



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

CBD Economic Recovery & Implementation Plan

URGENT RESPONSE TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE CAPE TOWN CBD

Making progress possible. **Together.**

13 August 2020

Background and Context

The COVID-19 crisis and associated extended lockdown restrictions have had a devastating impact Cape Town and the Western Cape with the CBD of Cape Town experiencing business closures on a daily basis.

The current economic crisis is driven fundamentally by **lack of demand** as a result of restrictions and residents response to the crisis.

- **COVID-19 still poses a significant threat (without wide scale vaccinations – 12/18 months out)** to the health of residents necessitating the need for mitigation measure such as social distancing.
- Limited numbers of office workers have returned to the CBD and consumer/retail behaviour have shifted - **resulting in less “footfall” in the CBD.**
- **The hospitality industry has specifically been impacted by regulations** such as curfew, restrictions on alcohol sales and tourism as well the general apprehensiveness of residents to “venture” out of homes.

An urgent motion was submitted to the Sub-council 16 requested that the City and partners develop an urgent response by recommending concrete actions / interventions to address / reverse this crisis.



Fit within the Economic Recovery Strategy

The City together with key external partners will formulate an **economic recovery plan and implementation plan** to respond to the current crisis facing the CBD.

The overall framing of the response to the SC16 request, is to develop a plan/framework with the focus on the **stabilisation of the CBD** by reducing the initial impacts of COVID-19 on businesses and residents. During this period we cannot encourage large gatherings in the CBD as risk of viral transmission remains significant.

Approach needs to be centred around **promoting economic activities but in a safe manner**.

As COVID-19 fundamentally challenges our perceptions and use of space, this crisis also presents an **opportunity to re-evaluate the functioning, role and significance of the CBD - Build Back Better Approach**. To this end, the team will also include medium to long term interventions (**adaption and recovery**). This project can serve as a pilot to address similar challenges faced across the City.

COVID RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Phase 1: Stabilisation – A 12-month programme of initiatives which will be emphasised due to their ability to respond to and halt the immediate economic downturn.

Phase 2: Adaption – A further 12-month phase in which emphasis will be placed on a programme of initiatives which have the potential to transition us to a re-purposed and relevant Economy with increased competitiveness in the post-Covid economic landscape.

Phase 3: Rebuilding/Recovery – A long-term programme of initiatives that consolidate and build on the previous phases and seek to leverage competitive advantages for sustainable growth within the changed economic context

Foundation for safe “return” to the CBD

The decision to “reopen” or “return” to areas and activities resembling pre-COVID times is a difficult decision which many authorities and individuals have contemplated.

As evidenced internationally, the pressure to allow more activity in order to cushion the immense economic impacts of COVID-19 may have serious unintended impacts not only on the spread of COVID-19 but also on activities themselves.

Some issues to consider when advocating for more activities/return of individuals to the CBD:

- Experts say that as people interact more, cases will go up, but it's unclear if there will be another surge in cases – *it also depends on type, location and duration of interactions.*
- Months of communication by government (led by WCDoH/CCT partnership) and civil society has created certain mitigation “behavioural changes” which has been and will continue to be important to reducing the spread of the Virus - including working from home and social distancing etc.
- There will likely be a major impact on business and consumer confidence, if workers/visitors return and a resurgence of cases occurs or legislation forces “lockdown” again – this could have lasting impacts such as undermining a stable economic recovery

Foundation for safe “return” to the CBD

What needs to be in place for a “safe return”¹?

Continued vigilance and monitoring of virus:

- A solid FTTIS (find, test, trace, isolate, support) system central to confidence.
- Strong behavioural change programmes and adherence monitoring/enforcement
- Communication Plan required to ensure public info campaign is reaching EVERYONE

Business level mitigation strategies/enforcement

- Work place risk assessment and mitigation for staff
- Work space risk reduction: increasing ventilation, ensuring physical distancing, hygiene, face coverings.
- Governance: consider how work place compliance is ensured. eg environmental officers that inspect restaurants for food safety. Who is monitoring compliance?

