VILLAGE OF SKOKIE

COVID-19 PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN
# Table of Contents

I. Executive Overview ................................................. 3

II. Summary Recommendations .................................. 4

III. Economic Recovery Task Force .............................. 5

IV. Survey & Interviews .............................................. 6

V. Business Assistance ............................................. 14

VI. Reopening Guidance ............................................ 15

VII. Regulatory & Policy Review ................................. 16

VIII. Research & Data Collection ................................. 17

IX. Implementation .................................................. 18

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The Village of Skokie Economic Recovery Task Force and Village Staff present the Economic Recovery Plan. On May 12, 2020, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen was one of the first suburban Chicago mayors to establish a recovery task force to address economic issues caused by the pandemic. Since its creation, the task force has met weekly to provide guidance to Village staff and assist in developing a plan to help ameliorate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The task force is comprised of leaders in the business, faith, and healthcare communities who have volunteered to assist the Village with its response to economic issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the initial task force meeting, staff presented “Skokie’s First Steps to Recovery,” which has acted as a guide for the recovery planning process. The first steps document identified the roles of the Task Force and Village staff and provided structure to the planning process.

Since its inception, the task force has provided valuable perspectives into hardships businesses are facing during this period of uncertainty. These insights have helped guide the Village's response and shaped the recommendations in the recovery plan.

After a 2-month long effort, Village staff presented a draft plan to the task force in early July. In addition to task force input, staff was informed through a business survey and interviews that have helped identify issues. Overall, the Economic Recovery Plan consists of a series of recommendations that will help guide the Village’s economic development efforts during this crisis.
II. Summary Recommendations

The following summary recommendations (not ranked in order of priority) were deemed essential by the Task Force given the current state of the economy and progression to Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. Details for implementing the recommendations are articulated in Section IX.

1) **Initiate and expand efforts to promote and assist Skokie businesses and organizations** in applying for COVID-19 related financial assistance programs including the federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) programs, state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant programs, Cook County Recovery Initiative funding, Skokie Small Business Assistance Grant Program, and any other assistance offering. Expand partnerships to other stakeholders not already engaged with the Village on these efforts.

2) **Advocate for additional business assistance** from federal and state programs by joining local government coalitions and contacting state and federal representatives. Proactively engage our delegation by sharing insights from the Task Force, best practices realized and efficacy of existing assistance programs. Provide ideas for future programs.

3) **Solicit and broaden feedback** from key business, community, and organizational sector representatives to help guide the Village’s response and to identify and respond to the changing economic climate. Provide tools needed to Skokie businesses via the web or in-person to address and/or help mitigate economic impacts.
II. Summary Recommendations

4) **Bolster marketing initiatives that support businesses and organizations** throughout the community by promoting business districts through Skokie E-News, Shop Local social media efforts, search engine optimization, Skokie Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and local ad buys. Coordinate efforts to develop a business / economic development centric web presence to correlate with these initiatives.

5) **Develop special events to promote Downtown Skokie** while recognizing social distancing guidelines. Build upon the success of outdoor dining and activities to expand to other areas in Downtown. Relaunch Downtown Skokie website to drive consumer, business, visitor, and employee traffic to Downtown.

6) **Increase safety and COVID-19 prevention assistance** to businesses and organizations as they continue to reopen. Provide one-on-one guidance so that said entities can adhere to Public Health Guidelines and promoting the services of the Skokie Public Health Department.

7) **Review and reshape local regulations** to anticipate changes within the marketplace resulting from COVID-19 and make changes or provide flexibility accordingly. Consider rapidly evolving commercial real estate impacts and how to best work with property owners to re-purpose applicable properties.

8) **Monitor local, regional, and national economic conditions** and business activity and disseminate information to businesses and organizations by developing and deploying a dashboard of information on the Village's website.

9) **Identify which businesses have permanently closed** due to the pandemic and take steps to attract new uses for these sites as identified in the Skokie Economic Development Strategy and Action Agenda.

10) **Monitor COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, and capacities** that may cause the region to fall back to Phase 3 requiring businesses and organizations to modify operations or close again.

