

Principles to Guide COVID-19 Response & Recovery

Given the serious and acute impacts of COVID-19, cities should establish principles to guide investments and decision making. Each city's principles should be grounded in local context, history, and need, and should be shared publicly, as well as across departments and partner organizations. Below is a **sample approach** that includes six principles that could be used to inform ongoing response and recovery phases.

1 Support the most vulnerable people first.

COVID-19 is amplifying existing racial and socioeconomic inequities, and is disproportionately impacting society's most vulnerable. Planners and decision makers should consider systemic inequities, unequal levels of risk and exposure, and disparate financial and social resources available to their residents, and work to ensure that support is provided first to the people who need it most.

2 Amplify & support public health guidance.

Physical distancing is a core public health strategy to reduce the transmission and potential resurgence of COVID-19 outbreaks. In particular, increasing the amount of outdoor space available to people can make it easier for them to comply with public health guidance for longer periods of time, aiding in efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. As cities move into long-term recovery phases, streets offer unique opportunities to foster public health and improve health outcomes for everyone.

3 Safer streets for today and tomorrow

Especially during periods of COVID-19 outbreak, essential workers need to travel and must be able to do so safely. Emergency street changes must ensure that vehicles travel at safe speeds, even with fewer vehicles on the road. As stay at home restrictions ease, trips will increase. To ensure that recovery does not come with economy-choking gridlock and increased traffic fatalities and carbon emissions, cities must prioritize streets for public transportation, cycling, and walking today.

4 Support local economies.

Stores, restaurants, markets, and schools and daycares are essential to our economic health. Unemployment rates have increased dramatically and local businesses have weathered devastating impacts. Ensuring that businesses can re-open safely and that people have job opportunities is key to our overall recovery. As public health restrictions ease, cities must ensure that street design supports economic policy goals by providing space for businesses, schools, and institutions to safely re-open. Without this, broad economic recovery may not be achieved.

5 Bring communities into the process.

The rapid project implementation that is necessary during emergency, stabilization, and recovery requires open and frequent communication, transparent decision making with clear metrics and timelines, established channels for feedback, and regular coordination with communities and community groups. Ensuring the voices of a wide variety of local stakeholders is essential to project development and implementation. Local groups can provide key information to make projects better and help disseminate information wider and deeper than government channels typically can.

6 Act now and adapt over time.

Action is needed now. Adopting an open and iterative approach to transportation planning will allow for rapid implementation, continuous feedback, and course correction that will enable cities to respond better and faster to future COVID-19 outbreaks. Quick-build strategies today can inform lasting improvements over the course of recovery and beyond. Regular dialogue with local groups can provide essential on-the-ground information about how efforts are working and what should be modified over time.