



GLOBAL
RESILIENT
CITIES
NETWORK

CITIES FOR A RESILIENT RECOVERY: EMERGING DATA

Part 2 of 3:

Resilience Challenges and City Priorities for Recovery

London | Mexico City | New York | Singapore
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CITIES FOR A RESILIENT RECOVERY: EMERGING DATA

PART 2 OF 3: RESILIENCE CHALLENGES AND CITY PRIORITIES FOR RECOVERY

Why Cities for a Resilient Recovery?

The Global Resilient Cities Network (GRCN) carries on the foundational work of 100 Resilient Cities, transitioning the network to a city-led impact focused organisation. GRCN supports cities around the world to better understand shocks and stresses, and incorporate resilience into city planning and operations. The Covid-19 pandemic has stretched cities to their capacity in providing immediate response and relief services, with many simultaneously aiming to focus on longer-term recovery efforts.

GRCN is identifying ways to support cities as they begin to plan for long-term recovery. This 3-part document outlines the emerging data collected over the past months and informs the support GRCN should offer to cities to respond directly city demand.

Part 1:

How chief resilience officers are embedding resilience in recovery

- The role of chief resilience officers in response and recovery efforts
- How cities and cros are embedding resilience in recovery planning

Part 2 – **This document:**

Resilience challenges and city priorities for recovery

- Shocks and stresses
- City priorities for recovery

Part 3:

Gaps and city demand

- Gaps cities face in building out recovery plans and strategies
- City demand for support

Executive summary

- Chief Resilience Officers are taking an active role in their cities' efforts to fight Covid-19 and are particularly involved in the [recovery efforts](#).
- Cities are fighting the pandemic against the backdrop of [existing shocks and stresses](#), which influences the impacts of the virus, and can also exacerbate current risks and hazards – compounding risks and causing a crisis upon crisis.
- Existing vulnerabilities of communities and households are intensifying the impact of the health and economic crisis, with [new vulnerabilities](#) – including access to food, livelihoods, mobility – being brought into sharp focus.
- Cities are striving for a [holistic urban resilience](#) approach to address [equity, economy, and climate risks](#) in an integrated manner, delivered with a broad range of partners.
- Cities are increasingly focused on planning for recovery and want to use [place-based and people-centered](#) resilience tools to [prioritize actions and investment](#).
- While there is global agreement on the lack of data, funding, and municipal capacity to respond and recover, there are [regional variations](#) and nuances of what cities prioritize to build back better, and what their specific needs are.
- To address emerging gaps, cities across the network have articulated demand for a [platform for sharing ideas](#), support with [diagnostic tools and methods](#), and access to international [partners](#) to provide technical support in implementing solutions.

Resilience Challenges: Shocks and Stresses

Which underlying risks and hazards are cities building resilience to?

Explainer: Shocks and Stresses – Holistic Urban Resilience

Building urban resilience requires looking at a city holistically: understanding the systems that make up the city and the interdependencies and risks they may face. By strengthening the underlying fabric of a city and better understanding the potential shocks and stresses it may face, a city can improve its development trajectory and the well-being of its citizens.

Shocks - Acute shocks are sudden, sharp events that threaten a city, including earthquakes, floods, terrorist attacks, and disease outbreaks.

Stresses - On the other hand, stresses are slow moving disasters that weaken the fabric of a city, including high unemployment, chronic food and water shortages, and climate change.

The main shocks that concern Chief Resilience Officers most over the coming six months are Financial/economic shocks (51%), Floods (21%), and Disease outbreak (11%). The top 3 secondary shocks include Major infrastructure failure (11%), Heatwave (13%), and Riot and civil unrest (11%).

The prominence of recurring natural hazards in the minds of Chief Resilience Officers highlights two things:

- That the recurrent natural hazard-related shocks that cities face remain present in planning for recovery
- That the effects of Covid-19 can further exacerbate the consequences of a flood or heatwave (if disaster response and evacuation measures are curtailed, and/or households have lower capacity to cope due to enhance stresses such as reduce income, mobility, social support).

“We are thinking about cascading impacts such as heat, as we are trying to keep people safe while we are not operating our cooling centres. This is challenging because it is not quite clear what the new normal is, so we are imagining multiple scenarios.”