11) **Pinpoint potential gaps in the Recovery Plan** that have not been considered but should be included.
III. Economic Recovery Taskforce

The Economic Recovery Task Force (the “Task Force”) began meeting in May, 2020 and concluded its last regularly scheduled meeting on July 8, 2020. The Task Force will continue to engage with Village staff and leadership as conditions are warranted, especially with the potential for future spikes in COVID-19 cases and subsequent regression within the Restore Illinois Plan. Skokie Mayor George VanDusen appointed the following members to serve on the Task Force:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Shalom Klein – Chairman – Skokie Economic Development Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Howard Meyer – Vice-Chairman - Skokie Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Pastor Henry Biar - St. Paul Lutheran Church - Clergy Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Katie Bulgrin – Culver’s of Skokie</td>
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<td>▶ David Drehobl – Georgia Nut Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Madeleine England – Kneads &amp; Wants Artisan Bakery</td>
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<td>▶ Serge Khalimsky – Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Erica Minchella – Attorney</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ David Rahija – NorthShore University HealthSystem</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ John Terzis – Oakton Investment. Management</td>
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<td>▶ Randy Usen – Byline Bank</td>
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<th>Village Staff Liaisons</th>
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<tr>
<td>▶ John Lockerby - Village Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Michael Lorge - Corporation Counsel</td>
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<td>▶ Dr. Catherine Counard - Public Health Director</td>
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<td>▶ Ann Tennes – Marketing &amp; Communications Director</td>
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<td>▶ Matt Brandmeyer - Community Development Director</td>
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<td>▶ Len Becker - Economic Development Manager</td>
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<td>▶ Leslie Murphy - Economic Development Specialist</td>
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The Task Force has met since May 12, 2020 via zoom for 1-2 hours each week to receive an update from the Skokie Public Health Department Director, to discuss ongoing economic development efforts, and to discuss the members’ experiences with the economic impacts of the pandemic.

The Task Force considered the following items in its discussions as it worked toward the Economic Recovery Plan:

- **Continued Business Assistance**
- **Reopening Guidance**
- **One-on-One Telephone and Personal Interviews and Online Surveys**
- **Research & Data Collection**
- **Village Policy & Regulatory Review**
- **Marketing Initiatives**

Upon delivery of the Economic Recovery Plan to the Task Force, Village staff will begin implementing the Plan’s recommendations, which includes monitoring national, regional, and local economic and market conditions. Many recommendations built upon the "Skokie's First Steps To Recovery," document presented by staff at the initial meeting. If warranted because of unforeseen circumstances not anticipated in the Plan, the Task Force will reconvene to evaluate the situation and make subsequent modifications and recommendations.
Following 8 weeks of a State-directed closure of non-essential businesses and a stay at home order to limit the spread of COVID-19, Village staff designed a two-pronged approach to gather information to determine how businesses were faring during this time. Local businesses were encouraged to participate in the process by 1) responding anonymously to a 13-question online survey and/or 2) responding to personal outreach efforts made by staff to 40 independently owned restaurants as well as another 12 businesses representing a broad array of other sectors (e.g. childcare providers, consultants, etc.).

Through both approaches, Village of Skokie staff conveyed that it was seeking to ascertain the needs of the business community to provide guidance to the Skokie Economic Recovery Task Force as the State and region began to reopen. The online survey was open from May 22, 2020 to June 12, 2020 and the one-on-one surveys were conducted over a longer period, from May 15, 2020 to June 17, 2020. The online survey attracted 118 respondents and 52 one-on-one interviews were completed by staff. Please note that the survey and interviews were conducted during the stay at home order when only essential businesses were permitted to operate. The responses do not reflect any improvements to business activity as a result of reopening through the Restore Illinois phasing plan. The salient portions of the online survey follow:
IV. Survey and Interviews

**Business Type**

- **Restaurant** 15.36%
- **Personal Services** 6.83%
- **Professional Services** 23.05%
- **Manufacturing / Distribution** 11.95%
- **Other** 16.38%
- **Retailer** 9.39%
- **Banking / Finance** 3.41%
- **Entertainment** 3%
- **Automotive** 3%
- **Education** 4%
- **Non-Profit** 4.26%

**Employee Count Pre-COVID**

- **1-5** 48.72%
- **11-15** 11.11%
- **6-10** 16.24%
- **21-50** 13.68%
- **50+** 10.26%
IV. Survey and Interviews

How Has COVID-19 Impacted Your Business?

