



Global Observatory of  
**Healthy and  
Sustainable Cities**

# **Wuhan China 2024**

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

*Yellow Crane Tower, Yanning Yang, 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/hubei.osm.pbf>

Colour scale: Crameri, F. (2018). Scientific colour-maps (3.0.4). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1287763>

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 Wuhan 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 Wuhan and identify areas that could benefit the most from interventions to create healthy and sustainable environments.

### Wuhan context

Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province, is a core city in the Yangtze River Economic Belt, located in the river's middle reaches. With numerous rivers, it is China's largest inland transport hub and a key shipping center in the Yangtze.

### Levels of government

The policy checklist of Wuhan includes policies from both national and local governments. At the local level, key urban planning policy documents focus on land and space planning, master planning, and specialized planning.

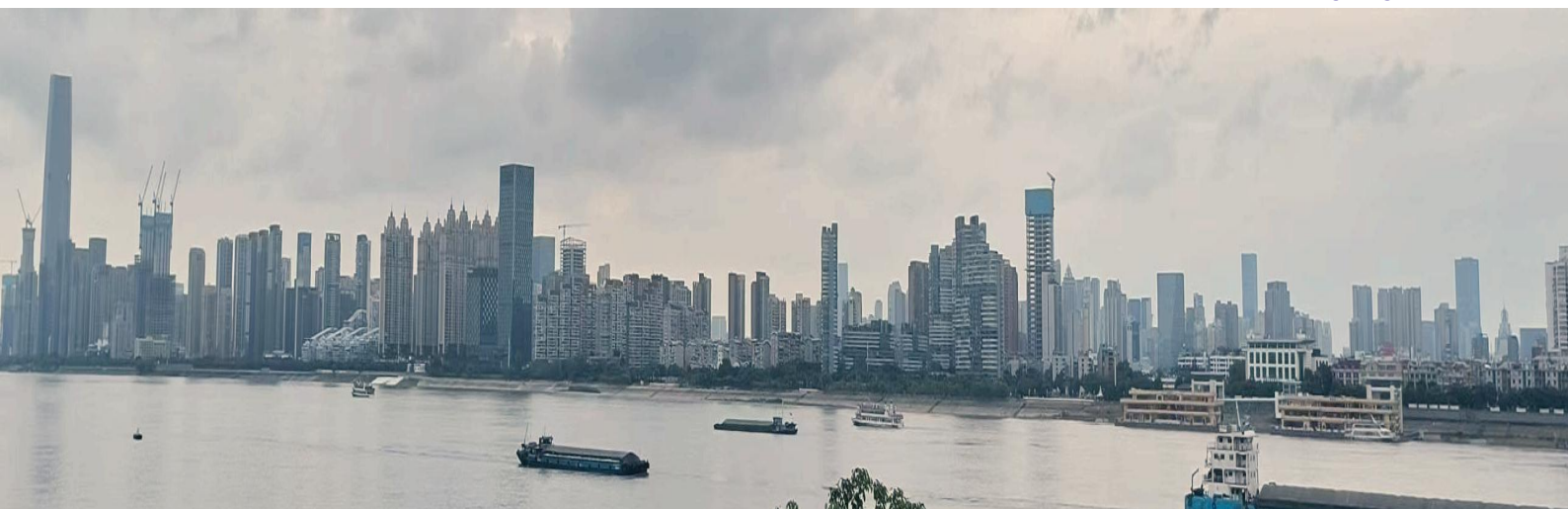
### Demographics and health equity

By the end of 2022, Wuhan's GDP reached 1.886643 trillion yuan, with a permanent population of 13.739 million. The city faces multiple health challenges, including major diseases such as cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, as well as common foundational diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