To reduce risk of exposure: consider:

- Public spaces in CBD: expand definitions of public space to prioritise pedestrians and active transport (cycling) over cars.
- Transport to the CBD: how are people getting to CBD? how can CBD support safe transport? cant separate that exposure risk from CBD as majority of people working in the CBD rely on public transport
- Face coverings in public and for staff
- Avoid large groups

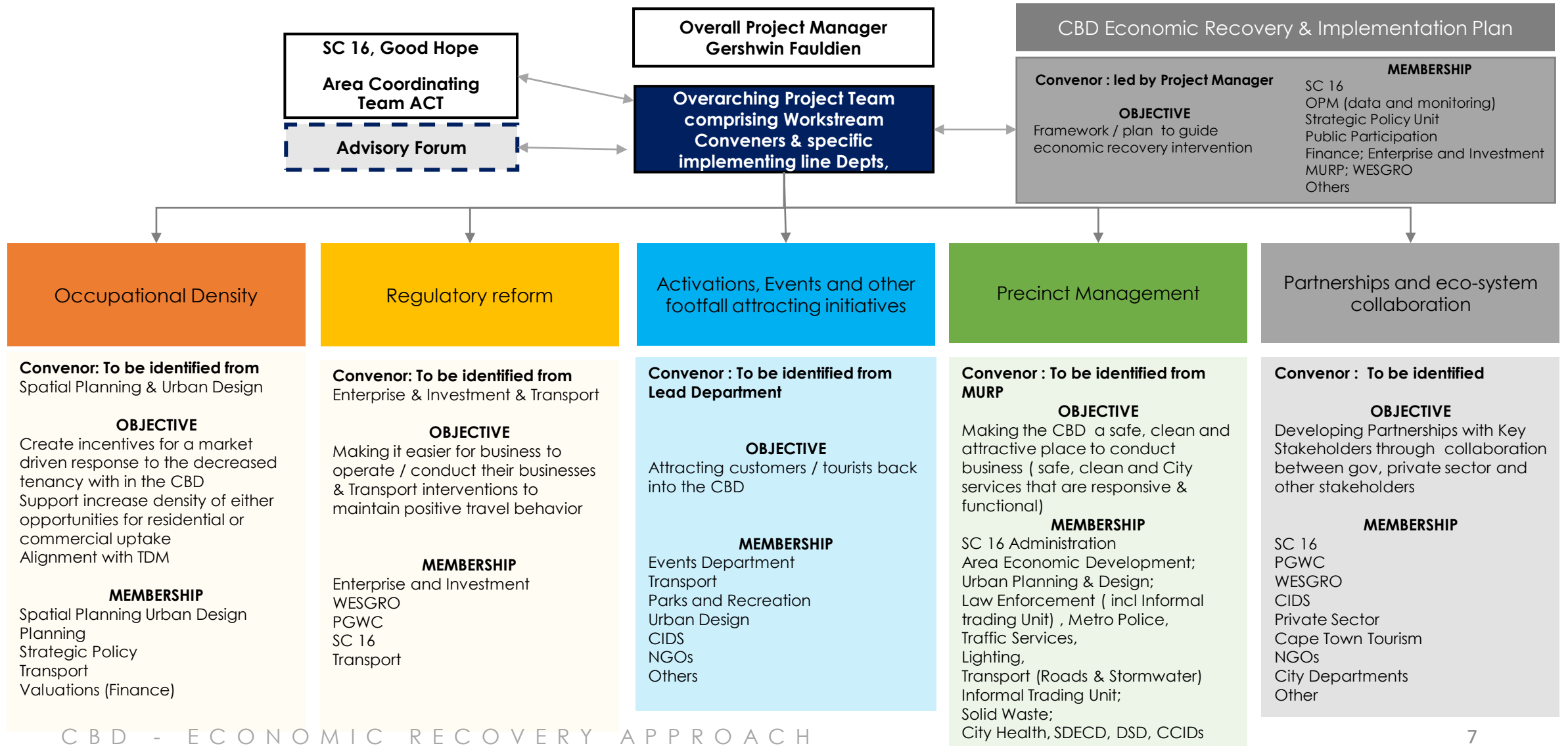
¹ **Tolu Oni** (Co-Director, Global Public Health, University of Cambridge)
- *Thoughts on Cape Town CBD Healthy Sustainable Recovery*

