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Mayors and Transport Unions Demand Historic Global Investments in Public Transport to Create 4.6 Million Jobs and Drive COVID-19 Recovery

Research published today reveals public transport stimulus funds to protect and expand jobs in cities is vital for a green and just COVID-19 recovery.

Proper investment in public transport will create 4.6 million additional jobs in the next decade and cut emissions from the transport sector by more than 50% across C40 cities.

30 March, 2021 — Transport workers, unions and mayors from leading global cities including Los Angeles, Milan, Jakarta, and Johannesburg have joined forces to demand that governments make an urgent injection of stimulus funding into public transport services and infrastructure in order to drive economic stimulus, create millions of jobs and tackle the climate crisis. As ridership has fallen during the COVID-19 pandemic, so has revenue - public transport agencies across cities worldwide face a critical funding shortfall that threatens jobs and services.

Research published today, [The Future of Public Transport](#) confirms that green investment in global public transport systems will not only safeguard existing jobs, but will also create millions of decent, sustainable jobs and cut emissions from the transport sector in cities by over 50% in the next decade. At a time of global mass unemployment and economic hardship, protecting jobs and stimulating employment opportunities will benefit millions of people who rely on public transport the most - the key workers providing vital services during the pandemic, women, young people and marginalised communities.

The report finds that proper investment in public transport could:

- **Create 4.6 million additional jobs by 2030** across 100 cities in the C40 network, and their supply chains, with multiplied economic impact as a result of greater public transport access. Scaled up to cities around the world would mean **tens of millions of new good green jobs**.
- **Reduce air pollution from transport in some cities by up to 45%.**
- **Cut emissions from urban transport by more than half by 2030**, as required to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and keep global temperature rise to below 1.5°C. Failing to support public transport will make it impossible for cities to reduce transport emissions, and to reach net zero by 2050 given that transport accounts for about one third of all C40 cities' emissions.
- **Protect tens of millions of workers in lower income and service sector jobs** who have been heroes during the pandemic and rely on public transport for their livelihoods, including hospital staff, retail workers and other sectors critical in delivering the Covid-19 recovery for

cities around the globe.

- **Connect city residents to work and education opportunities, leisure activities and each other**, vital in creating vibrant, thriving, equitable communities and supporting recovery efforts from the pandemic.

The 'Future is Public Transport' initiative is co-organised by C40 Cities, a coalition of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities, and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), who represent 20 million transport workers. This call for global investment is part of C40 Cities' global mobilization of mayors for a [green and just recovery](#) from COVID-19, and ITF's mission to secure decent jobs for transport workers and guarantee economic, environmental, racial and social justice for all.

The campaign is backed by strategic partners the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), who represent 1800 public transport companies, as well as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Public Services International (PSI), Greenpeace, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), WIEGO: Women In Informal Employment, 350.org and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

QUOTES

"The road to recovery is paved with investments in our infrastructure, because public transportation is more than just a way to move people around — it's a vehicle for opportunity, equity, and a better quality of life," said **C40 Chair and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti**. "This report solidifies what mayors already know: any recovery from COVID-19 must be green, just, fair, and driven by investments in public transportation that will help create jobs, reduce emissions, and lift up our most vulnerable residents."

Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan, said: "A resilient and well-resourced mass transit system is a source of jobs and economic prosperity in cities, and it is key to ensure fair access to essential services and jobs. This is not just about recovering from the pandemic: it's about transforming our systems to work better and for all of us. I join my voice to the call for investment in urban mass transit as a priority measure in all COVID-19 recovery plans."

"Right now, governments around the world are working to prepare for the global recovery, and we have a crucial opportunity to drive economic development that will create millions of decent, sustainable jobs while also accelerating climate action," said **John Mark Mwanika, Chair of the ITF Urban Transport Committee**. "Together, workers, passengers, mayors and trade union leaders, must raise the volume on why public transport matters and why bold, job-creating investments are needed now to ensure that the future is public transport."

"We need to speed up the shift to climate-friendly transport, in particular public mass transport. For cities, an efficient public transport system is crucial to reduce pollution, avoid chaos and congestion, and become zero emission," said **Raymond Johansen, governing Mayor of Oslo**. "In the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening public transport is essential — it will help everyone get back to work, create new jobs, and make city life good again. I will call on our national government, other cities and the transport industry to join this call. We have a real opportunity to make a huge step for climate, for our cities and for our citizens."

