

# Greener for Whom?

## Assessing Urban Green Space Accessibility in Cyprus: The Pedieos Linear Park

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### Abstract

In Nicosia, Cyprus, ensuring access to green public spaces, for all residents remains a major challenge, particularly for people with disabilities. This pilot study, part of the EU-funded TWIN2EXPAND project, evaluates the 14 km Pedieos Linear Park and its new Strategic Masterplan, using spatial analysis, and participatory accessibility-assessment workshops with stakeholders and the community. The findings aim to inform inclusive design and policy proposals to enhance access, comfort, and stewardship for the park. Situating Nicosia within the broader Mediterranean and Balkan contexts, the study frames access to urban green space as a fundamental expression of the right to the commons city in the era of climate crisis.

### Background and Context

Urban green public spaces are essential components of sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient cities. They provide a wide range of critical services, from mitigating urban heat and improving public health to supporting biodiversity and fostering social cohesion. However, the provision, quality, and safety of public spaces are distributed inequitably in many cities [1], while inclusivity in design of public spaces is a major challenge [2]. In Mediterranean cities, where rapid urbanisation, peri-urban sprawl, and rising temperatures pose growing risks, the need for equitable, accessible, and high-quality green infrastructure is more urgent than ever. From a policy perspective, accessible and inclusive design of public space is guided by international, national and local legislation. (SDG 11, the New Urban Agenda, WHO guidance) [3] Despite these mandates, significant challenges in bridging policy and practice persist in Cyprus. Nicosia is one of the least green capitals in Europe in terms of GBS provision [4], and access remains uneven and insufficient, particularly in high-density and underserved neighbourhoods.

### Case Study

In Nicosia, where density and extreme heat intensify, urban green space is critical. The 14-km (86 ha) Pedieos Linear Park traverses Nicosia, Strovolos, and Lakatamia, serving as a major “green lung.” A new Masterplan for the park, launched in October 2024, seeks to make Pedieos more inclusive and climate-resilient while enhancing its ecological and recreational value. This research evaluates the plan’s performance in accessibility, equitable amenity distribution, and integration with the urban fabric, highlighting strengths and limitations and pinpointing critical policy and implementation gaps.

### Methodology

We applied a mixed-methods approach integrating spatial analysis with stakeholder workshops and participatory mapping to evaluate the park and its masterplan. Spatial accessibility and connectivity were assessed using Space Syntax operationalised via the Place Syntax Tool. Two iterative workshops brought together academia, civil-society organisations, residents, and local-authority representatives to (a) prioritise needs and preferences, (b) interpret spatial-analysis results, and (c) evaluate alternative scenarios. A follow-up on-site accessibility assessment with residents is scheduled for October 2025, in collaboration with local organisations and NGOs, to systematically document barriers affecting people with disabilities and to record user perceptions of accessibility, comfort, safety, and amenity provision.

