



The 22-million-square-foot district will be car-free | Photo source [Tencent](#)

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## PLANS FOR A 22-MILLION-SQUARE-FOOT CAR-FREE DISTRICT IN SHENZHEN

 SUSTAINABILITY

### The car-free district aims to encourage a movement of cities designed for and about people

**Spotted:** Chinese internet company, Tencent, who own Chinese messaging service WeChat, has unveiled the concept for a 22-million-square-foot car-free district in Shenzhen. Urban development will prioritise pedestrians and green spaces.

Designed by NBBJ – an architecture firm with work with Google, Samsung, and Amazon under its belt – Net City will be roughly the size and shape of Midtown Manhattan and powered by solar panels. The project will be completed in three phases over the next seven years.

The development will include offices, homes, parks and entertainment venues. Terraced buildings between one to 30 stories will overlook the coast. Once complete, the area should be able to accommodate up to 80,000 residents and workers.

There will be no roads for cars; instead, residents, commuters and visitors will connect to Shenzhen via subway and travel through Net City on foot or by bicycle. Ferries will provide public transport along the waterways.

NBBJ also plans to plant mangrove trees along the shore to act as a natural flood defence and sensors will be used to track flooding. Net City will form part of China's Sponge City initiative for new urban zones with more environmentally friendly types of flood defences and water management.

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## Takeaway:

For the last 100 years, vehicles have revolutionised mobility, but they have also created many problems, from air pollution to traffic accidents. Whilst typical city planning is based almost entirely around a grid system for cars, planning a city without them provides more flexibility, creating a solution that is organic and human-focused. A small but growing number of cities are trying to design the car out of the urban landscape, including Oslo in Norway and Madrid in Spain.