on the side of Front and parts of Main Street.

On Friday, village officials and others deemed the concept a success story.

Parklets contain tables and chairs to act as an extension of the sidewalk and also protect patrons from traffic. Part of the idea behind the parklets was that, since the state cut the indoor capacity of sit-down restaurants in half, they could make up some of the difference with new outdoor seating. The plan also would increase the amount of sidewalk space available.

The parklet plan enabled the village to leverage 51 parking spaces to create an additional 9,000 square feet of outdoor space for al-fresco dining and commercial sales.

Mr. Kapell and Rich Vandenburg, co-owner of Greenport Harbor Brewing Co. and president of the Village Business Improvement District, led the effort to use the parklets. Mr. Vandenburg credited the idea to Mr. Kapell, who admits he was a little surprised at how well it worked.

“It’s such a pipe dream to start with, the whole idea of eliminating parking in the business district,” he said in an interview Friday. “Everyone complains about the lack of parking, and then try to make it happen during the height of a pandemic when people were preoccupied with arguably more important things.”

The parklet plan has been in place seven days a week since Memorial Day weekend, and it will Mayor George Hubbard Jr. attributed the success to a total team effort with regular early morning meetings and phone calls jumpstarting the plans.

“It took a great showing of camaraderie and of people working together and working together for the common goal of trying to do to salvage businesses,” he said.



A table is served in a parklet outside Anker on Front Street in Greenport Friday. (Credit: Tim Gannon)

Meanwhile, downtown businesses are continuing to adapt to the “new abnormal” with “touchless” transactions separated by Plexiglas shields and other unfamiliar and costly, but necessary, steps to promote sales and protect customers and staff. The Sayville Chamber of Commerce established a fund to assist struggling merchants. Discover LI created a mobile-based **Downtown Deals** by which customers can access discounts at participating businesses. With or without government help, more and more businesses are sinking every cent they must to survive and, hopefully, thrive.

The Downtown Main Street Work Group appreciates the leadership of Governor Cuomo, coordinating with the Nassau and Suffolk County Executives and other leaders, in helping flatten the curve in a fashion that should affirm our comeback as a national model. We can’t afford another shutdown. The work group also appreciates sound local planning and zoning rules, and their consistent application. But small business owners would love to be able to continue with outdoor dining, car-free street plazas and other “emergency” variances that helped our village establishments reconnect with customers.

The good news is that the positive results have encouraged more officials, working with town and county counterparts, to consider reimagining their rules and regulations. The better news is that the foundation of strategic goals and regional cooperation, established in the decade of the LIREDC’s existence, has helped and will continue to help downtown Main Streets rev up as fast as possible to be the economic engine we need.

Overall, what we’ve learned so far is that the key to recovery is clarity, consistency and timeliness – in everything from the delivery and enforcement of government edicts to the flow of relief funds to organizations and employees.

***Like all our sector work groups, the Downtown Main Street team identified current and potential problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs.***

<b>IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS</b>
<p><b>Regulations that limit the ability for businesses to adapt to changing conditions and implement innovative downtown practices.</b></p> <p>Promote regulatory reform at the local, county and state levels to encourage retail and commercial innovation.</p> <p>Continue to support the existing momentum on County, Town, and Village levels that are allowing innovative downtown practices to take place, such as converting parking spaces to dining areas/ commercial space for merchants to use.</p> <p>The State Liquor Authority (SLA) should consider extending its support of innovative approaches to downtown dining that brings not only revenue to establishments but also vibrancy through foot traffic. Diners not only dine; they also shop and provide revenue to additional businesses.</p> <p>Suggest that the Department of Transportation make permanent the regulations that permit commercial use of state highways and consider other ways state agencies can revise regulations to promote downtown innovation.</p>	<p><b>Emergency funding and fiscal relief is needed for downtown businesses to survive.</b></p> <p>Long Island’s eight IDAs should collaborate to establish a regional emergency loan/grant fund to maximize the impact of loans and grants.</p> <p>Still-available federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds should be marketed to provide greater and simplified access to downtown businesses. Further, small business should be allowed to reapply if refused an initial loan.</p> <p>Consider further action to increase flexibility of local IDA’s to support downtown business.</p>	<p><b>The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the pressing need to enhance and expand equitable access to digital information and commercial opportunity.</b></p> <p>The Council recommends that a plan be developed to create a regional network focused specifically on the need to digitally connect Long Island downtowns for both informational and commercial development.</p> <p>Offer existing state technical resources to support the development of a digital network to connect Long Island downtowns for information sharing and to promote online commerce.</p> <p>Ready access to current information on the pandemic in multiple languages could be enhanced by a centralized digital source and improved connectivity between downtowns.</p>

# Innovation and Technology

## ENABLING OUR BRIGHTEST MINDS TO TURN OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Now more than ever, Long Island needs support for the innovation sector we've spent a decade building up with state capital and workforce development investments. Our world-class institutions will need support to rise to the current challenges of the pandemic and fly on to realize our long-term goals of an innovation economy.

The Covid-19 pandemic halted critical collaborative research and lab work when physical spaces closed. Companies, notably in overseas manufacturing and retail-tech (technologies such as AR/VR, AI, and IoT that helps retail businesses to improve store operations, facilitate accurate inventory management, and enhance consumers' shopping experiences) lost months of product development; sponsored research projects slowed. Venture capital dried to a trickle, and entrepreneurs are faced with pro-investor deals. The ripple effect punished the innovation ecosystem, including subcontractors and firms that support them, from intellectual property attorneys to research supply services.

Science is inherently collaborative – the critical assumption of our strategic approach to an innovation economy – and it demands face-to-face contact to be effective. Sometimes just random encounters walking in from the parking lot or waiting on a cafeteria line can lead to flashes of shared inspiration that see researchers running back to the lab to explore. So, our research institutions, accustomed to collaborations encouraged by the LIREDC, did what they could during the dark months of spring. They worked independently and together to innovate, such as genetic research at Cold Spring Harbor Labs and the 3D printing facilities at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research and Stony Brook University to make PPE to protect our healthcare workers. In the region's world-class labs, some nurtured by LIREDC-supported funding, engineers re-imagined and re-organized on the fly, such as Northwell's adaption of BiPAP devices to alleviate suffering from COVID-19, and university-based incubators pivoting immediately to virtual programming.

Our universities, colleges, and research institutions are now open to students, faculty and researchers, and have done so in a safety-conscious, well-planned manner. They can deliver courses both remotely and in-person and often a "hybrid" of both. What they can't do as well remotely is replicate internship/research/clinical experiences that have been lost or compromised as a result of COVID-19. Placement opportunities are also

more limited. Long Island's institutions are placing an on-going emphasis on in-person education, driving students and staff to keep the virus from spreading by wearing masks, social distancing, hand washing, deep cleaning, a testing protocol, screening and common sense. But it has come at a steep financial cost at a time when student headcounts are falling short of pre-Covid projections.

Leave it to nimble entrepreneurs, however, to see great opportunities in great problems. Long Island – with innovative companies such as Codagenix at the state-supported Broadhollow Science Park in Farmingdale – can continue to be a leader in new drug discovery. And that includes the race to a Covid-19 vaccine. Just as we showed the entire world how science-based decisions can flatten a dangerous curve, we need to prove that Long Island and the State can be home to innovation in the pandemic and post-pandemic "new normal." Programs like the Hofstra University ideaHUB, SUNY Farmingdale's and Stony Brook's Small Business Development Centers, and the Entrepreneurship Assistance Centers at Hofstra and Suffolk County Community College have provided entre for hundreds of entrepreneurs to business-saving resources. Hofstra and Adelphi have filled the gap for students who lost or had difficulty securing internships, connecting dozens of students with remote internships with startup companies and non-profit organizations, in a mutually beneficial relationship.

For all these efforts to be truly successful for the economy, which cannot afford to leave anybody behind, they must lift minority students, entrepreneurs, and communities suffering from disinvestment. Traditionally, Blacks and Latinos have been under-represented in science, engineering and medicine, and few minority-owned businesses win contracts from major businesses, especially in the tech sector. Even before the pandemic and the national attention on Black Lives Matter has shone a harsh light on systemic racism, the LIREDC declared diversity, equity, and inclusion as a key growth strategy and many Long Island institutions have embraced it, such as Hofstra's Ascend Long Island partnership to train, mentor and provide access to capital for minority businesses that want to join the supply chains of larger companies. USA Today recently recognized New York Institute of Technology as having the most diverse student body of any school in the country. That's a distinction with a difference and something to be emulated.

As was specifically outlined in prior years reports, the Innovation Work Group continues to support a multi-region collaboration with New York City and the Mid-Hudson regions. This effort not only bolsters innovation and discovery but leverages the unique strengths of each region. These collaborations may include multi-region technology business recruitment and the attraction of highly skilled technologists and researchers. NYC, even with the ravages of the pandemic, absolutely remains a global magnet that attracts young people who want to live in the most exciting city in the world. A talented young PhD could live in NYC and easily “reverse commute” to BNL, Cold Spring Harbor labs or Regeneron in Westchester.

The opportunity to market a tri-region of innovation should be explored because it helps the downstate area. In addition, we can explore research collaboration among institutions in the three regions. On Long Island this opportunity is enhanced by some of LI’s major hospitals like Winthrop and South Nassau owned by NYC based healthcare and research powerhouses. NYU Langone’s affiliation with Winthrop’s Research Institute and South Nassau’s affiliation with Mount Sinai has been hugely important for LI. Schools like NYIT have major campuses in both LI and NYC and could be a springboard for new multi-regional educational and research collaboration. We will continue to support and explore efforts to align innovation efforts among the downstate regions.



