

auri research brief

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Improvements of a Management System for Sustainable Operation of Privately Owned Public Spaces

Are Privately Owned Public Spaces(hereafter, POPS) perceived as a comfortable and convenient space? This study focuses on a sustainable operation plan to achieve the goal of POPS ‘to provide a pleasant urban environment for citizens’.

It has been over 30 years since POPS were introduced in South Korea (hereafter, Korea). However, the purpose of the system has not been implemented to the degree that was intended when it was introduced. In April 2019, relevant laws to POPS were amended to improve its maintenance and management. However, the amendment did not specify plans that can be applied to individual POPS. It is necessary to prepare an additional institutional basis to ensure an active use of POPS.

This study aims to establish an operation system for POPS to maintain a good quality level that meets the needs of users, and ultimately promotes an active use of POPS. In order to increase the usability of POPS, it is required to meet a certain level in designing and installing POPS considering spatial quality, maintenance, and management. In addition, it is necessary to continuously diagnose the status of POPS, and based on this, come up with a reasonable improvement plan. Therefore, the study drew implications

through comparative analysis of POPS in Korea and other countries, checked the status of maintenance and management by types of POPS, and conducted a survey on the perceptions of users and managers. An integrated operation plan for POPS were proposed and an institutional basis for implementing strategies for maintenance, management, and utilization of POPS were prepared.

First, analysis on the laws and the systems in Korea showed that the accessibility and the openness of POPS were strengthened through restrictions on the use of POPS. In addition, the minimum institutional basis was prepared to ensure the amenity of POPS through the regulations on facility installation. However, it was found that the vitality and manageability of POPS could not be guaranteed since the use and management was conducted individually. Based on a comparative analysis of the overseas cases, we found implications for the establishment of the institutional foundation as follows. First, for the efficient and professional management of POPS, it is necessary to form a professional management organization to inspect and manage POPS in the city, such as Advocates for Privately Owned Public Space (APOPS), a non-profit organization in New York City. Second, as in Hong Kong's case of the 'Deed of Dedication,' legal obligations and responsibilities should be strengthened through the disclosure of contracts for maintenance and management of POPS at the time of issuing the building permits. Third, an institutional foundation should be prepared to encourage and support various activities, including limited commercial activities.

In order to understand the status of maintenance and management of POPS, a field survey was conducted on 206 POPS. When the size of a building was large or when it was used as an office building, the size of POPS was also large and it was managed well. This seems to be because there is enough manpower to constantly manage the external spaces of buildings, such as POPS. POPS in such places are regularly renovated along with the renovation of the buildings. The accessibility, openness, and management were good when POPS were located in the front part of the building. On the other hand, it was found that POPS were left unattended when it was located in the side or rear part of the building. In particular, the use of the place, which was poorly visible from the sidewalks, was remarkably low. The place was effectively used as an exclusive space for the building users. In this case, it is necessary to strengthen the accessibility of POPS to prevent it from being used as an accessory space of a building. Most of POPS in contact with the retail outlets marked a high level of use, but there were a lot of stockpiles and frequent private occupancy, impairing the public use. However, cafes were often found in POPS, and most of them had a high level of management on the spaces. Therefore, it was possible to promote sustainable maintenance and management by allowing limited commercial activities.