This question requested open-ended responses. The below summary includes a general overview of specific areas of impact described by the respondents.

Business interruptions, closures, sales reductions and re-opening concerns:

- 25% to 90% reductions in business being reported among majority of sectors;
- Majority of work has been postponed, reduced, or canceled due to shutdown of non-essential businesses, severely affecting business income and revenues with many being too small to qualify for available funding programs;
- Significantly decreased volume of clients, projects, contracts, phone traffic, leads among for-profits and donations for non-profits. Reduced employee count, reduced hours, reduced business volume;
- Spending much more on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (gloves, masks, sneeze guards, dividers, and sanitizer, among other necessities) to protect workers, visitors, customers, and to keep compliant with public health guidelines;
- Layoffs of between 2-200 employees reported;
- For restaurant and hospitality workers, sales have been severely impacted while costs have grown;
- Competition for recalling employees who are receiving more money through enhanced unemployment subsidies and benefits;
- Many non-essential businesses forced to close due to positive testing of employees or except for emergencies for 8-12 weeks. Complete closures, shutdowns, layoffs, furloughed staff, modified workdays commonplace since mid-March;
- Businesses owners needing to take on more responsibility with employee health screenings and making health decisions;
- Significantly reduced number of customers; customers seem reluctant to spend money;
- Professional service clients remain the same; the means of providing the service has been adapted;
- Working from home impacting the process and flow of work;
- Clients unable to attend in-person, monthly fees waived or reduced, no new clients; and
- The inability to have face-to-face contact with clients causes bad financial decisions.
Current Status Of Your Business

- Business As Usual - Essential: 9.40%
- Online Only - Pickup/Delivery: 15.38%
- Modified Business Plan: 23.08%
- Entirely Closed - Waiting To Reopen: 11.97%
- Planning To / Permanently Closed: 6.84%
- Other: 3.42%

Have Your Employees Been Able To Work Remotely?

- Yes: 25.66%
- Yes, To Some Extent: 16.22%
- No: 38.93%
- Other: 19.19%
Have You Had To Do Any of These Relative To Your Employees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>Temporary Layoff or Furlough</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.34%</td>
<td>Stagger Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.09%</td>
<td>Move From Full to Part Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.34%</td>
<td>Terminate Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.66%</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.70%</td>
<td>Other</td>
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Have You Applied For Federal COVID-19 Funding?

- Paycheck Protection Program: 76.62%
- SBA Express Bridge Loans: 6.49%
- SBA Debt Relief: 3.90%
- EIDL Loan Advance: 12.99%
IV. Survey and Interviews

The survey also asked whether businesses had applied for State of Illinois and/or Cook County financial assistance programs. A significant majority of the respondents had either not applied, were not approved or were unaware of such programs. (Note: This question was asked prior to the establishment of the State of Illinois Business Improvement Grant (BIG) Program and others after June 17, 2020).

**What Are Your Immediate Business Needs?**

- 24.05% Maintaining Social Distancing
- 20.25% Loan / Grant Assistance
- 17.72% Marketing / Promotion
- 10.13% Converting / Expanding Online
- 20.25% Other
- 7.59% Current COVID Info.

**What Are Your Most Important Business Concerns?**

- Financial - 48.35%
- Safety For Employees - 71.43%
- Loss of Employees - 17.58%
- Loss of Customers - 42.89%
- Promoting My Business - 19.78%
- Confusion of Regulations - 27.47%
- Other - 6.59%
IV. Survey and Interviews

Where Have You Been Receiving Most, If Not All, Of Your Information Regarding COVID-19 And Business Assistance Programs?

