

# auri research brief

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## Support Policies for Improving Architectural Administration Services

### Introduction

Korea's central and local governments have been deregulating and otherwise simplifying building regulations to ease public inconvenience. Despite such efforts, however, complaints increased from entities such as building project owners, developers, registered architects, and even the general public. The primary complaints with respect to architectural administration services arise from operational processes such as responses to questions regarding the legal system, prior disclosure of the related procedures and standards, and perfunctory administrative processing. In other words, this study was inspired by the recognition that public complaints and inconveniences are rooted in the low-quality administrative services provided during the process of architectural administration, rather than the building regulations themselves.

The goal of this study is, in recognition of the aforementioned issues, to prepare policy measures to improve architectural administration services for users, with a focus on the operation of architectural administration.

## **The Necessity of Introducing the Concept of Administrative Service to Architectural Administration**

In Korea, administration is the system for implementing tasks stipulated by law, in this respect, architectural administration is limited to works related to the execution and management of administrative regulations. For this reason, the relationship between administration and the public is equivalent to the relationship of a manager to the managed through unidirectional processing and delivery. In other words, architectural administration has to this point solely provided regulatory and management services, though the ultimate purpose of administration is providing services that the public needs. Diverse services reflect the needs and demands of the public, the users of this service, to date, this has been relatively insufficient.

Regulatory administrative services such as deregulation and the amendment of building regulations have been implemented as a means of improving the related systems, shortening the processing period, simplifying the general procedure, and so on. However, only service efficiency and quantitative improvements have thus far been taken into consideration, and there are limits to these types of improvements. The general conditions (i.e., the overall administrative system) must be improved along with these institutional changes. However, since this was not taken into account, the system has not functioned as intended, and this has lowered the service quality. In the past, a new public management approach that emphasizes quality and value in the services was implemented to improve service efficiency and to make certain quantitative enhancements in other administrative fields. However, the limitations in such practices are well recognized, and efforts are now being made to improve upon these original efforts. There is now additional work to increase the rate of user satisfaction, with the ultimately goal of improving service quality.

The field of architectural administration has concentrated on regulations and management, due to the nature of its affairs. However, architectural administration is an administrative service financed by taxes paid by the public, and therefore it should be the public who benefits from such services. From this point of view, the concept of administrative services should be introduced into the field of architectural administration, and changes should be made to improve the quality of these services, to enhance efficiency, and to make quantitative improvements.

Instead of using a definition of architectural administration that centers on the “execution of regulations” set forth in previous studies and related provisions, the concept of “architectural administration service” used here stems from the viewpoint of public administration service. And the concept is outlined below.

<b>General concept</b>	"Overall aspects of direct and indirect administrative services provided by administrative agencies such as the state and local governments to the entities intending to plan, design/engineer, construct, maintain and/or manage buildings."
<b>Narrow concept</b>	"Administrative services through which the results of processing arising at the request of the users are delivered directly to the users in the process of planning, designing/engineering, constructing, maintaining and/or managing buildings."

## **Demands of Users improving for Architectural Administration Services**

In order to improve architectural administration services, by applying the concept of administrative service to the construction administration, it is important to accurately grasp the problems with the current construction administration and conditions that might resolve such issues. Accordingly, this chapter examines and analyzes the complaints about inconveniences and demands of users related to architectural administration services.

The complaints made by unspecified general citizens to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MOLIT) and municipal and local governments were analyzed in this research, based on their relevance to architectural administration. Additionally, surveys and in-depth interviews were conducted with registered architects, the primary users of specific administrative services.

The major complaints of inconveniences requiring urgent improvement can be summarized as follows:

- **Major inconveniences faced by the users of architectural administration services:**
  1. Difficulty in determining legality due to vague interpretations of the law;
  2. Difficulty in obtaining informations related to architectural administration, such as manuals and standards that must be reviewed for building activities;
  3. Low predictability in project schedules due to uncertainties in the architectural administration procedures; and
  4. Inhospitable and inadequate services by administrative officers in relation to consultation, inquiries, and other requests.
  
- **Major demands for improvement by users of architectural administration services:**
  1. Provide accurate and accessible information pertaining to architectural administration;
  2. Ensure transparency and swiftness in the architectural administration procedures
  3. Enhance the professional expertise of officers in charge of architectural administration and recruit more personnel capable of providing accurate and professional services.

