



Global Observatory of
**Healthy and
Sustainable Cities**

Hefei China 2024

Policy and spatial indicators for healthy and sustainable cities
1000 Cities Challenge report

Xiang Li, 2024



Full details of the data and methods are available at:

Global Observatory of Healthy & Sustainable Cities
<https://www.healthysustainablecities.org>

Policy review conducted by: Ke Peng, Xiaoyu Cheng, Yaning Yang (2024-09-03)

Population data: Schiavina, M; Freire, S; Carioli, A., MacManus, K (2023): GHS-POP R2023A - GHS population grid multitemporal (1975-2030). European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC) [Dataset] doi: 10.2905/D6D86A90-4351-4508-99C1-CB074B022C4A

Urban boundaries: Florczyk, A. et al. (2019): GHS Urban Centre Database 2015, multitemporal and multidimensional attributes, R2019A. European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC).
<https://data.jrc.ec.europa.eu/dataset/53473144-b88c-44bc-b4a3-4583ed1f547e>

Urban features: OpenStreetMap Contributors. OpenStreetMap.fr (2023).
<http://download.openstreetmap.fr/extracts/asia/china//Anhui.osm.pbf>

Colour scale: Crameri, F. (2018). Scientific colour-maps (3.0.4). Zenodo.
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Global Healthy & Sustainable City Indicators Collaboration

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Policy and spatial indicators for healthy and sustainable cities

1000 Cities Challenge report

This report outlines how Hefei performs on a selection of spatial and policy indicators of healthy and sustainable cities. As part of the 1000 Cities Challenge, we examined the spatial distribution of urban design and transport features and the presence and quality of city planning policies that promote health and sustainability.

The findings could inform changes needed to local city policies. The maps show the distribution of urban design and transport features across Hefei and identify areas that could benefit the most from interventions to create healthy and sustainable environments.

Hefei context

Hefei, the capital of Anhui Province, is the central city of the Hefei Metropolitan Area and a sub-center of the Yangtze River Delta Urban Agglomeration. The city features hills, low mountains, and lowland plains.

Levels of government

Hefei's policy list includes policies from national and local governments. At the local level, key urban planning policy documents cover land and spatial master planning, sponge city planning, and transportation development planning.

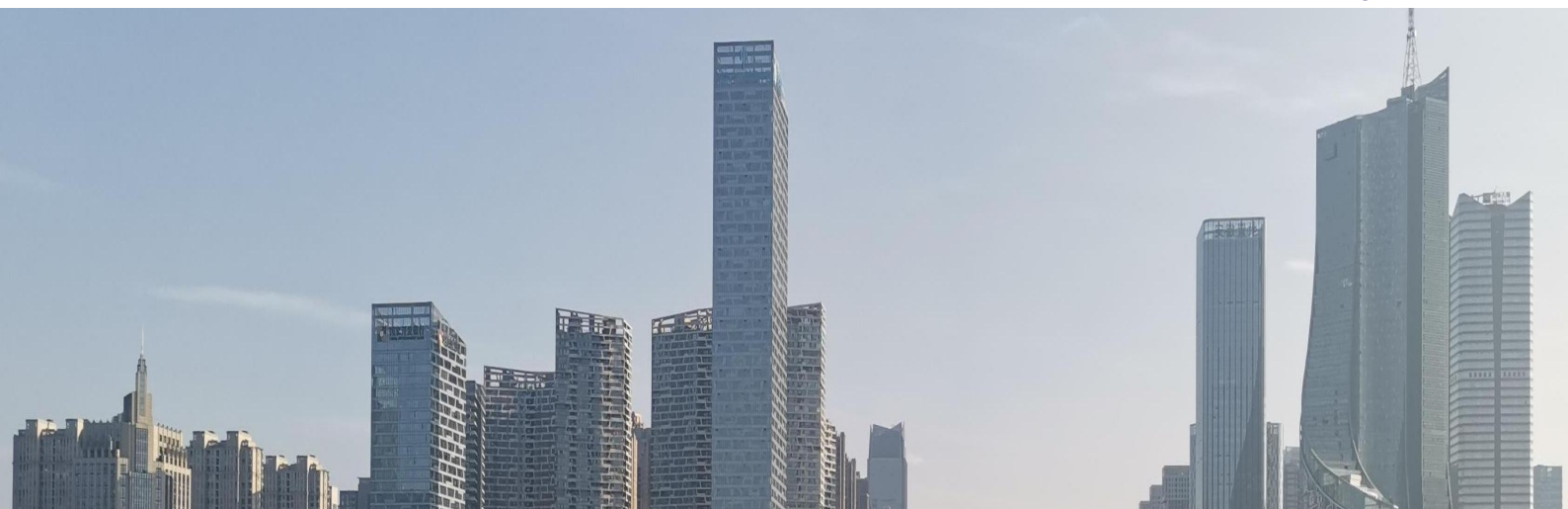
Demographics and health equity

By the end of 2022, Hefei's GDP reached 1.201308 trillion yuan, with a permanent population of 9.634 million. The city's main health issues include malignant tumors, lung cancer, and chronic diseases. Among these, lung cancer has the highest incidence and mortality rates.

