

Morning Keynote

COVID-19 & Building Back Communities Better – Richard Florida, Ph.D., University Professor at University of Toronto's School of Cities and Rotman School of Management, Distinguished Fellow at NYU and FIU, and Co-Founder and Senior Editor, *CityLab*

Key Takeaways

- Cities will survive as demonstrated by history & past crises
- **Current crisis is a resetting moment**
- Pandemic accelerated and compressed trends that were already occurring such as the remote work as well as decisions about where to live
- Rise in remote work may cause families and older and more vulnerable people may opt to move to less-crowded suburbs, exurbs, and even smaller cities
- Confluence of overlapping crises (pandemic, economic fallout, racial protests) have created a **once in a lifetime opportunity to reimagine our communities in a different way and build back better**
 - Remote work and pull factors create opportunity to **remake older cities and suburban communities**
 - Opportunity to **reinvigorate NJ cities** – Newark, New Brunswick, Trenton, Paterson, Camden and more – as regional office centers
 - **Recast abandoned malls** and old suburban office parks
 - **Regional Rebalancing** – Shift to Hub and Spoke corporate systems
 - Create 15-Minute Neighborhoods **and Complete Communities**
- **Time to act with intentionality is now**
 - Crisis creates opportunity for communities of all shapes and sizes
 - Sets the stage to build better, more inclusive and resilient communities
 - More than density – not people per square mile but people per square foot; overcrowding, poverty, work, and race factors



Density Debate and COVID-19

- **Density blamed early** in the COVID-19 outbreak, as virus ravaged big cities like New York, London, Madrid, and others
 - But virus hit denser places first
 - Not density per se but global connectivity



Recent Research:

- **No evidence** that denser places have been **more susceptible** to COVID-19 than small towns or rural places
- Density has been key offsetting factor
- **Denser places have been more effective** at mitigation, social distancing, and providing effective health care

Future of Transit

- What assumptions should agencies be thinking about in mid & long-term service delivery?
- People are reluctant to take transit & return to transit will take more time as compared to 9/11
 - Likely decline in transit demand in the long-term; agencies need to make their customers feel safe & have viable finance strategies
 - **Northeast Corridor cities form a mega-region where transit is effective and needed to support one of the most important regions in the world**

Session #1: Where Are We Headed: The Pandemic, Reopening, & Public Health

Panelists

1. **Mike Greenberg**, Distinguished Professor, Ph.D. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University
2. **David Alland**, MD MSc DTM & H, Chief of Infectious Diseases, Professor, Rutgers, New Jersey Medical School, Department of Medicine
3. **Cathleen Bennett**, President and CEO, NJ Hospital Association
4. **Dr. Shirley Sylvester**, Senior Director, Johnson & Johnson

Key Takeaways

- Disproportionate impact on minority populations which already struggle with access to health care services, education, workplaces, and food.
- Near-term: ventilation, cleaning, hygiene (wearing a mask), and clear communication/messaging are key to reopening
- People's responses to reopening businesses, reopening workplaces, and the vaccine availability are highly variable
- Anticipate a vaccine will be available in early 2021 for emergency use only. It's unknown when a vaccine will be available for the public
- Long-term: new technologies to help stop the spread of infection – robotics, surface treatments

