

**Read about Songdo. What are Songdo's answers to the problems of urbanisation?**

## **Songdo**

Songdo in South Korea is a brand new city for 65,000 residents and 300,000 workers which is being built entirely from scratch on reclaimed land. It has been planned as a green city in both senses of the word: it is 40 percent open space and it emits one-third of the greenhouse gases of a typical, similar-sized city. Songdo is also a technologically smart city, with electric water taxis, tubes that suck rubbish directly to a central processing facility and millions of wireless electronic sensors everywhere that transmit information to a control room. This information will allow the city to turn off street lights when a road is deserted, for example, or to change the traffic lights to ease congestion.

But perhaps the most surprising technological innovation is the installation of video conferencing screens in every home, office, shopping centre and public building so that video calls can be made whenever and wherever residents want. Songdo's planners hope to render unnecessary much of the day-to-day travelling that we do, such as visiting the doctor and going to see friends.

Songdo is a bold concept, and at an estimated cost of \$35 billion, it is far from cheap, but plans are in the process of being drawn up for 20 more such cities across China and India, using Songdo as a template. The ultimate aim, for the planners and builders of Songdo, is to mass-produce cities.

***Take turns to tell your partner about the city you have read about. Your partner listens and asks questions to find out more information.***

- Which city, Songdo or Medellin, do you find most impressive? Why?
- Which model offers the best hope for the future?
- What solutions can you think of for the problems of the major cities in your country?