### Environmental disaster context

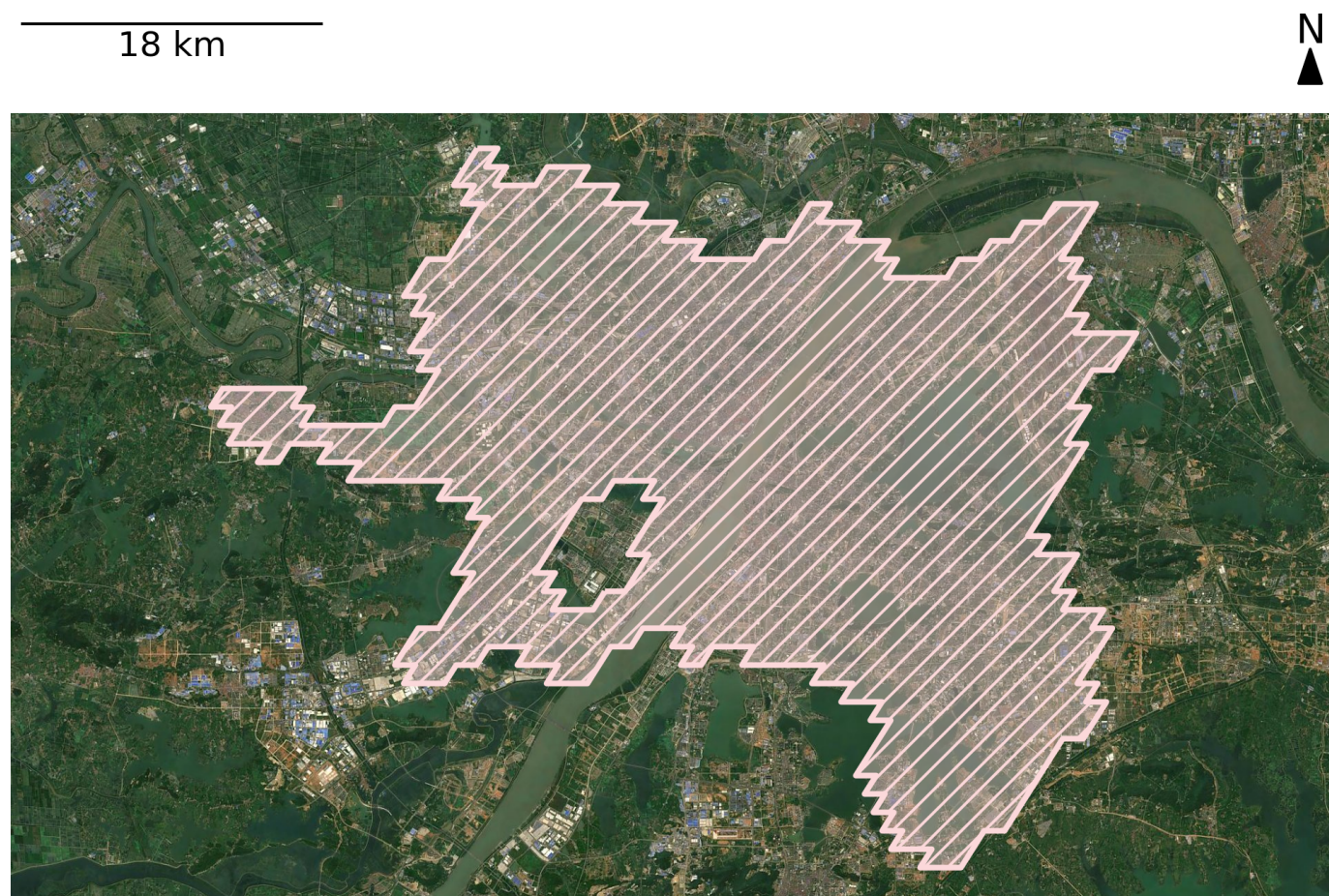
Wuhan faces various environmental challenges, including urban heat, heavy rain, hail, flooding, and cold waves.

Yaning Yang, 2024



## Study region

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



Study region boundary (shaded region): Global Human Settlements urban centres: 2015 (EU JRC, 2020; Changsha Center only) under CC BY 4.0; GHSL - Global Human Settlement Layer 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; Changsha Center only) (GHS:UC\_NM\_MN=='Wuhan' 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

