

auri research brief

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Place-based Integrated Plan for Small and Medium-Sized Cities: Based on the City Center – Neighborhood Network Model

Small and medium-sized cities with a population of less than 300,000 tend to decline by and large in all areas, unlike large cities where urban decline is concentrated in specific areas. A significant number of places are facing deterioration due to population decline. While small and medium-sized cities are urgently in need of survival strategies, local governments have implemented various regeneration projects subsidized by the state, but have not had a significant impact on improving the lives of local residents or revitalizing the economy. The problem lies in that regional revitalization policies including urban regenerations of small and medium-sized cities have failed to differ significantly from the spatial management methods of the past development-oriented era. To overcome these limitations, smart urban shrinkage policies are needed that can promote self-reliance and sustainability. Eventually, these cities require action plans that ensure economic, social, and built environment sustainability, which means that progressive and sustained regional revitalization projects are necessary by ensuring urban spatial management measures that actively respond to changes in social conditions.

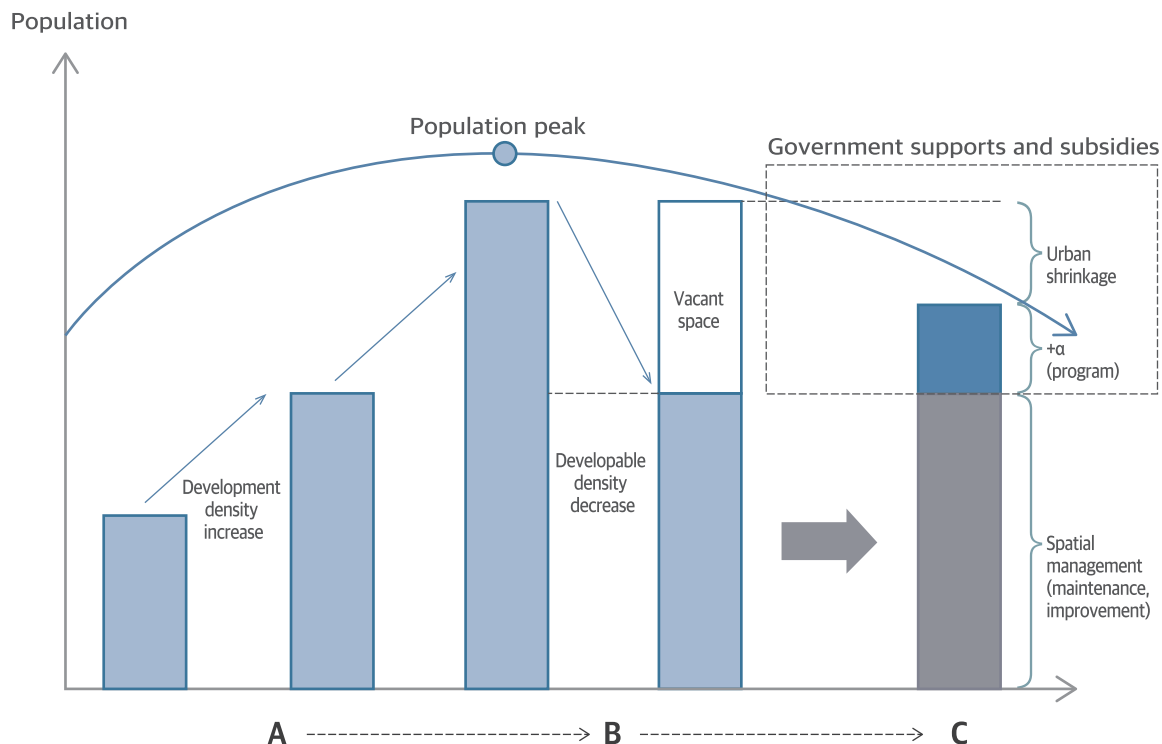
This study aims to propose a place-based integrated management planning

based on the estimation of spatial demand according to population changes in small and medium-sized cities. Also it suggests the government support system improvements of regional revitalization projects including the Urban Regeneration New Deal policy run on a competition basis.