Public open space for
large-scale buildings



Abandoned public open space
located on the side



Public open space with a high degree of
management where a cafe is installed

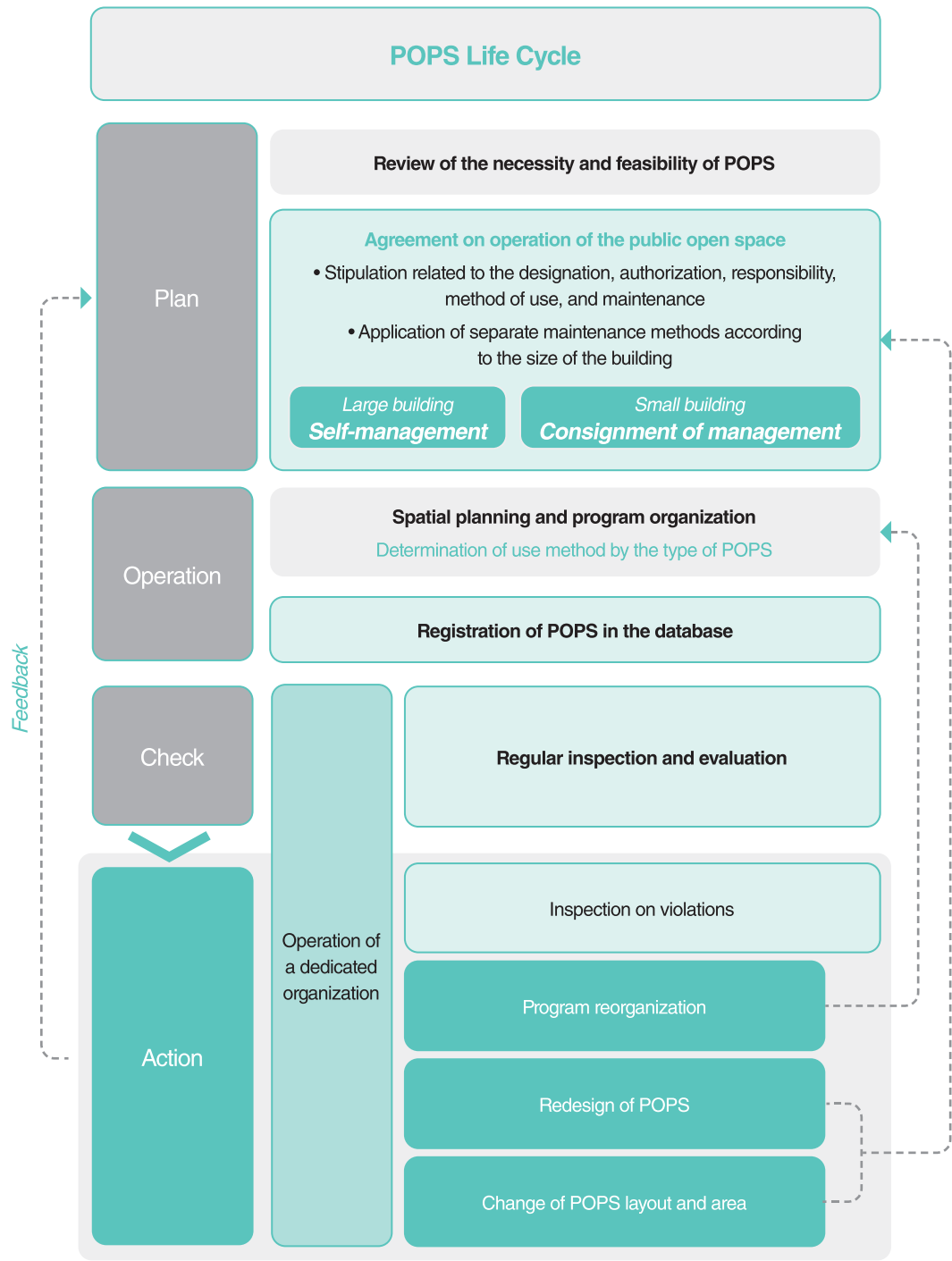
[Figure] Maintenance of public open spaces

Source: Authors

In order to understand the perceptions of users and people in charge of the maintenance and management of POPS, a survey on public perception (550 cases) and public officials in charge (100 cases) was conducted. The survey of the users confirmed that it was necessary to install an appropriate sign for the place and that the degree of comfort and management should be improved to meet the purpose of POPS as a resting area. In addition, 44.9% of the respondents affirmed that commercial activities need to be allowed in a limited way for the activation of POPS. From the responses of the public officials in charge, it was confirmed that the maintenance and management of POPS were practically difficult due to the limited allocation of the manpower and the budget. In addition, as measures to improve the level of maintenance and management of POPS, there were many opinions that institutional supplementation was necessary to give the owners of buildings more responsibility for the maintenance and management of POPS and to increase the utilization of POPS to benefit both the public and the owners.

In conclusion, rather than simply maintaining the existing state of POPS, it is necessary to establish and reflect the spatial operation strategy that responds to the changed spatial context and surrounding conditions while maintaining and inheriting the purpose of the policy at the time of installing POPS. For this purpose, it is desirable to treat POPS as a target of the space management policy that includes all the stages of the life cycle of POPS from the designation to the stage of use and remodeling.

[Table] A operating system of POPS



Source: Authors

As an improvement plan, the followings are proposed. First, a public contract for the objectives and obligations of the installation and maintenance of POPS at the stage of designation is suggested. Second, establishment, promotion, and support behaviors of the users are recommended. Third, establishment of a digital platform to support accessibility to POPS and to receive feedback is necessary. Fourth, the operation of a dedicated management organization is required. Fifth, an integrated improvement strategy for POPS on the major streets of cities is essential.

Keywords : Privately Owned Public Spaces(POPS), Maintenance of POPS, Operating System for POPS, Activation of POPS Use