“The COVID-19 pandemic has put into sharp focus how public transit is a social justice issue and the disparities that exist to this day,” said **John Costa, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union**. “Public transit has been a lifeline to our communities and essential workers, doctors, nurses and sanitation workers who must get to their life-saving jobs. The pandemic has also put transit systems under severe stress while disproportionately impacting the health and wellbeing of hero frontline transit workers and riders. Our union has lost more than 140 brothers and sisters to this devastating virus and thousands more have been infected. We join with mayors, the riding public and transit advocates to push for robust investment in public transit to create union jobs and expand service for those who rely on it every day.”

“Investment in public transportation helps spur economic growth, improve public health, fight inequality, and combat climate change – and the need for investment has never been greater or more urgent,” said **Michael R. Bloomberg, U.N. Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Climate Ambition and Solutions, Founder of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Philanthropies, 108th Mayor of New York City, and C40 Board President**. “The pandemic has been putting enormous stress on public transportation systems around the world, and causing so much hardship for essential workers who keep cities moving. Smart and bold investments in public transportation can help cities rebound from the devastation caused by the pandemic — and help chart the course for a safer, healthier, more equitable future.”

“Citizens, cities and the planet will be better off with more public transport,” said **Mohamed Mezghani, UITP Secretary General**. “It improves our lives in so many ways and is the shot in the arm for our economies to fully rebound now and build us back better in the future”.

“2021 is a year when people are still living with Covid-19 but it is also a year when governments must implement serious plans for recover,” said **Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** “Recovery starts with jobs - climate-friendly jobs with just transition to respond to the destruction of the pandemic. Cities and public transport have been hit hard by the need to socially distance as part of the pandemic response. But we can create millions of jobs through a green urban recovery. We must protect workers and we must invest in their future.”

Rosa Pavanelli, Public Services International (PSI) General Secretary, said: “Without strong public transport systems, workers – especially women, migrant, young, precarious and informal workers – face greater barriers to access employment opportunities and fully participate in society. Many public service workers are also disadvantaged. Learning from the pandemic means this is the time to invest in strong local public services, including in public transport infrastructure to ensure a just, prosperous and green future for all”.

“The most vulnerable workers need systems that are accessible, affordable and appropriate to the day-to-day realities of their lives and livelihoods,” said **Sally Roever, WIEGO International Coordinator**. “This is especially the case for women workers in informal employment who are often in the most vulnerable occupations of the economy. This is why investment in public transportation systems is essential for recovery across all sectors of the economy.”

“The pandemic has illuminated just how essential public transport is, as so many people that serve as the backbone of our cities and our economy rely on it every day,” said **Heather Thompson, CEO of ITDP**. “Yet our public transport systems are not well funded and operate on tenuous budgets dependent on overcrowded systems and minimal maintenance. We must make sure that our transit systems receive the support they deserve. The future is public transport, and the future of public transport is safe,

frequent, reliable, convenient, and affordable.”

“The radical transformation of our cities is not only possible but urgently needed to protect the wellbeing of people and the planet. Many of the solutions to our current health, climate and inequality crises overlap, and start with real investment in green and affordable public transport leading to job creation and emissions cuts. The cities of the future will be centres of hope and joy, where we live more fully and healthily, consuming fewer of earth’s precious resources and ensuring justice for all,” **said Jennifer Morgan, Executive Director, Greenpeace International.**

"The crises stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted who and what we were leaving behind and have brought to the fore the vital role that public service provision plays in the protection of people and the planet" said **Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).** " Public transport is an integral part of these services and has worked non-stop during the crisis ensuring that all people have access to essential services and access to opportunity."

Mayoral quotes:

In Los Angeles, California, C40 Chair Mayor Eric Garcetti

“The road to recovery is paved with investments in our infrastructure, because public transportation is more than just a way to move people around — it’s a vehicle for opportunity, equity, and a better quality of life,” said **C40 Chair and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.** “This report solidifies what mayors already know: any recovery from COVID-19 must be green, just, fair, and driven by investments in public transportation that will help create jobs, reduce emissions, and lift up our most vulnerable residents.”

