

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



The City Beautiful

To: Mayor and Commissioners
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Asst. City Manager, Eduardo Santamaria

From: Vice Mayor Vince Lago

Date: April 23, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Business Recovery Task Force

The purpose of this memo is to initiate the formation of a Business Recovery Task Force, an idea that I suggested during the April 20, 2020 Commission Meeting.

In September 2017, I sponsored legislation that led to the creation of a Blue-Ribbon Committee during a time in which we faced many challenges in dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Therefore, I felt it was important and beneficial for the City to evaluate its existing operating procedures and processes when dealing with disasters such as hurricanes. The Blue-Ribbon Committee was comprised of a team of highly qualified professionals, who provided recommendations to the Commission on how to improve the processes that were in place prior to and during Hurricane Irma.

Every crisis is unique, and it is often difficult to develop a one-size-fits-all approach. However, in analyzing each of the emergency situations that arise, we can certainly develop an action plan that would allow us to be better prepared for the future. In terms of COVID-19, it is only a matter of time before operations resume under the “new normal.” In a Statement issued by the Miami-Dade County Mayor last week, the County is beginning to develop a plan to reopen its parks, marinas, and golf courses with the assistance of a similar task force they created called “The Parks and Open Spaces Working Group.” Our task force should not only focus on reopening parks and green spaces, but also our local retailers.

With that said, I would like to direct the City Manager to facilitate my request to form a Business Recovery Task Force (BRTF). The members of the task force should serve as a resource to the Coral Gables business community and stakeholders and provide thoughtful feedback and expert knowledge on how businesses, including parks, golf courses and open space, can continue to operate in a safe manner while following all health recommendations. Based on the feedback that is received, the BRTF will develop a community-wide action plan that will be presented to the City administration.

There are many reasons why I believe this task force would be instrumental in creating guidelines to reopen safely. For example, our local economy depends on businesses of all sizes throughout Coral Gables. They are responsible for a large percentage of the City's tax base and contribute to Coral Gables having the second lowest millage rate for a full-service city in Miami-Dade County. It is our duty as governing officials to support our local businesses in any way we can. Also, the opening of our parks, open spaces, and golf courses plays an integral role in the mental and physical health of our residents.

The entities below should be considered when creating the BRTF and may have one (1) appointed member who would represent each of the following:

Possible Representation

The University of Miami
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce
Coral Gables Community Foundation
The Coral Gables Business Improvement District
Miami-Dade County Liaison
State Representative
Beacon Council
Parks and Recreation Department
Baptist Health South Florida
Coral Gables Hospital
City Manager Appointment
Commission Appointment
City's Public Safety Officials (Chiefs and Emergency Management Staff)
City's Economic Development Department
Applicable City Board Members (Economic Development Board, Parks Advisory Board, Waterway Advisory Board, etc.)

The general idea is to establish a group consisting of industry leaders in both the public and private sectors, who can work collaboratively to formulate a plan that would serve as a roadmap on how we can safely reopen our businesses, parks, green spaces, golf courses and city facilities.

In summation, since the reopening of certain areas in Miami Dade County is expected to occur very soon, I am requesting the City Manager's Office to facilitate this request and provide a list of members who would like to serve in an advisory capacity on this task force no later than Friday, May 1, 2020.

CC: City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
Billy Urquia, City Clerk