Panelist Insights

- **Mike Greenberg**: Organizations and institutions need to work with state and federal government to develop long-term plans that maintain health actions in place now to be better prepared for the next disruptive event. **“We need to develop messaging... It is critically important to make the messaging apolitical, if that is possible.”**
- **David Alland**: Longer-term, contact tracing combined with DNA sequencing can follow exactly who transmitted the virus to who and can identify areas where there is vulnerability for transmitting and spreading the virus. **With enough data, we can better understand how to prevent the transmission in more places – such as people homes.** Experts are developing surface treatments that render surfaces less- or non-infectious, and oral treatments that can make people less infectious.
- **Cathleen Bennett**: The shift to e-commerce for essentials has impacted brick-and-mortar stores. **Transportation needs to align to consumer's values – safety, hygiene, healthcare.** Consumers want to see steps taken to ensure their safety (masks, symptom checking, etc.).
- **Dr. Shirley Sylvester**: Data is not well disaggregated in many states. Advocate for disaggregate data to get more detailed info and to better understand the impact to minority populations. “A lot of these transportation issues are going to be influencing health...We see this in maternal health all the time”. **“COVID 19 has helped us all be more creative, more innovative, and I also invite you to be more innovative to partner with communities to try find solutions to their problems.”**

Session #2: The Future of Mobility and Public Transit

Panelists

1. **Piyushimita (Vonu) Thakuriah**, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University
2. **Paul Skoutelas**, President and CEO, American Public Transportation Association
3. **Scott Bogren**, Executive Director, Community Transportation Association of America
4. **Jessica Mefford-Miller**, Executive Director, Metro Transit St. Louis
5. **Jeremy Yap**, Chair of UITP Organizing Authorities Division, Deputy Chief Executive (Public Transport, Policy & Planning) of Land Transport Authority
6. **Tom Wright**, President and CEO, Regional Plan Association

Key Takeaways

- Pandemic offers a unique opportunity to re-imagine towns, cities, and transit systems
- The transit industry has shown great resilience in their response; "Heroes Moving Heroes"
- Transit may be shifting from fixed service to a more responsive, operationally flexible model
- Increase use of micro-transit and TNCs to help fill service gaps in areas of lower ridership
- Working remotely is here to stay in some regard, and jobs will be closer to homes
- Messaging is key; emphasis that transit is safe, and the public must be convinced of this
- Panelists are interested in pivoting off of the dialogue started during the Symposium to continue to engage on these topics

Panelist Insights

- **Piyushimita (Vonu) Thakuriah**: Think about new partnerships and opportunities—transit agencies must take leadership in urban sectors/micro-mobility/cargo and logistics; leverage lessons from previous downturns; **there is a window of opportunity for transit to expand into other markets**
- **Paul Skoutelas**: New protocols set across the board: cleaning stations and equipping employees with PPE; secured \$25b out of CARES act; transit needs additional federal support, advocating for \$32b as part of Heroes Act; beyond funding, industry also recognizes need to reposition; established National Task Force; **looking at resources and social equity to ensure we are servicing the riders who need us most**
- **Scott Bogren**: The smaller the agency, the more essential their services tend to be; membership base lost ridership at slower rate but are slower to recover; increase in “essentialness” ratio; new definition of safety - safety must be perfect; value of public transit often articulated by consumptive data; need to speak in terms of value/outcomes with less on ridership
- **Jessica Mefford-Miller**: Remarkable changes in where demand still exists; most trips taken today are essential workers; new fare pricing while keeping equity at the forefront of decision-making; looking to cut back service early AM and late PM and use micro-transit to fill in gaps; preparing to launch payment app to plan/book/pay on a single platform
- **Jeremy Yap**: How do we reimagine and reinvent? Point-to-point market, taxis, and new mobility; messaging - never said to the public that transit was not safe; we made sure it was safe; LTA wants to entrench WFH; aids in easing the burden placed on existing transit infrastructure
- **Tom Wright**: 1975 to 2000, for roughly every ten jobs, one was in New York City and nine in the suburbs; dramatic change around 2000. In January of 2020, we were at the end of enormous centralizing forces: from 2010 to 2020 NYC added a million new jobs—a 25% increase in job growth over ten years; that growth is not sustainable; financial challenges are huge; NYC region got only 15% of funds with 50% of riders nationwide; transit will return, people in NY Metro region are still taking transit; **capacity improvements still needed (aging tunnels, Gateway, etc.)**

Lunchtime Keynotes

Public Transport Post-Covid-19: An International Perspective - Mohamed Mezghani - Secretary General, UITP

