

# auri research brief

No. 32

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## Tactical Utilization System for Vacant Urban Space

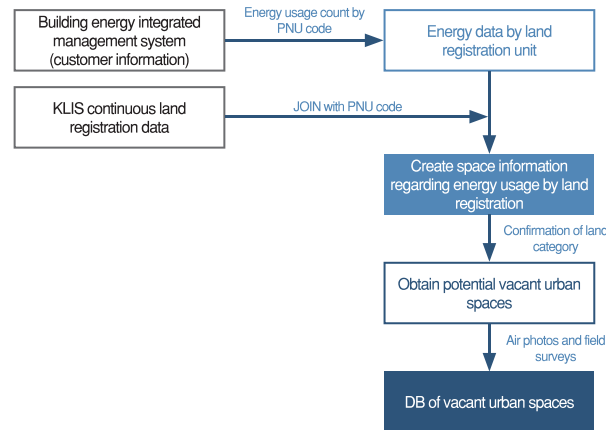
The persistent low birthrate and aging of society has resulted in changes to the demographic structure and low economic growth, increasing the number of vacant houses and stores. This causes, in turn, various social problems such as high crime, a deteriorating landscape, and low- quality residential environments. To solve these problems, the central and local governments have begun to consider vacant space to be an important policy subject. Here, we propose the concept of “tactical utilization,” investigate major issues with implementing this concept, and suggest a system for activating this type of vacant urban space utilization.

### Characteristics of tactical urbanism

- A deliberate, phased approach to instigating change;
- An offering of local ideas for resolving local planning challenges;
- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations;
- Low-risks, with the possibly of high reward; and
- The development of social capital among citizens, and the building of organizational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profits/NGOs, and their constituents.

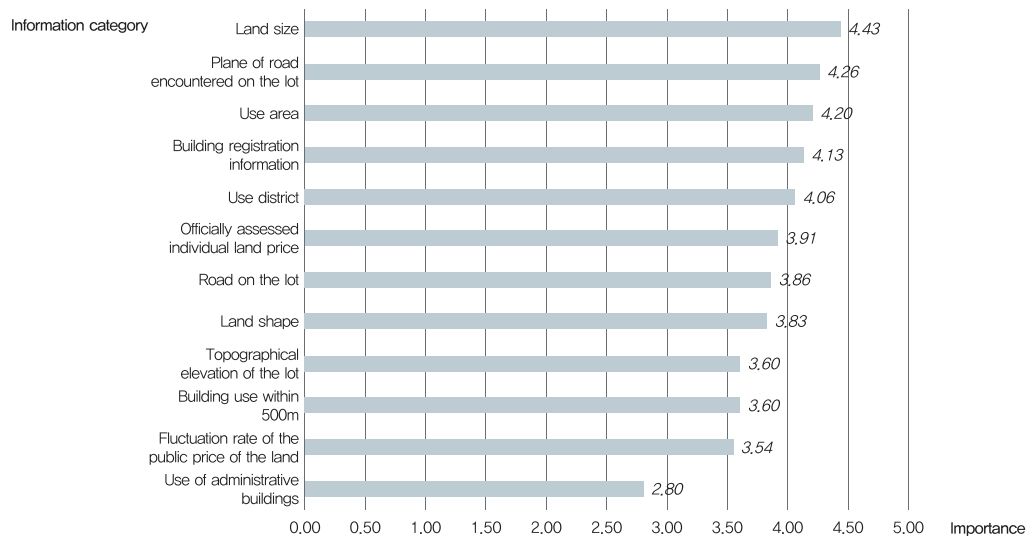
Source: Lydon, M., Bartman, D., Garcia, T., Preston, R., and Woudstra, R. (2012), “Tactical Urbanism 2,” New York: Street Plans.

The first step to implement the proposed tactical utilization system is to construct a database(DB) of vacant urban spaces in order to accurately estimate the area's current status. However, construction of such a DB would require a sizeable time-frame and budget. Therefore, in this study, we constructed a vacant urban space DB by utilizing the National Management System for Building Energy Database. This allowed us to analyze the energy usage of each individual lot of land and identify those with zero annual energy consumption. These were considered vacant. This method would enable local governments to construct their own DBs without committing large amounts of time and money, because the National Management System for Building Energy Database, organized by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, publicly provides information regarding monthly energy usage for every individual lot of land.



