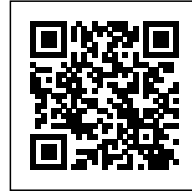




BEIJING

Posted on October 19, 2017 by urbanNext



Categories: [Code City](#), [Essay](#), [High Density](#), [Imminent Urban Commons](#), [Territory and mobility](#), [Urban Paradigms](#)

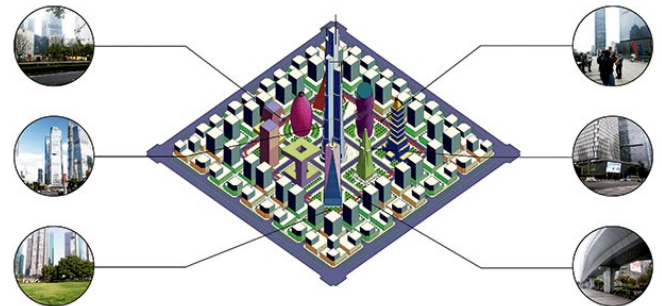
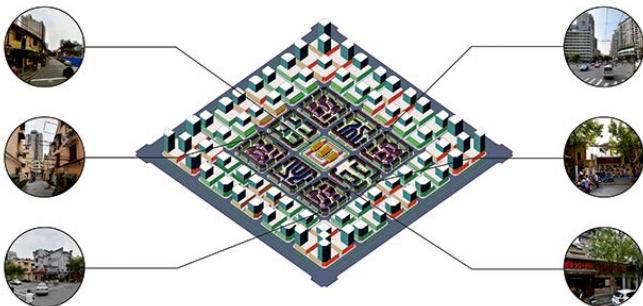
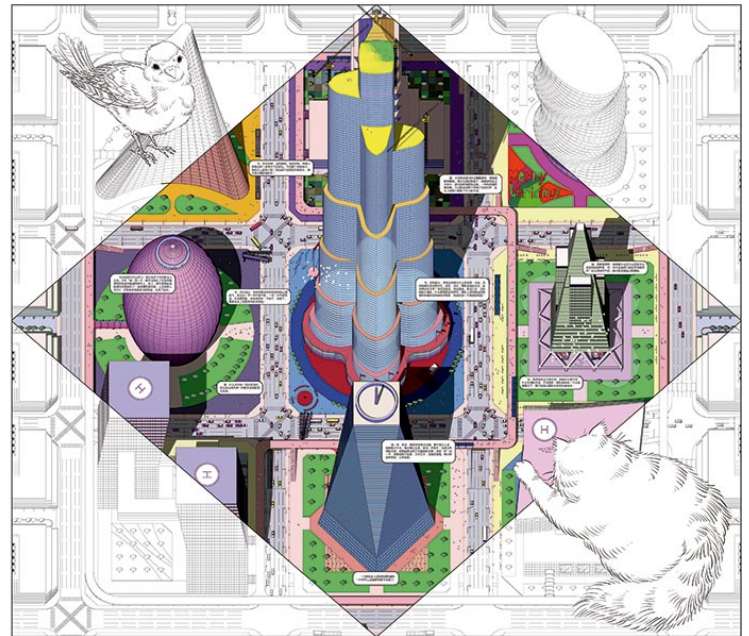
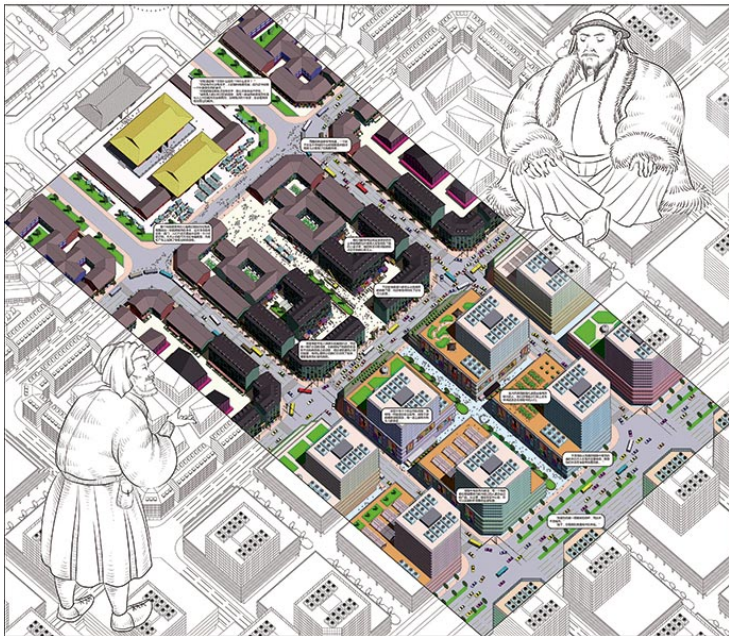
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If the modern city is a game of solid and hollow spaces, the zoning code city is like the rules for Go. The story of zoning is the history of how urban planners learned to regulate competition for access to natural resources, such as natural light, fresh air, and open views. The city of New York was the first to pass a modern zoning code, the 1916 Zoning Resolution, in order to harness its feverish urban growth at the beginning of the twentieth century. The 1916 Zoning Resolution underwent major revision in 1961, introducing the concept of "incentive planning": this encourages private developers to provide "privately owned public spaces" to the public in return for allowing extra floor area to be built. Both the 1916 and 1961 Zoning Resolutions shaped the iconic streetscape and skyline of New York City.

