

Seoullo 7017 Skygarden Project Text

Located in the heart of Seoul, a true plant village has been realised on a former inner city highway in an ever-changing urban area accommodating the biggest variety of Korean plant species and transforming it into a public 983-metre long park gathering 50 families of plants including trees, shrubs and flowers displayed in 645 tree pots, collecting around 228 species and sub-species. In total, the park will include 24,000 plants (trees, shrubs and flowers) that are newly planted many of which will grow to their final heights in the next decade.

Seoullo, the Korean name for Skygarden translates to 'towards Seoul' and 'Seoul Street', while *7017* marks the overpass' construction year of 1970, and its new function as a public walkway in 2017. The pedestrianised viaduct next to Seoul's main station is the next step towards making the city and especially the central station district, greener, friendlier and more attractive, whilst connecting all patches of green in the wider area.

Since the project was won by MVRDV in May 2015, the main challenge of the Skygarden has been to transform the existing overpass into a public garden, overlaying a matrix of Korean flora onto the 16m elevated steel and concrete structure. How to transform a 1970's highway into a Skygarden and how to change the daily life of thousands of people who cross Seoul's city centre every day? From the start, MVRDV engaged with this need to change the forgotten and existing infrastructure into a green symbol that will become a catalyst for a greener quarter for Seoul. Together with the municipality, local NGO's, landscape teams and city advisers are committed to accommodating the biggest diversity of flora into a strictly urban condition. New bridges and stairs connect the viaduct with hotels, shops and gardens.