The technology testbed will be at the base of Mt. Fuji | Photo source Toyota

PLANS FOR A HYDROGEN-POWERED CITY OF THE FUTURE

A 175-acre site at the base of Mt. Fuji will become the "Woven City" — a fully-connected ecosystem filled with high-tech treats

Spotted: At the annual Consumer Electronics Show, Toyota revealed plans to build a prototype hydrogen-powered city of the future, on a 175-acre site at the base of Mt. Fuji. Named the “Woven City,” it will be a fully-connected ecosystem filled with high-tech treats.

Residents and researchers will be able to test and develop technologies, such as autonomy, robotics, personal mobility, smart homes and artificial intelligence, in a real-world environment.

The Woven City will form a grid of different street types that aim to separate traffic into three distinct paths for faster vehicles, lower-speed mobility devices, and pedestrians. Only fully-autonomous, zero-emission vehicles will be allowed to transport residents within the city. Little robots will operate underground and hop into lifts that take them directly into each home to drop off the packages, and residences will also be stocked with human support technologies that will take care of basic needs and help daily life run more smoothly.

The city aims to be fully sustainable, constructed with traditional Japanese wood joinery combined with robotic production methods, and every roof will be covered in solar panels. There will be parks and a central plaza designed to bring the community together.

Designed by the Denmark architecture firm Bjarke Ingels Group, the project is scheduled to begin breaking ground in 2021. Upon completion, an estimated 2000 people will be able to live in the Woven City, and while Toyota will prioritise its own researchers, spaces for retirees, families, retailers, scientists and industry partners.

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Takeaway:

Building a smart city from the ground up opens the gateway to the development of future technologies. Connected, autonomous, emission-free and shared mobility will be a major facet of the sustainable city of the future, and will lend opportunities for a new kind of urban life. The grid pattern that makes up the Woven City also provides a better and safer experience, as compared to the average modern-day street and the wildly different speeds of vehicles and pedestrians.