

C40 MAYORS' AGENDA FOR A GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY



**C40
CITIES**

We are committing to provide the swiftest and strongest possible rebound for our citizens and reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Global Green New Deal

As the tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, our immediate priority as C40 mayors is to face this unprecedented crisis and protect the lives of our residents. At the same time, we are leading in taking the first steps towards recovery. We are committing to provide the swiftest and strongest possible rebound for our citizens and reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Global Green New Deal — to protect our environment, strengthen our economy and build a more equitable future, by cutting emissions from those sectors most responsible for the climate crisis to keep global heating below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement and by putting inclusive climate action at the heart of urban decision-making.

Not only will a green and just recovery better address the immediate challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will also tackle the immediate and longer-term challenges of climate breakdown. By choosing a green and just recovery, we will secure a just transition to an inclusive economy for all workers and remedy long-running environmental and social injustices for those disproportionately affected by the climate crisis — those living in the Global South more generally, and the poorest and most marginalised communities everywhere.

By taking a sustainable path at this critical juncture, by respecting science, fostering unity and embracing a spirit of innovation and purpose, we will secure the best recovery we can and avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Amid the devastation of this global pandemic, mayoral leadership has never been more important.

Foreword

The Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force was established to determine how we can achieve a green and just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As mayors, we are on the frontline of this crisis. Together with the residents of our cities, we have taken unprecedented measures to protect the health and wellbeing of our citizens. Together, through this Task Force, we are looking to the future. How can our cities recover swiftly from the health and economic crisis of COVID-19? And how can we, as city leaders, ensure that the world turns this tragedy, which has caused so much hardship and pain, into a better tomorrow?

This report sets out our collective vision for a green and just recovery and our shared principles for achieving it. We address the ambitious actions needed, together with examples from our network, showing how the 'new normal' is already materialising in our cities — providing evidence that it is possible to 'build back better', as United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged.¹ Lastly, we call on others — national and regional governments, financial institutions, unions, our youth, businesses and citizens — to join and support our efforts.

In this agenda for recovery, we have focused on those actions we are taking as part of our response to COVID-19, those we will take and those we are asking others to take with us. As part of the Recovery Task Force's efforts, we are commissioning further work to assess the impacts and benefits of our actions, to demonstrate why a green and just recovery is better, and to inform the ways in which we deliver these actions. This next work will set out how to finance the recovery in a time of recession, how we should govern in a time of uncertainty, and effectively communicate how to bring about the transformational change we need.



GLOBAL MAYORS COVID-19 RECOVERY TASK FORCE

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*Mayor Park Won-soon passed away on 9 July 2020. As a C40 Vice Chair, and member of the C40 Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, Mayor Park has been one of the world's strongest advocates for bold and inclusive climate action and Seoul's climate leadership has been an example to other cities around the world. Mayor Park was a strong advocate for climate justice and always pushed us to act with greater urgency. On behalf of everyone at C40, we are extending our deepest condolences to his family, the team in Seoul City Hall and to the residents of Seoul.

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1. Introduction and vision

COVID-19 has caused immense suffering and hardship in our cities. More than 470,000 people have already lost their lives to this terrible virus.² With more than 90% of reported cases in urban areas,³ this means hundreds of thousands of families have been left bereft in cities around the world. We will never forget their loss.

The global pandemic has exacerbated a wider social and economic crisis, which has fundamentally altered societies everywhere. We will feel the reverberations in our cities for years to come. The measures taken to contain COVID-19 are estimated to have wiped out 400 million full-time jobs in the second quarter of 2020, resulting in a 14% contraction in working hours compared with pre-crisis levels (at the end of 2019).⁴ Furthermore, as a consequence of the pandemic, an estimated 100 million people living in cities are likely to fall into poverty, with as many as 71 million falling into extreme poverty.⁵

The pandemic has exposed the stark inequality in our cities and in different parts of the world. COVID-19 has not affected people equally. It has visited greater destruction on those least able to defend themselves against it, often low-income communities, isolated elderly people, communities of colour or those living in informal settlements. Systemic racism, sexism, inequality and unfair access to basic healthcare are all driven by the same institutional and economic failures. What's more, these drivers of social injustice are the same as those behind pandemics and environmental breakdown. If we want to emerge from COVID-19 in a just and sustainable way, we have to change the systemic, underlying causes of those failures.

The inequitable impact of COVID-19

- The elderly are five times more vulnerable to COVID-19.⁶
- Black and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, as many are essential workers on the frontline, in housing or work situations where physical distancing is not possible, or less likely to have access to healthcare.⁷
- Black and ethnic minority groups are already suffering the worst impacts of air pollution, which causes illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, that increase the risk of COVID-19. People of colour in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States of America are living with 66% more vehicle-induced air pollution than white residents, for example.⁸
- Impacts on the informal economy could jeopardise the employment of 740 million women globally, affecting women's longer-term economic independence and security.⁹
- While wealthier countries have so far suffered higher rates of infection and greater loss of life, less developed countries are being hit hard by the consequent global recession and generally have lower levels of resilience.¹⁰

The COVID-19 pandemic has also laid bare the need to improve resilience, strengthen data-driven government, and protect and revive multilateralism. Some societies have been able to eliminate or contain the virus relatively rapidly, but most have not. Intergovernmental cooperation has been inadequate for the severity of the pandemic, whereas collaboration between C40 cities has strengthened and helped save lives.

C40 city collaboration is helping to speed and scale up solutions, saving lives and accelerating the recovery

C40 cities have collaborated closely in response to the health crisis, with immediate and direct effect. This collaboration will now help to advance recovery efforts.

- **Durban, Buenos Aires, Philadelphia, Lima and Vancouver** created and shared their own guidelines on safe waste management and collection during the COVID-19 crisis, allowing all cities in C40 to benefit from their experience.

- The C40 Land Use Planning network turned its attention to identifying sites for virus testing and to repurposing hotels and other buildings as hospitals and homeless shelters, led by **Chicago** and **Rio de Janeiro**.

- **Hangzhou** hosted a webinar to share how it was safely sanitising and operating its bike-sharing scheme, one of the world's largest.

- **Nanjing** provided advice and medical aid to other C40 member cities, including Boston, Portland, Vancouver, Seattle, Cape Town, Barcelona, San Francisco, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Heidelberg, Santiago and San Diego. Santiago, for example, received 20,000 disposable face masks.



Overall, the crisis has exposed how ill-prepared human civilisation is to manage major global shocks. This is critical, as **the global consequences of climate breakdown and the breach of other planetary boundaries threaten to be even more severe than the COVID-19 pandemic.**

As cities already facing the consequences of climate change, we are acutely aware of this, and are acting individually and collectively to address it. But we need to do much more to adapt our cities to the health and climate crises and to increase the resilience of our fundamental services and infrastructure. We need to continue our work towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, to halve emissions by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050, and we need to ensure that these efforts support a healthy and equitable recovery. We are committed to making our communities and cities more resilient to shocks and to deepening our global collaboration to enable all of our individual cities to thrive. Increasing our resilience and adapting to a world in which global crises are likely to become more frequent has never been more important.

