





## PUBLIC SPACE SAFETY AUDIT

# KABUL | AFGHANISTAN

TOWARDS SAFETY FOR ALL IN PUBLIC SPACES ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

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 **UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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The methodology used in this report is based on the UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme City-wide public space inventory and assessment. UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Initiative uses the City Prosperity Index which is a sampling methodology and there is a difference in the data reported. The data is also based on time and day of the survey and may vary due to weather condition and user perception.

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# **AFGHANISTAN · KABUL**

## **PUBLIC SPACE SAFETY AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT**

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**Towards safety for all in public spaces especially for women & girls**

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# DEFINITIONS

## **Antisocial behaviour**

Any action that can cause nuisance or annoyance to anyone.

## **Experiences of crime/harassment**

To encounter/undergone a form of crime or harassment,

## **Gender equity**

The process of being fair to both women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Gender equity strategies are used to eventually attain gender equality. Equity is the means and equality is the result.

## **Green network:**

a system of elements characterized by ecologically based relationships interacting with the other urban systems (Jim & Chen, 2003; Mahmoud & El-Sayed 2011; Oh et al., 2011)

## **Harassment**

A wide range of acts or behaviors, often of a sexual nature, which are unwanted and offensive to the recipient.

## **Infrastructural problems**

Issues related to the physical state of public spaces.

## **Mono-functional spaces**

Spaces that are limited to only one activity.

## **Multi-functional spaces**

Spaces that are used for different types of activities at different times of the day.

## **Perception of safety**

A generalized judgment about the chance of crime. Different times of day, and physical location may affect perception of safety.

## **Pluri-funtional spaces**

Spaces with different kinds of activities at the same time.

## **Public space**

All places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. UN-Habitat categorises public spaces into streets, open public spaces, and public facilities.

## **Social problems**

Issues arising from societal factors.

## **Urban Safety**

Safety does not only mean lack of criminal behavior, fear or aggression. Safety points to the certainty of being respected as an individual at the physical, social and psychological levels. 'Safety' goes beyond the multiple ways of crime and violence. In fact, safety is firstly a foundation for the deployment of human abilities, freedom, solidarity, multiculturalism and creativity. Safety does not only cover the individual's life, but embraces also society and the city. Safety is also a social value, since it is the foundation for the common good of societies that allows a fair and equitable development for all its members. Safety is one of the pillars of good governance and is the basis of freedom and equality for people's full and equal

## **Walkability**

Defines much more than just providing citizen with "the ability to walk". Several characteristics result in optimal walkability such as physical access, places and proximity. Defining a walkable neighbourhood extends beyond pedestrian concerns, as the ability to walk in a neighborhood indicates not only a type of mobility and means of travel, but also a type of sociability between neighbors, which, together, likely affect the physical, mental, and health of people in the community.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

While cities are powerful engines of development and innovation, they are also home to informal settlements and many millions of vulnerable women and girls. Sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls in public spaces are present in every country, in rural areas as well as cities, and even in online spaces. As a result, it has become an impediment to the rights of women and girls in cities, and to enjoy the opportunities of urbanisation. The outcome is often gender exclusion and the lack of participation of women and girls in development.

In theory, public spaces are accessible for everyone—yet, in practice, many powerful factors lead to the spatial domination of one group over the others (Lofland 1998; Carmona et al. 2003; Madanipour 2003; Neal 2010). Women, for example, do not have equal access to urban spaces where they fear for their safety (Ali, Coate and Goro 2000, 62). Thus, many women limit their access to public spaces because male-dominated spaces are usually associated with predictable violence (Valentine 1989, 388, 389; Fenster 1999, 3; Koskela 1999, 113; Andrew 2000, 158; Sandercock and Forsyth 2005, 75). Therefore, the crime itself, the fear of crime, and the inappropriate behaviors of some men can be powerful factors that deter women's access to certain urban spaces.

The adoption of the 2016-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides a roadmap for an inclusive and sustainable world and requires the provision of well-designed networks of safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces and streets, free from crime and violence, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities. It recognizes gender equality as a key pillar for ensuring that no one and no place is left behind. The Goal 5, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” places the importance of ensuring gender equality to sustainable development. Although public space can become the ground for co-production of urban safety, its importance is not widely recognized in the literature and policy arena. Ending all discrimination against, and removing all economic, social, cultural and political barriers for participation of women and girls in societal development is not only a basic right, but it is one of our better chances to solving some of the world's pressing and wicked problems.

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) also calls upon all urban stakeholders to work towards achieving gender equality and empower women and girls by ensuring their full and effective participation and equal rights in all aspects of development. It also urges city leaders to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all, and to address and empower the working poor in the informal economy: Often, these are women.

Afghanistan is amongst the very few countries in the world that is implementing the NUA, the UN roadmap to achieve the SDG 11. Together with the national priorities of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA), UN-Habitat Afghanistan has committed to keep the momentum towards healthy urban

development working with the government, municipalities and communities.

In the capital city of Afghanistan, Kabul, the population has grown exponentially in the past three decades despite the conflict and instability the city has experienced. The country-wide insecurity and natural disasters have resulted to an influx of people into the city for escaping and seeking better opportunities. Its supply of public spaces has not kept up with its growing population. This has resulted in unprecedented demographic and spatial growth of the city contributing to problems already afflicting the capital: inadequate housing and infrastructure, lack of sanitation, land grabbing, environmental challenges, and rampant crime.

Today, Kabul's public realm can be a difficult place for women. This sense of perceived vulnerability can restrict free movement around the city and participation in professional, social, and cultural activities. To address these challenges and to achieve inclusive public spaces especially for women and girls, local level data is important, in order to provide immediate and long-term recommendations for the government to consider in their policies and strategic planning. Therefore, the City of Kabul together with UN-Habitat undertook a Public Space Safety Audit.

### INTRODUCTION

Kabul, among other cities in Afghanistan, has tried to leverage the goodwill of the general public to transform the city into a better one for citizens to fully enjoy their civil rights. This effort presents an opportunity to create jobs, build a sense of pride, belonging and solidarity, and mobilise the public to appropriately care for public spaces. The urban greening and sanitation initiative under the Cleaning and Greening Cities (CGC) program has made a significant investment in re-greening the city among other 12 target municipalities through tree planting, cleaning streets and retrofitting of medians. Kabul is also experiencing a renaissance of public art and an interest of the creative community in shaping public realm. One example is the façade painting campaign converting grey concrete walls into colorful talking walls highlighting local identity and values of the community.

The Public Space Safety Audit was done under the Afghanistan Urban Safety and Security Programme (AUSSP) of UN-Habitat, to not only understand the gaps in the distribution, quality, safety, accessibility and inclusivity of the public spaces but also to celebrate and support the already ongoing initiatives and programmes of the government and UN-Habitat. The survey was also a means to protect existing public spaces, improve the quality of urban spaces, revitalize street life and improve the network of interconnected streets and public spaces especially between the formal and informal areas of the city. Importantly, the results of the audit and assessment will inform policy and strategic recommendations, particularly to improve safety and security, accessibility and inclusion for women and girls in future public space upgrading or development.

Afghanistan Safer Cities Programme, titled as “Afghanistan Urban Peacebuilding Programme (AUPP)-2015-2018” interpreted the concept of safety and security

to be more holistic and cover socio-economic realm, addressing issues of gender, education, employment, environment and beyond to make citizens' life and living conditions safer and more secure. The programme successfully introduced the concept to urban planning in Afghanistan for the first time, and succeeded to the Phase II, “Afghanistan Urban Safety and Security Programme (AUSSP)” 2018-2021. In 2019, the first Public Space Safety Audit was undertaken in the country to enrich the urban data for more evidence-based policy planning and implementations, especially from the perspective of safety and security.

The pilot project was undertaken in Kabul, which is one of the eight strategic cities that AUPP and AUSSP have been operating, in order to test the methodologies which has been adjusted to the Afghan context and better showcase to the national government and other municipalities. The practical survey covered the areas under Provincial Districts (PDs) number 2, 3, 4, 10 selected based on the set criteria.

The tool that was adopted was the Public Space Assessment developed by UN-Habitat Headquarters' Global Public Space Programme based in Nairobi, Kenya. This is a digital tool that uses a structured questionnaire that can be modified to fit any context as well as lead assessment of the priorities for development or upgrading of public space for any city. It utilises the free open source application called KoBoCollect, which is a fast and effective tool for data collection, minimising enumeration errors. The assessment helps in not only identifying needs or substantive areas to address in the city, but also how the development or upgrading process can align with other, already ongoing or planned processes. The objective of this alignment is to make possible synergies and identify institutions, organizations, agencies and other municipal departments as potential stakeholders or collaborating partners. In addition to identifying key strategies, steering documents, potential partners, etc., the key issues of the existing strategic plan (if any) should be mapped and analysed. This tool starts with answering the question “where are we?” in the realm of public space.

Since 2015, UN-Habitat has supported 27 human settlements of varying spatial scales to conduct the assessment. These include, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Wuhan, China, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Durban, South Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Khan Younis, Occupied Territory of Palestine, among others. There has also been a keen interest by other cities to use this tool for their own citywide public space strategy work. The tool is also key in monitoring and reporting on SDG 11.7 as well as toward the implementation of the NUA.

In Kabul, the questionnaire that was used to conduct the safety audit in the pilot districts was formulated by UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme in close consultation with the AUSSP team. It was then uploaded into the Kobo toolbox server where it was made accessible to the surveyors. In addition to the questionnaire, maps were developed to aid ground-truthing and identification of public spaces as well as sketching their boundaries on the ground as of the time of the assessment.

Prior to data collection, a five-day session for meeting and training was held to provide a better understanding of public spaces and the tasks ahead. At the United Nations operational complex in Kabul, two trainings were conducted. One was an orientation for officials from Kabul Municipality while the other was administered to 25 surveyors who were recruited to support the data collection exercise.

As part of the training, the surveyors were exposed to a hands-on experience of the tool and tested the tool on the ground. Following these two exercises, they provided feedback regarding the application of the questionnaire and the usability of the tool. Based on the feedback received, some of the questions were modified to fit the local socio-spatial context.

In total, there were 67 data entry points collected, including 25 open public spaces and 42 streets. After data cleaning, 23 open public spaces and 32 streets were assessed within the four districts. The collected data was verified in a one-day workshop inviting senior officials from the municipality, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Civil Society Organizations, and communities. The validation helped in confirming credibility of the collected data and gathering additional information on the available public spaces, in parallel to raising awareness of the importance in public spaces and its proper utilities especially for women and girls. As it was the first attempt in the country, the Mayor was also very keen and cooperative to the activity, providing fullest support to UN-Habitat.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

The purpose of the open public space and street assessment in the four districts was to indicate both spatial and non-spatial gaps and provide the districts and the city with a way forward for upgrading, renovation and development of streets and open public spaces that are safe for all especially women and girls. This assessment is a first step towards a more long-term strategic plan for Kabul.

Collectively in the four districts, the open public spaces account for 0.7 square kilometres, which represent only two per cent of urban land. This is against the international good practice of 15 – 20 percent of total urban land which is also supported by UN-Habitat. Measured against the population, every resident in the districts enjoys 0.7 square meters of public spaces. There is a clear disproportionate distribution across the four districts, reflecting and reinforcing social and economic inequalities, and vulnerability to multiple risks.

Within the four districts, interviews were conducted for users of public spaces. These interviews ensured that there is an age and gender balance to limit subjectivity. An analysis of responses revealed that feeling of unsafety, harassment directed to women and infrastructure problems were the main safety concerns in open public spaces. The main safety concerns along the streets were also feeling of unsafety, harassment directed to women and infrastructure problem with infrastructure problems being present in majority of the streets. This shows the need for the districts to work on ensuring that infrastructure are installed in public spaces and are maintained in

good condition for use. Additionally, these public spaces should have mixed usage and activities, for diverse user groups at different times of the day for maximizing the utility of public spaces. This will also enable to secure natural surveillance by residents and business people, and in that, there is reduced isolation and therefore contributing to a feeling of safety. Investment in street lighting and policing in public spaces and streets used at night can improve safety and reduce harassment directed to women.

Adequate and proportionate distribution of these spaces across the city – both in low-income and affluent neighborhoods, is important for fostering social cohesion and building a sense of 'collective' among residents. When creating new public spaces, attention should be paid to parts of the city where the need is greatest and where investing in public space would yield the highest impact. Essentially, the priorities should be given to areas where there are opportunities to achieve multiple effects including improving urban safety and security, reducing the risk of natural disasters such as floods, upgrading informal settlements, enhancing economy through supporting the informal and formal economy, connecting neighbourhoods and regenerating decaying inner city neighbourhoods among others. Within the four districts, approximately 48 per cent of the land requires creation of new open public spaces. This will also support creation of a green network and achievement of a higher share of land to be dedicated to open public space, which will result in increasing the per-capita public space.

To achieve the above, adequate street connectivity provides an excellent opportunity and an efficient way to disperse traffic, providing multiple choices and offering an incentive for people to walk, cycle and or embrace public transport. Where a road connection may not make sense, for example in a high-density neighborhood, a difficult terrain or an unplanned settlement, a pedestrian and bicycle connection may be a better idea to consider. This is especially applicable for the case of Kabul where the landscape has several hills and the radial road network converges in the central city, creating significant congestion. Shared streets (mix of pedestrian, cyclists and motorists) accounted for 84 per cent (27 streets) of the total streets assessed. However, within the four districts, most of these streets were informally developed as pedestrians were not prioritized in the design, therefore these streets are dominated by cars. Even with majority of the streets having designated sidewalks (30 streets), 60 per cent (18 streets) of these streets do not have a buffer between the sidewalk and the main road, leaving the street disorganized. For a successful shared street, considerations should be given where pedestrian activity is high and vehicle volumes are low or discouraged. Street width mainly ranged between 600 metres to 1,800 metres which is not enough for the typical shared streets. Overall, the street length to land area ratio is 15 km/km<sup>2</sup>. This is below the recommended ratio of 18km/km<sup>2</sup>, contributing to the congestion and traffic snarl-ups. There is also high number of streets with no signage for pedestrians and cyclists and 33per cent (10 streets) of the sidewalks have obstacles discouraging continuity of walking and cycling. Because of these and a general low quality of the streets, few people especially women are

walking and cycling. While some of the streets have unique characters including trees and enough pedestrian space, the Municipality needs to invest more to improve the pedestrian experience by promoting safety and security.

The indicators related to safety, inclusivity and accessibility of open public spaces and streets were analyzed and showed that safety scored the highest and accessibility the lowest while along the streets, user index scored the highest. This supported to categorize the streets and open public spaces according to the priority for upgrading. It was found that as many as 15 open public spaces and 31 streets require moderate upgrading, such as improving the road infrastructure and installing streets lighting. Majority of the public spaces require continuous maintenance while those that require upgrading are, Prozha Tadeli Wazir Abad Park, Park Behind the Red Cross Clinic, Tap-e-Kolala Poshta, Behind of Municipality Blocks Park, Wazir Akbar Khan Park, Zarnegar Park, Pul Artal Park and Qasabi Street Lane. This may suggest redesigning of the spaces through community engagement and implementing the upgrading project. It is however important to ensure that there is a clear budget allocation and involvement of key relevant stakeholders and experts in the process of upgrading and maintenance after the projects. These priority projects can be integrated into the city development plan to ensure addressing the needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The vision for the city of Kabul is to be “a green city, with ample parks and open spaces for residents to relax, gather together, and enjoy the region's natural beauty. To be a civic city, with beautiful streets, commanding views, and a grandeur appropriate for a capital city. Kabul will also be an inclusive city, with economic opportunity for everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, or circumstance”

To achieve this vision within the four districts, four goals are proposed based on this pilot, which are: create a network of public spaces to enhance climate resilience, promote safety in open public spaces and streets, provide a diverse and inclusive public space and build a positive culture for walking and cycling. Each of these goals have strategies and recommendations for their achievement, and to supplement the Kabul Urban Development Framework (KUDF). It further seeks to support the regeneration of the central city and reinforce the city's conservation and open space network strategy by supporting a balanced relationship between built and natural environment to support economic development, heritage conservation and environmental sustainability.

The Public Space Safety Audit ensures a demand-driven approach, in which the opportunities for the most deprived neighbourhoods and public spaces are maximized. To anchor the next steps of this analysis for a long-term strategy, the analysis and the identification of gaps in the existing urban policies, legal and institutional frameworks and in the planning of the districts is paramount.



# 1

CHAPTER



## BACKGROUND

- Global Framework
- UN-Habitat in Kabul
- UN-Habitat's Public Space Programme
- About Kabul Municipality
- Scope and focus
- About the districts
- Objectives
- Who was trained?
- Data collection and data cleaning



# GLOBAL FRAMEWORK ON SAFETY, GENDER AND PUBLIC SPACE

More than fifty per cent of the world still feels unsafe in public spaces. Violence against, and harassment of women and girls is an everyday phenomenon in public spaces such as streets, public open spaces and markets among others. This limits their choices for movement, work, healthy leisure and education. It is the biggest impediment to the rights of women and girls to the city, and to enjoy the opportunities of urbanisation. The outcome is often gender exclusion and the lack of participation of women and girls in development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a roadmap for an inclusive and sustainable world, and recognizes gender equality as a key pillar for ensuring that no one and no place is left behind. Goal 5, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” places the importance of ensuring gender equality to sustainable development. Ending all discrimination against, and removing all economic, social, cultural and political barriers for participation of women and girls in societal development is not only a basic right, it is one of our better chances to solving some of the world’s pressing and wicked problems

The New Urban Agenda calls upon all urban stakeholders to work towards achieving gender equality and empower women and girls by ensuring their full and effective participation and equal rights in all aspects of development. It also calls on city leaders to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all, and to address and empower the working poor in the informal economy. More often than not, these are women.



**60%**  
60 % of all urban residents in developing countries have been victims of crime



Globally, one in five people has been a victim of violence and crime



96% of adolescent girls don't feel safe in Delhi



45% of girls reported sexual harassment when using public transport in Kampala

**2.2%**

Just 2.2% of girls say they feel safe in public spaces in Lima



In Port Moresby, over 90 per cent of women and girls have experienced some form of sexual violence when accessing public transportation.



In London, 43 per cent of young women have experienced some form of harassment in the past year.

**“We will support the provision of well-designed networks of safe, accessible, green and quality streets and other public spaces that are accessible to all and free from crime and violence, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence, considering the human scale, and measures that allow for the best possible commercial use of street-level floors, fostering both formal and informal local markets and commerce, as well as not-for-profit community initiatives, bringing people into public spaces and promoting walkability and cycling with the goal of improving health and wellbeing.”**

New Urban Agenda: Para 100.

## OPEN PUBLIC SPACES AND WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan's rapid urbanization presents an immense opportunity for socio-economic growth. However, since over three decades, Afghanistan has been experiencing the atrocities of conflicts, which affected many public spaces, infrastructures and facilities to be destroyed, unattended, and/or used as fighting fields. Urban spaces have been developed to some extent, but many are still in "unplanned" areas without proper municipal controls, and therefore necessary basic urban services have not been delivered to the city dwellers. There are much residual needs for developing safer and secure public spaces with free access to all the citizens.

The conflicts have significant impact on many lives of vulnerable groups such as women and children in the country. They were deprived of their opportunities for educations, economic activities, healthy social lives, political participations, decision makings, etc., causing vicious circles to their next generations. There were times that Afghan women enjoyed the very basic freedom of working outside and having public life during the years of 1919-1980, although the country was still under development and male dominated. However, not only with prolonged conflicts, but with social, cultural and religious norms, women and girls have still difficulties of enjoying the benefit of and access to public spaces and facilities.

## UN-HABITAT AFGHANISTAN

UN-Habitat is the leading UN agency in sustainable urban development, working for people in cities and urban areas. In Afghanistan, for more than 20 years, UN-Habitat has been the main strategic partner of the government, promoting urban development, upgrading public spaces and facilitating citizens' in particular women's participation in urban decision-making processes. UN-Habitat has been assisting the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) through different National Programmes, making urban challenges as opportunities and addressing issues with unique approaches but with respect to the local context.

Afghanistan is amongst the very few countries in the world that is implementing the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the UN roadmap to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11. Together with the national priorities of GoIRA, UN-Habitat Afghanistan has committed to keep the momentum towards healthy urban development working with the government, municipalities and communities.

## AFGHANISTAN URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAMME (AUSSP)

UN-Habitat Afghanistan launched the first Safer Cities Programme in Afghanistan in 2015, a flagship programme of UN-Habitat started in 1990s which stemmed from

necessity of addressing issues of urban crimes, physical violence and youth involvement in these acts in Africa. Afghanistan Safer Cities Programme, titled as "Afghanistan Urban Peacebuilding Programme (AUPP)" interpreted the concept of safety and security to be more holistic covering socio-economic realm, addressing issues of gender, education, employment, environment and beyond to make citizens' life and living conditions safer and more secure. The programme successfully introduced the concept to Afghanistan for the first time, and succeeded to the Phase II, "Afghanistan Urban Safety and Security Programme (AUSSP)" from May 2018. In this phase, AUSSP conducted the first Public Space Safety Audit to enrich the urban data for more evidence-based policy planning and implementations, especially from the perspective of safety and security. The pilot project was undertaken in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan and one of the eight strategic cities that AUPP and AUSSP have been operating, in order to test the methodologies which has been adjusted to the Afghan context and better showcase to the national government and other municipalities. The practical survey covered the areas under Provincial Districts (PDs) # 2, 3, 4, 10. The first analysis of the data were validated by Kabul Municipality, Ministry of Urban Development and Land, Ministry of Women Affairs, Civil Societies and community representatives. The result and recommendations have been shaped in the report, being endorsed and launched by the government as official document.



# UN-HABITAT'S GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME

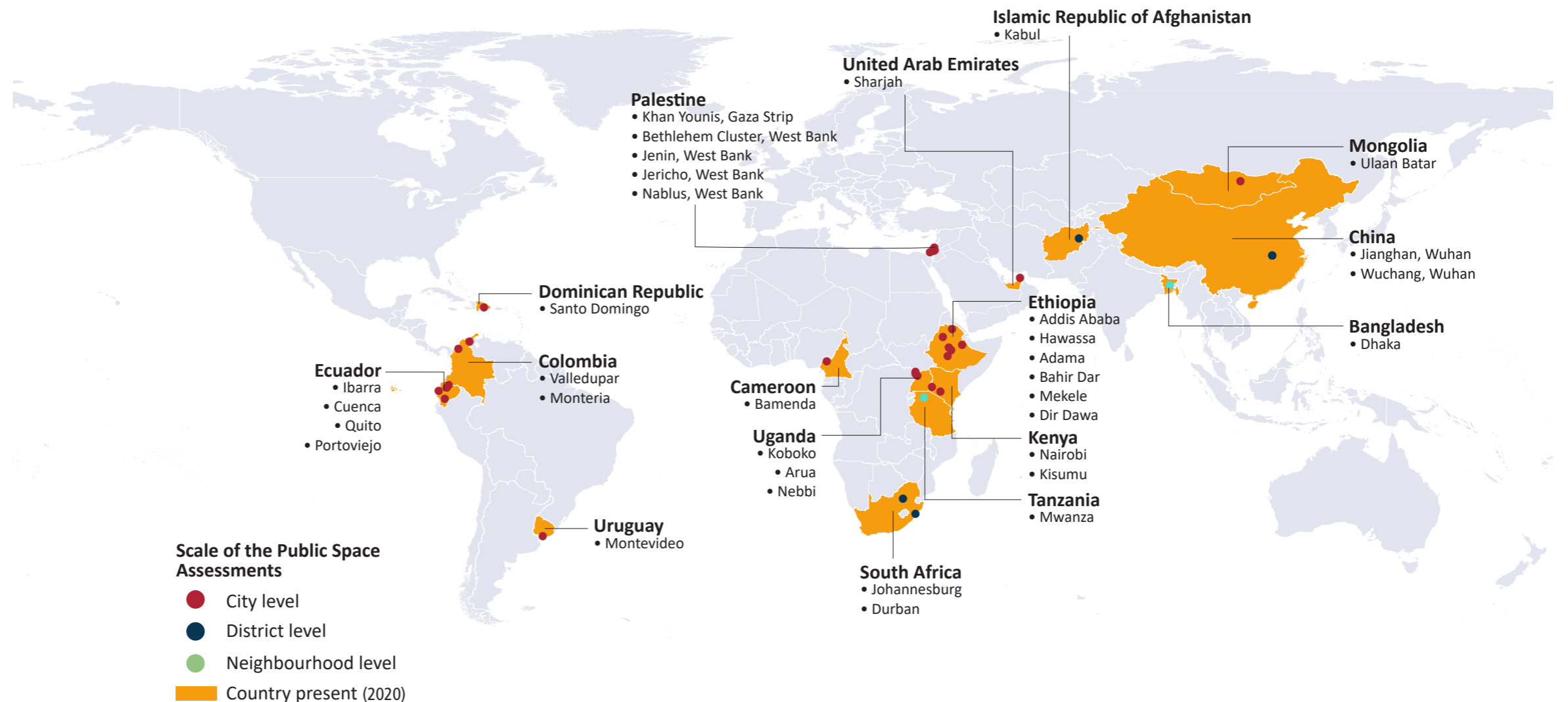
Since 2012, UN-Habitat, together with partners, has upgraded nearly one hundred public spaces in 35 countries. It has focused on the Global South, impacting over 1.5 million people and directly engaging 20,000 people through innovative community engagement approaches. The impact of the programme is being scaled up through innovative cross-sector partnerships. In most cities, the programme is working in collaboration with city authorities to implement pilot projects through community-led approaches and to develop city-wide strategies for greater impact.

The Global Public Space Programme is organized around three main areas:

**Partnerships and networking** – An important part of the Programme is to bring together a broad global network of partners working on public space, and UN-Habitat has agreements and ongoing activities with various organizations.

**Knowledge management, advocacy and tools** – To institutionalize public space in the normative work of partner organizations and cities, UN-Habitat promotes a policy approach, develops tools and indicators and runs capacity building programmes.

**Public space demonstration projects and city-wide strategies** – To show the importance of public space on the ground, UN-Habitat supports cities in implementing public space demonstration projects, city-wide strategies and sectoral development plans.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations



### THE PUBLIC SPACE ASSESSMENT

UN-Habitat provides guidance to local governments in developing city-wide strategies that provide the foundation for taking a strategic action-oriented approach to public space development and management and can help local governments map the current state of public spaces and set goals to improve them. This work can be translated into annual public space action plans which provide more detailed information on proposed projects as well as monitoring framework.



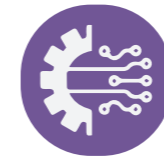
### CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS

UN-Habitat brings together a broad global network of partners working on the issue of public space, and UN-Habitat has agreements and ongoing activities with various organizations. These partners are brought together annually at either the World Urban Forum and/or the Future of Places Conference.



### PUBLIC SPACE UPGRADING

UN-Habitat selects each year, a number of public spaces upgrading projects through an annual call for expression of interest. The spaces are geographically distributed all over the world, but with a main focus on countries in the global south. The upgrading of the public spaces is done in a participatory manner engaging the community and the users in the process.



### TECHNOLOGY

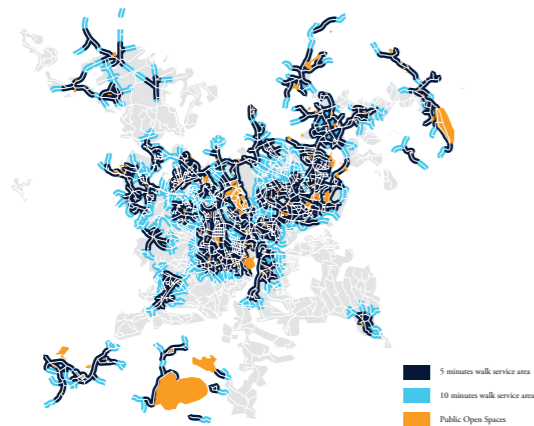
In recent years, the role of digital technologies has become increasingly important. UN-Habitat recognizes the role of ICT and the opportunities that it can offer for citizens, particularly children and youth, to take part in decision making and governance process. The Programme uses technologies such as Kobo Toolbox for mapping spaces and the Minecraft video game as a participatory tool for upgrading public spaces.



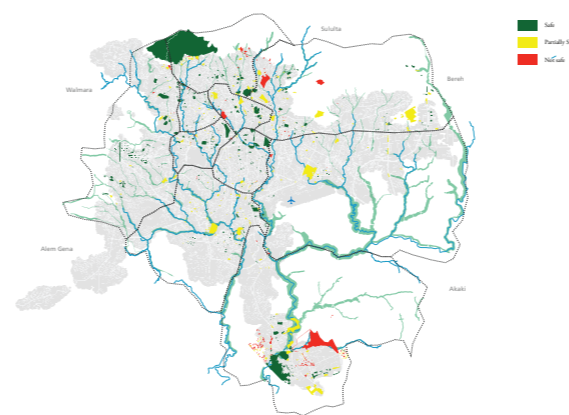
### POLICIES

UN-Habitat supports national governments in mainstreaming public space in NUP as well as local governments in developing their own public space frameworks, policies and implementation strategies. The intention is to influence cities to recognize the importance of localized city-wide public space policies, to deepen the understanding of local governments' role and responsibilities in public space development, and to maximize public space areas at a city level. This is considered as a guiding strategy for local governments in which public space is a central axis.

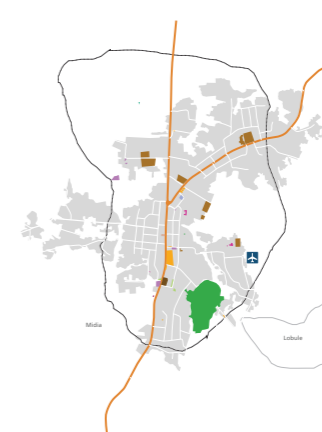
**BAMENDA, CAMEROON**



**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**



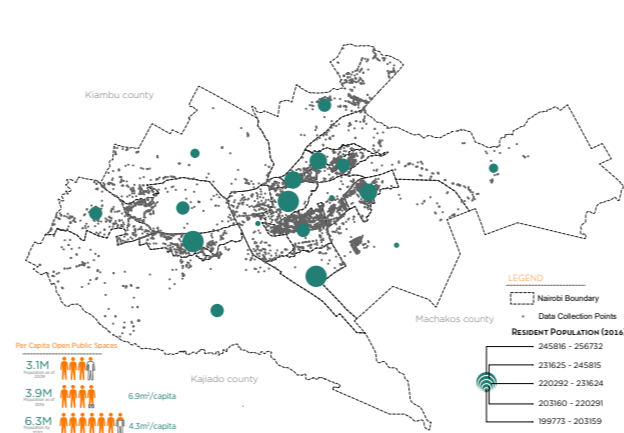
**KOBOKO, UGANDA**



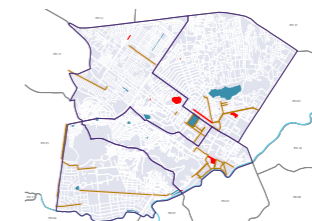
**JIANGNAN, CHINA**



**NAIROBI, KENYA**



**WUCHANG, CHINA**



## ABOUT KABUL CITY

Kabul became the capital of Afghanistan in 1775-1776. Since then it has remained the political, economic and cultural centre of Afghanistan. This has resulted in unprecedented demographic and spatial growth of the city contributing to problems already afflicting the capital: inadequate housing and sanitation, land grabbing, poverty, pollution and criminality. It is the largest city in Afghanistan and it also a municipality forming part of the greater Kabul Province. The city has 22 districts and according to the World Factbook: Central Intelligence Agency, its populations in 2019 is at 4.114 million with females accounting for 48 per cent.

### Directorates that are directly related to urban planning and development in Kabul

1. Urban Beautification Directorate
2. Department of Kabul Zoo
3. Buildings Control Directorate
4. Urban Planning and Implementation Directorate
5. Improvement Directorate
6. Directorate of Properties
7. Infrastructures Planning Directorate
8. Public Transport Directorate
9. Greenery Directorate

Year	Population	Population growth rate (%)
1950	171,000	-
1960	285,000	5.17
1970	472,000	4.89
1980	978,000	4.94
1990	1,549,000	4.45
2000	2,401,000	4.48
2010	3,289,000	2.52
2019	4,114,000	2.54
2020	4,222,000	2.63
2030	5,737,000	3.35

### HIGHLIGHTS:



**Population**  
4.114 Million

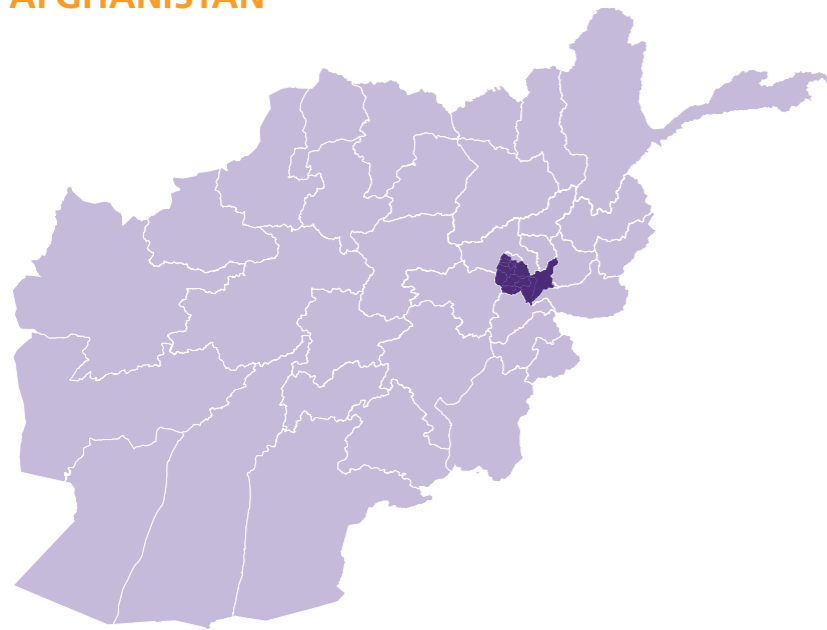


**Population density**  
4,021 people/km square.

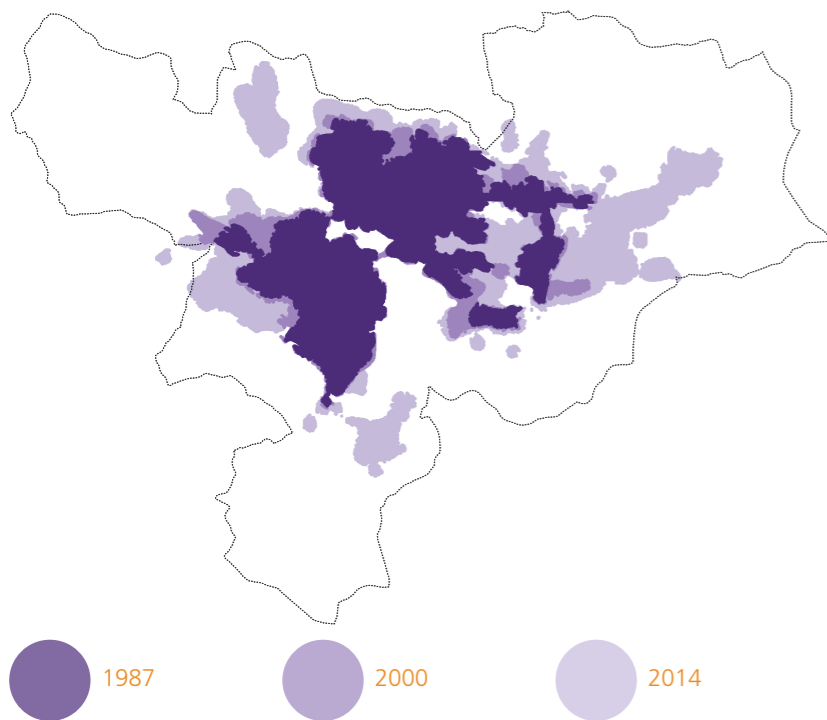


**Area**  
1023 square km.

AFGHANISTAN



URBAN EXPANSION



CHALLENGES IN KABUL

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



Air pollution and poor solid waste management are two areas of concern. Air pollution is reported to have claimed 17,000 Afghans in 2006 alone. Poor solid waste management has led to increased accumulation of risks including flooding and vector borne diseases among others.

RAMPANT CRIME



Street crime and terrorist attacks are some of the greatest challenges in the city. Despite the efforts to re-green the city and create beautiful space, the state of security is hindering the enjoyment of public spaces.

RETROGRESSIVE CULTURE PUNITIVE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS



Restrictive culture, particularly targeting women has locked out many women from enjoying public life and public space. This has also given rise to harassment of women and girls in public spaces as offenders often walk away freely.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR KABUL

MOMENTUM THROUGH THE URBAN GREENING INITIATIVE



The urban greening initiative under the Cleaning and Greening Cities (CGC) program has made a significant investment in re-greening the city among other 12 municipalities through tree planting and reclamation of medians.

A VIBRANT CULTURE OF PUBLIC ART



Kabul is experiencing a renaissance of public art and an interest of the creative community in shaping public realm. One example is the façade painting campaign converting grey concrete walls into colorful talking walls highlighting local identity and values of the community.

A VIBRANT-PEOPLE FIRST APPROACH



Kabul, among other cities in Afghanistan, has leveraged the goodwill of the general public to transform the city. This model presents an opportunity to create jobs and build a sense of pride, belonging and solidarity, and mobilise the public to appropriate and care for public spaces.

## SCOPE AND FOCUS: WHY SAFETY FOR ALL IN PUBLIC SPACES?

In Afghanistan, gender inequality remains one of the biggest impediments to sustainable development, peace, security and prosperity. The inclusion of women and girls in city-making processes is one of the first principles for building sustainable cities and communities.

In Kabul, public spaces are in every sense space for men. For women, public life is restricted, and if they do have places to meet, these spaces tend to be closed, exclusive places. This is echoed by a survey carried out by women and children's legal research foundation which revealed that 90 per cent of women had faced harassment in public spaces, 87 per cent in their workplaces and 91 per cent in learning institutions.

