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**EDITORS:** The following is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Chester County Public Information Officer Rebecca Brain at 484-798-8710, [rbrain@chesco.org](mailto:rbrain@chesco.org), or Bobby Kagel, County Administrator at 610-344-6025.

## **Chester County COVID-19 Business Task Force Charts Plans for Next Phase of Economic Recovery**

**WEST CHESTER, PA** Members of Chester County's COVID-19 Business Task Force, selected as the Economic Cabinet, met this week with county industry leaders to begin addressing the county's efforts for economic recovery necessitated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force's plan for economic recovery, led by Chester County Planning Commission Executive Director Brian O'Leary and the Chester County Economic Development Council, is divided into two phases.

Phase 1 of the economic recovery plan focuses on short-term strategies for the 21 industry sectors identified on the Restore Chester County website. Industry leaders from each of those 21 sectors will identify short-term, actionable steps needed to stabilize businesses and the economy in Chester County.

Phase 2 will be a larger, broader long-term recovery plan, addressing overall recovery from the economic impacts of COVID-19 and how the County can further strengthen its economic viability in the future.

Chester County Commissioners' Chair Marian Moskowitz said, "Our COVID-19 Business Task Force took action early-on in this pandemic to prepare our businesses and our residents for the re-opening phase, which came into effect in June. As we continue to support our business community, it is time to focus on the next step – repairing what has been lost by businesses, helping them to continue to weather the storm so that we can move forward to grow."

The County has appointed two consultancies to support the next phase of economic recovery. 4ward Planning will provide a local perspective to economic development plans, and TIP Strategies, which helped to create and drive Chester County's economic development strategy VISTA 2025, will offer a national perspective on economic development issues.

County Commissioner Josh Maxwell commented, "We know that so many businesses are teetering on the edge right now because of this pandemic, so this next step is focused on helping them all to stabilize. We are working through Phase 1 quickly, with the right partners, consultants and leaders to identify and begin taking action on those steps needed to stabilize."

Plans for the Phase 1 recovery include a survey of businesses and organizations addressing current issues and concerns, as well as longer-term issues including impacts of on-going national trends on businesses and plans for the future. Results of the survey, combined with roundtable talks with the 21 industry sector leaders will help to generate the list of short term actions needed to stabilize Chester County's economy.

Members of the Economic Cabinet who are working with Brian O’Leary and the Economic Development Council include County administrators, the Chester County Department of Community Development, the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry and the Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau.

County Commissioner Michelle Kichline added, “Chester County’s strength in planning gives us a tremendous advantage in moving forward economically. We pledge to continue to support our businesses and help them to navigate through this pandemic, and this economic recovery plan will do that. The stepped approach – steady the course now, then move forward and grow – will help us to reshape our robust economy, in a post-COVID-19 world.”

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