

HUDSON VALLEY **PATTERN** *for* **PROGRESS** *The PULSE of the ECONOMY*

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2021 – 10 Things We Would Like to See Happen

There is little reason to dwell on 2020. Each of us experienced its wrath in one form or another. So let's offer some ideas for moving forward:

- 1) Living with the virus.** One way or another the virus is going to influence how we live and work in 2021. One way to build consumer confidence is to create an app with a bar code for those who have received the vaccine. Nothing is perfect but whether you are flying in an airplane or dining inside it may be reassuring to hear "all of our customers have been vaccinated". The policy should be set by the entity offering the service and we hope it would be temporary.
- 2) Broadband.** This could be New York's Moonshot. It is time to move this from a luxury to the necessity that it is. Like electricity every household must have it. Remote work, telemedicine and virtual learning are just some of the critical items that showed why this has to be made available to everyone.
- 3) Virtual Learning.** While we are hoping that by the time September rolls around everyone has a close to normal schedule, the integration of some virtual learning can enhance education. From k-12 to college this might be a way to make up some lost ground during the summer months.
- 4) Housing.** The only thing that is going to slow the purchasing of housing in the Hudson Valley is the lack of supply. We need communities to step up and approve both market rate and affordable housing. Lower cost housing is the answer to gentrification.
- 5) Stewart Airport.** Try as they may, the Port Authority cannot seem to make it a viable alternative for commercial flights. Given the rapid increase in e-commerce, it is time that Stewart be utilized as a massive cargo hub with hundreds of new jobs and a training center for pathways to higher paying employment. Charter flights could still be integrated.
- 6) The Changing Nature of Work.** Having had a taste of remote work, where possible, we are not going back to five days in the office. 2021 is going to allow for equilibrium to be established as workers ask for the ability to work from home and employers, in order to compete, no longer demand their workers to have to commute five days a week to their job.
- 7) Transit Oriented Development.** This is the perfect time to maximize TOD throughout the Valley. Even assuming adjustments to the MTA's train schedule due to Covid, apartments that allow people to walk to the train and to work from their home communities seems to be part of the new equilibrium.
- 8) Tourism.** It is time now to gear up for a robust, even if Covid influenced, tourism season. We saw what happened last year to the demand for our open spaces. Restaurants, hotels and parks need to be able to market themselves as "Covid Safe" and they can count on a stronger season than last year. People will have been indoors much longer than 2020. Demand will be strong.
- 9) Metro North.** To help the flood of tourists or people commuting to work, we in the Hudson Valley should be rooting for a fiscally strong rail system. It is in the best interest of the Hudson Valley.
- 10) DRI and CFA.** We are fans of these State grant programs but we understand the State's fiscal reality. Scale back the funding but use the best of them to rebuild hope and energy throughout the communities of the Hudson Valley.

And two more goals:

Build Equity. The virus showed that those with resources fared better than those without. In thinking about everything from vaccine distribution to creation of jobs – equity should play a role.

Finally, **Reduce Polarization.** Everyone has to find someone who they do not agree with politically and search for something they do agree on. It's a good starting place.

Wishing everyone a Healthy New Year!
Jonathan Drapkin
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