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Stefano Boeri unveils Smart Forest City covered in 7.5 million plants for Mexico

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Italian architect Stefano Boeri has unveiled plans to create a forested smart city near Cancun, Mexico, that is designed to be a "pioneer" of more eco-efficient developments.

Smart Forest City Cancun is intended to be built on a 557 hectare site near the Mexican city. According to the architect it will contain 7.5 million plants, including numerous species of trees, shrubs and bushes chosen by botanist and landscape architect Laura Gatti.

"Smart Forest City Cancun is a Botanical Garden, within a contemporary city, based on Mayan heritage and in its relationship with the natural and sacred world," said Stefano Boeri Architetti. "An urban ecosystem where nature and city are intertwined and act as one organism."

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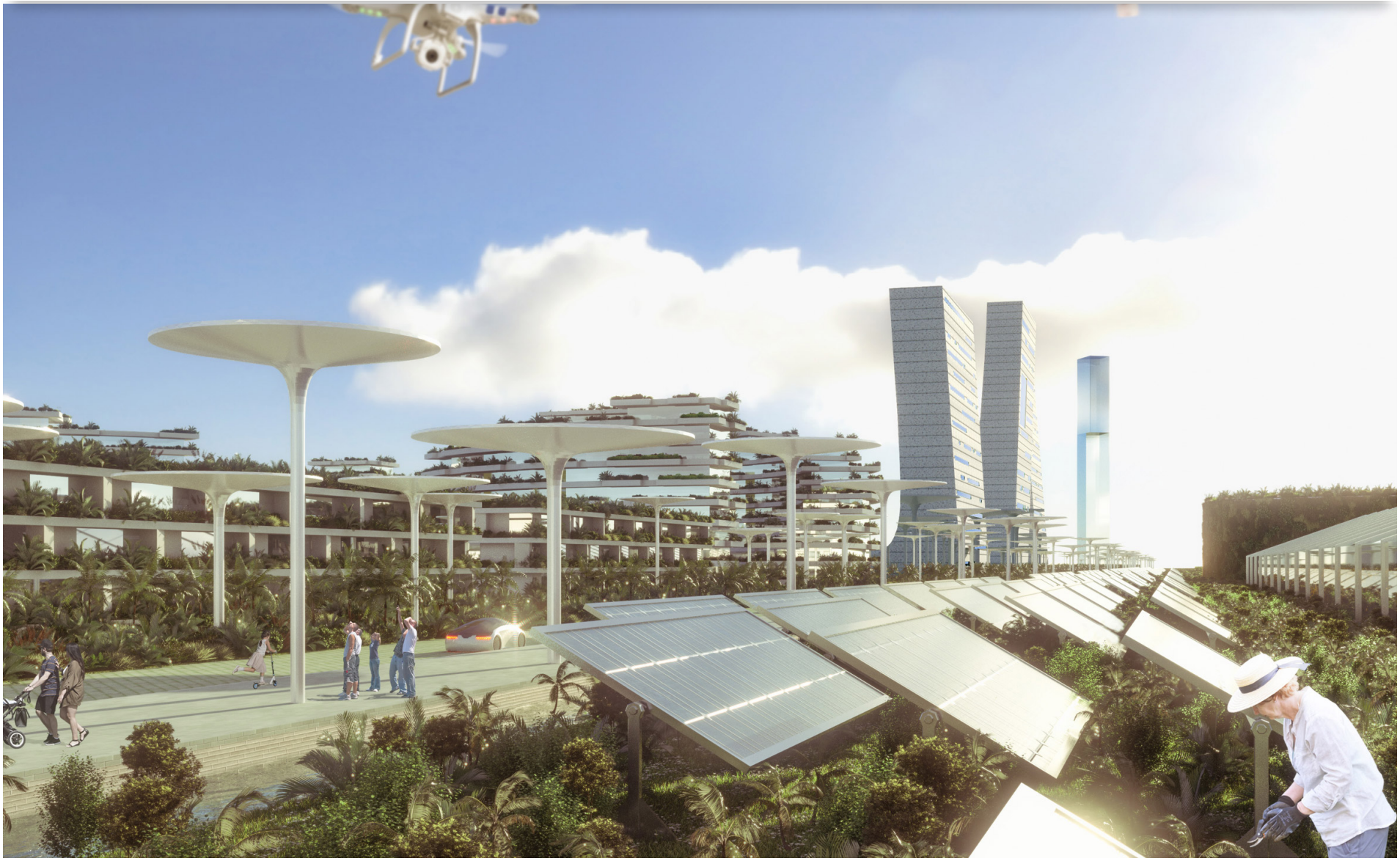

With concerns about climate change, pollution, habitat destruction and animal extinction rising, the firm believes the city could be a "pioneer" for more eco-efficient developments

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"Sensors are distributed within the building fabric: they collect and share relevant information, which is then centrally analysed and turned into suggestions in support of everyday life," it added. "For example, by mapping on an app the expected outdoor comfort

machines or dish washers during peak generation conditions, in order to get a cheaper energy rate, while supporting the energy management of the mechanical systems."

Boeri has teamed up with German engineering company Transsolar to design Smart Forest City Cancun to be self-sufficient in producing its own food and energy. Among the elements included to promote the circular economy are solar panels, and farmland that will be irrigated by an embedded water system.

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Water will be collected in a basin at the entrance of the city, which will also include a desalination tower, and then distributed throughout canals.

Because of Cancun's close proximity to the Carribean Sea, the parcel is encircled by "water gardens" that bolster it against flooding. Renderings of the development show that these waterways can also be used for boating around the development.

Other features of the future neighbourhood include an internal electric and semi-automatic mobility system developed by Milan urban and transportation planning firm MIC (Mobility in Chain). The systems means that all residents will leave vehicles on the outskirts.

Smart Forest City Cancun will provide home to 130,000 inhabitants, who will become "gardeners" of the plants. There will be a variety of affordable, and plant-covered, housing aimed at different residents, including students, researchers and professors.

"We have designed different types of housing that could include all the types of inhabitants," said the firm. "This will include affordable buildings for young students, researchers, professors."

"The idea behind this project is to create a district dedicated to research and innovation (the fields will be: molecular biology, robotics, IT, etc) where academic institutions and research centres meet, along with big multinational corporations and the new generations of students and researchers, Mexican and from all over the world," said the firm.

Boeri presented the concept masterplan and project to the Region and the Municipality in March, and is awaiting approval.

The project forms part of a wave of new smart cities proposed for areas across North America. Others include a future city on the Toronto waterfront by Google's sister company Sidewalk Labs, a project in Arizona's desert planned by billionaire Bill Gates, and a development in Nevada backed by cryptocurrency millionaire Jeffrey Berns.

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