Environmental disaster context

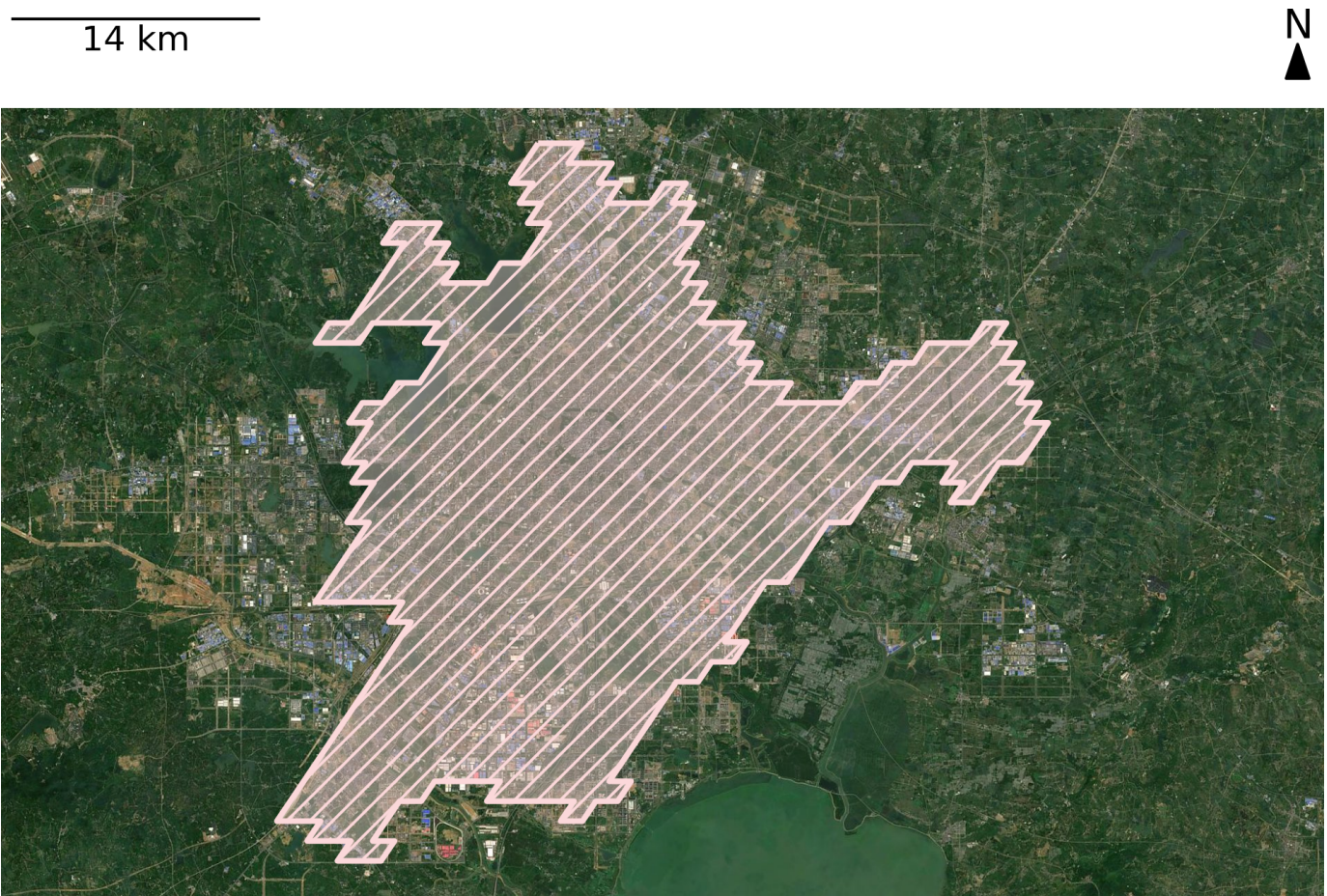
Hefei faces various environmental challenges, including heavy rainstorms, earthquakes, flooding, and cold waves.

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Study region

The study region used to calculate spatial indicators for the population of Hefei presented in this report has been highlighted in the map below using parallel line shading.



Study region boundary (shaded region): GHSL - Global Human Settlement Layer under CC-BY-4.0; Global Human Settlements urban centres: 2015 (EU JRC, 2020; Hefei Center only) under CC BY 4.0 | Basemap: Sentinel-2 cloudless - <https://s2maps.eu> by EOX IT Services GmbH (Contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data 2021) released under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Map legend



Administrative boundary
(GHSL - Global Human Settlement Layer.<https://ghsl.jrc.ec.europa.eu/download.php?ds=pop.>)



Urban boundary
(Global Human Settlements urban centres: 2015 (EU JRC, 2020; Hefei Center only) (GHS:UC_NM_MN=='Hefei' and CTR_MN_NM=='China'))



Study region boundary
(intersection of administrative boundary and urban boundary)

Policy indicators for healthy and sustainable cities

Public policies are essential for supporting the design and creation of healthy and sustainable cities and neighbourhoods. The 1000 Cities Challenge Policy Checklist was used to assess the presence and quality of policies aligned with evidence and principles for healthy and sustainable cities.

Policy presence score

Presence of urban and transport policies supporting health and sustainability

24/32 (75.0%)

