



15-minute city: Human-centred planning in action

The 15-minute city, is quite a recent concept, developed by Pantheon-Sorbonne Professor Carlos Moreno in 2016, that has taken momentum in wake of the pandemic and has been picked up by many European cities. It was thought as a human-scale proposition for how cities should be planned to improve quality of life. It essentially proposes an urban set-up based on four dimensions: density, proximity, diversity, and digitalisation. The goal is to create a city where people could reach all their basic essential social functions like living, working, commerce, healthcare, education, and entertainment at a 15-minute by walk or by bicycle.

EIT Urban Mobility, an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, a body of the European Union, produce the report “+15 minutes city” with the Technical University of Munich. Three workshops were conducted with planning practitioners from the metropolitan region of Amsterdam, Ghent, Madrid, Milan, and Munich. The insights obtained as well as the analysis of cities across the globe allowed the authors to build a holistic document on the methodology, the challenges, and opportunities the 15-minute city concept upholds. **A key output of this study is a roadmap for the implementation of ±15-minute city strategies conceived to support practitioners and decision-makers in designing human-centred, more accessible, just, and liveable neighbourhoods and cities for all.**

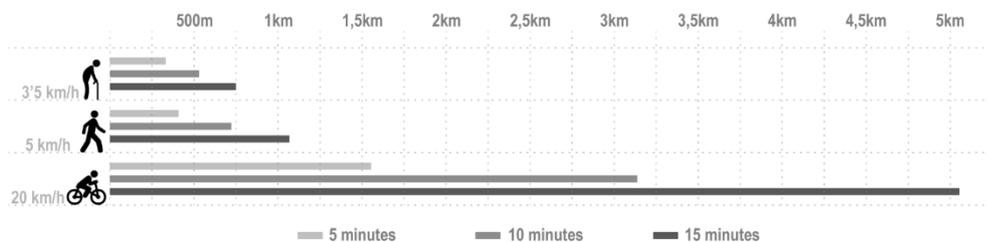
The report will be presented on Wednesday 16 November 09:30 – 10:45 | Accessibility and inclusiveness: drivers of new urban mobility opportunities CONGRESS AREA | MOBILITY ROOM





Key facts from the report:

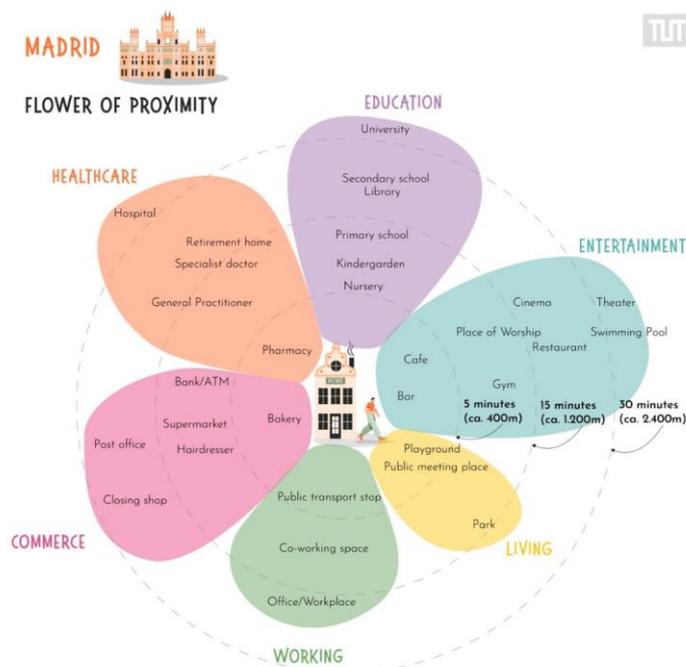
1. In the wake of the COVID-19-pandemic and with Paris as a leading example, **Europe has become the hotbed for new ± 15 -minute cities** with cities such as Rome, Dublin, and Utrecht. In total, the study counts 16 municipalities that have adopted or are in the process of adopting a ± 15 -minute city strategy.
2. Regarding time and distance, there is no consensus on which travel time or travel distance would capture most pedestrian and cycling trips, since the distance covered by different age and abilities groups may vary. For instance, the walking speed of elderly is on average around 3.5 km/h while the average speed is considered 5km/h in most studies. Hence, a 15-minute walk could represent 900-1000m at an average speed, while at a reduced speed it could be 700m. **This means that ± 15 -minute city concepts need to be adapted to local circumstances and population groups.**