New York Institute of Technology, a private technological institute located on Long Island, recently established the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Task Force. Courtesy of New York Institute of Technology via Facebook

## MICHAEL LAI HOFSTRA STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR

The company he founded was named one of Fast Company’s 2020 World Changing Ideas. He is backed by the Clinton Foundation, the 1517 Fund, Accelerate New York Seed Fund, and Microsoft. He and his company have won more



Photo Credit: Hofstra University

competitions than some entrepreneurs do in a life time.

And he accomplished most of this before he graduated college. “There’s only one word for Michael,” said Stacey I. Sikes, Executive Dean of Entrepreneurship and Business Development at Hofstra University. “Star!”

Michael is the founder and CEO of Cress Health, which creates disruptive digital technologies to help individuals enhance their mental wellness. With the help of the Center for Entrepreneurship, while he was still a student at Hofstra, Cress Health won 2nd place in the 2019 Healthcare Entrepreneurship Community Challenge, 1st place in the 2019 Long Island Business Plan Competition, 3rd place in the 2019 Hofstra-Digital Remedy Venture Challenge, and the national grand prize at the 2019 GMAC “Think Like an Entrepreneur” competition.

Michael has not let the Covid-19 pandemic slow him. If anything, it has spurred him toward his passion for social entrepreneurship. Michael has founded Cress Cares (Cress Health’s non-profit arm) to work with global partners such as the U.N. Refugee Agency and the Jesuit Refugee Service to deliver cost-free mental wellness resources to Kenyan refugees.

A testament to the importance of overcoming whatever obstacles Covid-19 has created for research and entrepreneurship, Michael credits Hofstra’s Center for Entrepreneurship and the support from the ideaHUB incubator as being a launching pad.

“I originally came into Hofstra as a biology major pursuing a career in medicine,” Michael said. “The extent of my entrepreneurial experience was from watching people pitch on Shark Tank. Never could I imagine that one day I would also be pitching in front of an investor panel.”

Michael aims to expand Cress Health’s products to further its domestic and international impact while pursuing an MBA at Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management. He hopes to give back to Hofstra’s Center for Entrepreneurship through its NextGen Advisory Board and serve Long Island’s regional economic ecosystem.

“It’s been amazing to see his journey and success,” said Hofstra’s Dean Sikes. “There is tremendous potential to continue to support students like Michael with university-based incubation programs on Long Island.”

**Like all our sector work groups, the Innovation and Technology team identified problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs.**

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS
<p><b>Maintain current and projected state levels of funding.</b></p> <p>NYSTAR can establish a “virtual” NYS Center of Excellence” in pandemic medicine with nodes across NYS aimed at linking expertise in viral and pandemic research that can be quickly marshalled to develop vaccines and emergency therapies. The COE would coordinate statewide research collaboration and grant funding.</p> <p>Continue to support R&amp;D funding at universities and research institutions that suffered loss of federal aid.</p> <p>Immediately establish a university-based regional business start-up competition (like 43 North). NYS along with partners like banks and VCs could help fund an annual competition with a sustainable funding stream. These regional business competitions could morph into a statewide business startup competition.</p>	<p><b>New funding should support hardest-hit disadvantaged students and communities and early-stage entrepreneurs.</b></p> <p>The State through a public private partnership can establish a local seed funding initiative to promising early stage start-ups with focus on healthcare.</p> <p>Create a multi-college accelerator internship program that leverages State resources to connect students with industry. This effort should be tied to the immediate goal of a regional business competition.</p> <p>New training, mentoring and funding efforts should be re-focused on disadvantaged communities and students. Low-cost capital aimed generally at new businesses and specifically at minority entrepreneurs communities would help.</p> <p>Expand incubator and hot spot programs.</p>	<p><b>Innovation infrastructure must be improved.</b></p> <p>Improve telecom infrastructure by investing in more reliable electric and data connectivity, hardening utilities, and burying infrastructure.</p> <p>Build out a 5G high-speed wireless internet network on Long Island with a focus on underserved communities. The 5G investment could facilitate big data research linkages among institutions across NYS with BNL, SBU and Hofstra as anchors.</p> <p>Continue to work on multi-regional innovation, collaboration and tech-talent recruitment with NYC and Mid-Hudson regions.</p>



5G High Speed: Getty Stock Photo

# Reimagining Manufacturing... on the Fly

## COVID-19 PUSHED LONG ISLAND'S LEGACY SECTOR TO PIVOT QUICKLY

Long Island's manufacturers have helped win World Wars and conquer the moon. And while they have struggled with structural changes to the economy that have put our region at a competitive disadvantage, our aerospace and other makers have responded nimbly and creatively to keep growing.

But Covid-19 forced our high-tech manufacturers to innovate even faster than the F-14s and other Mach-plus aircraft that once enhanced our reputation as well as enriched our families. And they rose to the challenge: One after another our makers adapted to keep their business alive and employees safe. And some, particularly with chops in the health care sector or the wherewithal to pivot there, did extremely well. Those that relied on export or retail sales, not so much.

Overall, LI makers and their peers statewide offered what can arguably be called a national model. But they can still use help in the short and long term, as the chart at the end of this section details.

Even though most manufacturers were essential and able to continue production, they were faced with supply chain disruptions, the need to protect their employees with PPE, social distancing rules, changes to markets, and remote work when possible. Additional challenges included limited cash flow and difficulty engaging overseas partners, uncertainty with cost and timing of shipments, cancelled growth plans, inability to access SBA loans because of lack of banking relationships, uncertainty surrounding demand for goods and tariffs, and concerns about future trade shows.

But the pandemic didn't stop them. If anything, like a combat pilot shifting to afterburners, it pushed many of them higher and farther. The imperative of survival saw manufacturers reimagining how they operated and, like the biopharma company that switched over to producing products useful to health care, even what they made.

As much as they might have wanted to, however, not every manufacturer was able to adapt. Those not deemed essential were forced to close or limit their capacity. Also, manufacturing industries rely upon an increasingly diverse workforce, and many employees of color and their families were hit hard by the pandemic, thus unable to work. And many of those who could work faced layoffs and furloughs that further exacerbated their plight.

On the bright side, more than a dozen large manufacturing stepped up to retool and meet the rising demands for PPE and diagnostic testing to support Long Island and the State's efforts to crush the curve. These included:

- Applied DNA Sciences, a biopharmaceutical company located at Stony Brook, NY, which started to produce critical therapeutics and diagnostics for health care workers and patients.
- AB Bioinnovations, which began manufacturing a solution with strong antiviral, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties. It can be used as a spray coating on the masks (PPE and N95), as a nasal spray and as a disinfectant on other surfaces.
- Soter Technologies developed an access gate to measure temperature, oxygen level, and other diagnostic data to identify infection.

The manufacturing sector on Long Island is diverse – with concentrations including biotech/pharmaceuticals, food and beverage and aerospace and defense – and they all have unique needs and challenges presented by the pandemic. These included:

- The food and beverage manufacturing business increased sales as demand for home delivery increased. But the retail/consumer side was hit hard with shutdowns, and only now are seeing some light. Retail especially has a long way to go before stability and growth is realized. Optimism can be had with the continual growth in food manufacturing regionally, given that it was deemed an essential business and companies were able to continue production. The smaller manufacturers faced the most workforce challenges with new health and safety protocols.
- The biotech/pharma sectors affected by Covid-19 are distinctly broken down into two groups—PPE suppliers, which are doing well throughout this pandemic; and all other biotech/pharma manufacturers, which are struggling. This is also coupled with the supply chain shortage, which was somewhat restored after the first month for some aspects of the sector.
- Hospital suppliers that focus on emergent care also did well during Covid-19, and those that are suppliers for elective surgeries (such as MRIs, CAT Scans, screws, plates, etc) suffered for three months until elective surgeries resumed. The dental industry and its supply chain have been hit the hardest, with about 70-80 percent of loss in business.

Industry, government and business organizations, such as the Long Island Association, Hauppauge Industrial Association-LI, Stony Brook Manufacturing and Technology Research Consortium, Ignite LI, SBA, Empire State Development Small Business Division, and the LI Food Council and many others, including manufacturers like GSE Dynamics and A&L Lighting, played a key role in disseminating information and supporting businesses as they navigated new rules and regulations. Leaders made themselves available to answer questions and many opened their meeting platforms to share information about loan programs and rules about businesses re-opening.

Now we know that New York State can rely on its own manufacturers to help manage a crisis in the future, including those on Long Island, and should establish a process where manufacturers have access to bills of material/specification, contract proposal information, and questions about liability insurance are answered. New York's response to COVID-19 was a model for the nation, and the manufacturing industry on Long Island is looking forward to supporting the economic recovery.



Members of the Huntington Community First Aid Squad pick up face shields at Zaro's Café, a restaurant that transformed dining into making face shields, Photo from Zaro's Café

## MARRYING INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING

Long Island may not be the manufacturing powerhouse that produced aircraft that won World War II or put the first human on the moon, but it's an important, value-added facet our economy. And organizations like the Composite Prototyping Center (CPC) know that new growth opportunities await – if we seize them.



PHIL RUGILE

The CPC in Plainview, NY is the NYSTAR designated Regional Technology Development Center (RTDC) for Long Island. For the past six years, the CPC has served a dual role in educating the industry and public-school children as well as to be the operational center for manufacturers requiring advanced composite capabilities. The CPC has benefited from a growing base of high-tech startup companies supported by independent spaces such as Launchpad Huntington, along with Stony Brook University's and Hofstra University's incubators and entrepreneurship programs.