The pandemic comes on top of, and is connected to, the climate emergency. We are already facing an existential threat from climate breakdown. This climate ‘pandemic in slow motion’ already causes the deaths of more than 150,000 people annually.¹¹ The COVID-19 crisis can be considered an environmental crisis too. Recent research on the outbreak of diseases suggests that biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, unsustainable food systems and deforestation can act as critical drivers of pandemics.^{12, 13}

What’s more, the link between air pollution and viruses, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and COVID-19, underlines the connection between pollution and health. Decades of research show that exposure to poor-quality air damages the heart and lungs, causing some of the same conditions that predispose people to severe COVID-19 outcomes. Low-income countries have worse air quality and, in many cities, low-income neighbourhoods

have worse pollution and higher rates of illness most associated with pollution. Regardless of whether people in our poorest communities are already suffering from cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease or diabetes due to air pollution or other long-standing social inequities, such as a lack of access to preventive and routine medical care, their risk of dying from COVID-19 increases massively. The only way to truly confront the impacts of this pandemic and the risk of future outbreaks is through a sustainable, just recovery.

To build the future we want, the process of recovery must bring about meaningful change in the way we think about our societies and our economies. We must forge a new normal.

A return to ‘business as usual’ would not just be a monumental failure of imagination, but lock in the inequities laid bare by the pandemic and the inevitability of more devastating crises due to climate breakdown.

Even now, as we feel the wrought by a crisis that is still unfolding, we are seeing the anger of people around the world who have faced systematic discrimination, who have lost their jobs, who lack access to basic healthcare, who have suffered and are suffering from racial and social injustice. The Black Lives Matter protests in many of our cities are a clear sign that our citizens expect us to ‘build back better’, not just return to business as usual. Recovering in an equitable and sustainable way means recognising and alleviating this anger, remedying the causes of this injustice, and protecting and promoting the rights of our residents. We must ensure that the new normal starts from and serves all of our communities, our essential workers, the suburbs and the peripheries of our cities.

As Professor Kate Raworth, the best-selling author of *Doughnut Economics*, reminded us in her evidence to the Task Force, ‘20th century economic narratives told us that the economy is essentially the market and so let the state stand aside and let price be the reflection of value; that humanity is ‘rational economic man’, who stands alone with money in his hand, ego in his heart, a calculator in his head and nature at his feet; and it told us that the goal of the economy is endless GDP growth, no matter how rich a nation already is.’

We now know that this is not a recipe for long-lasting, thriving societies and that such policies have serious negative effects on both our immediate wellbeing and the medium-term ability of our environment to provide us with the conditions necessary for human civilisation to survive and thrive. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a vivid reminder of the value of public services and the need for civic leadership, that there is such a thing as society, and that a growing economy does not automatically guarantee a prosperous society in future.

Economic policy, to be effective in addressing societal and environmental problems, has to meet the social foundations set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, to end poverty and improve the quality of life of everyone, everywhere, without exceeding the planetary boundaries of our ecosystem. We need to invest in a thriving society, rather than return to an unsustainable race to devour our natural resources.

Cities are critical to delivering a green and just recovery. Cities are on the frontlines — both of the COVID-19 crisis and of the climate crisis. And because we, as mayors, are responsible for the health and wellbeing of our residents, we are often the ones responding with concrete action in moments of crisis, be it a pandemic, flood or wildfire. Cities are centres of population, engines of economic growth and hubs of consumption. We house over half the global population,¹⁴ generate more than 80% of economic production¹⁵ and emit over 75% of carbon emissions.¹⁶

Consequently, cities are both where the problems are most serious and where the solutions are being found. City politicians and practitioners can mobilise municipal resources, show leadership and draft a template for how to ‘build back better’. Climate action in cities can help accelerate economic recovery, reduce air pollution and enhance social equity, providing multiple benefits for city residents. Indeed, these efforts can drive economic benefits for entire countries. Research from the Coalition for Urban Transitions finds that climate investments by national governments and other actors in cities could yield USD 24 trillion in economic benefits by 2050 based on cost savings alone. This would support more than 80 million jobs by 2030, millions more by 2050, and fuel medium- to long-term productivity and innovation.¹⁷

As mayors of the world’s largest and most dynamic cities, we have a unique responsibility and ability to lead a green and just recovery.

We will take big, bold steps to build a better, more sustainable, more resilient and fairer society, based on the principles of C40’s Global Green New Deal. As Professor Michael Jacobs put it in his evidence to our Task Force, ‘In responding to both the coronavirus and the environmental crises, the risks of inaction far outweigh the risks of action. Already in response to the pandemic, mayors have shown that they can act much more swiftly and on a larger scale than they previously believed possible.’

We are committed to acting right now, to using public investment and dynamic public services to protect public health. As another contributor to our Task Force, Professor Mariana Mazzucato, said, ‘What we need now are entrepreneurial governments, ready to create and shape markets that will enable us to build thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities — driven by a dynamic stakeholder approach involving labour unions, business and civil society.’

We envision a future with jobs and an inclusive economy for all, resilient and equitable communities, healthy people and a thriving planet. Our work in this regard has always been essential, but as COVID-19 devastates lives, livelihoods and communities, it is now more essential than ever. In the future we all want, people will have access to decent, green jobs powered by sustainable industries — from green buildings to renewable energy, from nature-based solutions (such as parks and green roofs) to circular economies, and from sustainable transport to low-carbon, clean infrastructure. All city residents will have access to resilient, sustainable public services, especially our most vulnerable. Fundamental to this will be sustainable, efficient and safe mass transit systems that keep our cities moving and our economies running, while leaving our streets car-free, air clean and skies blue. All residents will live in '15-minute cities', where shops, workspaces and essential services are easily reached within a short cycle or walk, surrounded by plenty of green spaces where they can relax, exercise and play.

This vision is far removed from many of our daily lives at present, particularly for those living in informal settlements, those who are homeless and those surviving below the poverty line. As we have seen in the rapid spread of movements for racial justice around the world, there are people in all our cities who do not and cannot enjoy the rights and quality of life we want for all of our citizens. In the immediate future, we will strive for cities where everyone can live free of the fear of deadly viruses and other preventable diseases, free from discrimination and free from poverty, breathe clean air, have a roof over their head and be optimistic that things will continue to improve in future.

Collaboration is key to realising this vision for a green and just recovery. We are engaging with national and regional governments and international financial institutions to make sure the necessary resources flow to cities to spearhead national and global recovery efforts. We are engaging with youth movements, unions, businesses, city networks and civil society to ensure that we jointly develop and deliver our plan for recovery.¹⁸ We cannot do this alone, nor do we want to. Rather, we will partner with those who share our vision of a just and green recovery.

As mayors, we are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that this recovery builds towards the future we need and want.

This plan sets out our vision and principles for recovery, the leading actions we are taking on jobs and an inclusive economy, resilience and equity, and health and wellbeing. It is a call to action for others, particularly national governments and financial institutions, to support our efforts. Today's investments will yield tomorrow's cities. Let us make sure they are healthy, prosperous, just and safe places for all.

2. Principles for a green and just recovery

In April 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread to cities around the world, C40 mayors launched the Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, with the aim of rebuilding cities and economies in a way that improved public health, reduced inequality and addressed the climate crisis. To date, more than 40 mayors have signed on to the Task Force's [Principles for a Green and Just Recovery](#).

- 1 The recovery should **not be a return to 'business as usual'** — because that is a world on track for 3°C or more of over-heating.
- 2 **The recovery, above all, must be guided by an adherence to public health and scientific expertise**, in order to assure the safety of those who live in our cities.
- 3 **Excellent public services, public investment and increased community resilience** will form the most effective basis for the recovery.
- 4 **The recovery must address issues of equity** that have been laid bare by the impact of the crisis — for example, workers who are now recognised as essential should be celebrated and compensated accordingly and policies must support people living in informal settlements.
- 5 **The recovery must improve the resilience of our cities and communities**. Therefore, investments should be made to protect against future threats — including the climate crisis — and to support those people impacted by climate and health risks.
- 6 Climate action can help accelerate economic recovery and enhance social equity, through the **use of new technologies and the creation of new industries and new jobs**. These will drive wider benefits for our residents, workers, students, businesses and visitors.
- 7 We commit to doing everything in our power and the power of our city governments to ensure that **the recovery from COVID-19 is healthy, equitable and sustainable**.
- 8 We commit to using our collective voices and individual actions to **ensure that national governments support both cities and the investments needed in cities**, to deliver an economic recovery that is healthy, equitable and sustainable.
- 9 We commit to using our collective voices and individual actions to **ensure that international and regional institutions invest directly in cities** to support a healthy, equitable and sustainable recovery.