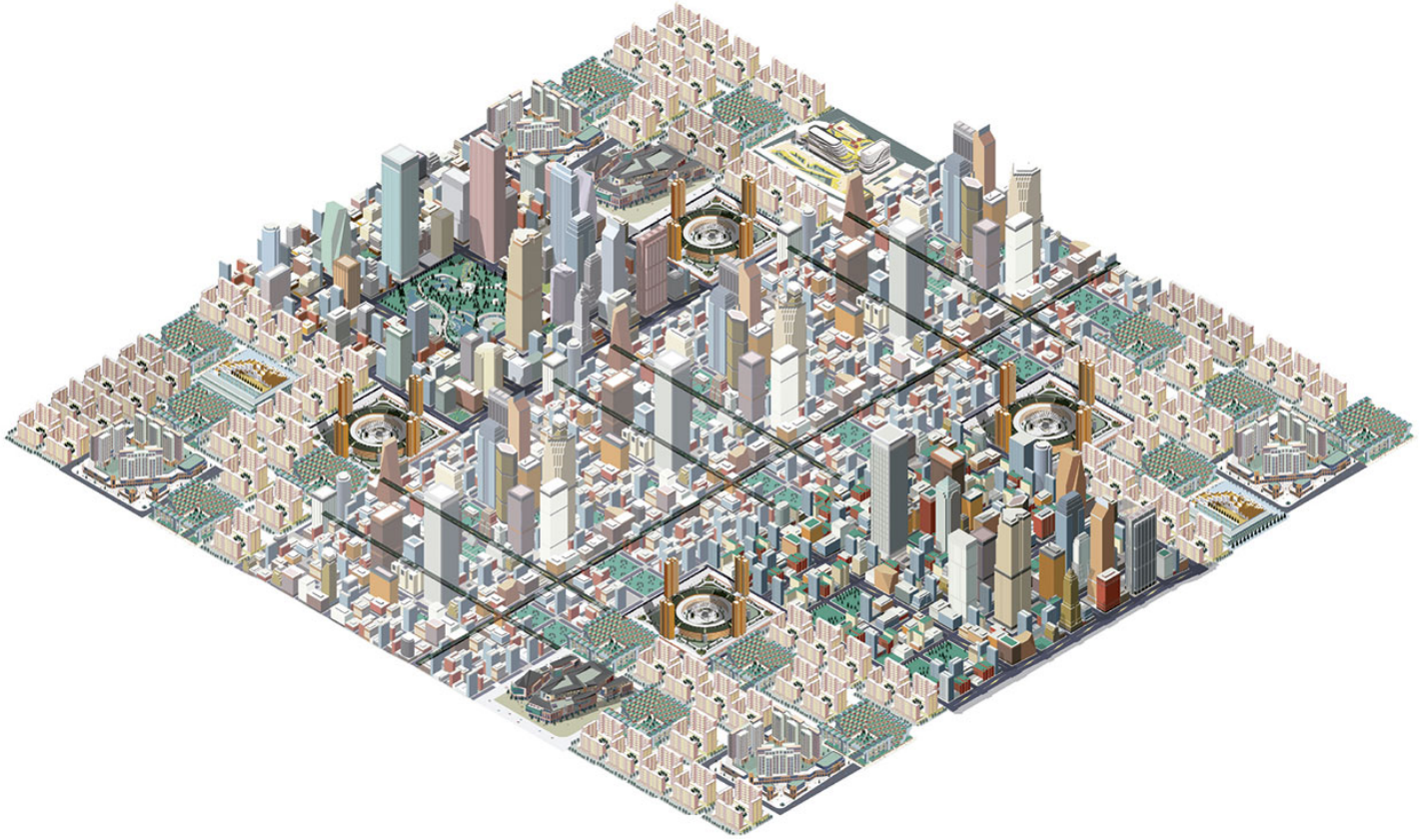


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Two “Fictopian” Cities: Turning Urban Stories to Urban Rules.

In China, Detailed Regulatory Planning, a mix of socialist urban planning and western zoning codes, is the major instrument that planning agencies use to balance the interests of the capital, the public, and the state. Detailed Regulatory Planning inherits Soviet-style planning practices and is deeply grounded in the mentality of the planned economy. Hence, inspired by Hong Kong's leasehold sales, the land auction system was established in the Post-Reform Era (1978 to the present); in this system, urban land is allocated for leasehold sales by local officials. The land auction system preselects developers with higher solvency, who are more capable of developing a large tract of land with minimum infrastructural investment from local municipal governments. Beijing, as well as other Chinese megacities, is heavily subject to Detailed Regulatory Planning and the land auction system. In the past three decades under this regime, a generic development pattern, featuring superblocks, expressways, high-rise towers, and shopping malls, has been formed. In this sense, our project explores and critiques the (in)ability of zoning codes to guide the urbanization of China. The objective of this exhibition is to show the internal paradox of China's planning system and to demonstrate hypothetical urban forms when these zoning codes are changed, compromised, or upgraded.