## **Current Status of the Duties of Architectural Administration Service Providers and the Operation of the Organization**

The objective of this chapter is to identify the causes of issues with the current architectural administration services, as noted by the users. The duties and operation of the organization in charge of architectural administration were analyzed, and a survey was conducted to examine the perceptions of architectural administration officers; the goal was to identify their limitations in providing such services. The results of the analysis are outlined below.

First, to determine the current duties and workload, the content of the work performed and work delivery procedure were analyzed. The current status of the workload was determined based on the value of the existing building contracts and construction completed, number of building permits, and governing laws and systems. It was determined that the value of the building contracts and construction surged since the mid-1990s. As of 2015, the values were 2.7 and 2.8 times higher, respectively, than these of fields such as civil engineering, industrial plants, and landscaping. This signifies a continuous growth in the private building market, as well as the architectural administration-related work that accompanies building activity. A review of the number of building permits issued by local governments showed that this has also increased in response to the upsurge in private building activity. The results of examining the number of building permits issued by local governments from 1999 to 2016, based on data provided by the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), showed a continuous growth in both the number of buildings and total floor area. More specifically, permits were issued for fewer than 100,000 buildings in 1999, but this swelled 2.8-fold to approximately 280,000 buildings in 2016. Moreover, the laws and regulations (acts, and enforcement decrees and rules) falling under the jurisdiction of the Building Policy Office, the MOLIT responsible for architectural administration, were extracted for a review of any changes in number. The results showed that the number of building-related laws and regulations doubled from the six in existence in the 1960s to twelve in 1990, to thirty one in 2010. Clearly, the workload must also have surged for architectural administration officers.

In terms of content, architectural administration officers' duties have also increased. From the 1960s to the 1990s, job duties were primarily related to the Building Act and the Certified Architects but officers were asked to undertake new tasks pertaining to landscaping and the spatial environment with the enactment of the Landscape Act and Framework Act on Building in the late 2000s. In the early 2010s, there was additional work assigned concerning green buildings, buildings subject to long-term suspended construction, the architectural service industry, and building assets such as hanoks (traditional Korean houses), the result of an increase in the related laws and regulations. Such growth did not simply increase workload, but



also made it necessary for the officers in charge to gain additional professional expertise and knowledge regarding now-diverse legal systems.

With regards to work delivery procedure, architectural administration service providers and producers (suppliers) are one and the same in Korea, and thus the related tasks are concentrated in the administrative agencies. Legally speaking, although there are regulations regarding administrative procedures, there are few that control service delivery procedures. For this reason, there have been cases in which service users directly executed the administrative work themselves in order to affect service delivery.

Secondly, the manpower and budget of the organization in charge of architectural administration was analyzed. The manpower was determined based on the number of individuals employed by the central government and the number of personnel at local government offices. The results showed that five to nine public officers had been hired by the central government each year from the 1970s until recently, which was only one-third of the public officers hired for civil engineering positions. Of particular note, while the building industry began booming after the mid-1990s, the number of public officers responsible for building-related duties declined. In contrast, the number of public officers in civil engineering positions quadrupled from six to twenty four, even though the civil engineering industry saw relatively slower growth. In the case of four municipal governments (i.e., Busan, Daegu, Ulsan, and Gyeongnam), there were fourteen to eighteen public officers dedicated to architectural administration services in the mid-1990s; this number has increased only marginally over the years. As for other municipal governments, the number of public officers in building-related positions did not change significantly after the mid-1990s. In this research, local governments were divided into four groups, depending on their population size, and a single area for each group (Bucheon-si, Seochon-gu, Geoje-si, and Gwacheon-si) was examined as a representative sample. It found that there were around six to nineteen public officers in building-related positions at each local government between 1995 and 1996. The size of the personnel fluctuated at negligible levels until 2007, when building and civil engineering positions were integrated into facility positions. As for some of the lower-level local governments, there was no change in manpower over ten years.

Conversely, an analysis of the budget operation showed the budget allocated to organizational cost was only approximately 1% of the total expense of the local government budget. Also, a review of the detailed statement of spending showed that there were no projects in place for improving the architectural administration services in ways that would help it meet current user demands.

Thirdly, a survey and analysis were conducted regarding the awareness and perceptions

of the officers in charge of architectural administration as they are related to the types and attributes of architectural administration services, the level of importance and the difficulty of job duties, and the difficulties in providing essential services. Those in charge of architectural administration perceived management-oriented tasks such as building permits, inspections of maintenance and management, and management of building registers as the primary architectural administration services, and selected information provision and the execution of regulations as important tasks. In terms of the level of architectural administration services, they stated that the level of service in relation to complaints processing and execution of regulations was relatively high, which contrasted with the perceptions of actual users.