Policy quality score

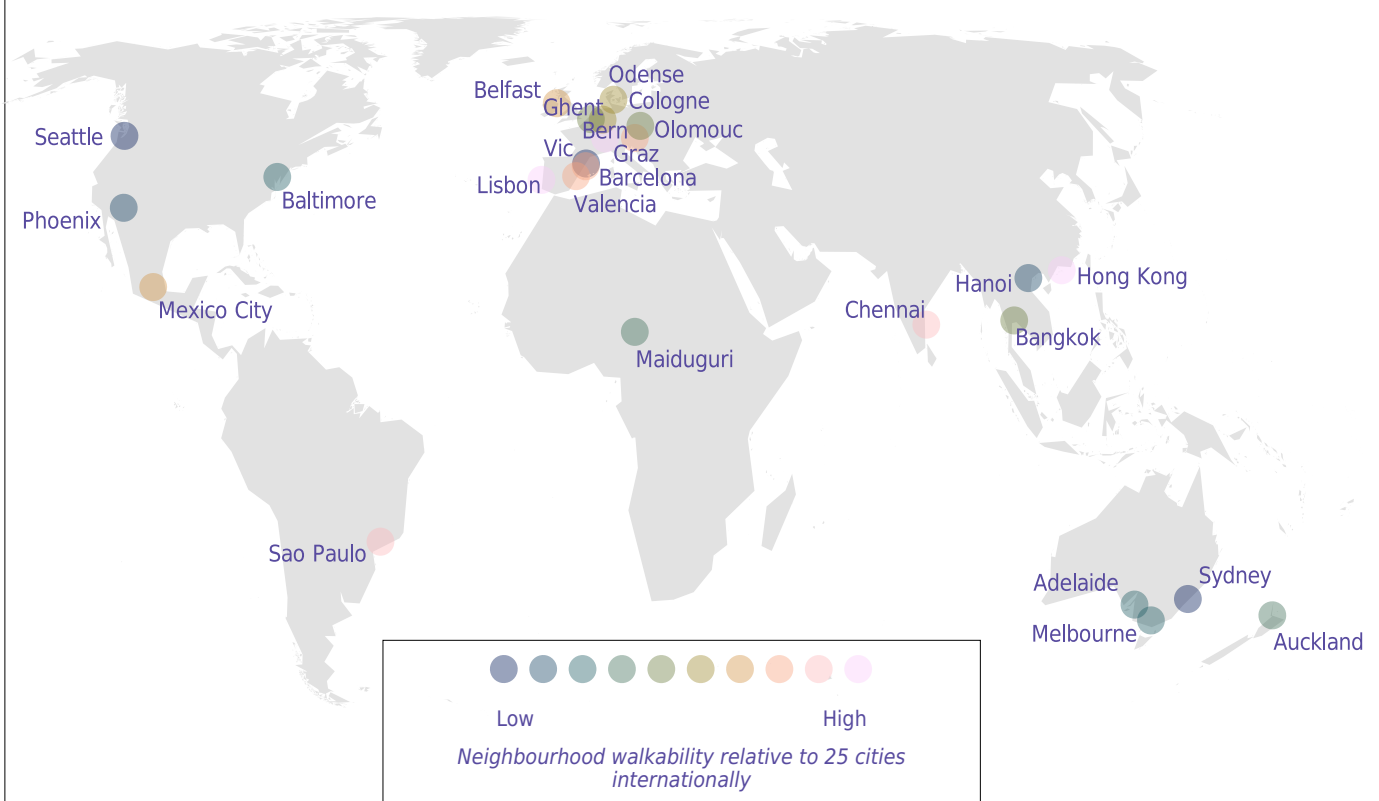
Policy quality score for measurable policies aligned with evidence on healthy cities

34.5/62 (55.6%)

Box 1: The Lancet Global Health Series study of 25 cities internationally

The 1000 Cities Challenge extends methods for assessing the health and sustainability of cities outlined in the 2022 Lancet Global Health Series on urban design, transport, and health. Policy and spatial indicators were calculated, analysed and reported in multiple languages for 25 diverse cities across 19 countries and 6 continents. These cities provide a useful reference for comparisons, but are not a representative sample of all cities internationally.

For more details, please see the 2022 The Lancet Global Health Series on Urban design, transport, and health (<https://www.thelancet.com/series/urban-design-2022>).



Integrated city planning policies for health and sustainability

Many sectors are involved in creating healthy and sustainable cities, including land use, transport, housing, parks, economic development, and infrastructure. Integrated planning is required to ensure policy alignment across sectors. Health considerations need to be embedded in transport and urban policies, and investment in active and public transport should be prioritised.

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Transport policy with health-focused actions	✗	-	-
Urban policy with health-focused actions	✓	✓	✗
Health Impact Assessment requirements in urban/transport policy	✓	✓	✗
Urban/transport policy explicitly aims for integrated city planning	✓	✓	✗
Publicly available information on government expenditure for different transport modes	✗	-	-

Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -

Walkability and destination access

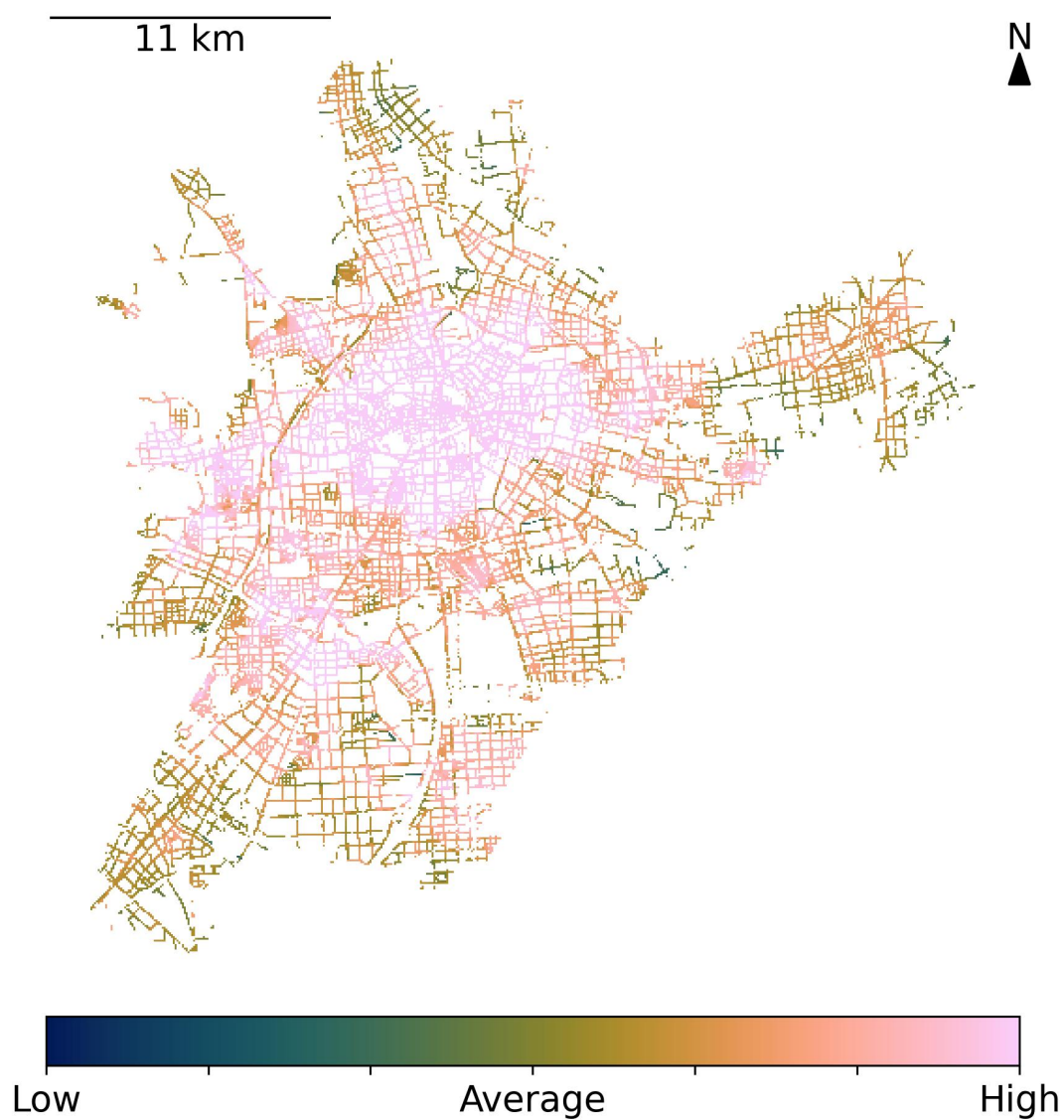
Walkable neighbourhoods provide opportunities for active, healthy, and sustainable lifestyles through having sufficient but not excessive population density to support adequate provision of local amenities, including public transport services. They also have mixed land uses and well-connected streets, to ensure proximate and convenient access to destinations. High-quality pedestrian infrastructure and reducing traffic through managing demand for car use can also encourage walking for transport.

Walkability and destination access policies

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Street connectivity requirements	✓	✓	✓
Parking restrictions to discourage car use	✓	✓/✗	✗
Traffic safety requirements	✓	✓	✗
Pedestrian infrastructure provision	✓	✓	✓
Cycling infrastructure provision	✓	✓	✓
Walking participation targets	✗	-	-
Cycling participation targets	✗	-	-
Housing density requirements	✓	✓	✓
Residential building height restrictions	✓	✓	✓
Limits on greenfield housing development	✓	✓	✗
Mixture of housing types/sizes	✓	✓	✓
Mixture of local destinations for daily living	✓	✓	✗
Close distance to daily living destinations	✓	✓	✓
Employment distribution requirements	✗	-	-
Ratio of jobs to housing	✓	✓	✗
Healthy food environments	✓	✓	✓
Crime prevention through environmental design	✓	✓	✗

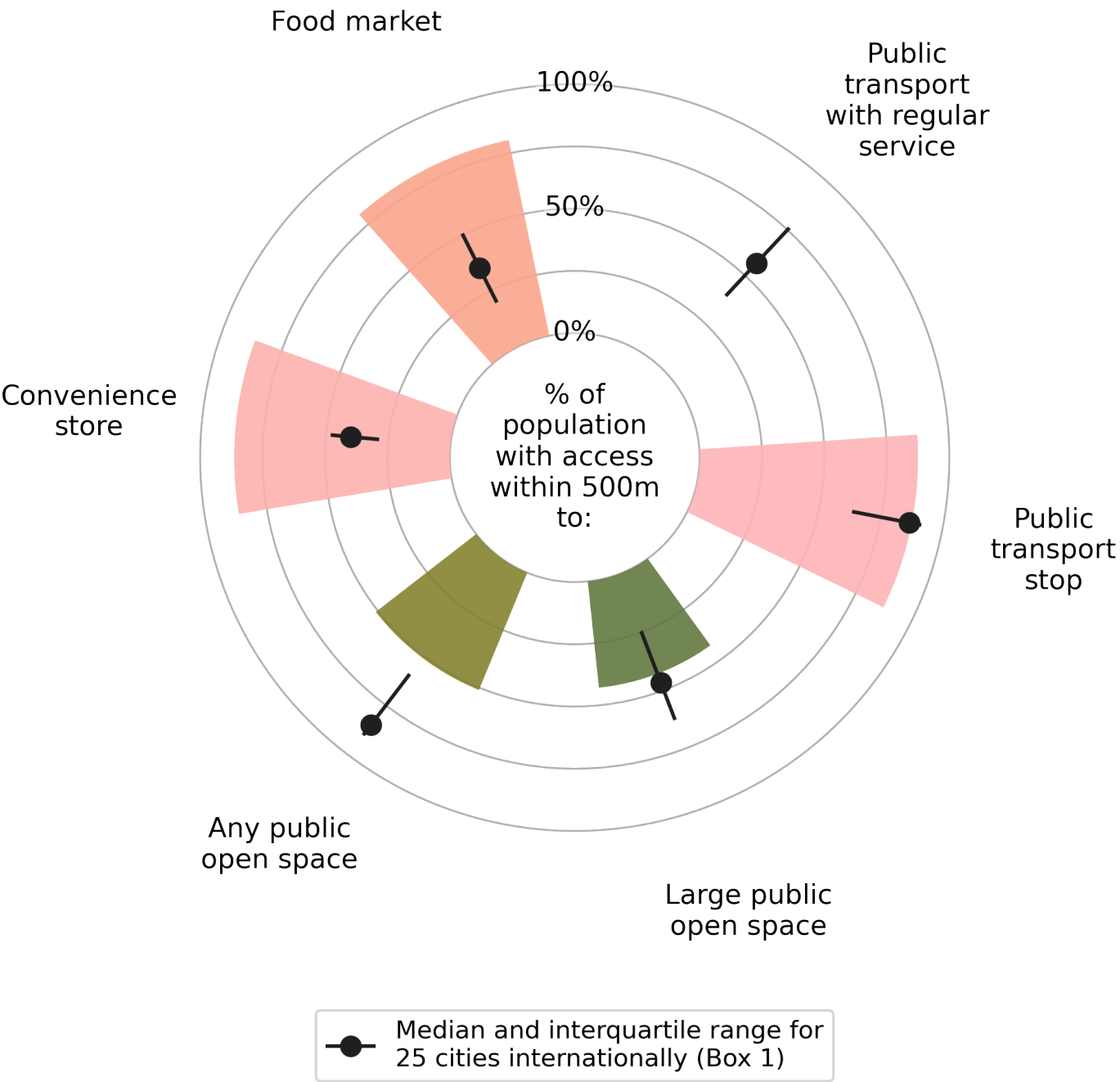
Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -

Neighbourhood walkability relative to 25 cities internationally



99.8% of the population in Hefei live in neighbourhoods with walkability scoring above the median of 25 cities internationally (Box 1)

Percentage of population with access to amenities within 500 metres (m)



Urban design thresholds to promote walking

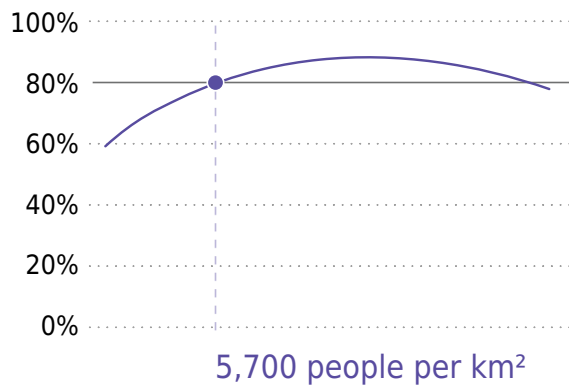
The 2022 Lancet Global Health Series found that to achieve at least 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport, an average urban neighbourhood would need a population density of at least 5700 people km² and street connectivity of at least 100 intersections per km², approximately and depending on context. Preliminary evidence showed that street intersection density above 250 per km² and ultra-dense neighbourhoods (> 15,000 persons per km²) may have decreasing benefits for physical activity. This is an important topic for future research.



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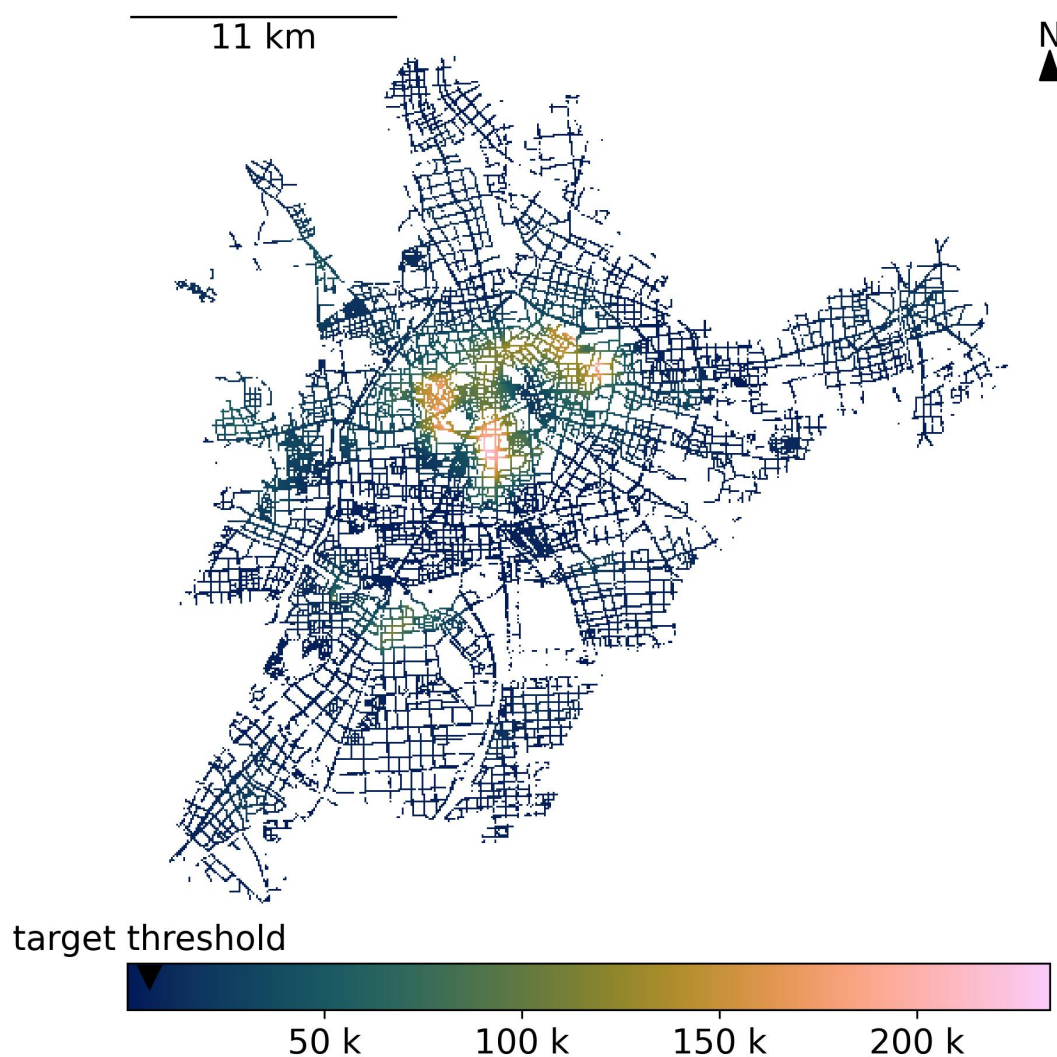
Neighbourhood population density (per km²)

