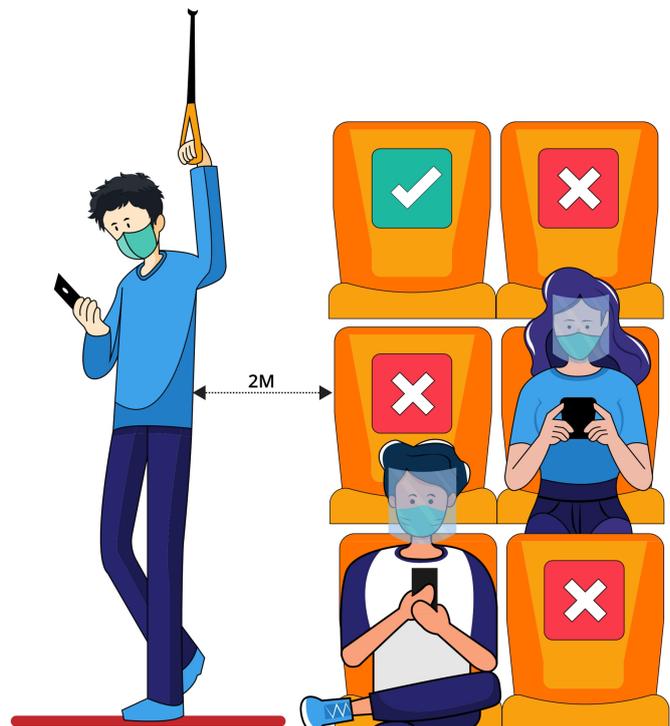By Patrick Troy / Updated: 08 Jun 2020

8 June 2020 weekly summary: the impact of COVID-19 on transport and mobility

Submitted by Patrick Troy on 08 Jun 2020
Picture:

Region:
Europe-wide
Topic:
COVID-19
Body:

Greater Manchester is the latest UK city to postpone the introduction of its clean air zone (CAZ), following Leeds, Birmingham, Oxford and Bath. Leader of Trafford council (one of the councils in the Greater Manchester region), Andrew Western said that the CAZ had been delayed by 12 months, until 2022, as the planned public consultation would not be practical under physical distancing. He has reassured the public that this delay will not affect Greater Manchester's ability to comply with legal air pollution limits.

The Irish capital Dublin has launched its COVID-19 transport recovery plan which includes: increasing space for pedestrians, providing safer cycling facilities and changing bus routes to accommodate more cycling and walking. The Spanish region of Catalonia has launched a post COVID-19 public transport campaign, which mandates the use of protective masks on public transport and urges passengers to keep a safe distance and avoid travelling during the busiest hours.

Mobility experts have warned that the public may use cars after COVID-19 instead of returning to public transport due to safety concerns, potentially increasing emissions to levels higher than those before COVID-19. To counteract this, city officials from Bonn, Brussels, Dublin and Milan have asked the European Commission to boost public transport funding, suggesting a zero-emission bus fund of €3.5 billion. This fund would be used to make up for the losses caused by COVID-19 and keep transport companies on track to contributing to meeting emissions targets.

Mobility experts have also published ideas for increasing shared mobility solutions. These include more frequent vehicle cleaning and the upgrading of hardware with self-cleaning materials. They have also suggested that membership rental schemes should aim to increase the use of shared mobility by locals rather than by tourists. Third parties could also promote the increase in shared mobility by, for example, providing parking spots for e-scooters.

The public are starting to turn to modes of transport that enable social distancing, as shown by the increase in the sales of bikes, which have gone up by as much as 60-70% in Helsinki. Sales manager, Harri Halme, of the Finnish bike manufacturer Helkama said: 'The sector has seen many years of zero growth, so 5-10 % growth has been considered good. There's never been this kind of growth, in my opinion'.

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

- Manchester delays introduction of CAZ;
- Dublin launches Covid-19 transport recovery plan;
- Catalonia launches public transport campaign for post-lockdown travel;
- Data-driven solutions for smart parking in post-COVID-19 cities;
- Four cities call for multi-billion-euro clean bus fund;
- Shared Mobility, Rebooted;
- Epidemic sparks bike sales spike in Helsinki.

Also, see these COVID-19 related events:

- COVID-19 Webinar: Impacts on transport emissions and air quality;
- LEVITATE Webinar: The impacts of automation in urban transport;
- Rethinking mobility: Cycling for a safe COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

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:

- 1 June 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 25 May 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 18 May 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 11 May 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 4 May 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 27 April 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 20 April 2020 - Weekly Summary
- 13 April 2020 - Weekly Summary

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