Conversely, the problems of excessive workload and the lack of manpower were critical, and the intensity of the work was much higher compared to other administrative services. Yet, job performance was neither properly recognized nor compensated fairly. In order to overcome such limitations and to boost the level of architectural administration services, those in charge of such services need to recruit more workers, recognize the importance of job performance, and to reinforce the professional expertise of those in charge.

By compiling the results of this analysis, the limitations on the organization and persons in charge of architectural administration were determined as followings.

First, although the workload for the organization has been increased dramatically due to an upsurge in private development activities and building-related laws and regulations, the size of the workforce and budget for the related department has remained nearly the for the past 20 years, resulting in a heavier burden on individual public officers.

Second, while there is a need to improve services such as the provision of information, it has been difficult to carry out such improvements due to the excessive workload related to the existing legal system.

Third, in order to ensure accurate and fair execution of the laws and regulations that have newly come into force in addition to the existing complex legal requirements, those in charge must have the related professional expertise.

Fourth, architectural administration is responsible for a plethora of important tasks, but the job requirements are not properly recognized or adequately compensated.

## **Overseas Case Studies of Improvements to Architectural Administration Services**

In this Chapter, overseas case studies of improvements made to architectural administration services are reviewed in order to derive implications. The subjects of this investigation were American cities (Seattle, San Francisco, and Portland) that actively implement public

administrative services, as well as Japan, a country with an institutional system similar to that of Korea. A comprehensive review of US and Japan improvement cases indicated that while the goals were the same, the methods varied due to a variety of circumstances and policy issues.

In Seattle, San Francisco, and Portland, the construction market has recorded continuous growth. In line with this trend, administrative offices set out to provide diverse architectural administration services to users while efficiently meeting the increased demand. Of these three improvement cases, the most characteristic implication is stemmed from the operation of an architectural administration services center dedicated to providing information and consulting services. In addition, all three cities ran building permit tracking systems to increase convenience in building permit application submission and acceptance procedures and provide a means of checking on the progress of applications in real time.

Highly distinctive characteristics of American cases include the independent formulation of a budget for architectural administration that is separated from the city government's budget, and the independent operation of an organization dedicated to architectural administration. The fees related to building permits are not mingled with general city funds, and instead are for the sole use of the architectural administration organization. With these funds, the dedicated department is able to independently organize manpower and generally operate the organization, based on the circumstances of the particular construction industry and workload related to the services the organization provides. To improve efficiency, all three cities reinforced their staff capacity. In addition to hiring professional experts, they also implemented a rotational work system. So, the staff could gain diverse work experiences, and held regular meetings to share information about the related policies and systems of the city. Furthermore, one city adopted a self-inspection method through which previously implemented projects were arbitrarily selected for examination, in order to determine possible areas of improvement. Another city that conducted quantitative job performance evaluations, the goal of which was not to reward or punish the staff, but rather to discover areas in need of improvement and present alternatives to achieve further advancement.

One of the most representative cases of improvement in architectural administration services in Japan was the “designated institution system for examinations and inspections,” through which the work related to building inspections was transferred to a private institution. Due to a lack of regional governmental staff there had been delays, and it had become difficult to assure quality in the examination procedures. Thus, the Japanese government began commissioning certified experts from the private sector to perform building examinations and other inspection services; in so doing, they ensured professionalism and enhanced the quality of services. At the same time, this system allowed users to receive fast yet accurate inspections.

Another Japanese improvement included a new architectural administration management plan for preventing building accidents and ensuring the construction of safe buildings. What is noteworthy is that the specific execution roadmap was prepared based on a comprehensive understanding of the administration work. Moreover, the outcomes are reviewed periodically for management purposes, to enhance the efficiency of the services provided. Another notable characteristic is that the plan includes matters related to actively dealing with users' demands.