Most respondents indicated that the following were their primary source of information during the pandemic and shutdown (Ranked by number of responses):

1. Village of Skokie website and direct e-mail communications
2. Local banks and financial institutions
3. Skokie Chamber of Commerce and Industry
4. Small Business Administration (SBA)
5. CPA’s, lawyers, and financial advisers
6. State of Illinois/Cook County
7. Internet, Trade Associations, Media, News

Is There Anything You Would Like To Share With Us?
(The Following Is A Sample Of Varied Responses)

» Business modifications should not be met with more licensing fees. Current tax collections should be sufficient. Businesses want to stay open, however, added fees or taxes might keep them closed.
» Concerned about having to give customers less service at a higher price to pay for the modifications.
» Need better access to PPE, compliance information and concrete (and common sense) suggestions concerning permissible performance options.
» Need for more PPP or other funds to assist local businesses.
» Need help with preparing sites for return of employees and tenants.
» Need for real estate tax payment extensions.
» Many businesses pleased with the Village of Skokie compliance with COVID 19 protocols, and leaders' concerns regarding businesses.
» Communication has been good, and guidance appreciated by the business community.
» Need assistance in property tax and reductions such as liquor license fees, etc.
» Organizing a community relief fund and bulk procurement of PPE and other health and safety supplies would be extremely useful to the child-care providers.
» Thank you to the Skokie Police and Skokie Fire Departments who have been awesome for 30 years now.
IV. Survey and Interviews

General Summary Of One-On-One Interviews

Village staff personally contacted 52 individual local independently owned and operated restaurants and non-restaurant businesses (including dance studios, pet grooming, chain retailers, beauty salons, barbers, liquor stores, day care operators, florists, yoga studios, entertainment centers, signage companies, theaters and food production manufacturers, etc.). The primary discussion topics included:

- Assessment of the severe negative impacts due to COVID-19 and adjustments already in place or contemplated by the owner;
- Confirming business owner’s understanding of and/or success at achieving meaningful funding assistance via the PPP, EIDL, SBA or other COVID-19 related programs;
- Concerns about:
  - loss of customer base;
  - caring for/keeping/paying employees during shutdown;
  - rent, utility taxes and fees, and vendor obligations;
  - frustration with third-party delivery providers (restaurants only);
  - uncertainty about financial and operational viability;
  - potential Village assistance in meeting their financial and regulatory needs;
  - ability to get furloughed workers to return who are making more on unemployment; and
  - safety concerns for employees, customers, clients and visitors regarding COVID-19.

Staff triaged the above concerns, where possible, and to provide an empathetic sounding board while helping to facilitate resource utilization for these business owners. Furthermore, staff assured them that they were available for them as needed as they navigated their way through the pandemic and shutdown.
V. Business Assistance

Village of Skokie staff has undertaken the following initiatives to assist the local business community throughout the pandemic:

1. Established telephone and email hotlines to assist businesses with a wide range of questions throughout the shutdown. Contacted and responded to businesses directly to check their status and ascertain how staff could assist.

2. Provided information about financial assistance programs (e.g. PPP, EIDL, SBA loans, and various grants) through weekly emails to over 3,800 recipients to assist businesses with questions about these programs and local lenders administering said programs.

3. Through recently made available Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, staff has developed and implemented a Small Business Assistance Grant Program to cover the cost of COVID-19 response, including PPE supplies, protective barriers, tents, tables and chairs for outdoor dining, signs and display items, etc.

4. Promoted local businesses by maintaining a comprehensive list of open businesses and identifying them on the ZoomBusiness GIS tool. This step includes details on restaurant delivery and curbside services and has continued through stages of reopening to including outdoor dining and most recently dine-in options.

5. Following the Health Department’s lead, staff has provided information to essential businesses, connected local businesses to residents in order to obtain face coverings, and reopening guidance. When the face covering requirement was first established, staff printed several hundred signs and delivered them directly to businesses.

6. Provided financial relief by postponing business license renewals, waiving penalties for late Food and Beverage and sales taxes, and waiving outdoor dining permit fees.

