



# City of Highland Park

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May 15, 2020

Dear Governor Pritzker,

On behalf of the City of Highland Park, I write to share our grave concern with action taken by the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) Board of Directors at their May 13, 2020 meeting. Let me be clear, the statements within the NWMC letter requesting a diminishment of public health protective actions from your four-region approach to specific EMS regions does not represent the position of the City of Highland Park. The NWMC has taken a short-sighted and ill-informed approach to re-opening our vital local economies.

The lack of consultation with public health officials in proposing this change ignores the seriousness of the public health crisis we are experiencing. We know that certain health care metrics must be reached before social expansion (including commerce) can be safely supported. As a city that borders Cook County, we recognize that what happens in communities to our south is just as impactful as what happens to our north.

Fates as municipalities are intertwined with the region's economic engine -- the City of Chicago. It is folly to imagine that we can separate ourselves from that entity to any gain. Employment, transit, commerce, and social activities are fluid throughout our region, not limited by the geographic borders of our individual towns, and any attempt to separate from a regional approach to pandemic recovery is unrealistic and dangerous. The economic pain we are feeling will not be alleviated by a more granular regional reopening, and the public health pain will only be exacerbated by this approach in coming months.

I cannot state strongly enough: Highland Park supports your four-region plan to restore our state as this plan was guided by health metrics. Decisions that fail to account for real-time public health metrics are dangerous and put our residents at risk.

To address these critical concerns, I respectfully request a Zoom conference town hall meeting with you and the Northeast Illinois mayors – from Evanston to the Wisconsin border. It would be beneficial for this meeting to allow members of the public to observe and/or participate. We know from the public health data, and we've confirmed this with



Lake County Public Health Executive Director Mark Pfister, the density of population in this region is the strongest contributing factor to the continued rise in cases. It is important that we have a public health data-driven, region-specific conversation about realistic timelines and safe approaches to re-opening our local economies. Everyone wants to do this as quickly as possible, but it needs to be based on science and not whim.

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time.

Sincerely,



Nancy R. Rotering  
Mayor  
City of Highland Park

cc: Highland Park City Council  
Ghida Neukirch, City Manager  
Mark Pfister, Executive Director, Lake County Public Health  
Mark Fowler, Executive Director, Northwest Municipal Conference

