Spatial Planning

Spatial planning in Korea has been greatly advanced with the development of the national territory since 1960. Spatial planning is the institutional and technical framework that is intended to maximize the efficient use of Korea’s territorial land and water bodies. Spatial planning is also a key component in the Comprehensive National Territorial Plan (CNTP), regional development plans, and comprehensive city/county plans. The intent of spatial planning is to seek environmentally-friendly management of land.

More specifically, the CNTP is a master plan to efficiently manage territorial land resources in a manner that is compatible with the basic direction and underlying strategies of national policies. The first CNTP (1975–1985) was implemented in 1977, it was followed subsequently by the second CNTP (1986–1995), the third CNTP (1996–2001), and the fourth CNTP (2002–2020). With the rapid economic growth and urbanization in Korea the national development plans, and district unit plans. The urban planning system encompasses area-wide management plans, and district unit plans.

Changing Economic and Social Conditions and the Land in Korea

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The transformation and development of the land territory is an essential part of the national development plans. The CNTP (2000-2020) follows subsequently by the second CNTP (1982-1991), the third CNTP (1992-2001), and the fourth CNTP (2002-2020). With the rapid economic growth and urbanization in Korea the national development plans, and district unit plans. The urban planning system encompasses area-wide management plans, and district unit plans.

Tourism development plan has also been prepared to help foster more distinctive regional development projects.

Another crucial element of Korea’s spatial planning system in the urban planning system, which was designed to be compatible with the CNTP. The urban planning system encompasses area-wide regional land-use plans, city/county master plans, urban planning management plans, and district unit plans.

National Territorial Planning

Comprehensive National Territorial Planning

- Expressways and Industrial Railroad Construction
- Restoration of Transportation
- Foreign Aids & Production
- After-war Restoration & Irrigation Projects
- Industrial Base & Special Area Development
- Economic Development Base (Light Industry)
- 1960s - Guro Export Industry Complex
- 1960s - Fertilizer Plant
- 1970s - Gyeongbu Expressway
- 1970s - Shipyard
- 1980s - Gangnam Main Street
- 1980s - Seoul Olympic
- 1990s - Bundang Apartment Complex
- 1990s - Seohaedaegyo Bridge
- 2000s - High-speed Railroad
- Eco-friendly Transportation System
The goals of the First Comprehensive National Territorial Planning were straightforward and focused primarily upon cultivating the effective use of the national territory, expanding social overhead capital, developing natural resources, protecting the environment, and improving the quality of life. These goals were aimed at fostering economies that would in turn facilitate the accumulation of wealth, a process that relied upon a nationally-led growth pole development strategy to assist in developing smaller regions. The plan’s main development strategy was predicated upon investing in large-scale industrial complexes, building supply chains for the transportation, communication, and energy industries, and strengthening the economic status of backward regions.

The Second Comprehensive National Territorial Plan sought to implement a multi-pronged spatial plan to rationalize the nation’s territory for development in a manner that would help to achieve regional and urban balance. This Plan specifically controlled the growth of the four big cities, Seoul, Incheon, Daejeon, and Busan, expanded social overhead capital to backward regions, and further fostered the development of those as yet underdeveloped regions by designating them as promotion areas. In order to facilitate more balanced development and settlement in specific local areas, the Plan dispersed or relocated undeveloped industrial complexes to these areas deemed to have potential for growth. It also established industrial areas in regions that possessed favorable geographical conditions for development, and it pursued economic growth by connecting and integrating existing concentrations of industries to intraregional industries.

The Third Comprehensive National Territorial Plan applied multi-pronged development and regional economic free development strategies with the intention of continuing to integrate underdeveloped regions in Korea. Specifically, the Third Plan reduced the degree of concentration of industries in metropolitan areas, increased small and medium-sized industrial complex development in underdeveloped regions, and regulated new industrial complexes in metropolitan areas. It also attempted to spur the voluntary relocation of major companies to the provinces to help foster the spread of the population away from the congested urban centers. The plan also focused on upgrading the industry-related infrastructure of the northeast coastal industrial belt. It also continued existing governmental regulations, and it expanded expressway transportation networks between metropolitan areas and the more sparsely developed industrial areas.

The Fourth Comprehensive National Territorial Plan focuses on the integrated national territory of the twenty-first century. It seeks to realize a globally-competitive national transportation network and to promote globally competitive cities based on “Wide Area Economic Zones.” To achieve this goal, the Fourth Plan established a national representative network of regional areas which linked wide area economic zones as well as the coastal areas with inland areas and further linked the three coastal areas and the border areas between South and North Korea.

Until 2030, the focus is on improving the nation’s transportation infrastructure revealed in major road construction projects that linked key nationwide routes. After 2030, the focus shifted toward maximizing traffic efficiency and improving the overall balance in regional development. Continued investment in the national transportation infrastructure have provided the foundation for expanding Korea’s overall transportation capacity. The framework of a national level arterial road system has now been established. As for railroad efficiency improvement, people can move from one side of the country to another within a quarter of a day after the Gyeongha High Speed Railway began operation in 2004. International air travel has also been greatly facilitated after the Incheon International Airport opened in 2001.
THE TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND

Seoul Metropolitan Spatial Structure (2000s)

1st Seoul Metropolitan Area Readjustment Plan (1982~1996)

- Balanced development of the region.
- Selective functional distribution of both for a more balanced development of the region.
- Introducing strong regulation with the intention of controlling excessive concentration of population and manufacturing industries in the Seoul metropolitan area and encouraging the selective functional distribution of both for a more balanced development of the region.
- Implementing environmental conservation efforts, improving regional self-sufficiency, augmenting reorganizing of the Seoul metropolitan area, implementing environmental conservation efforts, improving regional self-sufficiency, and augmenting the focus on quality of life issues.

