



Re-Opening of Hampton Beach As presented by Hampton Beach Re-Opening Task Force

Introduction

The Hampton Beach Re-Opening Task Force -- consisting of stakeholders and officials from the Hampton Beach business community -- was tasked with creating a plan that is realistic, sustainable and achievable for the summer 2020 season.

Our mission was to build a sustainable and supportive infrastructure that is an even-handed approach taking into account all aspects of Hampton Beach.

Six focus groups were established from various sectors:

- Public Health
- Public Safety
- NH State Parks
- Lodging
- Food Service
- Retail

This process engaged more than 250 business owners along Hampton Beach as well as the intown business community.

Discussions also took place with Commissioner Quinn (Public Safety); Commissioner Shaheen (Transportation); Commissioner Stewart (Natural & Cultural Resources); Patricia Tilley, NH Public Health Services; and Jaime Sullivan, Town of Hampton; as well as neighbors from the south (Salisbury & Newburyport).

The Task Force intends to continue meeting until there are no other collective issues created by the pandemic exist.

The Task Force members include:

John Nyhan, Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District
Chief Rich Sawyer, Town of Hampton Police Department
Phil Bryce, NH State Parks
Senator Tom Sherman, New Hampshire Senate 24th District
Tom McGuirk, McGuirk's Ocean View Hotel & Restaurant
Dave Hartnett, Mainsail Motel & Cottages
Mary Rae Preston, Sand & Santa Gift Shop

About our Area

Hampton Beach is a vibrant and inviting vacation spot that includes restaurants, lodging, shopping and attractions. It has rated in the top 3 cleanest beaches in the United States and was also rated in the top 10 values for resorts in America.

The reputation of the community is the utmost importance to our guest whereas we would like to offer a product that takes into account the Public Health, Safety and Welfare while also taking into account the viability of our local economy.

Hampton Beach is vital to the State's economy as well as to the business community (most of which is family-owned; small businesses). The seasonality of this community makes it imperative to develop a plan that allows Hampton Beach to open; otherwise we risk losing this valuable asset due to an economic crisis from which there is no recovering for years to come.

The major areas that the task force addressed and now are recommending to The Governor's Economic Reopening Task Force for acceptance are:

Density

During the summer 2020 Season, we understand the importance of limiting density of the area which includes limiting tourism; especially on a day-to-day basis.

The following recommendations address this issue:

PARKING

- State parking limited to 50% capacity
- State Parking directly along Ocean Blvd eliminated
- Town of Hampton Parking lots limited to 50% capacity
- Letter Street Parking A to M St decisions will be left up to the Town's Chief of Police but would not exceed 50% parking
- Private Parking Lots (over 22 parking spaces limited to 50% capacity)
- Pay-4-Parking in unapproved areas (yards) eliminated

Daily rates will be in place but with a strong recommendation that, in order to maintain the family-friendly reputation, surge pricing (gauging) be discouraged.

NOTES:

- NH State Parks is considering using a reservations system for their lots in addition to physical barriers or cones. Other lots would use a physical barrier system.
- Hotel Parking and Beach Employee Parking (Business & State Parks) not be counted against capacity limits.
- Capacity limits in all lots to be adjusted on a regular basis; with the exception of the state parking between A St to M St due the social distancing need in that area.

PARKING COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Appropriate Signage (reader boards; highway indicators) be utilized to communicate limitations on parking as well as when daily capacity is reached.
- Signage to be appropriately located as to discourage influx of tourists that would clog the roadways.
- A media campaign (print as well as social media) that discloses the rules, restrictions and limitations to the general public. The Town, State Parks and all of the partners will also have information about the parking limitations in their websites and, where applicable, will push the messaging out on social media. The parking application will be promoted to show the status of parking lots that it covers.

DE FACTO DENSITY LIMITATION:

- The very real possibility of the Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom closure for Summer 2020 will eliminate 2000 tourist a day; three or four times a week.
- Cancellations of Cottages; Hotels and Motels that most likely will not be rebooked.

RESTAURANT RESTRICTIONS

- To follow State guidelines as approved by the Governor

LODGING RESTRICTIONS

- To follow State guidelines once they are approved by the Governor

RETAIL RESTRICTIONS

- To follow State guidelines as approved by the Governor

ENTERTAINMENT/AMUSEMENTS RESTRICTIONS

- To follow State guidelines once they are approved by the Governor

STATE PARKS BEACH (THE SAND) PLAN

- ASAP open the sand for transitory physical activity including but not limited to walking, running, swimming, surfing, kayaking and paddle boarding. All activities at the State Beaches will continue to be subject to administrative rules.

NOTE: This allowance does not negate the State Parking restrictions.

LARGE EVENTS/GATHERINGS

- All events that encourage congregation that exceed state limits are being postponed to a later allowed date or canceled.