3. City leadership and action for a green and just recovery

Cities are already leading the way in creating a green and just recovery from COVID-19. While our immediate priority as mayors is tackling the crisis, we are also preparing for recovery and exploring how we deliver a better future.

Together, as C40 mayors, we have collectively identified key actions that are critical to achieving our vision for a green and just recovery.

The pandemic has highlighted the inextricable link between health, the environment and the economy. To regenerate sustainably, and to provide decent, green jobs for all, we need to invest in a thriving, sustainable economy — one that values and supports our essential workers, one that provides accessible career paths from the high-carbon sectors of yesterday to the low-carbon industries of today and tomorrow.

We will lead in taking action to create jobs and an inclusive economy — in supporting essential workers, in ensuring new jobs are green jobs and in fostering upskilling to facilitate a just transition and an inclusive economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed our collective vulnerabilities, lack of resilience and failures of the current system. A recovery that improves equity and resilience is crucial.

We will lead in taking action for resilience and equity – providing fundamental public services for all that underpin a fair society and strong economy and that are resilient to future shocks.

Finally, the pandemic has emphasised the paramount importance of health and wellbeing; the health of our citizens has to come first. We are not only acting to address the challenge of reopening our cities safely, but also to secure the long-term conditions necessary to safeguard the health of our people and the planet.

We will lead in taking action for health and wellbeing – giving public space back to people and nature, reclaiming our streets and guaranteeing clean air to ensure liveable communities.

For each of these actions, we have shared best-practice examples from Mayoral Task Force cities and others, demonstrating where successful projects and policies are already improving lives. The examples prove that solutions exist and that a sustainable future is already here. We are committed to acting boldly to implement these solutions at scale, creating a new normal for millions more people around the world.



Jobs and an inclusive economy: Create new, good, green jobs fast, support essential workers and massively expand training to facilitate a just transition



As C40 mayors, we will act as entrepreneurial governments, taking a lead in creating new, good, green jobs, nurturing essential workers and ensuring skills and training are available so that workers in polluting industries can move directly into jobs in the sectors of the future.

With unemployment so high, the immediate economic priority in all C40 cities is to invest in programmes with the shortest lead times that will deliver the greatest job-creation and protection benefits and which will set us firmly on the path to a zero-carbon economy. We have to enable the millions of people who lost their jobs due to COVID-19, had their pay and/or hours cut, or were already unemployed to get back to work and earn a decent living.

Fortunately, there is ever stronger evidence that investment in the green economy creates more jobs, with better terms and conditions, than continuing to prop up old, polluting industries and services. By investing in climate action, cities can cut emissions and create jobs. Research shows that with an investment of around USD 1.8 trillion per annum, or about 2% of global gross domestic product (GDP), cities could not only cut 90% of their emissions, but create 87 million jobs by 2030 and generate an economic return of around USD 24 trillion by 2050 based on cost savings alone.¹⁹

Investments should support industries of the future with good job potential and sustainable impacts.

- **Building retrofits** generate large numbers of jobs in the short term, creating immediate local employment, with significant opportunities for low-skilled labour to learn new skills, and delivering very large emission reductions over the long term, creating healthier, better housing and saving considerable costs over time.

- **Renewable energy** requires more jobs and creates more and higher-quality local jobs than fossil fuels. Investing in renewables is pivotal in tackling the 46% of carbon emissions from energy extraction and generation, as well as providing a secure, resilient energy supply and avoiding the air pollution generated by fossil fuels.

- **Nature-based solutions** (such as parks, green roofs, green walls, blue infrastructure and permeable pavements) can rapidly generate jobs and provide accessible employment opportunities for lower-skilled workers, while creating healthier, greener and more liveable cities.

- **Circular-economy strategies**, which prioritise waste avoidance and reduction through reuse and repair, generate jobs, with the potential to boost employment by 2% or more.²¹

- **Sustainable transport** has very good employment potential, particularly public transport, which can generate 30% more jobs than building roads, and electric vehicles, which has the potential to generate 10 million jobs from just a 50% switch.

- **Low-carbon, clean infrastructure** can provide a high number of jobs in the construction sector, focusing on shovel-ready projects to provide jobs quickly. Investing in connectivity infrastructure (such as clean transport, information and communications technology) is particularly relevant for the post-COVID recovery, as we rethink how people will work and live.

The pandemic has helped us all to realise that 'essential workers' are not just doctors and nurses, but also drivers and food providers, waste collectors, mass transit personnel and many others. The list is long. We recognise the profound value and contribution that working people have made to our societies in this crisis and how essential they are to regenerating our economies. Many work in the public sector and we need to protect jobs in our vital public services. Lots of cities will require subsidies from national government and international agencies, as city government finances have been hit hard by the pandemic. But there are other ways in which mayors can support essential workers, particularly those in the private and informal sectors, and there are important examples of how to do this already emerging in C40 cities.

Action: Create new, good, green jobs fast

We will invest, regulate and incentivise to create decent, green jobs for all those looking for work, recognising both the need to generate immediate short-term jobs through ‘shovel-ready’ investments and the need for longer-term regulation and incentives to stimulate a thriving, regenerative and redistributive economy (one that supports wellbeing, reuses materials sustainably and distributes value equitably).

Best practice examples

Hong Kong, China

The **Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region** has launched the Green Employment Scheme to **create more than 1,000 jobs** in the realm of environmental protection. It is using part of its anti-epidemic fund to generate green jobs, namely the promotion of electric vehicles by subsidising the installation of charging points in the car parks of private residential buildings (electric-vehicle popularisation), strengthening support for different community-based waste-reduction and recycling projects

(‘Use Less, Waste Less’), and promoting the environmental and ecological protection of country parks and the remote countryside, as well as shoreline cleansing (‘Leave No Trace at Mountain and Sea’). It has also launched the Distance Business (D-Biz) Programme to fund IT solutions for developing remote business, to allow enterprises to continue their business and services. As of the end of May 2020, **the D-Biz Programme had received more than 8,000 funding applications.**

Medellín, Colombia

In Medellín, Mayor Daniel Quintero will **create 20,000 jobs in industries associated with the digital revolution**, investing in its Software Valley centres (CEDEZOS) and the business-process outsourcing industry. The city is already using digital technology to support a safe reopening and has so far **reactivated**

980,000 jobs. Medellín is also investing in low-carbon infrastructure to generate employment, including a new metro line with the potential to generate 2,100 jobs during construction and around 900 permanent jobs after completion.

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb of Rotterdam is promoting investment in the energy transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy as a cornerstone of the city's environment policy, but also to create new job opportunities and stimulate the circular economy. The city supports and is already undertaking various sustainable projects and initiatives (such as retrofits, solar, wind power and green roofs) and, as part of a sustainable post-COVID recovery, will set up the **EUR 9.5 million Rotterdam Energy Transition Fund**. This revolving fund will accelerate projects by citizens and companies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Rotterdam and its Port also aim to become a hydrogen-economy hub and carbon neutral to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and create thousands of new green jobs. A three-step plan, which includes efficiency and infrastructure, a new energy system and a new raw-material and fuel system, will serve as a roadmap to achieving these ambitious goals. Lastly, Rotterdam is investing in the circular economy, aiming to halve its use of fossil raw materials by 2030 and to be completely circular by 2050, in the process **generating an estimated 3,500-7,000 jobs**.

