

GLOBAL NIGHTTIME RECOVERY PLAN

CHAPTER 5 – NIGHTTIME GOVERNANCE IN TIMES OF COVID-19

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

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ISSUE STATEMENT

Over the past 15 years, new actors and institutions have become responsible for managing urban life at night, and promoting this time frame as a priority in city agendas.

Since Covid-19 these young institutions have been under significant pressure as they attempt to mitigate the unprecedented crisis for the cultural and nightlife sector triggered by restrictive measures hoping to contain the pandemic.

This chapter poses two main questions:

- How are nighttime governance institutions responding to the Covid-19 crisis?
- How can they build local capacity to sustain and recover night-time ecosystems?

METHOD

To answer these questions, the chapter presents case studies from five cities— **Montreal, Helsinki, Tokyo, Vilnius** and **Melbourne**—that have recently created their own institutions to govern life at night, drawing practical insights from the perspective of advocacy organisations and policy-makers that will hopefully encourage other cities to create their own nighttime strategies. The chapter also includes a guide to establishing a nighttime office.



EXPLAINING NIGHTTIME GOVERNANCE

The concept of **nighttime governance** refers to the idea that the night has to be managed in a strategic way in order to accommodate the needs and interests of those who work, study, party, or sleep. Managing the city at night involves creating the right platforms for collaboration, since the night is experienced differently by different groups, e.g. residents, venue owners, night-shift workers, tourists, artists and the homeless.

Nighttime governance institutions come in many forms, from businesses associations to neighbourhood watches or hosts, and now, increasingly, dedicated night mayors and specialised nightlife offices, which can either be independent or funded by local government.

More than 50 cities around the world have introduced night mayor positions or nightlife offices, creating a global movement of advocates to promote greater awareness of the nighttime economy's value and the challenges in sustaining it.

CASE STUDIES

Montreal: key takeaways

- In 2017 a new civic organisation was formed in Montreal, *MTL 24/24*, to represent participants in the nighttime cultural sector. In 2020 this organisation became paramount in advising government on the nature and needs of Montreal's nightlife community, and on international best practice in nightlife sustainability.
- After declaring nightlife a priority in 2017, it wasn't until mid 2020 Montreal's city government began developing a specific night strategy, and named its first *Commissioner of Noise and Night*, Deborah Delaunay – effectively Montreal's first night mayor.
- Delaunay began regular consultations with MTL 24/24 and commissioned from them a diagnostic report of nightlife in Montreal. She organised working groups, established a steering committee of specialists and stakeholders, and a public consultation.
- The sense of urgency created by the pandemic finally put nighttime governance on the city's agenda. This case illustrates the advantages of using collaborative and participatory mechanisms to develop a solid knowledge base of the city's nighttime economy, to pave the way for a comprehensive strategy.

Helsinki: key takeaways

- Since March 2020, Salla Vallius has been working as the *Night Liaison* for the city of Helsinki. Her role was drastically complicated by the arrival of the pandemic immediately after.
 - The greatest challenge for Salla is the lack of definition of what her role can accomplish, which is difficult to measure in the absence of reliable data on the value of the city's cultural and nighttime economy. She therefore believes it is important to work with researchers and universities to develop ways to measure the value of Helsinki's night scene.
 - She is creating a nighttime development plan for Helsinki which will also help the city's "mental recovery" post-pandemic.
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Tokyo: key takeaways

- The *JNEA (Japan Nighttime Economy Association)* is a non-profit civil organisation founded in 2019 to support Japan's nighttime economy. It collaborates with government agencies including Japan Tourism Agency and the Agency for Cultural Affairs.
- In 2020, JNEA produced the *Creative Footprint Tokyo* in collaboration with *VibeLab*, a study which maps and evaluates the cultural value of nightlife in a city. The study highlighted an opportunity for the nightlife sector to leverage its touristic appeal to move the government to acknowledge nightlife's cultural legitimacy and needs.
- JNEA's established cooperation with governmental organisations proved invaluable after the outbreak of the pandemic. JNEA submitted a set of proposals to support music entertainment, food service and tourism sectors, many of which were incorporated into the national government's rescue package.