### Outcomes

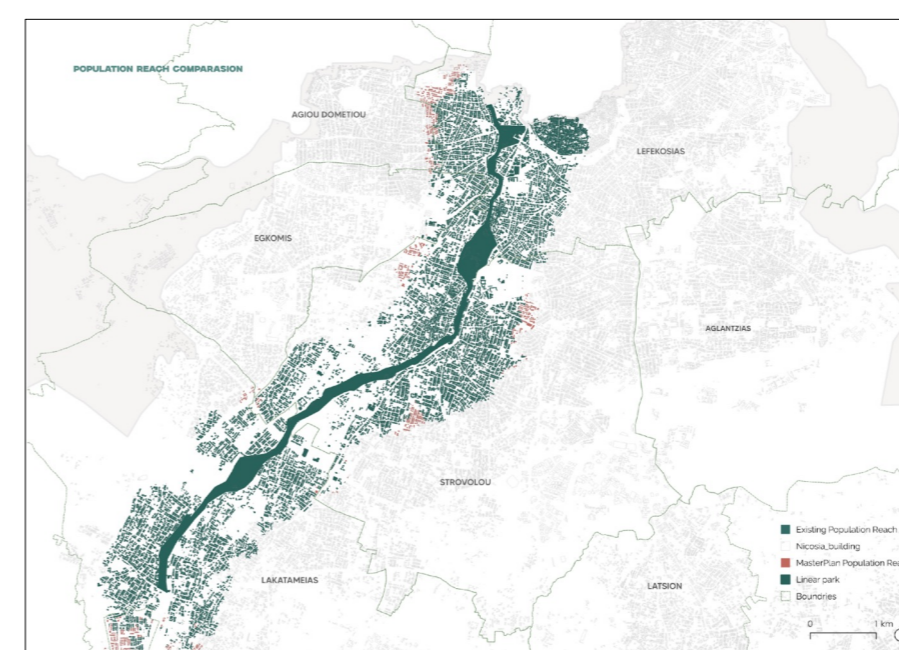
The 14km Pedieos Linear Park in Nicosia currently reaches only around 19% of the city’s population within a 15-minute walk. The spatial analysis confirms that the proposed masterplan, despite adding 17 new entrances and 14 bridges, only marginally improves accessibility. While the plan significantly improves the park’s link to external amenities an imbalance persists in on-site provision, with some facilities being inadequately allocated to the park’s central, underserved segments. Workshops findings underscore critical qualitative requirements, including the need for universal access infrastructure and climate-conscious shaded corridors to extend the park’s usability into adjacent high-density neighborhoods during extreme summer heat. The outcomes of this work aim to inform design decisions for the park’s future development. In parallel, a policy brief “Greener for whom? How Accessibility and Amenity Proximity Shape Inclusive Urban Green Space in Cyprus” targets policymakers, local authorities, and urban planners with evidence-based recommendations for equitable access.

### Conclusions

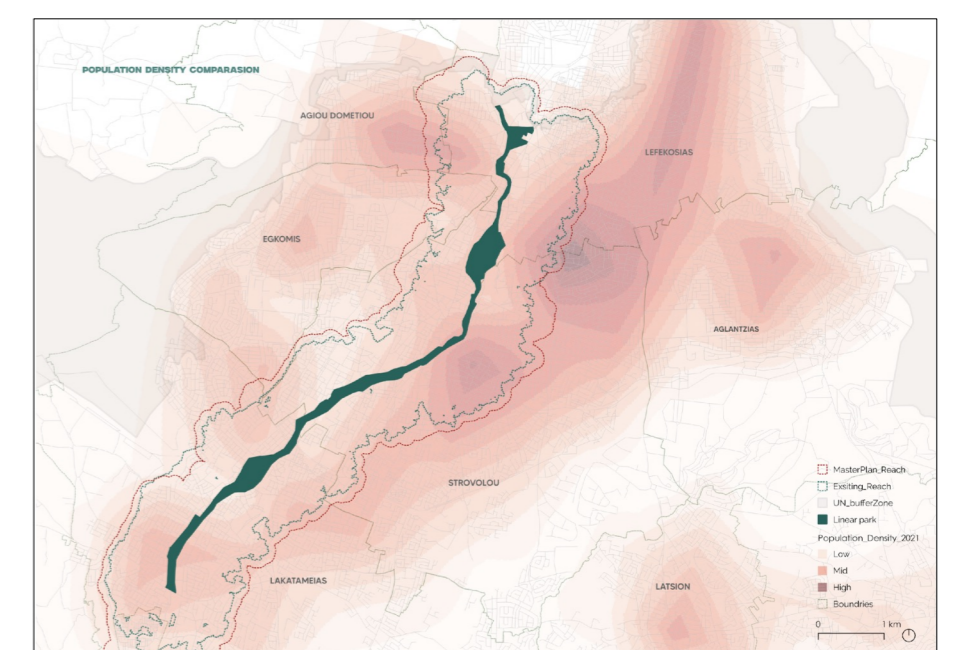
Pedieos Linear Park illustrates both the promise and the current underuse of urban green infrastructure in Cyprus, particularly among residents in high-density, underserved areas. While the Strategic Masterplan adds value, it underscores the need for more integrated, evidence-informed approaches to address persistent accessibility gaps. Realising the park’s potential requires holistic strategies linking spatial justice, sustainable mobility, and inclusive design—supported by stronger inter-agency coordination and meaningful public engagement to embed community knowledge in future decisions.