The city's population has been fluctuating over the years, mainly due to wars and conflict. The population

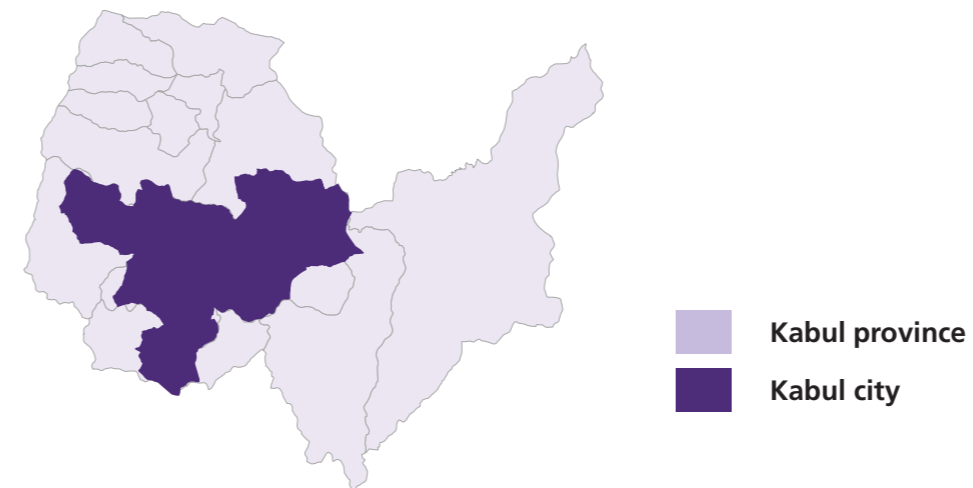
dropped in the 1990s but has grown four-fold since 2001. It is now one of the fastest-growing cities globally. Consequently, many informal settlements have mushroomed all around the city.

The government has prioritised reconstruction of the city in its development agenda, with master planning taking centre stage and Kabul Urban Development Framework. The Kabul master plan, updated in 2011, provides sufficient and well distributed multi-scaled network of multi-functional urban open spaces including for risks and emergencies such as earthquakes, flooding, fire and conflict among others. This includes sports facilities, green belt along the river, recreational facilities and a buffer area. This accounts for 17.85 per cent of urban land in the city.

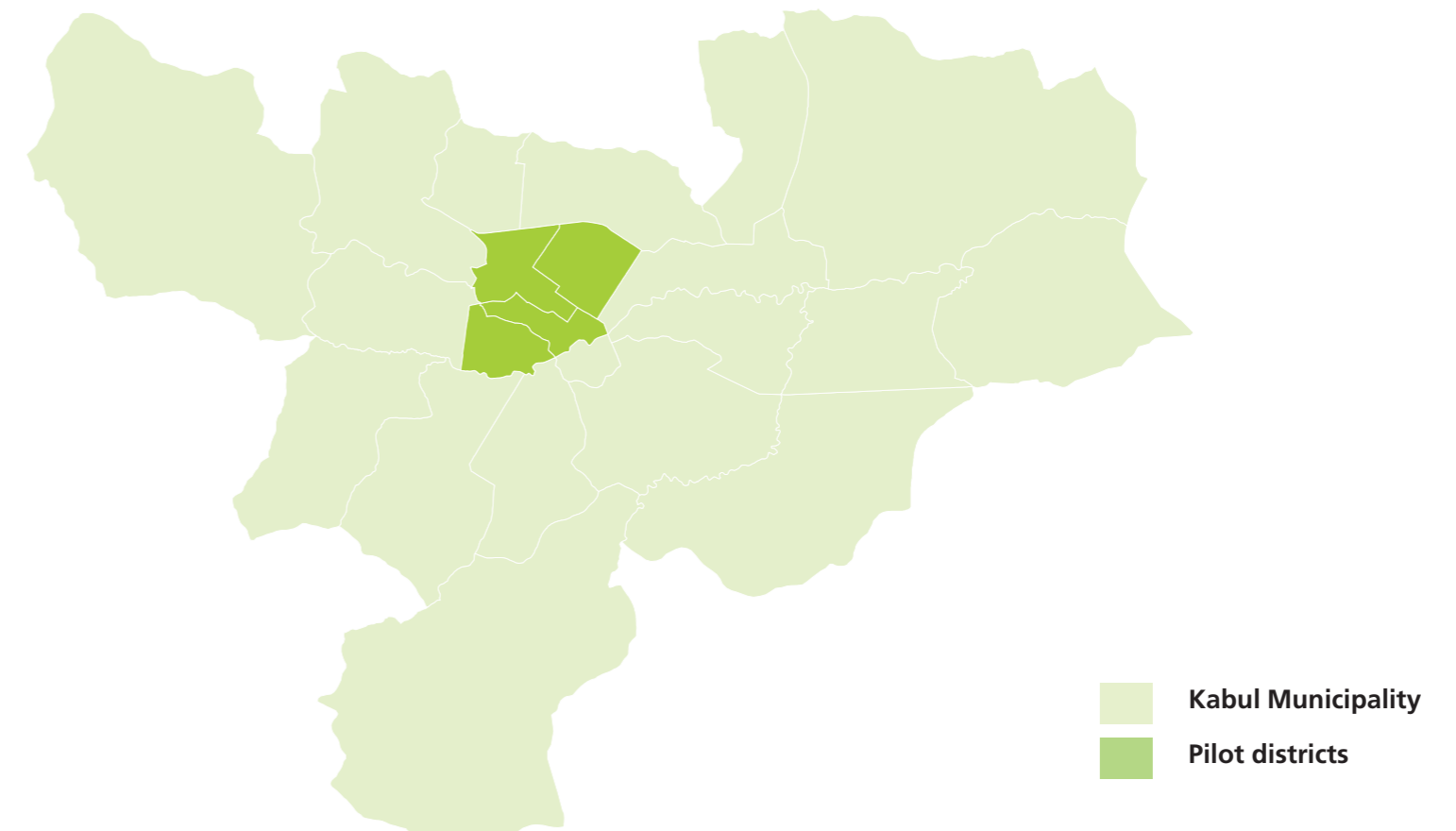
**"It is unrealistic to anticipate significant socio-economic progress when half of the population is denied or unable to participate in poverty reduction, reconstruction or development projects."**

*Norah Niland, former Lead of UNAMA'S human rights units.*

### KABUL PROVINCE



### KABUL CITY





**PILOT DISTRICTS FOR THE PUBLIC SPACES SAFETY AUDIT**

The four district were selected for piloting based on the following criteria;

**Center of the city:** the selected PDs are located at the center of city which most public service delivery organizations such as government departments, private sector, business persons and non-government organizations are settled on the mentioned PDs.

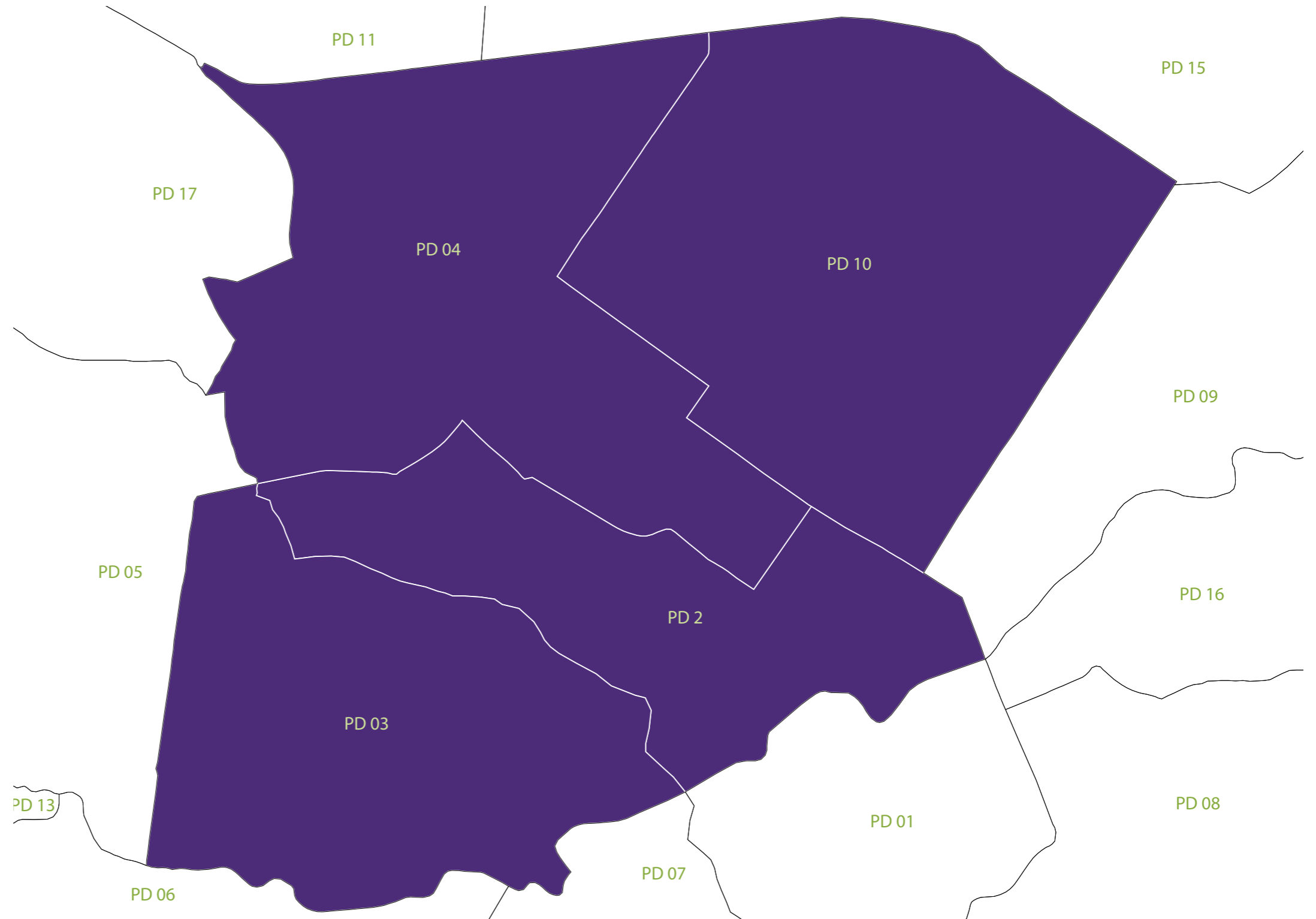
**High population:** the selected PDs have a high percentage of Kabul city's population therefore, a clear understanding from an urban culture perspective.

**Land value:** the land value in the selected PDs are higher than other PDs.

**Oldest PDs:** the selected PDs have long standing cultural and historic background among others.

**Planned area:** mostly the selected PDs are within the planned area which therefore the public space is calculated based on the urban planning standards.

**Settlement of high officials:** mostly high officials of government including president, ministers and other politicians live within the selected PDs.

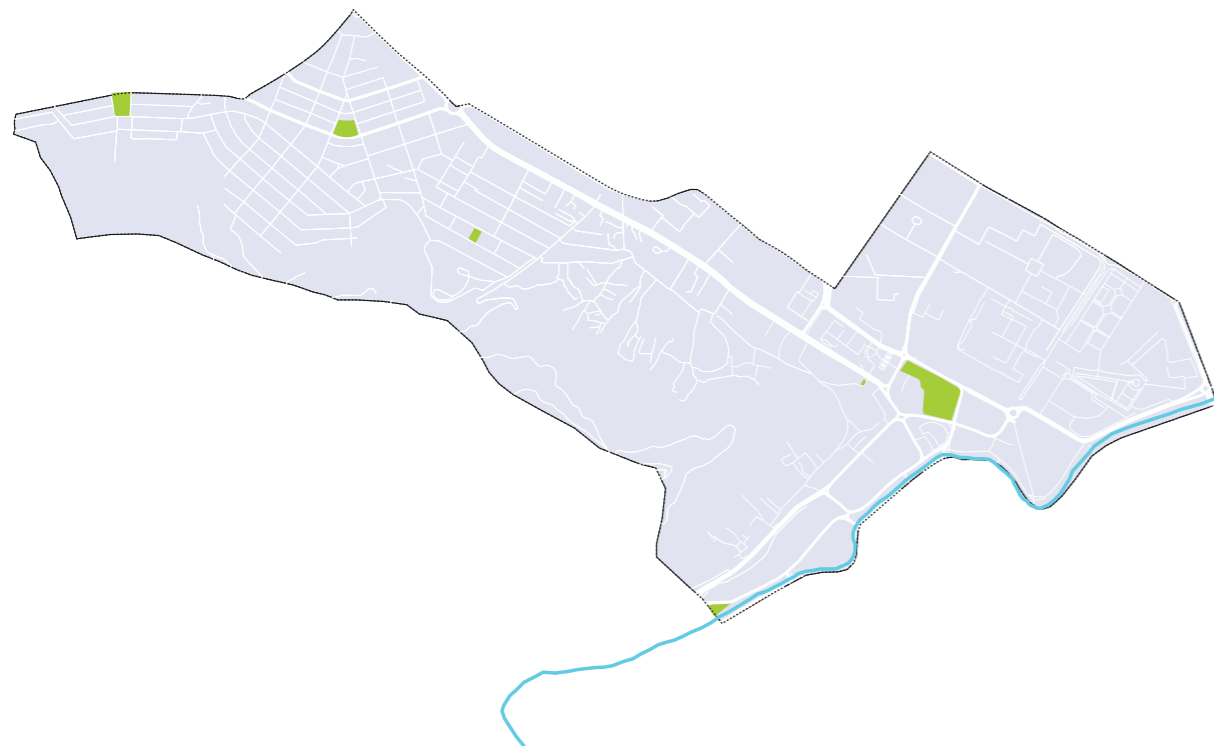


## ABOUT THE DISTRICTS

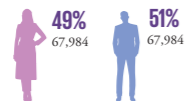
The scope of the audit and assessment covered streets and open public spaces, with a focus on four police districts: PD2, PD3, PD4 and PD10. The districts are described briefly below:

### DISTRICT 2

Police district 2 is made up of two distinct areas: part of Shahr-e Naw, the new city of Kabul developed in the early twentieth century and some older settlements that were originally villages outside the walled city (Deh Afghanan) or residential and administrative quarters developed at the end of the nineteenth century. The district is diverse and of civic importance to both the city and country. This is because it is home to the main seats of political power (Presidential Palace, major ministries and embassies), popular commercial areas near the riverbanks, sought-after residential and shopping areas (especially Baharistan) and historic neighbourhoods. Due to its strategic importance, the district is a primary target for political violence. Consequently, it is characterised by a heavy security set-up.



Area: 6.8 Km<sup>2</sup>



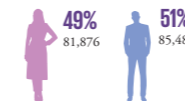
Population: 138,190

### DISTRICT 3

Police District 3, together with PD 6, constitutes the core area of West Kabul. It is home to the campus of Kabul University and other landmarks including the Aliabad Hospital, the Kabul Zoo and the Sakhi shrine. A large part of this PD consists of a flat-lying area with a regular street grid. Given the presence of many educational facilities, green areas and comparatively low prices, it is a sought-after residential location for middle-class Afghans and (until recently) foreigners. In the same context however, there are criminal gangs on the higher reaches of TV and Aliabad hills; otherwise, this PD has for long been one of Kabul's quietest and safest areas, despite the presence of some foreign organisations and guesthouses, which started to attract the attention of militant groups after 2010.



Area: 9.2 Km<sup>2</sup>



Population: 167,365

### DISTRICT 4

Police District 4 comprises the main portion of the new city (Shahr-e Naw) developed for administrative and residential purposes since the 1930s, other residential areas developed from the 1950s onwards (Kart-e Parwan) and historical hamlets once situated at the edge of Kabul (Shahrara). It also includes some conspicuous landmarks like the Shahr-e Naw Park and the Kolola Poshta hilltop fort. This area was relatively preserved during the 1990s war, and it has always been a central shopping area with many modern commercial malls and upmarket residential areas much sought-after for its central location. It features some high-profile VIP mansions (especially in Kart-e Parwan), many government facilities and local and foreign organisations' offices.

Shahrara and the less central Parwan-e Dowom, Parwan-e Sewom and Tahiya-ye Maskan host less well-off residents. It is also a known venue for drug dealers and for political violence.

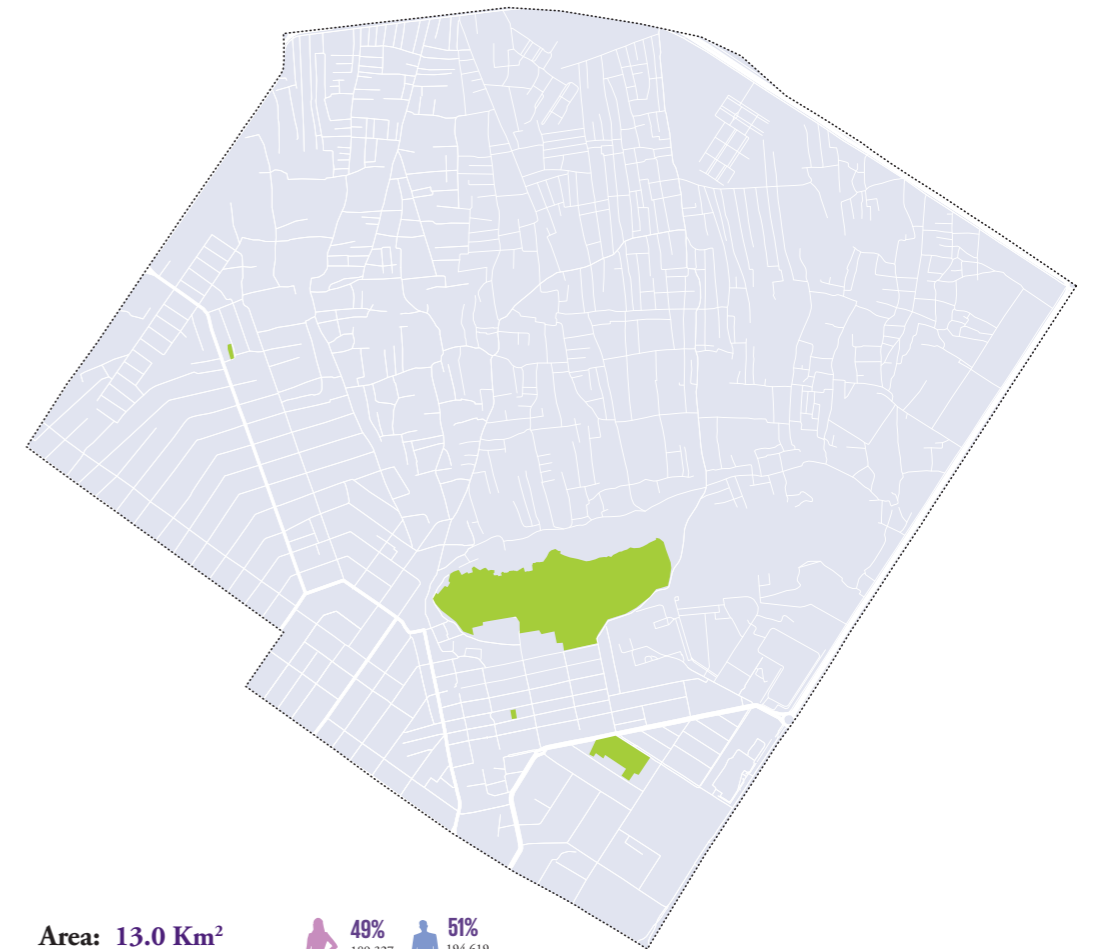


Area: 11.6 Km<sup>2</sup>  
 Population: 356,094

49%	51%
175,681	180,413

### DISTRICT 10

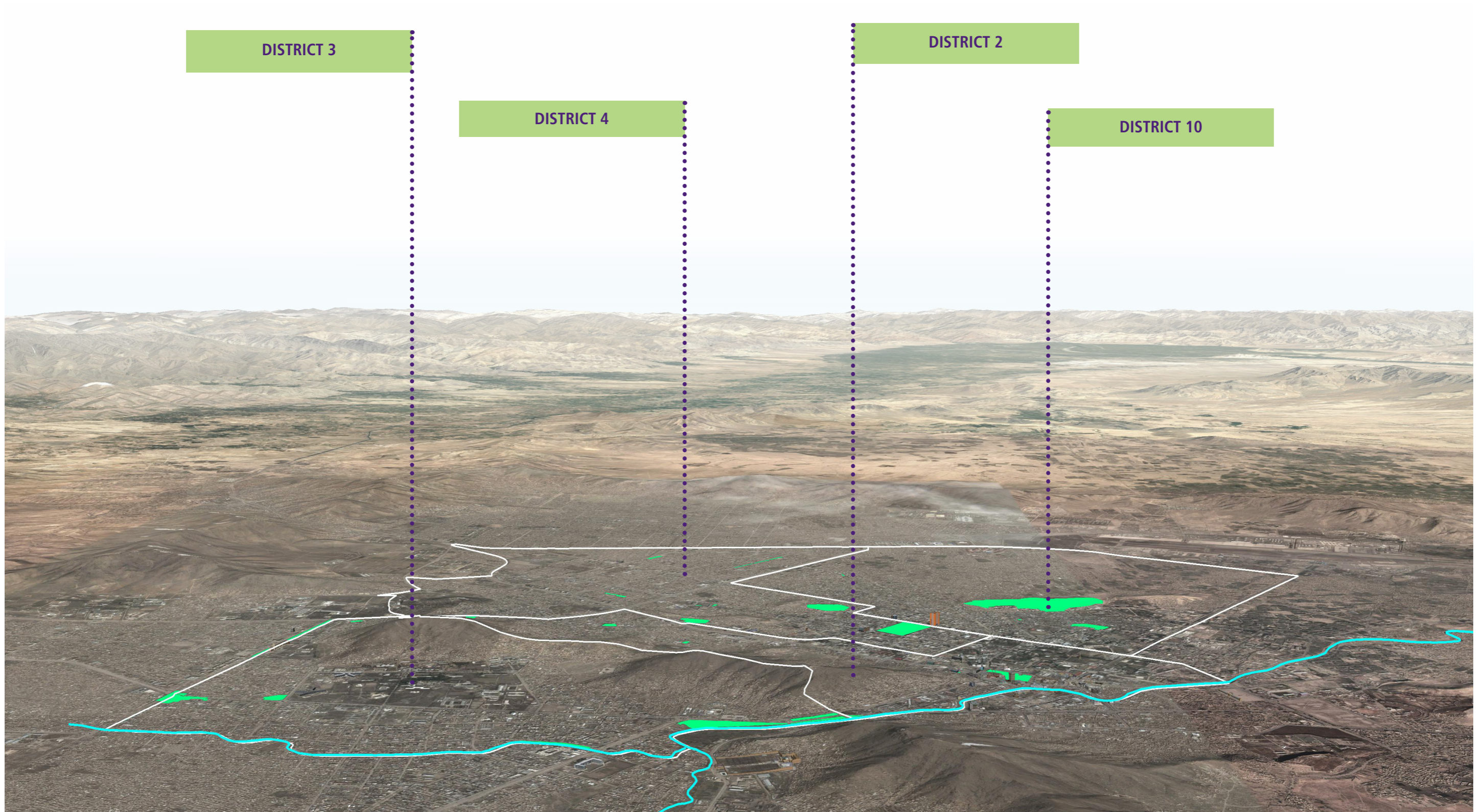
Half of this police district is made up of residential areas built according to master plans at different times from the 1940s onwards. These areas are at the core of Kabul city centre. The district is an enclave of embassies and the offices of government branches, NGOs and private companies. It has several VIP houses residential areas much sought-after by foreigners and middle-class residents. From a security perspective, the district is a mix of everything. Parts of the district are high-profile targets for political violence and therefore have high security. At the same time, some areas like Wazirabad experience higher insecurity because of common criminality, especially at night-time, with instances of robberies and house raids.



Area: 13.0 Km<sup>2</sup>  
 Population: 383,946

49%	51%
189,327	194,619

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE PILOT DISTRICTS



# OBJECTIVES

## OBJECTIVES OF THE OPEN PUBLIC SPACE ASSESSMENT IN KABUL



**Investigate the Accessibility of the public spaces in the Municipality.**



**Understand the Distribution of the public spaces in the Municipality.**



**Understand the Network of the public spaces in the Municipality.**



**Assess the Quality of the public spaces in the Municipality (Accessibility, Use, Comfort, Facilities, Safety, and Green Coverage).**



**Establish the share of urban land that is used as open public spaces in Municipality.**

The audit and assessment of public spaces in Kabul Municipality was carried out with an aim to:

1. Investigate the Accessibility of public spaces in the Municipality.
2. Understand the Distribution of public spaces in the Municipality.
3. Understand the Network of public space in the Municipality.
4. Assess the Quality of public spaces in the Municipality (Accessibility, Use, Comfort, Facilities, Safety, and Green Coverage).
5. Establish the share of urban land that is used as open public spaces in Municipality.

The results of the audit and assessment will inform policy and strategic recommendations, particularly to improve safety and security, accessibility and inclusion for women and girls.

**The results of the audit and assessment will inform policy and strategic recommendations, particularly to improve safety and security, accessibility and inclusion for women and girls.**



Share naw park in Kabul, children learn how to ride a bike © flicker/omar.lemar786



Sports in Kabul © UNAMA/Fardin Waezi



Boys in Shar-e-Now park in Kabul © flicker

# METHODOLOGY OF THE SAFETY AUDIT

## PRE-FIELDWORK PREPARATION

### 1

#### Developing the Assessment Tool

UN-Habitat team in collaboration with Kabul Municipality developed structured questionnaire to guide the classification and analysis of the existing open public spaces. These questions were modified to fit the context of Kabul and to assess safety concerns in public spaces. The developed form constituted two main sections as follows:

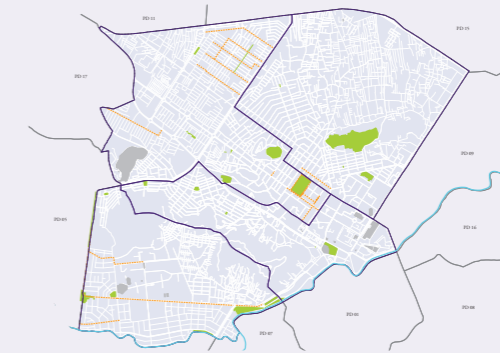
##### Section A: Public space assessment

- Part 1: Identification of the open public space
- Part 2: Types of the public space assessment
- Part 3: Physical facility assessment
- Part 4: Accessibility assessment
- Part 5: Use assessment
- Part 6: Comfort assessment
- Part 7: Green coverage assessment

##### Section B: Safety assessment

- Part 8: Safety Assessment
- Part 9: Perception of Safety

The questionnaire was then uploaded into Kobo toolbox application that is an open source and digital and allows for validation on the ground, remote administration, and working under different conditions.



### 2

#### Preparation of GIS Base Map

In collaboration with Kabul Municipality, UN-Habitat Afghanistan team prepared the first version of GIS base map. This included all the existing open public spaces, the administrative boundaries and the main landmarks such as the Kabul River.

Updating the base map was critical prior to commencing the data collection, the main objective of this task was to validate the existing public space in terms of location, area, ownership, and use, and to identify any other available public spaces that were not reflected on the base map. The selection of the pilot districts were based on the criteria in page 17 and all open public spaces were selected within these districts. The streets were selected due to their active use and safety concerns that were linked to it.

3

### Mobilizing the Assessment Team

Through a vigorous exercise, UN-Habitat Afghanistan recruited 25 consultants, drawn from diverse backgrounds, to support in conducting the field study, with a specific focus on providing safe, inclusive and accessible public space for women and girls, especially in the most disadvantaged communities. The consultants were selected based on their prior experience in conducting field assessments in Kabul city, this was envisaged to facilitate navigating the local landscape as they are knowledgeable about the targeted neighborhoods.

4

### Training Sessions

An orientation workshop was conducted for officials from Kabul Municipality and a training session was held for the data collectors. It was divided into two sessions

A) Theoretical Part: during this session the project's main objectives, scope, and intended results were highlighted. In addition, the trainees were introduced on how public spaces are identified globally and what criteria and measures that should be in place to ensure they are safe, inclusive, and gender responsive. The final section was introducing Kobo toolbox, how it works, and the content of each section in the developed questionnaire and how to respond to each question;

B) Practical part: this session focused on how to configure and set up Kobo toolbox on their mobile phones and how to fill, edit, validate, and send finalized forms. These steps were followed by practical testing of the application and open discussions on practical concerns and possible challenges that may arise throughout the fieldwork..



## DATA COLLECTION QUALITY CHECK AND DATA CLEANING

## 5

## Data Collection

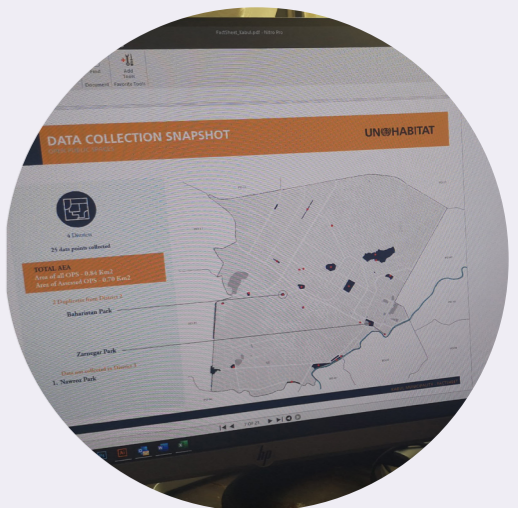
The data collectors were divided into groups (one male and one female each) and set of field visits were assigned to each group taking in consideration the closeness of the assigned locations for each group to maximize the efficiency and to reduce travel times.

The questionnaire included different methods to harness data required for reliable assessment of public spaces:

- A) Observations: data related to the physical components of public spaces, and number of users were injected based on the surveyor's observations in the field;
- B) Photos: minimum of three photos were mandatory to finalize the form, the photos were very helpful for assessing the nature of the public space and to verify its respective data as well;
- C) Sound Measurement: the surveyors were able to reflect the noise levels through voice recording tab that is an indication of comfort level of the public space;
- D) Semi-Structured Interviews: to assess the safety from the users' perspectives, the surveyors conducted number of interviews for each entry, people living adjacent the targeted public spaces were interviewed when the public spaces were vacant during the field visits.

To facilitate the fieldwork and make sure that the generated data from the field are appropriately linked with spatial data (GIS base map), each group received assigned work plan that included public spaces ID, area, name, category based on fieldwork done to update the GIS dbase, and their code on the aerial maps. In addition, each group were handed the aerial map of the neighborhoods that include the targeted public spaces.

Most of the sites were visited over the weekends – afternoon, to ensure that the field visits are running during the peak hours, and number of sites were visited in mornings due to their functions such as markets and commercial sections.



## 6

## Data Cleaning

The data was cleaned and verified to ensure precise data analysis and hence reliable finding. This included omitting duplicate entries for the same field visit, entries for privately-owned public spaces, entries that were uploaded during the training sessions.

The data cleaning resulted in the open public spaces and streets assessed on page 28 to 31.



7

Updating GIS map

GIS database was updated prior to data analysis, this included reshaping of number of public spaces and deleting number of public spaces that was identified as privately-owned public spaces. The GIS database includes the Public Space ID that is considered key cell that link the spatial data with the data generated from Kobo Toolbox.



8

Data Analysis

The final 23 open public spaces and 32 streets were used in to conduct the analysis for the pilot districts.

The analysis was conducted to achieve the objectives set out for this report and therefore it was categorized into two main sections, (a) general state of public spaces and the (b) safety concerns in the open public spaces. All the data collected from the field was used in the analysis to develop a spatial and non-spatial gap analysis. This was done by aggregating several indicators. The results can be found at the end of Chapter two and beginning of Chapter three.

## WHO WAS TRAINED?

A five-day workshop was held to provide a better understanding of public spaces and the tasks ahead. Held at the United Nations operational complex in Kabul, two trainings were conducted. One was an orientation for officials from Kabul Municipality while the other was administered to 25 consultants who were recruited to support the data collection exercise.

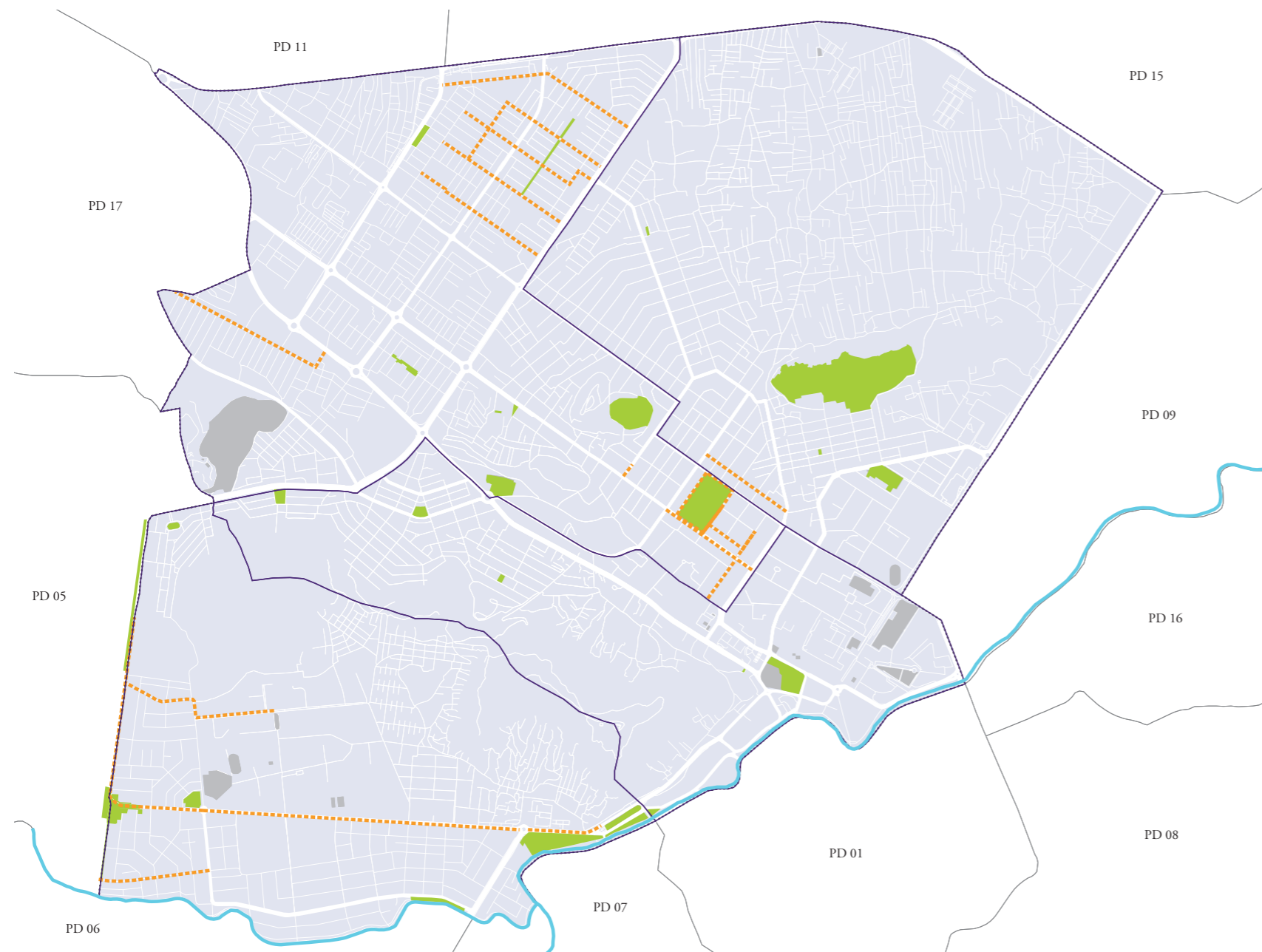
The main topics covered in the training were:

1. The definition and basic concepts of public space.
2. Practical implementation of public spaces on the ground: From global principles to local policies and strategies.
3. Citywide public space and assessment.

As part of the training, the surveyors were exposed to a hands-on experience of the tool and tested the tool on the ground. Following these two exercises, they provided feedback regarding the application of the questionnaire and the usability of the tool. Based on the feedback received, some of the questions were modified to fit the local socio-spatial context.



# DATA COLLECTION AND DATA CLEANING



Data collection was undertaken using Kobo toolbox. This was guided by a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was formulated by UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme in close coordination with the UN-Habitat Afghanistan Country office. It was then uploaded into the Kobo toolbox server where it was made accessible to surveyors. In addition to the questionnaire, maps were developed to aid ground-truthing and identification of public spaces as well as sketching their boundaries on the ground as of the time of the assessment.

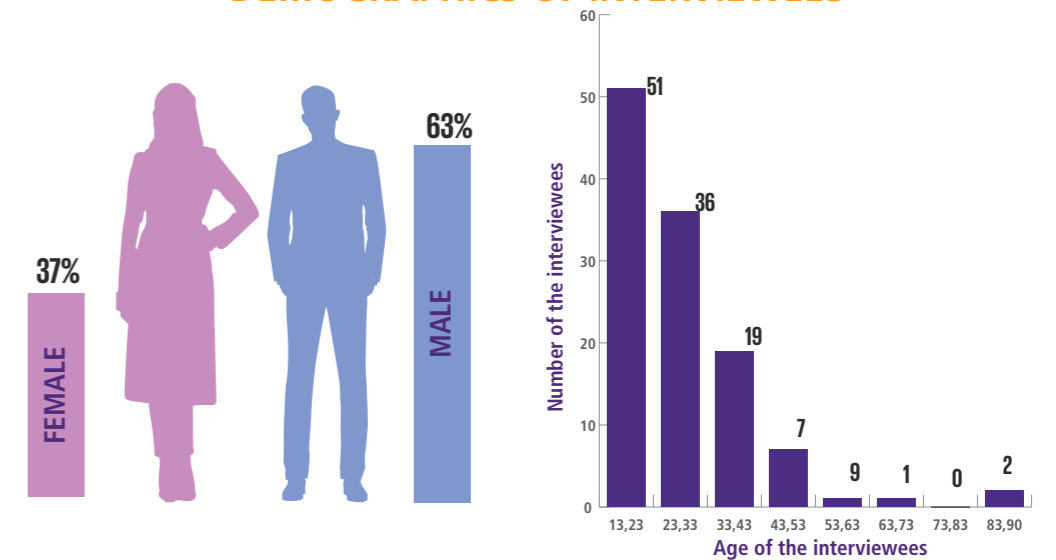
In total, there were 67 data entry points collected, including 25 open

public spaces and 42 streets.