7. Relaxed regulations to promote outdoor dining by allowing tables and tents to be installed in street-side parking spaces. Public Works staff delivered jersey barriers and planters to safely use on-street parking for outdoor dining. Relaxed temporary sign regulations to promote special offers and advertise curbside pick-up.
VI. Reopening Guidance

Through several discussions with the Task Force and input from businesses through the survey and interviews, it was determined that customer and staff safety are at the forefront of reopening the economy. Businesses are rightfully concerned that if customers or staff do not feel safe, they will not likely return. In response to these concerns, Village staff has assisted businesses through each phase of reopening.

When the stay at home order was first issued in late April, Village staff provided guidance in determining essential vs. non-essential businesses and visited businesses to ensure safety precautions were in place. Following the stay at home order, the Village took the extra step of requiring face coverings in public, a measure that was soon required statewide. In response to the requirement, staff delivered “Help Stop the Spread” signs to essential businesses to post in their windows.
VI. Reopening Guidance

Since the Restore Illinois Plan was released and Cook County has progressed to Phase 4, staff has worked to provide clear guidance to businesses as they reopened. Upon moving into a new phase, staff sent the new reopening guidelines and restrictions to businesses via email and posted on the Village's website. Village staff fielded numerous phone and email inquiries regarding the reopening guidance.

After the Governor allowed outdoor dining, staff developed specific guidance for seating options. In addition to considering state requirements on separation distances and preventative measures, staff created a document that also took local requirements into consideration. The guidance specified the conversion of parking spaces to dining areas, the erection of tents, amplified music, and permitted liquor service, among other items.

Village staff has been diligent in disseminating the reopening guidance via direct contact with the community via e-news as well as through business updates and partnerships through community-based organizations and other Village Departments. The Village will continue to provide guidance as we work through the Phases of the Restore Illinois Plan.
The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted how we work, how we shop, and how we socialize. As a result, we need to think about long-lasting changes to the marketplace and how that affects the Village’s approach to planning and economic development.

If work-from-home remains a viable option, companies that don’t have on-site staff requirements will not have a need for space, which may lead to a reduction in office demand. Conversely, some office tenants may need to increase space to accommodate social distance mandates and to address employee safety. We may also see curbside service and other modified operations for restaurants and retail continue into the long-term. While the Village has supported different scenarios for curbside pick-up, we will need to reevaluate it if this becomes a permanent fixture. Furthermore, zoning and parking requirements will need to be adjusted and flexible moving forward.

The pandemic may also speed up the shift from brick-and-mortar retail to online spending and fulfillment. This shift is ongoing and has followed somewhat predictable patterns where online retail gradually takes a greater share. Due to the pandemic, online shopping may have a greater foothold, which will affect the demand for retail space.

While the Village has taken steps to accommodate changes to business operations, much of the impact on the marketplace has not been fully realized. The best recommendation is to be flexible and open to new and non-traditional ideas. It is anticipated that the disruption of COVID-19 on the commercial real estate sector will be profound and create unforeseen opportunities and challenges at the same time.
The rapid pivot of the economy over the last few months is unprecedented in magnitude and scope. These impacts have been significant across all sectors of the economy and it has been difficult to assess the mixed-messaging of current conditions. Data and research reports will be critical to implement any plan for recovery amid great uncertainty.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Village staff has kept tabs on several data sources to gain insights into the local economic indicators, industry and association insights, and workforce trends are being monitored continually. And, as previously mentioned, staff conducted an online survey to gauge the temperature of local businesses and continues to call and email businesses directly to understand their path forward. These steps will continue during the recovery phase of the pandemic.
The following implementation activities detail the elements of the Recovery Plan recommendations, specifically what actions have already been taken, actions in progress, and future actions. Staff accountability measures and timelines are also provided. These implementation activities will undoubtedly change through the duration until reaching Phase 5 (no restrictions whatsoever) of the Restore Illinois Plan. Implementation of the Recovery Plan recommendations consider that there is a possibility that there maybe modifications and regression of the Restore Illinois Plan within the region and state.

