

RESPONSE TO CHARTER PRINCIPLES

While the project is submitted under the category of THE REGION: METROPOLIS, CITY AND TOWN, it in fact demonstrates congruency with many CNU Charter principles at multiple scales. The project addresses the role of urbanization on city fringes, transit expansion, density, land use, resource conservation and economic sustainability. Most importantly, it proposes a new type of urban environment that ensures a higher quality of life for middle-class Chinese: walkability, access to open space, clean air, food and water, convenient civic services and affordable housing. The project proposes design guidelines for buildings, streets, parks and other elements of the public realm to ensure the realization of these aspirations.

The name “GREAT” was created by the client and is an acronym for Green, Relational (mixed-use), Environmental, Accessible, and Technological.

Summarized below are the key design principles behind GREAT City, preceded by the corresponding CNU Charter principle. We feel the design of GREAT City aligns with 22 of the 27 Charter principles:

CNU principles addressed:
1 ...The metropolis is made of multiple centers that are towns, each with its own identifiable center and edges.
2 The metropolitan region is a fundamental economic unit of the contemporary world...
3 The metropolis has a necessary and fragile relationship to its agrarian hinterland and natural landscapes...

GREAT City takes as its first objective, and most important design attribute, the conservation of over 75% of its site for the purposes of habitat conservation, agriculture and stormwater bio-filtration. The entire site area is approximately 5.77 square kilometers (1450 acres), of which 1.3 square kilometers (325 acres) has been designated for the City’s urbanized area. The remaining 1125 acres of Conservation Area will be used to re-settle local farmers displaced by the City, and will remain in perpetuity as undeveloped land.

CNU principles addressed:
4 Development patterns should not blur or eradicate the edges of the metropolis....
5 Where appropriate...noncontiguous development should be organized as towns...with their own urban edges...
6 The development... of towns and cities should respect historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries.

GREAT City has a compact, 1.3 square kilometer urbanized area. The design of the City is based on a maximum 800-meter (1/2 mile or 10 minute) walking distance from transit, resulting in an approximately circular City edge and urban plan. The design does not contribute to sprawl at the edge of the adjacent metropolis- rather it emphasizes the clarity of the existing and future urban pattern. The surrounding Conservation Area will ensure that the edge of the City is not blurred by future expansion.

CNU principles addressed:
7 Cities should bring into proximity a spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy....
11 Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian friendly, and mixed-use...
13 Within neighborhoods, a range of housing types can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes...

One of the key precepts of the GREAT City design is the concept of a broad spectrum of land-uses closely interwoven into the physical form of the City. These land uses include multiple types of housing, commercial, retail, civic, light manufacturing, office, education, vertical farming and entertainment. The goal of this rich variety is to allow all residents to meet their daily needs within the City, reducing automobile trips to adjacent areas.

CNU principles addressed:
8 The physical organization of the region should be supported by a framework of transportation alternatives...
14 Transit corridors, when properly planned and coordinated, can help organize metropolitan structure...
15 Appropriate building densities and land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops...

GREAT City is specifically sited to take advantage of Chengdu’s burgeoning transit system. An agreement has been reached with the City of Chengdu to bring one of the planned light-rail lines to the center of GREAT City, ensuring transit access for all residents. This light rail line, and a second nearby subway line, form both a north-south and east-west corridor linking GREAT City residents and workers to other parts of Chengdu.

CNU principles addressed:
12 Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance...
19 A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the definition of streets and public spaces...
22 ...development must accommodate automobiles. It should do so in ways that respect the pedestrian...
23 Streets and squares should be safe, comfortable, and interesting to the pedestrian....

Perhaps the most important aspect of GREAT City’s design is the pedestrian movement system. This three-dimensional network provides a completely autonomous and separate pedestrian pathway system on multiple levels, allowing unfettered and conflict-free movement for all ages and mobility levels. Designed not at the exclusion of the automobile, it instead seeks to provide a complementary and safe pedestrian network that creates streets for all transportation modes. Ranging from a continuous perimeter walkway to elevated bridges at strategic points in the plan, this network is one of the unique and distinctive elements of the project.

CNU principles addressed:
16 Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods...
25 Civic buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity...
18 A range of parks, from tot-lots to ballfields and gardens, should be distributed within neighborhoods...

A fundamental goal and characteristic of GREAT City is the provision of schools, institutions, government services, civil services, parks, and other quality-of-life amenities that are lacking in most Chinese communities. Every neighborhood within GREAT City contains these uses, and all are within a 5-minute walk of all residents. In addition the City is designed for a multi-generational population, and will provide the necessary schools, training facilities, and senior services that are not found in most Chinese communities. This design allows families to stay in close proximity throughout their lives, should they so choose. Civic buildings and parcels are given places of prominence within the plan, typically centered within neighborhoods. Schools have been located adjacent to the Conservation Area to utilize open space.

CNU principles addressed:
10 The neighborhood, the district form identifiable areas that encourage citizens to take responsibility...
24 Architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history, and building practice.
26 All buildings should provide their inhabitants with a clear sense of location, weather and time...

GREAT City’s design has been carefully calibrated to not only realize good urban design principles and outcomes but also ensure economic and environmental sustainability. Organized around a customized sustainability framework comprised of eight themes, the design achieves a true integration of effective sustainable concepts and a liveable urban environment. Based on the intrinsic environmental assets of the site such as topography, solar-orientation and climate, the sustainable framework ensures significant environmental benefits such as an almost 70% reduction in carbon impacts and a 94% reduction in waste-to-landfill, among other benchmarks. In addition, all residential units have been designed to meet strict Chinese lighting codes.