Regarding interviews, a total of 125 people were interviewed whose aged ranged from 13 years to 90 years. The demographics are as shown in the graphic below. The gender difference is due to the absence of women and girls in public spaces as seen in the analysis in Chapter two.

Entries were assessed from each district and enabling processing of only accurate data. This cleaning was done in close collaboration with UN-Habitat Afghanistan Country office. Data that were outside the scope (e.g. the pilot public spaces) of the pilot was also deleted.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF INTERVIEWEES



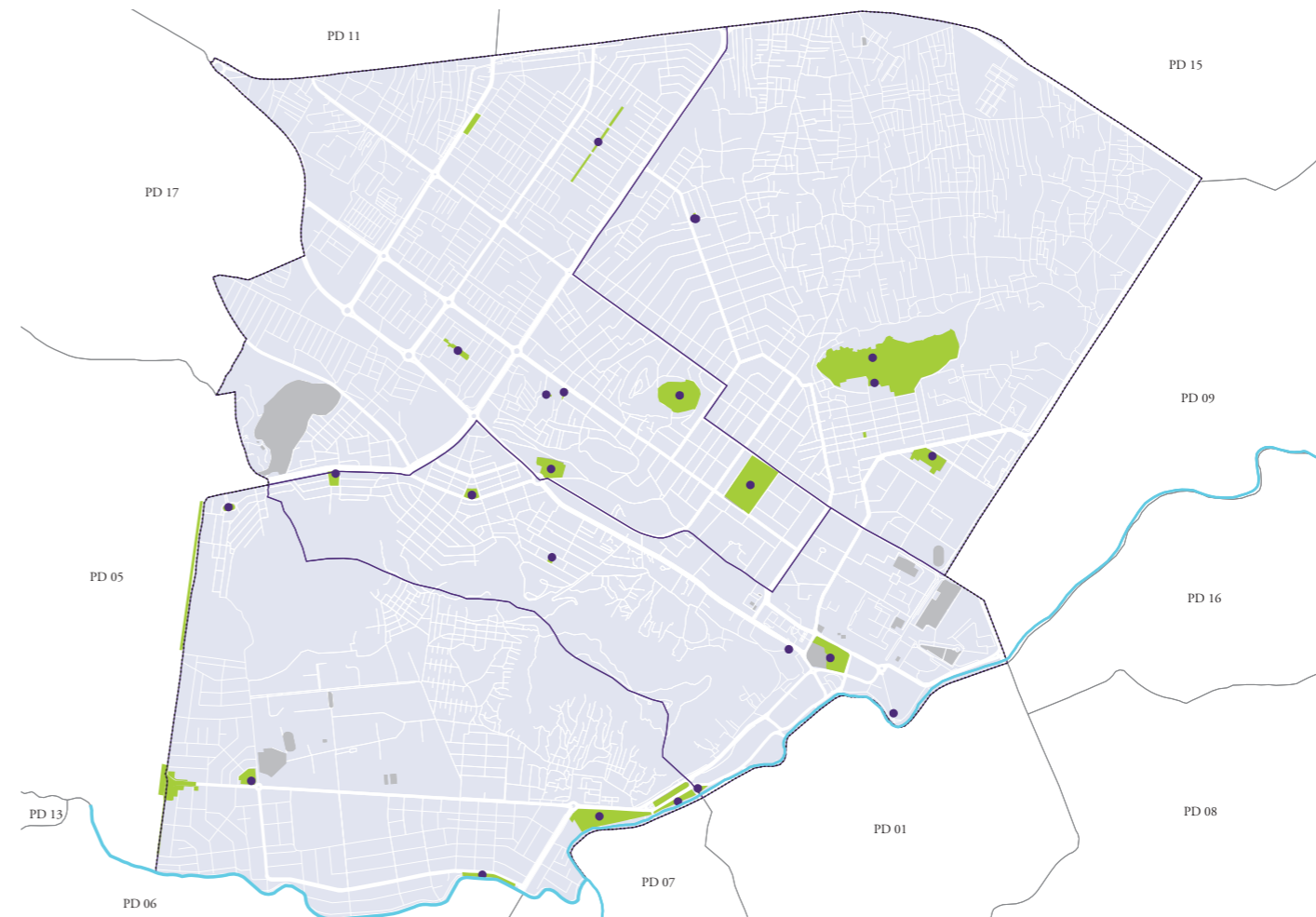
# OPEN PUBLIC SPACES

## ASSESSED OPEN PUBLIC SPACES

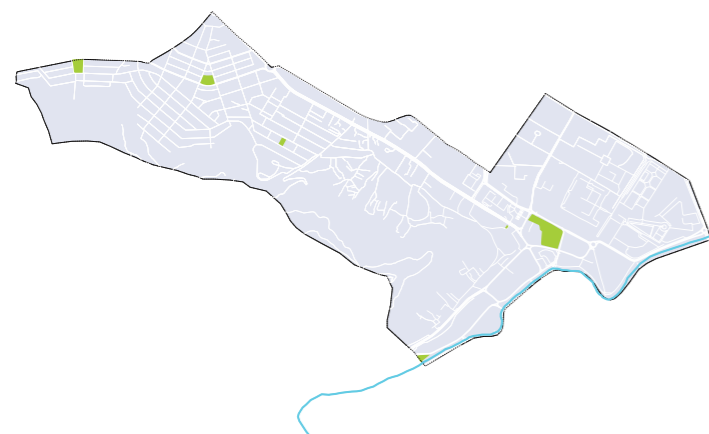
The equitable distribution of the spaces across the city is an important element of creating a cohesive city, balancing growth and revitalizing impoverished communities. The assessment covered the four districts in Kabul. Majority of public spaces data were collected in district four and district two. District four had eight data entries, out of these, all eight were assessed which accounted for a total area of 0.22 Km<sup>2</sup>. District two had eight data entries,

out of these, six were assessed these accounted for 0.06 Km<sup>2</sup>. District 10 had the least number of data collected which was four - all four were assessed and resulted in the largest area of 0.36 Km<sup>2</sup> compared to all other open public spaces in the other districts. The percentage share of open public spaces and the per capita public space is also the highest. District three had five data entries, out of these, all five were assessed.

District	No of OPS	Area of OPS (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Area of District (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Percentage share (%)	Population	Per capita (m <sup>2</sup> /person)
No. 2	6	0.06	6.8	0.88	138,190	0.43
No. 3	5	0.06	9.2	0.65	167,365	0.36
No. 4	8	0.22	11.6	1.9	356,094	0.62
No. 10	4	0.36	13.0	2.77	383,946	0.94



### DISTRICT 2



No. of OPS: 6  
Area of OPS: 0.06 Km<sup>2</sup>



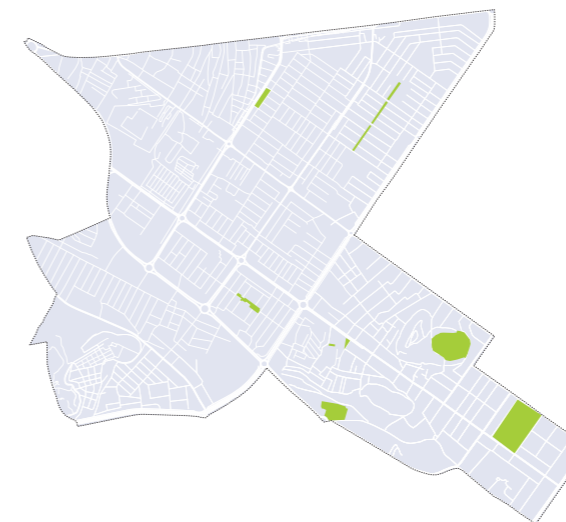
### DISTRICT 3



No. of OPS: 5  
Area of OPS: 0.06 Km<sup>2</sup>



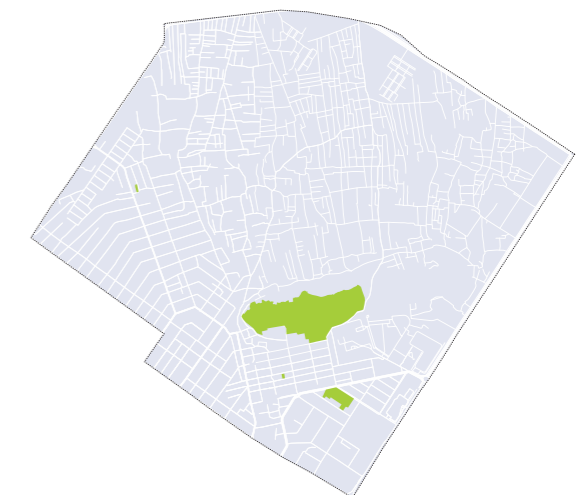
### DISTRICT 4



No. of OPS: 8  
Area of OPS: 0.22 Km<sup>2</sup>



### DISTRICT 10



No. of OPS: 4  
Area of OPS: 0.36 Km<sup>2</sup>



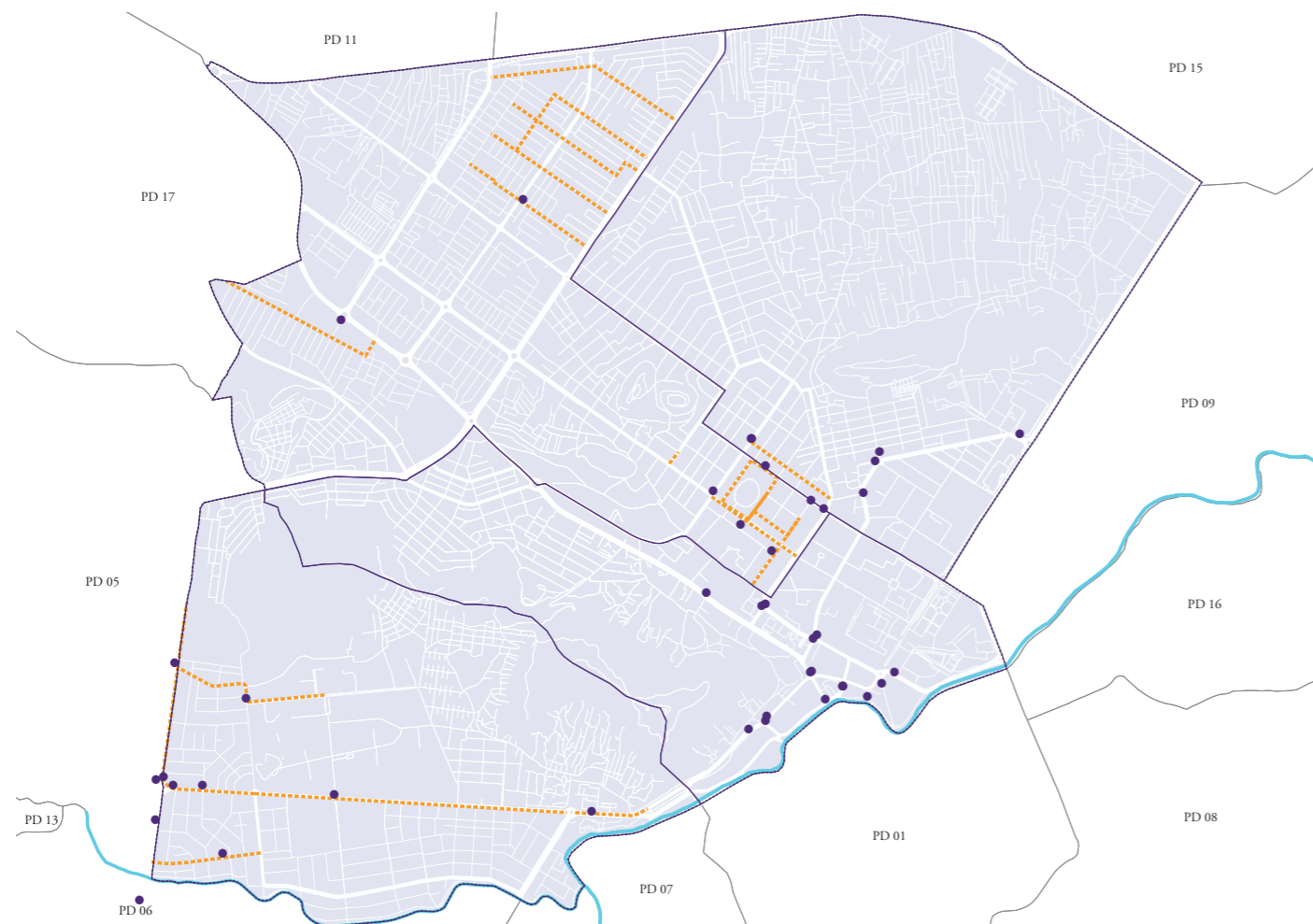
No	District	Name of OPS	Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )
1	District 2	Pul Artal Park	0.003334
2	District 2	Baharistan Park	0.007984
3	District 2	Dahan Nal Bagh-e-Bala Park	0.009359
4	District 2	Shirino Park	0.002412
5	District 2	Zarnegar Park	0.038606
6	District 2	Mashal Park	0.000441
7	District 3	Dehbori Park	0.013717
8	District 3	Kart-e-Mamomrin Park	0.00415
9	District 3	Chamcha Park	0.012547
10	District 3	Nawroz Park	0.013289
11	District 3	Shahr (city) Park	0.011713
12	District 4	Shahr-e-Naw Park	0.097767
13	District 4	Bagh-e-Zanana (Women Garden)	0.027499
14	District 4	Behind of Municipality Blocks Park	0.001937
15	District 4	Inside of Municipality Blocks Park	0.000942
16	District 4	Prozha Tadeli Wazir Abad Park	0.007744
17	District 4	Shared Sabz from 1 to 5 Street of Taimani Prozha	0.012696
18	District 4	Parwan 3 Park	0.007801
19	District 4	Tap-e-Kolala Poshta	0.067609
20	District 10	Wazir Akbar Khan Park	0.028395
21	District 10	Children Entertainment Park/Park Bazi Atfal	0.001021
22	District 10	Tap-e-Wazir Akbar Khan Park	0.324448
23	District 10	Park Behind the Red Cross Clinic	0.001372



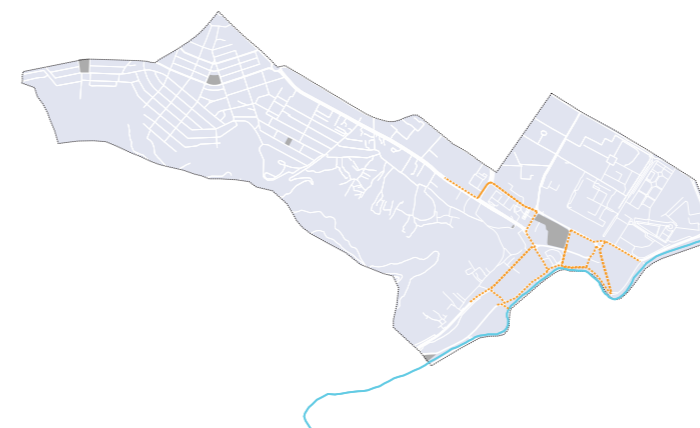
# STREETS

## ASSESSED STREETS

A total of 42 data points for streets were collected within the four districts. District two had the highest number of streets which were 18. District three had 10 data points and district four had nine points. District 10 had the least entries which was 5. After data cleaning together with the team in Afghanistan, a total 32 streets were assessed within the four districts.



### DISTRICT 2



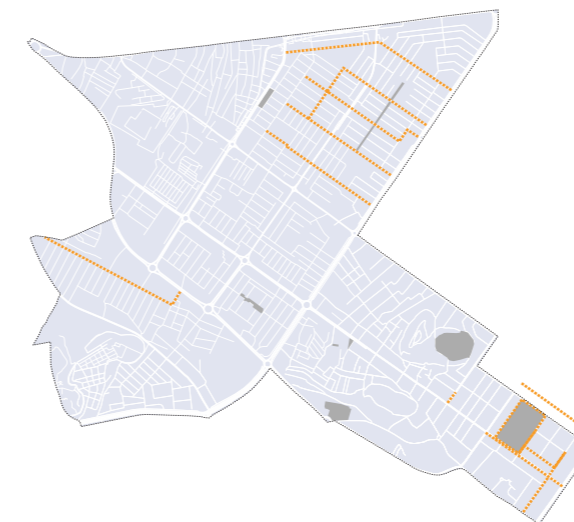
No of streets collected: 18  
No of streets assessed: 14

### DISTRICT 3



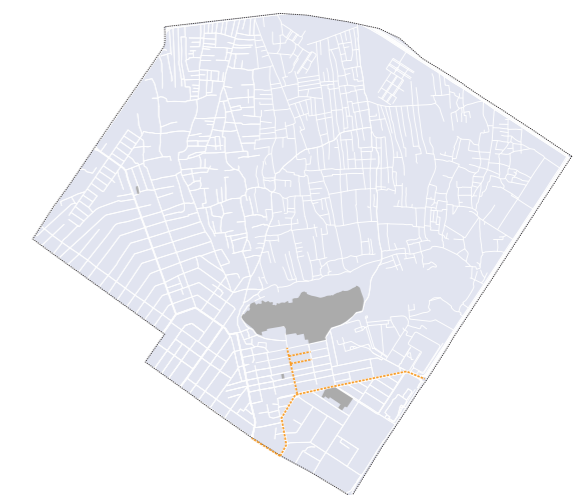
No of streets collected: 10  
No of streets assessed: 6

### DISTRICT 4



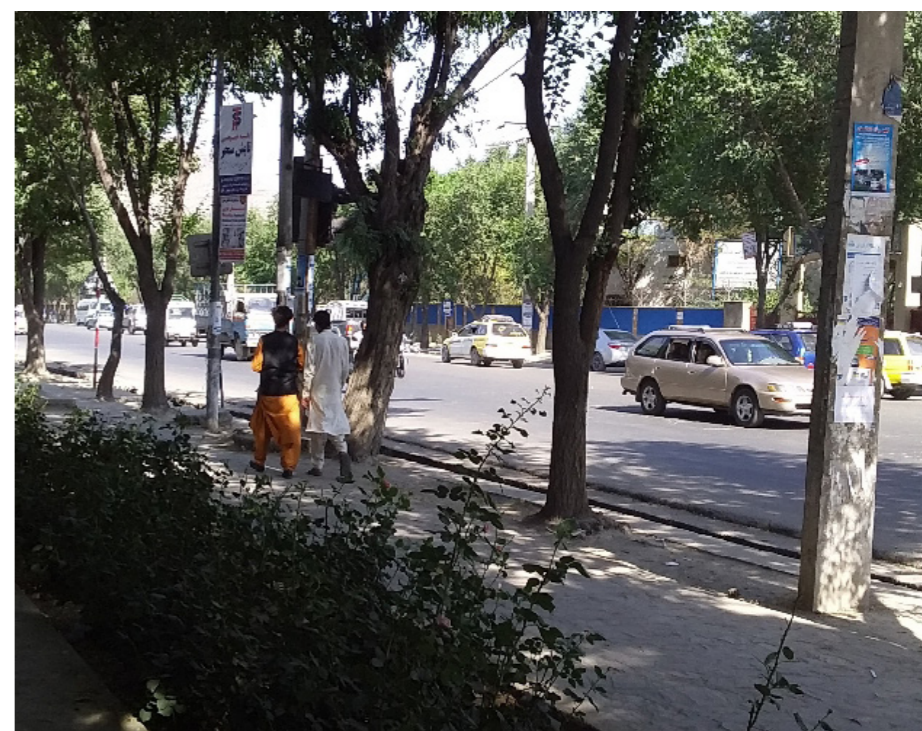
No of streets collected: 9  
No of streets assessed: 8

### DISTRICT 10



No of streets collected: 5  
No of streets assessed: 4

No	District	Name of street	Type of street	Landuse around the street	Designation
1	District 2	Nader Pashton Street	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
2	District 2	Road connected Pashtonistan sqaure to Zeyarat Abulfazl	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
3	District 2	Street connected Malik Asghar Ave to Pashtonistan Ave (Ibn-e-Sina Street)	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
4	District 2	Street connect Zerkamini Station to Democracy Ave	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
5	District 2	Street connected salang watt city bus station to sehrahee infront of Kabul PHQ	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
6	District 2	Street connected sehrahee infront of Kabul PHQ to Malik Asghar Ave	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
7	District 2	Street connected Malik Asghar Ave to Sar-e-Zerkamini	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
8	District 2	Street connected Sehrahee Infront of Isteqlal High School & Next to Kabul Serina	Pedestrians and cyclists	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
9	District 2	Stree connect Shah-e-Du Shamshira Station to Sehrahee Aasmayee Street Road	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
10	District 2	Street conncted Sehrahee near to Kabul River Bridge & Pul Bagh-e-Omomit to Shah-e-Du Shamshera	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
11	District 2	Street connected Zerkamini Station to Pul Bagh-e-Omomi Station	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
12	District 2	Aasmayee street from Sehrahee area next Galary Meli to Zerkamini Station	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
13	District 2	Road connect Pashtonistan sqaure to Democracy sqaure	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
14	District 2	Nader Pashton Street Market	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Informal (spontaneously developed street)
15	District 3	Street connected University to street # 5 of Silo	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
16	District 3	Golayee Dawakhana Road	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
17	District 3	Aqrab District 3 Road	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
18	District 3	Aasmayee Road (Road connect Dehmazang sqaure to Dawlati Nawabad fuel station)	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
19	District 3	Street connected Dehbori square to street # District 3 of Silo	Pedestrians and cyclists	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
20	District 3	Shared Sabz in Selo Road from Kart-e-Mamorin to Pu	Pedestrians and cyclists	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
21	District 4	Shah Bobo Jan Road	Pedestrian only street	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
22	District 4	Taimani Prozha from 1 to 5 Street	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Residential	Formal (planned / designated street)
23	District 4	Parwan District 3 Road	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
24	District 4	Qasabi Street_Lane	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
25	District 4	Around Park Shahr-e-Naw Street_Lane	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
26	District 4	Gulfroshi Street_Lane	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
27	District 4	Murghha Street_Lane	Pedestrians and cyclists	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
28	District 4	Bazar from Ansari Ave. to Turabaz Khan Street	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Mixed underdeveloped	Formal (planned / designated street)
29	District 10	Street connected Masoud sqaure to Shirpor sqaure	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
30	District 10	Street # 4, 5 & 15 of Wazir Akbar Khan	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Residential	Formal (planned / designated street)
31	District 10	Street connected Wazir Akbar Khan Road and Shirpor	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)
32	District 10	Street connected Zanbaq sqaure to Shirpor	Mixed (pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)	Commercial	Formal (planned / designated street)





# 2

CHAPTER





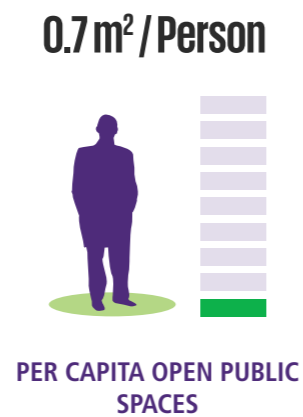
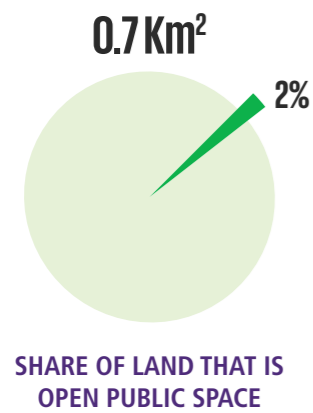
## ANALYSIS

- General state of open public spaces
- General state of streets
- How safe are public spaces?
- How are people using public spaces
- Who uses public spaces
- What are the opportunities for 'stay' in public spaces
- What are the safety concerns in public spaces
- What users feel is lacking in the public spaces

# GENERAL STATE OF OPEN PUBLIC SPACES

## LOW SHARE OF LAND THAT IS OPEN SPACE

Public Spaces are an important component of successful cities, and are a key factor in promoting urban safety and security, and building sustainable peace and social cohesion. Aggregately, there are twenty three open public spaces and thirty two streets in the four districts combined. Collectively, the open public spaces measure 0.7 square kilometers and represent only two per cent of urban land. This is against the international good practice of 15 - 20% which is also supported by UN-Habitat. Measured against the population, every resident of the four districts enjoy 0.7 square meters of public spaces. This is distributed across the four districts as shown in chapter one. There is a clear disproportionate distribution across the four police districts, reflecting and reinforcing social and economic inequalities, and vulnerability to multiple risks.



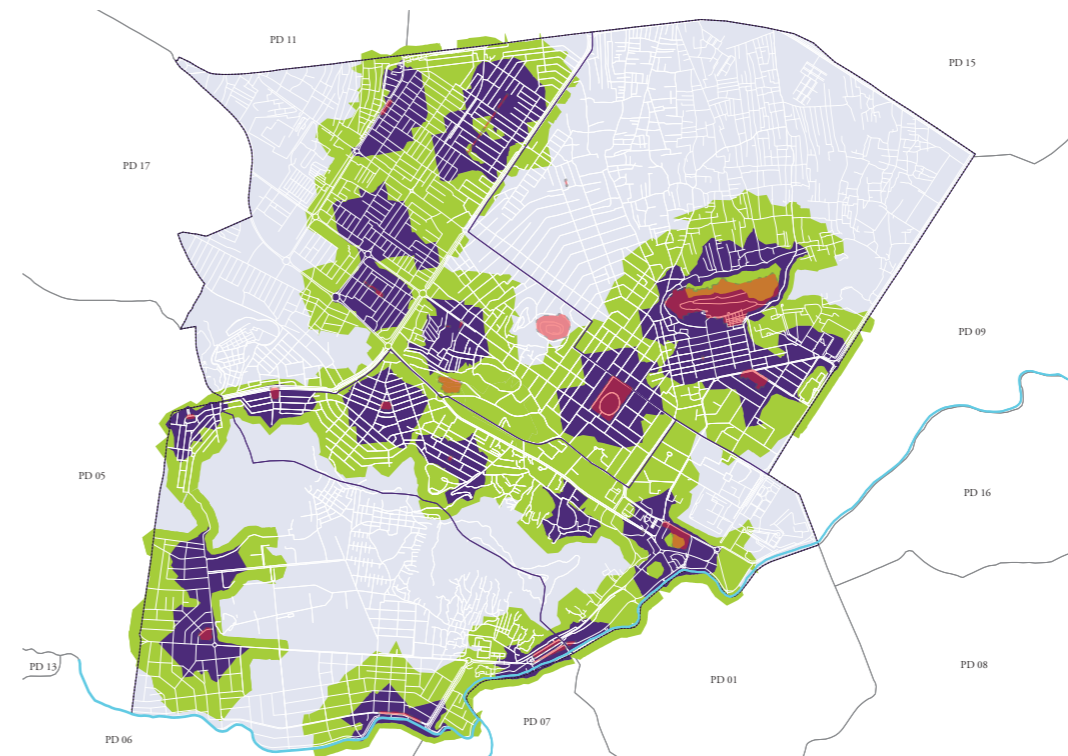
AREA:  
**41Km<sup>2</sup>**

POPULATION:  
**1,045,595**

## LACK OF A NETWORK OF PUBLIC SPACES

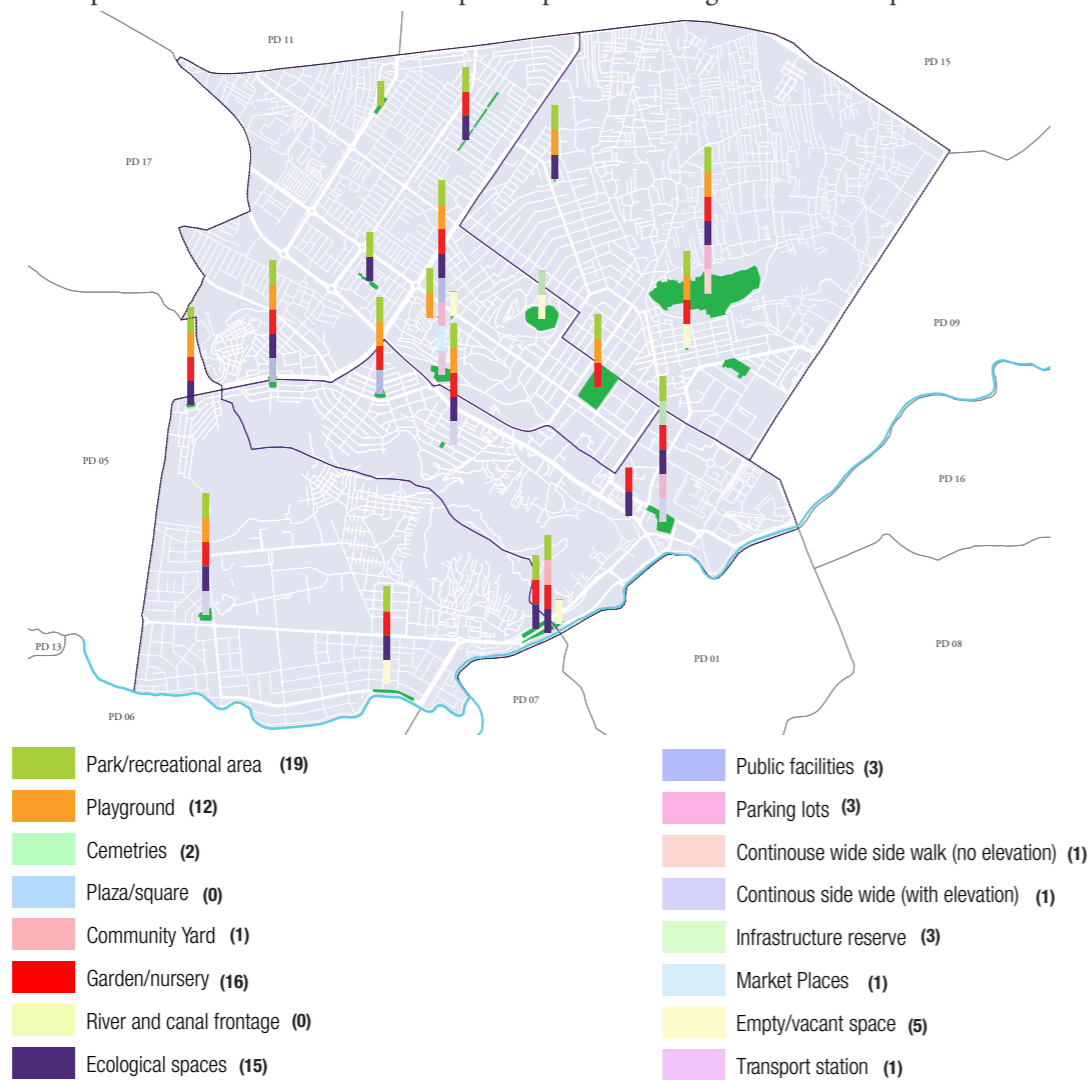
Research and experience globally show that living within walking distance of public spaces is positively linked to greater use and enjoyment of the amenities, and consequently, multiple outcomes. An average distance most people will typically be willing to walk before opting to drive is considered to be 400 meters, coverable in five minutes. Others use 1,000 meters, coverable in ten minutes. It is however important to note that aside from distance, the quality of the streetscape, street network and permeability, weather and micro-climate, and safety considerations play a critical role in determining how long people would be willing to walk. Many people will walk only if it is easier, safer and more interesting than driving.

Within the districts, 19 per cent of land does not have open public spaces within 5 minutes' walk and 52 per cent of land does not have open public space within 10 minutes walk. This leaves out 48 percent of the land lacking open public spaces within 5 and 10 minutes walk.



### PARKS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SPACES

Public Spaces take various spatial forms depending on size and use including parks and gardens, playgrounds, riparian reserves, community squares/courtyards among others. Within the four districts, there are different multifunction spaces that have various typologies with parks being the most present in 19 open public spaces. Ecological spaces (in 15 open public spaces), playground (in 12 open public spaces) and gardens (in 16 open public spaces) are other important spaces. These were classified into three broad categories namely: city level spaces, neighborhood level spaces and pocket parks. While city level and neighborhood level public spaces are categorized based on their location and catchment area, pocket parks are predominantly defined by their sizes. The four districts have 16 city level public spaces, seven neighborhood level ones and no pocket parks. Neighborhood level public spaces are public spaces which are predominantly used and experienced by people living within the neighborhood in which the spaces are located while city level public spaces are public spaces which are used by people from the whole city and beyond. Pocket parks on the other hand are small public spaces measuring less than 400 square meters.

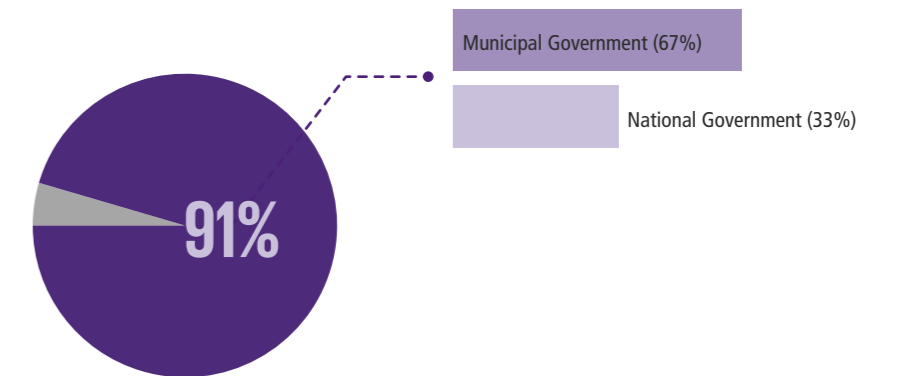


### WHO OWNS AND MANAGES PUBLIC SPACES?

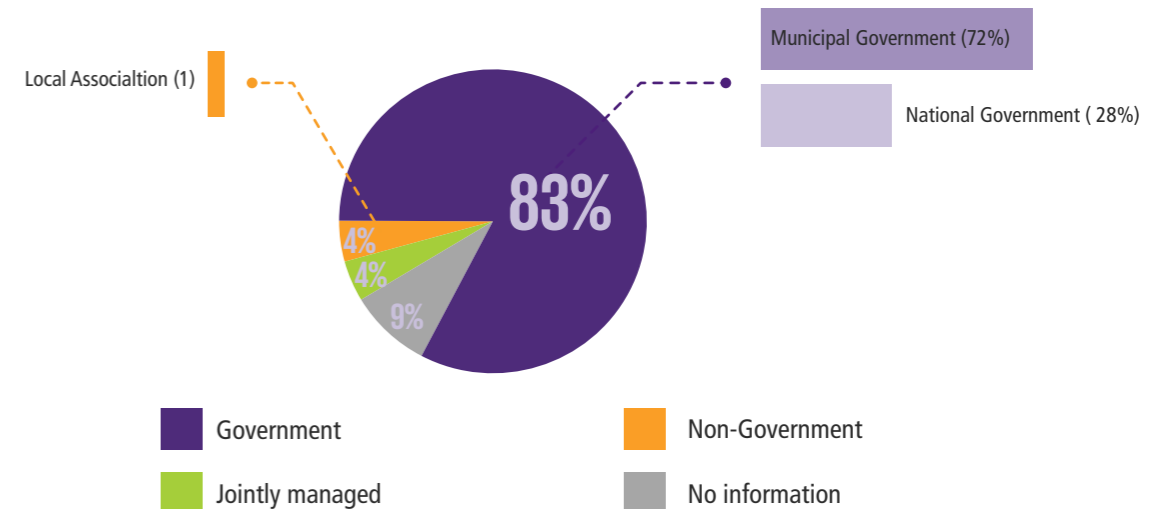
People are drawn to and tend to stay longer in public spaces that offer interest, stimulation and or comfort. Further, they are more likely to linger if there's somewhere comfortable to sit, there's protection from adverse weather, there's fresh air to breathe and the overall environmental quality is satisfactory. At the center of this, are clear ownership and pragmatic management.

The Municipality is the main custodian of open public spaces within the four districts, owning 14 open public spaces which is 67 percent of all open public spaces owned by government. There's however no information on the ownership of two open public spaces. This exposes them to misappropriation by unscrupulous individuals and or groups. Even though the findings suggest that the Municipality manages 13 of all the 18 open public spaces, there is no evidence of management of the spaces. They still remain unwelcoming, and often unsafe spaces, particularly for women and girls.

