

# COLOMBIA'S RIVER CALI REVITALIZATION PROJECT IS UNDERWAY

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The Río Cali Park, is a result of a strategic alliance between the public and private sectors. West 8, together with the Municipality of Cali, has worked intensively on the design of the park which is intended to create a safe and well connected public realm and catalyze the renewal of the urban center.

After four decades of stagnation, violence and social conflict, Colombia's third-largest city, Cali, is reprioritizing its public space, with a renewed approach to urban planning and revitalization. In recent years the newly stabilized authority of Cali has been investing in urban improvements to modernize its public realm and transport systems. Undertaking efforts to reestablish urban public life via the revitalization of the city's natural heritage, the Cali River and its role in Cali's collective urban life, [Cali. ¿Un sueño atravesado por un río? 'A 'Dream Crossed by a River'](#) is one such initiative.

## Encouraging Sustainable Urban Development; Reconstructing Urban Life

With one of the fastest growing economies in Colombia, Cali is focused on creating a new epicenter of commerce and a peaceful public realm for collective urban life. A sentiment that has led to the instigation of the Río Cali Park Project. The project has been commissioned by a group of Cali entrepreneurs who recognized the need for a quality public space within the city center that brings people from all walks of life together. "The idea was to create a large park of international stature, that takes advantage of the river, green areas, the diversity of fauna and existing tree planting" explained Project Manager, Claudia Palacios Richardson.

In this car dominated society, West 8 and the Municipality of Cali's new urban design prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists. It facilitates important access to new public transport terminals and provides safe and pleasant passageways for cyclists and pedestrians through the rapidly expanding city. In addition to providing a new infrastructural network for the many people who use the bicycle as their predominant mode of transport, this project aims to endow the city with a peaceful public environment, providing places where people of Cali can meet and enjoy on a daily basis. With a more stabilised environment people's lives begin to be reoriented around the streets again, collective urban life can be reclaimed, and expectantly this will trigger Cali's urban identity to gradually be reborn in a more constructive manner.

## Environmental Issues Treated as an Opportunity

Suffering from problems of deforestation in the upper river catchment, widespread pollution and safety issues, West 8's design will reconnect Río Cali Park with the river landscape where the natural assets and the environmental legacy of the Cauca Valley are the treasured. Transforming it from an underutilized and overgrown urban green space into a rehabilitated ecological landscape and respected city destination. By dealing with the environmental issues, the city also gives way to a major urban transformation that people have longed for after decades of tormented Colombian city life.

Last week the Ministry of Infrastructure and Enhancement of Cali put the construction of the first phase of the Cali River Linear Park out to tender, which is scheduled to be inaugurated in September of 2015. With construction commencing in January 2015, the first section of the riverside park which stretches between 15th and 25th Street, will remove two lanes of adjacent vehicular traffic and replace them with a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. The new cycleways will eventually connect the city from east to west bringing people from the surrounding neighborhoods into the city center. Meandering along the river the "**Paseo del Rio**" will give pedestrians and cyclists space to safely navigate away from vehicular traffic.

Construction of the second phase of the project is expected to start in February and will be completed in late November 2015. Phase 2 begins at 8th Street, opposite the River Boulevard and encompasses **the Monument to Journalists**, the **Paseo Bolivar**, the new **Jorge Isaacs Garden** and the **CAM Square**, which will be transformed with lush greenery and feature a piano-bar style café.

The launch of phase one of Río Cali Park, is the first step of this substantial urban renewal and river rehabilitation project and speaks volumes for the city's urban transformation. This publicly supported project will eventually extend along the riverbanks from the city until the river mouth in the Cauca. Addressing future mobility needs and enabling people to again see the river as an important and vital element of the city.

more information: [Río Cali Park](#)