Through visualization/mapping, narrative collage, transcultural studies, and educational games, we would like to critique the existing zoning codes in China and exhibit alternative urban morphological scenarios based on a hypothetical manipulation of zoning codes and building regulations. The main body of the exhibition tells four urban “fables” in a typical Chinese context. These fables feature prototypical urban forms and expose the tensions between the public and the private, the general and the specific, and the privileged and the unprivileged. Each story will focus on a specific function of the zoning codes, such as land use planning, density, massing, or building design guidelines.



A Panoramic City Collage of Code-Driven Buildings.

Starting with personal narratives from fictional protagonists, these stories will eventually lead to a comprehensive critique of the existing zoning codes. Inspired by the urban massing studies of New York architectural delineator Hugh Ferriss in the 1930s and 1940s, and employing visualization tools, we seek to demonstrate the enormous impact that zoning codes in Chinese megacities can have on urban forms and consequently on everyday life. Despite its history as a commonly used apparatus for planners for over a century, the invisible relationship between zoning codes and urban forms remains an "urban legend" for laypeople as well as for many architects and urban designers. People might be aware of the distinctions between cities in different parts of the world (typical building types, development intensity, street grid patterns, urban fabric, etc.) but are certainly unaware of the underlying zoning processes and their impact on cities. People should be more informed about the effect of zoning codes and a culture of "code manipulation" in the history and

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