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## A resilient system is **resourceful**. In other words, it can easily repurpose resources. Are **denser** places more resourceful, and in turn, more resilient?

*“For many urban systems to work properly, density is the goal, not the enemy.”*  
Michael Kimmelman

Being resourceful is about repurposing the resources a system has, but it starts with having enough resources. These resources – hospitals, medical professionals, emergency response teams – have a direct correlation with the amount of people who live in a certain area. According to [this](#) article, some of the hardest hit areas by the virus have been rural areas. These lower density areas are the ones who lacked the resources to tackle COVID-19.

Despite this knowledge, epidemics attack urban life. In the past, people fled cities in fear of overpopulation causing the spread of infectious diseases. This pandemic may not reverse the resurgence of urban life we’ve seen in the last decades, but it may create a crippling fear of density, a fear we cannot ignore.

A great portion of my recent work as an urban designer has been around elevating the discourse in urban communities around the topic of density and its tradeoffs. There are services and infrastructure (groceries, public transportation, parks, etc.) that are directly associated with density. Providing data-based information to the communities we serve has empowered them to make informed decisions about their future. When this crisis settles, we –urban designers– will be coming back to work in communities who may be more skeptical of density and urban life. How will we prepare for that?

The new discourse may not be whether we want to live in urban centers, but how we want to live in them. Will they have the appropriate infrastructure to support growth and will this infrastructure be inclusive? Will open and recreational spaces that promote healthy living be a priority? How will cities maintain social cohesion and communal life despite their growth?

This is an instance where we have to be reminded that we are not designing future cities to withstand pandemics only, but we also cannot design them as if they will never happen again.



*Amenity Index graphic illustrating the amenities supported by different types of neighborhoods. This graphic was part of a community engagement exercise used in the Turner Field Neighborhoods LCI planning process in Atlanta to inform residents of the tradeoffs associated with density.  
Credit: Perkins and Will*