#### OWNERSHIP OF OPEN PUBLIC SPACES



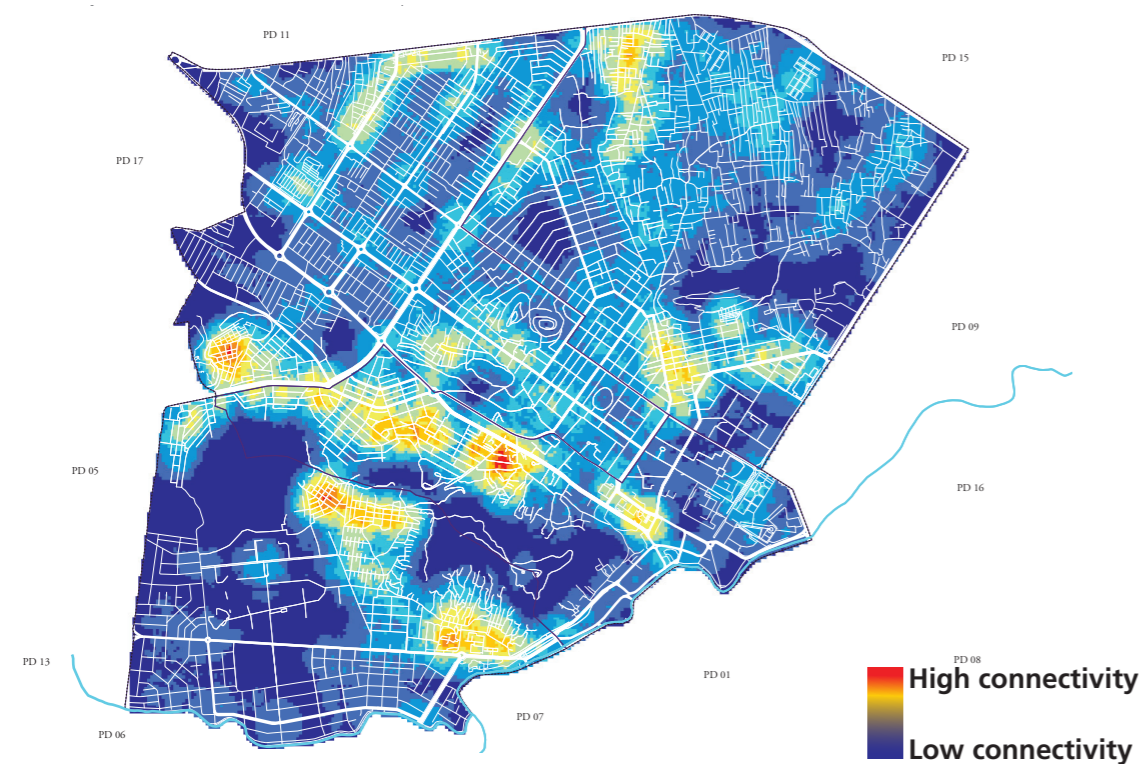
#### MANAGEMENT OF OPEN PUBLIC SPACES



# GENERAL STATE OF STREETS

## WEAK STREET CONNECTIVITY IN DISTRICT 4 AND 10

A sufficient street network is important for the success of any human settlement. It shapes the urban structure and increases the overall productivity of a city by reducing commute time. In order for a city to function optimally, its street network should make up at least thirty per cent of urban land with at least eighteen kilometers of street length per square kilometer. This network should not only work for the car but for public transport, cycling and walking. Successful streets have multiple functions including moving people and traffic, and serving as public spaces where people meet, celebrate and appreciate the city. Overall, the street length land area ratio is 15 km/km<sup>2</sup>. This is below the recommended density. The result is congestion and traffic snarl-ups. While some of the streets have unique characters including trees and sufficient pedestrian space, the Municipality needs to invest more to improve the pedestrian experience by improving safety and security and the micro climate.

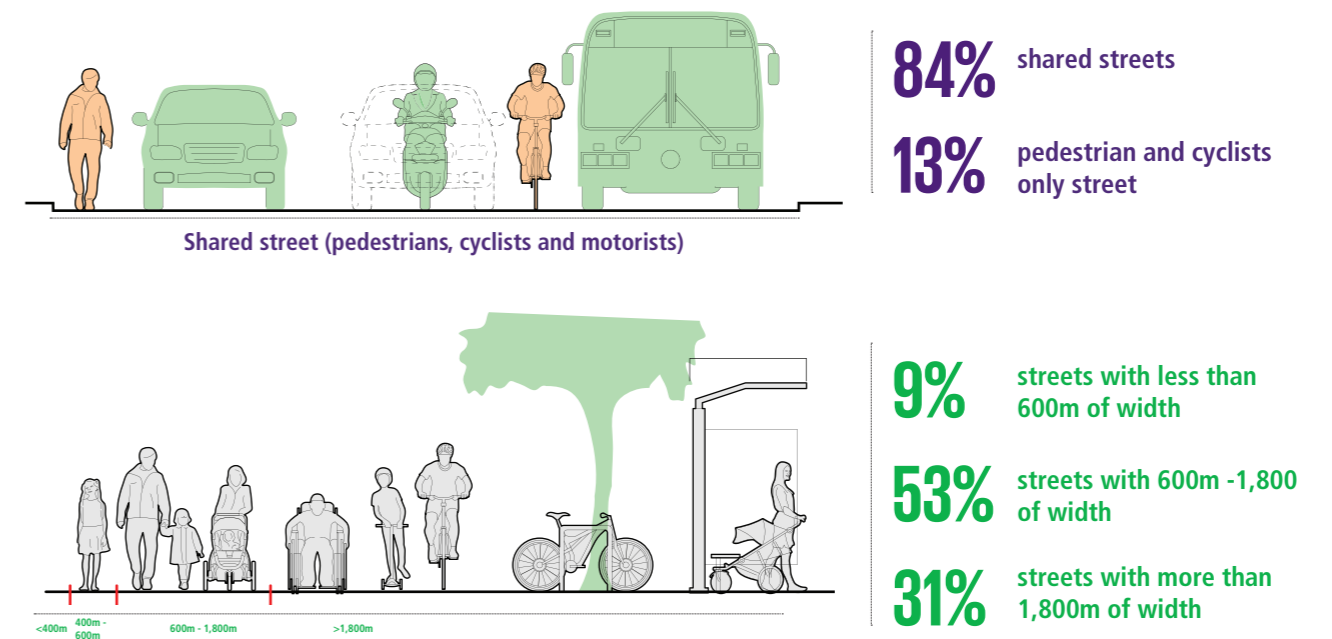


**27 Km** STREET LENGTH PER SQUARE KILOMETER

**336** INTERSECTIONS PER SQUARE KILOMETER

## TYPE OF STREETS

By removing the formal distinctions between spaces dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorized vehicles, the street is shared by everyone, with each user becoming increasingly aware and respectful of the others. Shared streets (mix of pedestrian, cyclists and motorists) accounted for 84 per cent (27) of the total streets assessed. However within the four districts this is informally developed as pedestrians were not prioritized in the design, therefore these streets are dominated by cars. For a successful shared street it should be considered in places where pedestrian activity is high and vehicle volumes are low or discouraged. Fromm the data collection in the field, we found that street width mainly ranged between 600 meters to 1,800 meters which is not sufficient for the typical shared streets in these districts as it encourages



**97%**

percentage of streets that are formal

**50%**

percentage of street with concrete surface material

**72%**

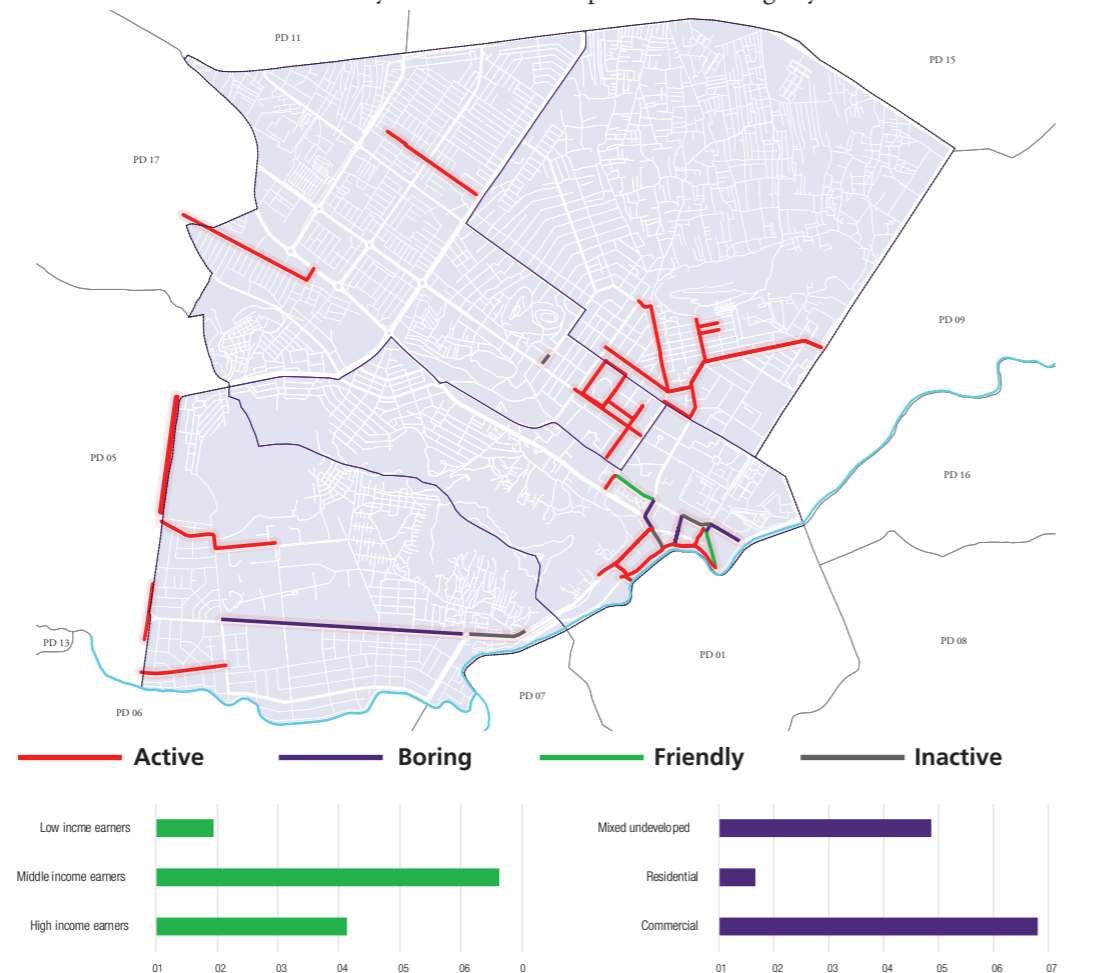
72% (23) streets are multi-functional

traffic snarl-ups.

### HOW ACTIVE ARE THE FACADES

Facade study was done for the targetd streets to gain an insight into how facades vary throughout. These were categorised as active, friendly, boring and inactive dependant on how active these frontages onto the street were. Seven streets that were assessed as dominated by boring and four streets by inactive facades and are therefore uninteresting to the pedestrians. The overall perception of the facades of areas near the streets is that they are active. Those areas where facades are more inactive create different character and sub-divides the adjacent areas, however more active frontages should be encouraged to ensure more consistent visual interest and public life throughout.

Land use information is useful in helping to give insight into the potential for public life, to build on existing land uses and to identify areas where vacant buildings or those that do not promote public life are located. Majority of the street were located in commercial areas categorized as middle income neighborhoods. The result of these land uses and their opening hours results more active and busy streets with more public life during daytime hours with

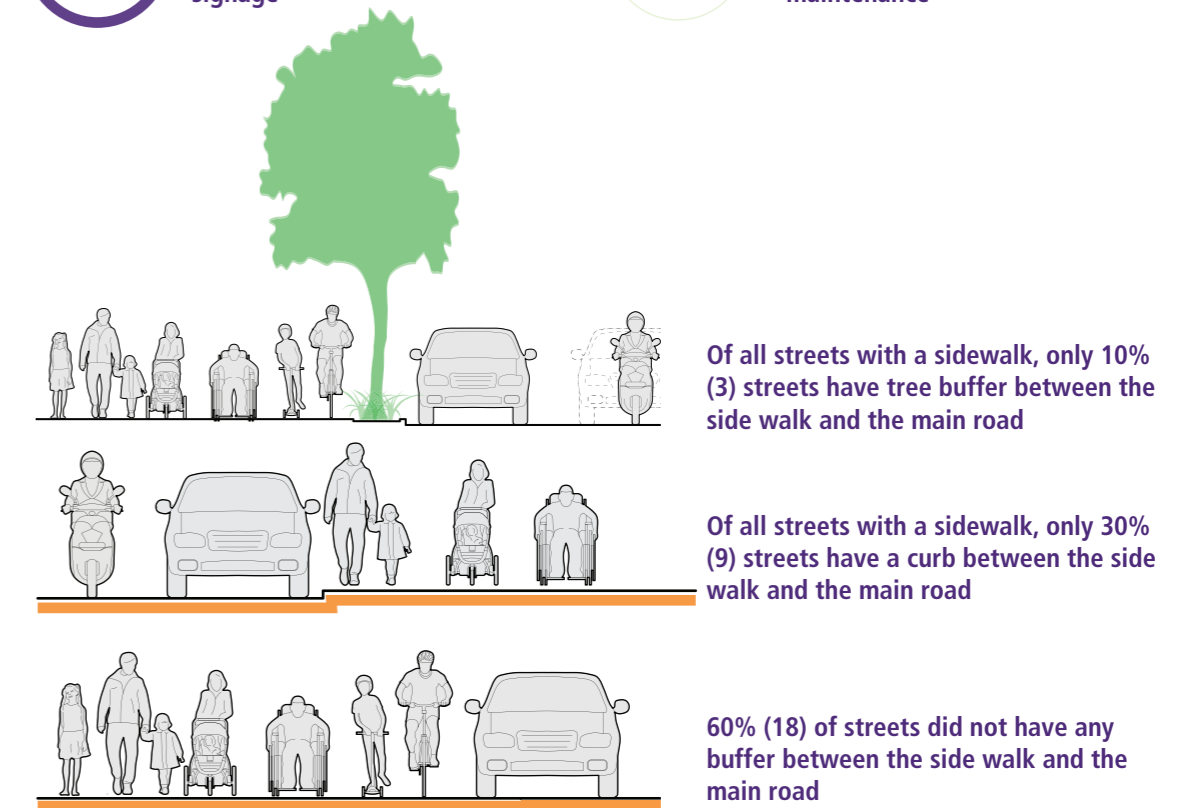
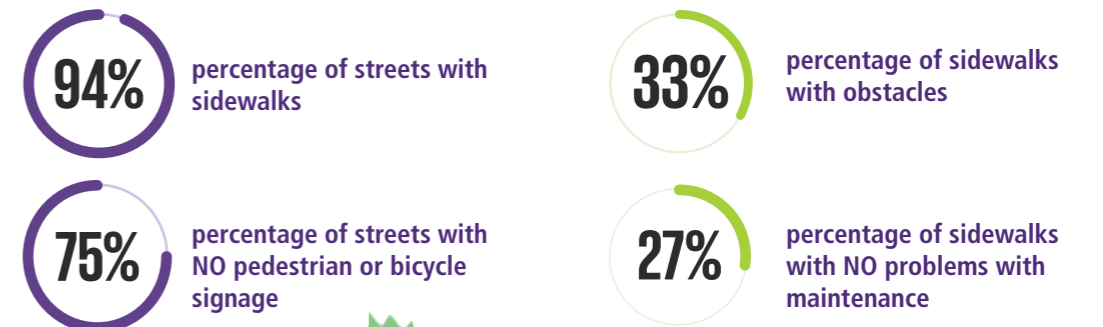


considerably less to no activity in the evening.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO WALK AND CYCLE

Although the streets in Kabul are wide, majority of them do not have designations for different users. With majority of the streets having designated sidewalks, 60% (18) of these streets do not have a buffer between the sidewalk and the main road, leaving the street as one disorganized road. These streets are therefore dominated by cars with little room for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is also high number of streets with no signage for pedestrians and cyclists while 33% of the sidewalks have obstacles discouraging continuity of walking and cycling. Because of these and general low quality of the streets, few people especially women are walking and cycling.



# HOW SAFE ARE PUBLIC SPACES?

## HOW ARE PEOPLE USING PUBLIC SPACES?

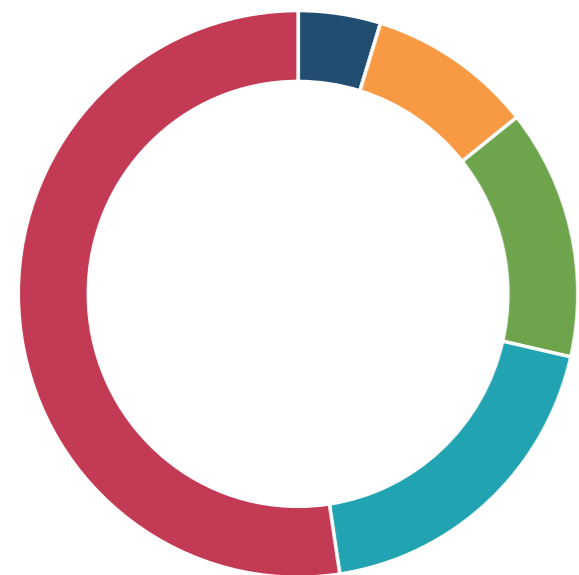
Successful public spaces are accommodating and welcoming to both men and women, children, teenagers, the elderly and persons with disabilities. For the elderly for example, some of the most important considerations include social and physical activities, community life facilities and services, social networks, and pleasant and safe environments.

Within the four district, dominant activities and use along the streets as shown in the percentages on the right include walking to/from work, walking

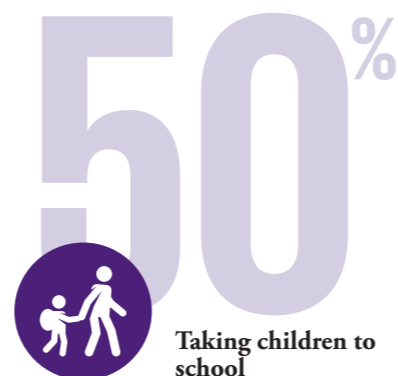
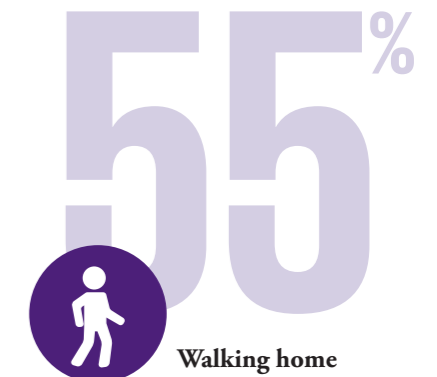
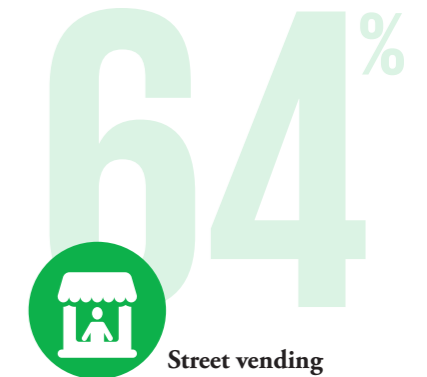
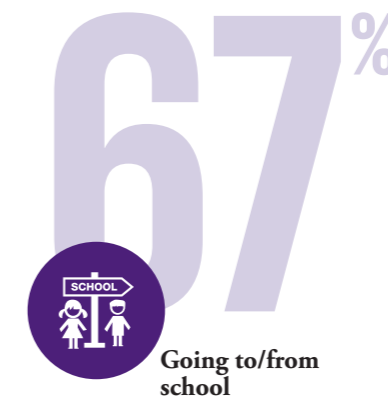
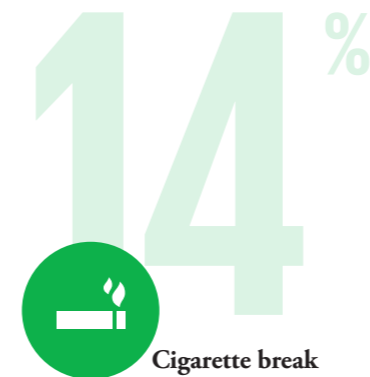
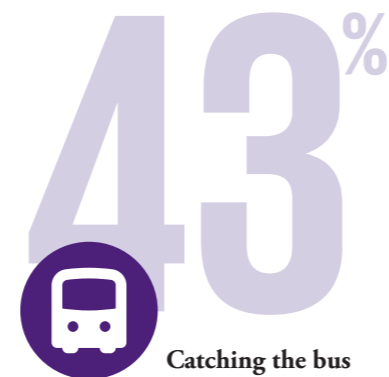
to shops, window shopping, walking to/from school and street vending. The majority of staying activities are commercial with very few play related activities.

Six open public spaces are perceived as very active in terms of use and have pluri-functional activities (different types of activities at the same time). This is also seen by the variety of typologies present in the open public spaces. This shows the potential of both streets and open public spaces to be active and attractive for different use and users.

### USE OF STREETS



■ Play  
■ Others  
■ Political  
■ Social  
■ Commercial



### FORMAL OR INFORMAL ACTIVITIES

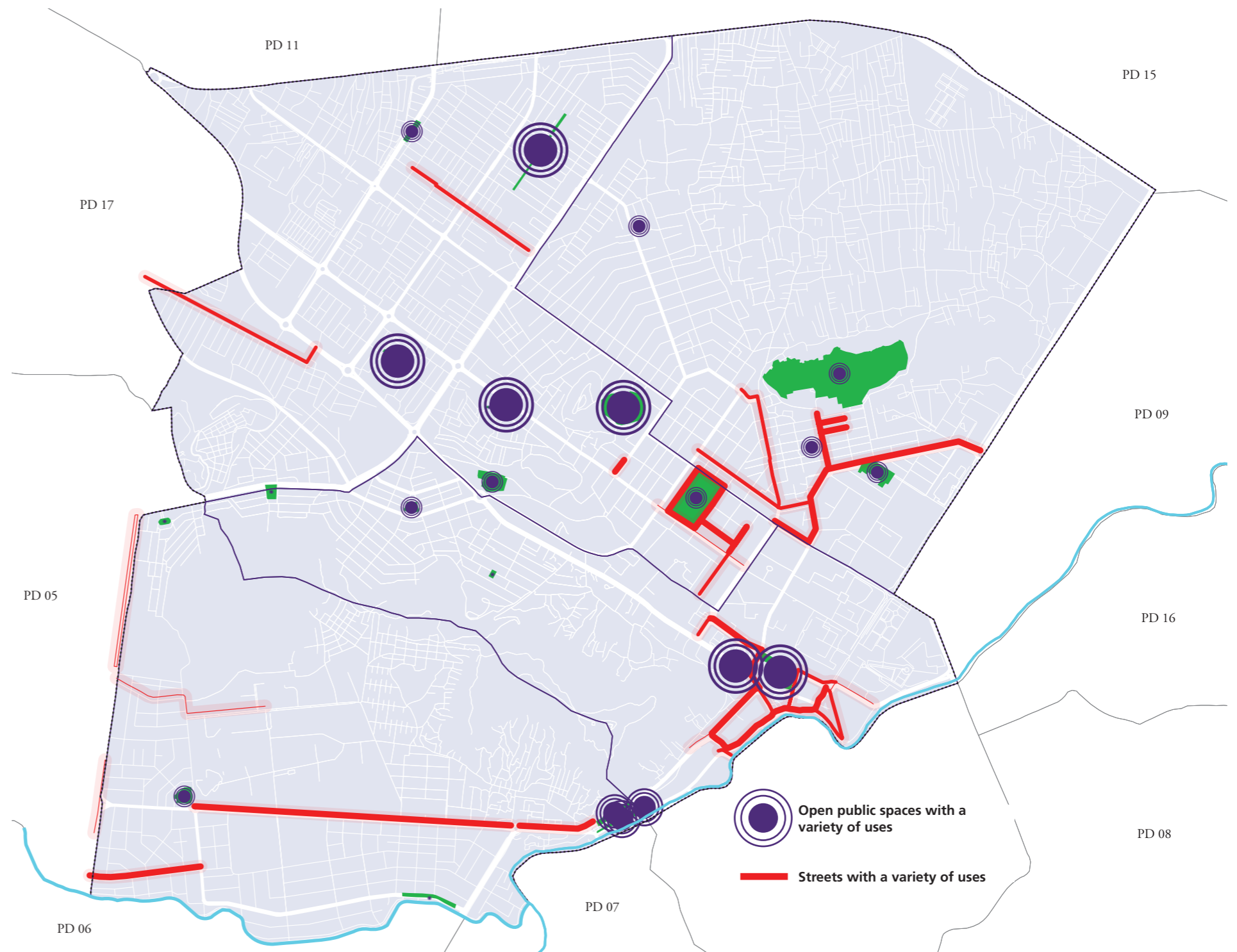
Street space serve as trading places, for both formal and informal commercial activities such as small shops, cafes, street vendors, street musicians etc. Most of the commercial streets also function as residential area especially for the shop keepers/ owners. This mixed-use function keep the street vibrant and lively. These streets also served as an arena for social interaction as well as a cultural space - unique to the people's beliefs and customs. The streets in the four districts, although formally planned, have both formal and informal activities while open public spaces have both organized and non-organized activities these ranges from play related, art-related, religious and socializing. Streets could enhance more staying activities by prioritizing pedestrian activities by providing seating in sunny spots near the bus stop, combined with clearing of obstacles along sidewalks.

### FUNCTIONS DAY AND NIGHT

The functions and activities in both open public spaces vary as it gets darker as many users either close their businesses around the streets and in open public spaces users do not perceive them as safe during the night. This is due to the lack of proper programming of public spaces but also the lack/poor street lighting present hindering extended use of the spaces. The functions of public spaces can vary from different times of the day e.g. a square becomes a theater at night but also it can vary at different times of the day e.g. a parking lot becoming a skate park or a market during the weekend. It could also vary depending of climate and events of the calendar. This ensures that public spaces remain active and vibrate, promoting public life and enhancing social cohesion and safety.



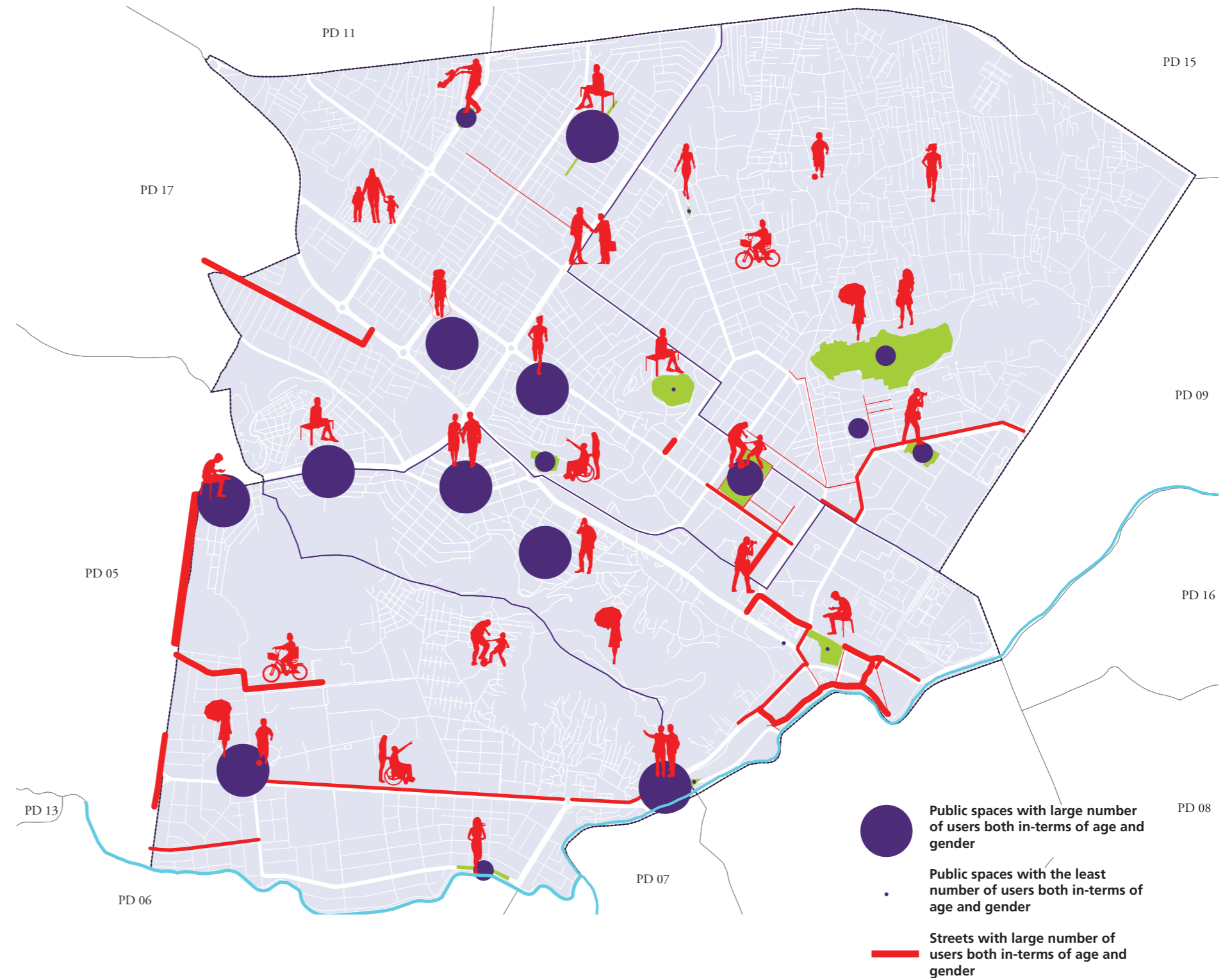
Users in Kabul's streets © flickr/sarahdejong



## WHO USES PUBLIC SPACES?

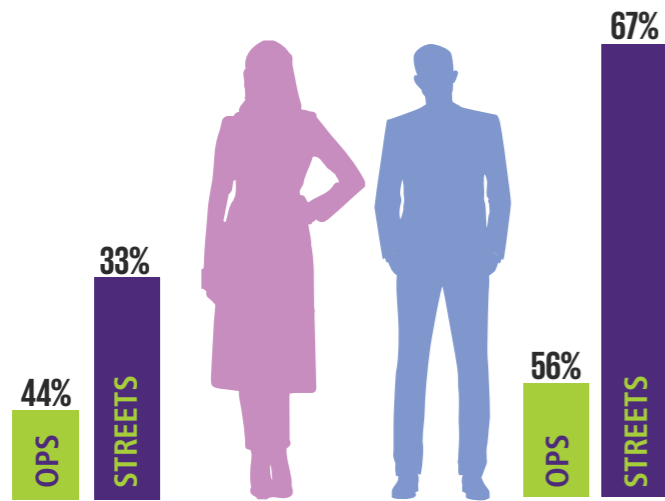
Planning and design of public spaces that focuses on inclusivity of all gender should start with an analysis on who doesn't use a particular public space, when, and why. This is because when certain groups, like women or girls, do not use a space, it is usually an indication that the space feels insecure to members of that group. Public spaces with an equal representation of both age and gender has often been perceived as safe.

Although the population in the four district has almost equal representation of males and females, public spaces had a higher number of men compared to women across all age-groups. There was a high number of men between the age of 18 - 35. This suggests that open public spaces and streets are not attractive for females and especially for children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

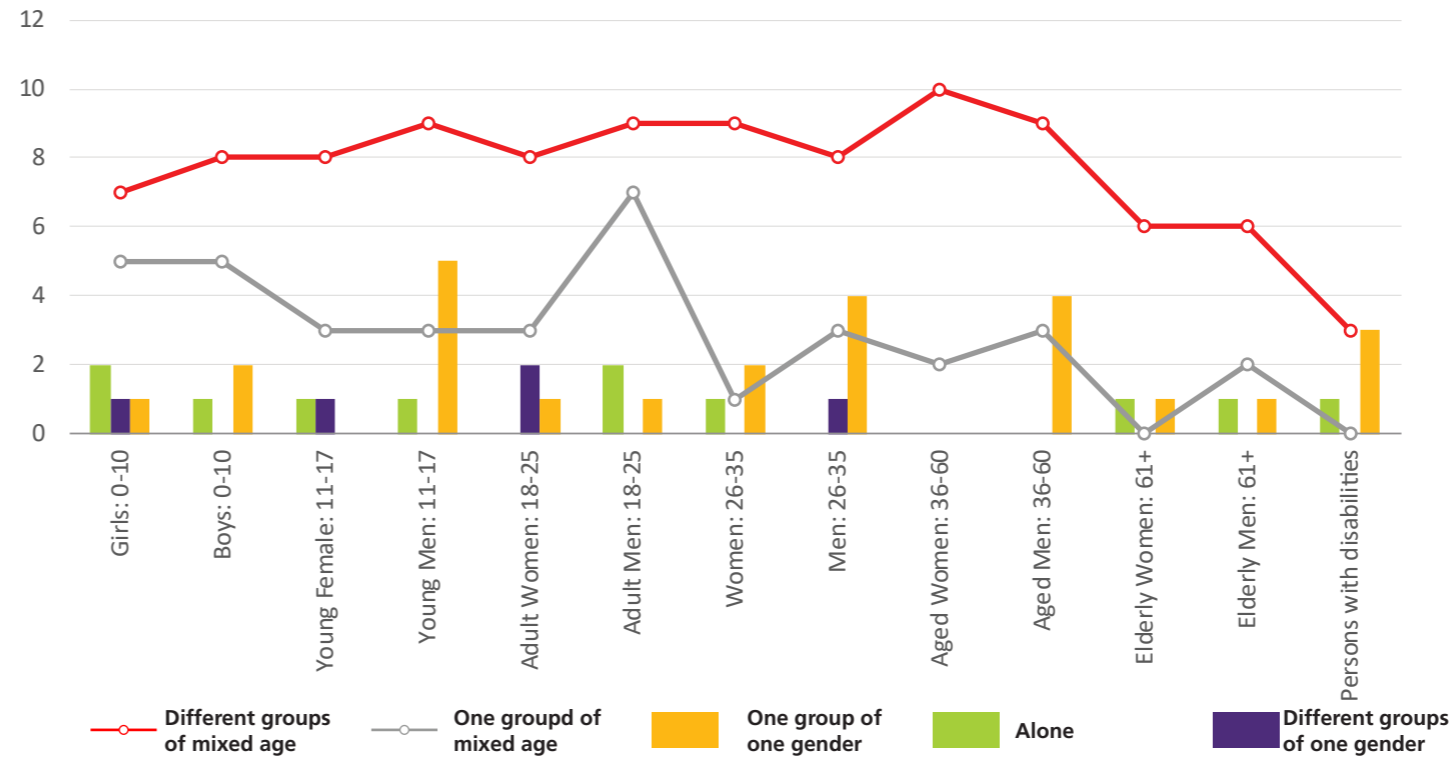




### FEW FEMALES IN PUBLIC SPACES

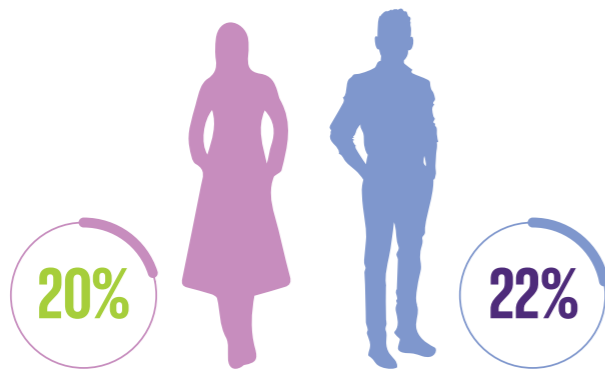


### HOW ARE USERS GROUPING THEMSELVES IN PUBLIC SPACES



**43%**  
public spaces with aged women between 36 - 60 years in different groups of mixed age and gender

### USERS OF PUBLIC SPACE BY AGE



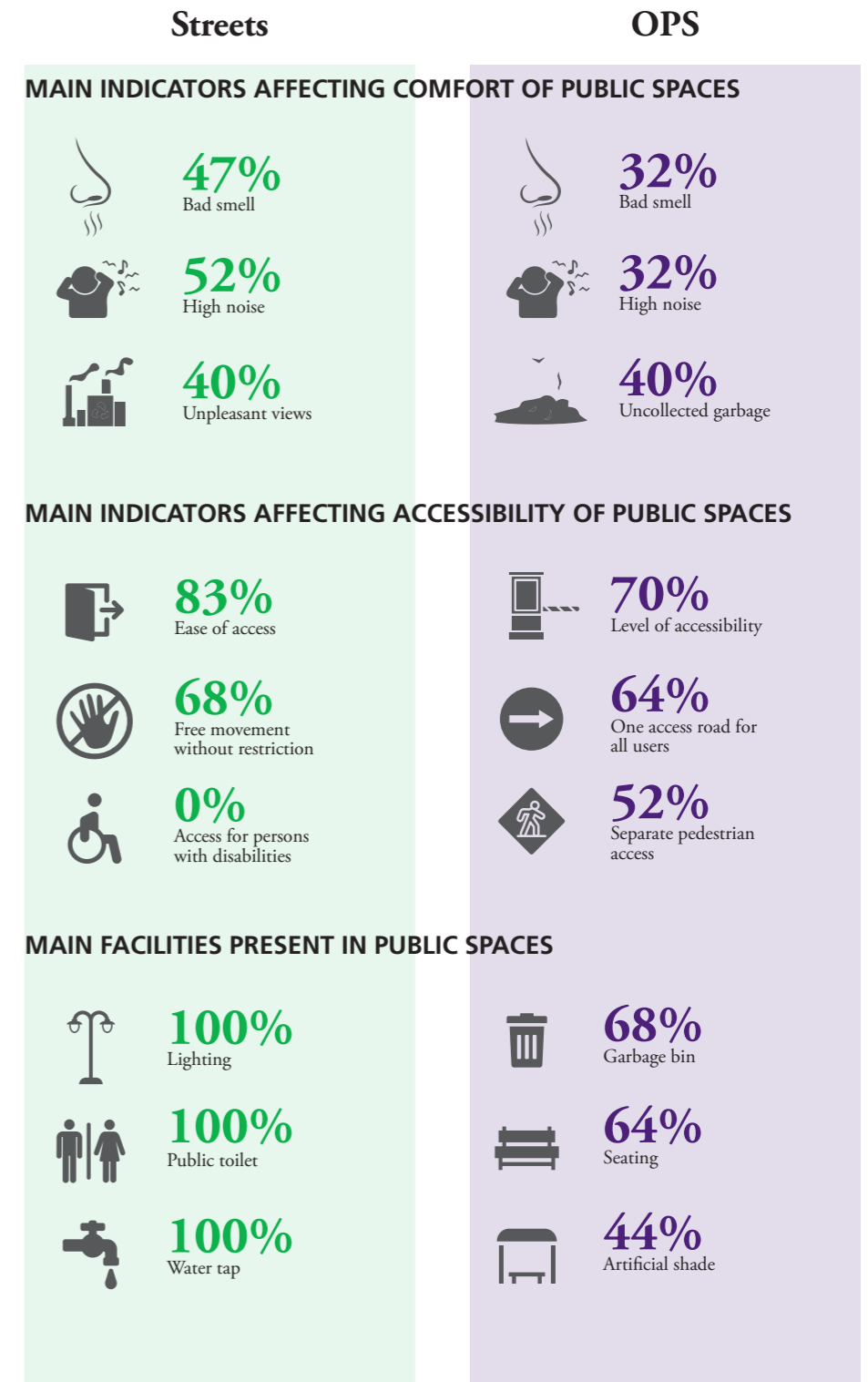
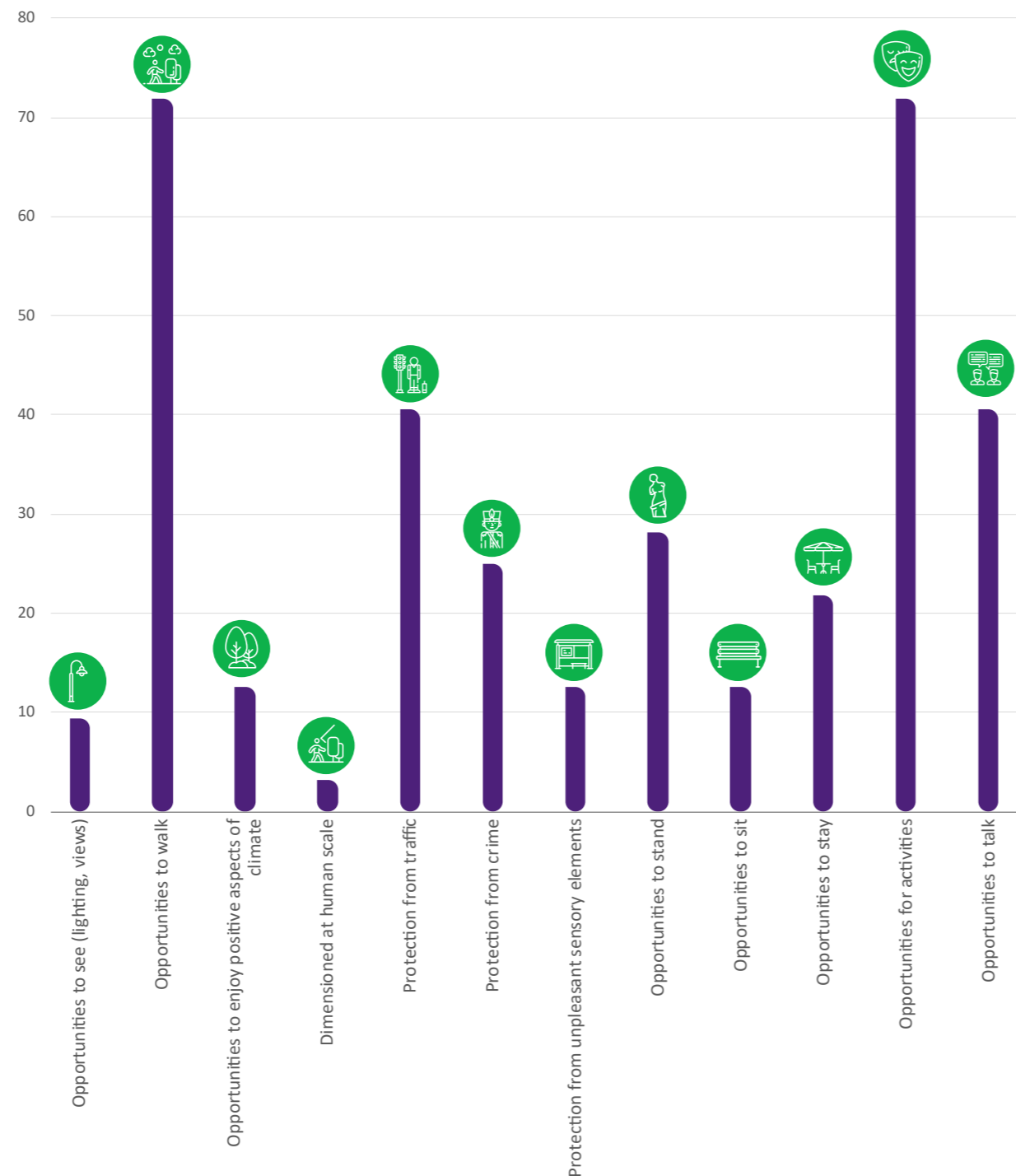
**76%**  
public spaces with men between the age of 18 - 25 years.