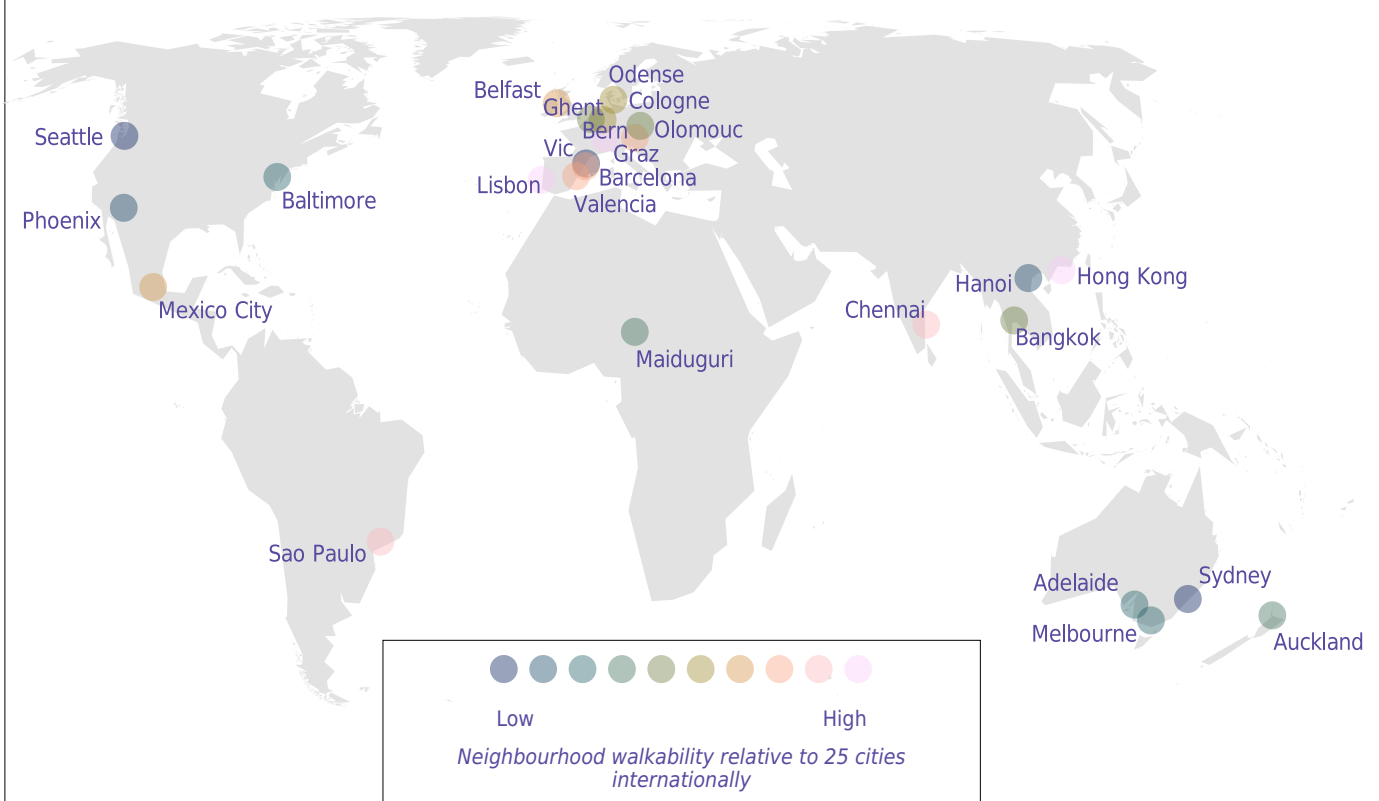
*Policy quality score for measurable policies aligned with evidence on healthy cities*

**35.0/62 (56.5%)**

### 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

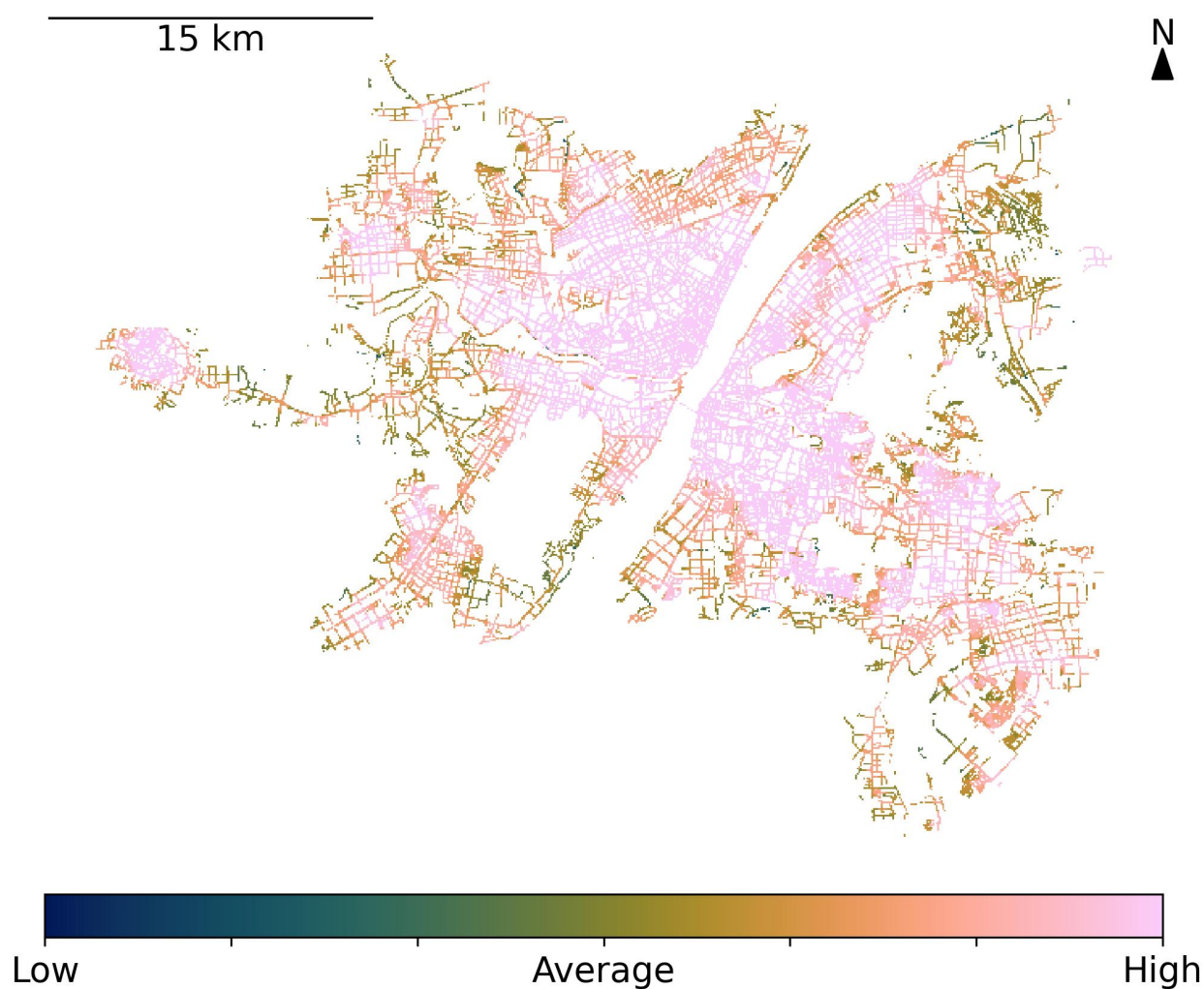
Walkable neighbourhoods provide opportunities for active, healthy, and sustainable lifestyles through having sufficient but not excessive population density to support adequate provision of local amenities, including public transport services. They also have mixed land uses and well-connected streets, 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	✓	✓	✓

