

YoCo STRONG

RECOVERY TASK FORCE



FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

May 29, 2020

YoCo **STRONG** RECOVERY TASK FORCE

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Task Force Input

Thank you to the dozens of additional committee members who provided input as part of the recovery task force process.

BACKGROUND

On April 29, 2020 the York County Commissioners announced the YoCo Strong Recovery Task Force and tasked its members with assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current response, formulating recommendations for recovery, and providing input on lessons learned to inform recovery from future economic and public health crises.

The task force provided a final report by May 29, 2020.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The full task force report identifies dozens of important recommendations that should inform the county's current and future recovery. However, there were a number of recommendations that appeared across numerous focus areas and are clearly shared as priorities by the task force.

Those priority recommendations are:

Establish a County Health Bureau to coordinate the county's public health response to current and future pandemics and other emergencies.

- The County of York managed the public health aspects of COVID-19 admirably. This is affirmed by comparing our health statistics to those of neighboring counties. However, there is still significant room for improvement, and this can only be achieved by an investment in permanent public health officials responsible for protecting the entire county. Use the bureau to align public health information across sectors, in consultation with subject matter experts.

Establish a permanent emergency response and recovery task force.

- The creation of the YoCo Strong Recovery Task Force has demonstrated the importance of empowering a holistic range of perspectives to inform the recovery process. During future emergencies, such a task force could also inform the response process in the earliest days of a disruption and provide a reciprocal communication function with the county's public and private sectors.

Produce and distribute ongoing pandemic and crisis planning tools.

- The current crisis has revealed gaps in advance planning in both the public and private sectors. County emergency management, in collaboration with the planning commission and other partners, can provide technical assistance to community organizations, businesses, and local governments by serving as a clearinghouse for crisis planning information both during and in advance of crises and providing easy-to-implement tool kits.

Close the digital divide in York County by investing in broadband infrastructure for all residents

- With residents relying on the internet for education, news and information, tele and health care delivery, the disparity between those with access and those without exacerbated during this crisis. Broadband access is also crucial to retaining and growing businesses that provide employment to our current and future workforce. The county should leverage its own resources and attract federal and state investment to build out appropriate digital infrastructure to address the digital divide facing low-income communities, people of color, and rural communities.

Establish a permanent countywide funding pool to support small businesses.

- Emergency funding programs at the state and federal level served only a small portion of York County's small businesses, leaving many of them vulnerable to failure during this period of business restrictions. The county should establish and seed with its own funding a revolving loan and grant fund to support small businesses throughout the county, with an emphasis on supporting businesses serving vulnerable populations, minority business enterprises, and Main Street businesses serving our downtowns and boroughs. The county should also explore the creation of a York County-based Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) to secure, leverage, and deploy such funding.

Ensure access to Personal Protective Equipment and other crucial supplies.

- The county should take a lead role in coordinating the stockpiling and/or joint purchasing of PPE to ensure all front-line public employees, non-profit social service providers, educational institutions, and essential businesses have affordable and reliable access to PPE and other supplies required by state and local regulations for safe operations. This coordination should take advantage of York County's entrepreneurialism in manufacturing and technological sectors to source as much of the equipment locally as possible.

Deploy a communications strategy that reaches all county residents.

- During the current crisis and in future disasters, the county should play a lead role in developing and implementing a communications strategy that deploys a variety of communication channels, technologies, and community networks to deliver critical information to all residents. Key components of this strategy should be ensuring all communications are multilingual and that county government is empowering trusted community leaders to participate in disseminating the information.

Advocate for the task force's public policy agenda.

- The commissioners should use their political influence to advocate for legislative action and public policy reform that benefits York County residents, organizations, and bus policy agenda is included in the full report.