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Snohomish County Task Force Releases Report to Advance Economic Recovery from COVID-19

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., July 8, 2020 – Today, Snohomish County’s “Blue Ribbon” Economic and Workforce Recovery Task Force, formed by County Executive Dave Somers in late-April, released its [first report](#) with recommendations to advance the County’s recovery from COVID-19. The Co-Chairs of the Task Force are Amy Drewel, Owner/Principal of Mosaic Insurance, and Ray Stephanson, former Mayor of Everett. Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring serves as the Advisory Group Chair.

The findings in the initial report reinforce the fact that the economic impact of the pandemic has been widespread and significant, showing the continued need for a coordinated response to rebuild the local economy. Businesses, non-profits and other partners came together to advance efforts during the beginning of the crisis and continue to work hand-in-hand to be responsive and position the County to recover as quickly as possible.

“Snohomish County was ground zero for the first reported case of COVID-19,” said Executive Somers. “Through those first few months, we led the country in response to the pandemic, and we are working towards being the first to fully recover. At the onset, our entire community stepped up, not only to respond but also to balance our recovery and resiliency efforts. The Task Force and the Advisory Groups in each district are part of a holistic effort. This is the beginning of a road map for our economic recovery and will help us build a resilient economy to provide opportunity and prosperity for all areas of the County.”

The major findings identified in the work of the Task Force and Advisory groups include:

- For working families needing to return to work, K-12 education and childcare is crucial and is linked to successful business reopening and economic recovery;
- The importance of continuing to provide clear health & safety guidelines and timelines to support business reopening;
- Businesses and workers will need ongoing support even as the economy re-starts and will need continued support well into recovery;
- The County’s most vulnerable populations have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and will need our support as the County recovers; and
- The need to be prepared for a future business climate with less certainty for planning and decision-making.

Nearly 40 recommendations were identified in the report and the strategies fell into three categories:

- **Response:** Strategies to respond quickly to identify the needs of businesses and non-profits who were mandated to close and remain closed until they are allowed to open. Strategies are designed to help stabilize a company and support its employees.
- **Recovery:** Focus on businesses as they prepare to a reopen under the Safe Start program as well as those businesses that are already open. Even when open, these businesses will require continued support to ensure they can successfully operate.
- **Resiliency:** Prepares the economy should the virus strengthen, requiring more mitigation measures, and supports long-term growth and shared prosperity throughout Snohomish County.

Many of the strategies in the Response category are being implemented. To support further implementation, the Taskforce will identify which strategies can be supported with federal CARES Act resources. The Office of Economic Recovery and Resiliency will support the coordination and implementation of these identified strategies. To determine which strategies should be implemented first, a Task Force committee will be tasked to rank the strategies based on the criteria outlined in the report. This will help the County determine which strategies can be implemented most quickly and effectively based on available resources.

“I’d like to thank all those who have participated in district Advisory Groups to support our economic recovery efforts,” said Chair Nehring. “The voices of small business owners and workers from across Snohomish County clearly express the difficulties they have faced during the pandemic. The strategic recommendations they have provided pave the way to support job creation and economic growth.”

The Office of Economic Recovery and Resiliency supports the Economic and Workforce Recovery Task Force. The Office website <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/Recovery> contains important information about COVID-19 as well as resources for businesses, workers impacted by business layoffs, and the public. An innovative Chat Bot on the site answers common questions about economic recovery efforts.

You can access the full report [here](#).

If businesses have additional questions about the Task Force, Board, or Office of Economic Recovery and Resiliency, they should contact the Office at 425-338-3800 or by email at SnohomishCountyRecovers@snoco.org.

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