After the State and LIREDC strategic commitment to support the Sunrise and Empire offshore wind farms, the CPC quickly brought together disparate talents to identify supply chain, product innovation and workforce certification opportunities and better position the region to benefit. Says the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI) CEO John Hopkins of the CPC efforts, "CPC's leadership in convening and coordinating partners with and along the supply chain to help enable New York's vision for offshore wind is a tremendous advantage for the region and also reflects on the important role it is serving in IACMI's national network of regional programs for composites workforce development."

Industry opportunities presented by offshore wind as well as evolving manufacturing technologies like Cyber Manufacturing are showing a need for tighter educational curriculum integration between composite and metals manufacturing. In addition, developments in the manufacture and repair of high-performance composites research at Stony Brook (just one example) are presenting exciting opportunities for regional Department of Defense manufacturers.

When aligned with two-year college curriculums and certification programs, the CPC is lending its materials expertise to create career pathways in advanced manufacturing while educating industry on supply chain opportunities. Said Phil Rugile, Education and Workforce Director for the CPC and Director of Launchpad Huntington,

"Projects such as offshore wind offer the perfect setup for more tightly aligning education and industry to provide new markets for early stage and established companies, new career development for high school through in-transition adults, and a pipeline of innovative technologies with far-ranging applications."

*Like all our sector work groups, the Manufacturing and Industry team identified current and potential problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs.*

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS
<p><b>Government support of LI through NIST and Regional MEP funding; revisit regulations and processes for reaching out to LI manufacturing to support crisis response.</b></p> <p>Continue to make funding from sources like the NYMEP and NIST CARES available to LI businesses struggling to survive. Specifically we should focus on companies producing critical PPE or biomedical supplies, but also other manufacturers critical to the economic health and employment of our region.</p> <p>Development of virtual trade shows where in-market representatives attend, utilizing the model established by the U.S. Commercial Service and highly secured virtual platforms. Technical support from export experts could also help companies take full advantage of the opportunities presented at a virtual show.</p> <p>Work closely with NYC’s Industrial &amp; Technology Assistance Corporation to create a plan to source PPE and other disaster relief supplies with a contact list and website of all interested manufacturers, which includes specifications, contract information, a plan for dealing with liability insurance, and government oversight.</p>	<p><b>New policies should support on-going profitability and mitigate cost-drivers of the manufacturing industry.</b></p> <p>The US Commercial Service should deploy its commercial diplomats and locally employed staff people on the ground in over 80 markets overseas to provide market insight and support for businesses that are looking to export.</p> <p>Enact new policies to ensure long-term profitability of Long Island manufacturers developing PPE and ventilators, and encourage companies to purchase local instead of turning to foreign markets.</p> <p>Address cost-drivers that add challenges to LI manufacturers, including electric rates, property taxes, a group health insurance program for manufacturing companies.</p> <p>Support the development of an apprenticeship accelerator that will help train the future manufacturing workforce in the skills they need to begin a career in the manufacturing industry including aerospace/defense, pharmaceutical, metal fabrication, etc.</p>	<p><b>Partnerships with local and national industry organizations are essential for the continued support and expansion of manufacturing.</b></p> <p>Encourage utilization of programs and services from federal and state agencies, industry associations, and educational institutions to prepare manufacturers for doing business internationally. These include Empire State Development’s Global NY Program, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s US Commercial Service, the SBA and SBDC, Stony Brook University’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership, IGNITE, ADDAPT and others.</p> <p>Ensure NYS presence with major trade/industry associations – National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) etc.</p>



# The Land and Sea Drives the Tourist Trade

## COVID-19 RECOVERY RELIES ON STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS AND GREATER RESOURCES

*“Since its inception, the LIREDC has emphasized that we not only can balance the economy and the environment, but we must. And no sector better illustrates the nexus of economic development and environmental protection – as well as a healthy respect for our history and culture – than our \$6.1 billion tourism economy...”*

–2019 annual update

Less than a year later, Covid-19 hit the overlapping sectors of tourism hard. And they're still hurting. According to a [study commissioned by Nassau and Suffolk Counties](#) and conducted by Hofstra University, Long Island's hospitality industry heavily dependent on our tourists suffered the greatest job losses in the region – 80,000. The road to recovery is expected to be long and, after two years, it's expected that 25,000 of those jobs will never return. Many restaurants and other businesses remain shuttered or are operating at a fraction of capacity, and major attractions such as Splish Splash water park and Nassau Coliseum remain closed. The catering industry, whose weddings and other family events attract many out-of-state guests, also has been crippled; our most notable facilities are unable to host events of any size for the remainder of 2020. Commercial fishermen and farmers, who saw little or nothing returned for their spring and summer investments, will never recoup those losses.

Even with restaurants, hotels and other magnets for visitors finally reopening for business, however restricted by safety protocols, a return to last year's hard-won record levels of spending and the resultant profits for hoteliers, fishermen, farmers, restaurateurs and shopkeepers may take years. Getting back up to full speed also may require structural changes between and within sectors – in some cases literally, as in architectural adjustments – to reflect new consumer preferences and the availability of capital.

But the fundamental approach to growth will remain the same. Like the spiritual that sings of “the knee bone connected to the thigh bone,” Long Island works best when it works together. Although we may organize our work groups around a specific strategy or industry cluster, the LIREDC knows – particularly in confronting the challenges of Covid – that our economy is stronger when every component is in sync.

That's especially true of the Natural Assets and Tourism Work Group. Where all our committees are mindful of how their research and recommendations relate to other sectors, the LIREDC understands that the complex, intersecting ecosystems considered by the work group epitomize the importance of connecting critical dots. In the case of Natural Assets and Tourism, the work group's report highlighted the interconnectedness of the industries included in this sector.

The “knee bone” of the fishing boats and farm fields feed the “thigh bone” of restaurants and gourmet shops that, in turn, increase the demand for the scallops and micro greens – all of which generate jobs up and down the economic ladder and spending that multiplies throughout the communities. Clean bays and oceans, as well as the bucolic cache of farm fields, fishing docks and cultural venues, draw tourists who, in turn, drive up demand in restaurants, boutiques, bed and breakfasts and rental homes. And so it goes – that is, when it goes well.

Covid-19 scrambled the entire equation. Every sub sector suffered. If farmers managed to plant and harvest their crops, for instance, there were far fewer customers for their products because restaurants were forced to close and then operate at a limited capacity. Spooked by the spread of a deadly virus, most tourists stopped coming entirely – where would they eat or sleep safely, if at all? When small businesses such as vineyards closed, their employees lost paychecks that no longer were spent to feed their families. Government subsidies helped for a time. So did the New York City residents who fled to vacation homes, but even that gain was offset, particularly the East End, by crowds that downtowns and neighborhoods had a hard time accommodating safely. Village officials and merchants, sometimes confused by the new rules and regulations from higher levels of government, took the entire summer season to get their arms around the issues.

A number of organizations pivoted quickly, taking short-term emergency steps – especially in use of technology – that could lead to longer-term transformations. Restaurants revamped websites, going digital for the first time and completely shifting their business models to takeout and delivery. Attractions changed their business models from theme parks to

drive-in concert venues, and small cultural facilities and museums utilized technology for timed reservations and touchless payment systems. LI's official tourism promotion group, Discover Long Island, recently announced a new digital mobile [travel pass](#) to support small downtown businesses – it received more than 2,000 downloads in 24 hours.

The sectors pulled together, both within and among themselves, to find uses for the products that helped people (even if they didn't generate profits). Their focus was often on essential workers and underserved families and their children. The Riverhead School District reached out to Satur Farms to supply workers with breakfast/lunch bags, knowing that no deli buffets were open for them to buy prepared food. The East End Food Institute launched a [virtual farmers](#) market where local makers could sell their goods online, and helped farms meet the demands of early-season retail and home delivery. The EEFI also partnered with a local restaurant group to supplement food pantry offerings and employ out-of-work restaurant staff; and it purchased thousands of pounds of local fish and produce to support agriculture and fishing while feeding needy community members.

What's clear is that, for all the short-term emergency efforts that saved jobs and businesses, more longer-term strategic planning is a must. For instance, the Tourism and Natural Assets Work Group determined the need for a Long Island Destination Master Plan that incorporates economic development, downtown revitalization, tourism and hospitality, agriculture, commercial fisheries and environmental impacts.

In charting out a roadmap for recovery, the industry professionals and activists in the work group – whose ideas are detailed in the charts below – gathered weekly from March to June to discuss the pandemic's related impacts and to remain informed about efforts to alleviate some of the hardships. What they encountered was both discouraging and motivating – the challenges to every facet were enormous but the years of collaboration and the strength of these inter-relationships offered opportunity.

Among the challenged sub sectors:

#### **Greenhouses.**

Most of these businesses made significant investments in early Spring inventory and were not able to recoup the costs because they couldn't move product due to closures under the Pause NY Act. The sales loss of the spring holidays will have a long-term impact on the industry.

#### **Vineyards.**

Most wineries lost lucrative direct sales and tasting room traffic. Limited openings and online business are helping to generate cash flow; however overall business is down in a range of 30 to 80 percent. But vineyards still need to tend to vines and prepare for the upcoming growing season, so crews had to be paid just to protect long-term investments.

*This article was excerpted from Innovate LI.*

### **AS SUMMER SIZZLES, EAST END FARMERS MAKE THEIR STAND**

July 10, 2020  
By KATE FULLAM



July on the East End of Long Island is magical (aside from the traffic). Foodies marvel at the local bounty, which starts trending now toward its peak in August and September. This is when cooking by stove or oven is traded for a chopped local veggie and herb salad ...