Engagements
with WCDoH
and other health
experts are
required

Desired Outcomes and Principles

Problem Statement/s	Desired Outcomes	Principles
Decreased occupation of commercial offices due to staff working from home. This new way of working is likely to continue beyond 19, thereby reducing the demand for commercial office space in the CBD	To ensure that the infrastructure in the CBD is utilised , either for commercial or residential purposes, in order to support business activity and the occupation of space , within the CBD.	COVID “smart” utilisation of space within the CBD’s that allows for heightened densities and encourages foot-traffic
Lack of residential uptake in City whilst commercial office space is under utilised	Increased residential opportunities in the City centre in the long term	
Closure of retail/food outlets and tourism related activities stemming from the lockdown restrictions, the public fear posed by COVID 19, and the resulting decreased foot traffic	A business environment which supports reduced start-up costs, ease of access to market, and speedy navigation of the necessary regulatory requirements.	Regulatory reform to reduce RED tape and increase commercial activity.
Due to the lack of utilisation of space resulting in increased criminal activity and urban decay within the CBD	Well managed, safe and clean public spaces	Implementing precinct management approach
Given the pressures placed upon financial resources by COVID 19, both the private and public sector are under strain to contribute to the funding of upliftment projects within the CBD	Civic organisations, residents, business, and government work together to trial innovative solutions to the challenges placed before them. Supporting Citizen led interventions and development of scalable and agile interventions . To this end, an open-minded approach is adopted toward problem solving.	Developing/Nurturing partnerships and eco-system collaboration Rely on local knowledge and agility through continual reviews

Overall project structure and thematic work streams



Occupational Density

Convenor: To be identified from Spatial Planning & Urban Design

OBJECTIVE

- Create incentives for a market driven response to the decreased tenancy within the CBD
- Support increase density of either opportunities for residential or commercial uptake
- Alignment with TDM

MEMBERSHIP

Spatial Planning & Urban Design
Development Planning
Strategic Policy
Transport
Valuations (Finance)
CCID
Private sector/Prop Developers

Possible Interventions:

- Explore how to encourage occupancy density in the short term
- Consider fast tracking current residential and other development applications in the CBD
- Explore how to sustainably increase residential density of the CBD in the long term.

Research package:

- Understanding the regulatory context
- Establish current land use density and vacancy rates in the CBD
- Current and possible incentives
- Current residential and other applications

What does success look like?

- Increased residential opportunities in the City centre in the long term leading to more sustainable demand for goods and services
- Improved take-up of vacant buildings in the innercity

Monitoring: Vacancy rates | Business Closures | Residential use applications

Regulatory reform

Convenor: To be identified from Enterprise & Investment
(*Ease of doing business prog*)
& **Transport**

OBJECTIVE

Making it easier for business to operate / conduct their businesses & **Transport interventions to maintain positive travel behavior**

MEMBERSHIP

Enterprise and Investment
WESGRO
PGWC
SC 16
Finance

Proposed Interventions:

- Exploring the use of rates and tariff release to reduce burden on businesses (perhaps specific industries if applicable)
- Focus on utilisation of existing mechanisms to fast track development & COVID 19 specific Policy / By-law if applicable
 - Regulations underpinning utilisation of public space to “extend” business premises such utilising parking spaces for tables and chairs
- Ease of doing business interventions – such as increasing efficiency of business and liquor licencing etc.
- Business Support Interventions
- **Transport interventions to maintain positive travel behaviour and congestion reduction post lockdown**

Research package:

- Determine the applicability of a specific by-law/policy intervention for the COVID response.
- Regulatory Impact Assessments based on discussions with business and other stakeholders.

