

4.8 The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao.



shapes which are clad in limestone and unified by a curving, twisting titanium roof. The building establishes an unprecedented presence against the background of the Puente de la Salve, the Nervión River, the surrounding hills, and the grayness of the downtown. This building has been hailed as a masterpiece of contemporary architecture, and indeed the project has come to represent the renaissance of the entire city. The project is responsible for bringing US\$210 million of increased economic revenue to the region, of which US\$30 million has gone to the Government of Biscay in taxes.

Other major projects in the regeneration of the city include the Conference and Concert Hall, designed by Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios, located just west of the Abandoibarra area, next to the Euskalduna Bridge; Sir Norman Foster and Associates designed the underground stations for the Metro Bilbao; a new airport designed by Santiago Calatrava; and Michael Wilford designed the Abando Passenger Interchange. Although the interchange project is currently on hold it comprises a complex of residential and service facilities combined with local, inter-city and high-speed trains, bus and underground connections and car parking. The Bilbao Harbor Extension is a major infrastructure improvement to the port, making Bilbao Spain's leading merchant shipping port with Europe's deepest docking facilities (105 feet).

The ultimate aim is to create a logistical Activities Zone that will serve as a nucleus for the Zamudio Technology Park and the European Software Institute. These projects are evidence of Bilbao's commitment to high-tech industries. Also important in these regeneration projects is the clean-up of the Nervión River, which will improve the quality of water and bring life back to the river by 2004. To date, one-third of the 12-mile waterfront has been renewed to the European Union "Blue Flag" level, another third has been cleaned to 50 percent and the final third has been cleaned to 25 percent. Other cities now look to the success of the Bilbao revitalization and the city is active in networking with other European cities immersed in