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Strategizing COVID-19 recovery

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL

Photo: Pedestrian Plaza, Chennai
Source : ITDP India Programme

What will happen if we start using streets like we did before?

Photo: Congestion in Chennai
Source : Getty Images

Impacts

Physical distancing will be a challenge while moving around the city.

Our streets may become a hotspot for transmission, threatening a second wave of COVID-19.

The possibility of increased congestion and poor air quality will also increase the risk towards future pandemics.

Issues and Interventions

Approach:
Expansion of footpaths

Why?

To ensure physical distancing while walking and waiting on sidewalks

Photo: People queuing on footpath space in Bhopal to maintain physical distancing - April, 2020
Source: patrika.com

Intervention: Increasing walking and waiting space around transit nodes

Where?
- Bus stops
- Bus terminals and depots
- Access streets to rail and metro stations

How?
Sidewalks should be extended around the mobility node to allow for safe queueing and waiting.

Access streets shall be pedestrianised or delineated as 'slow zones' to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists.

Bicycle parking should be provided.

Photo: London has expanded its sidewalks around bus stops temporarily - May, 2020
Source: Viesturs Krūmiņliepa

Intervention: Expansion to allow queueing

Photo: Residents in Barnes, US cone off a lane of the street to ensure physical distancing - April, 2020
Source: Walk ride GM

Where?
- Streets with no or narrow footpaths
- High footfall zones such as predominantly commercial and market streets

How?
On-street parking space or carriageway lanes can be repurposed to provide more walking and waiting space.

Intervention: Expansion for safe walking

Where?

- Streets with high pedestrian footfall
- Streets with no or narrow footpaths
- Access streets to high density neighbourhoods, schools, job centers, and other institutions

How?

On-street parking space or carriageway lanes can be repurposed to provide more walking and waiting space.

Photo: Sidewalk width expanded in Washington, US to ensure physical distancing - April, 2020
Source: Walk ride GM

Approach:
Cycling as an alternate mode

Why?

- Public transport is running at a reduced capacity

- Vulnerable users (low-income households, children, and women) are unable to commute

- Cycling can support short and long distance trips

Photo: Special buses for frontline workers, Chennai - March, 2020
Source: The Hindu

Where?
- Arterial, sub-arterial, and collector streets
- Along existing public transportation networks - bus, rail or metro routes

How?
On-street parking space or even carriageway lanes can be repurposed and demarcated through paint and barricades.

Photo: Bogota, Colombia added 76km of additional cycle lanes in response to COVID - March, 2020
Source: Gabriel Leonardo Guerrero Bermudez/iStock

Intervention: Operation of bicycle—rental & sharing systems

Where?
- Transit nodes
- Healthcare facilities
- Government Offices
- Educational institutions
- Job centers

How?
Operationalise the existing system with standardized sanitization strategies.

Provide incentives for shorter trips to attract new users.

Expand the network in alignment with pop up cycle lanes.

Photo: New York expanded its bike-sharing system to meet the surge in cycling - March, 2020
Source: Reuters

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Photo: Students in Punjab receive cycles as part of a public bicycle distribution scheme
Source: The Tribune

How?

Free or subsidized bicycles can be given to students, women, frontline workers and people from lower-income backgrounds. Existing schemes can be expanded to ensure everyone has access to cycles.

Private businesses can provide incentives to its employees for use cycles.

How?

Announce cycle showrooms, local repair shops and lending services as essentials.

Initiate mobile repair vans, with services incentivized through CSR and public budget allocations.

Photo: Mobile vans in UK move around neighbourhoods to service bicycles
Source: Cycle Tech UK

Where?

- Streets without footpaths and without segregated cycle tracks

- Areas frequented by children and elders such as hospitals, open spaces, and schools

How?

If carriageway is shared by cyclists and motorized transport, speed limit should be 30kmph.

If pedestrians and motorized transport share space, speed limit should be 15kmph.

Implement road closures through barricades and timed management of traffic flow.

Photo: Slow Streets initiative in Oakland encourages physical activity - April, 2020
Source: Houston Chronicle

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Approach:
Crowd management

Why?

To provide safe access to opportunities and essential services, ensuring mandatory physical distancing

Photo: A crowded Chennai market with no space for physical distancing - April, 2020
Source: IANS

Photo: *Traditional market with physical distancing in Salatiga, Indonesia - March, 2020*
Source: The Star

Where?
- City-level markets
- Local markets within dense neighbourhoods

How?
The markets should be decentralised by repurposing street space.

Identify adjoining streets into which the market can spill over.

These streets can be pedestrianised temporarily or permanently based on demand and activities. Access to the streets should also be controlled.

Approach:
Repurposing streets as social spaces

Why?

- Restriction of social life and physical activity in the longer run will increase stress

- Overcrowding of public spaces and parks post-lockdown could be unsafe

Mental illness in India up by 20% during lockdown
Source - Indian Psychiatric Society

Photo: Family members play indoors during lockdown, Patna - April 2020
Source: The Quint

Where?
- Streets in dense neighbourhood areas, informal settlements without open public space for recreation

- Streets adjoining parks, beaches, and other public spaces

- Unused parking spaces

How?
Road closures through barricades and timed management of traffic flow.

Convert parking bays into mini public spaces/parklets.

