SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES AT THE HEART OF CITY TRANSFORMATION

GUANGZHOU

GROWING ECONOMY

FAST-GROWING MEGACITIES

Citizen Centric Cities
The Sustainable Cities Index 2018
Guangzhou, like Shenzhen, is placed in the third quartile of the Index and is ranked #10 in Asia. As the capital of the Guangdong Province, it has one of the largest GDP, is the political and commercial center and a major transportation hub for Southern China. This sprawling port city is home to 14 million people and is ripe to enjoy the fruits of economic openness making it one of the most successful Tier 1 cities in China along with Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen.

Guangzhou has similar urban challenges as other developed cities in growing population, lack of housing and concerns about pollution. The city received an average scoring across the Profit, People and Planet pillars, indicating there is room for improvement to achieve sustainable success. Like many of its Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area (GBA) neighbours, the city is fast moving away from its manufacturing heritage and accelerating its economic development in modern services industries, which ultimately alter citizens’ needs.

Compared to other Tier 1 cities in China, Guangzhou has the most affordable cost on properties and good value for money for living costs. The city is also striving to develop its next generation of Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Biological Medicine (IAB), new energy and new material industry; it is also focusing on establishing a high-end modern industrial system.

Guangzhou has advanced its public transportation networks, including a metro network that operates 13 lines with an operating distance of 391 km, carrying an average of over 8 million passengers daily. The new High Speed Rail linking Shenzhen, Hong Kong and other major Chinese cities will also make Guangzhou more accessible and reduce traffic congestion.

As a key transportation hub, the 370,000 square meter Guangzhou South Railway Station is an essential node straddling 7 high-speed rail lines, served by 4 metro lines connecting to Guangzhou’s downtown area as well as neighbouring cities in the Pearl River Delta.

The GBA city cluster is set to become the largest bay area economy and will see further significant growth and rapid urbanization, particularly in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. It is important to nurture the co-dependent eco system shared among GBA cities to ensure that sustainable city principles are part of the cities’ transformation plans.

The three pillars

The Sustainable Cities Index is a broad measure of sustainability, encompassing measures of the social, environmental and economic health of cities. It ranks 100 global cities on three pillars of sustainability: People, Planet and Profit. The three pillars are closely aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and track progress against UN SDG commitments.

Guangzhou’s three pillar rankings:

- **People**
  - Reflects social mobility and quality of opportunity and life
  - #53

- **Planet**
  - Describes management of energy use, pollution and emissions
  - #71

- **Profit**
  - Assesses business environment and economic performance
  - #77

City Cluster Four | Fast-growing Megacities

Our report also features new work on city archetypes and clusters based on an analysis of the citizen experiences of city living combined with the Index data. The four city clusters; Balanced Innovators, Post Industrial Opportunists, Evolutionary Cities and Fast-growing Megacities seek to profile the citizen experience in correlation to the Index ranking.

Guangzhou is a typical Fast-growing Megacity and the Index features 13 cities that fit this profile. All but three of these cities are in the bottom quartile of the Index and are in rapidly growing economies including China and India. Cities like Mumbai, Shanghai and Shenzhen exhibit significant inequality in terms of income and access to resources and opportunity.

A key challenge for the city is engagement with the citizen. A good example of this is citizen experience of technology in comparison to other city clusters. This is not necessarily a reflection on the level of technological advancement as some of these cities, particularly in China, have a very sophisticated technology infrastructure.
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