Soon we'll see heirloom tomatoes and baseball bat-sized zucchinis on farm stands, like the stand at Balsam Farms out in Amagansett. Founded in 2003, Balsam Farms started with 10 rented acres, one tractor and a small roadside stand – today it's one of the East End's most successful farming enterprises, including its popular home-delivery service.

"We've learned and grown a lot since [2003]," says founder Alex Balsam. "Today, we farm approximately 90 acres with two greenhouses, a new barn, over 20 tractors and an impressive farm stand..."

When a farm like Balsam grows vegetables, fruits or herbs, there's plenty to spare – so the East End Food Institute helps turn the surplus into products with longer shelf lives than fresh produce...

Processing fresh produce also gives farms the opportunity to offer out-of-season vegetable and fruit products in the spring, when greenhouses and fields are not highly productive. The EEFI also freezes surplus produce for schools, hospitals and food pantries...

A stockpile of value-added goods was a particular advantage for Balsam Farms when demand for their home delivery services skyrocketed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The ability for us to have a jar of tomato sauce or pickles or jams when we open in May really helps round out the season," noted farmer and Balsam Farms co-owner Ian Calder-Piedmonte. Salad dressings, pestos, jams and barbeque sauces are just a taste of the many value-added products now on the shelves at eastern Long Island farms this season.

Meanwhile, the EEFI offers rented space in Southampton for new and innovative food businesses whose products ultimately end up at regional farm stands.

From pasta and pies to soups and salsas, there's no shortage of innovation around food on the East End.

*Kate Fullam is the executive director of EEFI.*

**Farming**

Most produce farmers were hurt but because of seasonal timing did not see the same market losses as seafood and greenhouse sectors. The USDA passed a \$16 billion relief package that provided some help but not enough because of our focus on specialty products. Additionally, the USDA box program for food banks flooded the market with out-of-state products.

**Commercial Fishing**

When restaurants closed, fishing vessels immediately lost their main market, Hunts Point in the Bronx. Out-of-state processors wouldn't accept catch because of the loss of European and Asian export markets. Seafood prices often dropped sharply. The Choose Local F.I.S.H program helped connect suppliers to consumers. But, while most fishermen are fishing, prices are still low.

**Aquaculture**

Similar to the commercial fishing industry, oyster and other seafood farmers lost their primary revenue stream with the closure of restaurants. The challenge has been to quickly find new markets for their products and navigate some of the regulations that make it difficult to sell shellfish direct to consumer or to mainstream markets.

*Like all our sector work groups, the Tourism and Natural Assets team identified current and potential problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs.*

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS
<p><b>With restaurant closures, remote working, reduced party sizes, many producers are stranded without a market for their goods.</b></p> <p>Involve more vendors in <a href="#">USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes and Nourish NY</a>. This requires a coordinated intra-industry outreach effort that may be beyond the resources of local groups.</p> <p>More outright grant or forgivable loan programs such as PPP so businesses get a shot in arm without taking on more debt than they already can handle.</p> <p><b>Market disappearance meant a glut of agriculture/seafood product.</b></p> <p>Refine regulations to enable the quick movement of product where it is most needed, such as at food pantries that can't accept the freshest seafood because they lack specific permits.</p>	<p><b>The glut of goods will continue to cry out for new uses for products and relief for producers.</b></p> <p>Support infrastructure for processing product and develop direct to consumer models whether, dried, canned, frozen, etc. such as the <a href="#">East End Food Institute</a> and the <a href="#">Stony Brook Incubator Kitchen</a> collaboration.</p> <p>Offer technology training to businesses, particularly those run by older residents that previously had a difficult time pivoting to online service offerings.</p> <p>Industry organizations, which have been very helpful and accessible, must devote more resources to educate owners and operators on how to enter the new virtual business world.</p> <p>Bi-lingual programs, particularly in Spanish and other languages spoken by agricultural workers, are a must – short, medium and long-term.</p> <p><b>Need broader communication on funding and marketing opportunities.</b></p> <p>Promote seafood in future state campaigns that boost wineries, breweries and others that receive marketing funding.</p>	<p><b>Various revenue streams must be realigned with needs that reflect the changing realities of various tourism and natural asset sectors.</b></p> <p>Support is needed to permanently preserve existing commercial fishing bases and new fish processing facilities for species landed at Long Island's ports.</p> <p><b>Aquaculture lacks access to leasable waters and shore-side infrastructure.</b></p> <p>Utilize public /private investment to create dockside facilities to land, process, and store highly valued aquaculture products.</p> <p><b>Need for more and better ongoing relationships between the regions and within LI tourism, restaurant associations and agriculture.</b></p> <p>Look for shared service opportunities between the two counties to leverage resources and enhance public outreach.</p> <p>Enhance collaboration between Long Island and NYC and the Hudson Valley to share resources and extend audience reach.</p> <p><b>A lack of long-term planning.</b></p>

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS
<p><b>There is still tremendous fear and uncertainty in venturing out, which is impacting economic recovery.</b></p> <p>Rebuild consumer confidence with a collaborative effort to share the <a href="#">BeSafe Pledge</a> and display prominent signage. A marketing campaign that shows safety protocols and good pandemic etiquette (mask wearing).</p> <p>Important “Buy Local” initiatives need to be enhanced and coordinated.</p> <p>Link The Long Island Farm Bureau’s <a href="#">“Grown on Long Island”</a> campaign, Suffolk County’s <a href="#">“Choose LI”</a> and Cornell Cooperative Extension’s <a href="#">“Choose Local F.I.S.H.”</a> for joint marketing opportunities.</p>	<p>Approve legislation for a Tourism Industry Recovery District (TRID) that would allow the industry to self-assess and fund tourism initiatives, similar to a Business Improvement District (BID).</p> <p>Encourage cross-marketing of industries such as tours and agriculture that work well together.</p> <p>Entice NYC residential transplants to frequent local businesses. Focus on East End Marketing Campaign to entice new East End resident to patronize their local restaurants, wineries and stores. like tourists normally do.</p> <p>Extend marketing strategies beyond advertising campaigns. Consider a symposium on making businesses more viable through virtual “visits” and sales. Restaurants could collaborate with farmers and fishermen to offer on-line cooking sessions. Captains can conduct virtual tours of their ship. A nursery could sell a box of fresh evergreens along with a video of how to make a Christmas wreath.</p> <p><b>Market disappearance highlighted two interconnected challenges for seafood sectors: inadequate local processing and the need to create channels to supply seafood to foodbanks.</b></p> <p>Larger facilities to process fish as food and fertilizer, along with smaller “fillet houses,” including mobile ones, so local fishermen can bring their catch directly from boat to consumer through pop-up markets.</p> <p>Facilitate fishermen taking part in “Farmers’ Markets” especially those that serve disadvantaged urban areas that have been to date defined as “food deserts.”</p>	<p>Create a Destination Master Plan to recommend specific strategies to enhance downtown waterfront revitalizations or connections between existing downtowns and nearby waterfront recreation opportunities that often are left out of regional economic development discussions – and funding.</p> <p>Create a Long Island line of branded food products supported by local markets, such as <a href="#">Michigan’s “Farm to Freezer”</a> brand on Amazon and in national chains.</p> <p>Incentivize chain stores (or subsidize producers) to purchase locally grown products understanding that our costs are higher than imported alternatives. NY faces unfair competition from states where costs are lower and regulations fewer.</p> <p>Work with government to streamline “direct-to-consumer” permitting, via e-commerce, or direct sales at farm stands, “pop-up” farmers market, or deliveries through mail.</p> <p>Attract next generation farmers and fishermen willing to implement new business models and offer training in web development, marketing, and e-commerce.</p> <p>Prioritize funding for processing facilities for local produce, meat, and fish to create profits and jobs.</p> <p><b>Address inequities in food access and distribution.</b></p> <p>Work with schools, religious institutions and community groups, as Hofstra has in Roosevelt, to address disparate health outcomes, especially childhood obesity.</p> <p>Develop and fund an LI food policy council, especially in underserved communities with nutrition-related issues.</p>

# Wind Is Still in the Sails of Our Future

## OFF-SHORE WINDMILLS MUST PROCEED ASAP FOR OUR ECONOMIC AND ENERGY FUTURE

In the [LIREDC 2019 update](#), following an announcement on Long Island by Governor Cuomo, we inaugurated a new section on a major renewable energy initiative with a quote from a song by Bob Dylan. “The answer my friend is blowin’ in the wind...” Well, a year later, even after unfortunate delays in permitting due to the pandemic, the answer – to generating new jobs, businesses and clean power in our region – still is “blowin’ in the wind.”

The nascent offshore wind industry suffered less than other sectors, such as downtown Main Streets and Innovation. That’s because, for all the excitement over the expected billions of dollars of economic activity, thousands of jobs and hundreds of new businesses or spinoffs, the industry hasn’t moved into the development phase yet. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t reason to worry about the Covid-related setbacks – and to act aggressively to reverse them.

Protecting the environment and the neighbors’ quality of life are critical imperatives – a key to keeping Long Island attractive as a destination for new residents, tourists and businesses. So, any delays on projects potentially as transformative as the offshore windfarms is a cause for concern. And that’s particularly true at a time the region is desperate – yes desperate – for new jobs, investment and clean energy. This industry should be viewed as a key opportunity for our region, an economic engine – or literally a turbine – that can help bring us out of what may be a long recession.