Seoul, South Korea

Mayor Park Won-soon of Seoul had put in place plans to tackle building emissions that account for 68% of citywide greenhouse gas emissions, beginning with massive energy efficiency improvements to bring old, large municipal buildings to the efficiency of **zero-emission buildings**, while tightening mandatory zero-energy building standards on new buildings. For existing buildings, Seoul will introduce caps on greenhouse gas emissions for municipal buildings before expanding the rules to include private buildings. The policy measures are expected to **create around 20,000 green jobs by 2022**.



Action: Support and lift up essential workers

We are improving the resilience of our cities by ensuring a fair, safe and healthy environment for all of those whose work proved 'essential' during the COVID-19 emergency (in particular, workers who delivered health, food, waste and mobility services) and by working with national governments and businesses to regularise the status of essential workers without personal documentation.

Best practice examples

Cape Town, South Africa

Mayor Dan Plato of Cape Town has an informal trading policy and a **by-law that recognises the key role of informal trading** in poverty alleviation, income generation and entrepreneurial development, as well as its positive impact for historically marginalised communities. In response to COVID-19, the

city issued a series of trading permits and identified trading areas and times, along with safety guidelines developed together with representatives of informal groups. This has created the conditions for certain informal traders to continue working and to **provide key services safely**.

Johannesburg, South Africa

Mayor Geoff Makhubo of Johannesburg developed an informal trader policy through regional consultative workshops with leaders and trader associations. In response to the COVID-19 lockdown, the city recognised informal traders as providers of essential goods and service under the Disaster Management Act and distributed **more than 3,500 permits** (as of April 2020), requesting that informal traders abide by safety and protection regulations.



Seattle, United States of America

In Seattle, Mayor Jenny Durkan required platform companies, such as ride-sharing or food-delivery firms, to **provide gig workers with paid sick and safe time** (PSST) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gig workers can use the PSST to take care of their own health and safety needs or that of a family member whose place of care or school has closed. The law goes into effect in early July 2020 and covers transportation firms and food-delivery companies that arrange the delivery

of groceries or prepared food through an app or online platform. These policies are designed to **protect the health of all of Seattle's workers and ensure they have the protections they need to fully participate in its economic recovery.** The measure also paves the way for more permanent and stable protections for the city's workers.



Action: Train and upskill workers to enable a just transition to an inclusive economy

We will support and deliver training programmes to upskill and reskill the workforce and those currently unemployed, so that city residents can access jobs in the growing green economy. Economic policy needs to support transition, so that high-carbon industries can regenerate into cleaner production, and hard-hit sectors (such as tourism) can diversify and forge a more resilient economy. To ensure lessons learned during the immediate recovery are maintained, city governments will support employers in embedding upskilling and decent pay into practices, procurement and standards.

Best practice examples

Cape Town, South Africa

In **Cape Town**, the city has **increased workforce skills and supported the most vulnerable** by investing in retrofits for poor-quality housing in low-income neighbourhoods and supporting the training and employment of marginalised communities. The results were evident in

a pilot that provided training to a diverse workforce, including women and young people; **upgraded homes, improving the living conditions of more than 2,000 households; saved 7,400 tons of carbon emissions; and generated more than 2,300 jobs.**

Medellín, Colombia

Mayor Daniel Quintero is investing so that Medellín will **train 25,000 people in science, technology and innovation**, with an emphasis on women, youth and older people, to guarantee equity of access to the labour market. In partnership with a worldwide online

learning platform, Medellín is establishing an 'initiative for the recovery of the labour force for governments' that will improve the skills of the local workforce and **certify up to 50,000 people as part of the digital revolution** needed to create the city's Software Valley.

Los Angeles, United States of America

Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles has invested in a number of training programmes as part of the city's Green New Deal, aimed at bolstering the recovery from the COVID-19 recession, including: a workforce training programme for longshore workers and mechanics at the Port of Los Angeles; the Cleantech Incubator Fellowship Program, which provides candidates with technical training, interpersonal skills and industry-recognised certifications; the Green Janitors Education Program, providing certified, **vocational training for more than 1,400 janitors** in COVID prevention,

green cleaning practices, energy efficiency, recycling, waste management and water conservation, increasing efficiency in over 75% of buildings; and the GRID Alternatives Solar Powered Homes and Jobs Program, which has **installed solar panels at no cost on the homes of almost 2,000 low-income families and helped 200 individuals gain skills and employment after release from incarceration.**



Resilience and equity: Provide fundamental public services for all, underpinning a fair society and strong economy, resilient to future shocks



We will continue to take the lead in acting for resilience and equity, providing fundamental public services for all that underpin a fair society and strong economy and are resilient to future shocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a lack of planning and preparedness for extreme events, as well as the fragility and interconnectedness of our systems. Building resilience is critical to both climate and health, ensuring our cities' fundamental services and infrastructure can withstand the impacts of climate breakdown and future pandemics. Climate-related crises are only going to get worse and more frequent in the years ahead because of the emissions that are already in our atmosphere. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that measures to improve resilience need to be rapidly stepped up; even the most well-resourced cities can be shut down when crises hit.

Mass transit, a vital service at the heart of sustainable, connected cities, has been devastated by COVID-19. Even in cities in the Asia-Pacific region, where the spread of the virus has been drastically curtailed, ridership numbers are less than half of what they were and it remains a massive task to reassure commuters that public transport is safe. We are already seeing increases in car usage as some cities emerge from lockdown — a situation that is unsustainable, will increase pollution and exacerbate inequalities.

At the same time, in many areas of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a crisis within a crisis — a public health emergency that requires frequent handwashing in conditions where access to water is not universal. The provision of handwashing systems is a prerequisite to bringing about the behavioural change necessary to prevent the spread of the virus and future health emergencies.

The pandemic has brought into sharper relief the inequalities that exist in all of our cities. It has demonstrated that the poorest and most vulnerable are often exposed to greater risk and find it harder to access essential services. Food systems have collapsed, but mayors have stepped in. Almost every C40 city government has needed to provide emergency services, such as food aid, to significant portions of its residents during the pandemic. Some expect that up to half of their population will require city-sponsored food aid at some point this year. Building on the actions taken during the emergency, cities can transform their urban food networks and systems to make healthy and sustainable food the easier, cheaper and more available option for residents.

The crisis has also revealed the incredible capacity of cities and communities to adapt rapidly and effectively in response to shocks. Remarkable feats of resilience and resourcefulness are being witnessed every day across Global South and Global North cities, in both formal and informal sectors. The self-sufficiency, action and cooperation of local communities has proved crucial in adapting and building resilience to the pandemic and it is vital that we harness this creative energy as cities move towards recovery.

We are building the resilience and sustainability of our cities by investing in fundamental services, such as transport, water, waste, food and housing, and ensuring that they reach the most marginalised and vulnerable communities. Investing in our public services now will speed up recovery and increase our ability to deal with future shocks, and is essential to ensure both a fair and just society and a strong and thriving economy.

Action: Deliver a safe and resilient post-COVID mass transit system

We will continue to defend and invest in safe, affordable, high-quality transit to ensure the health, equity and economic success of our cities and to make transit better and more reliable, for example, by implementing priority lanes for buses to help increase capacity and access to work while reducing travel times and greenhouse gas emissions.

