

GLOBAL NIGHTTIME RECOVERY PLAN

CHAPTER 1 – OPEN-AIR NIGHTLIFE AND COVID-19: MANAGING OUTDOOR SPACE & SOUND

Introducing the **Global Nighttime Recovery Plan (GNRP)**, a practical guide for cities that are trying to determine the best way to design and safely execute a strategy to reopen and reactivate their creative and night-time economies. The guide was created in response to the severe vulnerability of nighttime industries caused by Covid-19, and in acknowledgement of this unique opportunity for improved, night-centric city planning offered by the crisis.

The GNRP is an international collaboration of some of the foremost minds in nightlife governance, planning and culture, spearheaded by nightlife advocacy agency, **VibeLab**. First conceived in June 2020, it has quickly grown to include the work of 130 practitioners, academics, public health experts, advocates and industry representatives from more than 70 cities spanning 6 continents – that network growing and strengthening with each new chapter.

Download and read the complete chapters via nighttime.org

The GNRP is published by VibeLab

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ISSUE STATEMENT AND KEY CHALLENGES

Pent-up demand for social activity combined with the continued restrictions on use of indoor areas has led to an increase in demand for outdoor space during the pandemic.

- Health concerns and increased noise levels are generating friction between residents, lawmakers and business owners.
- This creates a need for speedy deployment and communication of new regulations— which in turn cause problems of enforcement and public acceptance.

METHOD

Through interviews, research and strategy development, this chapter has drawn on recent case studies in **New York, Vilnius, Berlin, Paris** and **Orlando**, to discern possible challenges and advantages, assess existing trials, and produce best-practice recommendations.

OPEN-AIR DINING

(includes private spaces, pavement, public squares and parks, food trucks).

Key takeaways/ recommendations:

- Advantages = increased capacity and revenue. Boosts morale with a vibrant atmosphere in city streets.
- Challenges = Restricted space for passers by, increased noise, conflict with existing alcohol consumption laws, unfair division of space amongst competitors
- Solutions =
 - Road closures and repurposed parking spaces create more safe areas for al fresco dining and pedestrian movement
 - Simplify permits for food trucks and use of public space in front of venues
 - Introduce takeaway alcohol, especially helpful for venues without access to outdoor space
 - Deploy street teams to communicate rules with public, mediate between business owners and residents and encourage responsible behaviour amongst patrons

Case Study: **Vilnius, Lithuania** transforms central square into a large open-air cafe, including live performance.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

(Includes one-off events or series, seated or standing, ticketed or free to attend)

Key takeaways/ recommendations:

- Advantages = Traceable identity of attendees, controlled entrance and exit movement, clear accountability, increased cultural vibrancy, direct and adjacent economic opportunities.
- Challenges = Expense of securing/patrolling perimeters for ticketed events, large attendance numbers, increased noise
- Solutions =
 - Free stages provided by municipality to encourage outdoor events
 - Regular event license fees waived

FREE GATHERINGS

(spontaneous and unregulated gatherings in public spaces)

Key takeaways/ recommendations:

- Advantages = Utilising unused spaces, fills demand where regulation is slow to react
- Challenges = Unpredictable, untraceable, increased noise, reduced revenue for hospitality + ticketed events, covid protocols unlikely to be upheld, clashes between illegal ravers and police
- Solutions =
 - Different areas analysed for their suitability to host events, gatherings, events piloted in suggested area
 - Event checklists issued for organisers
 - Liaison for event registration appointed in each district
 - Communication campaigns directed at public
 - Mediators deployed to encourage and enforce covid-safe practices
 - Simplify event application process and support collaborative efforts toward legal event pathways, to dissuade illegal events

Case Study: **Berlin** Clubcommission raises awareness through activism, creates covid-safe checklist, encourages compliance

MANAGING SOUND OUTDOORS

Key takeaways/ recommendations:

- Communication + mediation: Use mediation before you use enforcement and avoid over-complicated rules. Use clear marketing campaigns to ensure regulations are understood.
- Time restrictions + monitoring: Resist temptation to impose time-restrictions without logical basis. Identify trouble hotspots instead of assuming all actors and activities create the same risk or noise level after dark. Encourage frequent noise monitoring with dB meters and foot patrols, not just passively through complaints.
- Engagement + transparency: The local community must be involved at all stages in round table discussions with business-owners, lawmakers and law enforcement. Collect, analyse and publish statistics widely and frequently, and make them accessible to increase public confidence and compliance.

Case studies: **NYC** – clear marketing strategies and mediation policies from city government. **Paris** – Mediation street team deployed. **Orlando** – tourism ambassadors repurposed as regulation communicators

CONCLUSION

Despite cities' differences in pandemic severity and responses, there are two common themes.

1. The instinct to socialise is universal. In cities where there are no legal alternatives, dangerous illegal alternatives are found.
2. Outreach is crucial. City authorities need to be close to their populations, communicate clearly, and win the trust of their business communities and to encourage cooperation between all interest groups.

Cities that learn to do this well will be at a significant advantage to recover from this crisis, and cope with the next.



AUTHORS

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Mark Adam Harold is a British-born music and nightlife expert working in Vilnius, Lithuania since 2005. He served as a Vilnius City Councillor from 2015 to 2019 and runs Music eXport Fund, an NGO helping musicians to create, release and perform music outside their home country. He is Chair of the Vilnius Night Alliance, an advocacy group for better nightlife.

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From 1995 to 2014, Thierry Charlois has been involved in safer nightlife issues from the NGOs field. He created associations and developed projects both at local, national and European levels, around harm reduction and community involvement. From 2014, he works as project manager on night-time policy at the city of Paris.

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Berlin Clubcommissioner **Lutz Leichsenring** + former Amsterdam night mayor **Mirik Milan** are co-founders of *VibeLab*, which engages, connects, and counsels cross-sector stakeholders to keep cities vibrant and flourishing after dark. VibeLab has consulted on the formation of nightlife offices and commissions in London, Madrid, New York, Tokyo, Vienna, Los Angeles, and more, and continues to facilitate idea exchange and implementation for communities, institutions, government agencies and brands worldwide.



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As the City of Orlando's first nighttime economy manager, Dominique is an innovative policy strategist, a thorough project manager and a passionate industry liaison who aims to foster a vibrant, safe and sustainable nighttime economy locally and beyond.



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THE NEXT CHAPTERS OF THE GNRP WILL ADDRESS:

- Building nocturnal governance capacity
- Financial support models for creative industry workers, individuals and vulnerable populations
- Support models for independent nightlife businesses
- Gathering data and measuring nightlife's impact