**64%**  
public spaces with men between the age of 26 - 35 years.

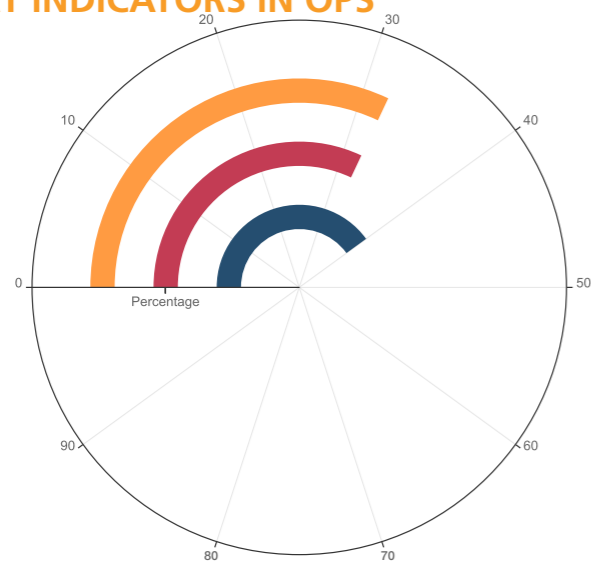
## WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR “STAY” IN THE PUBLIC SPACES?

A truly comfortable place is pleasant and welcoming for everyone regardless of gender, age or ability. At the core of this is enjoyment and quality of stay. These are determined by perceptions of safety, cleanliness, the quality of smell, the diversity of uses and users in the space, micro-climate, soundscapes, and availability of amenities for use and access. In addition, design, social programming and management of public spaces are directly linked to enjoyment and quality of stay in public spaces. When we get design and programming wrong, public spaces become underused, misused or abandoned, becoming unsafe places. However, when we get them right, public spaces become the ‘pulse’ of the city and areas of many activities. Many respondents highlighted that streets have areas for walking, for activities, for talking, to stay and stand. Protection from traffic and crime was also present but in a few streets. However, the design of the street have little consideration for human scale, there lacks lighting and pleasant views and there are few streets that provide opportunities to enjoy and ensure quality of stay. Some of the main issues affecting comfort in streets and open public spaces include, bad smell, loud noise and uncollected garbage. While facilities that affect quality of stay include absence of street lighting, garbage bins, artificial shades, an public toilets.

Management models can also enable or inhibit enjoyment of public spaces. For instance, entrance fees can be a barrier to access and inclusion. It reinforces economic and social inequalities and takes away the right to the city

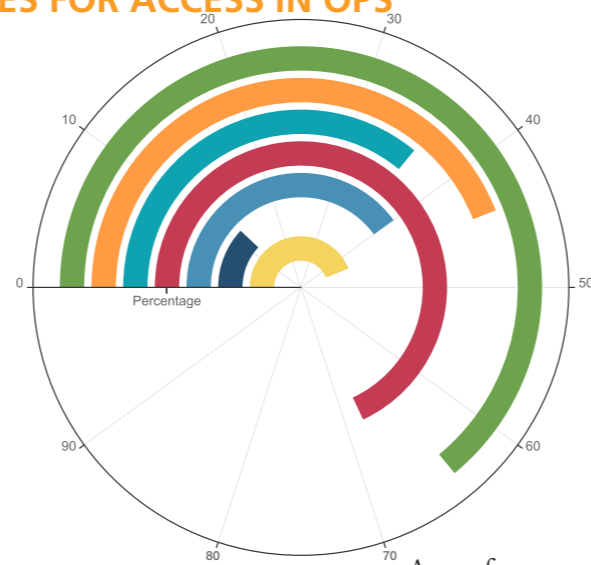


### COMFORT INDICATORS IN OPS



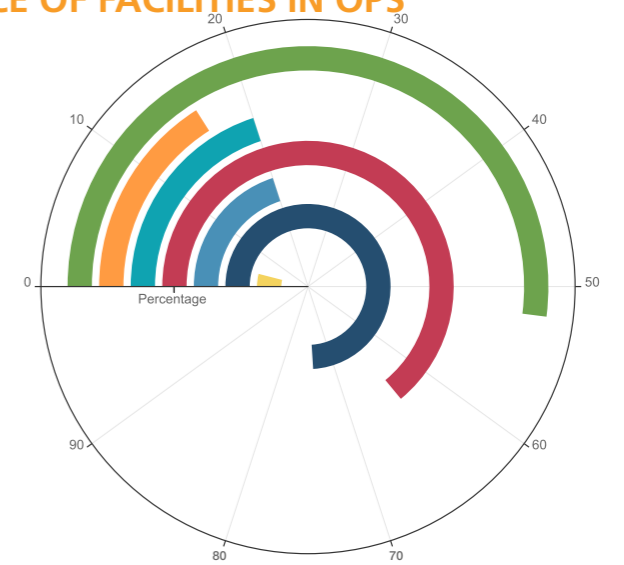
- Bad smell
- High noise
- Uncollected waste

### AMENITIES FOR ACCESS IN OPS

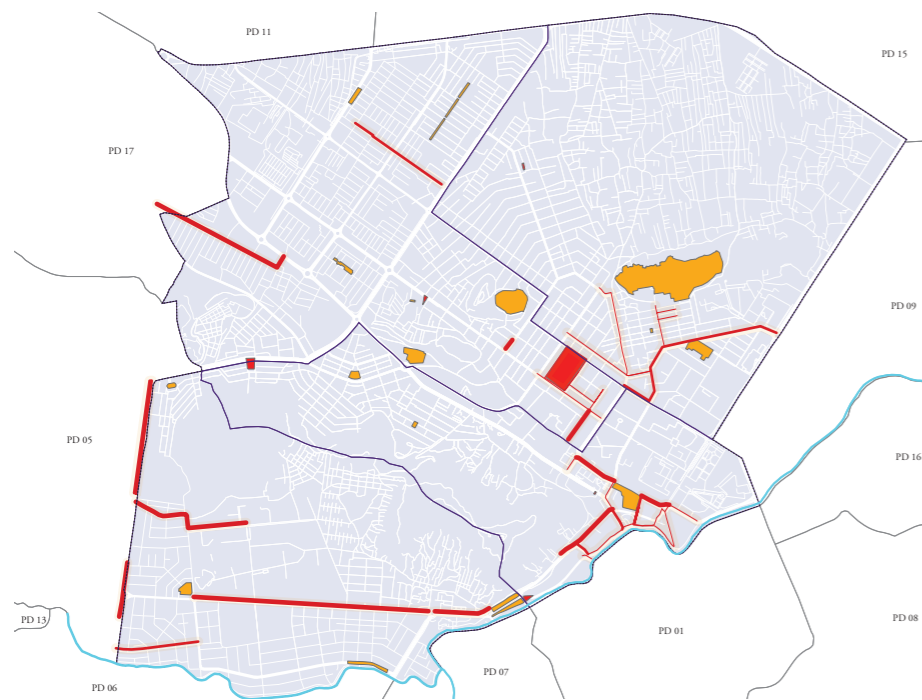


- Separate pedestrian access
- Separate vehicular access
- Separate bicycle access
- One access road suitable for all
- Access for persons with disabilities
- Accessibility level
- Bicycle Parking

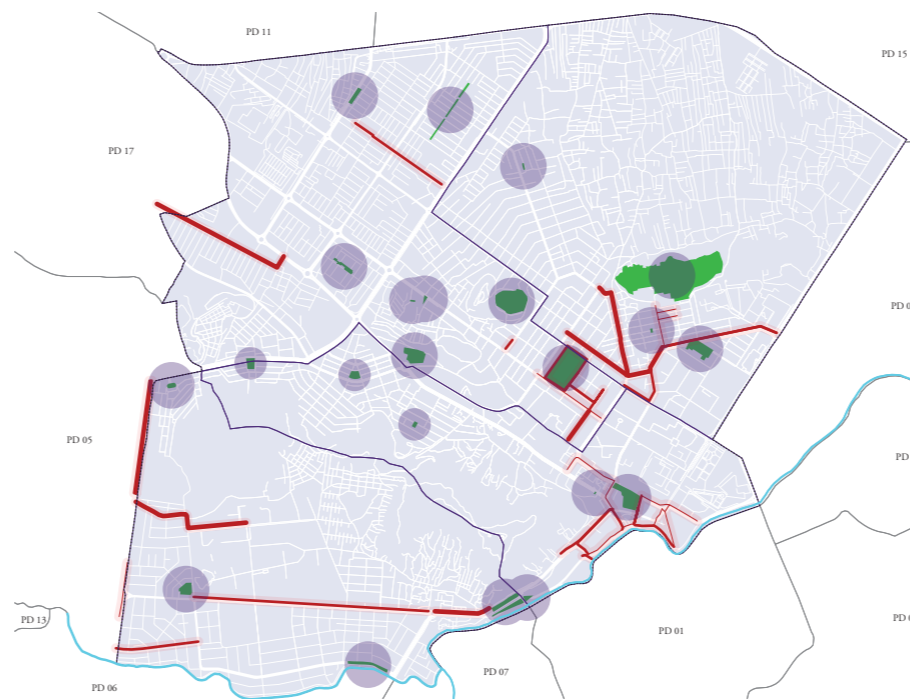
### PRESENCE OF FACILITIES IN OPS



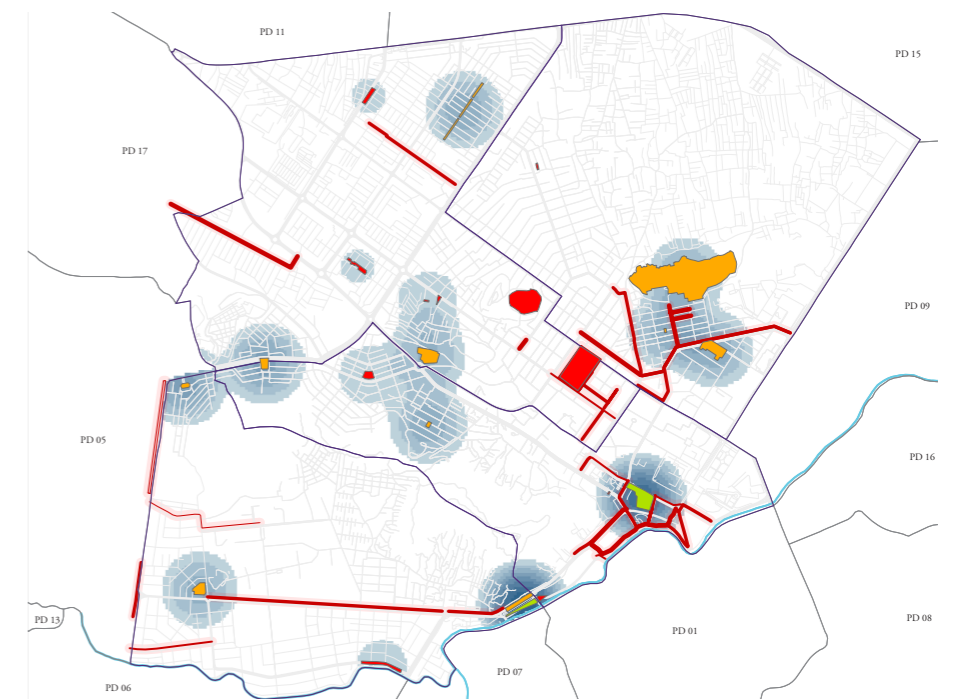
- Seating facilities
- Facilities to restrict vehicular movement
- Street lighting
- Garbage bin
- Water tap
- Drainage
- Artificial Shade



- OPS that are perceived as uncomfortable
- Streets that are perceived as uncomfortable

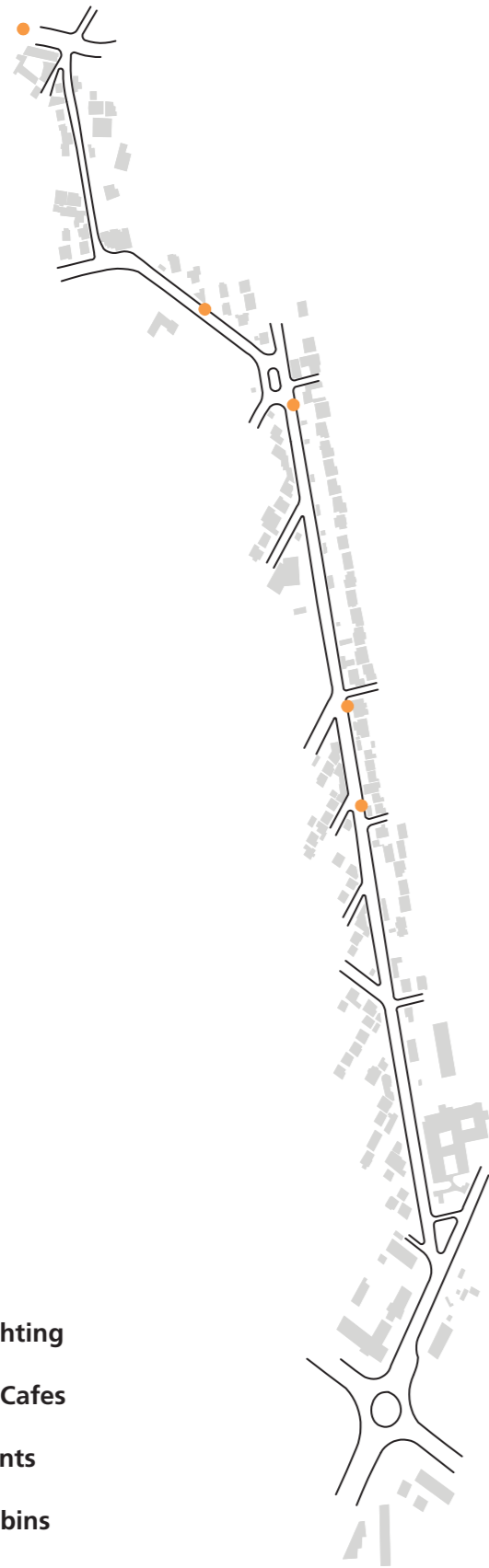


- OPS that are inaccessible
- Streets are perceived as inaccessible

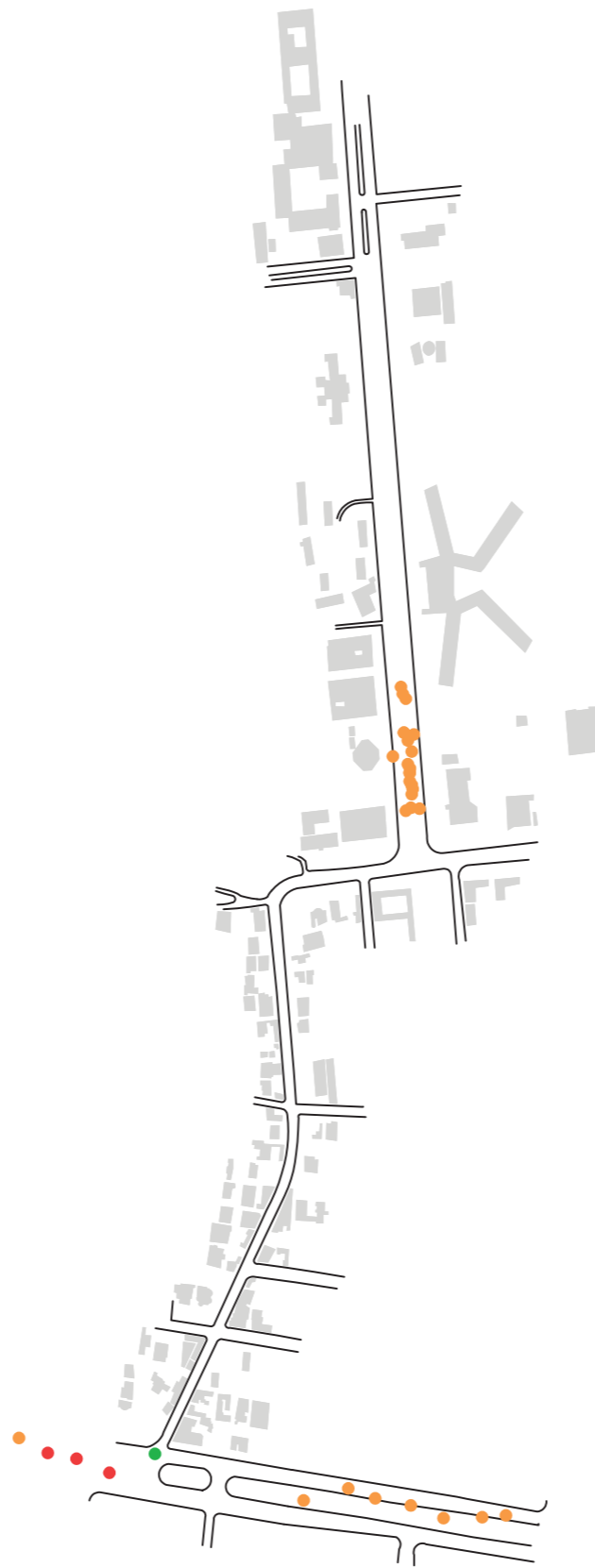


- OPS that have few facilities
- Streets few facilities

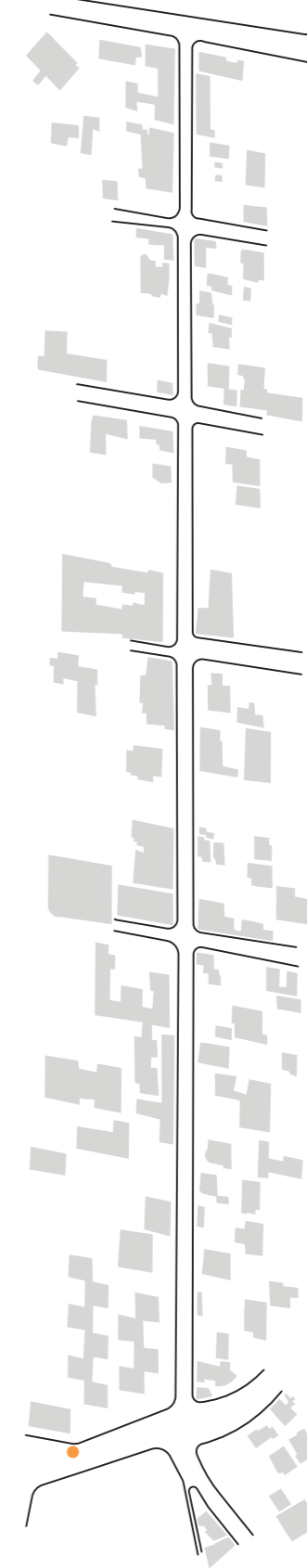
AMENITIES IN A STREET IN DISTRICT 10



AMENITIES IN A STREET IN DISTRICT 3



AMENITIES IN A STREET IN DISTRICT 4



- Street lighting
- Outdoor Cafes
- Pinch Points
- Garbage bins

AMENITIES IN A STREET IN DISTRICT TWO



AMENITIES IN A STREET IN DISTRICT 10



## WHAT ARE THE SAFETY CONCERNS IN PUBLIC SPACES?

Providing a sense of security among users in public spaces is key and is regarded as being a basic human need. Failing to have a sense of security in one's everyday environment can have various negative consequences. Where public space is inadequate, poorly designed, or privatized, the city becomes increasingly segregated. The result can be a polarized city where social tensions are likely to flare up and where crime and violence rises.

High quality, pleasant and safe public spaces are therefore, the pulse of great cities and communities. At the same time, public space is where many inequalities are reflected and staged. How one experiences public life is shaped by the dimensions of one's identity, including race, ethnicity, gender, nobility, caste, ability and age. In

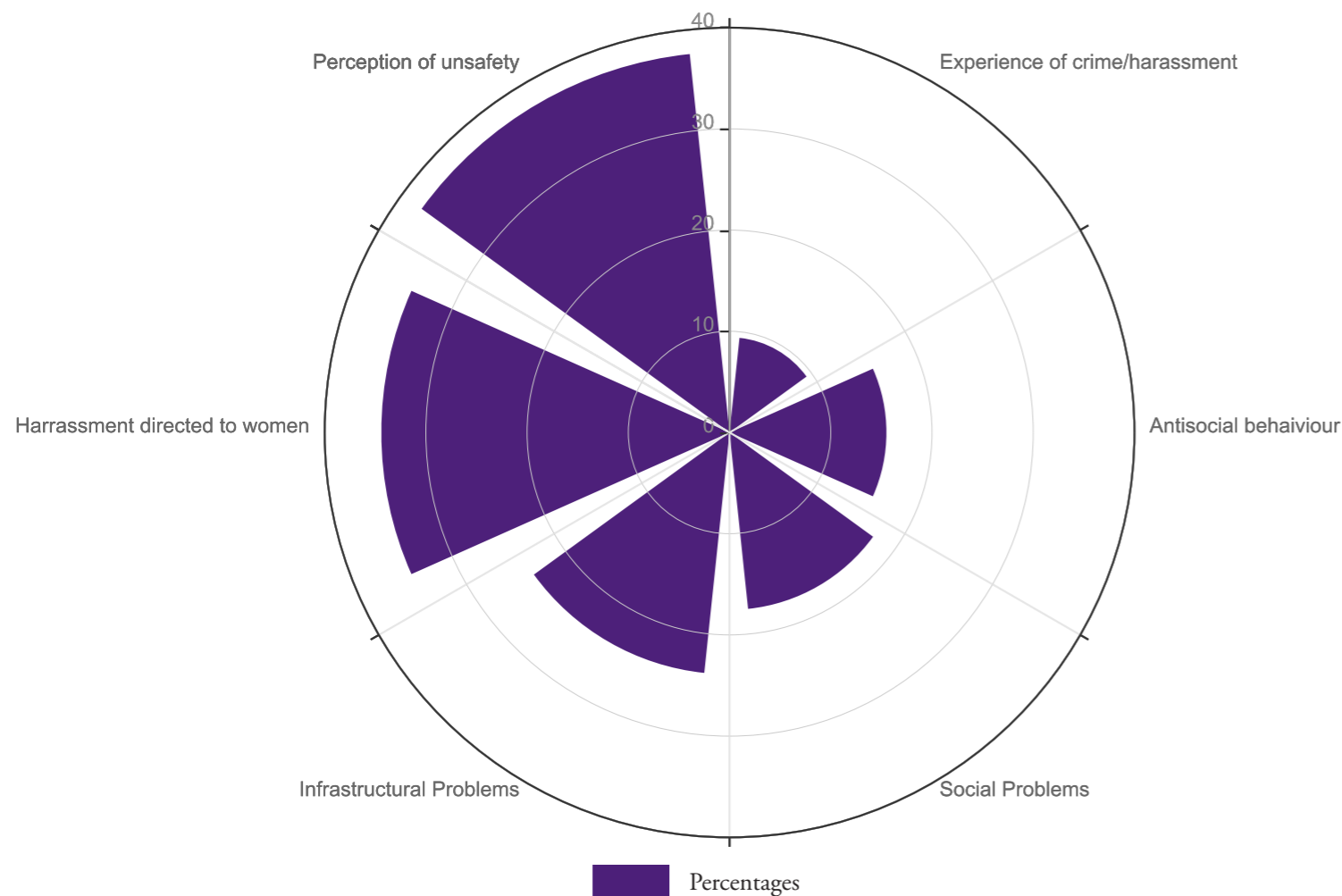
Afghanistan cities, public spaces are in every sense space for men. A survey carried out by women and children's legal research foundation revealed that 90 percent of women in Afghanistan have faced harassment in public spaces.

Away from culture and religious extremism, perception of safety in public space is shaped by a variety of factors including lighting, the presence of security guards in the vicinity, level of maintenance, availability of evidence of vandalism, visual access and eyes on the street among others. Within the four districts, interviews were conducted for users of public spaces. These interviews ensured that there is an age and gender balance to limit subjectivity. An analysis of responses revealed that feeling of unsafety, harassment directed to women and infrastructure problems were

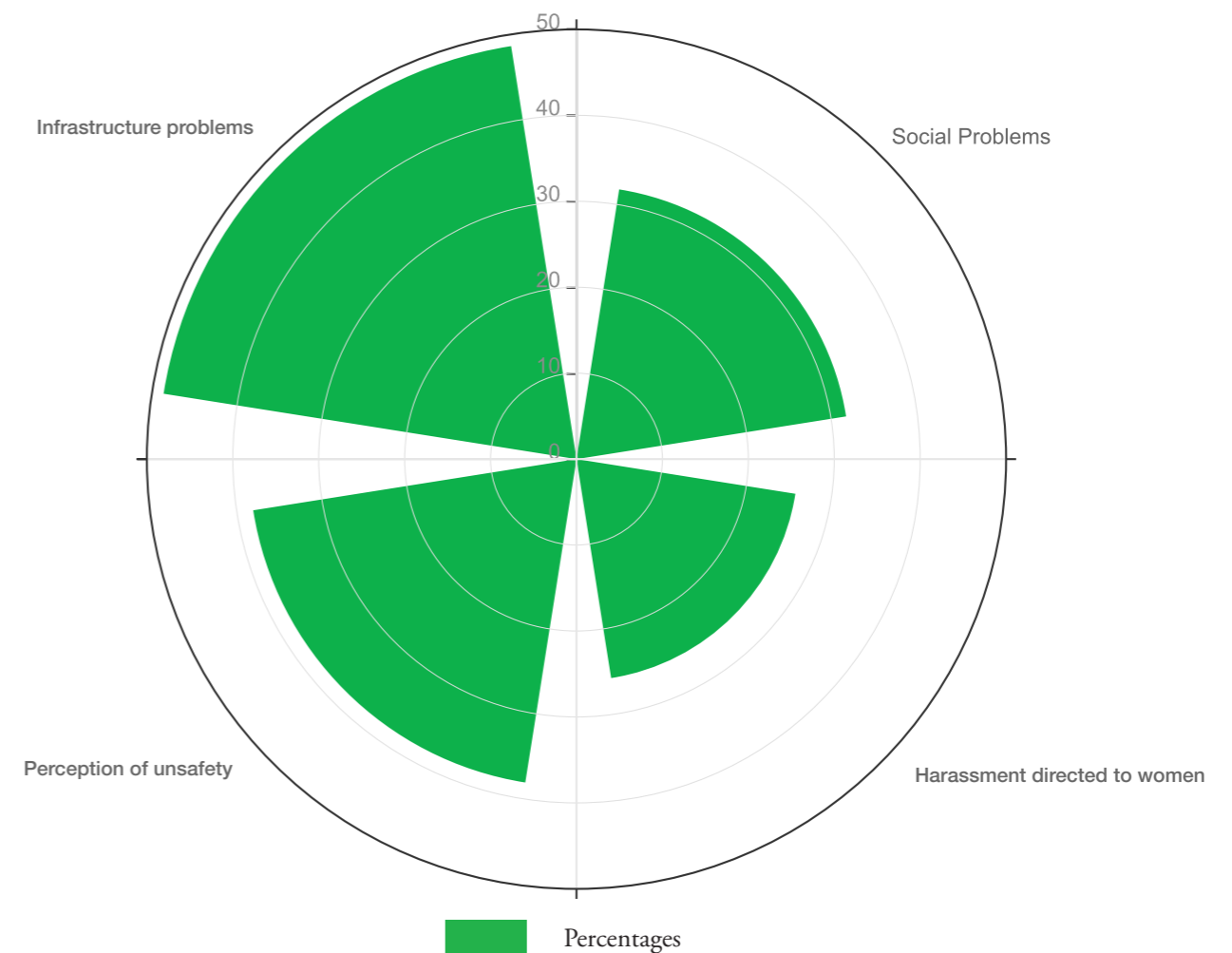
the main safety concerns in open public spaces. The main safety concerns along the streets were also feeling of unsafety, harassment directed to women and infrastructure problem with infrastructural problems being present in majority of the streets

This shows the need for the districts to work on ensuring that the presence and condition of infrastructure in the public spaces are put in place. Additionally, these public spaces should have mixed uses and activities, for diverse user groups at different times of the day to provide natural surveillance systems by local residents and business people, in that, there is reduced isolation and therefore creating a feeling of safety. Investment in street lighting in public spaces and streets used at night can improve safety and reduce harassment directed to women.