Best practice examples

Milan, Italy

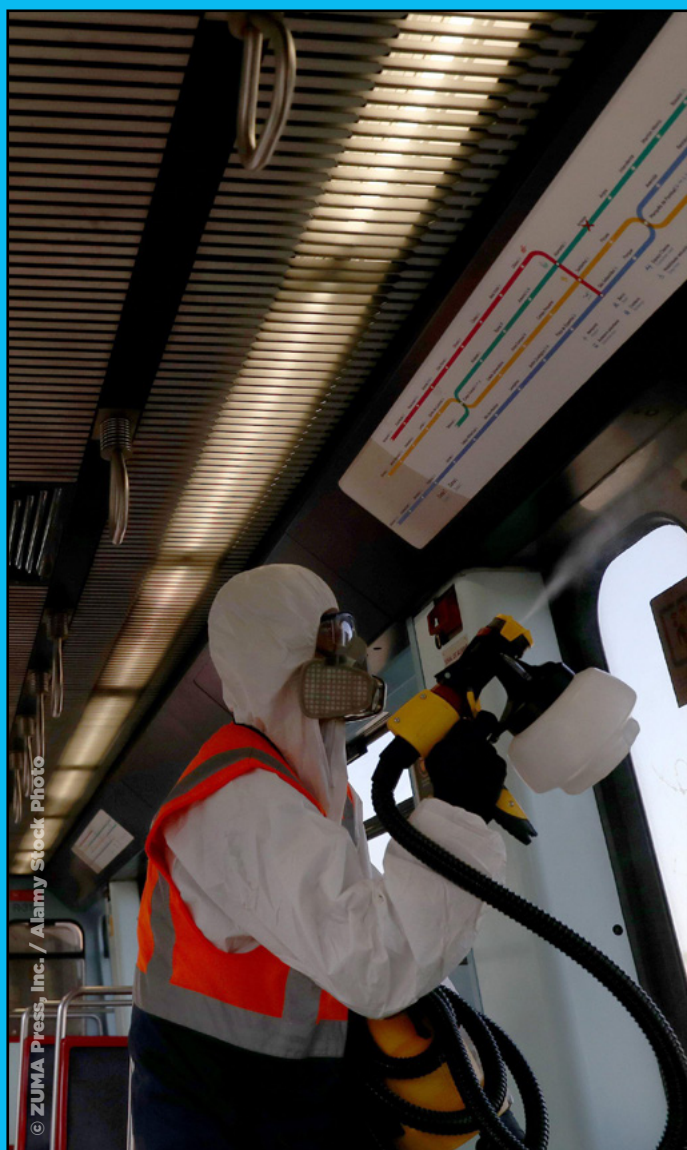
Because of the need for physical distancing and health protection, to best respond to citizens' needs, **Mayor Giuseppe Sala of Milan** has launched specific initiatives through the local transport mobility agency, ATM, to **manage passenger flow, by introducing new technologies and improving the efficiency of internal processes.** A dedicated Steering Committee has established an action plan based on key pillars including: sanitisation, flexible scheduling, crowding management, smart working, safety and security of employees and dedicated communication. The local transport agency and the city government are also liaising with stakeholders to urge them to make organisational changes to distribute the number of passengers during the day and reduce peaks.



Auckland, New Zealand

In Auckland, Mayor Phil Goff has put in place a range of measures to safely reopen public transport, as well as a plan for longer-term economic recovery. Auckland Transport has undertaken a major upgrade to its app, AT Mobile, to allow commuters to see how many people are on a bus at any given time. This allows people to see if the recommended two-metre physical distancing is possible before they board. Once a bus is at its safe-distancing capacity, the app will show that passengers are no longer being accepted, and the driver will only drop off passengers

until it is safe to accept more. In addition, Auckland Transport has announced that it will proceed with the delivery of the remaining stages of its NZD 1.4 billion AMETI Eastern Busway project, which will create a **dedicated, congestion-free busway between major town centres by 2025**. The plans will expand rapid public transit, cycling and walking, as well as ease pressure on traffic congestion in the area, boosting jobs and incomes to assist Auckland's economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.



Lisbon, Portugal

In Lisbon, Mayor Fernando Medina has implemented initiatives to **increase the safety of public transport through the daily deep cleaning and disinfection of buses and trams**, make adjustments to routes and frequency during rush hour and distribute masks at major terminals, in addition to reducing ridership to two-thirds of normal capacity. Lisbon is also creating **new, dedicated bus lanes to increase frequency and capacity**. The city is acquiring more trams and electric buses than previously planned. Alongside investment in mass transit, Lisbon has invested in active travel, low-emission zones and electric vehicles as part of a holistic approach. New cycle paths have been completed along major mobility routes during the lockdown period and others will be completed soon, increasing the overall length of the cycle network significantly.

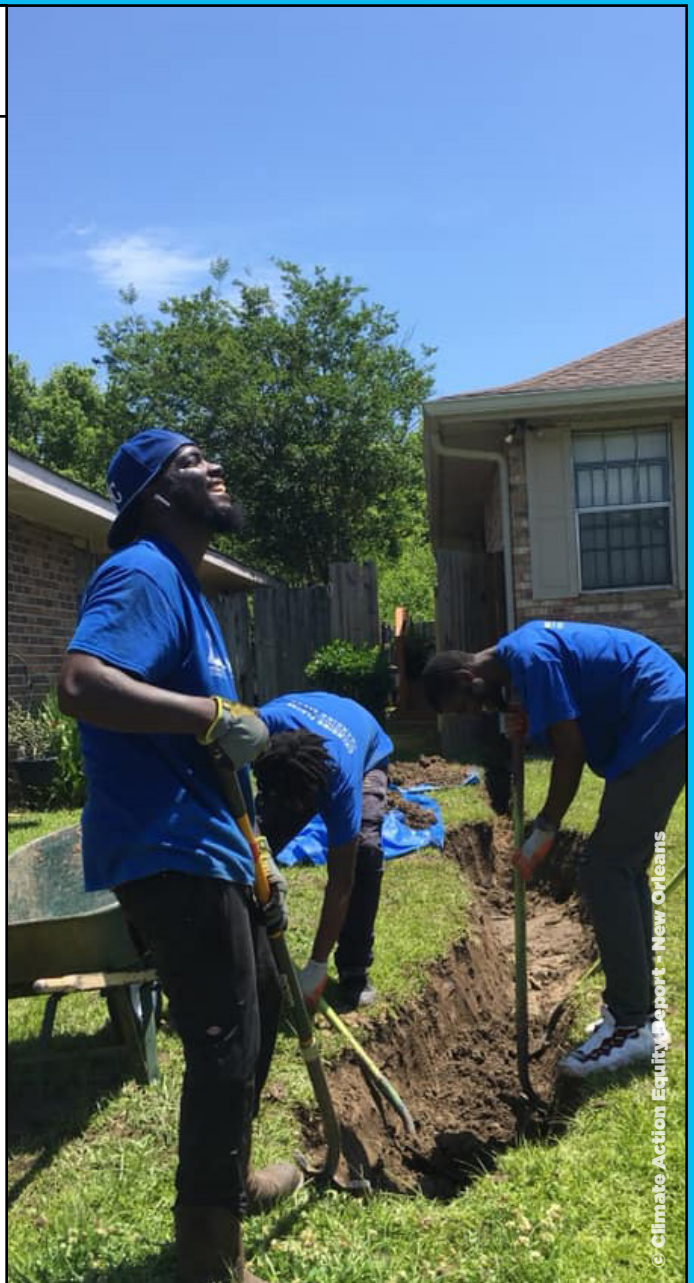
Action: Provide fundamental public services for all

We are investing in critical public services to ensure that everyone has equitable access to fundamental services, such as clean water, food, sanitation and affordable, healthy housing.

