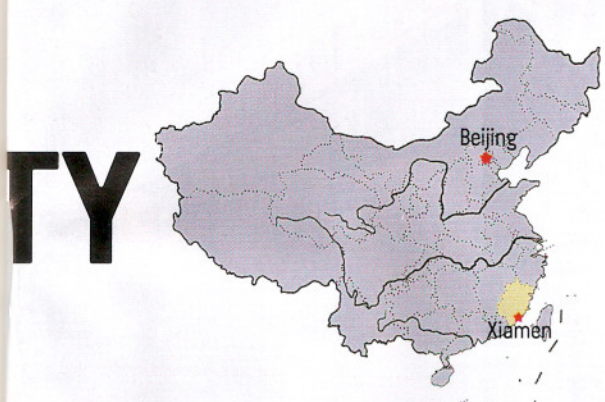


XIAMEN: A BEAUTIFUL CI

For residents in Xiamen, a “Beautiful City” campaign is under way



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Xiamen ABC

- **Location:** A coastal city in Fujian Province, southeast China, opposite Taiwan
- **Area:** 1,699.39 square km of land and 300 square km of sea area
- **Population:** 3.67 million (as of November 2012)
- **Gross domestic product:** 281.71 billion yuan in 2012
- **Mainstay industries:** shipping, tourism, financial services, information and electronic technology
- **International communication:** sister city of 17 cities and nations, including Cardiff in Britain, Sasebo in Japan, Baltimore in the United States, Mokpo in South Korea and Marathon in Greece

In mid August, *Xiamen Daily* published a Strategic Plan on Building a Beautiful Xiamen (Discussion Draft) by CPC (Communist Party of China) Xiamen Municipal Committee and Xiamen Municipal Government to invite suggestions and intensify publicity. Meanwhile, the local authorities also intended to release pilot programs and draw up documents to direct citizens in carrying out the initiative.

Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Planning will send out publicity teams and hand out questionnaires to collect public opinions and suggestions, some of which will be incorporated into the final plan.

Just before the draft was unveiled, a preliminary scheme was formulated. Wang Menghui, Party chief of the Xiamen CPC Municipal Committee, underscored speeding up the building of a beautiful Xiamen via concerted efforts. More specifically, Xiamen will be molded into an exemplary city by 2012, the 100th anniversary of the CPC, and a sample city of the Chinese Dream by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic.

Strong reaction

As soon as the draft surfaced, numerous citizens commented on it via telephone hotlines, in Sina microblogs, Wechat and the Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Planning website. Some people suggested attention should be given to both the overall planning and minor matters concerning people's living conditions; others believe improvements should be made in mental attitudes and moral cultivation.

Tang Kai, chief planner of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development in Beijing, noted that Xiamen's plan was a reflection and study of the transformation period, and that a beautiful city should be appreciated in terms of economic, political, social, cultural and ecological civilization.

Zhao Baojiang, President of China Association of City Planning, believed Xiamen

would set a good example for China's new urbanization trend. At the current stage, the city should focus on the quality of development. For one thing, a rein should be put on population, land use and building density; additionally, primary scenic spots should be shielded from construction projects.

Inner beauty

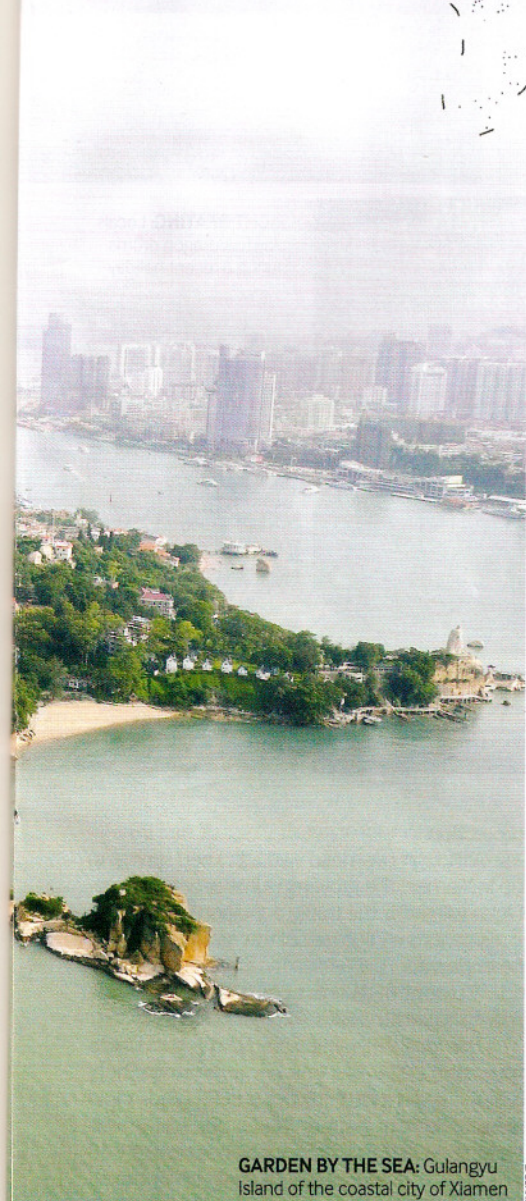
Xiamen, a southeast coastal city that came into existence during 1933, is known as the "Sea Garden" and one of the nation's first special economic zones established in 1980. It features a subtropical climate, and flowers bloom all the year round. Dotted with natural landscapes and scenic spots, its "outward beauty" has been highly praised.