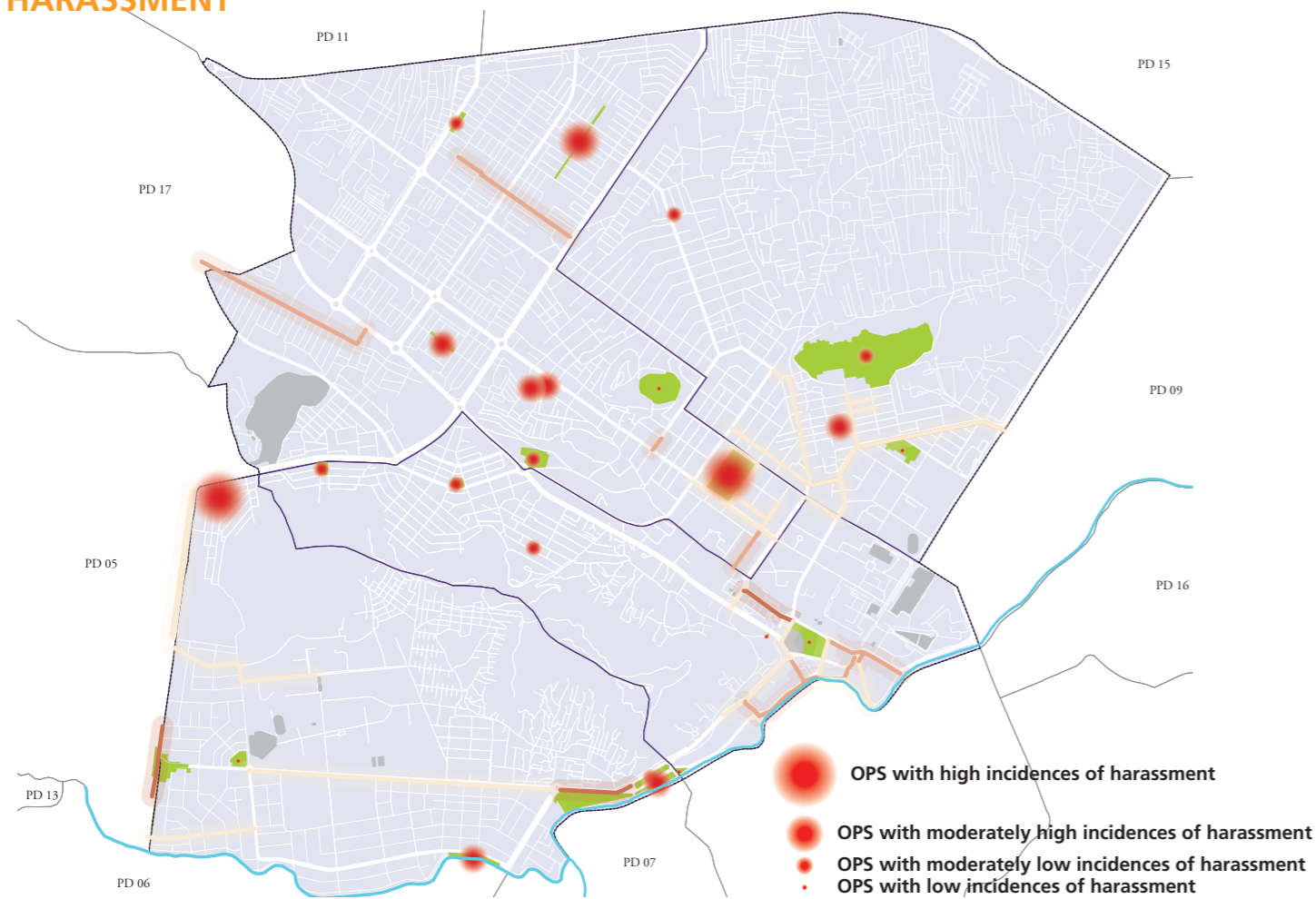
### MAIN SAFETY CONCERN IN OPEN PUBLIC SPACES ARE FEELING OF UNSAFETY AND HARASSMENT DIRECTED TO WOMEN



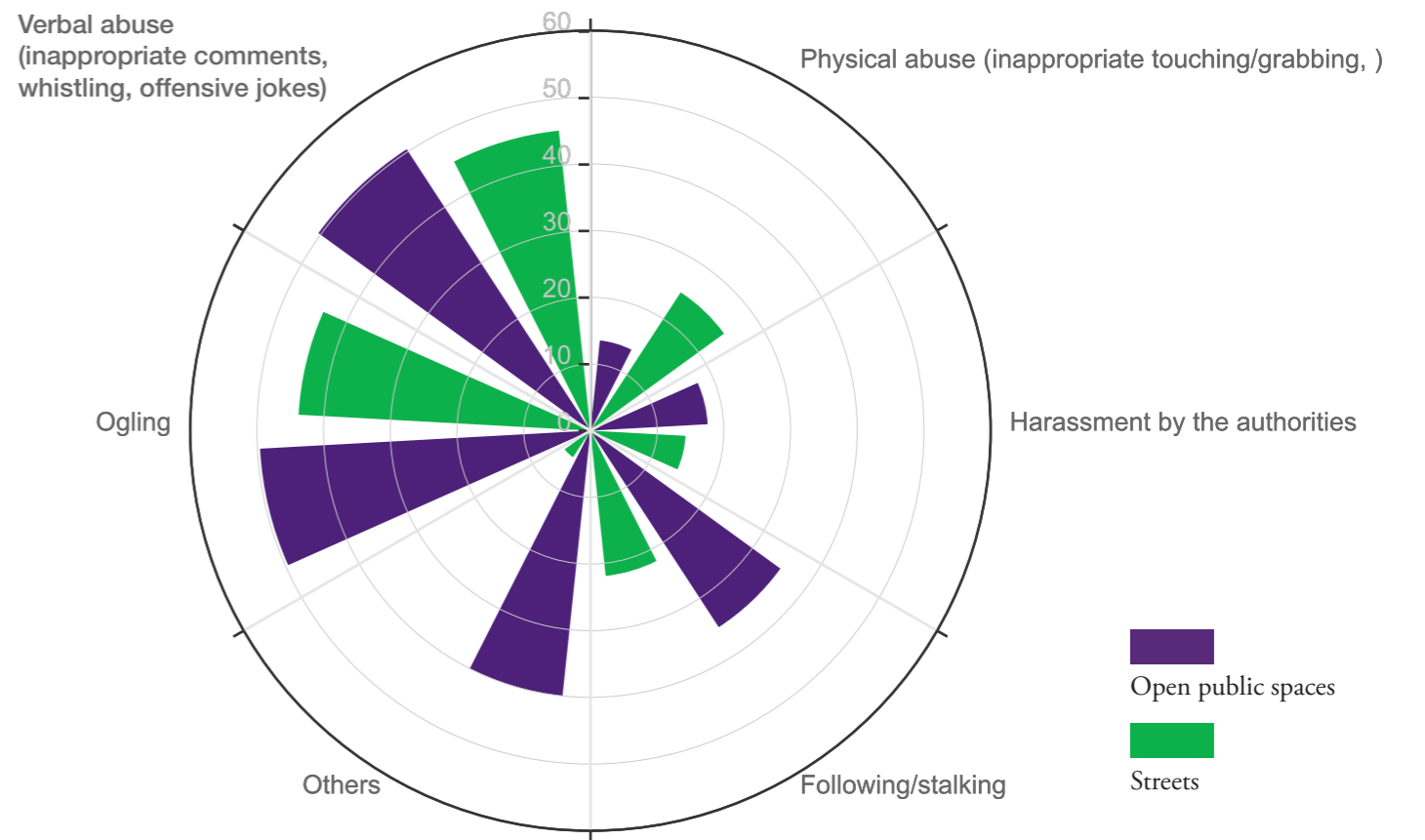
### MAIN SAFETY CONCERN ALONG STREETS ARE INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS AND FEELING OF UNSAFETY



## HARASSMENT

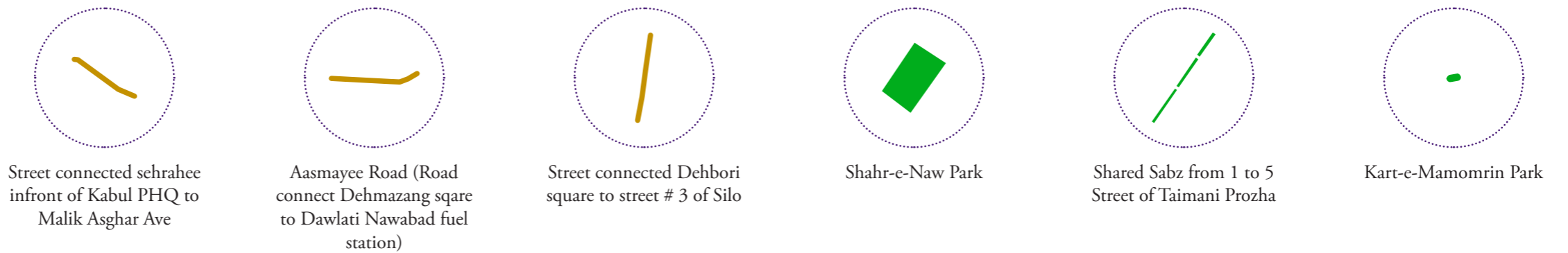


## WOMEN EXPERIENCE VERBAL ABUSE AND OGLING IN MANY PUBLIC SPACES

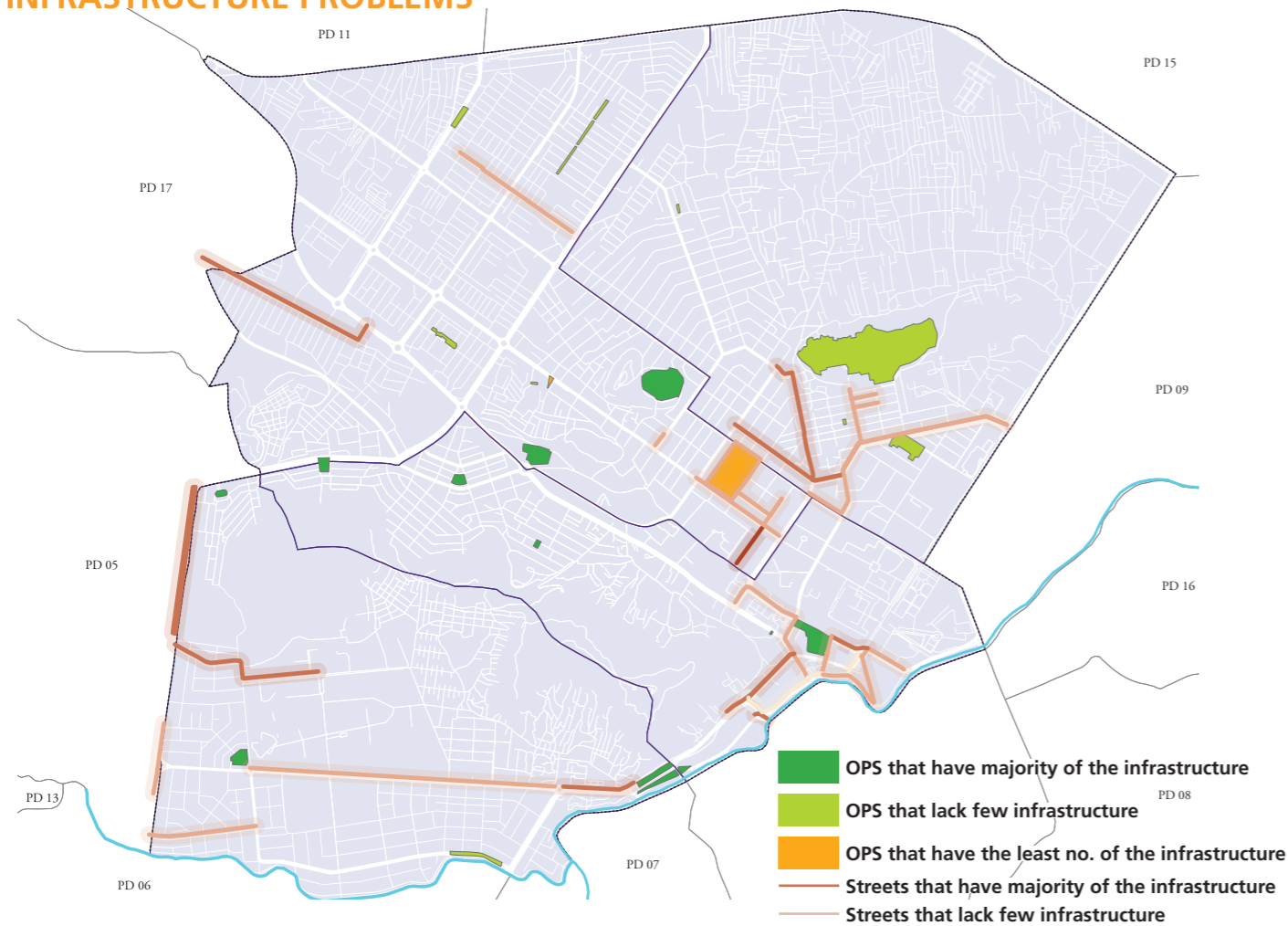


If harassment directed to women question the female presence in the public space, it also raises the issue of insecurity experienced by women, and the place of women in the city. The audit looked at different types of harassments from “acceptable” or obscene verbal violence, ogling, sexual attacks such as touching, stalking, and harassment by authorities. Several public spaces have more than one type of these harassments with the most prominent being verbal abuse and ogling. Open public spaces had a higher number of stalking than streets.

## PUBLIC SPACES WITH THE HIGHEST RECORDED INCIDENCES OF HARASSMENT



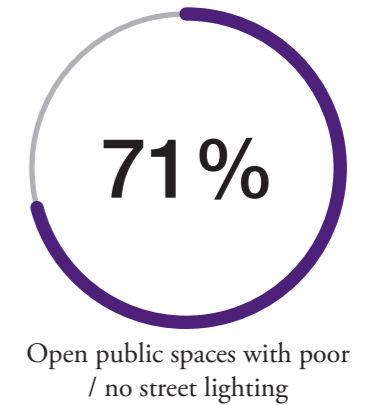
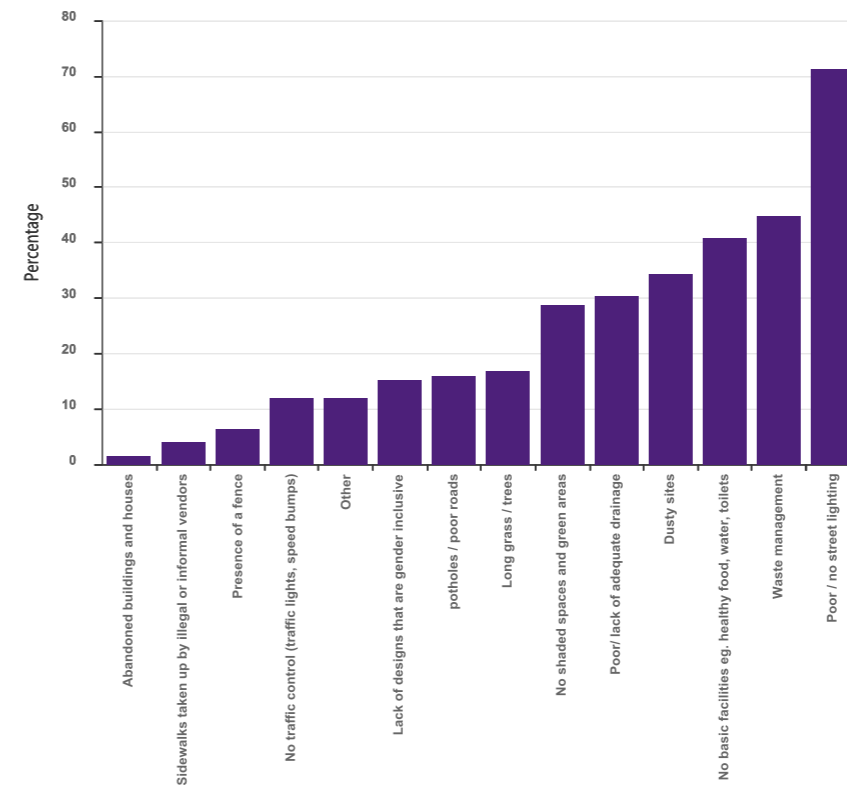
### INFRASTRUCTURE PROBLEMS



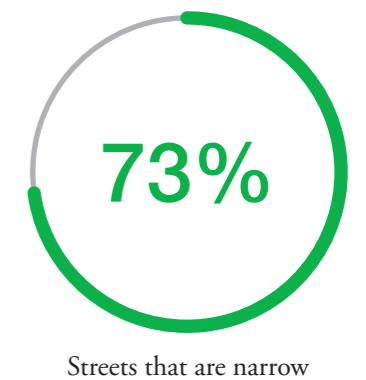
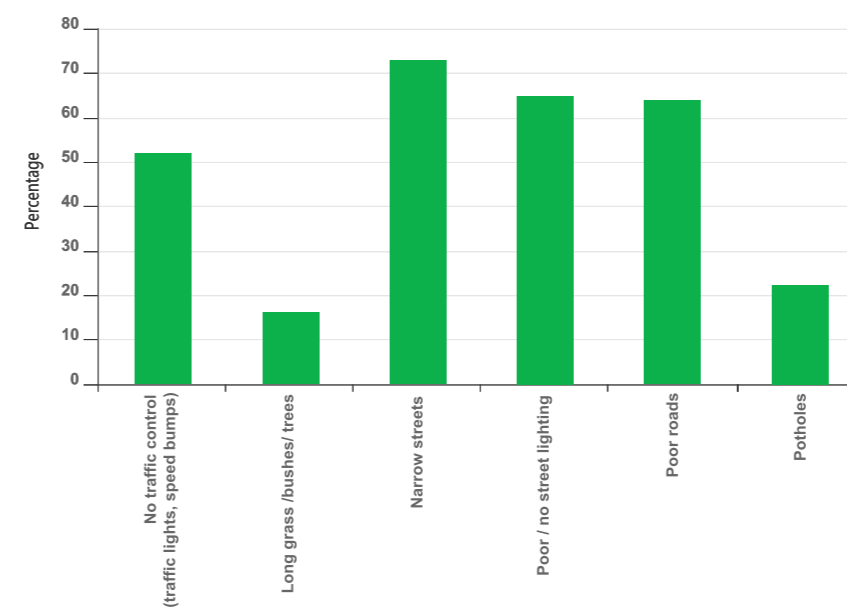
The presence and condition of different infrastructure such as street lighting can be linked to perception of safety. Public spaces that are not well maintained, have no traffic control, have poor drainage and do not have resting areas can contribute to lack of its use therefore creating a sense on insecurity. Although the streets facades are very active, streets within the four districts are narrow, there are no/poor street lighting and the general quality of the is poor. The open public spaces are poorly maintained and lack street lighting.



### LACK/POOR STREET LIGHTING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT HINDER ENJOYMENT OF OPS

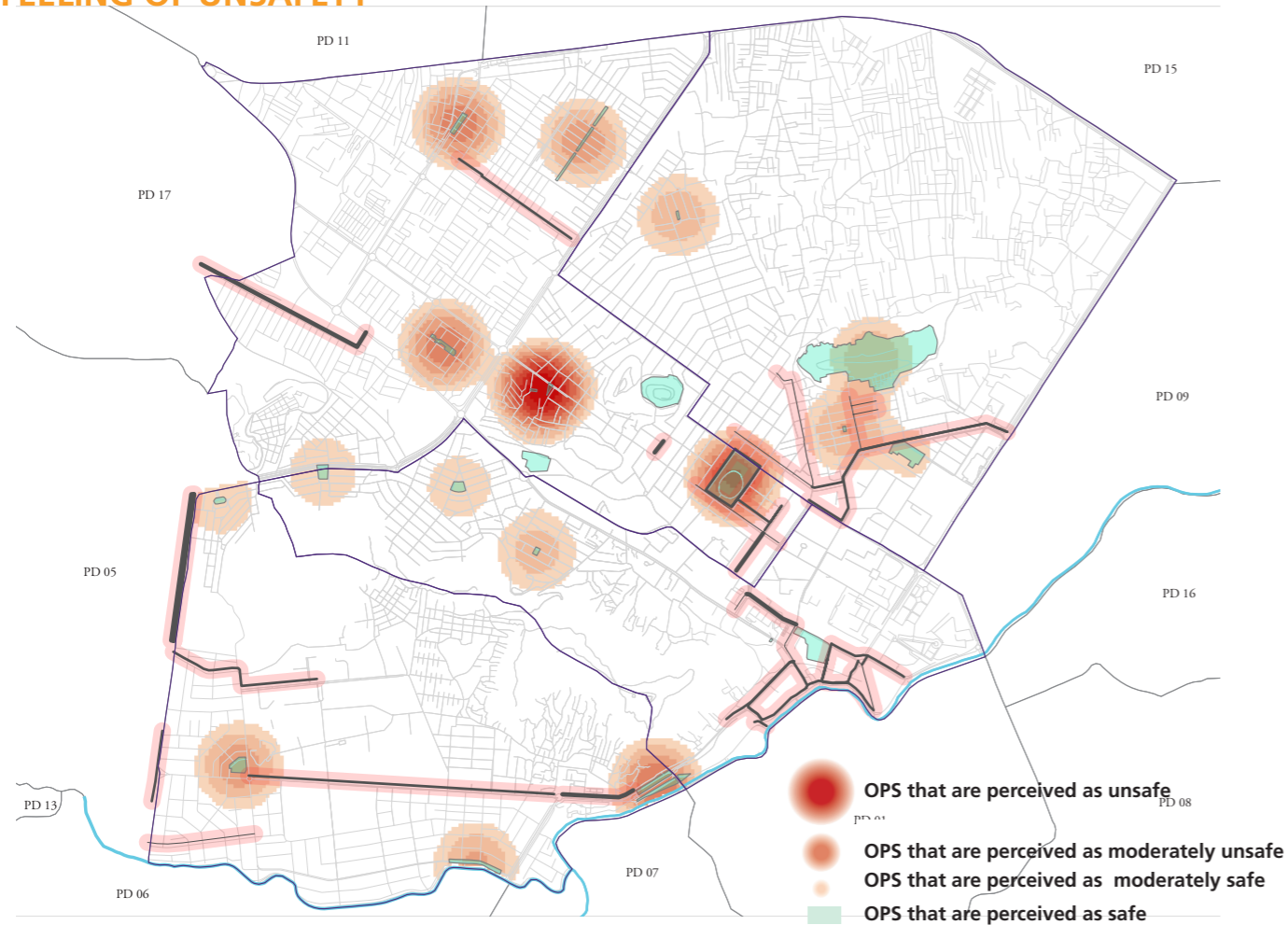


### NARROW STREETS ARE THE MOST PROBLEMATIC



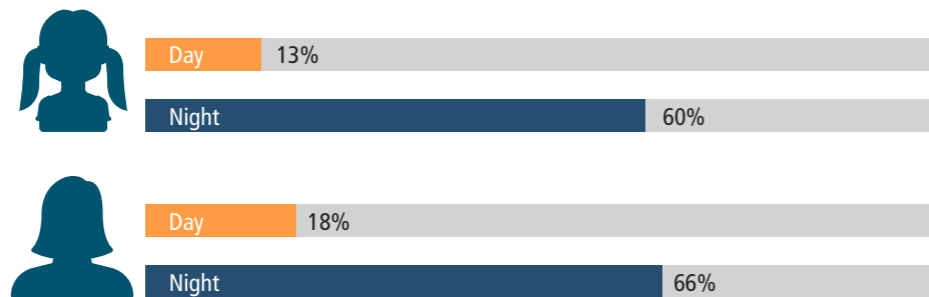


### FEELING OF UNSAFETY

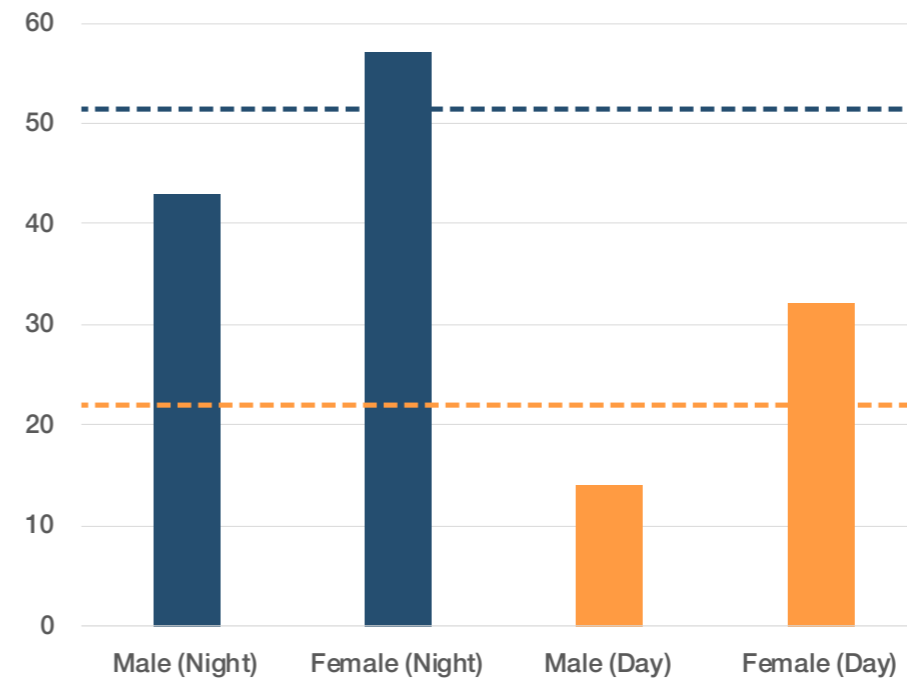


Perception of safety was seen to decrease as it gets darker in the in the four districts. We find that women and children both in open public spaces and streets perceive hem as unsafe compared to men. This could be related to the high number of men present in public spaces. Other reasons could be the high number of incidences of harassment especially towards women and the neglect of spaces.

### FEELING OF UNSAFETY BY WOMEN AND CHILDREN



### WOMEN FEEL UNSAFE IN PUBLIC SPACES COMPARED TO MEN



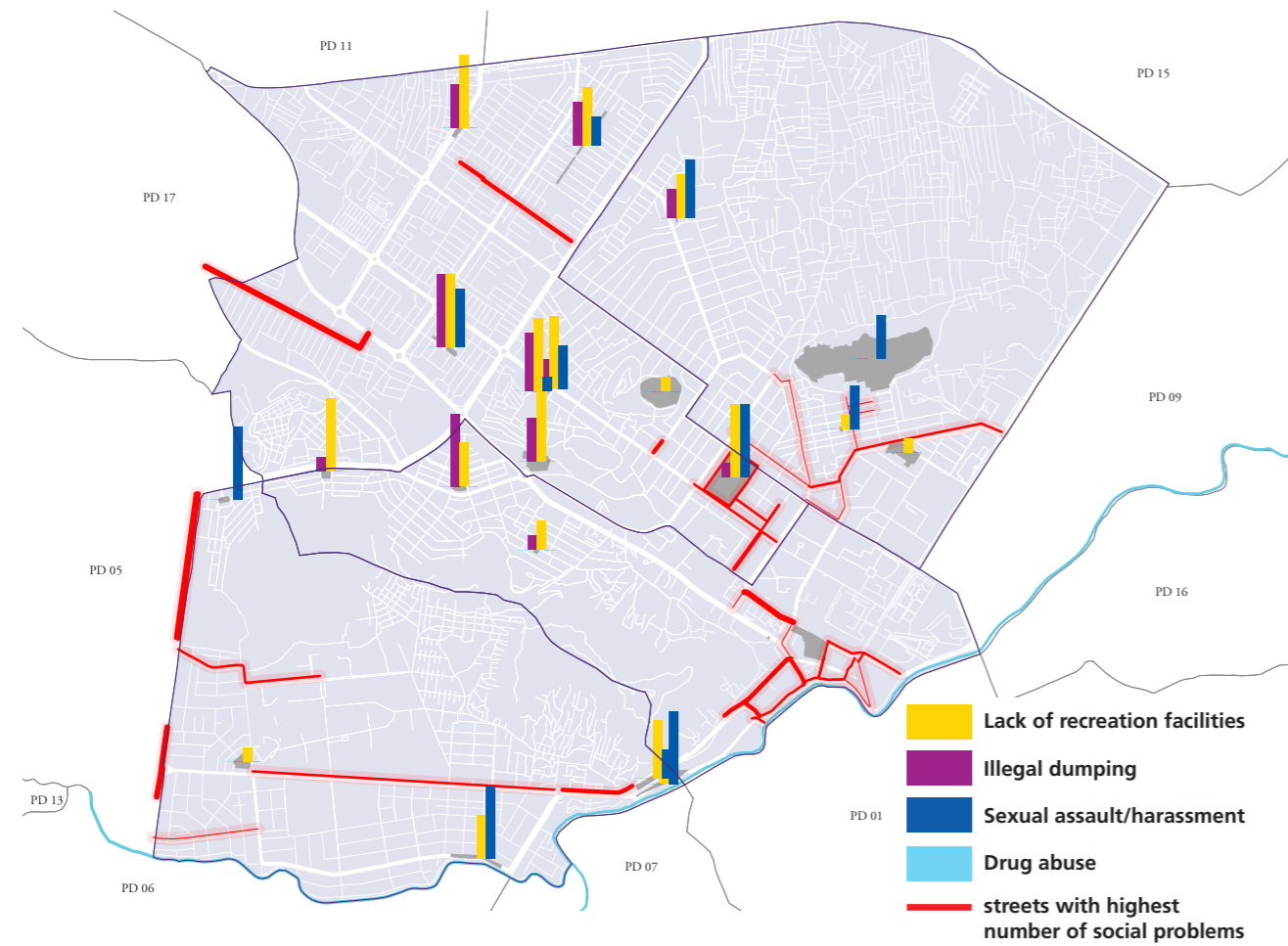
WOMEN FEEL UNSAFE IN PUBLIC SPACES COMPARED TO MEN

	Day	Night
OPS	34%	61%
Streets	13%	66%



Neglected public spaces pose a safety concern for users

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

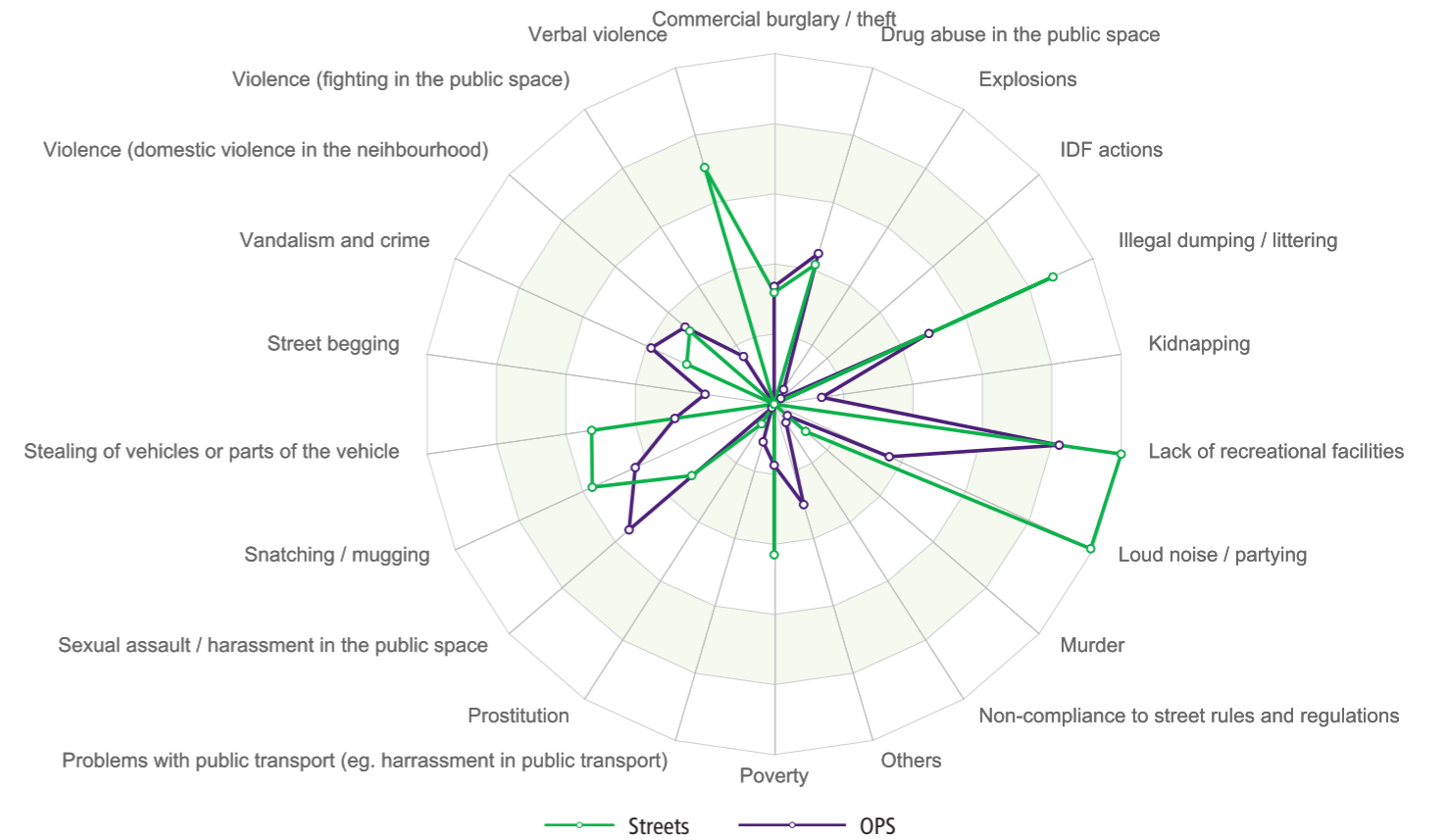


66 per cent of all streets have neighborhoods with social problems with the majority of problems being lack of recreation facilities, loud noises, illegal dumping and verbal abuse. Neighborhoods where open public spaces are located, 87 percent of them have the highest recorded incidences of social problems. The main ones are lack of recreational facilities, sexual assault/harassment illegal dumping and drug abuse (both selling and using).

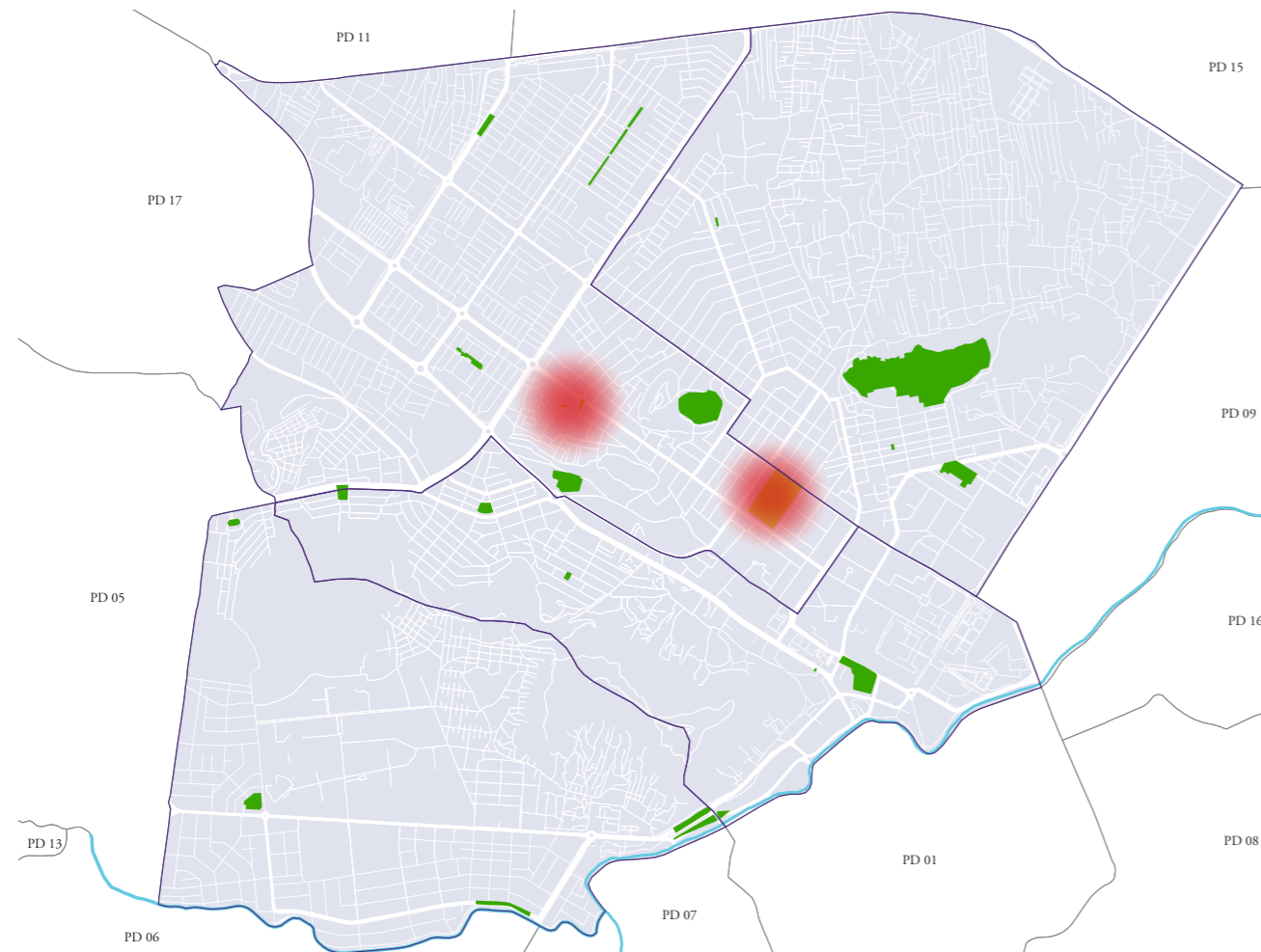
### MAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN NEIGHBORHOODS



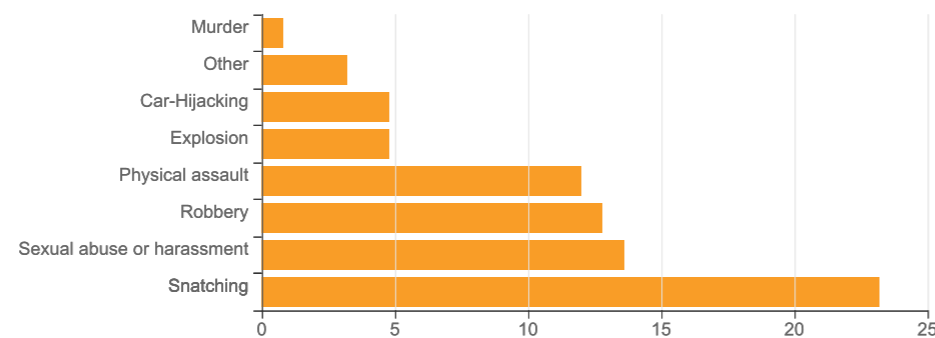
## TYPES OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS



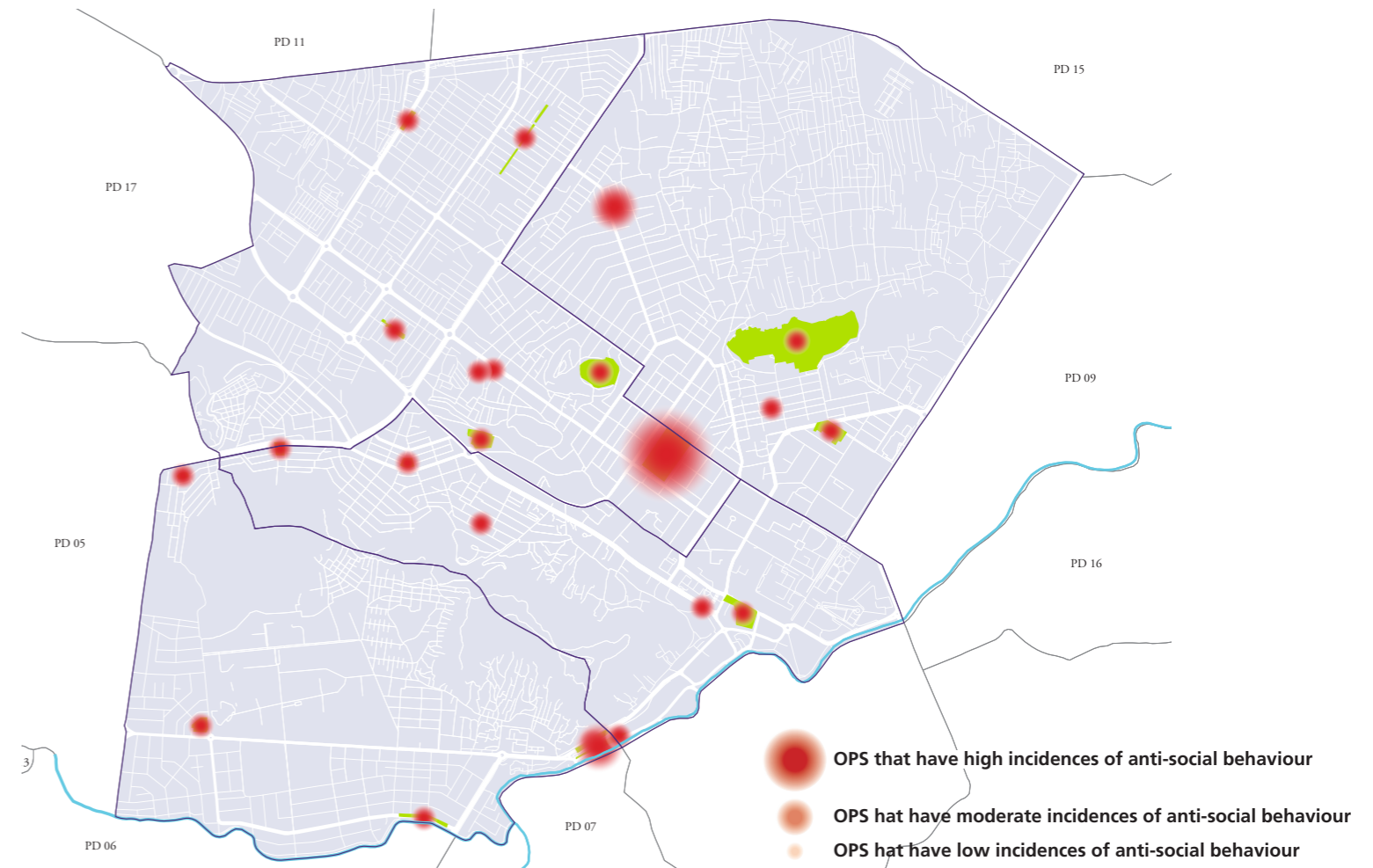
**MAJORITY OF USERS IN PUBLIC SPACES HAVE EXPERIENCED OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED SNATCHING AND SEXUAL ABUSE/HARASSMENT**



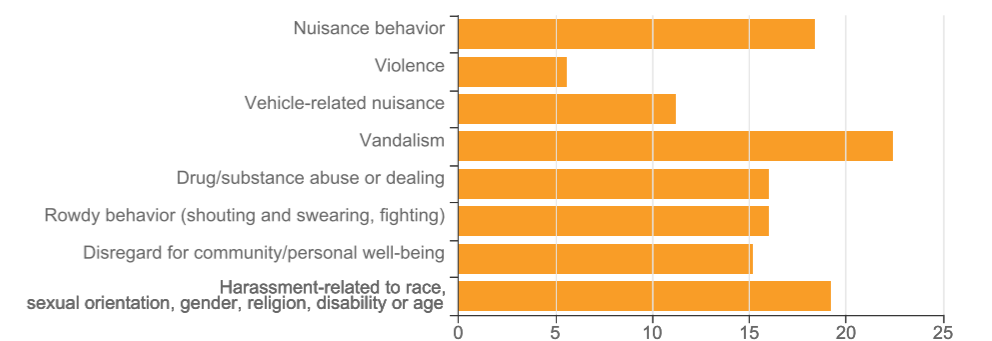
Two open public spaces have a high number of users who have experienced crime/harassment. These are Shahr-e-New park and Kart-e-Mamomrin park. The various incidences are mainly, snatching, sexual abuse or harassment, robbery and physical assault. Murder was reported in 2 open public spaces.