The integrated spatial management is premised on adjusting the development density. Spatial demand is estimated upon population and household changes, and based on this, vacant spaces are disposed of or new socio-economic programs are introduced to adjust or maintain existing facilities. In order to promote projects that can be carried out self-sufficiently by local governments, strategies such as utilizing local public finance or obtaining subsidies and finances from the central government are suggested. In other words, integrated spatial management efficiently allocates and utilizes local resources by understanding regional problems, potential resources, and the residential and living conditions of local residents. The integrated management is significant in that it can help improve the physical environment of the area, strengthen the self-reliance of the local government, improve the quality of living, and recover the local economic ecosystem.

[Table1] Concept of local resource-based spatial management

Source : Seo, Soojeong et al.(2019). Place-based Integrated Plan on the Basis of the Local Resources for Sustainability of Small-to-Medium Cities. auri. p.28



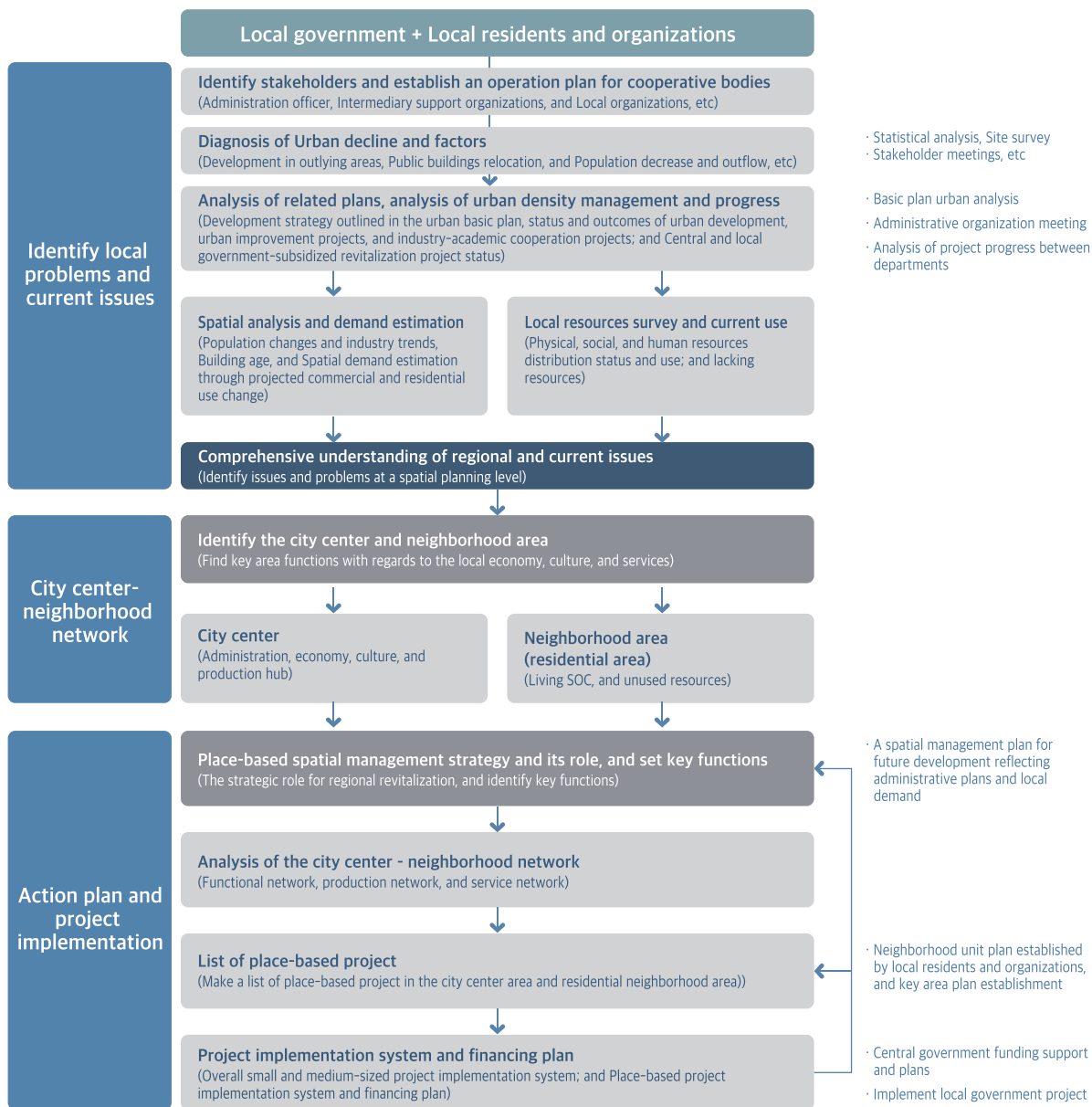
This study analyzed regional revitalization related policies and projects in six small and medium-sized cities, and identified the limitations, problems, and causes for integrated spatial management. The study found that projects supported by a number of government departments were simultaneously in progress, of which most of them were competition type projects. Despite the limited manpower of the local government, similar projects such as job creation and community building projects were carried out in the same spatial area. Also, large amounts of funds were spent on declining downtown areas, without coordination of urban fringe development projects. There was also a lack of partnership between related projects which were implemented by several government departments in the downtown. As a result, although a number of projects had been carried out, residential regeneration strategies and living area service improvement projects that directly impact residents' lives were insufficient, and local resources were not used effectively nor distributed efficiently.