Chief Resilience Officer, North America, April 2020

Whereas heat is not a new issue, the pandemic has decreased the adaptive capacity of individuals and households as they are unable to seek out cooling centres under lockdown, increasing their vulnerability to heat. Other cities raised similar concerns around the approaching start of hurricane season. As many are staying in their homes they are arguably safer from high winds, but it is necessary to start planning for what potential evacuation strategies would look like in case of flooding, and how support could be delivered for those who do not have a safe home.

Equally, there are concerns about the continued operation and maintenance of major infrastructure, and the expectation of civil unrest.

The top 3 stresses concerning Chief Resilience Officers are Economic inequality (23%), Unemployment (19%) and Climate change (15%). Secondary concerns are Poverty (15%), an Undiversified economy (13%), and Economic inequality (11%).

Other than climate change, all the top primary and secondary stresses reflect the economic reality facing cities around the world. Yet despite the health and economic crisis, the threat of climate change still ranks 3rd in the top stresses challenging cities.

“The key factor to recovery is the financial sustainability of the metropolitan government. When critical service delivery fails, that will lead to failure of the city’s ability to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.”

Chief Resilience Officer, Africa, April 2020

“With the climate crisis in mind, there is a balance that we are going to need to strike between what is clearly going to be a high speed dash to rebuild the economy and finding a way to influence that for positive change.”

GRCN - WB Speaker Series, Europe, April 2020

“What will be the skills impact? This ranges from issues of young people not in education, training or employment as a result of Covid-19 through to different skills needs for a changed economic future. There will be an increased demand for digital/tech skills for a more ‘online’ economy.”

Chief Resilience Officer, Europe, April 2020

There is a clear need to work on recovery in a holistic way, addressing both acute shocks and long-term stresses, and recognising how different risks interrelate and could compound crisis upon crisis.

City Profile: The Hague

Cities are considering how the pandemic is exacerbating acute shocks and chronic stresses, and vice versa – potentially creating crisis upon crisis. One such example can be found in The Hague, which is exploring the interrelation between heat, vulnerable communities, and the pandemic.

The Hague's resilience team is part of the Global Heat Health Information Network, partnering with agencies (like the Red Cross Climate centre) to compile evidence-based information to help public health practitioners and the public prepare for the upcoming heat season while simultaneously managing Covid-19 recovery efforts. Key questions that have emerged through the working group include:

- What alternative cooling strategies can be used to support vulnerable residents (e.g. in apartment towers) who are self-isolating at home without air conditioning? (should A/C's be provided) Are there different recommendations based on the group (e.g. people with A/C vs. those without, elderly, young)?
- How can outdoor cooling/relief be provided as an alternative/addition to at-home strategies? (Considerations around public spaces including drinking fountains, seating in parks, disinfection?)
- How can you do outreach during the pandemic on heatwaves? How to reach people who have difficulty using technology?) How to do a home safety check during COVID-19? (ensure there are plans in place to do this in a safe way)
- Are there any unique considerations for heat health in areas of high urban density in the context of COVID-19 (e.g. given inaccessibility to some cooling strategies, such as cooling centres or rooms and reduced access to parks and green space)?
- What considerations should be made for the management of "cooling centers" while COVID-19 transmission precautions? Should cooling centres be operated during the pandemic? If so, how/under what considerations? (e.g. most vulnerable people prioritised, screening, social distancing, timing, best practices)
- What social services need to be updated/trained for dealing with combined exposure of heat and Covid-19? (consider volunteer structures too)