### The vacant urban space created from building energy usage

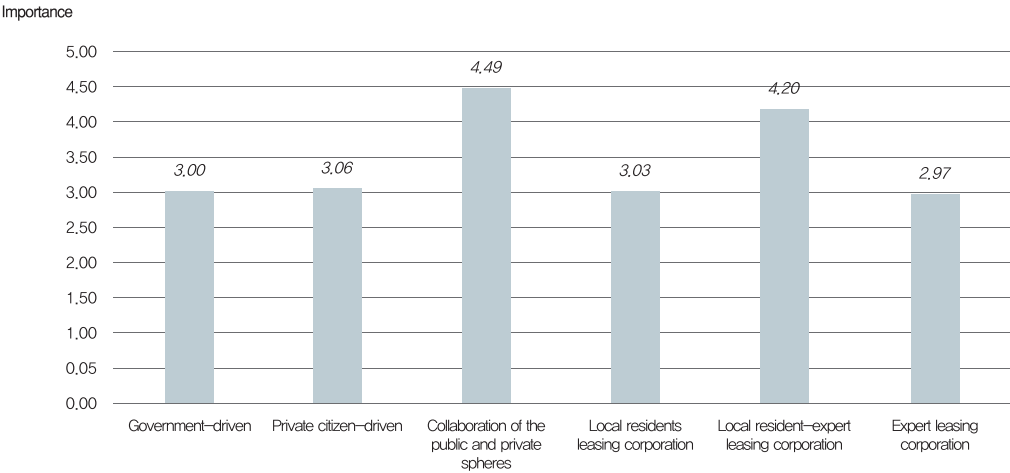
The next step is to extract and disclose information from the DB that help people determine the utilization value of vacant urban spaces. Such information, as proposed in this study, would include the appraised value of the land (for the current year, with the variations for the past five years), land characteristics (area, shape, and lay of the land, etc.), building registration (purpose, size, structure, approved date, etc.), and urban planning-related information (parcel purpose, district planning, etc.).



**Experts survey results according to a list of information important for judging practical value of the vacant urban space**

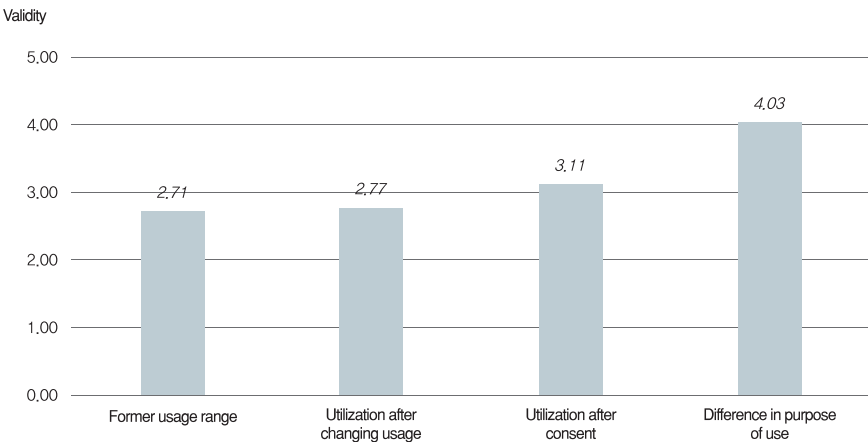
To activate a tactical utilization of above DB and information, we considered the need for a negative policy (e.g., imposing a tax premium if the urban vacant space was left vacant for a significant period of time) in addition to positive policies such as tax reductions and remodeling cost support. Such a negative policy, however, would require the careful consideration of various conditions such as the owner's financial status and economic decline in the surrounding area that might make space utilization difficult despite the owner's intention. Therefore, we suggested imposing a tax premium only when the owner has no desire to utilize the space and refuses to disclose the necessary information. In addition, we considered the need to oblige the landowner to establish and implement a tactical utilization plan when a long-term development project requires a certain lengthy waiting time before the construction can begin.

To determine how to manage and operate a tactical utilization, we conducted a experts survey on effective methods for forming contracts and managing relationships among users and personal owners or ownership groups (the local community, trust companies, etc.). We found that the most effective method for facilitating one-to-one user-owner contracts is a public institution constructing and operating an information system and consultation channel platform for vacant urban space utilization, and then allowing users and owners to form one-to-one contracts and follow established procedures. The next most effective method is establishing corporations composed of vacant space owners and related experts such as architects, and then entrusting them with the contracts and project management.



Experts survey results according to operation and management plan for the tactical utilization of vacant urban space

Finally, we considered whether the official procedure for changing land usage should be carried out when a tactical utilization plan does not match the existing usage purpose. As a result of our experts survey, we found that most responded that official procedure could be exempted when a tactical utilization was for a public benefit or a part of the profit return to the community.



Experts survey results according to usage change for the tactical utilization of vacant urban space

This study is significant in proposing the concept of tactical utilization and suggesting a methodology for implementing the concept into a system as a means of addressing the social problems caused by increasing in vacant urban space. Limitations of this study include the following: we have not addressed detailed utilization systems, which can vary depending on the vacant urban space’s size and type (vacant residence, unused space, empty building,

suspended construction, etc.), and other details such as how to calculate the appropriate rent when engaging in tactical utilization. Therefore, future research should explore various tactical utilization scenarios for different types of vacant urban spaces, and develop a conflict resolving method for addressing issues among owners and users.

**keyword:** Vacant Urban Space, Tactical Utilization System, Temporary Use, Tactical Urbanism