In Milan, Italy (Mayor Giuseppe Sala)

“A resilient and well-resourced mass transit system is a source of jobs and economic prosperity in cities, and it is key to ensure fair access to essential services and jobs. This is not just about recovering from the pandemic: it’s about transforming our systems to work better and for all of us. I join my voice to the call for investment in urban mass transit as a priority measure in all COVID-19 recovery plans.”

In Austin, Texas, USA (Mayor Steve Adler)

“In our community the need for affordable, reliable, rapid transportation is great, but unfortunately most lack access to it to meet their daily needs. As a result, many are forced to spend a disproportionate amount of their time and income on ineffective means of transportation. Mass transit is not only imperative for climate, but also indispensable for our communities to reach jobs, education, health care, and essential resources.”

In eThekweni Municipality, South Africa (Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda)

“Building resilient cities which support the health, social and economic needs of our residents is front and centre of our work as a city. To protect all people, we cannot allow a return to ‘business as usual.’ Through a reliable operational subsidy, our public transport system can be a catalyst for building said resilience.”

In Johannesburg, South Africa (Executive Mayor, Geoff Makhubo)

“As the government, we are committed to partnering with all stakeholders to ensure investments in the transport sector positions Johannesburg as the hub of a social and economic recovery that leaves none

of our residents behind. Access to safe and affordable public transport must be leveraged to drive investment in a sustainable future for all.”

In San Francisco, California, USA (Mayor London Breed)

“Public transportation is an essential part of San Francisco, and we know that our economic recovery is going to be directly linked to the recovery of our transit systems. People need to get to work, children need to get to school, and residents and visitors need to be able to get around town. We can make our cities more vibrant, healthy, sustainable, and economically prosperous, but the only way to do that while achieving our climate and equity goals is to make sure that we continue investing in public transportation.”

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (Mayor Jim Kenney)

“Philadelphia benefits from one of the largest transit networks in the country. A robust transit network is key to the city’s competitiveness in attracting and retaining people and investment. We can't separate the current economic crisis from the need to improve equity or address the ever-present climate crisis. Our transit system is and will need to be a competitive advantage for a recovered, reimagined, and more sustainable Philadelphia. Investing in public transit has been proven to create jobs, reduce congestion, and attract companies and jobs to the city and region. We are ready to partner with the Biden-Harris administration on ways to support and improve our transit system in service of our climate, equity and economic goals.”

In Seattle, Washington, USA (Mayor Jenny Durkan)

"Having a robust and reliable mass transit system isn't just about getting from one place to another – it's about providing equitable access, connecting to economic opportunity, reducing climate pollution, and supporting the livelihoods of those who need transit most, especially for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic who never stopped working to keep our City safe and thriving. I am proud that Seattle has made it a priority to invest in public transportation, and the transit workers who keep it running. From our recent voter-supported proposition to continue to fund transit service with Seattle's Transportation Benefit District, to our ever-expanding bus rapid transit and light rail networks, we know it is critical to invest in mass transportation and to create progressive revenue sources to best serve those who depend on reliable and accessible mass transit the most."

In Tel Aviv, Israel (Mayor Ron Huldai)

"The COVID-19 crisis has drastically changed the face of public transportation usage in Israel and across the world," "Despite the large proportion of vaccinated citizens and a return to almost complete economic activity in Tel Aviv-Yafo, the use of public transportation continues to be low. By recognizing that a safe and efficient public transportation system plays a vital role in the success of a just recovery, Tel Aviv-Yafo is inverting the transportation pyramid - prioritizing walking, cycling and public transportation over the private car."

In Oslo, Norway (Governing Mayor Raymond Johansen)

“We need to speed up the shift to climate-friendly transport, in particular public mass transport. For cities, an efficient public transport system is crucial to reduce pollution, avoid chaos and congestion, and become zero emission. In the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening public transport is essential – it will help everyone get back to work, create new jobs, and make city life good again. I will call on our national government, other cities and the transport industry to join this call. We have a real opportunity to make a huge step for climate, for our cities and for our citizens.”

In Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb)

“Without high quality Public Transport cities will clog, emissions will rise. Support for Public Transport is fundamental for a green and just recovery”

In Tshwane, South Africa (Executive Mayor, Randall Williams)

“Our vision for Tshwane is that of a city generating jobs for all, where people live in healthy, resilient and equitable communities supported by a sustainable environment. This can only be achieved through an affordable, sustainable, efficient and safe mass transit system.”

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Notes to Editors:

Research Highlights Measuring Impact and Outcomes

[The Future of Public Transport](#) report created four model city types to explore the full dynamics of the three scenarios: Green Recovery, Public Transport Neglect, and Business as Usual. Every C40 city has been impacted in different ways during the COVID-19 pandemic because each has a different transportation profile, based on geography, development patterns, traveller behaviours, governance and culture. Recognizing the diverse set of variables that exist, the analysts developed city typologies using two primary parameters: GDP per capita and proportion of car use for passenger trips.

The four models include: Higher GDP Lower Car Use; Higher GDP Higher Car Use; Lower GDP Lower Car Use; and Lower GDP Higher Car Use. Researchers then modelled the benefits on jobs from stimulus, greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions and air quality gains by each city category.

Job creation

The Green Recovery scenario would generate between **six and ten times as many public transport jobs by 2030**, compared to a Public Transport Neglect scenario, in three out of four model cities (Lower GDP Lower Car Use, Lower GDP Higher Car Use, and Higher GDP Lower Car Use). The Higher GDP Higher Car Use model city is an outlier since a Green Recovery is estimated to **generate nearly 250 times as many public transport jobs by 2030**, compared to a Public Transport Neglect scenario.

Greenhouse gas emissions

By 2030, a Green Recovery scenario would reduce cities’ transport emissions by:

- **78%** in Lower Car Use, Higher GDP model cities
- **71%** in Higher Car Use, Higher GDP model cities
- **67%** in Lower Car Use, Lower GDP model cities
- **34%** in Higher Car Use, Lower GDP model cities

Air quality gains

By 2030, a Green Recovery scenario would reduce cities’ PM2.5 concentration by:

- **47%** in Lower Car Use, Higher GDP model cities (like Athens, Greece)
- **45%** in Lower Car Use, Lower GDP model cities (like Buenos Aires, Argentina)
- **16%** in Higher Car Use, Higher GDP model cities (like Houston, USA)
- **13%** in Higher Car Use, Lower GDP model cities (like Cape Town, South Africa)

In Higher GDP Higher Car Use cities, the transport sector is a significant source of emissions — meaning these cities need to do more to meet their climate commitments in time for 2050. If these cities neglect public transport, they risk making no gains in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Major cities in the United States are overwhelmingly represented in the Higher GDP Higher Car Use model, underscoring the potential massive impact of public transport investment in the globe’s richest economy and second largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

The types of stimulus investment C40 cities have planned for in their Climate Action Plans include:

- New and improved segregated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, with faster, more frequent services, more comfortable buses, and safer, more accessible stations
- New and improved metro, commuter rail and light rail with faster, more frequent services, new trains, and safer, more accessible stations
- Electric ferry services
- Investment in electric bus fleets
- Upgrading micro and paratransit to cleaner vehicles, including electric minibuses
- Electric vehicle fleet charging infrastructure
- Integrated ticketing and real time information systems

Across the world, a green recovery means more jobs both directly through expanded transport systems and indirectly through opening up economic and educational opportunities, more social equity, more climate protections, and better public health for all.

The call for global investment is part of C40 Cities’ global mobilization of mayors for [a green and just recovery from COVID-19](#) and follows the [statement](#) of the Urban 20 group of mayors from G20 countries to the G20 Italian Presidency calling for investment in public transport as part of a green and just recovery.

About the International Transport Workers’ Federation:

The [International Transport Workers’ Federation](#) (ITF) is a democratic, affiliate-led federation recognised as the world’s leading transport authority. We fight passionately to improve working lives; connecting trade unions from 147 countries to secure rights, equality and justice for their members. We are the voice for nearly 20 million working women and men in the transport industry across the world.

About C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group:

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world’s leading cities who are working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a **science-based and people-focused approach** to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. Through a Global Green New Deal, mayors are working alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labor, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to go further and faster than ever before. The current Chair of C40 is Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti; and three-term Mayor of New

York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).