

# REOPENING The World's Workplaces for Today, Tomorrow and the Future.

May 5, 2020

CBRE hosted experts from Johns Hopkins University, JPMorgan Chase and PGIM Real Estate for a roundtable discussion, as we continue to navigate COVID-19 and help our clients prepare for reopening their workplaces. Insights were shared on a broad range of public health, workforce and workplace topics as well as CBRE's approach as we plan to reopen our offices around the world.

The reopening process is challenging and complex. Because we are dealing with an evolving global public health situation, it demands new types of expertise, collaboration and communication—and perhaps most important—leadership in managing change.

Our workplaces—and the communities they support—are inherently connected. We are all in this together, and can benefit from sharing expertise and first-hand experience.

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## Key Points from the Call

### Public Health Perspective on COVID-19

**"It's important for businesses to be focused on the safety of their workers and the public."**

- *Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Vice Dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University*

Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Vice Dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, spoke about the current state of the pandemic and how public health considerations should inform plans for reopening the physical work environment. He was interviewed by Karen Ellzey, Global Leader of Consulting & Analytics and COVID-19 Response Management Leader, CBRE Global Workplace Solutions.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Johns Hopkins University has developed a coronavirus resource center, which garners millions of views per day, to share data openly. Organizations can download the raw data and use it to inform the decision-making process. This is a reliable source of information and can help assess the crisis from different dimensions.

#### Resource:

- Johns Hopkins University Resource Center and Map: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>

- It is critical for businesses to focus on the safety of workers and the public that each company engages. Without a vaccine, it is important to reduce community transmission. There are multiple reports outlining guidance from academic institutions.

**Resources:**

- [Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors \(Johns Hopkins University\)](#)
- [National Coronavirus Response: A Road Map to Reopening \(American Enterprise Institute\)](#)
- A thoughtful approach to the reopening process, coupled with redesigning the physical environment, will help reduce the spread of the virus. However, personal accountability will remain critical.
- An employee’s journey to and from the office is equally as complex as the operations that support a workplace reopening.
  - Temperature screening cannot be solely relied upon to reduce risk. We should support the process by thinking through our symptoms before leaving the house. If any symptoms of infection is suspected, you should take precautions and be tested. People who are exposed to infection should quarantine themselves for two weeks.
  - Partnership between local communities, businesses and transit agencies can support a comprehensive plan for commuters.
  - In a building lobby, security and elevator precautions should be clearly communicated to avoid long queues and safe passage to the workplace.
- Mitigating risk significantly depends on individuals and the broader business community working together with public health to support a reduction in transmission.

## Panel Discussion: Commercial Real Estate and Corporate Workplace Perspectives

“You have to realize that there’s no one-size-fits-all solution across the different sectors. There’s very different things going on in various sectors and so you have to be mindful of that. There’s also a very different set of risks that you need to think about.”

- *Cathy Marcus, Global Chief Operating Officer and Head of U.S. Equity, PGIM Real Estate*

“The world is going to go back to ‘normal.’ It doesn’t mean we’ll operate the same way. Maybe we’ll operate better; maybe we’ll learn lots of lessons from this. And that would be my hope—that we learn how to be better.”

- *David Arena, Head of Global Real Estate at JPMorgan Chase*

Attendees heard from prominent commercial real estate leaders representing both owner and occupier perspectives in the reopening process: David Arena, Head of Global Real Estate at JPMorgan Chase, and Catherine Marcus, Global Chief Operating Officer and Head of U.S. Equity, PGIM Real Estate. They shared insights in a panel discussion moderated by Scott Marshall, Global Chief Client Officer, CBRE.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

- Though immediate priorities have shifted for real estate leaders with a renewed emphasis on health and safety, “big picture” priorities remain: delivering exceptional results to clients and customers, and cultivating an environment that attracts and retains the best talent.
- As we focus on reopening workplaces around the world, consider lessons learned from Singapore and other parts of Asia that have experienced setbacks as a result of premature reopening or lifting too many restrictions at once, as opposed to taking a gradual, phased approach.
- There’s no one-size-fits-all solution for reopening across various sectors. From data centers to senior housing to bank branches, each sector has a unique set of nuances and risks to consider.
- Employees’ path of travel within the workplace is an important consideration. Create floorplans that impute local social distancing guidelines. However, note that there will be implications for seating capacity. Other dense path-of-travel areas to take into account are elevators and employee queues in the lobby.
- Each tenant must have a plan that is tailored to their business and associated activities. There will be different iterations of reopening plans and requirements from both the landlord ownership and tenant perspectives.
- There are tactics, both legally and culturally, that will work in some countries but not others. Some practices are culturally ingrained; for example, in Asia, multiple daily temperature checks are common practice, whereas in other countries, such measures may raise privacy concerns or would not be tolerated by tenants.
- In the realm of retail, change has been accelerating in recent years. The pandemic has validated the use of technology—that people can bank and work remotely. The next challenge is changing peoples’ habits.

## CBRE's Perspective on Reopening Our Own Workplaces

**"COVID-19 is a complex, highly fluid situation. As such, we must develop office re-entry plans informed by the best intelligence, adjust our execution to changing circumstances and hold ourselves accountable for the results."**

- ***Bob Sulentic, President and Chief Executive Officer, CBRE***

CBRE is finalizing an internal playbook for reopening our offices. Our thinking continually evolves, influenced by government guidelines, medical health experts like Dr. Sharfstein, experts across our supply chain (HVAC, cleaning, elevators, etc.) and client feedback. The timing of reopening will vary market-to-market, driven by local community circumstances.

Innovation is creating new opportunities to support employee reentry. Mobile apps, like CBRE Host Connect, can serve as a platform for employee communications and potentially a self-health-check system. We also are researching technology advances such as "touch-free everything" within a space.

In planning our reopening, CBRE is intensely focused on the readiness of our communities, our people, the buildings where we lease space and the CBRE offices within those buildings. Accountability is key—developing a plan and executing it, while observing and adjusting our approach as changing circumstances dictate.