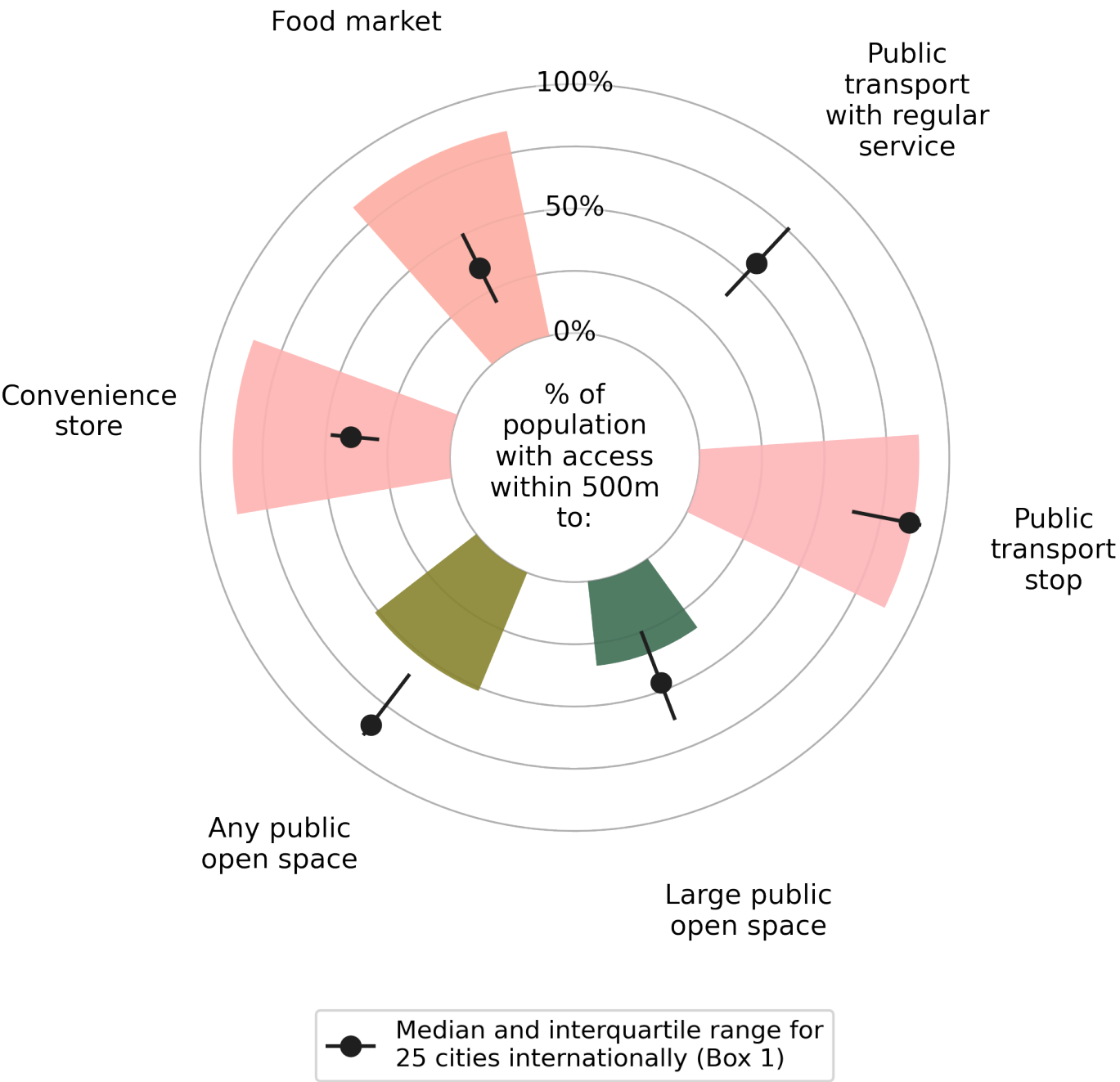
Key: Yes ✓ No ✗ Mixed ✓/✗ Not applicable -