Key Takeaways

- The pandemic is an opportunity to advocate for more space for healthier, and more efficient and sustainable modes of transport like walking, biking, and public transit
- Public transit must embrace shift to “Mobility as a Service” (MaaS); with mass transit as the backbone, we must offer more on-demand services (e.g., shared scooters, ride-hailing, etc.)
- Operators and transit authorities should not be low-profile; communicate confidence and pride in what transit can do. Need to consolidate transportation authority into more comprehensive agencies. Adopt a *customer-oriented* approach to make it easier to move around
- Joint messaging on topics like public transit safety and the importance of public transit during the crisis
- Advocate for increased spending/space for public transit (e.g., funding and street space)



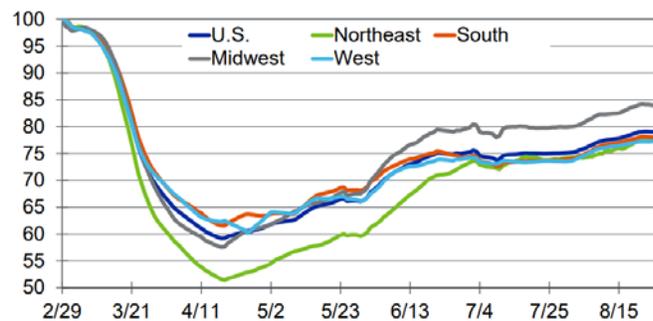
It's Getting Dark Early Out There: Pandemic Impacts on the Economy - Ryan Sweet - Senior Director, Moody's Analytics

Key Takeaways

- The economy is bouncing back and *will* return to normal, though “easy part” (i.e., just re-opening businesses) is over; steady growth is needed to replace the 11 million jobs lost
- **Costs of this crisis will be with us for years to come**; unemployment will remain high for years. Other long-term effects (e.g., accelerating shift to e-commerce) remain to be seen
- Continued federal stimulus is crucial. Shift to fiscal austerity could reverse recent gains.
- **Recovery is following natural disaster trajectory**: an economic shutdown, an initial bounce in activity as businesses reopen, a lull, then sustained expansion. Currently in lull: expected to last another 6-12 months.
- Projection: 5% GDP growth this year, 4% next year; 8% unemployment this year, 7.5% next year

Still Running 20% Light

Back-to-Normal Index, early Mar=100, 2020



Sources: CNN, Moody's Analytics

Session #3: The Future of Work, Housing and Commercial Real Estate

Panelists

1. **James W. Hughes** Ph.D., University Professor at Rutgers University & Senior Scientist, Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation
2. **Jeffrey Otteau**, President, Otteau Group
3. **Shawn Rickenbacker**, Director, Max Bond Center for Urban Futures, CCNY
4. **David Sigman**, Executive Vice President & Principal, LCOR
5. **Robert White**, First Vice President, NJ Realtors

COVID-19: A "Gasoline-on-the-Fire" Accelerant Propelling Structural Change Already Underway

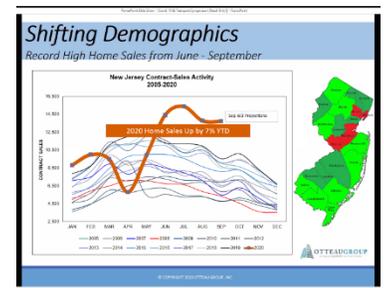


Key Takeaways

- Pandemic has accelerated telework, e-commerce & technological trends
- Watershed moment for world of work as COVID has exposed fragility of office ecosystem
- Shift from consumer-based spending of baby boomers to experience-based spending of millennials
- Work is being recognized as an activity and not as a place; rigid 9 to 5 work schedule; 5-day commute may be less relevant in the future
- Affluent households leaving NYC & moving to suburbs; potential for C-Suite leaders to move their firms more proximate to their employees
- Satellite office locations likely instead of large office campuses of passed decades;
- Mixed-use developments likely structured as Live-Learn/Work/Play developments