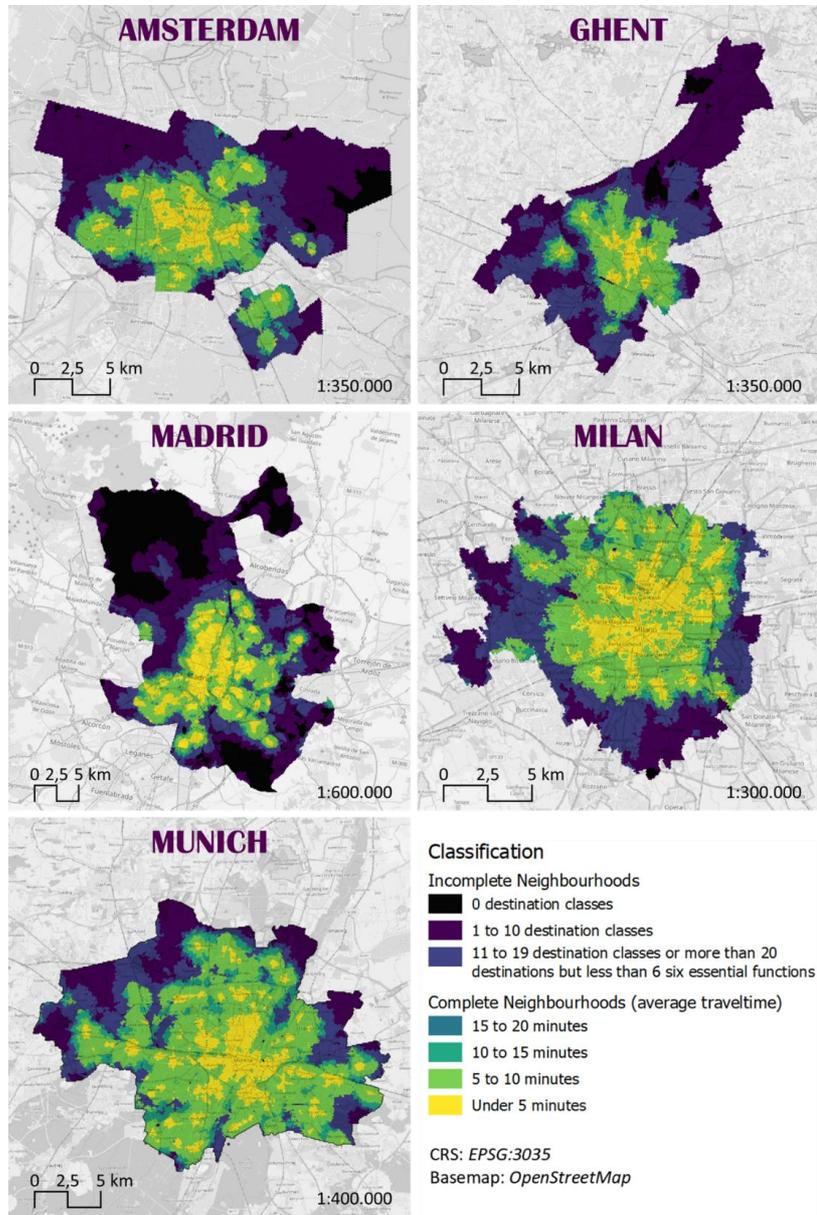
3. **Public transport is seen as an important cornerstone of all strategies** since it enables citizens to reach destinations outside of the ± 15 -minute radius, thereby creating a link between the different neighbourhoods within a city and beyond the city limits. Many cities, for example Utrecht, link their ± 15 -minute city strategy with spatial development around public transport nodes.
4. ± 15 -minute city concepts also encourage active mobility. **In Europe, cycling or walking are chosen for 20-40% of all journeys.**
 - o The average cycling trip length is around 3 km in most European countries. The number of bicycles by 1000 inhabitants is between 52 in Czech Republic to 1000 in the Netherlands. Males use bicycles as a primary transport mode more than females across all countries. Among European countries, cycling trips are higher in the Netherlands (in Amsterdam alone it's 38%), followed by Denmark and Sweden, with the lowest in Finland.
 - o Walking is the most affordable, inclusive, and accessible travel mode for any age and income level, compared to other active mobility options but the average walking trip length varies from 1 km (Great Britain) to 2.5 km (Finland). Walking trips up to 2 km are higher in Great Britain (65%), followed by Spain (55%) and Turkey (49%). About 15-30% of the walking trips correspond to shopping purposes and 30-55% to leisure.