Vilnius: key takeaways

- Gleb Divov, a mixed-media artist and curator based in Vilnius, founded the Digital Culture Centre in 2019, a social and educational initiative that provides tools for bar and nightclub owners to handle regulations and rally resources to plan nightlife and cultural events. It also seeks to motivate people to take responsibility for joint action to preserve existing nighttime structures and plan future responses.
- The Digital Culture Centre platform shows local awareness and capacity can be built through informal methods that strongly rely on trust and grassroots organisations. Newcomers can pursue their own initiatives and individual accountability is stimulated.
- Though operating outside the formal realms of government Divov acknowledges that constant communication with government workers is also key.

Melbourne: key events + takeaways

- Despite relative silence on the issue in previous years, in the midst of Melbourne's 7-month Covid lockdown, nighttime strategy took centre stage. The debate on how to manage not just the afterhours, but explicitly its recovery through Covid-19, became a hot issue in the November 2020 mayoral election; one that saw Clr Sally Capp reconfirmed as Lord Mayor, with the appointment of a Night Mayor one of Capp's key proposals.
 - Meanwhile, since 2018 the *Connected Cities Lab*, in partnership with international design firm *ARUP*, has run *Studio N*, an educationally oriented planning laboratory to experiment with ideas for what Melbourne's nighttime strategy and night governance bodies could look like, building on local and international case studies.
 - Studio N now serves as an informal touch point for the City of Melbourne and local nighttime experts to test ideas that may eventually become Council policy.
 - In February 2021 the City announced the creation of a Night-time Economy Advisory Committee bringing together leaders from business, creative industries, government and experts.
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TOOLKIT: HOW TO SET UP A NIGHTTIME OFFICE

How to set up a nighttime office...

- 1. Craft a nighttime vision for your city** which incorporates current values, future aspirations, clear definitions and targets.
- 2. Measure your night scene** by gathering data on its size, distribution and economic contribution, as well as measuring the impact of external events such as Covid-19.
- 3. Raise awareness** to not only to respond to the current crisis, but also pave the way for more sustainable night scenes.
- 4. Build a team** of experts responsible for designing and implementing a plan, with institutional backing, a financial structure, and ability to work with all levels of government.
- 5. Liaise with and support local networks** by building solid relations with the local community and nocturnal ecosystem.
- 6. Launch small-scale pilot projects** to monitor impact, involve stakeholders and make corrections if necessary.
- 7. Learn and educate** through knowledge sharing and capacity-building, for example via international conferences, webinars and training programs.
- 8. Embrace change**, since night mayors and nighttime governance institutions are constantly evolving in order to adapt to local needs.

CONCLUSION

What this chapter's case studies have in common is that each cities' nighttime institutions were either created right before or in the context of the pandemic, or have been reconfigured to respond to the challenges posed by the crisis. The examples show that solidarity and cooperation between stakeholders—both state and non-state as well as academia and civil society organisations—are more vital than ever.

The Covid-19 pandemic will not be the last crisis to dramatically affect cities' nocturnal ecosystems. Securing the right amount of funding and political support is critical for nighttime institutions not only to respond to the current crisis, but also to survive in the long term and facilitate the sustainable management of night scenes around the world.

AUTHORS

Robert Catherall

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Robert Catherall is a current researcher and PhD student at the University of Toronto focusing on urban planning strategies for cities at night. Robert completed his Masters in Community & Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia's School of Community & Regional Planning, with a focus on methods for utilising Nighttime Mayors as a nighttime urban management strategy. Some of his recent projects include research on policy frameworks and regulatory regimes as well as stakeholder engagement for the Vancouver Music Ecosystem Study, Nova Scotia Music Impact Assessment, and the Victoria Music Ecosystem Study. He is currently leading a collaborative project between the City of Toronto and Arup to develop implementation strategies for the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan as part of the University of Toronto School of Cities' multidisciplinary urban capstone course.

Gleb Divov

*Republic of Užupis, FAYR Ecosystem (Vilnius,
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His Excellency Mr. Gleb Divov — minister of culture and innovations of the independent Republic of Užupis in Lithuania — world's most innovative micronation. Gleb is an inventor, serial entrepreneur, international curator, founder and visioner of own bootstrapped startup ecosystem — FAYR Ecosystem. Among his launched culture+tech solutions for the city: Sound changes the City / Sound changes the Planet Global Initiative, city measurement hardware CitySenseBox/ PlanetSenseBox IoT, Multiverse Gallery Network, Crowded.Place platform and other FAYR Ecosystem Flagship Projects. FAYR Ecosystem is creating pioneering innovations at

the intersection of technologies with the culture, music, art, education, psychology, healthcare, urban environment, acoustic/soundscape ecology, sustainability, travel, tourism and hospitality and other areas and industries.

