

Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project

Large-scale urban regeneration achieved by removing a two-tier overpass and landscaping the river channel it exposed. Seoul Metropolitan Government successfully addressed a range of economic, social, cultural and environmental problems through a scheme that has provided a template for planning across South Korea and further.

Project summary

Location: Cheonggyecheon stream, Seoul, South Korea

Length: 5.8 km

Cost: US \$280million

Dates: 2000-2005

Delivery

Delivered through: Government funded, multi-partner project to deliver large-scale urban regeneration.

Partners: Cheonggyecheon Restoration Centre, Seoul Development Institute, Cheonggyecheon Restoration Citizens Committee, Seoul Metropolitan Government.

After



Background and issues

- The river was culverted and buried underneath a 12 lane highway.
- Severe degradation of surrounding area.
- Poor water quality.
- Poor quality of the natural environment and lack of plant and wildlife.

Zone 1: History

Underground waterways redirected to create a new stream bed with landscaped banks; former bridges used as decorative elements; seating to encourage the public to use the space.

Zone 2: Urban and Culture

Created a park in the centre of the city with recreation areas, waterfront decks and stepping stones; designed using environmentally friendly materials, with artwork and maps on walls along the river corridor.

Zone 3: Nature in the middle of the city

Designed to look natural and overgrown; sections of the pier and overpass left as industrial mementoes; wetland designated as an ecological conservation area.

Step-by-step

1. The Seoul Metropolitan Government established the Cheonggyecheon Restoration Centre to act as a focus for research, development and planning.
2. The Cheonggyecheon Restoration Citizens' Committee helped to gauge public opinion, communicating the projects goals through information sessions and conveying concerns.
3. The highway was de-commissioned.
4. The new river channel was excavated.
5. Works were undertaken to the river corridor.

Benefits

- Urban renewal and revitalisation.
- Economic growth and tourist attraction.
- Public access to the river – fishing and bathing.
- Educational resource.
- Historical and cultural values reflected in design.
- Significant ecological improvement.
- Air and water quality improved.
- Reduction in air temperature (cooling effect) in surrounding area by an average of 3.6°C demonstrated by thermal imagery.



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Lessons learned

- Hailed as a global best practice example of successful urban greening in a densely populated city.
- Provided a template for planning across South Korea and wider afield.
- Example of a metropolis scale, multi-partner project benefitting a population of 25 million people.

Project Contact: CABE/Design Council