**VANDALISM, HARASSMENT AND NUISANCE BEHAVIOR ARE THE MAIN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN MAJORITY OF THE OPEN PUBLIC SPACES**



Anti-social behavior among users of public space hinder the enjoyment of these spaces by others. Many responses from interviews identified Shahr-e-New park as having the highest recorded incidences of antisocial behavior. This is related to the high number of users feeling of unsafety, experiencing crime/harassment in this park. Other parks that had similar but less prominent are park behind Red Cross Clinic and Shahr city park. The rest had relatively low incidences of anti-social behavior.

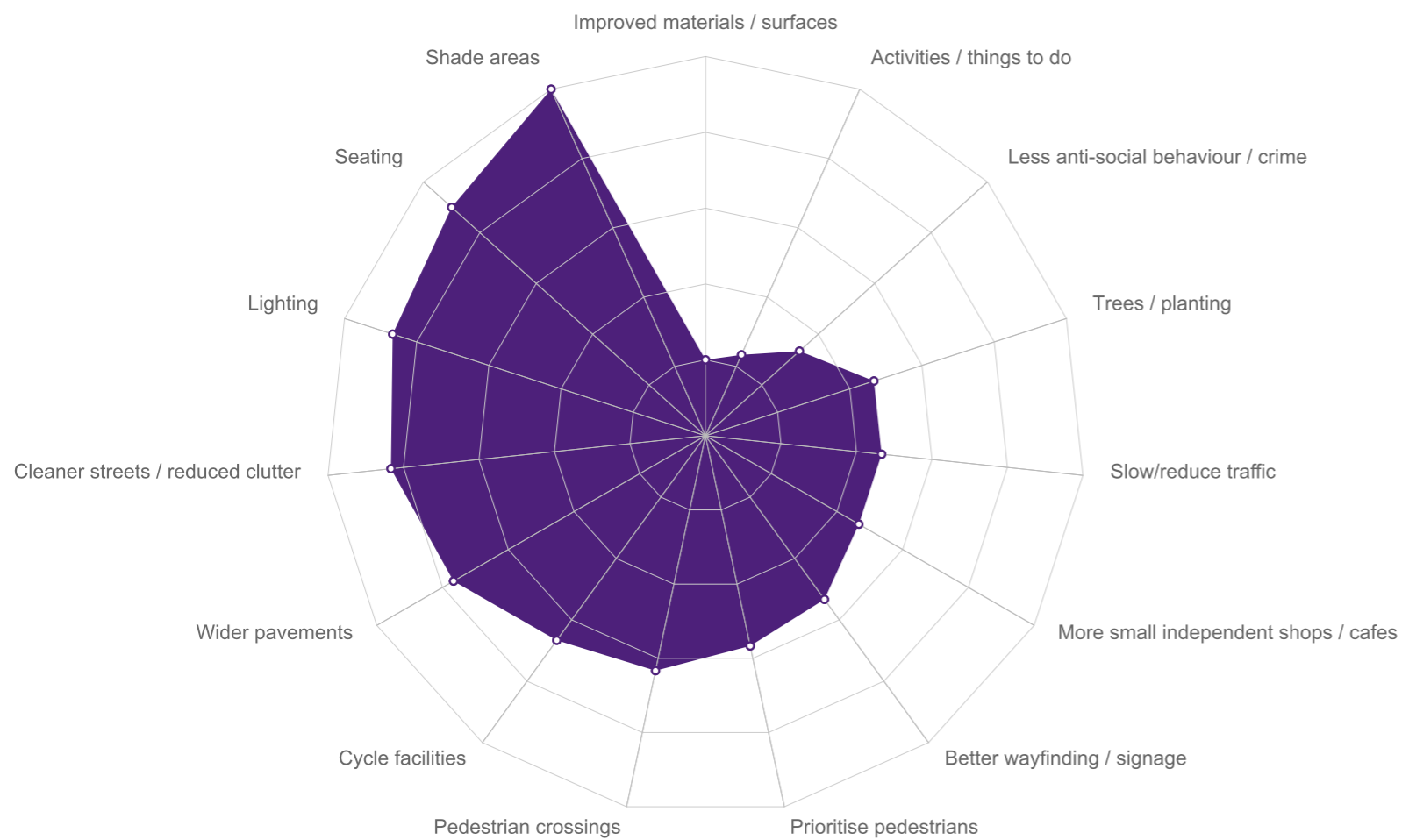


## WHAT USERS FEEL IS LACKING IN THE PUBLIC SPACES

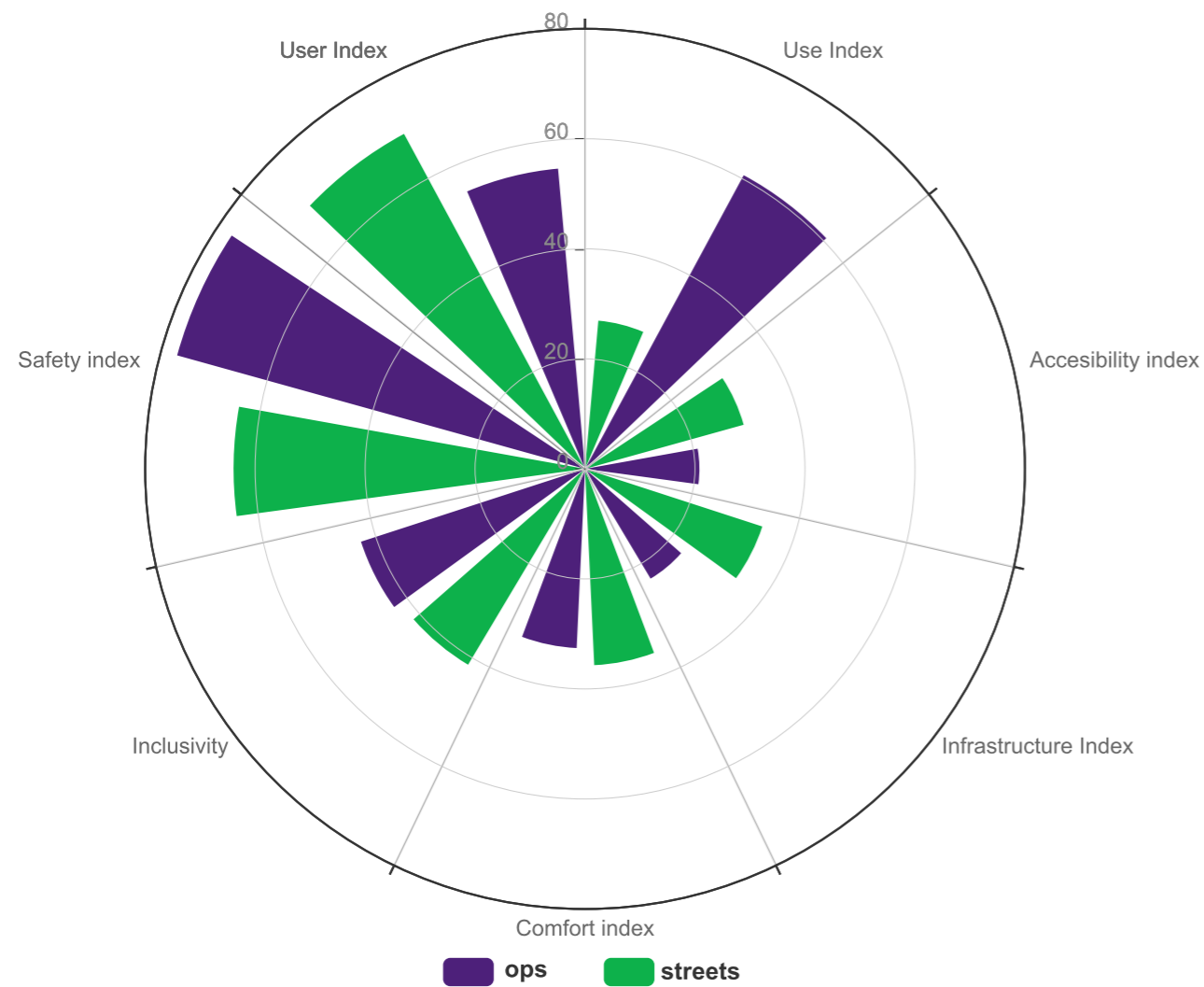
How people feel about a street and or an open public space is shaped through everyday experiences of and within physical spaces. These forms narratives, which overtime define the local identity. It is for this reason that people feel they belong in some places and not in others. In many ways, the bonds between place and identity influence social formations, cultural practices, social behaviour,

political action and perceptions of safety. Often times, people have a deep understanding of their public spaces, the success and failure factors and strengths and weaknesses. This underscores the importance of leveraging local knowledge and the need to look at public spaces through the lens of everyday users. Therefore to understand why users would not enjoy using the streets as public spaces

in the four districts, interviews were conducted and it was found that the main issue is lack of shaded area, seating, lighting clean environment and wider pavements. These are indicators for creating comfort in public spaces. It is therefore important to prioritize creating comfortable public spaces to enhance the quality of stay for users in the four districts.



## WHICH DIMENSIONS ARE STRONG IN PUBLIC SPACES?



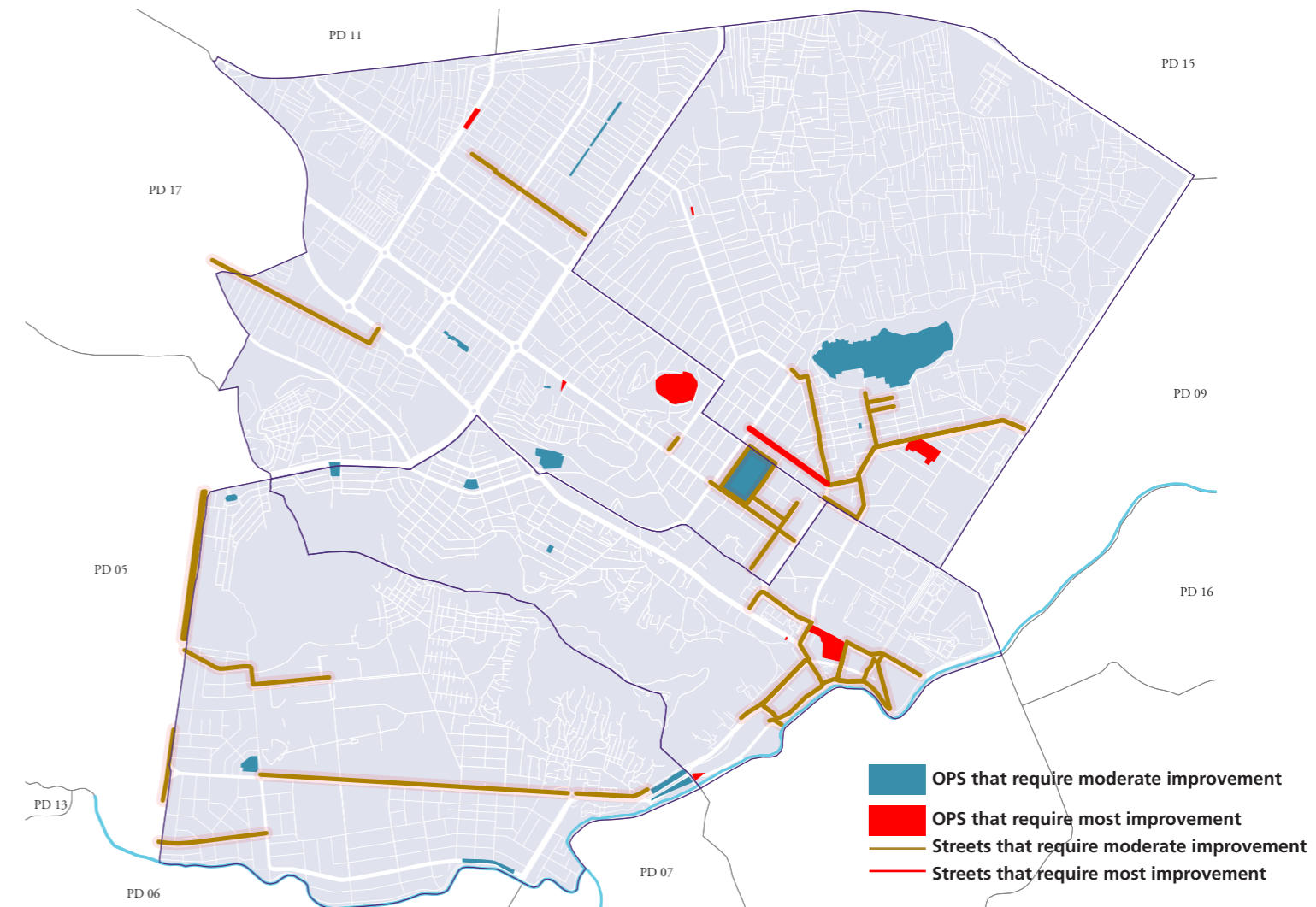
Information is a key material in public spaces. It changes the way that people experience the city. With the public space assessment, information is used to support sustainable development. The purpose of the open public space and street assessment in the four districts was to provide both spatial and non-spatial gaps to empower the districts and provide them with a way forward for the upgrading,

renovation and the creation of streets and open public spaces that are safe for all especially women and girls. This assessment is a first step towards a more long term strategic plan for Kabul.

The public space assessment approach promotes participation of all relevant actors at various levels. The approach identifies which street or open public space to target for upgrading and which areas in the city to create new

inclusive spaces. The focus is on the open public space or street that are important to the residents, and the districts.

All the indicators related to safety, inclusivity and accessibility of open public spaces and streets were analyzed. This showed that safety scored the highest and accessibility the lowest. This supported to categorized the streets and open public spaces



according to their priority in terms of upgrading. It was found that as many as 15 open public spaces and 31 streets require moderate upgrading, such as improving the road infrastructure, installing of streets lighting and eight open public spaces and one street require total upgrading. This may mean redesigning of the spaces through community engagement and implementing the project. It is however

important to ensure that there is a clear budget allocation and involvement of key relevant stakeholders and experts in the process of upgrading. These priority projects can be integrated into the municipal work plan to ensure their improvement and upgrading.

This approach ensures a demand driven strategic approach where the opportunities for the most deprived

neighborhoods as well as the public spaces that need most improvement are the starting point. To anchor the next steps of this analysis which is towards a long term strategy, the analysis of the different policies in place, legal and institutional framework and gaps in the planning of the districts has been addressed in the third chapter.

# 3

CHAPTER





# ENVISIONING KABUL

- Where are the gaps?
- Where should Kabul anchor the safety audit and public spaces?
- Vision
- Recommendations and way forward

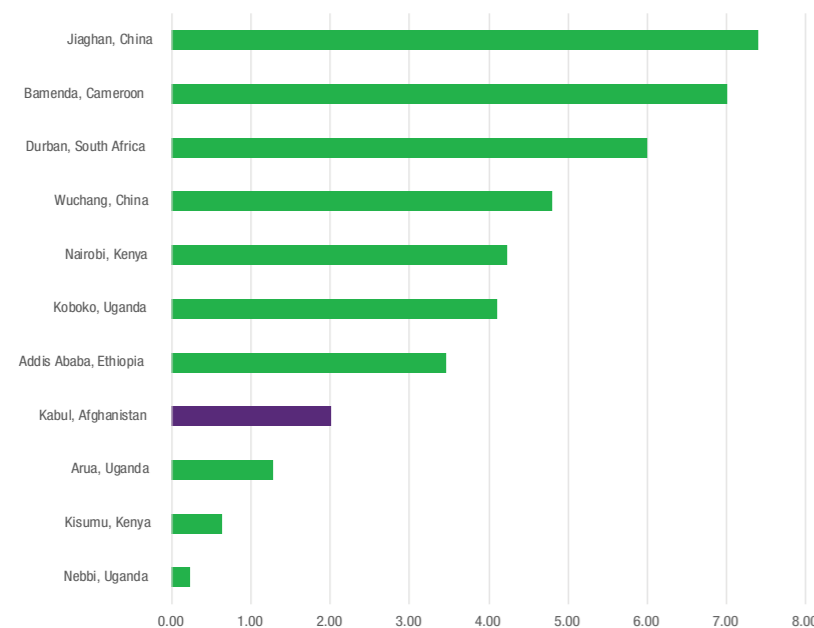
# WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

## WHERE TO PRIORITIZE FOR CREATION OF NEW OPEN PUBLIC SPACES?

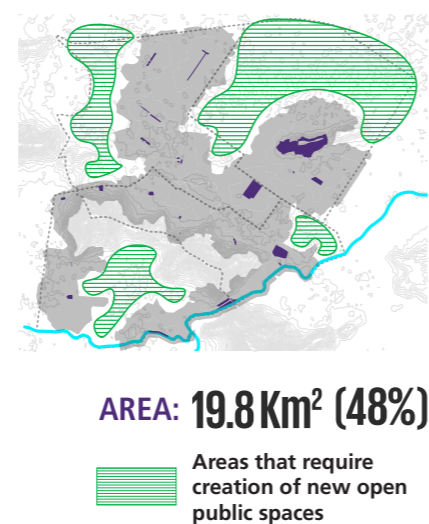
Public space is the glue that stitches a city together. Adequate and proportionate distribution of these spaces across the city – both in low-income and affluent neighbourhoods, is important for fostering social cohesion and building a sense of ‘collective’ among residents.

When creating new public spaces, attention should be paid to parts of the city where the need is greatest and where investing in public space would yield the highest impact. Essentially, priority should be placed on areas where there are opportunities to achieve multiple priorities including improving urban safety and security, reducing the risk of floods, upgrading slums and informal settlements, connecting neighbourhoods and regenerating decaying inner city neighbourhoods among others. Within the four districts, approximately 48% of the land requires creation of new open public spaces. This will also support creation of a green network and to achieve a higher share of land that is open public space as well as increase the per-capita public space. The municipality could also consider prioritising areas where public space could be used as a kick-starter for implementing the city’s urban development framework (KUDF).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER CITIES: SHARE OF LAND THAT IS OPEN PUBLIC SPACE



AREAS FOR CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

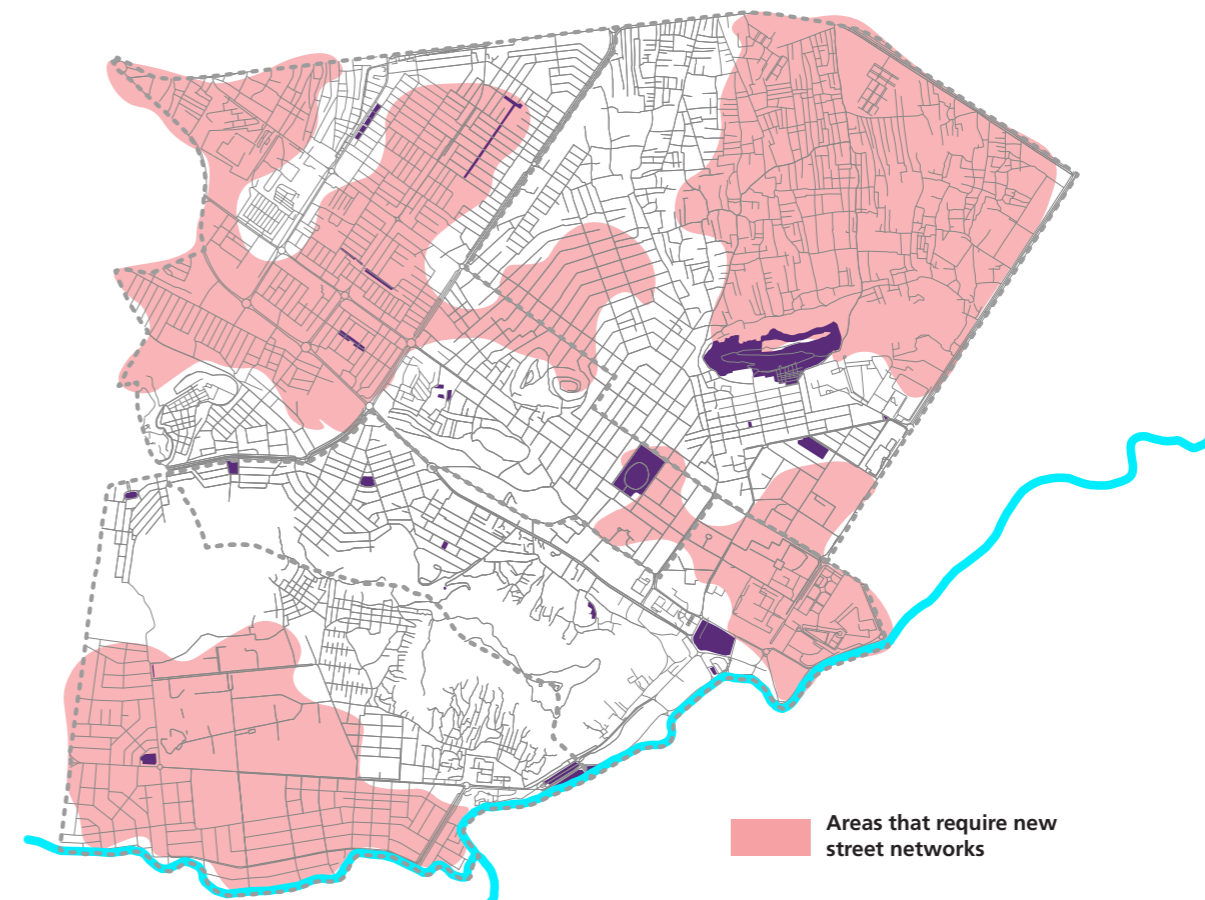


## WHICH AREAS REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT IN STREET CONNECTIVITY?

An interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, bike lanes and trails reduce the distances that children need to travel from home to school and to local shops, and women need to travel from home to market places among other places. It also promotes the use of local streets rather than the main arterials which often expose pedestrians and cyclists to risks of accidents. Adequate street connectivity provides an excellent opportunity and an efficient way to disperse traffic, providing multiple choices and offering an incentive for people to walk, cycle and or embrace public transport.

It is one of the key built environment determinants for active living, which has multiple direct and indirect outcomes. Where a road connection may not make sense, for example in a high-density neighbourhood, a difficult terrain or an informal settlement, a pedestrian and bicycle connection may be a better idea to consider. This is especially in the case of Kabul where the landscape has several hills and the radial network converges in the central city, creating significant congestion

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF STREET CONNECTIVITY





### WHAT SAFETY CONCERN SHOULD BE ADDRESSED?

Crime, violence and fear of crime in cities pose significant challenges to urban prosperity, ease of doing business and freedom of movement, especially among the youth, children, and women and girls. Perception of safety, harassment directed to women and lack of basic infrastructure to support safety and security was cited as the most important concerns that should be addressed. As such, the city should consider prioritising:

- **Integrated city surveillance infrastructure:** This is the foundation for a safer city. The city should invest in an integrated GIS-based surveillance system including CCTV, comprehensive street and public lighting, and intelligent traffic management system on the streets and public spaces.
- **Integrated community policing:** Community policing is the backbone of sustainable urban safety and security. The government should encourage the notion of ‘collectiveness’ and solidarity, inspiring civic involvement in co-producing urban safety.
- **Public awareness:** This is the first step towards sustainable community engagement. The municipality and partners need to develop programs for outreach and engagement with the public, listening to them and encouraging them to share their ideas.
- **Development of incentives:** These include regulations and programs encouraging both genders to enjoy public space and public life.

#### THE TOP SAFETY CONCERNS IN PUBLIC SPACES



HARASSMENT DIRECTED TO WOMEN



INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS ESPECIALLY ALONG STREETS



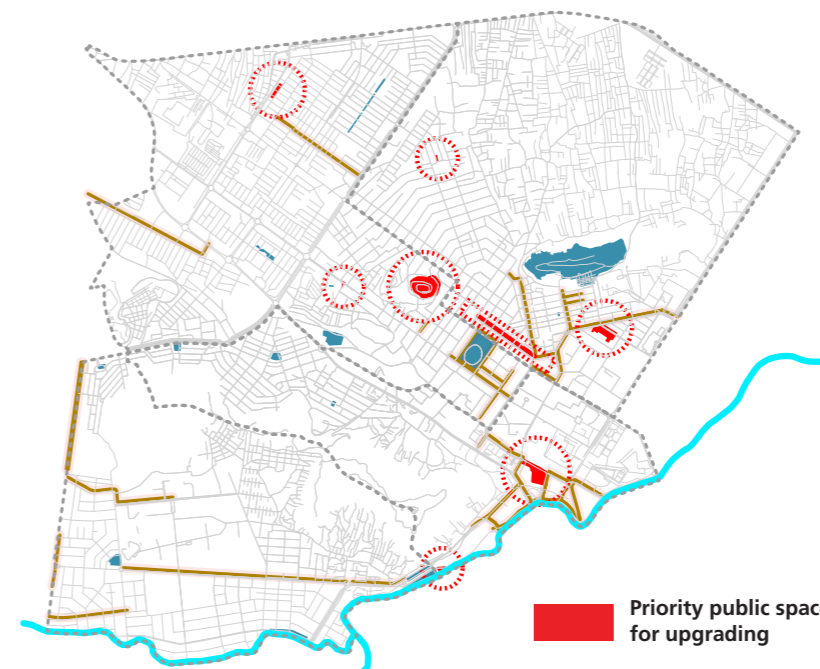
PERCEPTION OF SAFETY ESPECIALLY AMONG WOMEN

### WHICH PUBLIC SPACES SHOULD BE PRIORITISED FOR UPGRADING?

Public spaces are an infrastructure of opportunity – they present diverse opportunities to deliver public goods and address some of the most pressing urban challenges. An objective and pragmatic outcome-based criterion is imperative to ensure a good priority list. Majority of the public spaces require continuous maintenance while those that required upgrading are highlighted below. However, the municipality should prioritise public spaces based on their potential to deliver the following broad outcomes:

- **Civic engagement:** building a sense of community that brings people of all backgrounds – race, caste, gender, religion and ethnicity among others back into public life as stewards and advocates shaping the future of the city.
- **Social mix:** creating places that people feel welcome and attached to, and that generate opportunities for shared experience among people from all walks of life regardless of their socio-economic status and backgrounds.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Places that improve access to nature and creating environmentally friendly places easily reached by walking, biking or transit.
- **Value creation:** Places that have the potential to encourage additional investments in neighborhoods to foster local businesses and economies, and change the perception of safety, while maintaining the affordability of the neighborhood.
- **Safety valves:** Prioritise public spaces that can act as ‘safe spaces’ during diverse events including both natural and man-made disasters. On the same score, consider spaces that have the potential to promote intergenerational among other inter-groups dialogue.

#### PRIORITY PUBLIC SPACES FOR UPGRADING



#### Open Public Spaces

- Prozha Tadeli Wazir Abad Park
- Park Behind the Red Cross Clinic
- Tap-e-Kolala Poshta
- Behind of Municipality Blocks Park
- Wazir Akbar Khan Park
- Zarnegar Park
- Pul Artal Park

#### Streets

- Qasabi Street Lane

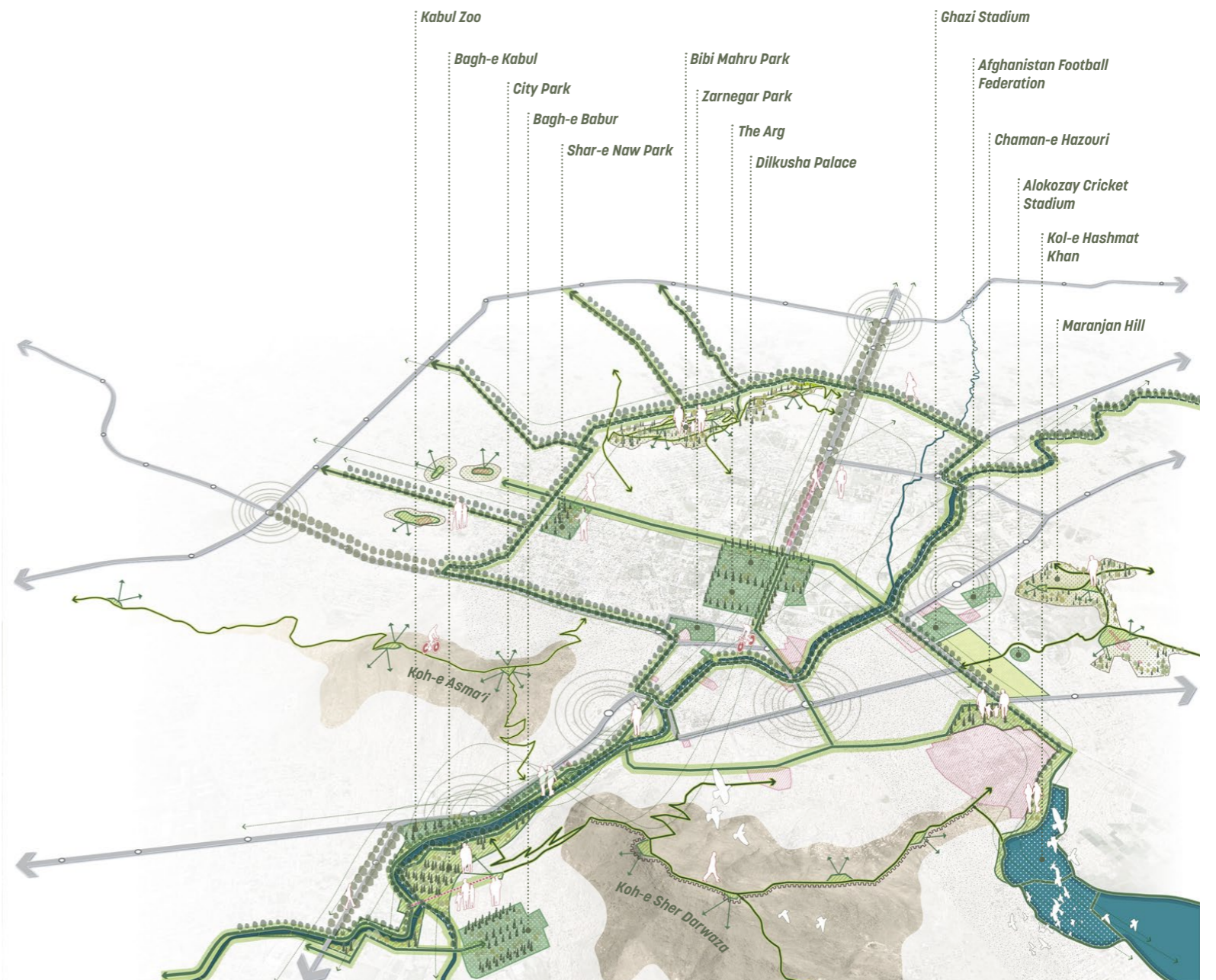
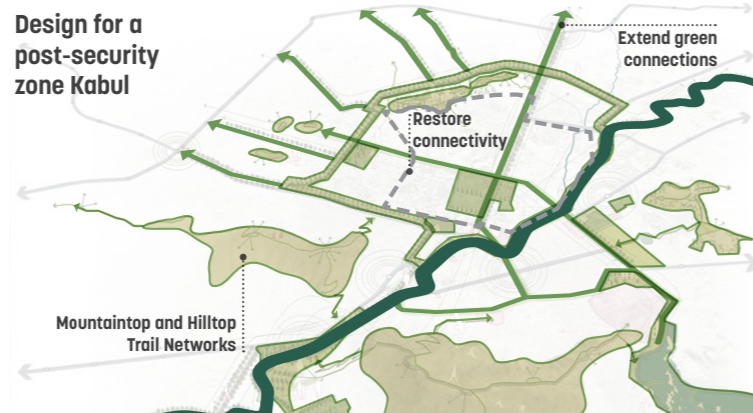
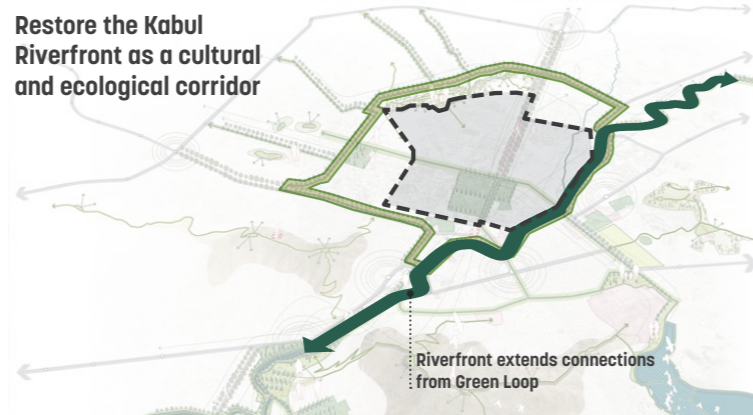
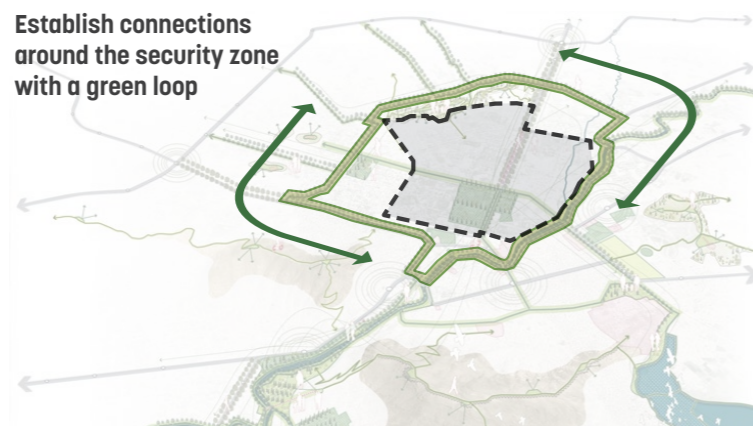
# WHERE SHOULD KABUL ANCHOR PUBLIC SPACES?

## PUBLIC SPACE AS AN ACCELERATOR TO IMPLEMENTING THE KABUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Kabul Urban Design Framework envisages Kabul as a green city with parks and open spaces for residents to relax, gather together and enjoy the region's natural beauty. It further envisions it to be a city with a strong public realm – a city with beautiful streets, commanding views and a grandeur that befits a capital city. This vision defined a holistic, integrated and picturesque vision for the city, reinforcing the city's image as a city of gardens.

The recommendations from this audit seeks to supplement KUDF and serve as a catalyst to achieve a safe, inclusive and accessible public space network, especially for the most vulnerable demographic groups including children, women and girls, the elderly, persons with disabilities and youth. It further seeks to support the regeneration of the central city and reinforce the city's conservation and open space network strategy by supporting a balanced relationship between built and natural environment.

As a supplementary document, it presents proactive and intentional strategies to improve the quality of life and urban safety, especially for women and girls. It focuses on the unique needs of women and girls to use and enjoy public space, and walk and cycle within the city. It is designed to provide easily implementable design and social programming solutions that could deliver a city that is truly inclusive, safe and universally accessible for all.