Presently, the [Sunrise Wind Project](#) and the [Empire Wind Project](#) are in the permitting process for their Construction and Operation Plans. Orsted’s South Fork project should become the first offshore wind project in NYS. The state’s solicitation for the second round of offshore wind projects and port development are due on October 20, 2020

The investment in 9 GW by 2030 should create more than 10,000 jobs. So reasonable – and timely – are the key words for those with permitting power, in Washington, Albany and the County and Town Seats. Frivolous suits should not be filed.

Delays in the initial South Fork project might encourage further attacks on the industry as developers seek additional permits on Long Island. The longer-term outlook for the industry is optimistic. Powerful forces, compelling and transparent, are

propelling it forward: The state’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act established ambitious goals for renewable energy and the elimination of greenhouse gases. The guiding NYSEDA White Paper on Clean Energy Standard Procurements calls for 9 GW of offshore wind power by 2035 with a planned annual procurement schedule. Legislation has streamlined the Article 7 permitting process so unreasonable delays can be minimized. It also has mandated a study of the state’s power grid for transmission of electricity which should be released this fall. Implementation of the recommendations may allow the region and the state to fully leverage the economic opportunity.

So, what can be done to support the wind power industry that would have both immediate and longer-term benefits? What actions could be taken, which align with LIREDC strategies and goals, to create economic environmental synergies and assure that many communities and sectors as possible can benefit – especially underserved people and places of color?

- Collaborative relationships that bring together government, educational institutions, unions and community organizations should be established to identify sector-based training requirements, skills, skill-gaps, and local workforce opportunities.
- Progress toward building a consensus strategy for the development of an Orsted-funded National Offshore Wind Training Center should be continued in conjunction with the Long Island Federation of Labor, the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, IBEW, the utility workers local 1-2, the Blue Green Alliance, Suffolk County Community College and other educational institutions.
- Job skills and needs should be analyzed and aligned with the goal of creating family-sustaining jobs, with particular attention to environment-oriented technical education as part of planning and executing the Training Center. (The Workforce Development Institute (WDI), the only statewide workforce development organization with an energy and climate program, will assist in the analysis and planning.)

- SUNY and private university certificate programs should be coordinated with BOCES training to create an employment pipeline toward well-paying jobs with career trajectories and with the Building Trades apprenticeship programs.
- A local and diverse supply chain should be nurtured for the industry, from manufacturers to service businesses, that has yet been created (but based on the experience of communities around the globe has the potential to grow long and profitable). The wind companies must find ways to effectively recruit MWBEs, such as by aligning with Hofstra’s Ascend Long Island, which trains, mentors and recruits minority businesses to become vendors to larger organizations.

The LIREDC recognizes its obligation to encourage public dialogue to assure that all stakeholders feel they have been heard. We also recognize the importance of supporting collaborative and inclusive training programs for workers and small businesses that would like to join the industry.

To fulfill our mission and mandates, we will take the same approach we’ve applied over the last decade to further everything from a high-tech “Innovation Island” to affordable housing that creates construction jobs, attracts young workers and generates new tax dollars. We firmly believe that the answer to our economic and energy needs – now and in the post-pandemic future – must be “blowin’ in the wind” for years to come.



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# Build We Must

## MAJOR PROJECTS CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO LANGUISH AS JOBS AND HOUSING GO BEGGING

Some people subscribe to the Field of Dreams philosophy of economic development: “If you build it, they will come!” (Maybe, maybe not.) We’re more certain of the colloquial corollary: “If you don’t build it, they can’t come!”

If we don’t provide the affordable housing, the first-class lab space, the processing facilities for our legacy farmers and fishermen, the “unsexy” but still essential modern sewage treatment and other infrastructure, then we have no chance of attracting and retaining businesses and their employees. As the LIREDC has pointed out for a decade, if we don’t invest in the mixed-use “transit-oriented developments,” in the roads, bridges and public transit that get us from here to there, we have no chance to compete on equal footing with rising suburbs throughout the country.

You’d think that would be obvious, right? You’d think that building smartly is the only way to reimagine and move Long Island forward, especially in the tough economic times of Covid-19. Well, unfortunately, a lot of Long Islanders disagree. And we have been paying a steep price we no longer can afford.

All too often, major commercial, residential or infrastructure projects suffer what we call “death by delay,” languishing for years – even decades – while they await local, state and federal approvals, not to mention court decisions. The economic havoc wreaked by the pandemic makes this sorry state of development affairs even less tolerable than ever – especially when many of them feature state-of-the-art wastewater treatment and other environmentally conscious facets and affordable housing needed to retain our young workers and retirees.

We need to get shovels in the ground for everything from high-profile, billion-dollar, mixed-use mega projects to lower-profile (so low they are on or even under the ground) sewers, transportation and other infrastructure initiatives that make all the “sexy” ones possible.

Not that opponents always raise frivolous objections, hardly. Not every recalcitrant village or town zoning board or neighborhood association is motivated by NIMBYism. There are developers who don’t take the time to connect with the communities where they want to build. And some push too hard to build too big, putting profits before a proper balance between the economy and the environment or between bringing in more shoppers or too many cars. Earning consensus and showing respect for someone else’s home is essential.

But all too often projects of regional significance, yet under hyperlocal control, face opposition that seems to fly in the face of the reasonable or any semblance of accepting the need to sacrifice a bit for a greater regional good. All too often concerns about a small number of children who might attend the local school, or about an increase in traffic that just isn’t impactful – they’re right out of the playbook of delaying tactics designed, not to reach a compromise, but to destroy.

And it has cost us. Infamous delays have fed the perception in some circles that if you want to build on Long Island, you’d better be prepared to wait until your children can do so. (In fact, that actually happened recently when a major developer passed away before he could even break ground on a project proposed two decades ago.) If it was ever tolerable, the need to jumpstart the economy in the wake of pandemic has made it anything but.

Our economic life may depend on it.

What follows are a list of significant projects, some that have been battled between local control boards and civic associations since well-before the LIREDC was constituted ten years ago. The good news is that they are still in play – which is also the bad news we no longer can afford. While we of course want environmental standards to be complied with, we need to bring these projects over the regulatory finish line so they can create jobs and economic activity our region desperately needs.



Brookhaven Discovery Park

## RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL RELATED PROJECTS – “MOVING LONG ISLAND FORWARD”

- **Nassau Hub Innovation Center.**  
By far Nassau County’s largest and potentially most transformative projects – and also one of its longest languishing – developer Scott Rechler proposes a mixed-use commercial, residential and entertainment complex on 77 acres of mostly parking lots anchored by Nassau Memorial Coliseum, Memorial Sloan Kettering and Northwell Health.
- **Carman Place in Village of Hempstead.**  
The Community Development Corporation of LI (CDCLI) will construct a mixed-use commercial and residential development in downtown Hempstead, creating 24,000 sf of commercial space and 228 affordable apartments. The project is considered a catalyst for the ongoing revitalization efforts within the Village of Hempstead, a distressed area with 20% of its population living below the poverty line.
- **Heartland in Brentwood.**  
This long-delayed project will transform 452 acres of the former Pilgrim State Psychiatric Hospital property in Brentwood into a walkable, mixed-use community. The project’s first phase will include 3,500 apartments, 626,000 square feet of office space and 560,000 square feet of retail on 113 acres. It will significantly expand Long Island’s housing stock, providing homes for young people and empty nesters alike.
- **Calverton.**  
The Enterprise Park at Calverton is a planned redevelopment of a 2,900-acre property formerly known as the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant at Calverton.
- **The Arboretum in Farmingville.**  
Comprised of 292 residential units and a 100,000 gallon per day sewage treatment plant, the project includes 134 two-bedroom flats at market rents, 30 two-bedroom flats at lower affordable housing rents, 77 three-bedroom town homes, and 51 single family three- and four-bedroom cottages.
- **Ronkonkoma Midway project / convention center.**  
A multi-faceted development to include a regional convention and event center, medical research focused on veterans and athletes, commercial office space, professional and youth sports programs, community entertainment and other features near Ronkonkoma LIRR station, Suffolk’s biggest, and MacArthur Airport.
- **Greybarn in Sayville.**  
The 27 proposed buildings, ranging in height from 45 to 55 feet, will include 1,365 rental apartments in 19 of them and retail space. Planned protection of groundwater calls for a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility that will help protect the waters of the nearby Great South Bay. Workforce apartments will be equally distributed throughout the development.
- **Modera West Hempstead.**  
An apartment community, located within a walking distance to the West Hempstead LIRR station, the 150 units will contain a mix of studios, 1BR, and 2BR units intended for a range of prospective residents, including millennials and empty nesters. The apartment complex will feature 10percent workforce housing (15 apartment homes) with rents affordable to those households earning up to 80percent of the Area Median Income.
- **Estella Housing in West Hempstead.**  
Comprised of 96 residential units with 80 percent one-bedroom or less, the project will include 30 units dedicated to disabled persons who will receive on-site supportive services. The developer - Concern for Independent Living - has a strong record of working with veterans and the homeless. All the apartments will be affordable to households making less than 60percent of the Area Median Income.
- **Sears Mixed-Use Redevelopment in Hicksville.**  
Repurposing of Sears site will create 250,000 square feet of retail and commercial, including an apartment building, retail and office space, restaurants, a grocery store, cinema, fitness center and food-service kiosks on 26.4-acres. The site is less than a mile from the Hicksville Long Island Railroad station and a key component of Oyster Bay’s winning Downtown Revitalization Initiative plan two years ago.
- **Gyrodyne in St James.**  
The mixed-use development will include an assisted living facility, commercial office space and a hotel. Of the 75-acre site, only 26 undeveloped acres will be built on. Construction will include a state-of-the-art, advanced wastewater treatment plant. Its design will reduce the nitrogen concentration of incoming wastewater by 85 percent and plans also call for a connection to be made to the downtown of nearby St James which will advance the revitalization of the hamlet’s business district on Lake Avenue.

