



Milan mayor: 'People are ready' for green change

By Laurie Goering, Thomson Reuters Foundation, May 4, 2020

“Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala has pushed in recent years to make his northern Italian city more climate-smart, including setting an ambitious aim to electrify all public transport by 2030.

“He estimated that 70 percent of Milan residents now back virus-accelerated plans to switch 35 km (22 miles) of street space to priority use for bicycles and pedestrians in the city of 1.4 million.

“Temporary new bike lanes on May 4 were helping ease pressure on the city’s public transport system, as construction and factory workers headed back to work and drivers limited passenger numbers to try to maintain spacing.

“Milan, among the European cities hit earliest and hardest by the coronavirus pandemic, is one of [dozens of cities around the world](#) aiming to use a post-lockdown economic restart to bootstrap environmental measures.

“Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, chair of the [C40 network of cities](#) pushing swift climate action, said that when the time came to reopen and rebuild, ‘our efforts will define our cities for decades to come.’

“Milan’s leaders also are asking companies to allow more working from home and to stagger hours for employees who do come in, to avoid crowding on transport and in other public places.

“So far, climate-friendly efforts associated with lifting the lockdown — such as expanding bike lanes and sidewalk space for pedestrians — have been relatively inexpensive, the mayor said.

“Still, finding resources — and the will — to [get green shifts underway now is crucial to reduce risks](#) from the next big threat of climate change, he said.”

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