**Examples of Actions Taken (not all inclusive)**

- Developed new and expanded existing partnerships with local and regional stakeholders such as the Skokie Chamber of Commerce and Industry to disseminate and cross-promote financial assistance programs, job openings and programming available to businesses.
- Initiated a COVID-19 Business Resource section to Village website.
- Delivered Skokie specific face mask signage to over 200 essential businesses beginning in Phase 2.
- Solicited input from businesses and proactively contacted those who were open and/or providing services from the outset of the stay at home order.
- Developed an enhanced web presence and populated the ZoomBusiness GIS mapping platform to promote Skokie businesses and services open during the pandemic.
- Connected businesses and customers in promoting locally availability of PPE.
- Have advocated for and assisted with regards to COVID-19 relief programs on behalf of business interests to local legislators at the regional, state, and federal levels as well as local lenders.
- Formalized a survey and connected with over 175 business and community stakeholders to gain insight as to how they were dealing with and plan to deal with COVID-19 related impacts.
- Waived permit fees and relaxed regulations to support restaurants who wanted to provide outdoor dining options.
- Postponed various fee collections to offer immediate financial relief to businesses.
- Established COVID-19 specific business hotline.
IX. Implementation

Recommendation #1: Initiate and expand efforts to promote and assist Skokie businesses and organizations in applying for COVID-19 related financial assistance programs including the federal PPP and EIDL SBA programs, state DCEO grant programs, Cook County Recovery Initiative funding, Skokie Small Business Assistance Grant Program, and any other assistance offering. Expand partnerships to other stakeholders not yet engaged with the Village on these efforts.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: Continue sending emails to current and growing lists of businesses and organizational recipients containing important COVID-19 related announcements and opportunities via constant contact, including information in Skokie E-News, and regularly posting items to the Village website.

Timeline: Constant contact emails will be sent every two weeks. Information in Skokie E-News and on the Village website will be posted as updates are available. Timeline is ongoing until Phase 5 of Restore Illinois is achieved.

Assigned Staff: Len Becker

Recommendation #2: Advocate for additional business assistance from federal and state programs by joining local government coalitions and contacting state and federal representatives. Proactively engage any formed delegation by sharing insights from the Task Force, best practices realized and efficacy of existing assistance programs and provide ideas for future programs.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: Send emails and/or letters to local representatives that shares our experience and request additional assistance. Work through the Northwest Municipal Conference and other local partners to request additional assistance.

Timeline: Initial contact should be made upon completion of the Recovery Plan, and regularly follow-up as needed. Timeline is ongoing until Phase 5 of Restore Illinois is achieved.

Assigned Staff: Matt Brandmeyer, Len Becker
Recommendation #3: Solicit and broaden feedback from key business, community, and organizational sector representatives to help guide the Village's response and to identify and respond to the changing business climate. Provide tools needed to Skokie businesses and organizations via the web or in-person to address and/or help mitigate economic impacts.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: Further analyze online survey results and one-on-one interviews to ascertain which sectors have suffered severe negative impacts from the pandemic and require technical and/or financial assistance. Develop and integrate focused initiatives (i.e. partnering with Northwestern University's Kellogg Small Business Advisory Initiative) to address the current and future needs of those businesses. Ideas generated from the surveys and interviews will continue to be incorporated into policies and new initiatives. Follow-up surveys and interviews during Phases 4 and 5 may be initiated to determine any longer term or unknown effects from the pandemic, shutdown, and recovery.

Timeline: The constant contact email will be sent every two weeks. Direct contact will begin with the completion of the plan. Timeline is ongoing until Phase 5 of Restore Illinois is achieved.

Assigned Staff: Leslie Murphy, Len Becker

Recommendation #4: Bolster marketing initiatives that support businesses throughout the community by promoting business districts through Skokie E-News, Shop Local social media efforts, search engine optimization, Skokie Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and targeted ad buys. Coordinate efforts to develop a business/economic development centric web presence to correlate with these initiatives.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: Develop messaging and identify each avenue for the promotion of local businesses, and then immediately begin ramping up. Regularly evaluate the messaging and determine if changes need to be made.

Timeline: The messaging and avenues step will take one week, while the implementation and monitoring will be ongoing.