- **Discovery Park**  
Discovery Park is a new vision for the gateway to the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Brookhaven National Laboratory—a world leader in discovery science and transformative technology, and the only multidisciplinary national laboratory in the northeastern United States. A 60 acre welcome center for Brookhaven National Labs’s thousands of guest researchers, the facility will provide workspace for 250 lab staff as well as research and development places for collaboration and conferences. It also will house a technology park and space for educational programming.

## INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED PROJECTS – “REIMAGINING LONG ISLAND”

- **Accelerate Resumption of State Route 347 Reconstruction**  
On Long Island, one of NYSDOT’s largest re-design efforts has taken place along the 15-mile corridor of Route 347. Beginning near the eastern end of the Northern State Parkway, it ends at the intersection with Route 25A in the Town of Brookhaven. This ongoing project, called NY Route 347 Safety, Mobility and Environmental Improvements Project, addresses roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit needs around a vision of a green corridor.
- **Fund Environmental Impact Study for NY State Route 27 (Oakdale Merge)**  
The Oakdale Merge is a section of the limited access portion of State Route 27 (Sunrise Highway) where the service roads and State Route 27A (Montauk Highway) merge with the highway mainline passing through Connetquot River State Park. More than 125,000 vehicles travel over this section of highway every day.
- **Advance Sagtikos/Sunken Meadow Parkway Capacity Expansion Project**  
The Sagtikos/Sunken Meadow State Parkway was built in the early and mid-1950’s as part of Robert Moses’ Long Island Regional Park and Parkway Plan. It runs from King’s Park in the north to Bay Shore in the south, intersecting numerous arteries, including Routes 25 and 25A, the Northern and Southern State Parkways and the Long Island Expressway. The busiest traffic flow on the parkway is between the Southern State and the LIE.

- **Initiate Study for Southern State/ Meadowbrook Parkway Interchange Improvement**  
The Meadowbrook State Parkway southern terminus is at a full cloverleaf interchange with the Bay and Ocean parkways in Jones Beach State Park. The parkway heads north, crossing South Oyster Bay and intersecting Loop Parkway before crossing onto the mainland and connecting to the Southern State Parkway in North Merrick.
- **Construct new LIRR station at Brookhaven National Laboratory for serving the community of East Yaphank**  
On January 10, 2017, Governor Andrew Cuomo, as part of his State of the State Address, announced a proposal to build a station at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The station is intended to serve the community of East Yaphank and Brookhaven National Laboratory and will replace the LIRR stop at Yaphank, which local officials report is hard to find and seldom used.
- **Push the electrification and system improvement of the Long Island Rail Road's Port Jefferson Branch**  
The Port Jefferson Branch is one of the LIRR’s busiest lines, with electric service to Huntington and diesel east of Huntington to Port Jefferson. The LIRR is evaluating proposals to begin the electrification studies. The project would require significant investments in infrastructure such as new substations, a second track between Huntington and Port Jefferson, upgrades to several station platforms and work on bridges, viaducts and crossings.



Port Jefferson backs electrification of LIRR Line  
A train from Hicksville arrives in Port Jefferson on Monday, Feb. 2, 2015. Credit: Joseph D. Sullivan, Newsday

# Workforce Development and Education Woes

## OVERCOMING THE “DIGITAL DIVIDE” AND OTHER OBSTACLES TO ADVANCEMENT

Covid-19 was a disaster for learning. For everyone from young English Language Learners whose families couldn't afford computers or internet access, to established tech workers who need to update their skills in an ever-changing sector, education was difficult – at best. The same could be said for workers across Long Island. Unemployment figures not seen since the Great Depression—never mind the “mere” Great Recession that challenged LIREDC a decade ago – created sudden, unspeakable hardships for most employers and their employees in all sectors. And they're not over, especially not for people of color whose communities suffered the harshest health and economic setbacks. We have a long way to go before jobs and their educational pipelines start flowing anywhere near normal.

We don't even know what “normal” will look like.

The good news and the bad news are the same: The pandemic exposed underlying disparities and barriers that years ago should have been confronted – by government, business, labor, schools, religious institutions and families – but now we can neither deny nor ignore. That's our new challenge in the “new normal.”

Most school districts scuffled financially and logistically to transfer hundreds of classes on line, just as their higher education counterparts. Wealthier or poorer, it was a massive undertaking not fully understood or appreciated by frustrated students, parents and staff. But the transition from classroom learning was particularly problematic in so-called “high need” districts that struggle in the best of times. They and their students fell into the “digital divide” with few if any lifelines to pull them out. Many poor, minority families didn't have computers. If their district managed to scrape up funds or donations to provide them, many families couldn't afford internet access. If they could connect, they lived in crowded households not conducive to school work. And, worse, many of their homes were in communities suffering from the region's highest rates of infection and death – so families were focused more on surviving than studying. Meanwhile, these districts didn't have the resources to train their teachers in the new technology. And these schools and students are criticized for low achievement rates? That some managed to overcome these obstacles—Huntington and Freeport received high marks— is almost miraculous.

But to anyone familiar with the plight of these racially segregated, resource starved schools, not to mention the disparities in access to health care, housing and well-paying jobs, the consequences of Covid-19 came as no surprise.

The costs for higher education increased dramatically as the move to remote learning resulted in immediate investments in technology for its students, faculty, and administrators (including new video platforms, 24-hour help desks, trainings on technology, etc.), exacerbated by millions of dollars in refunds primarily from room and board. Pell eligible students (with financial need) had a more difficult time with the move to remote learning. But the “digital divide” was more easily bridged by the majority of students even if they faced challenges of their own. For instance, a survey conducted by Farmingdale State College found the overwhelming majority of its workforce had the resources to be successful remotely – but this comes at a cost. And for the 30 percent of students who responded they had a moderate or major problem with completing their work remotely, about a quarter stated the reason was access to high speed internet. Additionally, 68 percent reported that their financial situation is more stressful since the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. It's clear that the efforts to safely re-open education in person can be more strongly and explicitly supported by state and local officials. If not, the gap faced by low income and other students will only grow.

Beyond the K-12 and college classrooms, virtual or not, the pandemic has punished nearly every industry that our workforce supports, and there is broad consensus that the issue of supporting displaced workers should be immediately addressed. Serious obstacles were faced by essential workers, who put their lives on the line to care and serve – from hospital wards to supermarket stockrooms to the huge chunk of the workforce who couldn't do their jobs at home and lost them. All faced a lack of child care and ever-present insecurity that their livelihoods and even their lives and those of loved ones could disappear in a matter of days.

Because of the limitations on in-person gatherings, labor unions have been missing the direct contact with employees and companies they serve, which is also limiting discussions about their training needs – if the programs that propel them up the economic ladder were even offered or the businesses where they worked were open. Most people were more concerned about finding or keeping their job, not advancing to another one.

But unions and other job trainers did not surrender, and some programs have managed to operate, at universities, BOCES and for-profit providers. Although workers did not have physical access to services, providers were able to reimagine their service model to include remote career counseling and program enrollment, online workshops and classroom-based training, and virtual job development. But these efforts could not reach displaced workers who cannot access WIFI connections, or who do not possess the computer hardware and software connections required for virtual workforce development services. The “digital divide” impacted more than just K-12 and college students.

The limited training programs affected many parts of our workforce, from the construction industry apprenticeships to school bus contractors. Mandatory training costs are the same for fields that require certifications such as First Aid & Safety and CPR, even though profits are down. In addition, COVID-19 exposed skills gaps in many industries, including:

- Businesses that need employees who can adeptly handle social media marketing, build websites to reach customers, coding, and even programs that have been in existence for a long time like Microsoft Excel.
- Manufacturers that will need technological investment for digital upgrading and skills training applicable to multiple facets of operations, including ones to which they pivoted to produce pandemic-fighting products.
- Construction companies struggling to keep up with the demand due to hiring gaps in the trades, such as increasingly popular green construction.
- Organizations seeking employees with strong written communication skills to correspond with customers and respond to grant and government contracting opportunities.
- The healthcare sector’s training needs in social assistance, direct patient care, business services, pharmacy techs, nurses, certified medical coders, food handler certification, and dental hygienists.
- Producing more auto mechanics and welders, workers whose skills fill jobs in a number of sectors and businesses.
- In-demand skills that support administration of businesses, including sanitization, data entry, data security, programming, e-commerce, LAN/WAN administration, production, customer service, payroll processing, clerical, and bookkeeping and QuickBooks.
- Professionalizing industry-recognized career pathways in areas including child care, direct service professionals, and certified nurse assistants, fields that also will address work force inequities and long-term needs, and support women.

## HELPING HANDS IN A COVID-19 HOTSPOT

Long Island’s new immigrant communities experienced the highest rates of Covid-19 infection and mortality, as well as the consequences of high unemployment. With its burgeoning population of Salvadorans and other Central, Caribbean and South Americans, Brentwood was one of Long Island’s hardest hit places.

Enter the Brentwood School District, the largest in the state (and with the largest Latino student body) outside New York City. Brentwood officials had their hands full simply meeting the needs of thousands of students suddenly forced to study from their homes – many of which had no computer or access to internet. But the district did not see its responsibilities end at the classroom door.

Brentwood school officials made sure that all its children continued to have access to the free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches that kept them healthy in good times and bad. With many families suffering from reduced incomes, hundreds of cars a day would show up for the bags and boxes of food, no questions asked.

But the brunt of the district’s efforts focused on closing the so-called “digital divide.”

Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, according to Dr. Rebecca Grella, a scientist and educator, Brentwood spent \$930,613 on devices “to ensure the continuity of learning for all students.” This resulted in the procurement and distribution of 3,277 devices. The district spent \$3,433,008 of its Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (from the federal CARES Act) on devices for children. An additional \$560,000 from general funds was used for the purchase of cameras and microphones for hybrid/remote learning.

“Our goal was to make certain that all students were outfitted with digital devices,” said Dr. Grella.

A donation of \$10,000 was received from United Way of Long Island to purchase 50 laptops for our SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) students. County Legis. Samuel Gonzalez is lobbying tech companies for the donation of 20,000 mobile devices and 6,000 mobile Wi-Fi docks. The Long Island Latino Teachers Association also provided Chromebooks to needy students.

The district will continue to look for grant funds to provide additional devices and/or internet Hotspots to ensure adequate technology “to effectively communicate with all parents and family members.”



Dr. Rebecca Grella, Scientist & Educator Brentwood Union Free School District  
Dr. Dashana Dulin, Assistant Principal Brentwood High School

All of Long Island’s industry sectors are interconnected, and workforce and education may be considered the backbone of them all. Their vitality depends on infrastructure investments that are critical to immediate job creation and long-term competitiveness - in our schools and hospitals, transportation, energy and telecommunications systems. The need for investment in modernized schools, additional hospitals and public assets like universal broadband are particularly important for communities of color. More child care slots are needed, as is attention to the emotional health of our workforce. And the State must address wage inequality and deficient wealth accumulation in traditionally underserved communities. Many of these challenges arise from systemic racism, such as redlining, resulting in decreased access to quality education and care.

Universities can continue to play an important role in the workforce development and education of disadvantaged students. Hofstra University’s Continuing Education division has partnered with Nassau County to provide more than 100 online classes and activities for local underserved children, ages 10-17, with Federal Cares Act funds. The university also offered tech support to students. Stony Brook University’s new Center for Teaching, Learning and Community offered 44 workshops to K-12 teachers with 3000 attendees nationally and beyond. Farmingdale State College supported food distribution through the Long Island Educational Opportunity Center, offered computer equipment to a local school district, and is starting recruitment in the Village of Hempstead. Suffolk County Community College’s Advanced Manufacturing Training continued to support apprenticeships in trades ranging from CNC machinist to Electro Mechanical Technician and quality assurance auditors.

***Like all our sector work groups, the Workforce Development and Education team identified current and potential problems and proposed solutions that they further broke down into an easy-to-read chart that focuses on immediate, intermediate and long-term needs.***

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	INTERMEDIATE NEEDS/SOLUTIONS	LONG-TERM NEEDS/SOLUTIONS
<p><b>Focus on re-training and upskilling on new technologies, especially for displaced workers and in fields with shortages. Address government policies and funding to provide training and ensure workforce safety.</b></p> <p>Expand existing training and career readiness programs at both the High School and higher Education level to prepare a new generation of workers and fill the skills gaps.</p> <p>Strategic, sector-based planning should be implemented to assess and align business skills needs with the available talent pool to identify gaps and align training and career services.</p> <p>Address immediate shortages in industries needed to respond to the crisis, including healthcare, logistics, and manufacturing.</p> <p>Expedite approval of broadband services to all communities so that service is ubiquitous. Create a partnership with tech firms to get appropriate digital equipment into the homes of families that lack sufficient technology to be prepared for contemporary education or work.</p> <p>Align Programs available at the community college and university level by eliminating barriers that make it difficult for students to gain or transfer credit—creating clarity around career pathways.</p>	<p><b>Enact new programs and partnerships to support worker training and workforce development to close the inequality gap.</b></p> <p>Focus on supporting pre-apprenticeship programs such as Opportunities Long Island, establishing manufacturing apprenticeships, and continuing to elevate the profile of workforce education opportunities in traditionally underserved communities.</p> <p>Develop worker and employer friendly telecommuting policies.</p> <p>A number of universities and colleges have partnered with human services agencies to support the workforce training needs of their employees. More collaboration could be done to bring the two entities together in a joint credentialing program.</p>	<p><b>Look to the future of workforce development and address the needs to ensure employers and workers thrive.</b></p> <p>Convert vacant retail/commercial space into child care centers. If the COVID emergency persists, provide these centers with suitable technology for elementary children to receive remote instruction and staffing.</p> <p>Create a task force or forces to address: Offshore wind workforce supply chain efforts; food supply chain; healthcare assessments; and K-12 students, teachers and parents with literacy and economic barriers.</p> <p>Reverse the common practice of encouraging people to invest in education and training, and then looking for employment that matches their skills/knowledge— hiring first (not training first), then supporting the new employees by paying them to obtain the required skills or knowledge to excel the job. This provide a greater incentive to enter the labor market, because those who are harder to employ will not be forgoing income or taking a risk by getting educated or trained.</p>

# State Policy Changes

We have been grateful for the state's support over the years (as well as its constructive criticisms) as we've collaborated to create an innovation economy that, we believe, will survive the pandemic. And we look forward to the post-Covid-era when the state can once again invest heavily in our ideas and aspirations. Thus, we would like to use this section to highlight our top ideas for attention, including those that reflect hard lessons learned during the pandemic. Whether there is funding sooner or later, we want to be ready – and we want the state to be ready by knowing our needs.

The following recommendations, many of which appear in other sections, represent a consensus of our work groups and the dozens of expert volunteers who have spent months developing them. The aggregation also reflects feedback from hours of engagement with stakeholders throughout Long Island. Some can and should be implemented immediately; some farther down the road. But most should be seen as having the potential to be sustainable in addressing our chronic challenges. And in promoting connectivity between all our sectors, we intend that ideas posited for one – such as universally available broadband that could help close the digital divide -- can apply to others.

## Child Care

- Invest in a statewide child care program – including support for increased wages, training, physical improvement and family subsidies – that will boost the local economy with a \$1.95 economic multiplier for every \$1 spent and bring many more people into the workforce, particularly women and minorities.
- Advocate for the recommendations contained in the 2019 LIREDC Progress Report on child care and Lt. Gov. Hochuls' State Child Care Availability Task Force – both of which call for quality child care that is affordable for all who need it.

## Racial Disparities

- Aggressively enforce fair housing laws to prevent landlords and sellers from discriminating against minority buyers, as revealed in an award-winning Newsday series.
- Vigilance on behalf of poorer communities that are vulnerable to violations of environmental justice in the siting of public works, “dirty” and “noisy” industries and allocation of remediation.
- Encourage school districts to hire more minority educators in majority white and minority districts.
- Make investments to harden and expand our regional broadband infrastructure while making it affordable to our most vulnerable populations will provide benefits in the areas of education, businesses and research and development.

## Downtown/Main Streets

- Advocate for the State Liquor Authority to make permanent the temporary regulations that facilitate outdoor dining on public streets and property.
- State advocacy for additional federal PPP loan funds and assistance in the application process.
- Consider further action to increase flexibility of local IDA's to support downtown business.
- Offer existing state technical resources to support the development of a digital network to connect Long Island downtowns for information sharing and online commerce.

## Innovation

- State research universities should identify a specific amount of “turn key” campus bio lab space that would be available on short notice to pivot to pandemic-related R&D.
- Create a statewide or multi-state innovation supply chain where companies and researchers in the northeast would all be linked in a real time database to enable faster and more effective collaboration in emergencies.
- Develop a “strategic reserve” of equipment and personnel – such PPE and retired health care professionals who can keep their credentials fresh – to be available far more quickly than they were in the early days of the pandemic.

### Manufacturing and Industry

- Create a supply chain database that would make it easier to mobilize PPE production if another pandemic were to hit.
- Support reshoring efforts by local companies manufacturing PPE or biomedical supplies with policies such as tax abatements, procurement opportunities, or incentives for consumers to purchase locally sourced PPE.

### Natural Assets and Tourism

- Extend the successful USDA Farmers to Families Food Program and Nourish NY to include seafood, to maintain a market for food producers and to feed families in need.
- Enhance collaboration between Long Island and NYC and the Hudson Valley to share resources and extend audience reach.

### Workforce Development

- Further develop a virtual one stop for both job openings and training needs where employers could list not only what jobs they have open now but what they anticipate needing so workers can train accordingly.
- Direct technical and instructional support for students and families lacking technology, connectivity or experience with remote instruction. This may allow some displaced workers—especially young people who are tech—savvy to go back to work as mentors/guides/tech supports for families lacking the means, technology or savvy to succeed in a remote environment.
- Convert vacant retail/commercial space into child care centers. If the COVID emergency persists, provide these centers with suitable technology for elementary children to receive remote instruction and staffing to help these students succeed.



Grown on LI will connect Long Island and New York City residents with local farmers from Nassau and Suffolk Counties. (photo credit: Queens County Farm Museum)



# PART FIVE Engagement

Since the LIREDC was created in 2011, we knew our stakeholders had to be on board if we were to create confidence in our mission and consensus for our initiatives. That's why community engagement has been at the top of our agenda.

WE'RE IN  
THIS TOGETHER  
#BESTMARKET

← LEFT PART →  
TOGETHER  
#BESTMARKET

STAY POSITIVE  
#BESTMARKET

# Work Groups

## CHILD CARE

The Child Care Work Group is a dedicated team of professionals representing both Suffolk and Nassau County Child Care Councils, workforce development leaders, training providers, corporate representatives and labor, all focused on developing and advising on sustainable solutions to the lack of child care options on Long Island. Without safe, affordable child care, Long Island's economy – and many individuals, especially women and minorities – cannot achieve its full potential

## DISPARITIES (Incorporates ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE)

This new group of professionals in the fields of community development, education, social services, minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and economic development and planning analyzed the disparities affecting our minority communities. In the wake of Covid-19's disparate impact on Blacks and Latinos, the work group has identified underlying inequities in education (including the digital divide), healthcare access, housing, financial supports for MWBE small businesses, food and childcare deserts. The group will work year-round to develop comprehensive strategies to address these issues.

## DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET

A new team configured of professionals from various backgrounds, including chambers of commerce, municipal leaders and business owners, to tailor strategies to encourage attractive, affordable, sustainable "place-making" at downtown and single land-use locations in the post COVID world.

## INNOVATION AND INDUSTRY CLUSTER

The Innovation Work Group is comprised of leadership from the region's premier universities and research institutions as well as technology acceleration entities and venture capital providers. In 2016 this group identified biotechnology as the region's industry cluster and developed specific strategies to foster that industry. The workgroup continues to identify, shape and support projects that align with regional strategies for technology business formation and technology commercialization. While focusing on biotechnology, the Work Group continues to examine and support

new industry clusters including artificial intelligence and machine learning, cyber-security and renewable energy.

## MANUFACTURING and INDUSTRY

The Manufacturing and Industry work group is comprised of members from the manufacturing sector, the public and private sectors, as well as academic institutions, with the goal of developing strategies that identify the needs of Long Island's tradeable sectors and opportunities for the long-term sustainability of these industries. With the understanding that the strength of the region's economy is dependent on the success of our manufacturers, the work group seeks to understand the barriers to growth that can make it challenging for Long Island manufacturers and exporters to access new domestic and international markets and identify programs and resources that can support our producers.

## NATURAL ASSETS AND TOURISM

The Natural Assets and Tourism Work Group features a broad mix of individuals that represent Long Island's agriculture, commercial fishing, shell fishing, tourism, and preservation industries. Since 2011, the group has devised strategies to enhance the economic potential of our Natural Assets and the Tourism industries. The group looks to better understand the challenges that our heritage industries face and develop solutions that can help promote the growth of our agriculture, seafood, and beverage industries, encourage the preservation of our historic assets, and continue to attract tourism to our entire region. The work group recognizes the inter-woven importance of these industries and encourages a better understanding of the unique challenges they face, so that projects and programs can be developed to eliminate barriers and support growth.

## OFFSHORE WIND

The Offshore Wind Work Group will continue to seek to identify regional opportunities for developing the nation's first offshore wind supply chain in support of the construction, installation and operation of offshore wind projects.

## PRIORITY PROJECTS

This new work group seeks to expedite the development and approval process of our regionally significant large-scale single land-use priority developments to support diversification efforts within the region. These projects will deliver more multi-family housing and will increase Long Island's prospects for accommodating its growing demand from young professionals and down-sizing empty-nesters.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Workforce Development Work Group worked intensely this year. This is one of our larger and most active groups consisting of representatives from government, labor, business, industry, and conventional and non-conventional educational environments. This group met multiple times to develop strategies to assist the harder to employ, i.e.: disabled, veterans, and post-incarcerated. This year they also focused on methods to better prepare all workers for the jobs of tomorrow, through industry/academic partnerships and apprenticeships.

## WRITERS

The Writers Work Group consists of a dedicated staff of individuals who are embedded in our workgroups and whose knowledge of Long Island and ties to the community – as well as their writing ability – allows them to weave the narrative and analytic tale of our regional progress and our promise. Our story could not be told with such aspirational eloquence and expertise without these individuals who give so much of their time and talent.

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**Key: \*=Co-Chair, Red = Regional Council Member**

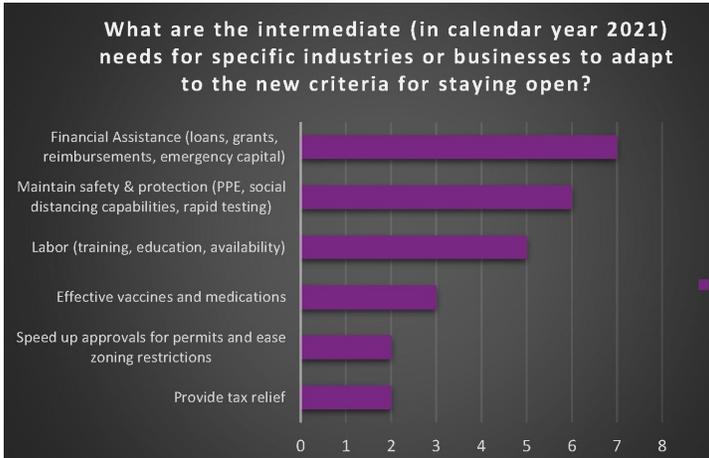
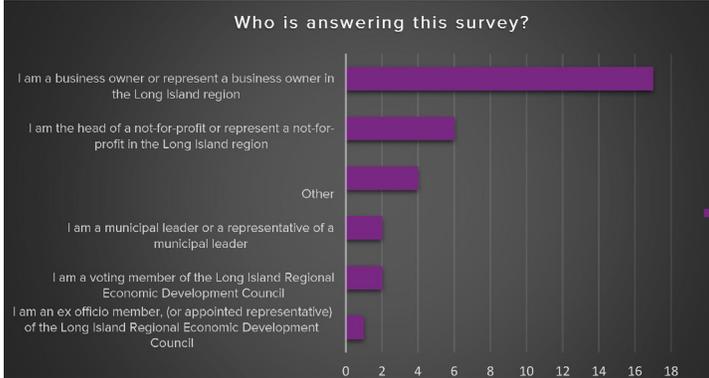
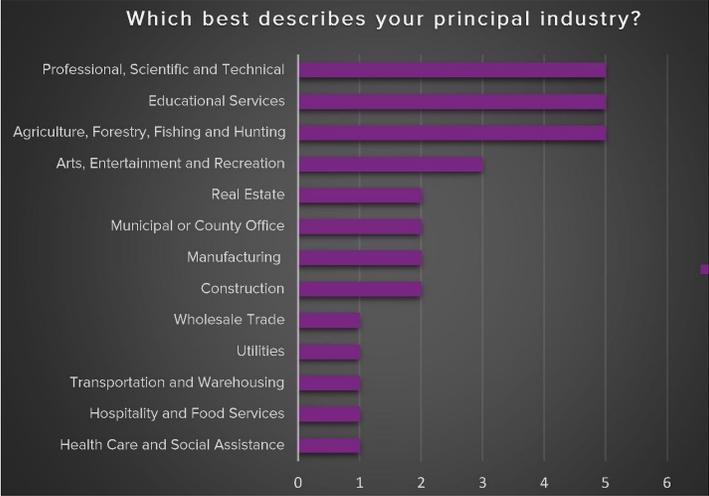
# Public Outreach and Engagement

Over the last decade the LIREDC has sought to be a conduit of information for all our stakeholders – in government, business, labor, not-for-profits and community groups – and to engage the public in our process as transparently as possible. Over the last six months, recognizing the imperatives of the pandemic, we have shared informational notices via email, webinars and our social media platforms to over 10,000 people on funding opportunities such as the PPE program, NY Forward Loan Fund as well as health and safety guidance.

Nassau and Suffolk Counties, in partnership with Hofstra University and HR&A Associates, conducted Covid-19 Business Impact Surveys of nearly 3,000 businesses on Long Island, the results of which are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Since late March Newsday and the Long Island Association have conducted over twenty free weekly informational webinars on everything from Helping Long Island Businesses Survive Corona, to Child Care and Covid-19: The Impacts on Workers and Businesses. The most recent webinar, with participation from both present and past LIREDC members discussed "Getting Long Island's Economy Going Again," as a Newsday headline declared. The webinar provided information on the current state of our regional economy with a portion devoted to a live Q&A session with questions from mostly small businesses owners it was viewed by thousands of people and covered by Long Island's largest media outlet. During this webinar Kevin Law encouraged individuals to complete the LIREDC Regional Recovery Online Survey that was also broadcasted to our regional population via email, social media posts and through our news and economic development partners to solicit public input on the recovery concerns of our businesses, municipalities, non-for profits partners and the general public.

The information provided us with additional valuable information that can inform how we strategize to move forward towards our economic recovery.



## PHOTO CREDITS

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Page 34: Joseph D. Sullivan, Newsday

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Page 41: Best Market Web Site



# Vision Statement

*For Long Island's economy, innovation has been our past and will be our future. This is a region whose agriculture and fishery harvests have fed the nation, whose natural assets have inspired poets and tourists alike, whose businesses produced the aircraft that helped win a world war and first put men on the moon and whose institutions cracked the genetic code. Long Island will reassert itself as a global center for innovation and the model for a knowledge-based suburban economy that creates new high-paying jobs and improves the quality of life for every one of our residents.*

*The Long Island Regional Council's vision for long-term economic growth is characterized by increased collaboration among academia, the private and public sectors and labor to protect and grow our advanced manufacturing base while encouraging innovation in the life sciences, information technology, clean energy, defense and homeland security industry clusters.*

*To accomplish this, we will build on the successes of our existing businesses, commercialize the valuable research conducted at our world-class research institutions, and strengthen our highly skilled and educated workforce. At the same time, we will be vigilant in promoting and protecting our unrivaled natural resources and in providing equal opportunity in housing, employment and education. Furthermore, we will continue to invest in our students, transportation, housing and sewer infrastructure, as well as our tourism and harvest-based agriculture and fishery industries. Our goal is to support a sustainable, innovative and inter-connected job-generating economy that also redevelops areas suffering from disinvestment and mobilizes the entire region for years to come.*