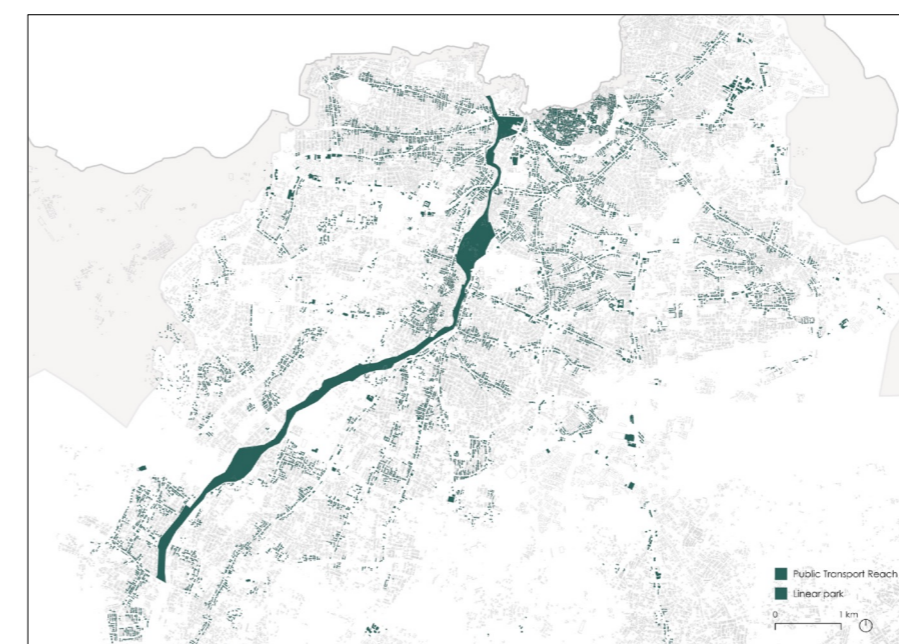
[1]



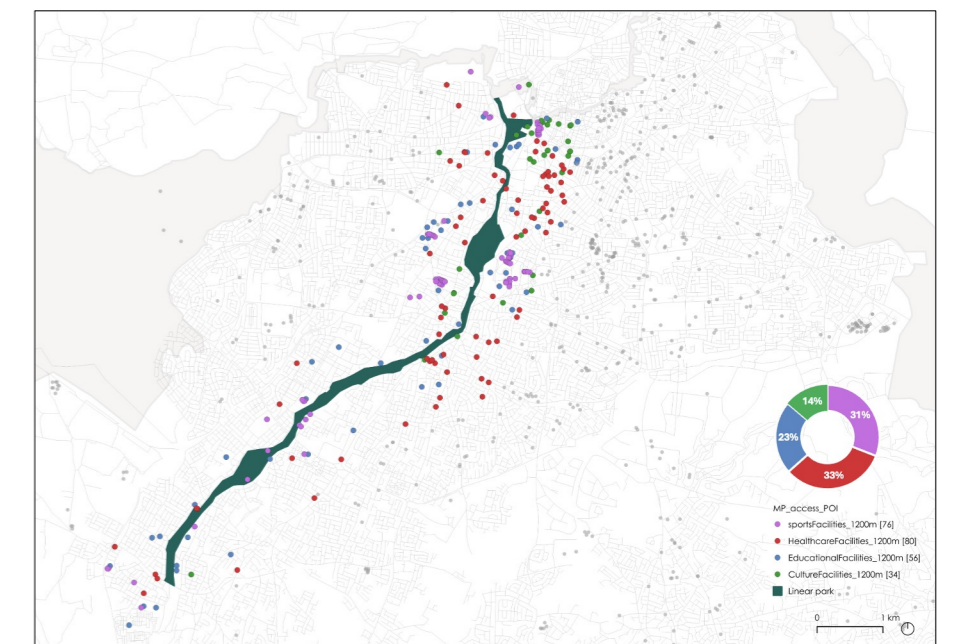
[2]



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[6]

[1] Photos from the Pedieos Linear Park, the longest green coverage in Nicosia, photo credits: SURF Lab  
 [2,3,4,5] Spatial analysis of the existing situation and masterplan potential, population reach, accessibility to the park with public transport and proximity to amenities.  
 [6,7] Photos from the Second Stakeholders workshop, photo credits: SURF Lab

### References

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