

TIANJIN

CITY BUILDING

BY RENEE CHOW



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In September, Studio Urbis was asked by the Hexi District government in Tianjin, China, to prepare a conceptual design for four sites divided by an intersection of a 12-lane arterial highway and six-lane “local collector.” We took this project on as “research” into the problems of superblocks with increasingly wide roadways and setbacks that predominate contemporary Chinese development. This current pattern reinforces boundaries between sites, with each development discontinuous from the rest of the city. Our strategy was to extend the pedestrian fabric of the district into the form of the buildings as three dimensional paths that move through multiple levels of all four sites and span the river of cars. The city of Tianjin, agreeing with our analysis of the district, has accepted our proposal for an expanded pedestrian environment.