Mathieu Grondin

MTL 24/24 (Montréal, Canada)



Mathieu Grondin is general manager for civic organization MTL 24/24, which aims at developing night time culture and economy in Montréal, Québec. Grondin is a night activist, cultural agitator, DJ and film editor. In May 2020, he founded Le Conseil de nuit de MTL 24/24, a night council which acts as a round table of 12 citizens who want to develop more dynamic and benevolent nights for the city of Montréal.

Nándor Petrovics

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Nándor Petrovics' doctoral research focuses on governance networks in night-time economies, but his area of interest also covers public service co-production and other issues of network governance. Nándor works as a lecturer teaching both English and Hungarian courses in public policy analysis, cost-benefit analysis, program evaluation, and multi-level governance. He also has significant consultancy experience in different public policy areas. Nándor holds an MA degree in Political Science, and an economist MSc in Public Policy and Management together with a certificate of European Master in Public Administration. Montréal.

Jess Reia

McGill University (Montréal, Canada)



Jess Reia is appointed as an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at McGill University. BMO Fellow at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Montreal. Member of the Conseil de Nuit de MTL 24/24 (2020–2022). They have been working on research and public interest advocacy at the intersection of nighttime policy, technologies and urban governance in the Americas.

Shelby Bassett

Connected Cities Lab, University of Melbourne (Melbourne, Australia)



Shelby Bassett is a Research Assistant in Urban Policy. She is currently researching philanthropic urban agendas in cities and the governance of cities at night. Her interests also lie in affordable housing, urban sprawl, public transport and conservation. She is pursuing a Master's of Public Policy (Environment) at the Australian National University, and holds a Bachelor's of Applied Science (Architecture) from Curtin University. Previously, she has worked in architecture as well as marketing and communications.

Michele Acuto

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Michele Acuto is Director of the Connected Cities Lab and Professor of Global Urban Politics in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne, where he also serves as Associate Dean (Research). He is also a senior fellow of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and teaches Studio N (Night-time) in the Melbourne School of Design. His work focus

on the interaction between global and urban governance and the networked politics of urban development.

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Professor of Urban Media Studies in the Department of Art History and Communications Studies at McGill University, Montreal. Night-related website: <https://theurbannight.com/>

Tak Umezawa

Japan Nighttime Economy Association (Tokyo, Japan)



Tak Umezawa is the Co-Founder/ Director of Japan Nighttime Economy Association (JNEA), Chairman of Kearney Japan, and Chairperson of Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) Japan. As Director of JNEA, he supports the national and local governments to develop nighttime economy policies and advises private sector players on urban development and cultural projects. He also leads a government committee on growth strategy for inbound luxury tourism.

Salla Vallius

City of Helsinki (Helsinki, Finland)



Salla Vallius is a pioneer Night Liaison at the city of Helsinki. She has a strong background in the fields of culture advocacy and the live music industry. She focuses on embracing the latent potential of small actors as bedrock for unique and original art and culture scenes. Her work is best described as redefining the perception of nocturnal economy beyond mere “enjoyment industry”. Night is an infrastructure that needs to enable multiplicity of social identities.

GNRP team:

Michael Fichman is a city planner, researcher and lecturer at PennPraxis at the University of Pennsylvania's Weitzman School of Design. He is also a nightlife organizer and musician, and is an Emerging City Champions fellowship recipient for his work with 24HrPHL.

Richard Foster is PR and Communications Manager at WORM, a Rotterdam-based multimedia alternative cultural centre and network organisation at the intersection of (popular) culture and (performing) arts. His writing appears regularly in *The Quietus*, *The Wire*, *Louder than War*, and other music and academic publications.

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.

Diana Raiselis is a German Chancellor Fellow with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, researching the role of nightlife in sustainable cities. She is a founding member of the Los Angeles Nightlife Alliance.

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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

Find out more at nighttime.org