In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization has underlined the benefits of cycling and walking as a means of transport as they both allow for physical distancing and enable exercise.

As authorities and companies prepare for a relaxation of lockdown measures, plans to reshape mobility are beginning. The Spanish cities of Barcelona and Valencia have budgeted €4.4 million to create 21 kilometres of bike lanes and 12 kilometres of pavements. The Italian city of Milan has announced that 35 kilometres of roads will be transformed to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. In order to encourage active mobility and ease users' way out of lockdown, the UK city of Brighton has opened up more of its seafront to pedestrians and cyclists. E-scooter company 'Bird'
has developed a warmup mode, to reduce e-scooter acceleration, in order to ease people back into riding.

Public transport is also likely to undergo changes as passenger numbers increase, but physical distancing rules still apply. Public transport can have an average passenger density in peak hours of between 4 and 6 people per square metre. However, in order to allow for physical distancing this will need to fall significantly, closer to 1 person per square metre. Hence, if passengers are required to stay one metre apart, public transport will be at capacity if demand recovers to just 25% of pre-COVID-19 levels. The solution to this problem is still unclear but the Trade Association for the Emerging Markets have called for additional subsidies for public transport to help the sector cope.

Many companies have been asking for a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, putting climate goals at the forefront of reconstruction plans. Frans Timmermans has said, ‘We strongly believe at the Commission that a green recovery is possible.’ Even with these positive words some of the European Green Deal initiatives could be delayed. The ‘Farm to Fork’ strategy is likely to be delayed as important lessons in food security need to be learnt from the pandemic. The strategy for sustainable and smart mobility could also learn some lessons from the pandemic.

If you would like to learn more about maintaining essential mobility during a pandemic check out our guide here.

For more in-depth information, see the original articles on the following websites:

- WHO endorses cycling amid COVID-19;
- Bird develops new warm up mode to help riders ease back into daily commutes;
- Barcelona and Valencia will eliminate car lanes to give more space to pedestrians and bikes;
- Milan announces ambitious scheme to reduce car use after lockdown;
- Rethinking public transport – adapting essential services in times of crisis;
- EMTA open letter to Presidents of European Commission, Parliament and Council towards Covid-19 crisis;
- Timmermans promises green recovery to EU lawmakers;
- COVID-19 sustainable mobility videos.

Also, see these COVID-19 related events:

- COVID-19 Webinar: Impacts on Transport and Working Behaviour;
- COVID-19 Webinar: Impacts on transport emissions and air quality.

For a detailed list of online resources, guidance materials, and COVID-19 related transport and mobility discussions, please see links in the Eltis article Maintaining essential mobility during a pandemic.

See also the previous weekly summaries produced:

- 27 April 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 20 April 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 13 April 2020 - Weekly Summary