However, Xiamen's beauty should be felt in both appearance and inner cultivation, said Hou Yongzhi, from the Development Research Center of the State Council. He argued that "inner beauty" should be mirrored in high quality and advanced economic system, harmonious social relations, colorful and refined regional culture, and orderly participation in public affairs as well as local political process.

First of all, Hou believed that Xiamen needs a developed economic system, which should be characterized by high efficiency, hi-tech and high income, rather than relying entirely on squeezing labor income, lowering commodity prices and randomly exploiting natural resources. Due to a shortage of land resources, the city needs to strategically plan the development of related industries and lay an emphasis on sustainability.

Xiamen has been honored as China's Civilized City for three consecutive years. Nonetheless, it's just a running start. Higher goals should be set and pursued.

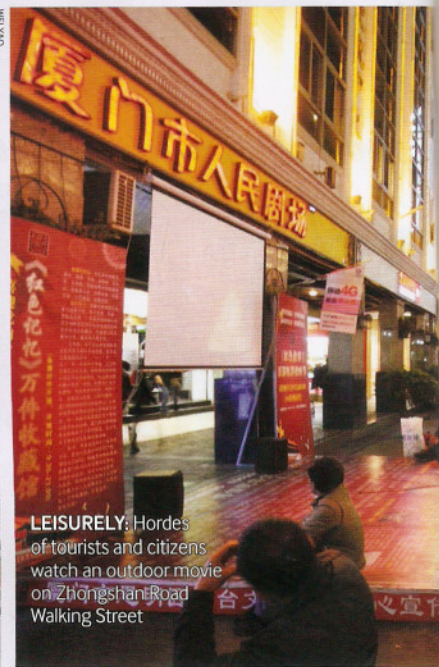
Wang Xiemin, from *Xiamen Daily*, said civilization and happiness should be taken as main measures—tolerance of and caring for disadvantaged groups and those who have no kin



GARDEN BY THE SEA: Gulangyu Island of the coastal city of Xiamen

XIAMEN SPECIAL

END OF THE DAY: Parents and their kids return home after school in Gaolin, an affordable housing community



LEISURELY: Hordes of tourists and citizens watch an outdoor movie on Zhongshan Road Walking Street

or cannot support themselves, the alleviation and solution of common problems in transportation, education, employment, housing and healthcare, and the practice of the "People First" principle.

"Only when these problems are perfectly solved, can the goal of building a beautiful Xiamen really come true," Wang said.

Following the release of the discussion draft, government institutions such as Xiamen Development and Reform Commission, Xiamen Economic Development Bureau and Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Science and Technology, immediately carried out in-depth studies, proposing that a solid industrial foundation should be laid for building a beautiful city by accelerating economic transformation and upgrading, and advancing high-end industries.

The focus should be on developing industrial clusters of new material, tourism, the marine industry, shipping and logistics, software information services, and cultural creativity, expediting specialty industries like biological medicine, aviation, automobiles, power transmission and distribution, high-end medical treatment and characteristic business, phasing out backward and excess production capacity, and fostering new growth engines.

"The overall plan will be put into practice as soon as possible, with goals of different stages clearly laid out. An array of matured projects will be launched to support the key sectors and industries, and attract investment to strengthen development momentum," said an official from Xiamen Development and Reform Commission.

