

Smart Growth: New Songdo City

An aerial rendering of Songdo City, a smart growth development. The image shows a dense cluster of modern, multi-story buildings with unique architectural designs, including some with perforated facades. The city is integrated with green spaces, parks, and a network of roads and bridges. A large body of water is visible in the foreground, with a bridge crossing it. The overall scene is a futuristic urban landscape.

By Michael Park

Introduction and Vision



“IMAGINE a city with Venice’s canals, New York’s Central Park and the broad tree-lined boulevards of Paris. And how about the colorful shopping bazaar of Marrakesh, Morocco; the pocket gardens of Savannah, Ga.; and an opera house like the one in Sydney, Australia? Throw in a world-class hospital, convention center and schools, and a sustainable design, and you might think you’re lost in a SimCity video game. But such a real-life metropolis of glass, steel and grass is rising on the western coast of South Korea, 40 miles from Seoul, on 1,500 acres of landfill that just a few years ago was water. It is called New Songdo City, and its backers envision it as a major new financial and business hub for northeast Asia.”

-NY Times

Some Quick Figures



Sustainable Design

- “Reference and Hybrid”



Sustainable Design II

- “Environmental sensitivity and long-term sustainability will shape everything about New Songdo City. It will influence the way buildings are constructed, the building materials that are used, and even the source of those building materials. It will determine the configuration of neighborhoods and the flow of roads and canals. It will shape the way the most basic natural resources – sunlight, air, and water – are used to heat and cool buildings. Energy efficiency and water conservation are being meticulously planned and will be hallmarks of New Songdo.”
 - **Remarks by Christine Todd Whitman, former administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

LEED Certified...City?

- The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary third-party rating system in which credits are earned for satisfying specified green building criteria.
- Projects are evaluated within six environmental categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels of green building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned.
- LEED for Neighborhood Developments focuses on residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects developed by a single entity.
- Songdo International Business District (IBD) is unusual in that it is seeking LEED certification for an entire city. By its very design - the result of a ground-up, master plan based on sustainability principles - Songdo will be an environmental standout not only in Asia, where many urban areas are in a state of environmental crisis, but the world.

The Future?

- “How will we know that New Songdo is a success? There are the obvious measures, like building occupancy rates, energy savings, pollution levels, resident satisfaction, property values, and the like. But we'll know it's a success when an even better New Songdo rises somewhere else. We'll know it has succeeded when new tall buildings in New Jersey or India or Eastern Europe take their lead from our project – and, better yet, improve upon what we're doing to achieve and promote sustainability. When that day comes, I will feel more confident that our global society is heading in the right direction in building a healthy future worthy of our children and grandchildren.”
 - **Remarks by Christine Todd Whitman, former administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

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