

## Chinese outline plans for mammoth R84bn Modderfontein ‘city’

BY: [NATALIE GREVE](#)

Hong Kong-listed property development group Shanghai Zendai has outlined ambitious plans for the development of an R84-billion 22 km<sup>2</sup> “city” on the sprawling Modderfontein property the company bought from South African chemicals group AECI for R1-billion in November.

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**84**

The development, dubbed Zendai Modderfontein, would be funded by Zendai, the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank and was envisaged to house 100 000 residents, and employ a further 200 000 people upon its completion in 2024.

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Shanghai Zendai at the launch of the development on Wednesday outlined its plan to construct the new ecofriendly and low-carbon urban district in Johannesburg, which would encompass the functions of a conventional city, including finance, trade, logistics, commerce, exhibition, manufacturing, education, healthcare and housing.

With a focus on green design and localisation, the group on Wednesday invited interested parties to jointly develop the Modderfontein project, construction of which would begin later this year, while development of an on-site university was expected to be completed in 2015.

The development, covering a floor area of 12-million metres squared, would be located some 20 km from the original city centre, in Johannesburg, 7 km away from Sandton and 8 km from OR Tambo International Airport, in Kempton Park, and would boast a Gautrain station linking the project to other financial hubs and transport networks.

### CLEAR MESSAGE

Shanghai Zendai founder and chairperson Zikhang Dai said at the launch that the group planned to spend R3-billion on the development of Zendai Modderfontein over the next three years, with a view to creating a “great city”.

“We did not realise that there was such a vast tract of [undeveloped] land within Johannesburg. This land has been asleep for over 100 years, but today it is awakened and will become a future city.

“We have made this investment because we have confidence in this country and this land,” he commented.

Chinese Vice Consul-General to Johannesburg **Peidong Yang** added that the hefty investment by China into South Africa sent a “clear message” to the world.

“This investment tells [the global community] that South Africa and China will forever be reliable friends and partners,” he said, adding that the States would continue to leverage their “positive” trade relationship and bilateral trade agreement.

China had been South Africa’s largest trading partner since 2009, with the volume of trade between the two countries in 2013 exceeding \$60-billion – accounting for one-third of the Asian State’s trade with Africa.

Yang hoped that the local authorities would provide support to “protect” China’s legal and financial interest in the country and “safeguard” Chinese citizens who worked and lived in the country.

Providing assurances that South Africa would defend local Chinese interests, Gauteng Premier **Nomvula Mokonyane** said at the launch that Shanghai Zendai’s decision to invest in Gauteng was the culmination of years of political interaction and the enduring relationship between the ruling African National Congress and the ruling Communist Party of China.

“Gauteng is measured by the type of investments it attracts and this investment affirms that we are doing things the right way. It is not by chance that this investment is in Gauteng, which has a good relationship with China,” she remarked, underlining that “political commitment” had driven the R84-billion investment.

The Premier went on to note that the Gauteng provincial government would work to debunk negative perceptions around the integrity of Chinese investors.

“We need to deal with the myth that the Chinese are here to exploit locals, which is wrong,” Mokonyane said, adding that Zendai Modderfontein would become a node of social cohesion and economic inclusion.

## **MULTIFUNCTIONAL CITY ZONES**

The master plan of Zendai Modderfontein described the development of nine interconnected, multifunctional zones; a business, trade and logistics park; a light industry node for export and light manufacturing; a commercial “city centre”; an international conference and exhibition node; a trade and logistics hub; an entertainment centre; a comprehensive education centre, including a university; a healthcare centre; a sports centre and stadium; hotels; as well as a residential development for the international community.

The group envisaged that commercial activity within the “city” would generate some 200 000 permanent jobs, while the project’s West Lake international community housing development and “downtown Modderfontein” residential development would house some 100 000 people, or 30 000 families.

The development’s central business district, or town centre, would cover an area of 2.4 km<sup>2</sup> and would host offices, company headquarters and finance and trade operations.

Zendai Modderfontein’s 2.5 km<sup>2</sup> international conference and exhibition centre, the Long Lake Gateway, would also boast a cultural centre, a sports centre and “ecological offices”, while the 1 km<sup>2</sup> entertainment zone would be an Africa-themed multifunctional entertainment area.

The Long Lake Gateway area would also play host to a 19.9 ha sport centre, boasting a stadium and a volleyball court, basketball court, football field and tennis court.

A “silver industry zone” would be situated in the Long Lake area of the city development, adjacent to the international exhibition zone, and would include a hospital, other healthcare facilities and designated shops and housing for the elderly.

The North Modderfontein node would see the development of a 3.7 km<sup>2</sup> residential development for the international community, encompassing housing, shops, offices, hotels and ancillary facilities.

In addition, the Founder’s Hill education and training centre, located on the south-east portion of the “city”, would be a “comprehensive education community” composed of vocational and technical educational facilities, including a university.

The 2.6 km<sup>2</sup> Highland business, trade and logistics park would be developed as the industrial cluster of Zendai Modderfontein, providing a base for logistics and storage companies as well as export and manufacturing entities.

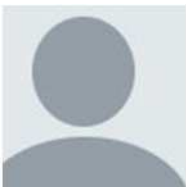
Zendai aimed to develop this zone into a “free-trade” area under South Africa’s special economic zone programme and a “business, trade and logistics” hub under the ambit of the Overseas Economic Trade and Cooperative Zone of China.

Lastly, the East Founder’s Hill light industry park, covering an area of some 73 ha, was described as a cluster area for the aviation and light manufacturing industries, and would focus on the manufacturing of decor, electronics, textiles and clothing, light industry and food.

Edited by: Tracy Hancock

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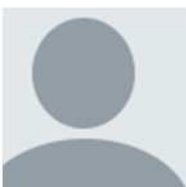
One child policy in Africa!!!! I quote "residential development would house some 100 000 people, or 30 000 families" That smells like 3 people per family.



[Dale](#) · 2 months ago

As mentioned, this is a big piece of property in the middle of an already developed area. It will have to be supported by existing infrastructure and services. Water, sewage, electricity, roads ... all tapping in to an already overloaded system around them.

Then there's the proven Chinese project management plan for Africa. Send across cheap (in most cases criminal) labour, & leave them behind when the job is done. Few sustainable local jobs, more poaching problems, more organised crime. Can't wait.



[Alan Simm](#) · 2 months ago

I sincerely hope it doesn't turn into another one of these places <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/new...>

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At last, some innovative architecture