Best practice examples

New Orleans, United States of America

In **New Orleans, Mayor LaToya Cantrell** is overseeing the Climate Action Equity Project, after the city partnered with local foundations, community leaders and practitioners to **develop a strategy for the more equitable implementation of its Climate Action Strategy**. The Climate Action Equity Project was the result of a year-long community engagement process that invited residents to identify challenges and solutions at local level on topics such as energy, transportation, workforce and culture. The advisory committee presented its findings and policy recommendations to the City Council, with proposed action items to ensure continuing equity considerations in policymaking and programming.



Housing

Lisbon, Portugal

As part of the city's green post-COVID recovery, **Mayor Fernando Medina of Lisbon** is developing a bold strategy to place short-term rental properties, unoccupied due to the decline in tourism, back on the rental market at reasonable prices, **providing affordable housing and relaunching the city-centre economy and community.** Through this Safe Rent Housing Programme, the city is making a sizeable public investment to place an additional 1,000 affordable housing units on the rental market by the end of the year, primarily targeting support at young people and families. The city offers landlords long-term, stable incomes for turning short-term lets into 'safe rent' homes for key workers. In addition, Lisbon is also developing the Affordable Housing Programme, a broad initiative backed by considerable public

investment to **build and place 3,000 affordable housing units** on the rental market. This programme is based on a strong commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency, with requirements to achieve near zero-energy buildings that use solar power and maximise renewable energy and thermal efficiency. Neighbourhoods will be planned for collective use and proximity, with quality public spaces and green areas, well served by public transport, along with high-quality walking and cycling networks. In addition, as part of its COVID-19 social response, the city has provided more than 200 houses for homeless people, more than doubling the number previously available.

Los Angeles, United States of America

In **Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti** established a **USD 20 million budget reserve fund to set up emergency shelter beds** in 13 of the city's recreation centres to quickly provide shelter for the most vulnerable Angelenos — unsheltered individuals who are 65 or older and/or have chronic medical conditions. At the peak of the programme, **the city operated 24 congregate shelters** in recreation facilities across the city and it continues to operate eight sites with housing trailers for individual housing. In addition, the mayor issued a temporary moratorium on evictions of tenants who are unable to pay rent due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and halted rent increases on occupied rental units that are subject to

the city's Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Mayor Garcetti also announced that shutoffs of water and power by the city utility for non-payment would be prohibited indefinitely to protect residents. Together, these actions are designed to prevent unnecessary housing displacement and to prevent housed individuals from falling into homelessness in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Water

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown rapidly provided sustainable access to water to the most vulnerable and important public spaces in the city, to informal settlements, markets and peripheral health units, as a major component of the city's COVID-19 response plan. The city is currently **increasing water provision by 20% in informal**

settlements in a sustainable manner, by using a rainwater harvesting system to collect and store water. Freetown will maintain this provision as part of the city's longer-term recovery.



Milan, Italy

In **Milan**, the breakdown of the food-aid system due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to the establishment of a better-coordinated, more efficient city mechanism to respond to citizens' food needs. During the emergency, **Mayor Giuseppe Sala** established a permanent joint food-aid system between all of the public and private entities involved in distributing food aid, enabling consistent and comparable data on distributed food. A joint database of beneficiaries allows for better outreach to low-income and vulnerable groups by social workers. During lockdown, the **centralised food-aid system provided help to more than 20,000 citizens in need**. The initiative reoriented the activity of municipal staff,

volunteers and logistics workers to support the coordinated food distribution. The city is also supporting neighbourhood shops and open markets to guarantee the availability of fresh, good-quality food in all parts of the city. It is further improving the logistics of grocery and meal deliveries with a view to ensuring that riders only cover the last mile and then an electrical fleet delivers across the city, improving distribution and reducing food waste. The system was born out of the crisis, but has the potential to strengthen the overall food-system network of Milan by scaling up the dietary, sustainability, accessibility and no-waste criteria promoted by the municipal catering agency.



Quezon City, The Philippines

In an effort to address food security and strengthen urban resilience, **Mayor Josefina Belmonte of Quezon City** formed a food-security task force to launch and promote an urban agriculture programme and to craft legislative measures to encourage it. A city ordinance granting additional exceptions from idle land tax and establishing agricultural and food-processing zones is being crafted to ensure the city's food system becomes more self-reliant. These efforts have long-term implications for how cities will improve resilience to climate breakdown. The city has provided more than 4.1 million food-aid packages to vulnerable populations in just the first two months of its response to COVID-19. In addition, to support informal food-sector workers, the city has hired market vendors and jeepney drivers to deliver fresh produce from local farmers to vulnerable communities in a programme called Fresh Market on Wheels.

**Health and wellbeing:
Give space back to people
and nature, rethink and
reclaim our streets, clean
our air and create liveable,
local communities**



We are taking action to create healthier, more liveable communities by giving space back to people and nature, reclaiming our streets and cleaning the air we breathe. In many of our cities, during recent lockdowns, the air has become clean enough to meet World Health Organisation (WHO) 'safe' standards for the first time in living memory. Polluted air is a killer, not just slowly strangling people through respiratory and heart disease, but increasing their susceptibility to viruses such as COVID-19. We need to hold on to our clean air and blue skies while reopening our economies.

The lockdowns of the world's cities prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic have transformed our collective appreciation of the value of public space. It is a public good, necessary for all. Paradoxically, during lockdown, many city dwellers have experienced — for the first time in generations — clean air, blue skies and quiet streets. While we have lived these moments with great anxiety and sadness, this rediscovery and reconnection with our local environment, its streets and park spaces is something that our residents are demanding we preserve. Not only is clean air more pleasant, it is significantly healthier.

Lockdowns during the pandemic have forced city dwellers to reassess the amenities available to them, based on what they can access near their homes. Many employers, particularly in the service and retail sectors, are also reassessing the premises they need. The pandemic is likely to provoke significant medium-term changes in workplaces, involving a long-term shift to home-working or smaller, dispersed branch offices.

We will give public space back to residents and nature by reallocating space for walking, cycling and recreation and by restricting polluting vehicles to create healthy neighbourhoods. We will invest in green over grey by enhancing our urban nature to improve wellbeing. We will create local, liveable communities through well-designed cities, neighbourhoods and streets and by rethinking our work and life patterns. In short, we will reimagine, repurpose and reclaim our streets and reinvent our cities.



Action: Create '15-minute cities'

We are implementing urban-planning policies to promote the '15-minute city' (or 'complete neighbourhoods') as a framework for recovery, whereby all city residents are able to meet most of their needs within a short walk or bicycle ride from their homes. The presence of nearby amenities, such as healthcare, schools, parks, food outlets and restaurants, essential retail and offices, as well as the digitalisation of some services, will enable this transition. In order to achieve this in our cities, we must create a regulatory environment that encourages inclusive zoning, mixed-use development and flexible buildings and spaces.

Best practice examples

Milan, Italy

Mayor Giuseppe Sala of Milan, in response to COVID-19, has committed to the '15-minute city' as a framework for recovery. The city intends to guarantee essential services within walking distance for all residents, preventing a surge in car travel (and accompanying emissions and air pollution) after lockdown.

City and business leaders are in discussions to co-design ways to encourage teleworking. Milan has now **reopened all of its street markets**, as soon as safely possible, created **35 kilometres of new cycle lanes** as of the end of June, and will pedestrianise several school streets by September.