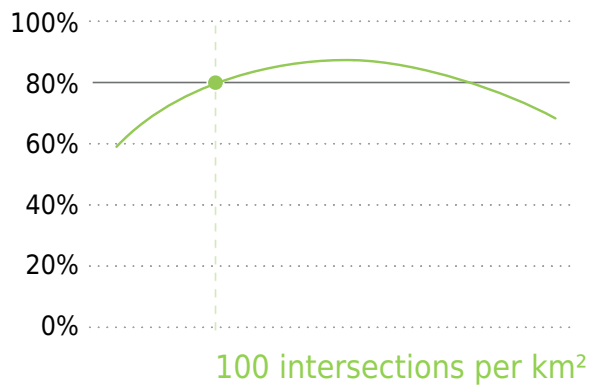
Probability of engaging in any walking for transport



Adapted from The Lancet Global Health (2022):
<https://www.thelancet.com/infographics-do/urban-design-2022>

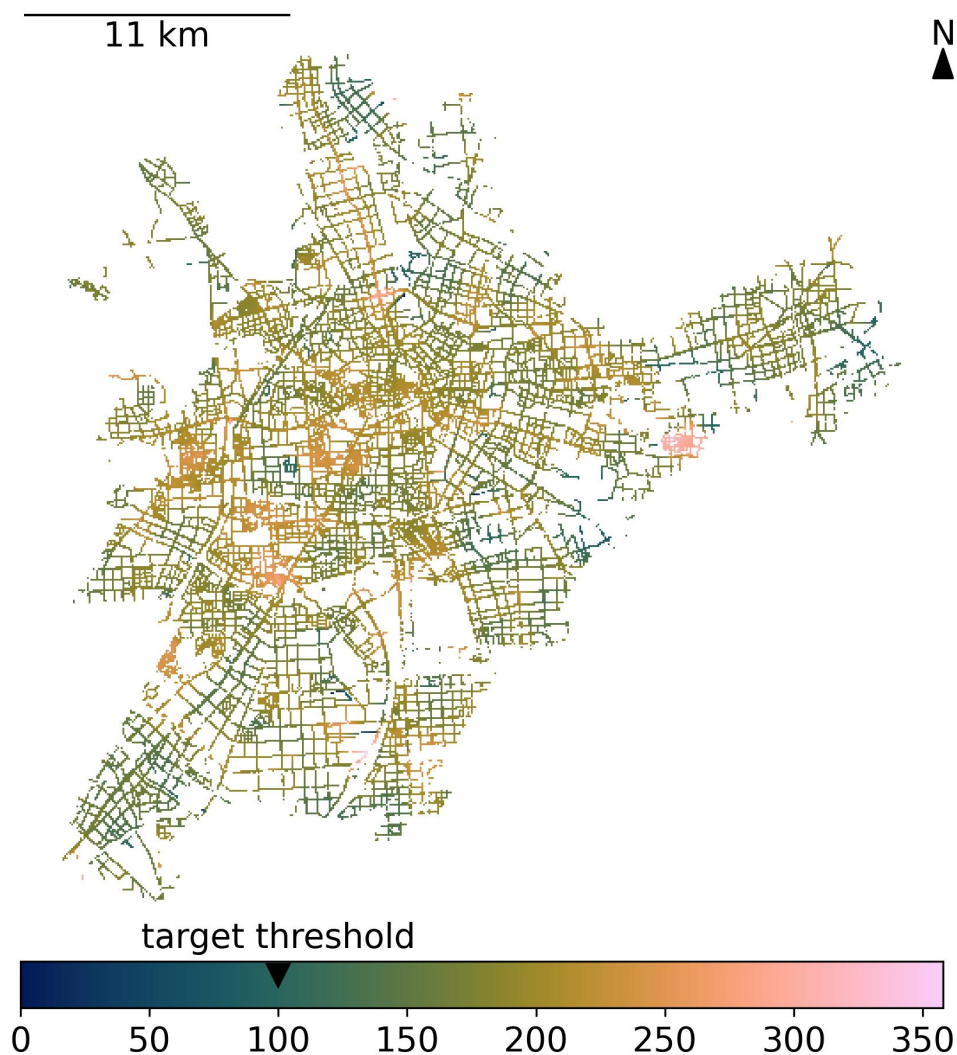
93.9% of the population in Hefei live in neighbourhoods meeting the population density threshold for 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport (5,700 people per km²)



Neighbourhood intersection density (per km²)**Probability of engaging in any walking for transport**

Adapted from The Lancet Global Health (2022):
<https://www.thelancet.com/infographics-do/urban-design-2022>

