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Policy Suggestions for Regeneration and Reuse of Empty Homes in Deprived Areas

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1. Introduction

There is a growing demand for national policies for maintenance and management of long-term neglected empty homes. According to the 2015 Population and Housing Census, the number of empty homes nationwide is about 1.07 million, which accounts for about 6.5% of all houses.

On the other hand, the central government's policy support for the regeneration of declining areas has been strengthened. The residential environment in deprived areas is very vulnerable, and there are a lot of empty homes. Therefore, there is a political high demand for the maintenance and management of empty homes.

The purpose of this study is to suggest implementation strategies and means for the regeneration and utilization of empty homes. In addition, this study suggests measures for the development of regeneration policies and systems that are tailored to the local community in connection with regional regeneration. The following main research questions were set up for the study.

☐ The main research question of this study

- · What is the actual state of empty homes caused by decline and community characteristics?
- · What are the methods of recycling and utilization of empty homes in accordance with the declining region and community characteristics?
- · What are the national and local support policies and systems for the efficient and effective implementation of the regeneration of empty homes?

2. The concepts, actual conditions, related policies and projects of empty homes in Korea

The following policy implications were derived from a comprehensive review of the current policies and concepts of empty homes in the Korean contexts. First, it is necessary to discuss the necessity of public intervention for empty homes and the policy discussion about intervention target. Long-term neglected empty homes and the vacant homes that is structurally and qualitatively usable need to have different approach to public intervention. However, it is considered that the long-term neglected empty homes should be directly intervened for direct public intervention in order to solve the local safety and hygiene problems.

Second, it is necessary to establish a long-term policy direction by establishing legislation related to the maintenance of vacant houses and increasing policy interest. As the policy interest in empty houses increases, it can be seen that the institutional basis for public intervention in empty houses is being developed. In addition, it is expected that the implementation of the policy for the empty house maintenance will be effective through the "Special Act on Small House Maintenance such as Empty Homes" (draft).

Third, it is necessary to review the policy implications and the necessity of linkage between projects for the field application of vacant house maintenance projects. It is carrying out projects including renovation of vacant hones in neighboring regeneration type urban regeneration projects, Saetul Maeul projects, and local governments' empty homes improvements projects, such as Seoul city vacancy revitalization project, and Busan city sunny nest project. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the policy development plan by analyzing the connection process with existing vacant house renewal related business, various difficulties in implementation, and the process and effect of empty homes regeneration projects.

3. The review of empty homes regeneration support policies and projects of foreign countries

The UK government has been attempting to facilitate the management of empty homes, linking the residential regeneration of the declining area, which is the

housing market weakening area. In addition, the Empty Homes Programme is being used to implement policies to prevent the decline of the neighbourhood and homelessness problem by regenerating empty homes. The following are some of the key implications of the UK government' policies.

- · Inspecting the quality of buildings and the quality of life together
- · Equity and rationality of public financing and prioritization
- · Providing a toolkit directly to program operation and execution can be effective
- · However, considering that 30% of the funding was provided to the community sector, the community sector could play a leading role as a party to public reuse.
- · Provide benefits for vulnerable groups such as affordable housing and consider moving to community facilities

The Government of Japan enacted the Special Law for the Promotion of Empty Houses in May 2015 as the ratio of vacant houses to the total number of houses increased sharply to 13% in 2013. The policy of recycling vacant houses in Japan is based on the internal causes such as aging, environmental factors such as aging, and the internal causes such as lack of attractiveness in the housing market and fundamental causes of unemployment and vacancies. It is necessary to investigate the cause of empty homes in Korea.

At the national level, the Special Act, the Basic Guidelines for Empty Homes Policy, and the Guidelines for Empty Homes Emergency Policy are proposed at the national level. At the municipal level, it is promoting a specific vacant house maintenance project in accordance with the vacant house plan. It is necessary to refer to this in the future institutionalization and development of domestic policy delivery system.

The case of the Japanese local government 's response to the vacant house maintenance suggests the necessity of partnership to promote the vacant house maintenance projects based on the establishment of the collaboration structure. In addition, it suggests the necessity of identification and diagnosis of vacancies through various utilization data and suggests that consideration of personal information protection is also necessary. The provision of information on vacant houses such as vacant house banks and the linkage of consumers should be a very important issue in

the policy of maintaining vacant houses in local governments.

In addition, a variety of vacant house maintenance projects by the Japanese local government suggest that local customized strategies are needed in the planning of vacant house maintenance projects related to domestic municipalities. Therefore, in the support of the local government, tailored response to various contexts will be needed, such as assistance for dismantling costs, assistance for promoting effects such as maintenance of pocket parks, provision of assistance for proposals.

4. Empirical case studies

The results of the empirical case studies of Mokpo, Cheonan, Yeongju urban regeneration area and Suncheon Saetul maul project are summarized as follows.

In terms of regional characteristics, all four case study areas have common features of declining areas with the reasons such as construction of new suburbs and continuation of population drain due to disasters. It has small lot size, narrow road width, and relatively poor infrastructures. As the old city areas, buildings that have been over 30 years old have become more aged, making them less popular as residential areas, and being characterized as an area where young people do not want live in.