Assigned Staff: Len Becker, Ann Tennes
**Recommendation #5: Develop special events to promote Downtown Skokie** while recognizing Phase 4 re-opening and social distancing guidelines. Build upon the success of outdoor dining and activities to expand to other areas in Downtown. Consider coordinating seasonal additions such as sidewalk sales, street closures, art fairs, etc. or new signage/way-finding from the CTA, North Shore Trail, and/or Illinois Science + Technology Park to capture and direct more patrons to Downtown assets. Relaunch Downtown Skokie website to drive/retain consumer, business, visitor, and employee traffic to/in Downtown.

**Actions Underway/Future Actions:** Further develop ideas in partnership with downtown businesses. Identify the scope, logistics, and budget of potential events and prioritize ideas to implement, then move forward with hosting chosen events. The Downtown website is near completion and can be promoted thereafter through marketing steps.

**Timeline:** Development of ideas will take approximately two weeks. Ongoing timelines will be dictated by the number and timing of scheduling events. The website will be foundational to the overall marketing effort.

**Assigned Staff:** Leslie Murphy, Len Becker, Ann Tennes

**Recommendation #6: Increase safety and COVID-19 prevention assistance** to businesses as they continue to reopen. Provide one-on-one guidance so that businesses can adhere to Public Health Guidelines and promoting the services of the Skokie Public Health Department.

**Actions Underway/Future Actions:** Under the direction of the Health Department, Community Development staff will begin calling each business to see how we can assist them and provide information and direct to PPE suppliers as needed.

**Timeline:** Two Community Development staff members have been assigned 50% of their time to complete this task. This task will take 6 months to complete.

**Assigned Staff:** Terry Oline, Colleen Burke, and Jim Duesenberg
**Recommendation #7:** *Review and reshape local regulations* to anticipate changes within the marketplace resulting from COVID-19 and make changes or provide flexibility accordingly. Consider rapidly evolving commercial real estate impacts and how to best work with property owners to re-purpose applicable properties.

**Actions Underway/Future Actions:** First round of text amendments will be scheduled upon completion of the plan. This will include walk-up windows, curbside pick-up provisions, and other recent business inquiries. Staff will continue to review and receive feedback moving forward for items such as modified parking requirements due to social distancing measures, signage, use, etc.

**Timeline:** A text amendment typically takes 2-3 months to complete. Additional review will be ongoing.

**Assigned Staff:** Steve Marciani

**Recommendation #8:** *Monitor local, regional, and national economic conditions and business activity* and disseminate information to businesses and organizations by developing and deploying a dashboard of information on the Village’s website.

**Actions Underway/Future Actions:** Several staff will be assigned to monitor various sources of information and/or a data points and regularly report findings. Sources of information include DCEO, IDES, SBA, IEDC, Crain’s, et.al.

**Timeline:** This item will be ongoing. Impactful information will be evaluated to determine if changes need to be made to the recovery plan.

**Assigned Staff:** Len Becker, Leslie Murphy, and Matt Brandmeyer
**Recommendation #9:** *Identify which businesses have permanently closed* due to the pandemic and take steps to attract new businesses or users as identified in the Skokie Economic Development Strategy and Action Agenda.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: Staff is conducting a sweep of commercial storefronts, industrial, and office properties. Businesses that have clearly closed will be noted. If we are unsure of their status, we will call directly to check.

Timeline: This item will take four weeks to complete and will be ongoing after initial inventory.

Assigned Staff: Mike Voitik, Len Becker, Leslie Murphy

**Recommendation #10:** *Monitor COVID-19 infection rates,* hospitalizations, and capacities that may cause the region to fall back to Phase 3 requiring businesses to modify operations or close again.

Actions Underway / Future Actions: Staff has been assigned to monitor the IDPH COVID-19 dashboard, which now includes the County-level risk metrics to anticipate any issues. We’ll continue to receive official updates from the Skokie Public Health Department.

Timeline: This item is currently taking place and will be ongoing.

Assigned Staff: Len Becker

**Recommendation #11:** *Pinpoint potential gaps in the recovery plan* that have not been considered but should be included.

Actions Underway/Future Actions: As staff receives additional information and as the pandemic continues, we will evaluate the Recovery Plan and identify items that have not been anticipated.

Timeline: This item has been ongoing throughout the development of the Recovery Plan and will continue to regularly occur.

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