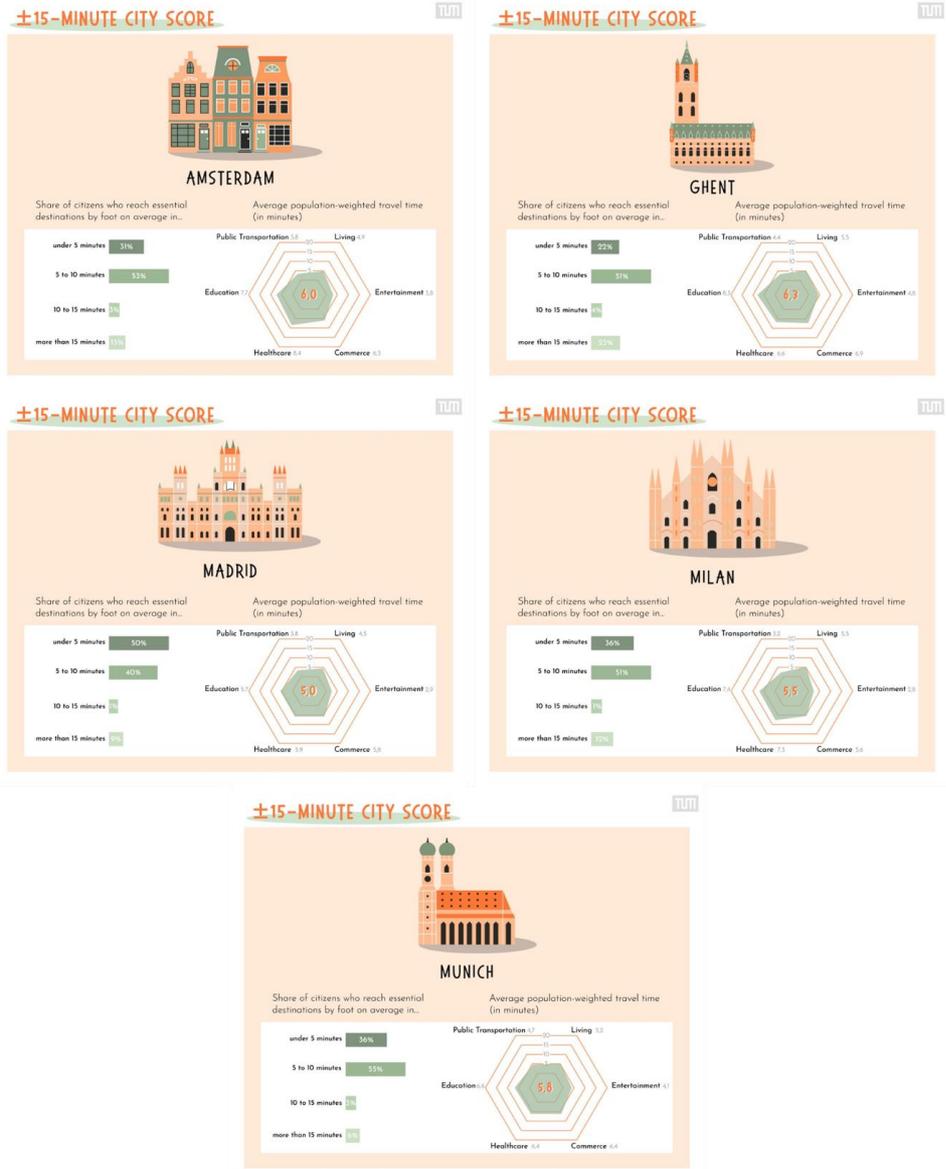
5. For the creation of the ideal ± 15 -minute city, the authors used the exercise of the ‘flowers of proximity’ which was developed by Ana Gil Sola and Bertil Vilhelmson as part of their research on sustainable accessibility. Participants were asked to allocate a wide range of amenities within circles that represent different walking times (5 minutes, 15 minutes, 30 minutes). The participants placed the amenities within circles that represented travel times they find acceptable to reach them. **Overall, there is a large consensus on the relevant destinations for the ± 15 -Minute city across different groups. Nevertheless, the differences between them demonstrate the need to refine the ± 15 -minute city concept based on the specific context it is implemented in.** Below is the “flower of proximity” that was created for Madrid:



6. Workshops with planning practitioners from five cities (Amsterdam, Ghent, Madrid, Milan, and Munich) have shown large European cities are already 10- if not 5-minute cities in large parts. The goal of bringing facilities closer to residents is therefore primarily a problem in suburban areas, while in urban areas the focus should be on factors such as the quality of walking and cycling routes and the attractiveness of public space.



7. For this report, the accessibility to essential services in Amsterdam, Ghent, Madrid, Milan and Munich has been assessed. Overall, all cities performed very well in the analysis with ranges from 75 % (Ghent) to up to 94 % (Munich) of the population living within 15 minutes of essential destinations:



8. Positive impacts of redesigning streets in line with the ±15-minute city concept:

- o Urban regeneration improving accessibility in neighbourhoods by walkability and cyclability increases **social cohesion** and a sense of place (placemaking). Simultaneously, mixed uses and activities make the area safer and bring a higher perception of security to its users.



- **Economic benefits** to consumers who travel by foot tend to spend more than car drivers. Walkable environments have shown a positive correlation with the enhanced value of local services, the creation of new job opportunities, and the support of local businesses and street markets. They also help inhabitants save on transportation costs thanks to the proximity of essential amenities. ± 15 -Minute city concepts **promote tourism** by creating attractive walkable and cyclable streets, connected with public spaces to enjoy local services, shops, and landmarks.
 - Active mobility modes, such as walking, and cycling promote mental and physical health and are also considered more environmentally friendly, which helps **bring positive impacts in terms of air and noise pollution**, directly affecting the health of the citizens living in the neighbourhood.
9. **Challenges** in the implementation of the ± 15 -minute city:
- **The concept risks spurring new waves of gentrification in our cities** if a focus is not put on the ubiquity of the concept and its prioritisation of the disadvantaged and less served areas of the city. It is key for ± 15 -minute city strategies to consider the needs of **all citizens, so it does not become a privilege of the few but a right for all**.
 - Having been planned around planning models that favour a clear division of functions in a territory, suburban areas have strict land-use limitations, making it difficult to implement a ± 15 -minute city model.
 - There is a need to coordinate interests and investments among different administrative units to achieve ± 15 -minute cities in both the city core and suburban areas, to avoid more territorial disbalances in terms of service provision.

BACKGROUND

About EIT Urban Mobility

*EIT Urban Mobility, an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, aims to accelerate solutions and the transition towards a user-centric, integrated and truly multimodal transport system. As the leading European innovation community for urban mobility, EIT Urban Mobility works to avoid fragmentation by facilitating collaboration between cities, industry, academia, research and innovation to solve the most pressing mobility challenges of cities. Using cities as living labs, its industry, research and university partners will demonstrate how new technologies can work to solve real problems in real cities by transporting people, goods and waste in smarter ways. **For more information visit www.eiturbanmobility.eu.***

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