## Neighbourhood walkability relative to 25 cities internationally



99.8% of the population in Wuhan 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

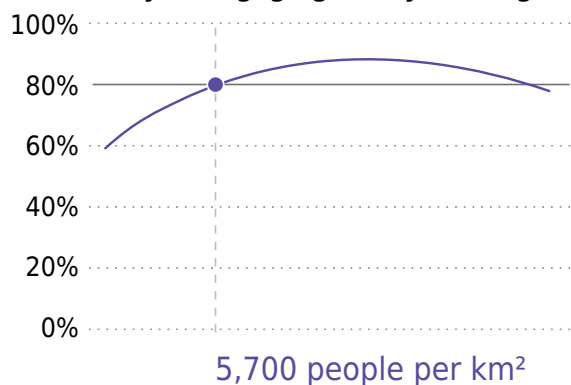
The 2022 Lancet Global Health Series found that to achieve at least 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport, an average urban neighbourhood would need a population density of at least 5700 people km<sup>2</sup> and street connectivity of at least 100 intersections per km<sup>2</sup>, approximately and depending on context. Preliminary evidence showed that street intersection density above 250 per km<sup>2</sup> and ultra-dense neighbourhoods (> 15,000 persons per km<sup>2</sup>) may have decreasing benefits for physical activity. This is an important topic for future research.



Lingling Zhu, 2024

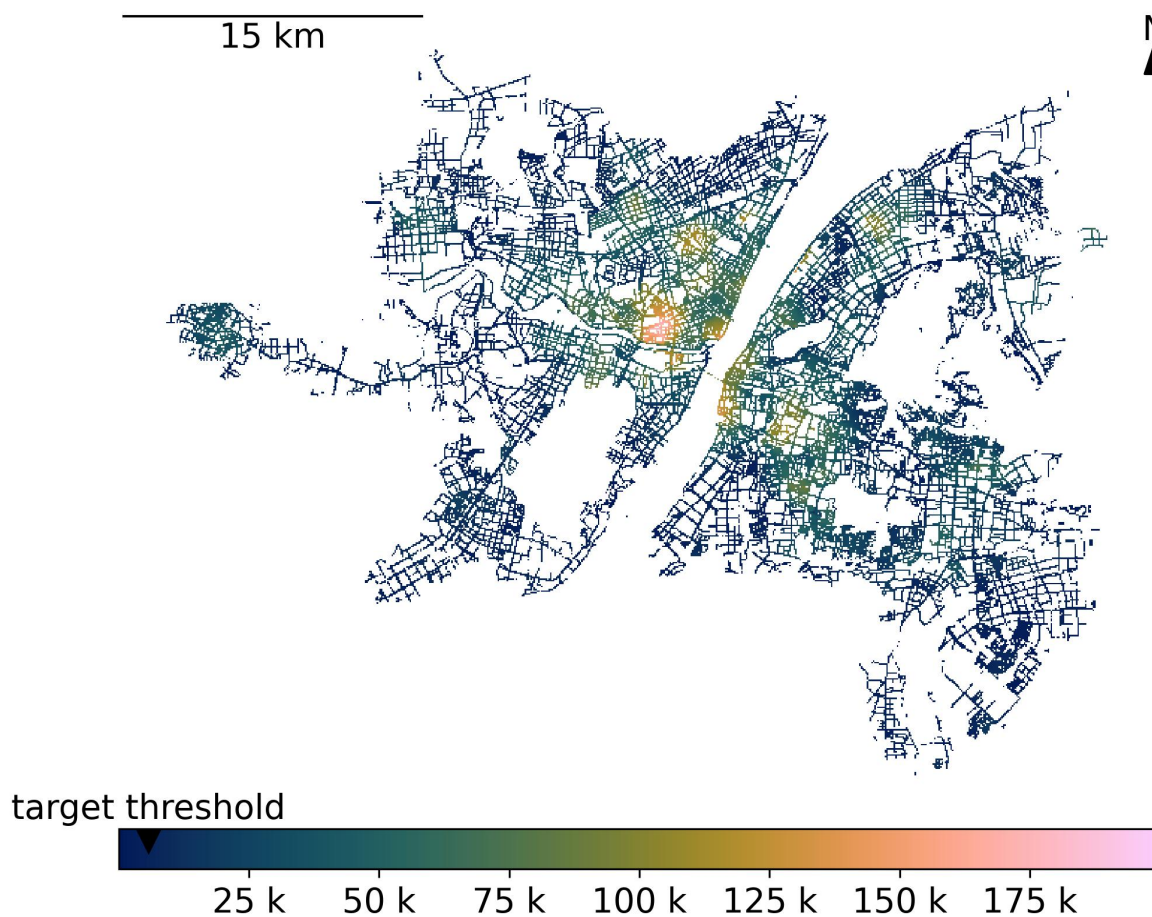
## Neighbourhood population density (per km<sup>2</sup>)

