



The International Awards for Liveable communities 2011

Candidate: Bilbao City Hall

Project Title: Bilbao ++

Category: E (over 400.000)

Bilbao is the capital of Bizkaia, one of the “historical territories” that make up the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Spain). Bilbao and the Basque Country as a whole have undergone a historical process of reinvention in recent years to face the challenges of the 21st century. Metropolitan Bilbao is home to around half the population and economic activity of the Basque Country. The city is gearing up to take advantage of this excellent location to become a true “hinge point” in Europe.

Enhancement of the Natural and Built Landscapes

One of the defining features of Bilbao is the surrounding terrain, which enables residents to live close to nature and enjoy all the advantages of the natural environment. The city has also increased the amount of green area within the city by more than one million square metres.

Abandoibarra is home to the urban regeneration project that best symbolises the transformation of Bilbao. The area was formerly occupied by rundown, obsolete port facilities. The waterfront has been renovated and the railway tracks removed; the Guggenheim Museum has been built at one end of the district and the Palacio Euskalduna convention centre and concert hall at the other.

The decision to reroute the rail lines underground was a key factor in the enhancement of the city's landscape. The new spaces created when the lines were covered brought together neighbourhoods that were previously separated and opened up new potential for growth and equilibrium in urban development.

The special action plans drawn up for the outlying districts furthest up the hillsides that surround the city, are good examples of projects intended to improve accessibility and mobility. Social interaction is also aided by the installation of a network of free WiFi hotspots in all the neighbourhoods.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Bilbao has made major efforts to restore its significant historical buildings. The historic Old Town of Bilbao and several other neighbourhoods were practically wiped out in the disastrous floods that struck the city in 1983. But the Old Town bounced back and is now a compact, diverse neighbourhood that is home to a wide range of activities.

The city's new hotels are architecturally innovative buildings that blend admirably into their settings, enhancing Bilbao's tourist intake capacity.

The term "Guggenheim effect" has come to symbolise a society's wish to change, based on the confidence and firm belief that it was possible to reinvent and construct the Bilbao of the 21st century on the ruins of an outdated industrial production system.

Environmental Best practices

The Integrated Cleanup Plan for Metropolitan Bilbao was implemented by Consorcio de Aguas Bilbao Bizkaia, the regional water authority, in 1979. Since then 95% of the river's pollutant load has been eliminated and the water has reached purity levels not seen since before the advent of industry.

The major projects to build the new Bilbao have been undertaken on waterfront land released by the Port Authority and by industrial firms along the river. To regenerate the disused industrial sites left after the recession of the 1980s, a company was created under the name Bilbao Ría 2000, Sociedad para la Regeneración Urbanística de Bilbao y su Entorno, ["Company for the Urban Regeneration of Bilbao and its Surroundings"]. This company was the result of a commitment by various public administrations to work together to transform Metropolitan Bilbao.

The Metro has become the number one form of transport in metropolitan Bilbao, and the core around which other forms of transport have been moulded into a coordinated, complementary, intermodal system. It is calculated that Metro Bilbao avoids the emission of approximately 46,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year, the equivalent of the pollution caused by 8,000 cars doing 30,000 km each.

The airport is one of the flagships of the regeneration and vigour of the city.

The tramway was designed as a paradigm shift to help return the city to its people. It also eliminates noise pollution and reduces consumption of natural resources.

Since 2010 the bike lending system has been automatic: this is a major step forward in ensuring a sustainable, practical, fast means of moving about the city that is suitable for everyday use.

Bilbao City Hall has been pioneering domestic refuse collection and management schemes for some years. **BIO, the Bilbao Climate Change Office**, opened in 2009 at the initiative of City Hall, marking a new phase in commitment to the environment and efforts to combat climate change. BIO is Spain's first actual office for combating climate change.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Bilbao seeks to encourage local people to involve themselves with the running of the municipality through the **District Councils and Working Committees** set up in the various districts.

City of Bilbao's Civic Council: This is a consultative body that discusses matters of local economic development, strategic planning in the city and major urban projects.

The **Neighbourhood Urban Observatory** is a new instrument for analysing and diagnosing the social and urban planning situation of the various districts of the city.

In 2010 Bilbao City Hall topped the ITA (City Hall Transparency Index) listing for the third year in succession.

Healthy Lifestyle

Bilbao is one of 35 cities in 22 countries involved in the World Health Organisation's Global Age-friendly Cities Project. This project seeks to get municipalities all over the world to make a commitment to caring for the welfare of the elderly, in the framework of active ageing.

Bilbao Kirolak is the municipal organisation in charge of sports in the city

Bilbao City Hall organises numerous actions to promote health in schools, aimed particularly at encouraging a healthy lifestyle and school environment.

Strategic Planning

Bilbao City Hall has designed a strategy based on austerity and strict financial controls in the implementation of its policies to meet its commitments to local people. Bilbao City Hall implements its projects on the basis of strategic objectives.

There are two instruments that enable progress to be made not just in efficiency and good political management but also towards the achievement of transparency and public trust: **Governance Plan 2007-2011 and Strategic Budgets.**

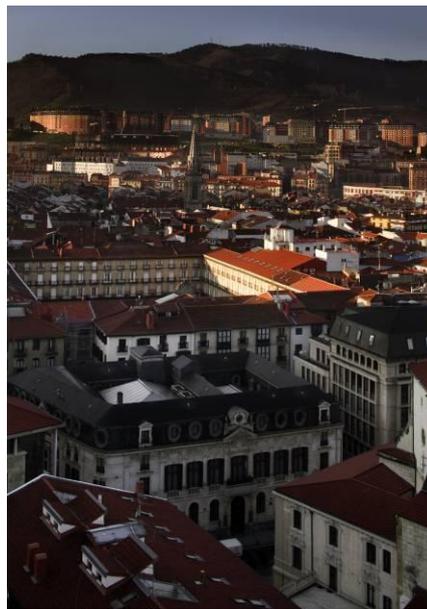
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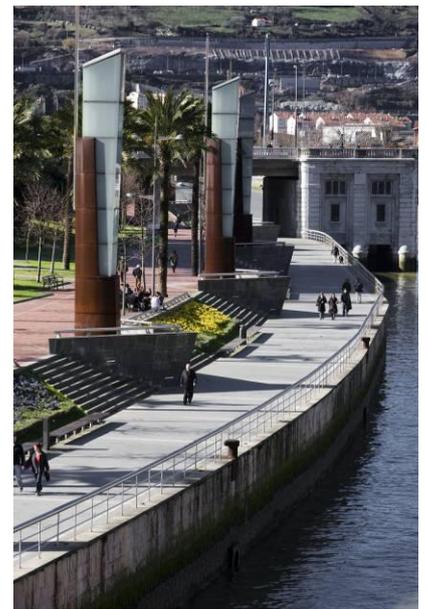
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao



Izosaki Towers



Old Quarter



Abandoibarra