What does success look like?:

- Reduced start-up costs through reduced rates/costs/burden of application
- Speedy navigation of City application system through improved licence processes (quicker turnaround time/additional allocation of licences/simplified application processes)

Monitoring: Business Closures | Licence approvals and efficiency | **Transport mode and Movement Patterns**

Activations, Events and other footfall attracting initiatives

Convenor : Events and supported by E&I

OBJECTIVE

Attracting customers / tourists back into the CBD

MEMBERSHIP

Events Department
Transport
Parks and Recreation
Urban Design
CIDS
NGOs in community events space
LAED
Others

Possible Interventions:

- Communication Strategy including buying local in the CBD
- “Pedestrianisation” of streets and precincts
- Activation of key sites such as Greenmarket Square
- Regular events in public that are COVID safe
- Exploring alternative “tourism season” activities

Research package:

- Site selection for intervention and engagement with stakeholders
- Night-time economy study

What does success look like?:

- Increase confidence of residents, visitors and business to continue to operate in the CBD both in the short and longer term
- The safe return of CBD office workers and visitors to the CBD

Monitoring: Business confidence & patronage | Increased safe footfall

Precinct Management Approach

Convenor : To be identified from MURP

OBJECTIVE

Making the CBD a safe, clean and attractive place to conduct business (safe, clean and City services that are responsive & functional)

MEMBERSHIP

SC 16 Administration
Area Economic Development;
Urban Planning & Design;
Law Enforcement (incl Informal trading Unit) , Metro Police,
Traffic Services,
Lighting,
Transport (Roads & Stormwater)
Informal Trading Unit;
Solid Waste;
City Health, SDECD, DSD, CCIDs

Possible Interventions, working with partners to:

- To reduce issues of crime and grime
- Ensuring safe public transport and routes
- Informal Trading Support Interventions
- Area Cleaning
- Vagrancy / homelessness interventions
- Approach to problem buildings with associated interventions

Research package:

- Obtain a good understanding of the problems, the scale of the challenges, the hot-spots – provided through inputs by the CCIDs, law Enforcement, Social Development , local business , SC 16 etc

What does success look like?:

- Working with organisations and community to collectively to create well managed, safe and clean public spaces

Monitoring: Crime Rates | Cleanliness and environmental conditions | Active use of space | Perceptions of safety

Partnerships and eco-system collaboration

Convenor : To be identified from MURP

OBJECTIVE

- The implementation of an economic recovery plan requires a collaborative approach between government, private sector and other stakeholders
- Share information about what is possible as apposed to what cannot be done.

MEMBERSHIP

SC 16
PGWC
WESGRO
CIDS
Private Sector
Cape Town Tourism
NGOs/Community orgs
City Departments
Other

Possible Interventions:

- Bi-Weekly meeting with stakeholders to discuss / monitor progress, challenges and recommendations
- Engagements with key economic stakeholders in the tourism sector and retail sectors to identify and unlock challenges
- Stakeholder Mapping
- Close collaboration with health – oversight and guidance role (DoH/CH)
- Communication Strategy (“*return safely to work*” – need Health guidance) and Protocols

Research package:

- Stakeholder Mapping

What does success look like?:

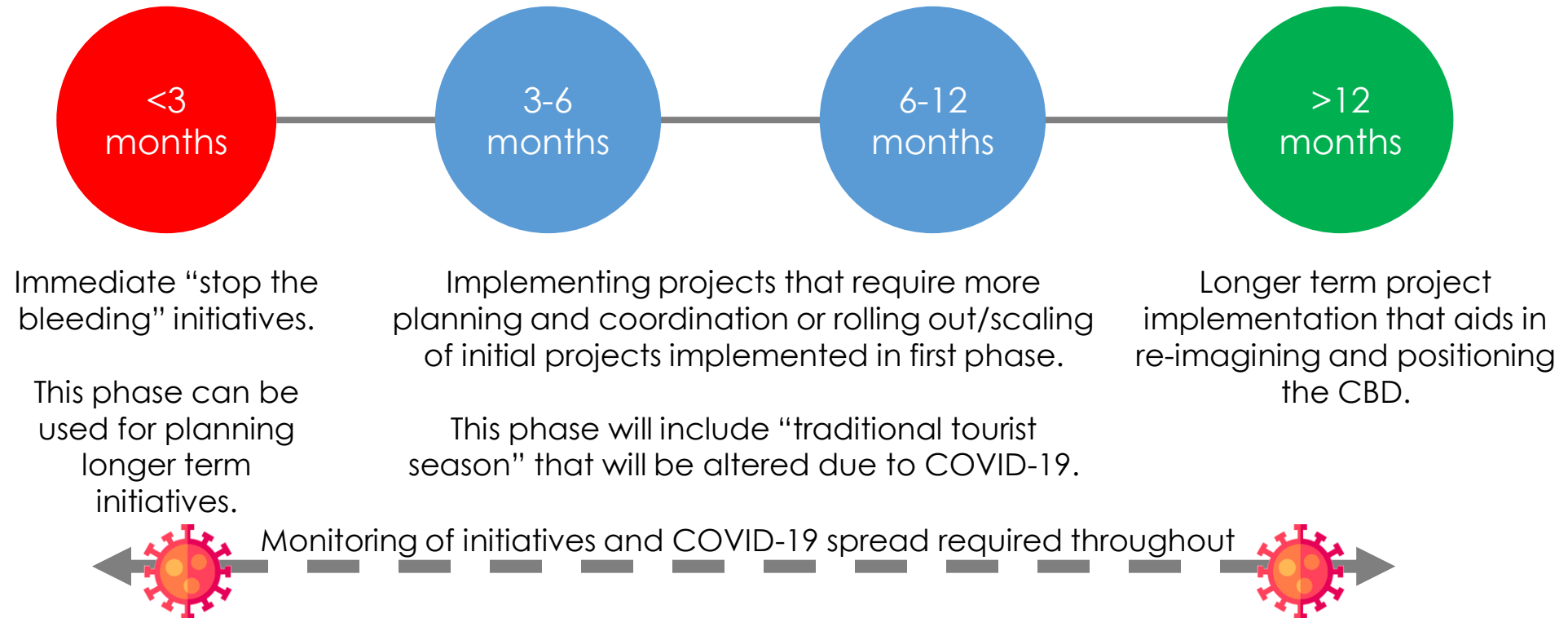
- Civic organisations, residents, business, and government work together to trial innovative solutions to the challenges placed before them.
- Supporting Citizen led interventions and development of scalable and agile interventions.

Monitoring: Stakeholder consultation | Perceptions of interventions | Overall monitoring of interventions/implementation

Sequencing + Timelines

Each work stream needs to consider the sequencing of project roll-out and duration of projects including whether some projects can be tested in the immediate term then replicated if successful.

Focus on nibble, replicable and collaborative project implementation.



Immediate interventions

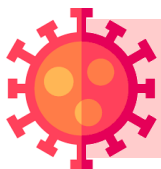


The next three months will be a crucial window and opportunity for the City and partners to intervene to “stop the bleeding” in the CBD. While the exact project implementation/ schedules are to be determined the following items should be considered:

- Finalise and establish internal work streams and capacity to implement the CBD recovery efforts
- Establish forums for intergovernmental cooperation & civic/business engagement
- In consort with the WCDoH (and CH) implement a communication and mitigation strategy in the City to instil confidence and reduce risks associated with increased activities.
- Explore and implement immediate rates/tariff relief
- Initiate and open up public space for business and civic use (use of parking spaces, temporary closure of streets/precincts) – pilot level in the first three months which can be extended in next phase
- Ensure Precinct Management – cleaning and safety should be in place and improved as a matter of urgency
- Initiate planning for longer term initiatives that will be rolled out over the next year.

Next steps and Implementation

- Presentation to Sub-council/EMT on progress - **Mid Aug**
- The various thematic work streams needs to be established with initial engagement meetings
- Set of initial proposals have been received for work streams have been received and will be discussed and amended in the coming two weeks (**Mid Aug and complete initial planning in Aug**).
- Next Steps for each work stream and related project:
 - Immediate mapping of data sources to enable responsive decision making is required
 - Identification of initiatives/programmes/interventions,
 - Confirmation of relevant implementing City department and officials,
 - Identification of relevant policy, by-law and procedures related to proposals,
 - Resource assessment and stakeholder mapping needs to be considered,
 - Initial project plan/process needs to be established for each intervention,
 - Obtain 'in-principle sign-off' for Proposed Projects
 - Projects can be considered on a pilot bases to test new arrangements then expanded – focus on “tactical interventions” and sustain those that function well,
 - Continued monitoring for success throughout project (impact of initiates) lifecycle.



All initiatives need to be “COVID-19 Smart” and needs to adapt the changing nature/spread of the virus