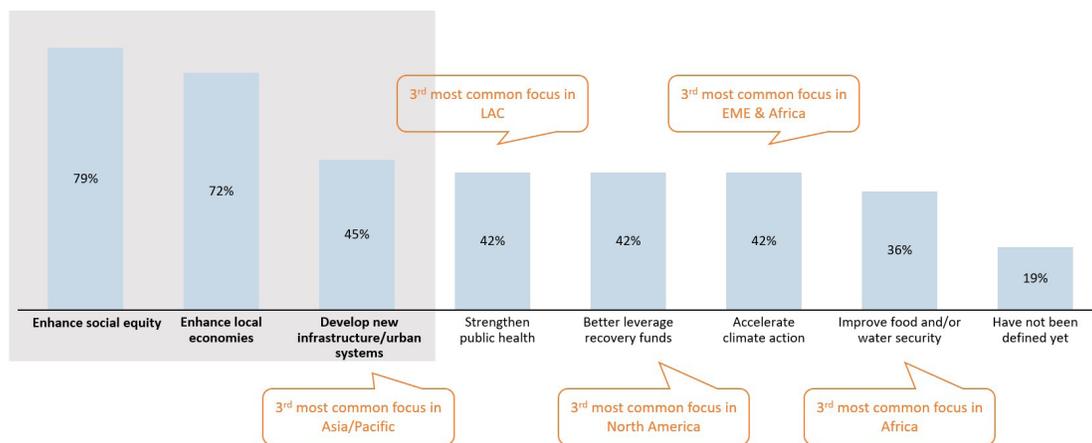
Within GRCN, The Hague has initiated a separate working group with cities from Chennai to Melbourne to exchange knowledge and strategies on this subject.

City Priorities in Recovery Planning

Building on the shocks and stresses, which priorities are city leadership targeting in the recovery from Covid-19?

In planning for recovery from Covid-19, cities across the network are consistent in prioritising efforts to enhance social equity and local economies.

What are some of the opportunities that your city leadership is targeting in recovering from this crisis?



“There are real tensions here between social, community based recovery which has health and wellbeing outcomes at its core, and how we get our economy going really quickly.”

Chief Resilience Officer, Europe, April 2020

“The emphasis here has been on the economic crisis, and I am worried that we are missing out on opportunities to work on social and environmental crises.”

Chief Resilience Officer, North America, April 2020

Different regions have different secondary priorities – from accelerating climate action, to improve food and water security, developing new infrastructure and strengthening public health.

African cities are also focussed on accelerating climate action and improving food and water security.

“We need to significantly scale up water and sanitation services. you cannot have a strategy that is centred on washing hands if you don’t have water.”

GRCN - WB Speaker Series, Africa, April 2020

Asian cities are focussed on strengthening public health, and, cities in Oceania are also focussed on developing new infrastructure.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that we need humility, respect for communities, and more humanity to prevent blind spots when it comes to reacting to crises in the future.”

GRCN - WB Speaker Series, Europe, April 2020

European cities are focussed on accelerating climate action, and developing new infrastructure, such as new bike lanes and pedestrianised streets.

“The climate crisis could become not a crisis, but the opportunity to shift the economy to a more sustainable economy.”

GRCN - WB Speaker Series, Europe, April 2020

In Latin America and the Caribbean, cities are focussed on levelling out public health inequities and accelerate climate action.

“The gender-based mobility norm has positive and negative consequences. But more importantly, it reveals the historical debts and inequalities in our societies.”

Deputy Chief Resilience Officer, Caribbean, April 2020

In the US and Canada, cities are focussed on better leveraging recovery funds and accelerating climate action.

“I have not seen any projections of sea level rise slowing down as a result of the Covid crisis,” said Brian Strong, chief resilience officer for San Francisco, which is trying to balance the growing cost of the virus with a \$5 billion upgrade to its sea wall. At the same time, “there’s only so much money to go around.”

Brian Strong, April 2020¹

Broadly, there is a concern that due to budget shortfalls and fiscal challenges, the emphasis on short-term economic recovery will precede over other crises such as climate change and equity. It will be no easy feat working on structural, systems-level change while facing pushback from those solely focused on economic challenges.

“We are all going to be borrowing for stimulus and investment. That money is the money we would have borrowed for climate action. Therefore, we only have one shot to do both – recovery and climate resilience.”

Chief Resilience Officer, Europe, April 2020

“We have to fundamentally re-design our systems, and get through the inequity that we have. We cannot go back to how we were.”

GRCN - WB Speaker Series, North America, April 2020

Specific thematic areas of focus have emerged across the network, including food, mobility, heat and providing financial relief to businesses and NGOs.