Photo: People walk, play, and cycle on the Outer Ring Road Highway in Bangalore - April, 2020
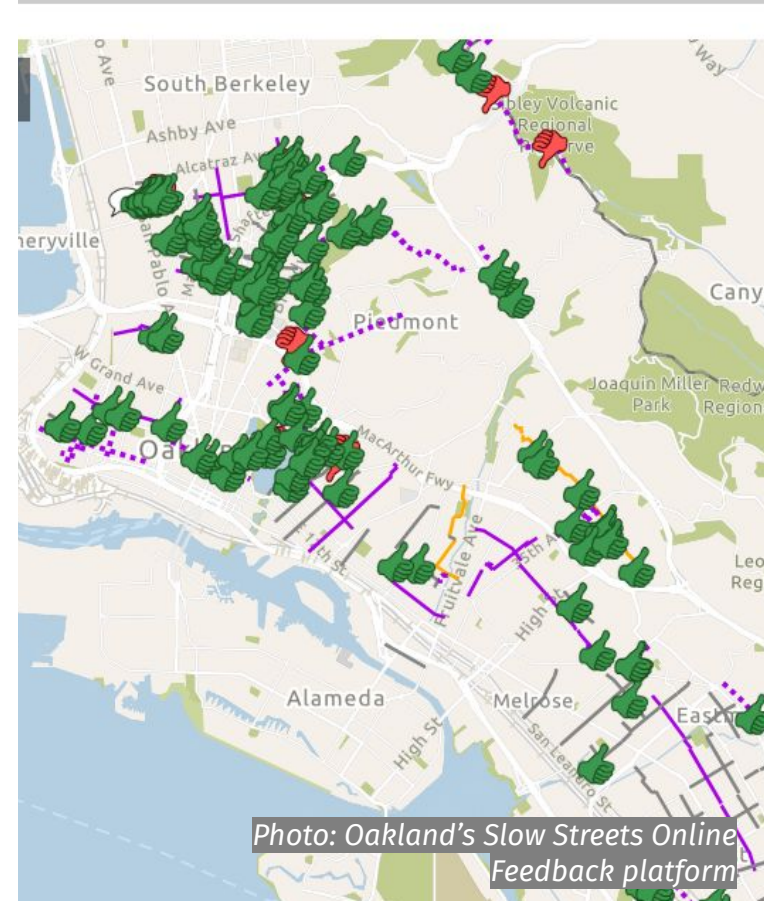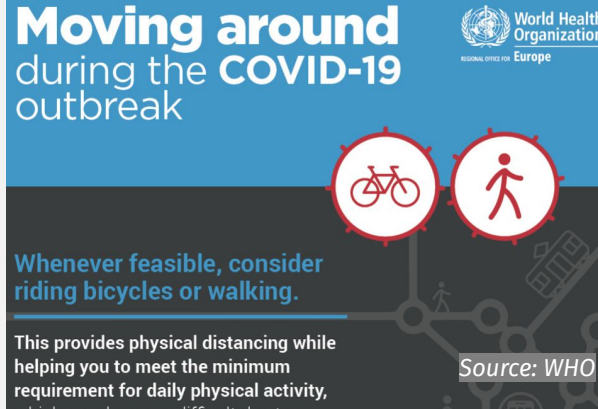*Source: Bangalore Mirror*

Regular communication is the key in regulating behaviour of people.

To be communicated
- Daily/weekly timings of intervention
- Rules of the road
- Modes of transport allowed
- Social distancing norms
- Map of similar interventions around the city

How?
On-site signages, posters, social media, surveys, interactive maps

Moving around during the **COVID-19** outbreak

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

Whenever feasible, consider riding bicycles or walking.

This provides physical distancing while helping you to meet the minimum requirement for daily physical activity,

Source: WHO

Road narrowed to aid social distancing on footway

Source: BBC

Photo: Oakland's Slow Streets Online Feedback platform

These interventions will ensure -

Safe and healthy commute for all road users

Alternate and affordable modes for public transport users

Safe access to essentials, especially in crowded areas

Sound health & active social life

by equitable distribution of street space

by promoting cycling

by providing more walking and waiting space

by transforming streets into social spaces

Methods of Implementation - Tactical Urbanism

Tactical urbanism (TU) is an approach to neighborhood building that uses **short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions** to catalyze long term change.

It is an effective approach during these uncertain times as it is

- Efficient
- Low-cost
- Tangible
- Low-risk
- Quick - can be done overnight
- Showcases long-term change

Photo: The junction around CSTM, Mumbai was repurposed to provide extra walking space - Nov, 2019
Source: Parin Visariya

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Tactical Urbanism interventions can be carried out using various simple tools and measures. Repurpose the following -

- Paint
- Traffic Cones
- Barricades
- Pots
- Plants
- Makeshift street furniture
- Tape

Photo: Traffic cones, bright paint and plants can liven up and change the usage of a space
Source: Tactical Urbanists Guide

The steps to implementing a successful intervention -

1. **Select a site** based on the issues and interventions presented above

2. **Study the context** by mapping land use, vehicular and pedestrian movement, and street elements.

3. **Design the intervention**, with considerations from other stakeholders

4. **Implement** at an appropriate time and **monitor** through local citizen groups

Photo: City contractors and local volunteers redesign the street to make it safer for people
Source: NACTO

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Cultural change to make healthy streets

A once-in-a-lifetime chance to take a fresh look at our streets and make it possible for everyone to get around safely.

Cities should use this change to build resilience through sustainable mobility.

Photo: Congested roads of Delhi
Source: Blogspot

Photo: Cycling movement at Amsterdam in 1982
Source: Wikipedia