



PART 1

Read the text below and answer questions 1–13.

THE CONCEPT OF THE 15-MINUTE CITY

The “15-minute city” is an urban planning framework that asks a simple question: can residents meet most everyday needs close to home? Instead of designing urban life around fast movement across long distances, the concept prioritises access to essentials—employment, education, groceries, healthcare, parks, and cultural venues—within a short walk or cycle. In practice, it shifts attention from traffic flow and journey speed to neighbourhood-level availability of amenities and the quality of routes that connect people to them.

The model is often discussed as a response to twentieth-century patterns of urban expansion and separation. In many metropolitan regions, zoning laws encouraged single-purpose districts: large residential suburbs, isolated office parks, and retail concentrated in out-of-town centres. This reshaped urban morphology around commuting, with daily routines dependent on long trips and private vehicles. The 15-minute city argues for a more compact, mixed pattern of land use that reduces the need for cross-city travel in the first place.

A key planning objective is to support a polycentric city, where multiple neighbourhood centres share the functions that used to be concentrated in one central business district. Each centre is intended to provide a basic set of services and destinations, while still being connected to others through reliable public transport. Proximity is reinforced by active mobility—walking and cycling—supported by safe crossings, continuous footpaths, protected cycle lanes, and streets that feel comfortable for different ages and abilities.

Supporters emphasise several practical benefits. If routine trips become shorter, dependence on long commutes can fall, which may reduce congestion and emissions while encouraging healthier daily habits. Proximity can also strengthen resilience. When fuel prices rise or a major transit line is disrupted, households that do not rely on long-distance travel may be less exposed to sudden cost increases or network failures. The same logic applies during extreme weather events, when shorter, local trips can be easier to adapt or postpone without severe disruption to daily life.

Economic effects are frequently cited as well. If residents can buy food, access childcare, or visit services nearby, everyday spending is more likely to remain within neighbourhoods rather than flowing to distant shopping centres. This can support small businesses and maintain activity on local high streets, where frequent footfall matters more than occasional large trips. Many planners link these outcomes to the design of public space:



streets that are pleasant to walk along tend to produce more interaction, stronger social ties, and greater informal surveillance, which can reinforce safety and community confidence.

At the same time, critics argue that the “15-minute” label can oversimplify real differences between residents and places. A 15-minute radius is subjective, because it depends on individual mobility, including age and health, as well as local terrain and street connectivity. A fit adult cyclist may cover far more ground than an older person, someone with a disability, or a caregiver walking with small children. Steep hills, poor lighting, heat, or fragmented routes can also shrink what is realistically reachable. For this reason, serious planning requires attention to how access is experienced by diverse groups, not just how it looks on a map.

Implementation typically involves multiple levers operating together. Cities may redesign streets to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, add protected cycle networks, and reallocate space away from cars. Many programmes explicitly aim to reduce through-traffic on residential streets, so that local roads function as places to live rather than shortcuts for drivers. In parallel, planning reforms can encourage mixed-use development and limit sprawl, allowing homes, shops, services, and workplaces to coexist within the same districts. Some planners also promote *chronourbanism*, aligning opening hours and service schedules so that proximity works for people with non-standard routines, such as shift workers or carers, not only for a nine-to-five timetable.

Equity is a central debate because improving neighbourhood access can change housing markets. If an area becomes safer, greener, and better supplied with amenities, demand may rise and prices can increase, intensifying gentrification and pushing lower-income residents outward. To address this, some cities pair mobility upgrades with affordable housing requirements, support for small businesses, and targeted investment in underserved districts to improve spatial equity across the wider urban area. Paris is frequently cited as a prominent example of a city implementing measures associated with this approach, although the framework is also discussed and adapted in many different contexts.

Measuring success is not straightforward. Simply counting the number of destinations within a circle can miss whether they are usable, safe, or culturally appropriate. A clinic might be nearby but overwhelmed; a park might be close but feel unsafe; a grocery store might exist but be unaffordable. Robust evaluation therefore combines access mapping with resident experience, travel behaviour data, and health indicators. Digital services add another layer: remote work, telemedicine, and online shopping can reduce travel demand,



but they may also weaken street life if they replace local interaction rather than complementing it.

Questions 1–4

Choose **TRUE** if the statement agrees with the information given in the text, choose **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the information, or choose **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information on this.

- 1 The passage gives the exact year in which the 15-minute city framework was introduced.
- 2 The passage suggests that the 15-minute city aims to reduce reliance on long commutes.
- 3 The passage suggests that local commerce can benefit when more daily spending remains within neighbourhoods.
- 4 The passage states that a 15-minute radius is identical for all residents, regardless of mobility, terrain, or personal circumstances.

Questions 5–9

Complete the notes below. Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text for each answer.

Measures used to implement the 15-minute city

- Street redesign may prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and reduce **5**
- Planning reforms can encourage **6** development and limit sprawl.
- Some planners promote **7** so that proximity works across different schedules.
- To address rising demand in walkable districts, cities may introduce **8** requirements.
- Evaluation can combine access measures with resident **9**

Questions 10–13

Select the correct answer.

10 What benefit of proximity is mentioned when fuel prices rise or transit systems are disrupted?

- A** People who depend less on long commutes may be less affected
B Cities can keep fuel prices stable by redesigning neighbourhoods



C Most residents will no longer need any form of public transport

D Disruptions will affect only those living outside city centres

11 Why can a fixed 15-minute radius be difficult to apply equally to all residents?

A Its practical reach varies according to mobility, terrain and route conditions.

B It assumes that every neighbourhood has the same population.

C It prevents cities from providing reliable public transport.

D It requires all residents to travel by bicycle.

12 Why is equity described as central to the debate?

A Because the concept requires all residents to work locally

B Because improving walkability can increase demand and raise rents

C Because cultural spaces are usually excluded from proximity planning

D Because targeted investment typically reduces housing costs immediately

13 Why does the writer say that counting nearby destinations alone may give an incomplete picture of accessibility?

A Nearby services may differ in usability, safety and affordability.

B Residents generally prefer travelling to more distant facilities.

C Digital services make physical amenities unnecessary.

D Access maps cannot identify the location of local services.

Answer Key

1. NOT GIVEN

2. TRUE

3. TRUE

4. FALSE

5. through-traffic

6. mixed-use

7. chronourbanism

8. affordable housing

9. experience

10. A

11. A



12. B

13. A