Food

- **Addis Ababa, Kigali, Christchurch, New York City, Chennai, Singapore,** and others have shared questions and activities concerning the delivery of food, long-term food production, and continued access to food for elderly and vulnerable populations. **Wellington** has increased support for vulnerable people with delivery of food to people in need, this includes food banks and meals on wheels.

- **Addis Ababa** has reached out to people who have a passion and any formal education in agriculture, as the City will assign designated land for building the urban agriculture capacity in the city to address growing short- and long-term demand.

Mobility

- **Jakarta, Toronto, Addis Ababa, Santiago, and New York City** have exchanged strategies around transit, such as odd/even schemes to limit vehicles on the road and address air pollution, disabled access advancing projects (rail/ airports in UK), enabling disabled access). **New York City** and **Milan** are considering how public transport can at some point re-open safely, while maintaining the financial viability of transport providers with reduced ridership to allow for sufficient distance between passengers. In many other cities transport and mobility are key sticking points of re-opening strategies.

“Our transport authorities are financially struggling. Additionally, vulnerable populations depend on it, and we will not increase fares.”

Chief Resilience Officer, North America, April 2020

- Resilient **Melbourne** has initiated a resilience change management program with the City of Melbourne’s Infrastructure and Assets team. It will involve an Urban Resilience 101 training session, an embedding and applying the frameworks workshop followed by a Resilience Value Realisation workshop aimed at accelerating 44km bike lanes in the CBD while the city is quiet.

Infrastructure

- **Sydney, Melbourne, Athens, London, Thessaloniki,** and **Vejle** have expedited planned infrastructure maintenance and repairs while the use of road and rail networks is cut down.
- **Vejle** brought forward infrastructure projects in order to take advantage of the empty streets and limit nuisance, but also to support local construction companies. **Mexico City** indicated a similar approach to benefit the local economy.

¹<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/climate/coronavirus-cities-infrastructure-money.html>

Heat

- A number of cities are working on the compound risk of heat and Covid-19, including **Toronto, The Hague, Chennai, Paris, New York City, Milan, Sydney, and Melbourne.**

Data

- **Pune** collects a wealth of city data, but lacked analytical decision-making using and communication this information. The CRO helped to map the data to visualise hotspots and communicate this data with stakeholders such as traders. Maps are now updated and uploaded regularly. The approach was inspired by a case study from Milan, shared through the GRCN-WB Speaker Series.
- **Tel Aviv-Yafo** launched a new platform within the city government to share what different departments are currently doing and capture reflective learnings, while aggregating data to support recovery planning.

Relief funds

- **Cape Town** is proposing new property rating categories to enable lower or no rates to be charged for not for profits organizations and other charitable property owners, including organisations offering shelter for street people, early childhood development and youth.
- **Wellington** is ramping up its Buy local program – The #LoveLocal program will be geared up to encourage Wellingtonians to buy from and support local Wellington businesses and those across the region. The city has also launched a City Recovery Fund – a fund of up to \$8m to support and boost the economic recovery including support for the creative and innovative sector, and has made available additional grant funding of \$1.5m to support community groups.

Part 2: Key messages

- Cities are fighting the pandemic against the backdrop of existing **shocks and stresses**, which influences the impacts of the virus, and can also exacerbate current **risks and hazards** – compounding risks and causing a crisis upon crisis.
- Existing **vulnerabilities of communities** and households are intensifying the impact of the health and economic crisis, with new vulnerabilities – including **access to food, livelihoods, mobility** – being brought into sharp focus.

Data sources

- A survey run in collaboration with Dalberg, shared with all cities in the Network, and completed by 53 respondents from 47 different cities across all GRCN regions. The graphics in this report capture the survey responses.
- Outputs including notes and presentations from the weekly GRCN – World Bank Speaker Series ‘Sharing Knowledge to Respond with Resilience’ launched in March 2020.
- Notes from various working groups, meetings, and verbal communications within the GRCN Network. The working groups were initiated by cities from Europe, North-America, and the Pacific and are expanding gradually as cities across the world move into recovery planning.
- Supporting analysis through a bespoke partnership with the University of Manchester – COVID-19 Recovery Team.