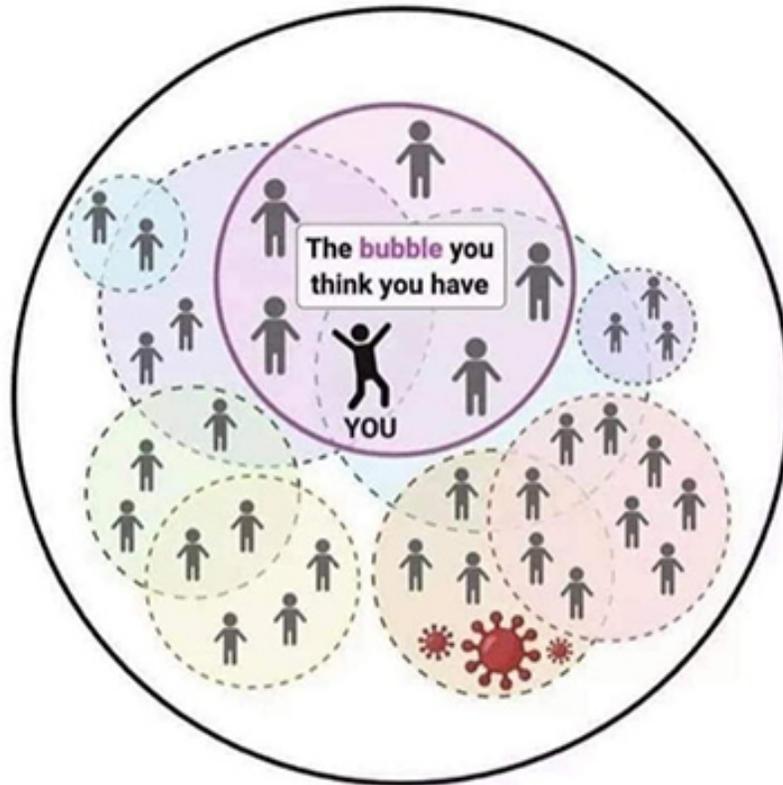




Mayor Brindle's
COVID-19 Update
November 17, 2020



The bubble you actually have

CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there were 4,060 new cases of COVID-19 reported in New Jersey, with another 706 still under investigation and 285,519 total cases statewide to date. Union County has reported 24,626 cases in total, with Westfield reporting x new cases through the State system since my last update on Friday (four on Saturday, two on Sunday, one on Monday, and x today). I will provide numbers from the Health Department, which include rapid tests results, on Friday.
- For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

STATE AND COUNTY UPDATES

- Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order to lower the limits on indoor and outdoor gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people (effective today), and outdoor gatherings are limited to 150 people (effective November 23). Outdoor gatherings remain subject to strict social distancing restrictions – including mask requirements whenever it is not possible to social distance. The following indoor gatherings may continue under the current rules – limited to 25% of a room’s capacity, up to 150 people:
 - Religious services/celebrations and political events
 - Weddings
 - Funerals/memorial services
 - Performances

For full details, visit www.nj.gov/.../news/news/562020/approved/20201116e.shtml

- The Union County Board of Elections reminds Union County voters who received a ballot cure letter that the deadline to cure their ballot is tomorrow, November 18, 2020, at noon. The letters were sent to voters who took their Vote-by-Mail ballot to a polling place on Election Day but did not sign the log book, as required by state law. Letters were also sent to voters whose signature on their Vote-by-Mail certificate envelope did not match their signature on file. Cure letters can be returned in person to the Board of Elections offices at 271 North Broad Street in Elizabeth, faxed to 908-527-4127, or emailed to ballotcure@ucnj.org. For more information visit the Board of Elections online at ucnj.org/ucboe, email ucboe@ucnj.org, or call 908-527-4123.
- The Union County Board of Commissioners has announced a rent relief program for eligible residents adversely impacted by COVID-19. A total of \$1,350,000 will be available through federal funds for residents who have fallen behind in payments as a result of job loss or income reduction. The program will provide a minimum of three months of assistance. For more details and an application, visit <https://wp.me/p4sLwl-mEX>.

LOCAL UPDATES

- Many thanks to the Westfield Police Department for their swift and comprehensive response to yesterday’s report of car burglaries in the areas of Maple Street, Maye Street, and Harrison Avenue, which resulted in the arrests of two suspects. Both Chief Battiloro and I have spoken at length about the need for residents to keep their cars locked at all times to help deter this type of activity, which persists not only in Westfield but in a number of other nearby communities. Please make every effort to secure your vehicles, and always call the police immediately if you witness any suspicious activity.
- The DPW continues with its first pass of leaf collection, and residents are reminded to remove any other organic debris from leaf piles -- including branches, twigs, grass, mums, or pumpkins -- as they cannot be accepted. For more information about leaf collection, including the pick up crews’ daily locations and details about this year’s free leaf bagging distribution program, visit westfieldnj.gov/leafcollection.

- In case you missed it, last week the Town Council adopted an ordinance on second reading for a downtown redevelopment plan, which is not a specific proposal for the properties recently designated as areas in need of redevelopment, but rather a framework to explain what type of investment the Town is seeking on those properties. This is in anticipation of collaborating with commercial property owners, investors, and developers in meeting our mutual goals. At the meeting, we were very fortunate to have members of the executive team from Hudson's Bay Company (owners of the Lord & Taylor property and our largest property tax payer) and Streetworks Development join us to discuss their approach to the shifting retail landscape as well as their continued interest in being a part of reimagining Downtown Westfield. The presentation can be found here: <https://bit.ly/WestfieldLordAndTaylorRedevelopment>.

While life during COVID can oftentimes feel like the world has stopped, it's important that we continue to imagine our post pandemic future. I encourage everyone to view the presentation and stay tuned for future updates about how you can participate in the public planning process.

- Lastly, I'd like to reiterate what we've all heard about the alarming surge in COVID cases -- this is a wake up call that we need to take seriously as winter approaches. Not only are cases up both statewide and regionally, but hospitalizations, positivity rate, transmission rate, and deaths have also been climbing in recent weeks. The health of our residents is top priority, which is also closely tied to keeping our schools and businesses open. Once again, nobody should be visiting our downtown without a face covering, and I'm asking for full cooperation with the contact tracing efforts of the Health Department -- which provides vital information about community spread to inform public health decisions. As you plan for your Thanksgiving celebration, please do so smartly by keeping guests to a minimum, and preferably outdoors. This is not the year for out of state visitors or large gatherings, as we all have a role to play in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 at this inflection point.

Thank you for your ongoing resilience and cooperation.