This lecture explores the role of urban master planning in the recent development of Seoul – the administrative, commercial, cultural and financial heart of South Korea – into an attractive, liveable and sustainable city. In the past decade, the city has seen the successful conversion of monolithic motorways into appealing public spaces for pedestrians (Cheonggyecheon, Seoullo 7017), and the re-energisation of old industrial areas into innovative urban clusters (Mapo Culture Depot).

Seoul's recent master plans have emphasised goals such as economic growth, connectivity, environmental protection and conservation. The 2030 Seoul Plan, finalised in 2015, also articulated a decentralisation of core functions and the reorganisation of Seoul into a multi-centric city; and is widely commended for involving citizens at all stages of the planning process. Seoul has just launched an effort to update the Plan – the 2040 Seoul Plan process – articulating new ideas for promoting Seoul's development in the next two decades.

Dr Inhee Kim, Senior Research Fellow at the Seoul Institute's Department of Urban Planning and Design, was the key researcher involved in the creation of the 2030 Plan and is playing the same role in the 2040 Plan. In this lecture, Dr Kim will be sharing on the key features of the 2030 and 2040 Plans, covering issues such as the strategic goals of each plan, the involvement of citizens in the planning process, as well as the statutory and administrative processes involved.

For enquiries and feedback:
mnd_clc_enquiries@mnd.gov.sg
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