Dubai focuses on technology in 'smart city' bid

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Emirati attendees take photos of an image of the city's skyline in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, March 5, 2014. After years of chasing the biggest and the best, the fast-growing Mideast city of Dubai is turning to technology to help the little things in life run more smoothly. (AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili)

(AP)—After years of chasing the biggest and the best, the fast-growing Mideast city of Dubai is turning to technology to help the little things in life run more smoothly.

Government officials presented a wide range of projects Wednesday to ruler Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum that are aimed at turning Dubai into what they're calling a "smart city" ahead of its hosting of the 2020 World Expo.

At a flashy event reminiscent of a Silicon Valley product rollout, they laid out plans for Wi-Fi access in city parks, buses and taxis. Also in the works: systems to help drivers find parking spots, schemes to connect home solar panels to the electric grid and a network of charging stations for electric cars.

Emirati government employees use a touch-screen display on a wall in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, March 5, 2014. After years of chasing the biggest and the best, the fast-growing Mideast city of Dubai is turning to technology to help the little things in life run more smoothly. (AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili)

Left unsaid was the cost for the projects.