

# Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily lives, and in particular on our mobility, with increased up-take of digitalisation at the forefront. On-going megatrends such as teleworking and e-commerce have accelerated, raising questions about the type of transport infrastructure we have in place today and that we need, in an uncertain, tomorrow.

The promise of a new vaccine provides hope of a return to normality and some degree of clarity of what tomorrow might look like but it is already clear that many of the changes accelerated by the pandemic are likely to remain in the ‘new normal’, especially those that have been welfare and productivity enhancing, as firms have invested in new technologies and digital infrastructures, and consumers have shifted their habits.

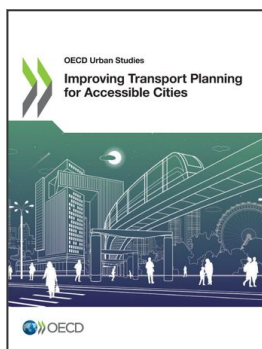
But much of the new normal will look like the old normal: many jobs require physical presence and many (especially personal, medical, and recreational) services cannot be delivered digitally. Efficient transport infrastructure remains as important today, and indeed tomorrow, as it has always been, especially as a tool to avoid new forms of digital-divide emerging but also to ensure that we continue to make our regions and cities attractive places to live and work.

This means that we must be proactive in our thinking, especially in respect of the diversity of mobility solutions, and how they can adapt to COVID-19 challenges as well as challenges that were with us before COVID-19, for example with respect to diverse demographic changes across cities, with some growing larger and some smaller, and some growing older.

Whilst the current pandemic has given greater urgency to dealing with these challenges, it has also created greater awareness about the importance of well-being and social cohesion and sustainable economic growth in the way that we shape our policies. The success of cities in providing access to opportunities for all will shape how inclusive cities are, as will greening of urban transport, which will be important in contributing to efforts towards carbon neutrality and sustainability.

*Improving transport planning for accessible cities* highlights that transport investment on its own does not suffice to promote access to opportunities for everyone. While cities need to focus on transit-oriented development, putting public transport and “active mobility” at the heart of transport strategies, with effective governance mechanisms to align different planning frameworks, is critical to help make better use of urban transport infrastructure. A companion report *OECD Urban Studies: Transport Bridging Divides* focuses on the economic benefits of transport infrastructure in general, and the measurement and analysis of access to opportunities within cities in particular.

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