Paris, France

Mayor Anne Hidalgo of Paris has also adopted the idea of the '15-minute city'. The city plans to add offices and coworking hubs and is encouraging remote working, so that people can work safely closer to or at home. **Expanding the uses of existing amenities** is also key: using libraries and stadia outside standard hours, using nightclubs as gyms during the day or having schools act as parks and play spaces over the weekend. Greening

is part of the initiative: adding green space to existing public spaces, creating new parks and urban forests and establishing new gardens for urban agriculture. Restricting cars, for example, near schools when they are starting and finishing will **make it safer for people to walk and cycle**. The city will also encourage local business, spaces and places for sharing and trading to encourage the uptake of existing local enterprises.

Portland, United States of America

Mayor Ted Wheeler of Portland is committed to creating complete, connected and inclusive neighbourhoods as laid out in the 2012 Portland Plan. The city's 2015 climate action plan has a **2030 complete neighbourhoods goal, in which 90% of residents can access all their basic daily, non-work needs by foot or by bike.** Complete neighbourhoods include a range of housing options, grocery stores and other neighbourhood-serving commercial services, such as quality public

schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, and access to frequent, reliable transit. As part of this work, Portland has transformed more than 90 miles of busy roads into neighbourhood greenways — where street trees shade sidewalks and green swales provide sustainable drainage and traffic calming, and where there are new apartments and street-level businesses.



Action: Give streets back to people

As lockdowns have emptied city streets, we are transforming city spaces by permanently reallocating more road space to walking and cycling — mobility options that are affordable and accessible for the majority of people, as well as zero carbon. We are investing in citywide walking and cycling networks, as well as green infrastructure and quality public spaces, so that more people can access economic opportunities and achieve the WHO's recommendation for daily physical activity (2 x 10 minutes). Reducing citywide speed limits and rolling out car-free or car-light streets around schools, hospitals, education centres and cultural areas will help to reduce both emissions and deaths from road-traffic accidents.

Best practice examples

Bogotá, Colombia

In **Bogotá**, Mayor **Claudia López Hernández** has rolled out **35km of cycle lanes** using temporary materials in response to the emergency and will make these lanes permanent to avoid a modal shift to cars or motorbikes. These permanent measures will add to the city's extensive existing plans to expand cycle lanes, such as the Cicloruta Medio Milenio. Bogotá has also **extended its 22-mile Ciclovía network**, a system of streets normally closed to cars on Sundays, to other days of the week. In addition, the city and a private cycle-hire operator are lending e-bikes to healthcare workers.



London, United Kingdom

In **London**, Mayor Sadiq Khan's Low Emission Zone had already reduced NO₂ air pollution by 35%, but lockdown measures have cut that by a further 27%. Mayor Khan has been clear that London's recovery from the pandemic must include renewed efforts to address the climate emergency and continue on the path to making London a zero-carbon city. In May 2020, the city announced its new Streetspace Plan, so people can walk or cycle while social distancing and relieve pressure on public transport. The plan aims to construct a strategic cycling network with new routes to transform local town centres, to **enable safe**

walking and cycling journeys and facilitate a local economic recovery, and to reduce residential street traffic through London-wide low-traffic neighbourhoods. To reduce car dominance, the congestion charge, Ultra-Low Emission Zone and Low Emission Zone, suspended during the pandemic, have been reintroduced and increased. Lastly, to support medical workers, a reimbursement scheme for these charges is being extended and is now open to care-home employees. With this plan, London is rolling out **one of the biggest car-free initiatives of any city in the world**.



Montréal, Canada

Mayor Valérie Plante of Montréal has implemented an ambitious Safe Active Paths circuit to allow citizens to adopt active transportation in greater numbers. It has moved forward plans to build **327km of bike paths** in response to COVID-19. The routes will provide dedicated, safe facilities that will allow people to reach the city's major parks and a number of major commercial arteries, among other things, while respecting public health guidelines. The city is also investing in increasing bicycle and electric-vehicle delivery services.



Seattle, United States of America

In **Seattle, Mayor Jenny Durkan** is delivering a Stay Healthy Streets programme to support citizens when exercising and undertaking essential travel. **Twenty miles of Seattle's streets, over 2.5 million square feet of newly available space, will be permanently closed to vehicles** so residents can use them for biking, walking and other exercise. The programme started as a temporary measure, but because of its success (a 300% increase in biking and a 90% reduction in vehicle traffic, compared with 60% on other streets, during the COVID-19 crisis), the scheme is being made permanent as part of a plan to

reimagine city space. One street-selection criterion was that routes connect people to essential services. The city will also accelerate construction of bike infrastructure, supporting the overall aim of discouraging a return to high levels of traffic and associated pollution as the city moves into recovery.

Action: Build with nature

We will prioritise nature-based solutions (such as parks, green roofs, green walls, blue infrastructure and permeable pavements) to help reduce the risks of extreme heat, drought, flooding and vector- and water-borne disease while improving liveability and increasing physical and mental health.

Best practice examples

Freetown, Sierra Leone

In **Freetown, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr** is committing to growing and **planting 1 million trees** across the city over the next year, with 500,000 trees planted in 2020 and the rest in 2021. The Mayor and City Council's goal is to increase tree and vegetation cover by 50% from 2018 levels by 2022. Trees will also be planted on upper-catchment and high-slope areas of the city to address critical recurring hazards and potential disasters.

The project will create jobs in the green economy, supporting local urban-greening

businesses, such as nurseries, arborists and landscapers. The city will also consult and cooperate with private landholders, the business community and residents to embrace citywide, neighbourhood and household tree- and vegetation-cover goals and objectives. Through tree planting and mangrove woodland restoration, support for community-based forest management and the creation of green livelihood alternatives to charcoal, the project will **protect and enhance local biodiversity**.

Montréal, Canada

Mayor Valérie Plante of Montréal is investing in greening the city and aims to **increase the city's canopy to 25% (from 20%) by 2025** by accelerating tree planting in vulnerable zones, restoring degraded public banks in large parks and increasing urban agriculture for increased food autonomy and resilience. In addition, the City's Botanical Garden has increased its vegetable plant production area

to more than double the amount it usually donates to community organisations. The City will also offer resources to citizens, especially to young people, who wish to cultivate gardens. These measures aim to **encourage local horticultural businesses and provide urban cooling to mitigate against extreme heat**.

Melbourne, Australia

At the direction of **Lord Mayor Sally Capp**, the City of **Melbourne** and the State Government of Victoria will **plant 150,000 trees, shrubs and grasses** (an increase from the 3,000 planned) in an ambitious project to green the city and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The **AUD 2.8 million revegetation project** will create habitat, support biodiversity and create **64 jobs for people** who would otherwise be unemployed as a result of the current crisis. The value of Melbourne's parks and gardens

has been evident during the pandemic, providing space for people to safely exercise and enjoy some fresh air during lockdown. This project will create 24,000m² of understorey habitat, increasing essential vegetation by 6% in a significant step towards the city's goal of increasing understorey cover by 20% by 2027.



4. Actions needed from national governments & international institutions

As mayors, together with our staff and residents, we are already building a green and just recovery. We call on national and regional governments, central banks and international financial institutions to join us. Like us, they must commit to ensuring that all economic recovery funds and stimulus packages support a fair and sustainable transition. By investing in the future, not the past, we will contribute to more equitable, thriving and sustainable societies. We commit to collaborating with others to design and deliver a green and just urban recovery that can power national and global efforts, and urge that the central role of cities be recognised.

Our call to action is:

1 The only stimulus should be green stimulus

National governments and international institutions should invest in a green and just recovery by stipulating that all stimulus packages, corporate aid and recovery funds support the low carbon transition we need and to prioritise investment in sustainable, climate-resilient industries and infrastructure. The priority for the recovery in every region is to help people work, while protecting the health of our residents and providing opportunity to the most vulnerable and marginalised communities.