In terms of community characteristics, the proportion of the elderly who have lived for more than 30 years is very high. It can be seen that there are many native and long-term residents in the community, and strong social networks are formed in the long-term residents. The rate of owned residence is very high and the ratio of single -person households such as elderly living alone is very high.

It is confirmed that the causes of demographic outflow, weakening of the business area and apartment preference are related to the occurrence of vacancy in the case area due to the weakening of the competitiveness of the downtown area due to the development of the new city. The disadvantages of public transportation, poor accessibility due to the narrow streets, relative lack of infrastructure, and the lack of residential choice market due to image hindrance to residential areas are also causing vacancies. Also, it is confirmed that the aging of the houses over 30 years old, the

old stability of the wooden and rainstormed houses caused vacancies. The characteristics of the owner were identified as the major cause of the vacancy occurrence, and the cause of some vacant houses was confirmed by moving to a neighboring area due to deterioration of health condition in vacant state after long-term residence and death.

Four case projects were established, including the elimination of some empty homes, which is recognized as an environmental constraint, or a plan to utilize it as a resting space and a garden after demolishing empty houses. In the case of Yeongju city, it also includes the implementation of projects utilizing some empty houses by providing community road, Muk factory for community business, community garden, and a workshop for old local houses improvement.

As a result of interviews with residents of three case areas, including Cheonan, Yeongju and Suncheon, the majority of respondents in all three case areas were elderly people aged 60 to 80, and many residents lived in the area for a long time. After the death of the elderly parents due to the major vacancy in three areas, it was found that the house was left empty. However, according to the characteristics of each case area, it was found that there are some differences in the issues related to vacancy generation and the perception of residents. It is pointed out that Cheonan and Sunchon case areas are not easy to access due to narrow alleys on the hill topography and are vulnerable to fire and other risks. The regeneration area of the Yeongju city is located on a relatively flat area, and it is confirmed that the residents' satisfaction level has been increased due to the opening of community road after the demolition of empty houses.

The majority of the residents pointed out that the housing environment was deteriorating due to long-term neglected empty houses. There was a difference in responding opinion to empty houses by case area. In the Cheonan area, there was the opinion that the improvement of the village aesthetic through the demolition of empty houses was the most, and there was some opinion that it should be let alone because it is a private property. Residents showed a somewhat negative view of using remodeling and using them for village use. In the Suncheon area, the most dismissal was the opinion, followed by the empty homes remodeling. In Youngju city case, many residents wanted to remove empty houses to reuse them for community

interests.

In-depth case interviews with local coordinators showed that many of the difficulties and diverse policy support needs were taken into account in promoting projects that use empty houses.

□ Difficulties

- · Owner identification and contact difficulties
- · Difficulty in building databases for vacant house surveys and decision making
- · Difficulty in carrying out projects due to the complexity of ownership structure, illegal buildings, and landfills
 - · A large number of serious structural problems
- · Difficulty in negotiating due to negotiation of reimbursement fee when purchasing, requirement for overhead when supporting remodeling
- · Difficulty in matching people to public use when replaying and utilizing plans and projects

□ Opinions for Policy supports

- · Build and utilize multidimensional database for empty homes recycling
- · Seeking a system for consultation on project promotion other than negotiation
- · Consensus to recognize empty homes the community from a community problem to local assets
 - · Building strengthening community capacity and building partnerships
 - · Programme linkage with cooperative participants based on creative demand
- · Seeking various physical improvement programs, cooperation partners and financial resources

5. Suggestions for empty homes regeneration policy

It is expected that the policy for the long-term neglected vacant houses will become more important in the future. In this research, we propose policy directions for short-term, mid-term, and long-term as follows.

☐ Policy directions for empty homes regeneration

- · Short-term (1~2 years): Establishment and maintenance of the system, operation of pilot project, investigation of vacancies and establishment of empty homes information system, establishment of empty homes maintenance plan
- · Mid-term (3~7 years): Dismantlement and utilization of empty homes regeneration projects
- · Long-term (from 7 years onwards): Strengthening community-led management, sustaining management or recycled empty homes

In this study, the concept of customized vacant house maintenance strategy was set up, emphasizing the necessity to reflect declining area characteristics, community characteristics, and vacancy status comprehensively. In addition, site-driven strategies are key to promoting empty house recycling projects. In this study, we set up the field-based concept of empty house reclamation which emphasizes the process of community demand assessment and opinion gathering, distribution of resources and cooperation system construction, and establishment of business promotion cooperation system.

This study proposed four pilot project types to reflect on policy development in the short term. The proposed pilot project includes a demonstration project for a vacant house, a demonstration project for supporting a vacant house (demolition type), a demonstration project for supporting a vacant house (renovation type), a demonstration project for remodeling with local landlords.

Also, this study suggests the role and contents of the vacant house maintenance plan, emphasizing the necessity of guidelines and criteria for vacant house maintenance in the short term. In addition, this study suggests the improvement of the system for the legislation and guidelines to promote the policy of recycling empty house recycling.

Keywords: Empty Homes, Deprived Areas, Urban Regeneration, Saetul Maul