### Architectural Administration Service Improvement Cases Classified by Type

TYPE		USA			JAPAN
		Seattle	San Francisco	Portland	
Cases of meeting user demands related to architectural administration	Operation of dedicated centers and consulting services for users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of the Applicant Services Center and an applicant coaching program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of the Planning Information Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of the Development Services Center</li> </ul>	—
	Operation of information and tracking systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of a building permit tracking system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of the Permit &amp; Project Tracking System (PPTS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of the Portland Online Permitting System (POPS)</li> </ul>	—
	Provision of optional express administrative services	—	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of a designated institutional system for examinations and inspections</li> </ul>
Cases of improving the professionalism and efficiency of architectural administration services	Operation of a dedicated organization and independent budget formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent budget formulation and operation by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent budget formulation and operation by the San Francisco Planning Department (SFPD) in charge of architectural administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent budget formulation and operation by the Bureau of Development Services (BDS)</li> </ul>	
	Differentiation of architectural administration services based on project characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplification of the permit procedure for projects requiring field supervision and operation of a peer review system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of a 1:1 planning system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of Field Issuance Remodel (FIR) Program and MPG program</li> </ul>	
	Training for persons in charge of architectural administration and self-verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction Review and Inspection Quality (CRIQ) and pilot operation of QMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff training and job performance evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotational work system centering on related job duties, financial support for renewing qualifications, and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance management based on the architectural administration management plan</li> </ul>

## Policy Measures for Improving Architectural Administration Services

Based on the results of the current status analysis, it was confirmed that there is a need to provide diverse services to satisfying user needs and improve the operating conditions of the organization in charge of architectural administration. This will ease the inconveniences experienced by service users. Accordingly, three policy directions are promoted here, as follows, for the purpose of improving future architectural administration.

<b>Policy Direction #1</b>	Diversification of architectural administration services to reflection of user needs
<b>Policy Direction #2</b>	Transparency of service delivery procedures to increase predictability
<b>Policy Direction #3</b>	Improvement of the organization in charge of architectural administration and its manpower operation system to promote user convenience and provide professional services

First, for the diversification of services to reflect of user needs, the following implementation strategies and tasks are proposed. These would help officials actively to meet the demands related to information, consultation, education, and inquiries on legal matters.

Policy Direction	Implementation Strategy	Implementation Task
Policy Direction #1  Diversification of architectural administration services to reflect of user needs	1-1 Set up and operate an integrated online and offline center for architectural administration services where users can conveniently obtain diverse information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create an online platform for architectural administration services</li> <li>■ Launch and operate an integrated archive service related to architectural administration</li> </ul>
	1-2 Prepare an applicant coaching program for prior consultation and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop and operate an applicant coaching program</li> </ul>
	1-3 Secure professional manpower and a dedicated window for receiving and answering inquiries on legal matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure professional manpower to answer inquiries on legal matters</li> <li>■ Prepare a dedicated window to answer inquiries on legal matters</li> </ul>

Second, to ensure transparency in service delivery procedures and increase predictability, it is proposed that the service delivery procedures could be simplified and a tracking system could be set up to enhance predictability.

Policy Direction	Implementation Strategy	Implementation Task
Policy Direction #2  Transparency of service delivery procedures to increase predictability	2-1 Simplify the architectural administration service delivery procedures to promote user convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specify the roles and responsibilities of the public servants in charge of architectural administration</li> <li>■ Run a 1:1 coordination system</li> </ul>
	2-2 Set up a tracking system to improve the predictability of service delivery procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Set up and operate an architectural administration tracking system</li> </ul>



Third, to improve the organization in charge of architectural administration and its manpower operation, it is proposed that policies could be implemented to expand the dedicated staff, to install a devoted center, to train the personnel, and to recognize job performance.

Policy Direction	Implementation Strategy	Implementation Task
Policy Direction #3  Improvement of the organization in charge of architectural administration and its manpower operation to promote user convenience and provide professional services	3-1 Expand the staff dedicated to architectural administration services to be better able to respond to user needs and strengthen the quality of the work performed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase the number of public officers assigned to building-related positions by reassigning newly hired personnel in each field</li> <li>■ Reallocate manpower based on a diagnosis of the organization</li> </ul>
	3-2 Install a center devoted to architectural administration services to promote user convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Install and operate a center dedicated to architectural administration services</li> </ul>
	3-3 Provide specialized training and support for the persons in charge of architectural administration so that they are able to provide professional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Administer training in architectural administration work to new staff</li> <li>■ Develop and operate a specialized training program for architectural administration</li> <li>■ Provide training and financial assistance for acquiring qualification certificates (licenses)</li> </ul>
	3-4 Recognize job performance and prepare a reward system in relation to architectural administration services, so as to promote the persons in charge to be more proactive in providing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reflect the performance of architectural administration services in the performance evaluation system for the department in charge</li> <li>■ Pay allowances to persons in charge of architectural administration for handling complaints</li> </ul>

**Keywords :** User-oriented, Architectural administration service, Information and consultation services, Transparency of procedures, Increase of manpower, Improvement of the operation of an architectural administrative organization

