

Using Urban Conversion to Green Public Space as a Tool to Generate Urban Change: Case of Seoul

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Abstract : The world's population is increasing with unprecedented speed, leading to fast growing urbanization pace. Cities since the Industrial revolution had evolved to fit the growing demand on infrastructure, roads, transportation, and housing. Through this evolution, cities had grown into grey, polluted, and vehicle-oriented urban areas with a significant lack of green spaces. Consequently, we ended up with low quality of life for citizens. Therefore, many cities, nowadays, are revising the way we think urbanism and try to grow into more livable and citizen-friendly, by creating change from the inside out. Thus, cities are trying to bring back nature in its crowded grey centers and regenerate many urban areas as green public spaces not only as a way to give new breath to the city, but also as a way to create change either in the environmental, social and economic levels. The city of Seoul is one of the fast growing global cities. Its population is over 12 million and it is expected to continue to grow to a point where the quality of life may seriously deteriorate. As most green areas in Seoul are located in the suburbs in form of mountains, the city's urban areas suffer from lack of accessible green spaces in a walking distance. Understanding the gravity and consequences of this issue, Seoul city is undergoing major changes. Many of its projects are oriented to be green public spaces where citizens can enjoy the public life in healthy outdoors. The aim of this paper is to explore the results of urban conversions into green public spaces. Starting with different locations, nature, size, and scale, these conversions can lead to significant change in the surrounding areas, thus can be used as an efficient tool of regeneration for urban areas. Through a comparative analysis of three different types of urban conversions projects in the city of Seoul, we try to show the positive urban influence of the outcomes, in order to encourage cities to use green spaces as a strategic tool for urban regeneration and redevelopment.

Keywords : urban conversion, green public space, change, urban regeneration

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