# Can forest cities help to mop up our pollution?


Liuzhou Garden City © Stefano Boeri Architett

Traditionally, the more people in a city, the fewer trees there are. To create space for houses, offices and other buildings, nature takes second place. But, if the architect Stefano Boeri has anything to do with it, this will soon be changing.

Boeri has designed a forest city, to be created in the north of Liuzhou – a metropolis in the Guangxi region in southern China. This mountainous area was chosen to be "a city where living nature is totally intertwined with architecture," according to Boeri.
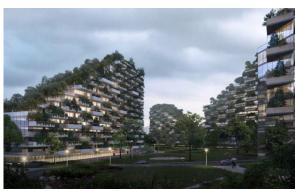
Instead of completely getting rid of the trees to build houses, the city's design accommodates the surrounding greenery. Homes and commercial buildings will be covered with trees, with gardens on the balconies of every floor, and rooftops that are home to miniature forests.

"I have been working on the idea of urban forestation for years," says Boeri. "In those areas of the planet where it is still necessary to build new cities, we are planning real forest cities for a maximum of 150,000 inhabitants."

The Liuzhou Forest City will be connected to central Liuzhou via a railway line and a road. It will be home to 30,000 people, and include commercial and recreational spaces, two schools and a hospital. On top of this, the vegetation will absorb carbon dioxide and pollutants, as well as releasing oxygen into the atmosphere.

Development is well underway for the forest city. "Our masterplan for a forest city in Liuzhou has been approved by the local government," says Boeri. Now, the government is starting the process of selling land to interested developers. "The current phase is still ongoing for land selling," says Boeri.


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Building is expected to begin in 2020. At the same time, the firm has replicated the concept in Lishui, a city in the southeast of China. The masterplan has also been given the thumbs-up by local governors here, and the developer is collecting funds to launch the project.

If the Chinese cities prove successful, Boeri hopes that the idea will take hold across the world. "We are developing the same concept in other places with different climate conditions, such as Mexico and north Africa," he says.

And there is science behind the idea of planting trees to halt climate change. A study earlier this year by scientists at ETH Zurich found that planting at least a trillion trees around the world could lock up 205 billion tonnes of carbon, once the trees are mature, helping to offset the effects of releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere

Source: ScienceFocus