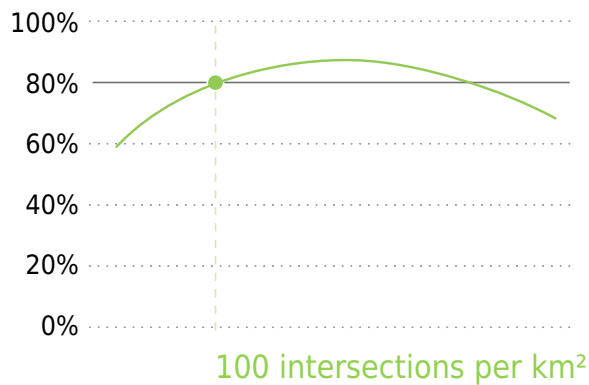
### Probability of engaging in any walking for transport



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

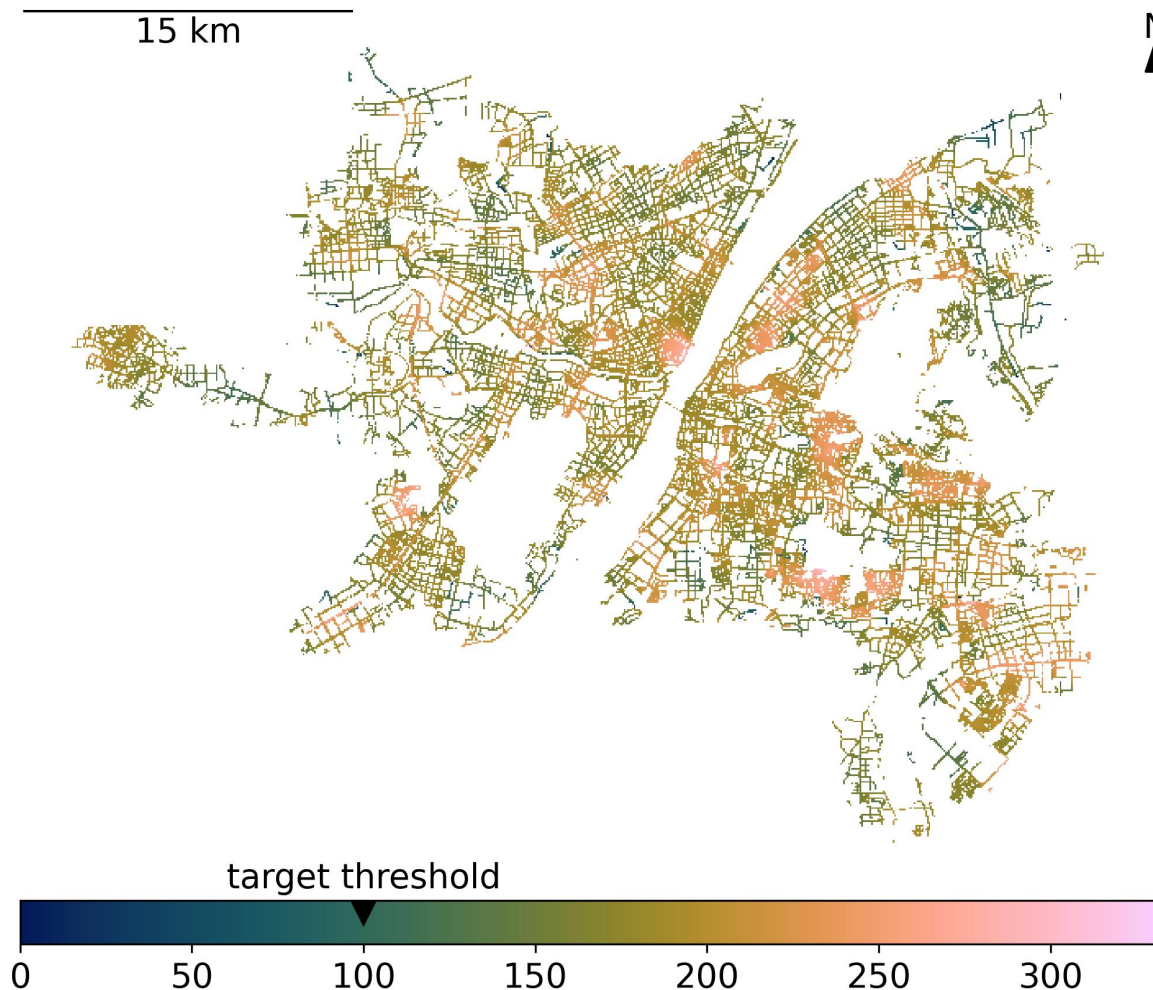
96.7% of the population in Wuhan live in neighbourhoods meeting the population density threshold for 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport (5,700 people per km<sup>2</sup>)