The Second Seoul Metropolitan Readjustment Plan set forth the goals of population stability, high global competitiveness, and the strategic reorganization of the Seoul metropolitan area along with continuing to balance the development of the Seoul metropolitan area with that of other regions. Third Plan focused on the transition from a Seoul-centered spatial structure to a multi-pronged approach to development nationwide, specifically with regard to the visible distribution of specialized industrial specialty belts across different regions.

A new approach to developing Korea’s national territory resulted in the adoption of a multi-core distribution structure that shifted the focus from the capital region to the nation as a whole. Rationalizing macro-region-region balance. This approach to decentralization can be seen in projects such as the construction of multiple “Enterprise Clusters” in the late 2000s that were part and parcel of the government’s attempt to foster new mega-regional economic zones and two individual economic zones in the hopes that such a bespoke distribution of development initiatives might help to create competitive agglomeration economies. The new strategy was to attract private investment and to expand the growth potential in each mega-regional economic zone.

The Park Geun-hye government established a new regional development policy that created what was called the “HOPE Area,” in which all basic daily services are integrated into a single living area. Here, HOPE refers to the first characters of four policy visions: Happiness, Opportunity, Partnership, and Everywhere. The new policy was designed to encourage autonomous development plans based on local conditions and aims at improving the quality of life for local residents no matter where they are located, in the rural areas, the core of the cities, or the rural-urban transition zones, or the core of the cities.

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The most recent development plan also identified and designated districts for further development. The districts targeted for accelerated development were provided more support for infrastructure with the intention of strengthening their competitiveness by improving the transport for higher stages and a better overall quality of life. Those newly identified districts were classified into three types based on an assessment of current key indicators. Depending on their classification, each district was then developed according to a model selected in its current status, the balanced area model, the balanced development model, and a city-regional integration model. As of July 2013, fifty-two districts and seven urban zones were designated as having the balanced area model. The balanced development model was assigned to the region in which intensive development was needed to attract more private capital. No new areas were designated in the city-regional integration model since it was deemed necessary to make development of urban zone with neighboring city areas as part of restructuring the region’s economic foundation. Gangneung-si was also designated in 1998, followed by Chuncheon-si in 2001, and Ansan-si in 2004.

The Korean government systematically proceeded with the top-10 wide area development plans with the goal of establishing resilient local economies and preserving the larger cities outside the capital area as well as newly industrialized areas within the capital area. In order to cope with the physical, social, and economic deteriorations of the inner-city, the central government announced the national urban regeneration policy guidelines in 2013. The target areas were selected by three specific indices: decrease in population, decline in industry, and deterioration of housing and overall community conditions. Based on these criteria the government has currently designated 11 areas that are on high priority for development according to urban regeneration policies. Those priority regions have been categorized into one of two types: economic revitalization or community restoration. The projects are currently financed by the urban regeneration fund with the expectation that individual pilot projects will result in positive ripple effects throughout the region.
The construction of new, entirely modern towns in Korea began in earnest after the 1960s. This new-town policy was centered upon two goals: first, the development of the national territory and its regions, second, the resolution of urban problems. During the 1970s, the industrial cores were constructed in existing regions with the primary goal of promoting heavy industrial industries. The construction of Changwon-eun as a newly industrialized city with a population of 100,000 was the first of the series of “New Towns.” In the 1980s, new towns in large cities were constructed in both Mok-dong and Seongdong with primary goal of providing apartments. Even newer towns in the capital area associated with the First Stage New Towns Development were constructed as a part of a plan to facilitate population dispersion by building two million homes. Daejeon-Dunsan and the Gyeonggi area were constructed to facilitate the partial relocation of administrative functions out of Seoul and into the greater metropolitan area. Hwaseong, Daejeon, Pyeongchang, and Sunam were all also First Stage New Towns. By the 1990s, there were many criticisms of these simultaneously developed large-scale new towns, and the policy trend shifted toward the development of smaller, denser communities that were dispersed throughout the outer lying areas of major metropolitan communities. Unfortunately, this attempt to solve the problems of First Stage New Towns was limited by many serious obstacles, not the least of which included the lack of suitable infrastructure. By the turn of the last century, Second Stage New Towns were constructed according to the concept of planned cities. The goal of these new was to address the problems created by the past approach to development and to supplant the smaller-sized dispersed development model with a more idealized model. Paju-eun, Gimpo-eun, Gimpo Hangang, Paju Unjeong, Yangju, Wirye, Guro-eun, Goyang-eun, and Bongjeong-eun are all examples of planned cities.

The Regional Regulations portion of the Seoul Metropolitan Readjustment Plan divided Seoul into three regions: an economic development area, an urban growth management area, and a nature conservation area. Among the regulations included in the Readjustment Plan are the prohibition of new large company complexes, the prohibition of new large industrial complexes, restrictions on large development projects, and stricter regulations of existing industrial sites.