**Op-Ed Template**

**Still unsure about the COVID vaccine? It’s worth a shot.**

**By [Insert City Leader’s Name]**

As the days get longer and the temperatures get warmer, it’s hard to believe that more than a year has passed since the world as we know it changed due to the deadly coronavirus. I’m sure most of us spent the last year telling ourselves that we would do anything—literally anything—for a return to how things used to be. No more masks, no more quarantines, back to business and no more social distancing.

Thanks to an unprecedented effort by our nation’s medical community and state and local leaders, we now have the chance to reconnect with the people, activities and habits that we enjoyed before March 2020. This chance is made possible by getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

To date, nearly 3 million Georgians have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and nearly 1.2 million are fully vaccinated. Most importantly, ***zero*** of these 3 million Georgians have died from the vaccine. Conversely, the coronavirus has claimed the lives of more than 18,000 Georgia residents. [insert city name], we have the opportunity to create a community of immunity and save lives!

To those valued [insert city name] citizens who are hesitant—even skeptical—about receiving the vaccine, I understand that historic mistreatment of communities of color have caused you to feel this way. I see how these horrible incidents along with the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color over the past year can bring you little hope, but today’s vaccine process is safe and effective. You can trust this process. Join the millions of Americans, who have received 165 million+ doses, and have trusted this vaccine process!

While it’s true that the COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out faster than other vaccines, each approved vaccine went through the same rigorous testing as previous vaccines and medicines. In the US, this process has produced safe and effective vaccines for the flu, polio, measles, mumps, pertussis and more. The technology behind the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines—mRNA—has been in development for nearly 30 years and has saved millions of people from getting sick and dying.

No, shots aren’t fun. But they really aren’t that bad, either. In fact, some of us might only have to get one dose (thanks Johnson & Johnson!). For the rest of us, we are just two doses away from protecting ourselves, our families, our friends and our communities from another lost year.

And that’s the thing: Getting vaccinated isn’t just about you. It’s about your parents and grandparents, friends and neighbors, child’s favorite teacher and the cashier at your local grocery store. It’s about the [insert name of local businesses], and the thousands of other workers, small business owners and community members who have been impacted by this global pandemic.

It’s time, [insert city name]. Time for us to roll up our sleeves to do what is best not just for ourselves, but for each other. It’s time to get back to being *us* again. All of that? It’s worth a shot.