Panelists Insights

- **James Hughes:** Prior to COVID, NYC economy was booming; 2-month collapse erased 10 years of job growth resulting in loss of over 900k jobs in NYC & 831k in NJ; NJ has recovered almost half of jobs initially lost; long recovery ahead - likely in the shape of a Nike swoosh; e-commerce replacing brick & mortar – 1B sf of distribution center space in NJ, which represents 3rd largest logistics center in the country
- **Jeffrey Otteau:** Historic sales in NJ despite economic downturn; related to out-migration; stronger markets in more distant NJ counties; recent residential trends will be reflected in longer trips in the short term; we now live in a time where employers in the region need to bring jobs to their employees as people do not like commuting to NYC; COVID-19 is here for the long-term and there may be a permanent aversion to density
- **David Sigman:** Approximately 10,000 NYC residents moved to New Jersey or upstate New York; most of impact confined to certain industries, geography, and salary levels; retail, travel, lower paying jobs more affected; Google and other tech companies have signed leases in NYC, so expectation is that some sectors will stay in NYC
- **Shawn Rickenbacker:** While residents have migrated from NYC due to pandemic affordable housing crisis that was present pre-COVID has not gone away; potential for eviction crisis if public policy initiatives are not undertaken to mitigate circumstances; disaggregation of large city centers may lead to increase in number of medium-sized city centers
- **Robert White:** Very likely that companies will shift to remote work while shrinking their brick and mortar corporate footprints; luxury real estate market decreased by 35% in 2019 but luxury sales have rebounded in 2020 (40% increase in Robert's market area); most are cash transactions with some mortgage due to attractive interest rates



Session #4: The Future of Tourism, Hospitality, Retail and Entertainment

Panelists

1. **Thomas Bracken**, President and CEO, NJ Chamber of Commerce
2. **Vijay Dandapani**, President & CEO, Hotel Association of New York City
3. **Marilou Halvorsen**, President, New Jersey Restaurant and Hospitality Association
4. **Mark Jaffe**, President & CEO, Greater New York Chamber of Commerce
5. **Adam Perle**, ArtPride NJ, President, NJ Tourism Industry Association

Key Takeaways

- All four industries (tourism, hospitality, retail, and entertainment) are still amid the crisis; small independent restaurant and retail businesses are most at risk
- Discretionary travel or leisure travel for outdoor destinations can recover in the near- to mid-term; there is a need to build consumer confidence by communicating and showing how restaurants, hotels, art spaces are ensuring employees and customers are safe
- Need to focus on attracting discretionary travel while waiting for business travel to return
- Destinations for both leisure and business travel are less concentrated and less discrete – leisure trips may be extended and mixed with business
- Expand partnerships with businesses and local government to provide commuter information, services, and tax incentives to workers and businesses

Panelist Insights

- **Thomas Bracken:** Government needs to support business by addressing liability protection from lawsuits related to COVID-19 and providing access to capital to survive the on-going recovery of these industries that are still mid-crisis
- **Vijay Dandapani:** Businesses can open safely with indoor services. Best example is the US Open – hotels hosted the players with catering and there were no COVID incidents. Hotels have exceeded safety requirements.
- **Marilou Halvorsen:** Every \$1 spent in promoting tourism returns \$33 in customer spending. Leisure travel promotion now will help the NJ economy in the near-term.
- **Mark Jaffe:** We're at a historic moment with social justice – wage earners want more, and business can support workers and transit with incentives for employees to use transit to get to work. But small businesses need government support to open more and open safely to survive the on-going recovery.
- **Adam Perle:** Transit, arts, retail, and tourism, are all tied together. Need public and private to work together to reopen safely, and let customers make decisions about going to a concert, a museum, a sporting event.