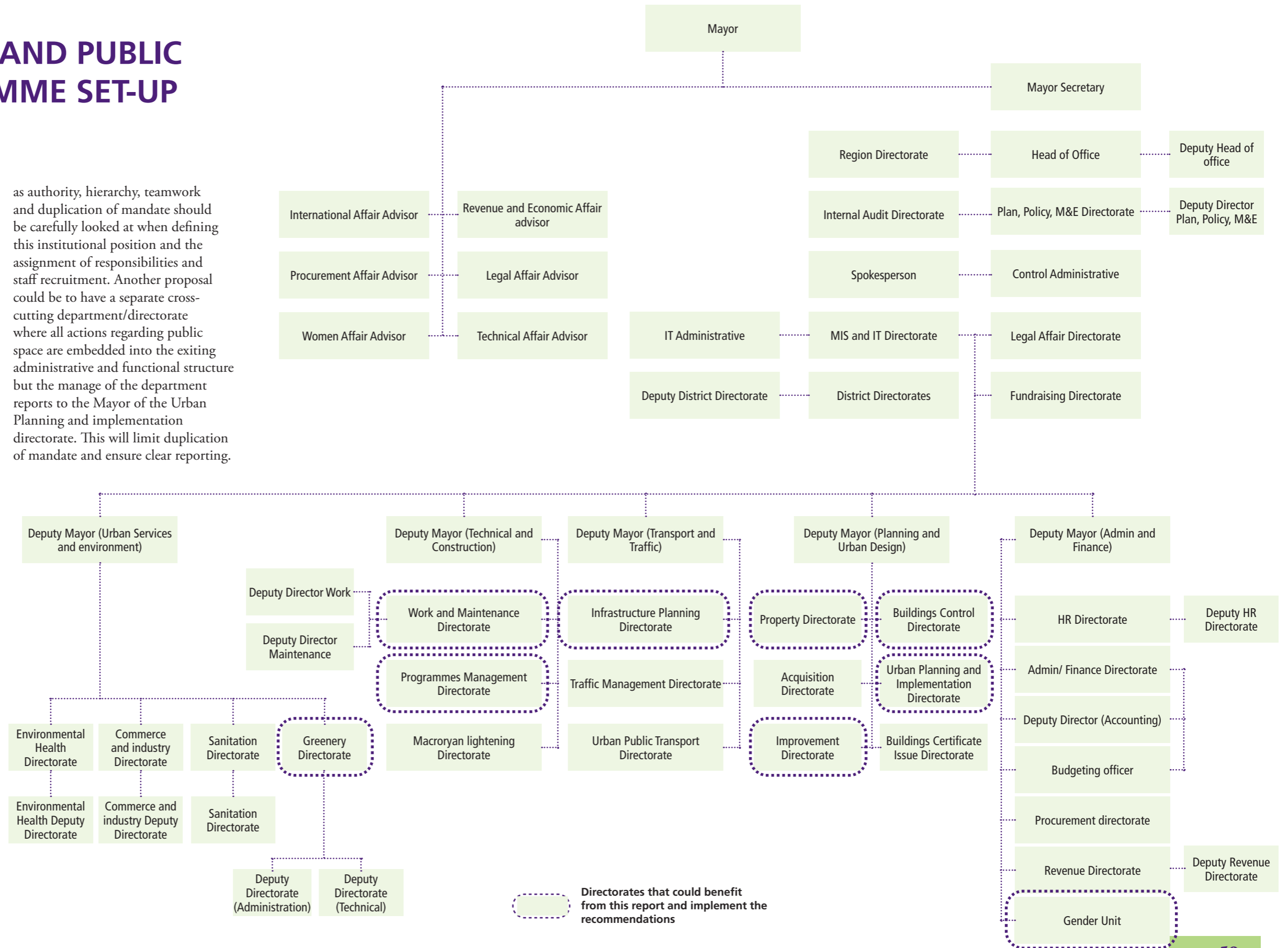


# INSTITUTIONAL AND PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME SET-UP

To ensure a long-term public space planning and implementation, a specific public space programme within Kabul Municipality administrative structure needs to be set-up. Its location may have implications for the way it works, its efficiency in decision-making, resource allocation and staffing and the overall success. Careful consideration should be paid to the formal and informal organizational culture of the municipal government, and to the functional department where the programme is likely to be placed.

To ensure that there is no duplication of mandate. The organization chart shown here highlights some of the directorates within the City that could support the public space work. It could also be well-placed within the Urban Planning or Public Works Departments. This will depend on the existing delivery capacity of the directorate and the political decision of the Mayor and his/her management team. A separate entity could be created under the Urban Planning and implementation directorate such as Deputy the Urban Planning and implementation. However, issues such

as authority, hierarchy, teamwork and duplication of mandate should be carefully looked at when defining this institutional position and the assignment of responsibilities and staff recruitment. Another proposal could be to have a separate cross-cutting department/directorate where all actions regarding public space are embedded into the existing administrative and functional structure but the manager of the department reports to the Mayor of the Urban Planning and implementation directorate. This will limit duplication of mandate and ensure clear reporting.



## VISION



KABUL WILL BE A GREEN CITY, WITH AMPLE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES FOR RESIDENTS TO RELAX, GATHER TOGETHER, AND ENJOY THE REGION'S NATURAL BEAUTY. IT WILL BE A CIVIC CITY, WITH BEAUTIFUL STREETS, COMMANDING VIEWS, AND A GRANDEUR APPROPRIATE FOR A CAPITAL CITY. KABUL WILL ALSO BE AN INCLUSIVE CITY, WITH ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF ETHNICITY, GENDER, OR CIRCUMSTANCE.

*Vision from Kabul Urban Development Framework*



**PUBLIC SPACES  
FOR ALL  
IN KABUL  
MUNICIPALITY**

**VISION**

**GOALS**

**STRATEGIES**

**CREATE A NETWORK OF PUBLIC SPACES TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

- Restore Kabul River
- Leverage on medians to create a green network
- Increase area for green spaces for environmental protection

**PROMOTE SAFETY IN OPEN PUBLIC SPACES AND STREETS**

- Plan for safe sidewalks and bike lanes
- Improve connectivity of streets
- Promote Safe routes
- Promote social programming of public spaces

**PROVIDE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES**

- Improve and create infrastructure
- Promote 'eyes on the street'
- Create and enforce rules for use of public spaces

**BUILD A POSITIVE CULTURE FOR WALKING AND CYCLING**

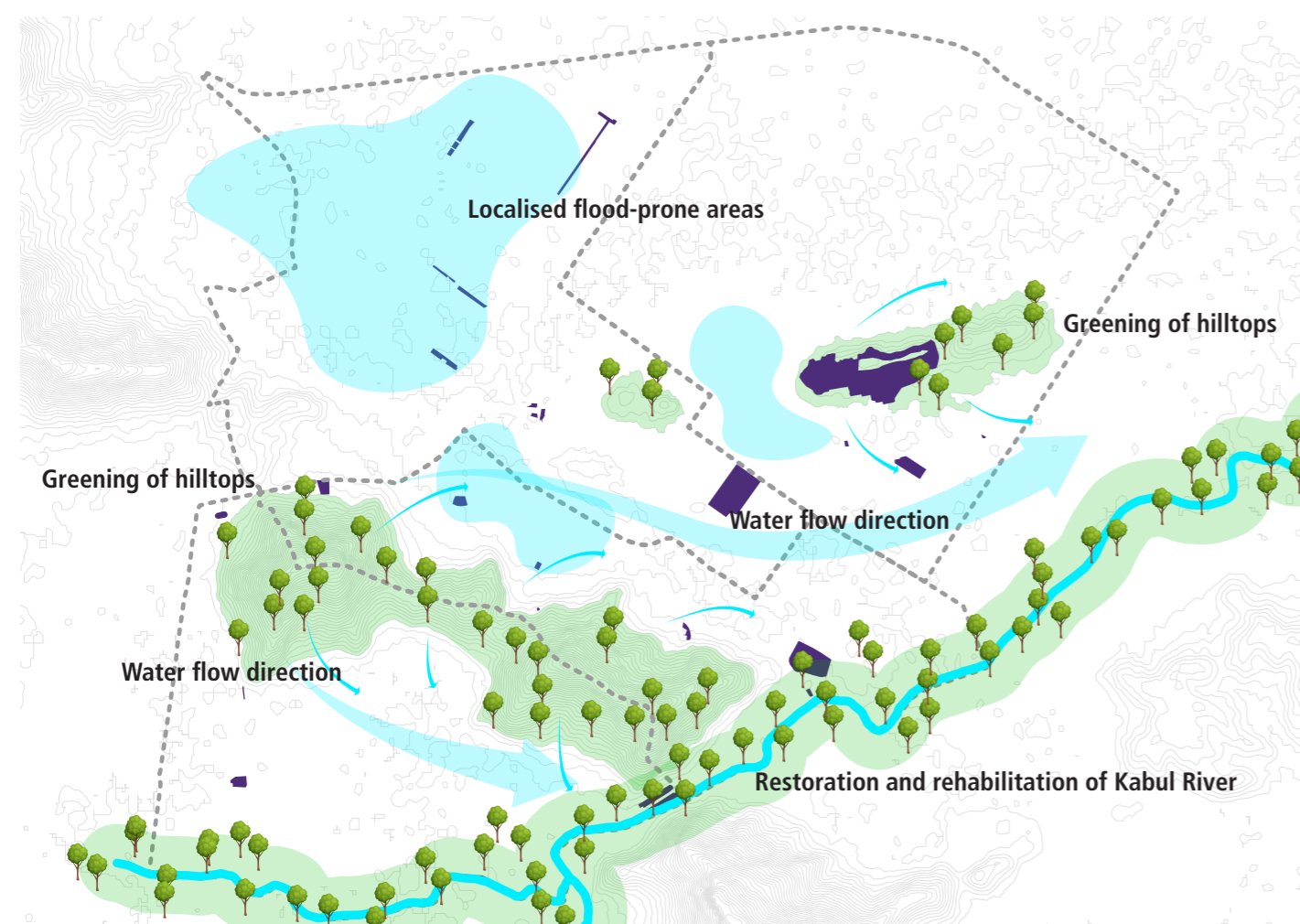
- Ensure universal public space design
- Design for climate comfort and enjoyment
- Ensure gender-responsive public space design
- Plan for formal and informal use in public spaces

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

### CREATE A NETWORK OF PUBLIC SPACES TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

#### RESTORE KABUL RIVER

Restore the river as a connection between the city and the surrounding formal and informal areas, creating a coherent transition from the city to the country. Leverage urban planning and design to create memorable places along the river, positioning the river as the new lifeline of the city, and a cultural, economic and ecological corridor. In addition to high aesthetic quality, integrate a regional walking and cycling safe route, linking the city to the hill tops and a series of public spaces across the network. Key projects to achieved this are also highlighted in the city's urban development framework



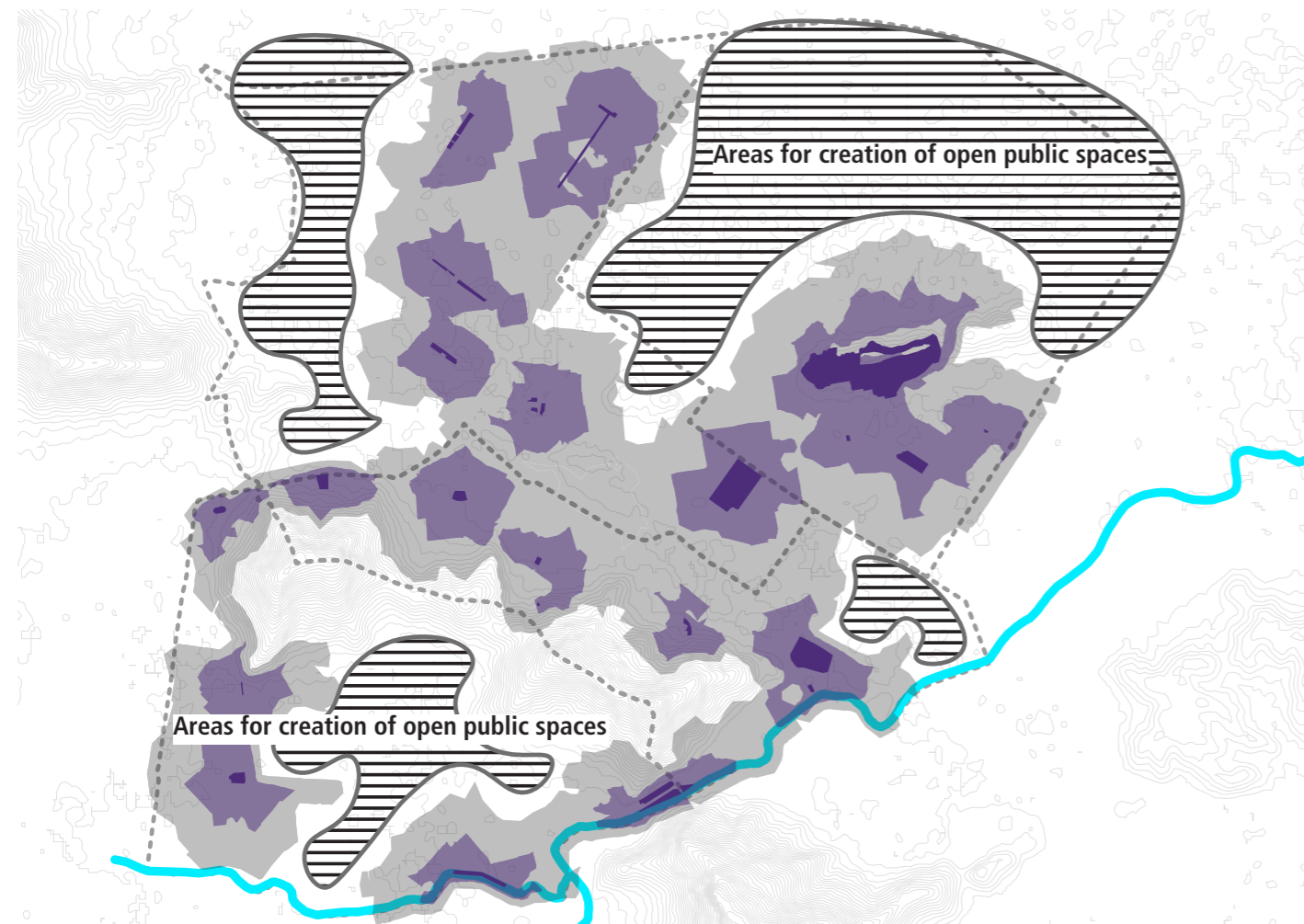
#### LEVERAGE ON MEDIANS TO CREATE A GREEN NETWORK

Establish a continuous network of green and public spaces by connecting medians, transit streets, pedestrian-only and pedestrian-priority streets, bike and walking trails and other linear green spaces. Importantly, design these network as part of the city's green infrastructure and as an alternative mobility network for active travel, connecting diverse destinations including public spaces, industrial districts and residential neighbourhoods.



### INCREASE AREA FOR GREEN SPACES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PROTECTION

Through planning tools such as master planning, urban regeneration and redevelopment, sub-divisions and land readjustment, increase the area of green space for optimum urban performance, creating green, and public space networks along rivers, hilltops, streets and new and existing neighbourhood and city parks. Repurpose streets among other corridors as ecological corridors, protecting vital aquifer zones, linking ecological restoration to conservation of the city's rich cultural heritage.



## PROVIDE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES

### ENSURE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN,

Design public spaces that are well-loved and well used by people of all walks of life, of all abilities - physical and mental, of a mix of ages, genders, religions, socio-economic classes and ethnicities. Specifically, introduce gentle ramps where there are level changes to enable everyone to freely move. In addition to ramps, introduce tactile paving and use of different materials, sound, texture and colour to enhance public space use by different persons with disabilities especially at intersections and crossings. At the same time, design multi-use spaces that can accommodate diverse activities and uses, including active and passive recreation.



### DESIGNING FOR CLIMATE COMFORT AND ENJOYMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES

Ensure that there are diverse things to see and do in public spaces, diverse sitting opportunities, for groups, for couples and individuals. Both through design and social programming, ensure that all ages and genders, have a place in public spaces. When designing play facilities for example, ensure that there are complementary uses such as eateries where parents can sit as they watch over their children playing. Kabul has extreme climatic conditions and therefore it is important to promote a climate-sensitive public space design such as trees during hot summer periods, managing snow during winter, water-sensitive landscapes and maximizing solar access.





## ENSURE GENDER-RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

In a truly inclusive public space, women feel safe, children run and play, the elderly exercise or sit and socialize, teenagers engage in play, and meet and chat with friends and strangers. Simply, everyone can be their best self, feel comfortable and be at peace with strangers. Some of the basic minimums that the municipality can take-up for a gender sensitive public space include adequate visibility, diverse sitting opportunities, clean and separate toilets, both motorized and pedestrian traffic, adequate and legible signage, and access to public transportation. Importantly, involve women and girls in all stages of the design of public spaces.



## PLAN FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL USE IN PUBLIC SPACES

Successful public spaces have diverse activities and uses, multiple destinations and diverse users. Design public spaces that can support diverse uses at different times of the day, week and different seasons. In addition, the Municipality can use social programming to encourage diversity of uses. Seasonal and annual events can be programmed in public spaces. These call for flexible designs that can be adapted depending on the activities and seasons.



## BUILD A POSITIVE CULTURE FOR WALKING AND CYCLING

### PLAN FOR SAFE SIDEWALKS AND BIKE LANES

The Municipality can design and build sidewalks that are wide enough and with even surfaces especially in areas where densification is yet to occur or the informal areas. Women and girls will walk and cycle if they live in neighborhoods where they feel it is safe and comfortable to do so. Places with sidewalks that are wide enough for pushing strollers and or for children to walk hand-in-hand with adults, having surface texture that is appropriate, where there are curb ramps, with regular street crossings and there is protection from motorized traffic can promote walking by women and girls.

In order to promote a culture of cycling, the Municipality can create a continuous network of protected and dedicated bike lanes with an even and obstruction-free surface. Through physical separation, provide protection from motorized traffic. Importantly, they should pay particular attention to safety, convenience, culture and comfort for cyclists and people on foot. In order to achieve lasting change, they can start with investing in the following activity areas:

- Trips to school
- Trips to work
- Trips to and from public transport

interchanges as part of last mile connectivity.

- Other utility trips i.e. trip to shops, leisure facilities
- Recreational and tourism trips

Besides cycling lanes, it is important to provide bicycle parking racks at strategic locations, along the streets, in public spaces, public facilities and offices. UN-Habitat proposes the sidewalks and cycle routes in the map below.

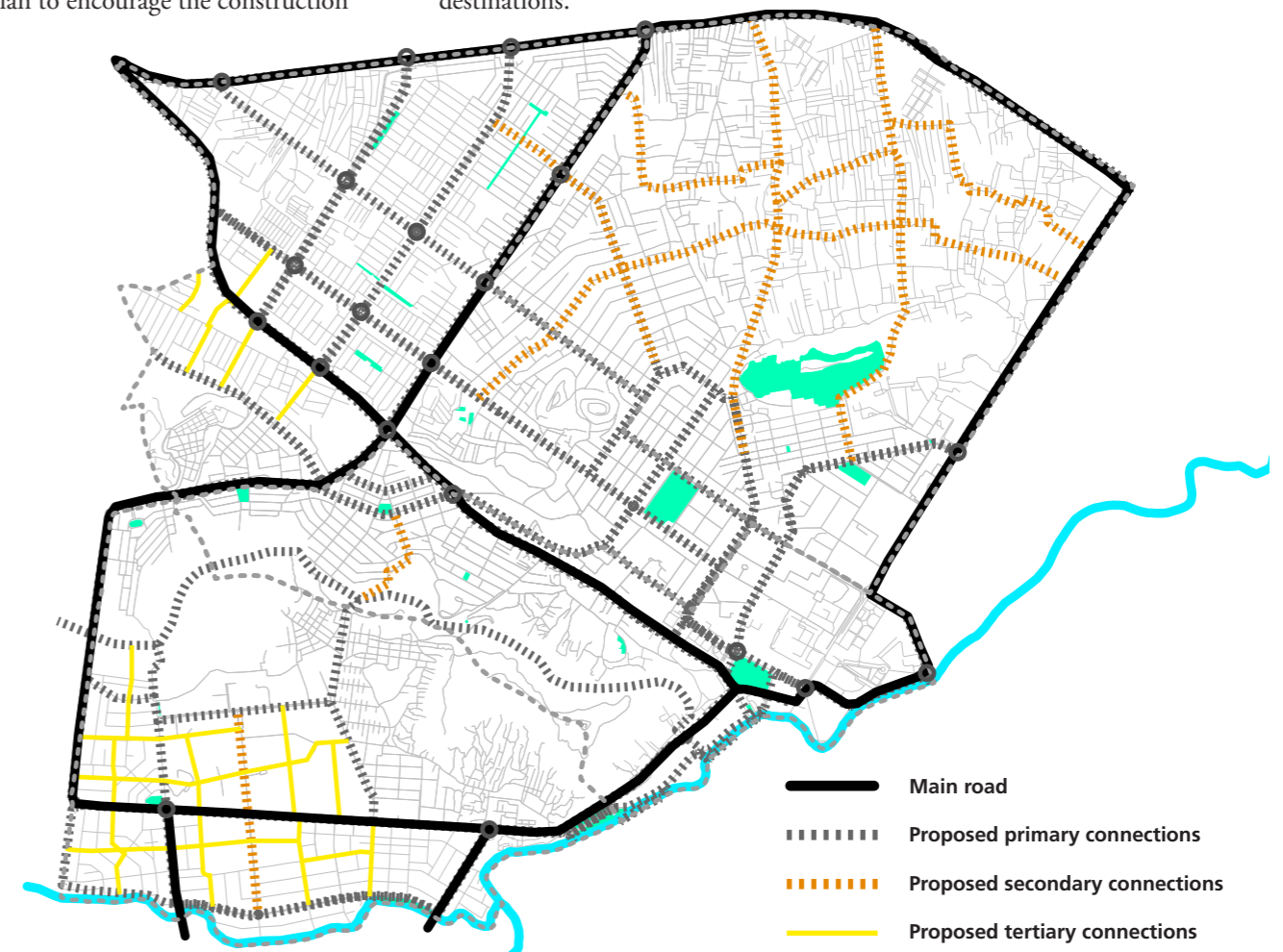


### IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY OF STREETS

Kabul Municipality should plan to reduce and discourage the number of cul-de-sacs and reduce the congestion in the city. This can be done within and between neighbourhoods and places. In the same context, there should be a plan to encourage the construction

of walkways and bike lanes, especially where street connection is either impossible or unwelcome, this can improve connectivity and safety. Walkways and bike trails can provide safe means for people to access nearby destinations.

Kabul is over 70 per cent informal. Within these informal settlements where connectivity is low, the Municipality can consider reblocking to create new connections and to open up the settlements.



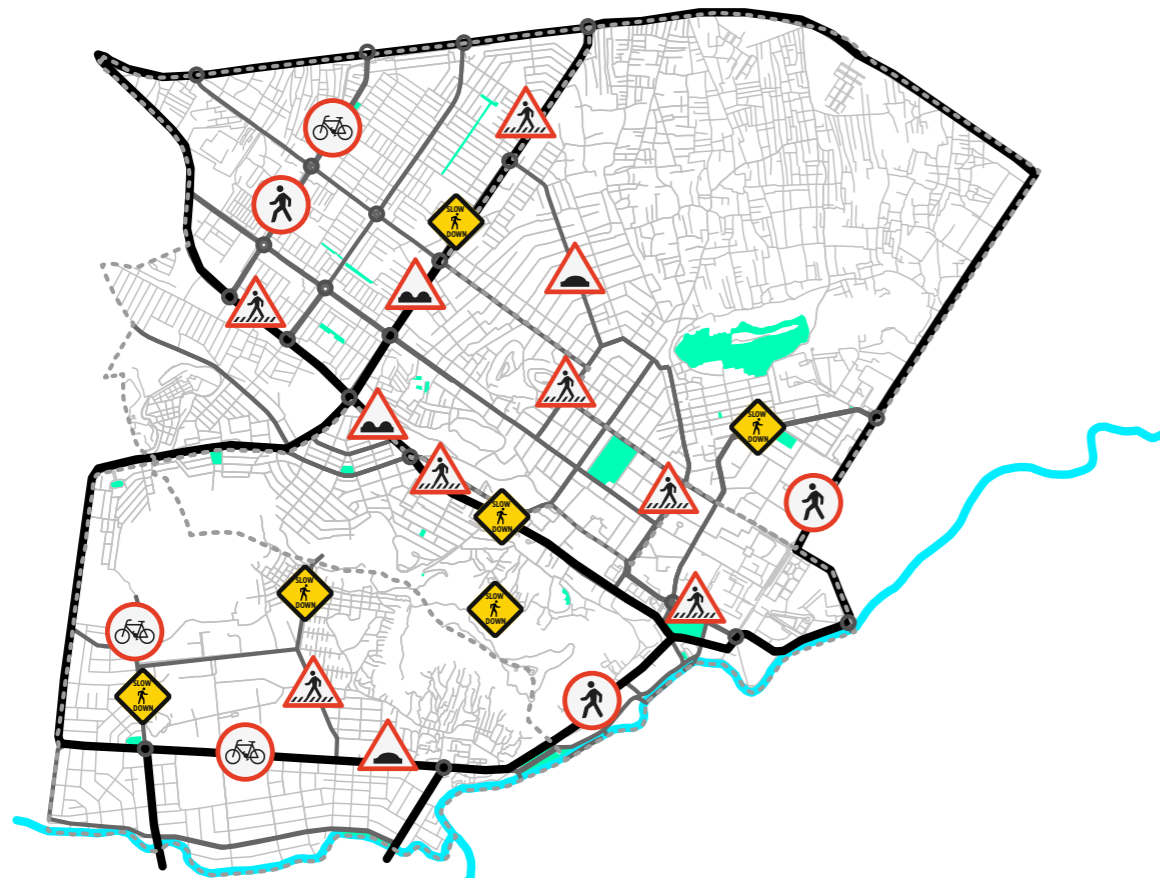
### PROMOTE SAFE ROUTES

Another strategy that the city should take to promote walking and cycling is to introduce a mix of traffic calming strategies including reducing the carriage ways, reducing the turning radii at intersections to reduce speed and introducing a kerb-level crossing. This tabletop pedestrian crossing can act as both a speed bump and a universal pedestrian crossing to enable

persons with disabilities, the elderly and children to be able to cross the street with ease. In addition to the above, they should introduce specific treatment at entrances of streets. These could include changes in texture or colour of surface material or even the level. These changes signal motorists that they are entering special zones. On wider and busier streets, the city

can consider introducing medians- where not available or pedestrian refuge islands to enable people to cross the street and wait as they watch traffic flow.

Besides design, signage improves road safety. These should include speed limits, restrictions and information on such things as bike lanes.

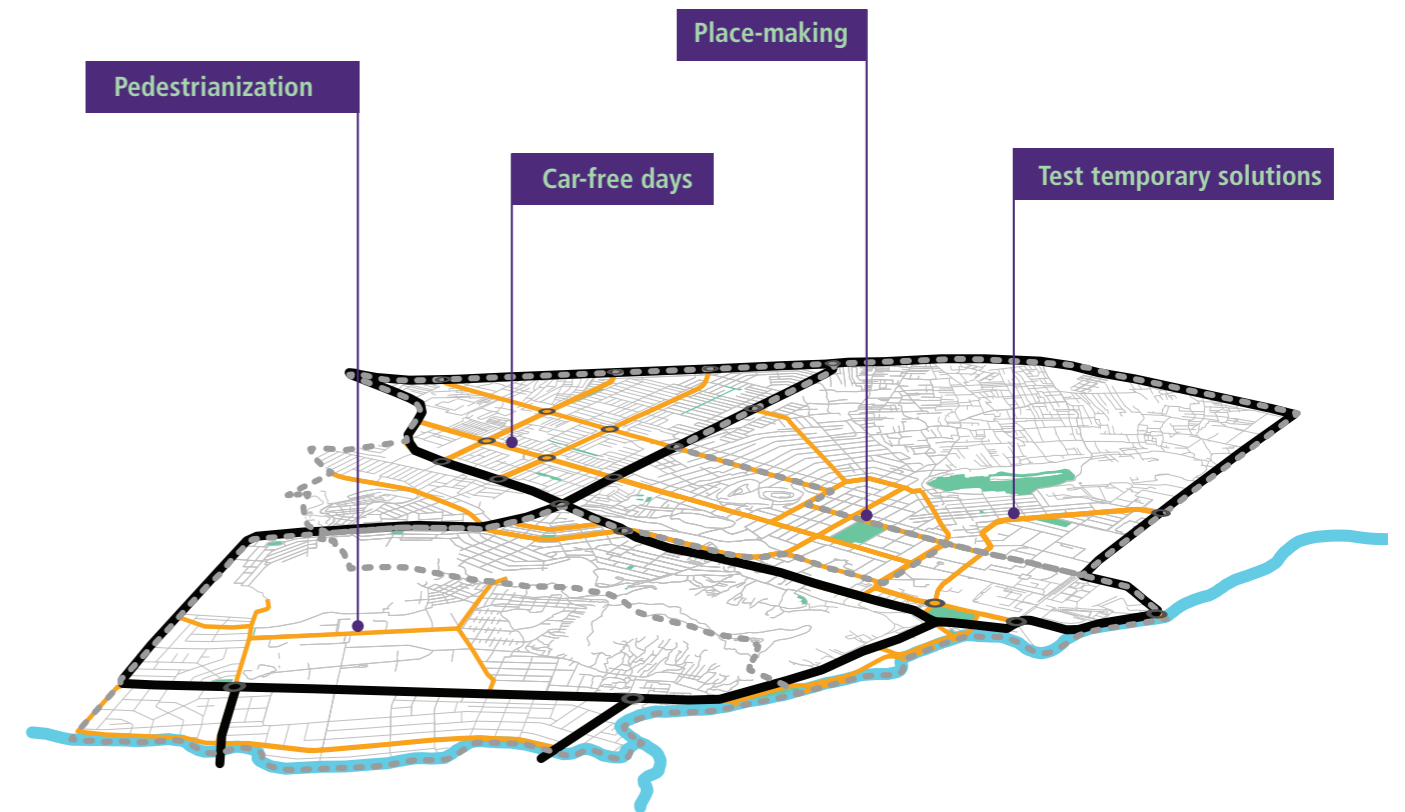


### PROMOTE SOCIAL PROGRAMMING OF PUBLIC SPACES

The city can invite local residents to experience Kabul either on foot or on bikes. This can be modelled around the idea of car free days. Other strategies could be the use of Placemaking as a tool to test temporary solution prior to making them permanent and

strategically selecting streets that can be pedestrianised. An example of a street that could be pedestrianised is Gulfroshi Street Lane. These strategies can be programmed a long certain streets either once a week, once a fortnight or once a month. Social

programming and tactical urbanism have proven to be powerful tools for promoting culture change around walking and cycling, and public life. At the centre of such advocacy initiatives is aggressive, relevant and timely communication.

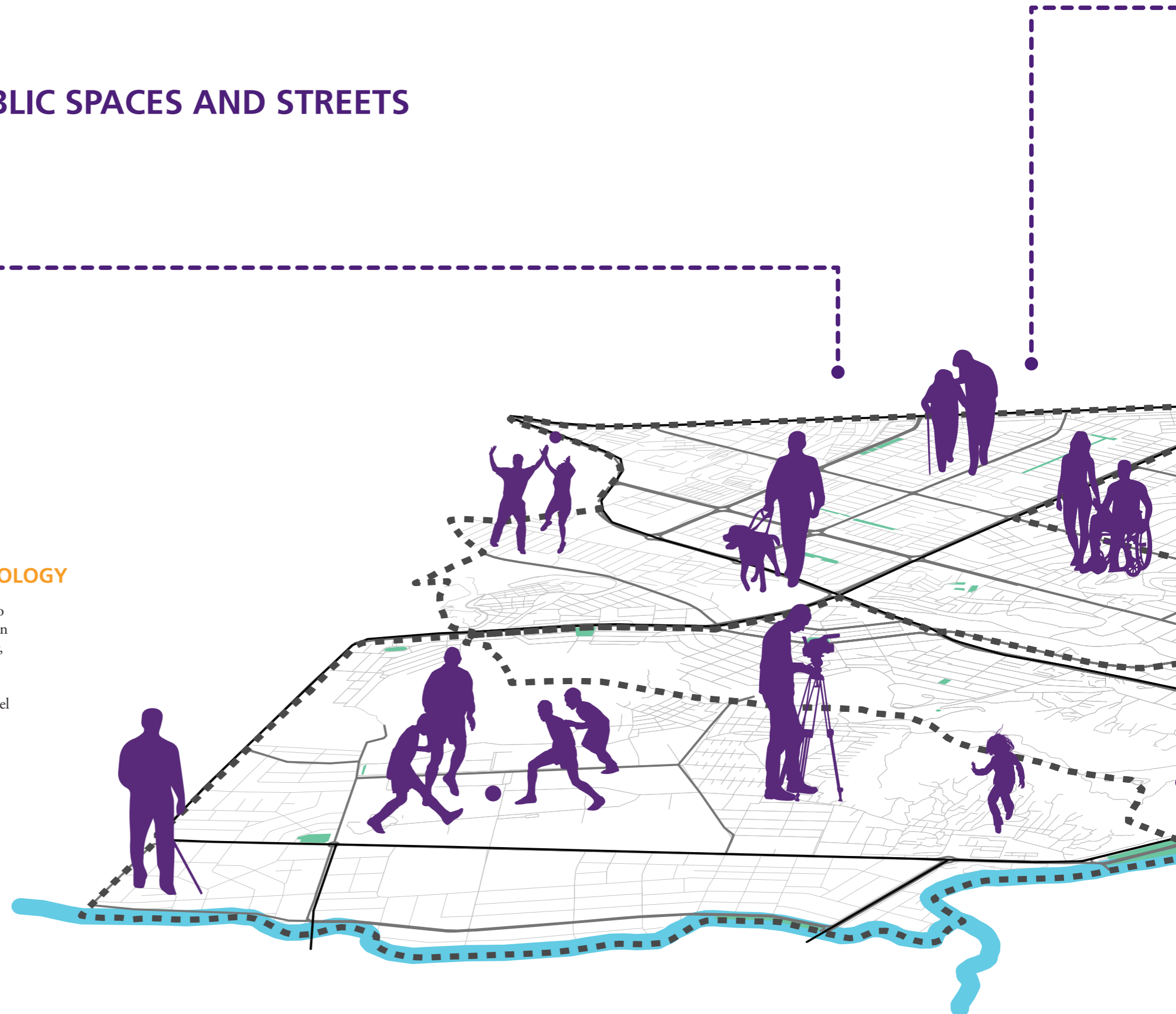


## PROMOTE SAFETY IN OPEN PUBLIC SPACES AND STREETS



### IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY

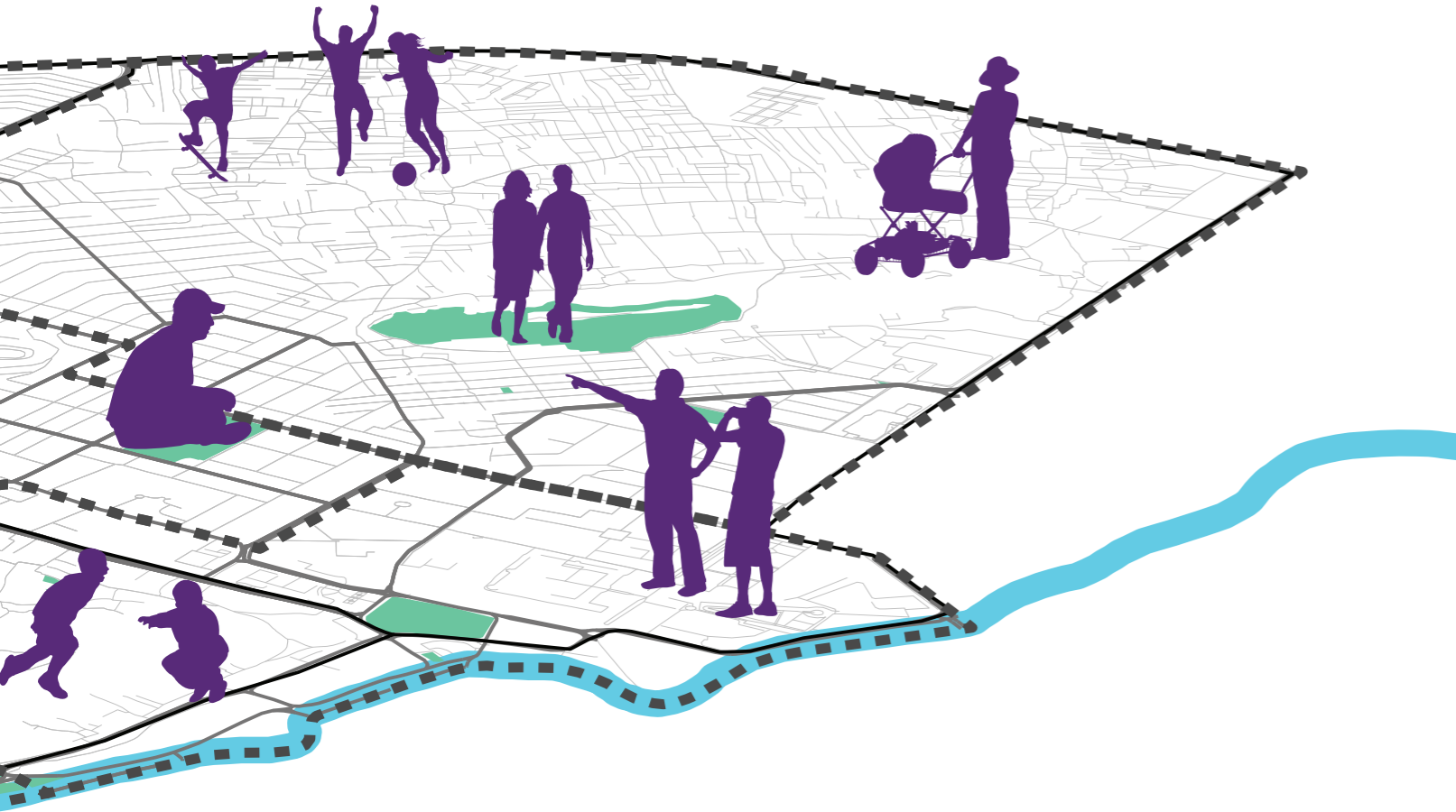
A gender-responsive city is well lit. The municipality and partners need to add more public lighting both along streets and in public spaces. These can be fitted with CCTV to relay information to relevant agencies. Moreover, in order to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport, walkways, bike lanes and transit stops should be well lit with clear way-finding and well maintained. This will especially make women and girls feel comfortable and willing to walk, cycle and enjoy public space.





### CREATE AND ENFORCE RULES FOR USE OF PUBLIC SPACES

The city can develop and implement regulations that encourage the use of public spaces by couples. This will make women feel welcome and protected in the streets and in public spaces. In addition, enforce rules and regulations that discourage sexual harassment of women in the streets and in public spaces. Other rules could be for example having smoking zones, discouraging littering and vehicular access to open public spaces.



### PROMOTE 'EYES ON THE STREET'

The Municipality needs to diversify policing mechanisms to adapt to changing times and dynamic patterns of crime. This includes embracing new technologies to keep the population safe, respond faster and better. In addition, there needs to be a heightened awareness of gender-specific urban safety and security issues. This could be for example through the use campaigns and media to provide information on issues of safety in public spaces especially for women and girls.

Clear sightlines along streets and in open public spaces can improve the perception of safety especially among women and children as it encourages the notion of "see and be seen". Promoting activities such as street vending along streets and cycling routes to increase natural surveillance by adding more 'eyes on the street'. In addition, the city can avoid erecting long hedges and high fences in open public spaces and along cycling routes. This will promote the feeling of safety.





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