**Neighbourhood intersection density (per km<sup>2</sup>)****Probability of engaging in any walking for transport**

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

99.8% of the population in Wuhan live in neighbourhoods meeting the street intersection density threshold for 80% probability of engaging in any walking for transport (100 intersections per km<sup>2</sup>)

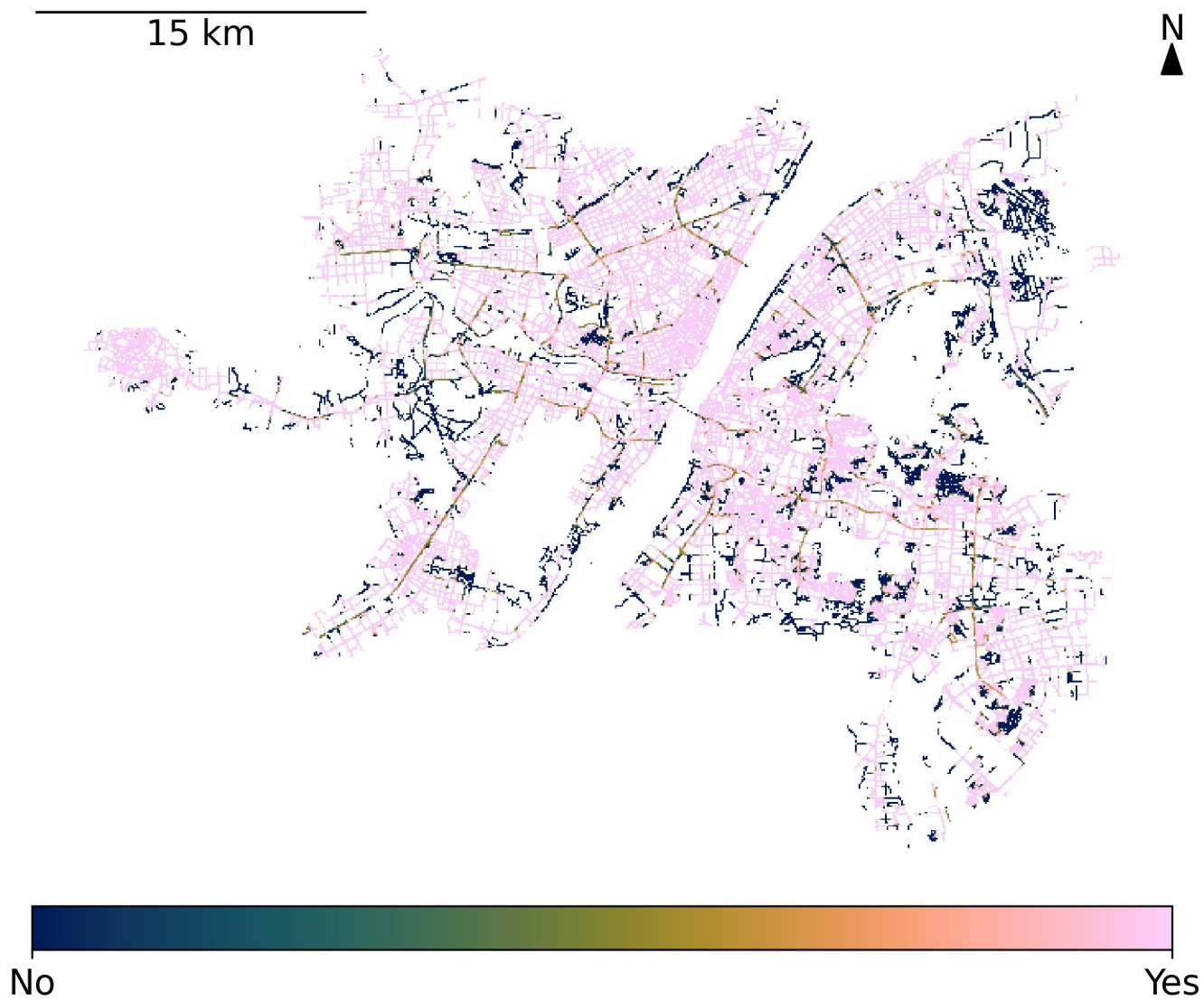


# Public transport access

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 -



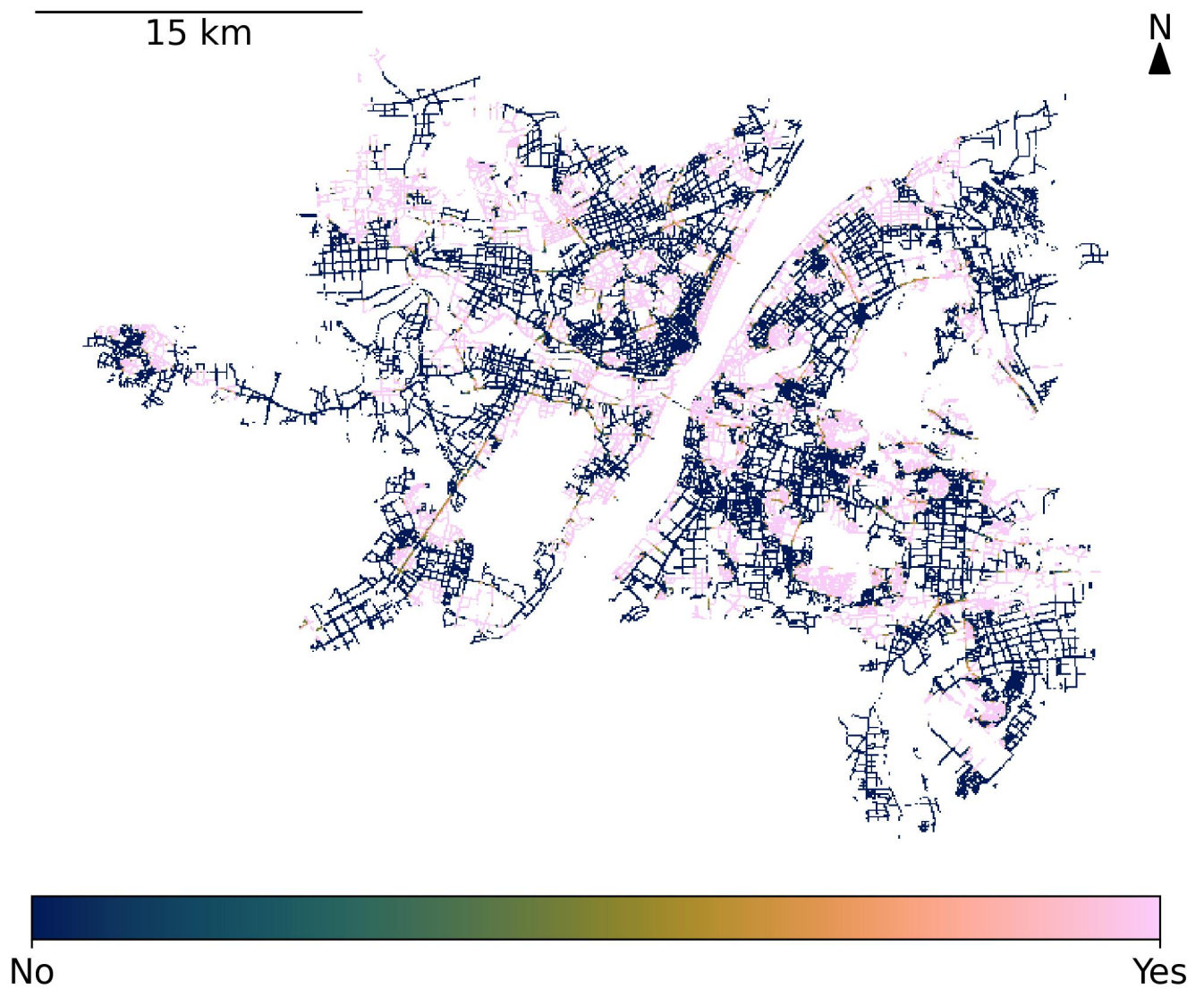
88.0% of the population in Wuhan live within 500m of public transport

# 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 -



34.1% of the population in Wuhan 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 -



Yaning Yang, 2024

## Summary

The evaluation of Wuhan's healthy city policies shows that the city's urban planning policy framework is relatively comprehensive. Although there is a lack of 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 areas. In terms of policy quality, Wuhan's healthy city policies generally lack descriptions of measurable action outcomes and corresponding result thresholds, leading to a lower policy quality score.

Spatially, the accessibility of public transport stations and convenience stores in Wuhan is comparable to the average level of 25 benchmark cities, with approximately 88% of the population living within 500 meters of public transport. Wuhan performs moderately in terms of accessibility to public open spaces, with 51.4% of the population living within 500 meters of any open space. However, only 34.1% of the population lives within 500 meters of public open spaces that are at least 1.5 hectares in size. The walkability of Wuhan's communities is relatively high, with only 0.2% of the population residing in communities with walkability scores below the average of other cities. Additionally, 96.7% of the population lives in communities that meet the population density threshold for an 80% walking travel probability, and 99.8% of the population lives in communities that meet the street intersection density threshold for an 80% walking travel probability.

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## Citation

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