

# Landmark city-park design revealed for Tianjin, northern China

Grant Associates leads project for Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City

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## SUMMARY

*Landscape architect Grant Associates has won an international competition to create a new 41 hectare city park for Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City (TJEC) in northern China.*

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Occupying a central location in Tianjin Eco-City on the Gu Dao Canal, the design vision for Friendship Park is a park that welcomes visitors of all ages, celebrating the friendship between China and Singapore, and embodying the principles of sustainability.

Grant Associates' masterplan aims to translate these ideas onto site by interlocking contrasting landscapes and characters - like water and land, nature and city - while maintaining a unity in the design with a continuous landform.

Grant Associates Singapore will lead the design of Tianjin Sino-Singapore Friendship Park with a phased masterplan that proposes a Conservatory of five glass biomes, housing tropical plant collections and water gardens. Other key design elements include a wetland centre, an urban dock, play areas, event lawn and amphitheatre.

Alongside Grant Associates, the design team for the Conservatories includes Wilkinson Eyre Architects, environmental design consultant Atelier Ten and structural engineer Atelier One. The team will collaborate with local consultants to deliver the project, which will be the most high-profile public park within the 30 sq km eco-city. Friendship Park is also intended as an all-season, international tourist destination.

Singapore's National Parks Board (Nparks), the original client behind Gardens by the Bay, is acting in the capacity as advisor to Tianjin Eco-City for the Friendship Park scheme. Confirmed local partners for Grant Associates' design team include Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA).

Friendship Park is one of several landscape projects sustaining the growth of Grant Associates' Singapore office. The practice is currently working on a series of prestigious projects in the region,

including Funan Mall and Paya Lebar Quarter in Singapore, and the Vietnamese-German University (VGU) in Vietnam.

Stefaan Lambregts, associate at Grant Associates, comments:

“Friendship Park is a hugely exhilarating and ambitious project. Our vision is to create a sustainable, playful and life enhancing landscape alongside inspiring architecture. Together this will provide a rich variety of spaces in which people can come together to play and learn, and have fun.

“The park symbolises many things. It represents the close relationship between China and Singapore, as well as the connection between people and nature, land and water, shelter and exposure. Friendship Park will exemplify the vital role of public parks in providing space for people of all ages to enjoy a rich variety of experiences with nature.”

### **Detailed design concept:**

- **Celebration of contrasts.** Friendship Park is an urban park full of contrasts, offering a variety of spaces for different user groups and experiences, in a harmonious and balanced setting. For example, the Wetland Forest contrasts with the Community Esplanade and high-rise cityscape beyond, while an elevated Ridgetop Walk gives long distance views across the site, and the Water Gardens below. This fusion of contrasting characters and landscapes makes Friendship Park a rich and complex park that truly evokes friendship.
- **Sensitive responses to a challenging environment.** The park’s new landscape is crafted out of an understanding of the inhospitable nature of the current site, which is currently barren. Exposed to north-west winds and with a saline soil, the aspiration is to establish an appropriate micro-climate by creating a sheltered park environment, which will be enjoyable throughout the year. Ridges in the northern reaches of the site will protect people and nature from the prevailing winter winds.
- **Fusion of architecture, infrastructure and landscape.** At the centre of the park is the Conservatory. Intrinsicly linked to the park’s landforms, it forms the main focus of the park. The Conservatory’s five biomes will provide year-round shelter and interest. Enclosing a series of garden and wetland spaces, they invite people to further explore the park. A Wetland Visitor Centre, also housed in a biome, provides another sheltered space and the opportunity to learn about its surrounding delicate ecologies.
- **Sustainability.** Friendship Park aims to be a beacon for sustainable design principles. This includes the establishment of a robust ‘Sponge City Strategy’ that uses a series of functional waterbodies to manage water flow, improve water quality, and, where appropriate, reduce water run-off. Measures include waterfront reed beds to filter water, and the use of permeable paving where appropriate.

The park’s environmental strategy will also utilise solar energy wherever possible. Importantly, the Conservatory is placed towards the northern end of the site, away from the shadows of the tall city buildings where it can capture maximum sunlight. A network of cycle lanes and pedestrian paths will flow throughout the park area.

## Background about Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City

Initiated in 2008, Tianjin Eco-City is a bilateral project between China and Singapore aimed at creating a blueprint for the future development of sustainable cities. The basic infrastructure for Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City is complete and the first residents moved into the city in 2012. When completed in around 2020, the eco-city will house up to 350,000 people in a low-carbon, green environment that already ranks as the world's largest eco-city. A series of celebrations are planned to take place in Tianjin Eco-City in 2018 to mark the concept's tenth anniversary.



### RELEVANT LINKS

 **Tianjin Eco-City**  
<http://www.tianjinecocity.gov.sg/>

 **Grant Associates**  
<http://grant-associates.uk.com/>

### QUOTES

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— Stefaan Lambreghts, Associate at Grant Associates

### IMAGES







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#### ABOUT GRANT ASSOCIATES

Grant Associates is an international Landscape Architecture consultancy specialising in creative, visionary design of both urban and rural environments worldwide, working with some of the world's leading architects and designers.

Inspired by the connection between people and nature Grant Associates fuses nature and technology in imaginative ways to create cutting edge design built around a concern for the social and environmental quality of life.

Grant Associates has experience in all scales and types of ecological and landscape development including strategic landscape planning, master planning, urban design and regeneration and landscapes for housing, education, sport, recreation, visitor attractions and commerce.

For more information visit [www.grant-associates.uk.com](http://www.grant-associates.uk.com)

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