Wang Baohong, Vice General Manager of Xiamen Xindeco Optoelectronics Co. Ltd., suggested attention be paid to help enterprises

OLD PATHWAYS: A street artist paints a foreign girl's portrait in Xiamen



RIGHT BEATING: Locals play folk dragon drums during a recent holiday



foster their core technologies. Take the light emitting diode industry (LED) for example. Despite the fact that Xiamen is a frontrunner in nationwide trade, its concentration ratio of industrial clusters is not very high. Certain small companies rush to get a finger in the pie. The local government should support leading enterprises to develop core technologies to command the industry.

Zhao Yanjing, Director of Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Planning, noted that the city was facing five challenges: to its development status, to imbalanced regional economic development, to the shifting of local economic growth model, heavy traffic pressure, as well as weak ecological

protection.

Although overhead viaducts keep springing up in Xiamen, the growing number of motor vehicles will make the traffic condition deteriorate. If residents are informed of the reality, things will be improved.

"To control the number of cars, a replacement should be worked out," said Wang.

The local authorities are planning to utilize four main pathways, one comprehensive hub, a traffic system for subways and BRT (bus rapid transit). Besides, a green traffic bus system will be introduced, and a greenway network of 848 km built. Restrictions should also be imposed on cars entering Xiamen.



CHEN CHENG



CHEN CHENG

By late August, the number of motor vehicles in the city had reached 970,000 units, and is expected to surpass 1 million this year. To help accomplish the goal of building a beautiful city, the Xiamen Municipal Government has unveiled plans to build up a convenient urban public transportation network, control the number of motor vehicles and accelerate the elimination of high-emission motor vehicles.

Residential buildings in Jiuzhuxiang, an open housing estate in Siming District, were one of the most dilapidated in the Zhenhai community, lacking property management and neighborhood facilities. However, changes have taken place.

"In the past, it was difficult to mobilize residents to maintain communal facilities. With the new plan, people have shown a stronger will to build a better home. The recent Golden Dream program has won the support of 99 percent of residents," said Su Jiangzhen, Party Secretary of the Zhenhai community.

Now, residents there are busy installing burglar-proof doors, putting recreational facilities in place, and trying to practice semi-closed management through joint contribution, spontaneous donation and collection by volunteers.

"The participation of all Xiamen citizens is a source of strength and momentum to build a beautiful city," said Su, who is committed to developing dirty and disordered residential communities into "sunny communities" featuring human interactions, as well as clean and sweet dwelling environments.

"Xiamen will become a dream home if all residents join hands in beautifying it in the same way they do at home," said Yao Yiping, from Xiagang sub-district neighborhood office. ■

Ten Steps to Build a Beautiful Xiamen

Industrial upgrading: Optimizing industrial distribution, integrating development resources, fostering competitive industries, establishing the most advanced manufacturing base and most competitive modern service cluster in the west coast, carrying out projects concerning industrial chain cultivation, green and low carbon development, modern agriculture.

Mechanism innovation: Pushing forward pilot programs in key sectors and links, making breakthroughs in reform and opening up to give full play to special economic zones, carrying out projects that can create jobs, fuel entrepreneurship, boost income and efficiency and strengthen the social security network.

Income increase: Establishing and improving the employment service system, multiplying channels to increase urban and rural income, constantly improving people's living standards, carrying out projects concerning employment, social security network.

Healthy life: Putting in place a balanced basic public service system covering both rural and urban areas, properly solving difficult problems concerning people's personal interests, nurturing healthy lifestyles and creating favorable living environments, carrying out projects concerning urban safety, educational balance, medical treatment, housing and traffic.

Harmonious neighborhood: Setting up a community management system featuring government guidance and self-governing, carrying out projects concerning community

management and service improvement, the expansion of community activities and building beautiful villages.

Intelligent city: Promoting digital families and the application and demonstration of related industrial bases, carrying out projects concerning the promotion of digital families, information infrastructure construction and intelligent industries.

Ecological civilization: Improving the ecological environment, carrying out projects concerning the construction of ecological function areas, ecological corridors, slow-moving greenways and a blue sea.

Cultural promotion: Popularizing the special culture of south Fujian, enhancing people's moral and cultural quality, enriching people's spiritual and cultural life, speeding up comprehensive cultural prosperity, promoting multi-cultural integration, carrying out projects concerning the expansion of cultural activities and the promotion of cultural competitiveness.

Cross-Straits integration: Deepening cross-Straits economic, cultural and technological exchanges and cooperation, creating an important, active, convenient and harmonious platform.

Party building: Running the Party strictly, consistently strengthening the Party's self-building, improving its working style and efficiency, fostering generations of self-disciplined, competent and talented Party members.

Source: *Strategic Plan on Building a Beautiful Xiamen (Discussion Draft)*