99.9% of the population in Hefei live in neighbourhoods meeting the street intersection density threshold for 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport (100 intersections per km²)

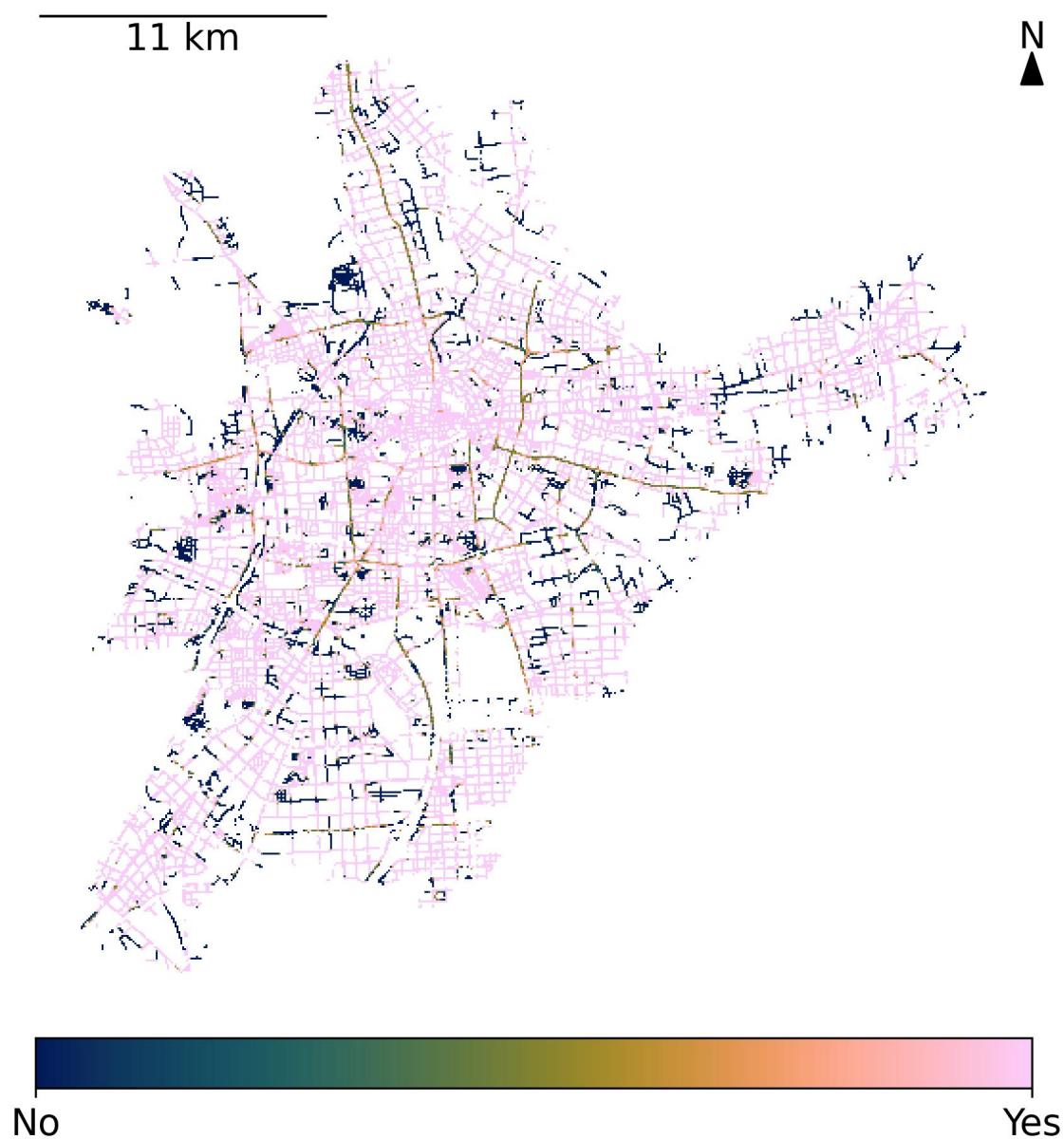


Public transport access

Easy access to frequent public transport is a key determinant of healthy and sustainable transport systems. Public transport near housing and employment increases the mode share of public transport trips, thus encouraging transport-related walking; offering access to regional jobs and services; improving health, economic development, and social inclusiveness; and reducing pollution and carbon emissions. The frequency of services also encourages public transport use, in addition to the proximity of stations or stops.

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Requirements for public transport access to employment and services	✗	-	-
Minimum requirements for public transport access	✓	✓	✓
Targets for public transport use	✗	-	-

Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -



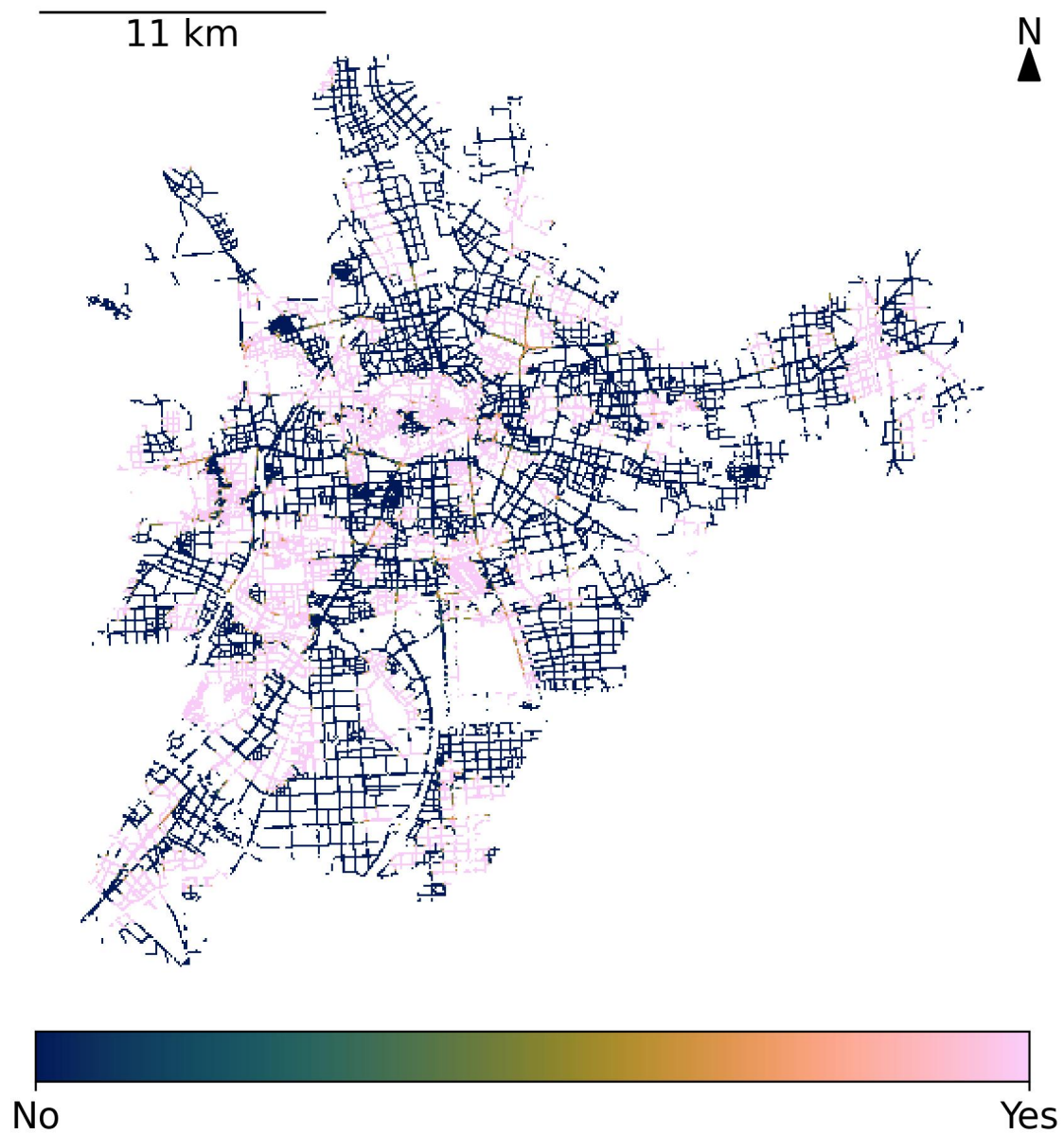
87.5% of the population in Hefei live within 500m of public transport

Public open space access

Local access to high-quality public open space promotes recreational physical activity and mental health. Nearby public open space creates convivial, attractive environments, helps cool the city and protects biodiversity. As cities densify and private open space declines, providing more public open space is critical for population health. Having public open space within 400 m of homes can encourage walking. Access to larger parks may also be important.

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Minimum requirements for public open space access	✓	✓	✓

Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -



43.0% of the population in Hefei live within 500m of public open space of at least 1.5 hectares in size

Urban air quality, and nature-based solutions

Land use and transport policies play a key role in limiting air pollution, with multiple benefits for health and sustainability. Nature-based solutions, including urban greening and urban biodiversity protection, have mental health benefits by increasing contact with nature. Green spaces and vegetation cover can cool cities and help build resilience to extreme heat.

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Transport policies to limit air pollution	✓	✓/✗	✓
Land use policies to reduce air pollution exposure	✓	✓	✓
Tree canopy and urban greening requirements	✓	✓	✓
Urban biodiversity protection & promotion	✓	✓	✓

Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -

Climate disaster risk reduction

In the face of climate change, built environments need to be designed to reduce the health impacts of increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events, such as heat waves, flooding, bushfires/wildfires and extreme storms.

	Policy identified	Aligns with healthy cities evidence	Measurable target
Adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies	✓	✓	✓

Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -



Chaohong Deng, 2024

Summary

The evaluation of Hefei's Healthy City policies shows that the city's urban planning policy framework is relatively comprehensive. While there are gaps in policies related to destination accessibility and transportation infrastructure investment, there are policies addressing integrated transportation and land use planning, air pollution, design, density, and other aspects. In terms of policy quality, Hefei's Healthy City policies generally lack descriptions of quantifiable action outcomes and corresponding result threshold standards, leading to lower policy quality scores.

Spatially, Hefei's accessibility to public transport stations and convenience stores is comparable to the average of 25 benchmark cities, with about 87.5% of the population living within 500 meters of a public transport station and about 86.4% within 500 meters of a convenience store. The city performs moderately in terms of accessibility to public open spaces, with 50.9% of the population living within 500 meters of any open space, and 43% living within 500 meters of a public open space of at least 1.5 hectares. Hefei's community walkability is relatively high, with only 0.2% of the population living in communities with walkability scores below the average of other cities. About 93.9% of the population lives in communities that meet the population density threshold for 80% walking travel probability, and 99.9% lives in communities that meet the street intersection density threshold for 80% walking travel probability.

Citation

Ke Peng, Xiaoyu Cheng, Yaning Yang. 2024. 1000 Cities Challenge report: Hefei, China 2024—Policy and spatial indicators for healthy and sustainable cities (English). Global Observatory of Healthy and Sustainable Cities.



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