

Suwon City

Suwon is a city of history, culture, and technology. Known as the “city of filial piety” due to its citizens’ Confucian-inspired love and respect for their family and ancestors, Suwon houses both Hwaseong Fortress, a registered World Heritage Site, and the global headquarters of Samsung Electronics. It is Korea’s no. 1 local government with a population of 1.1 million.

1. A planned city where the environment, culture, and people live in harmony

Suwon Hwaseong Fortress was the world’s first planned city, and it is considered a harmonious integration of Suwon Stream and Mt. Paldal.

The city is waging a citizen’s campaign called “Village Renaissance”, part of the city’s policy to build a signature Suwon village. As part of this campaign, the underdeveloped towns of Haengung-dong and Ji-dong inside the Hwaseong Fortress were rebuilt into friendly, cozy neighborhoods. Eight roads, called Palsaek-gil roads (roads of eight colors), were selected to deliver the unique stories of the neighborhoods to visitors as they walk along the scenic spots and streets. Suwon has actively campaigned for the “Beautification of Public Restrooms” nationwide. And Haewoojae, a toilet-shaped house, is the world’s first cultural park with a toilet culture theme, offering citizens an unparalleled place to freshen up.

2. A city of filial piety, enshrining the spirit of King Jeongjo

King Jeongjo, the 22nd king of the Joseon Dynasty, built Suwon Hwaseong Fortress as an expression of his will to reform the nation and to show his filial piety towards his father. The structure stands as the pinnacle of oriental architectural technique and the basis for the city’s culture of filial piety. During the periods of Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, the fortress suffered partial damage and loss. Most of the original fortress, what stands today, was later restored based on Hwaseong Seongyeok Uigwe, the construction archive published in 1801 after the fortress was completed. Starting with the excavation research in 1995, Hwaseong Haenggung Palace, the largest subsidiary palace of the Joseon Dynasty, which accommodated the King’s temporary stays, was restored in 2007, including the site in front of the palace. Today, colorful events take place around this area. Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival, Suwon’s largest traditional cultural event, the Suwon Food Culture Festival, and the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress International Theater Festival as well as diverse cultural infrastructure represent this city of dignified culture and art.

3. A low-carbon, green city addressing climate change

Suwon’s goal for CO₂ emissions is a reduction of 40% from 2005 levels by 2030, exceeding all national targets. The city has announced its commitment to greenhouse gas reductions, domestically and externally, by declaring Suwon the “environmental capital,” a low-carbon city fighting climate change. In 2009, Suwon embarked on the “Rain City” project to improve the water circular system and prevent disruption by impermeable layers, and to install rain storage and infiltration systems in buildings and forests. By doing so, it plans to increase its water self-sufficiency level to 50% by 2030. Suwon Stream, the city’s main stream, was

covered in 1990 to improve the transportation congestion. Later, in 2011, the covered section was wholly removed, and the blocked waterway was restored to create an eco-friendly stream. The stream established a new role model for urban stream management in Korea.

Suwon has been trying to build eco-friendly green transportation systems by introducing eco-friendly streetcars and encouraging citizens to use public transportation and bicycles. In 2013, Suwon, the ICLEI and UN-HABITAT, will host the 1st EcoMobility Festival. During the one-month event, Suwon will encourage its participating citizens to use only no-carbon transportation vehicles to demonstrate how convenient a future without cars can be.

4. A city of participatory municipal governance

The slogan of the 5th Government of Suwon elected by popular vote is “Human City Suwon”. The slogan represents the city’s philosophy of commitment to its people: the citizens being the owners of Suwon, the officials its stewards. Suwon is also the first city in Korea to report its Local Agenda 21 projects to the UN. The city, being the center of green civic activities, is home to various private-public networking efforts for sustainable development.

The city’s resident participatory budgeting system and citizen’s jury program allow its residents to participate in the municipal activities. The “Village Renaissance” project has restored the urban landscape as well as the long forgotten community culture. The Suwon Lifetime Learning Festival lays the foundation for promoting the city as the humanities center to lead the second renaissance of learning, and providing its citizens with life-long learning opportunities.

5. A city where every generation is healthy

Suwon conducts surveys to identify citizen needs across all classes of society. Based on the results, it has set as priorities key projects that help build and establish the very model of a healthy city. Suwon has also hosted a ceremony heralding Suwon as a city of healthy, where every generation is able to live healthy lives

The city’s motto of “microscopic welfare” for everyone is meant to describe the implementation of a networked welfare policy encompassing welfare services through the cooperation of the public and private sectors. In addition, Suwon’s rich sports infrastructure gives its citizens many opportunities to view and participate in sports events. This not only enhances the city’s status as a sports city, enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, it also improves the local economy.

6. Dreaming of a people-oriented, green Suwon, through communication and participation

Suwon is pursuing an urban policy that is harmonious with the environment and focuses on community culture. Projects like the citizen-driven Urban Planning 2030, the Village Renaissance project, and the Low Carbon Green City project has all of our citizens engaged. Through such initiatives, Suwon plans to create a people-oriented green city, a city that uses communication and participation to create the foremost environmental capital of Northeast Asia, fully committed to a green and eco-friendly spirit.