BUS TOURS & OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Bus tours disallowed for passenger drop off excluding hotel guest drop-offs.
- Drop offs are prohibited except as follows:
 - Traditional taxi services, beach employees, Uber and Lyft allowed to pickup/drop off but only after generally accepted "beach" hours in order to provide public safety and curb operating under the influence of Drugs and Alcohol.

Traffic Control

Traffic Flow along Ocean Blvd.

- Ocean Blvd closed to vehicular traffic between A to O St.
(Allowing for access to State Lot along the Ocean and daily trash pickup and business deliveries during certain hours)
- Ashworth Ave to become two ways between A to O St.

NOTE: This is to encourage social distancing for pedestrian traffic along the main business corridor of Hampton Beach. This plan will allow businesses to utilize space in the street for tape-lines; tables and chairs; and inventory depending on type of business.

NOTE: Supported by Commissioner of Public Safety, Commissioner of Natural & Cultural Resources and Commissioner of Transportation; as well as the Police Chief and Town Manager for the town of Hampton.

NOTE: This type of traffic flow is currently successful at yearly events such as the Seafood Festival.

Social Distancing

In a crowd-controlling effort, social distancing guideline would need to be in place.

The following recommendations address this issue:

- Closing part of Ocean Blvd (A to O St) creating a much wider walking mall for people to social distance
- Restaurants to follow state guidelines for capacity while also being allowed to utilize outdoor space including parking spots as well as sidewalks and part of the roadway along Ocean Blvd in order to properly distance customers.
- Concessions to follow state guidelines while also being able to tape line into the street on Ocean Blvd.
- Retail establishment to follow state guidelines while also being allowed to place merchandise in sidewalks and part of the roadway along Ocean Blvd (to be removed each night)
- Lodging to follow state guidelines with direct access units (Motels and Cottages) to operate at 100% while limited access units (Hotels and interior hall condos) to operate at the recommended capacity.
- As already indicated with the restrictions of large events, bus tours and entertainment venue capacity, we will see fewer large gatherings and more social distancing with fewer people.

NOTE: It is integral to the plan that the current sidewalks be abandoned in favor of use by adjacent business and that pedestrian traffic use the street as their "sidewalk" in order to avoid congestion or the very real possibility of pedestrians crossing into socially distanced lines.

Workforce Assistance –

- Although we will be working with the NH Division of Employment Security to fill a number of foreseen openings we will also, once travel restrictions are partially lifted, be depending on J1 students that will travel to the area on approved visas.
- Following health protocols (testing and adhering to quarantine procedures), we would request your support on allowing these students to come into New Hampshire.

Public Health Guidelines

Any recommendation by the Hampton Beach Re-Opening Task Force shall not contradict any guideline set forth by the State of New Hampshire nor the CDC.

The Hampton Beach Re-Opening Task Force is committed to safely reopening Hampton Beach. Planning, implementation and monitoring of the reopening process shall adhere to the public health guidelines set forth by the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health.

Changes to Standard Operating Procedure with regard to the opening of Hampton Beach for the 2020 Summer Season shall only complement these guidelines in order to present a safe environment for all.

Future Planning

- Develop a safe and acceptable plan that includes sunbathing; and congregating with social distances for all prior to the opening of the Summer Season (the Saturday prior to July 4 at the latest.)
- This plan would have to be accepted by the Town of Hampton, NH State Parks and the State of New Hampshire before implementation

Final Summary

Our Recommendation Requests

Since all stakeholders are closely working together (Business, State and local Governments) we need to open the beach as one. We have said from day one “we cannot open up Hampton Beach without both the east and west side of Ocean Blvd working together and formulating a comprehensive safety plan meeting phase one State Guidelines”.

- **We are requesting that the Governor’s Economic Reopening Task Force vote to approve our plan based on the content in this report contingent on NH Public Health Services sign off.**
- **This full beach opening request includes the opening of the State Park’s parking at 50% capacity so the State Parks generates revenue to cover payroll and expenses for the full or partial use of the State Park facilities including bathhouses, the seashell stage, the events function room, and the areas rented by local businesses.**
- **State Parks is required to hire a variety of staff so that they will be available for work once the State Parks open so this request includes**

the lifting of the State of New Hampshire State Parks hiring freeze that is presently in place today.

- **Although some of the beach businesses have been given approval to open soon (restaurants (partial) & retail our request is to open the rest of the beach no later than June 1st**

We appreciate your time in this matter. As you are aware, time is of the essence regarding any plan to open the Hampton Beach. The short summer season and the ability to implement any plan make expediency a requisite.

The Hampton Beach Re-Opening Task Force is dedicated to assist in manner you see fit to formulate a final version of a re-opening plan.