Based on the analysis results, this study proposes the 'City center-neighborhood network model.' The place-based integrated plan based on this model aims to identify the city center (area of economic activity) and the local hub (neighborhood area), and make network strategies for linking between neighborhoods area. It is important to consider efficient allocation and utilization of local resources for the sustainable community by place-making with guaranteed social, economic and physical sustainability. The public finance is used to utilize local resources and deliver various program which connect between local resources.

In order to verify the feasibility of implementing the place-based integrated plan based on the 'City center-neighborhood network model,' the alternative plans were reviewed with Yeongju and Mokpo city. The study analyzed the site, local demand, and conducted interviews with local stakeholders. As a result, the importance of discovering and networking diverse human resources was figured out to maximize utilization of local resources. Moreover, it was discovered that there was a need to supply and allocate the living SOC effectively, and promote the management strategies of community core facilities established through the government subsidy. In addition, the participation of local businesses from the key local industries is necessary to create the local economy cycle, and practical support measures for maintaining deteriorating residential areas are needed. In this respect, the study confirmed that the place-based integrated plan needs to include a long-term vision and strategies as the master plan for sustainable urban regeneration in small and medium-sized cities. Based on these findings, this study suggested the contents and system for the place-based integrated plan as well as the improvements of government subsidy system.

[Table2] The steps of Planning Process : Place-based Intergrated Plan on the Basis of the Local Resources

Source : Seo, Soojeong et al.(2019). Place-based Integrated Plan on the Basis of the Local Resources for Sustainability of Small-to-Medium Cities. auri. p.139



First, in order to ensure the sustainability of small and medium-sized cities' integrated spatial management, it is important that various stakeholders and actors participate from the initial planning stage. A designated management team that could establish and execute the place-based integrated plan, needs to be formed under the mayor's office. Centered on this organization, a governance-based planning system needs to be in place with the participation of local residents, communities, and the private sector.

Second, for the plan to function as a public financial investment strategic plan and the local government's implementation plan, the central government subsidy system needs to be improved through the urban regeneration approval system or planning contracting system. In the short-term, the urban regeneration approval system can be used. However, to understand local problems comprehensively and to execute projects incrementally, the planning contract system needs to be developed and applied based on the notions of the decentralization policy. To this end, the urban regeneration strategy plan can be replaced by the place-based integrated plan in small and medium-sized cities, and the contents of the plan should be formulated as a project implementation plan while improving the central government subsidy system. Related to this, the “Special Act on Promotion of and Support for Urban Regeneration” may be amended, and financial support through the urban account of the National Housing and Urban Fund can be considered.

Third, it is necessary to have a designated organization and professional manpower in the area that oversees and establishes the plan. Prior to providing a government subsidy, there needs to be policy support for securing funds and manpower in forming the designated organization and involving private sector experts. Also, considering the weak financial capability of small and medium-sized cities, providing limited support for planning and professional manpower through the special account for balanced national development may be considered.

Currently, small and medium-sized cities in South Korea show limits in fully implementing integrated spatial management due to severe population decline and insufficient human resources. Not only should the existing system be used, but in the long run, new legislation will be needed to revitalize small and medium-sized cities. In order to enact new legislation, further research on the planning establishment system, central government support system, and planning contracting system need to be conducted.

Keywords : Urban Regeneration, Small and Medium-Sized Cities, Integrated Spatial Management, City center-neighborhood network model, Local Resources