However, unless this recovery stimulates a rapid and irreversible shift to a zero-carbon economy, we will simply be creating a more devastating crisis in the form of climate breakdown. Every dollar, yuan, yen, euro, pound and peso of stimulus, corporate support and other recovery funding must, therefore, be designed to support the development of zero-carbon and climate-resilient societies. Specifically, financial support should be conditional on compliance with science-based targets for emission reductions and transition plans aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

2 Commit to an equitable and inclusive recovery

Ensure stimulus investment and recovery funds create more just and inclusive societies and communities and directly address long-standing inequalities and ongoing discrimination based on race. Frontline communities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including essential workers in both the formal and informal economies (the latter accounting for 90%, 67% and 18% of low-, middle- and high-income countries, respectively),²² who are providing fundamental services in the health, transport, waste and food sectors; people of colour; marginalised and discriminated ethnic and gender groups (women, whose income is likely to recover more slowly from the pandemic); and people living in informal settlements.

Plans and investments for the recovery need to address the root causes of economic inequality by providing direct and equitable access to green jobs and equal employment opportunities in the low carbon transition; increasing equitable participation in the labour force through training and upskilling, especially for currently marginalised groups; and developing and applying appropriate regularisation mechanisms (such as formal recognition and documentation) to provide better employment conditions and social protections for essential informal workers. Recovery investments should also be directed towards supporting cities to increase equitable access to fundamental services and sustainable and inclusive upgrades of informal settlements.

3 Protect and champion mass transit

Invest in, subsidise and support affordable, zero-emission mass transit. As the engine of sustainable mobility, public transit worldwide is coming under significant strain due to lower ridership and revenues. To keep our air clean and prioritise the health of our residents, governments must use stimulus funds to make public transportation more accessible, reliable, frequent, affordable, well integrated, safe and resilient to future crises. Governments, working with the private sector, must also make it easier for cities to procure electric buses while reallocating road space to public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and help cities maintain and enhance some of the successful air-quality, climate and road-safety improvements introduced during lockdown. Investments should also target pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, as well as electric-vehicle charging infrastructure, to support the transition of all remaining road vehicles to zero emissions.

4 Prioritise and invest in clean energy

Invest in renewable energy and building retrofit programmes to create thousands of jobs, help city residents save on energy bills and protect people's wellbeing and safety with better, more energy-efficient and healthier homes and offices. Globally, renewable energy and building retrofits can act as catalysts for a green and fair economic recovery. With the right financial support, research and development, along with regulatory and policy reforms to empower cities, the deployment of these readily available renewable and retrofit technologies can progress 'shovel-ready', low carbon infrastructure projects to rapidly generate employment and support healthier, low carbon cities.

5 Invest in resilient cities as the engines of the recovery

Cities have been on the frontline of the pandemic, and national governments, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and other relevant financial entities must channel financial support directly to them and ensure they can easily access this finance, recognising the need to tackle the existing barriers they encounter. This will fund low carbon, climate-resilient urban infrastructure (such as building retrofits, renewable energy and sustainable transport), fundamental public services (such as mass transit, water and food), as well as people-centred urban planning and nature-based solutions. Investing in cities also maintains and creates green and decent jobs, including training and upskilling opportunities, to support a thriving urban, national and global economy.

6 End all public investments in fossil fuels

Accelerate the global and urban energy transition as a cornerstone of the COVID-19 green and just recovery by ending all public fossil-fuel investments and subsidies. Those major cities that can are already moving their investments from fossil fuels to clean infrastructure by starting the process to divest their pensions of fossil fuels. National governments long ago pledged to end fossil-fuel subsidies: for G20 governments, it has been 11 years since they agreed in Pittsburgh to 'rationalize and phase out over the medium term inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption' — yet no action has been taken.²³ In 2018, USD 478 billion was invested in subsidies to the fossil-fuel industry²⁴ — roughly equivalent to the GDP of Austria — compared with USD 250 billion in public climate finance.²⁵ With a clear need to invest in clean power, public transport and cities, and with fossil-fuel prices at historic lows, nations must seize this moment to move decisively away from subsidising high-carbon and fossil fuel-intensive industries and increase investments in a low carbon future.

5. Concluding reflections

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our society, economy and environment. We have experienced first-hand the fragility of our systems and the extreme impact of a global shock – most painfully through the tragic loss of lives and livelihoods. The pandemic has turned the spotlight on the glaring inequality in our cities, countries and world at large. The most marginalised have been hit hardest and we have been reminded that for any of us to be safe, all of us have to be safe.

The crisis has demonstrated what happens when the risks we know about become reality. It has laid bare how precarious our lives really are, compounding the evidence of the financial meltdown in 2008/2009 and the ongoing climate breakdown, which had already showed our systems to be unsustainable. It has unequivocally demonstrated the interconnected nature of the challenges we face and the inextricable link between our health and the health of the planet. Harm to discriminated communities and the earth is interconnected. We need both social and environmental justice; one is not possible without the other.

It is clear that we need transformational change to address the underlying causes of these crises. We know we must invest in a sustainable, resilient, equitable recovery, not only to address the immediate COVID-19 pandemic, but to ensure we are prepared for future shocks. We are at a pivotal point in our history: we have both everything to lose and everything to gain. We must seize this moment, remembering that the risk of inaction far outweighs the risk of action.

As mayors, we are committed to taking bold, quick and creative action to lead the way and set a sustainable direction for the recovery. C40 cities are already leading on climate action and now, too, in acting for a green and just post-COVID-19 recovery. But we know that we need to

do more — we are at the start of a journey, not the end. We also recognise that different cities have different resources and capacity to respond and recover. As C40 mayors, we will collaborate, supporting each other in taking collective action. We know that we are stronger together. We commit ourselves to this challenge and reach out to other cities, our youth, unions, businesses and civil society to join in our efforts.

We recognise the critical role of cities in this global effort and the role that urban climate action can play in driving economic, social and environmental recovery. We will use our collective mayoral voice and leadership to help shape the global response. We are committed to working with — and to confronting where necessary — national governments and others to fully realise the potential of cities as a crucial delivery mechanism, not just for the urban recovery, but for national and global recovery efforts.

Cities are where the future happens first. As mayors, we know we need to be both visionary and practical. We have the chance, and the responsibility, to collectively create a new vision of a better future. We have the imperative to act, to provide on-the-ground solutions now. We stand together, firm in our commitment to fight for a green and just recovery and a better future for all.

We have the chance, and the responsibility, to collectively create a new vision of a better future.

Key takeaways

City leadership and action for a green and just recovery

As Mayors, we commit to taking bold, decisive action for a green and just recovery:

Jobs and an inclusive economy

- Support essential workers
- Ensure all new jobs are green jobs
- Train and upskill to enable a just transition

Resilience and equity

- Deliver a safe and resilient post-COVID-19 mass transit system
- Provide fundamental public services for all

Health and wellbeing

- Create '15-minute cities'
- Give streets back to people
- Build with nature

Key takeaways

Actions needed from national governments and international institutions

We call on national and regional governments and financial institutions to join us and:

1. Ensure the only stimulus is green stimulus.

2. Commit to an equitable and inclusive recovery.

3. Protect and champion mass transit.

4. Prioritise and invest in clean energy.

5. Invest in resilient cities as the engines of the recovery.

6. End all public investments in fossil fuels.



Endnotes

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The agenda for a green and just recovery was informed by a range of papers. To see all supporting documents, **please visit the green and just recovery page on the C40 Knowledge Hub.**

