

Survey and Policy Review for Deregulated Residential Communities in Green Belt Zone

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Summary

1. Since the Constitutional Court decided in 1998 that the greenbelt system violated the Korean constitution, development restrictions have been relaxed for about 1,800 communities in greenbelt zones across the country. The reforms began in the early 2000s in an effort to mitigate inconvenience to residents of densely populated areas within those greenbelt zones.

2. Yet infrastructure in the affected communities, for the most part, remains underdeveloped despite the changes. Accordingly, there have been growing calls for systemic improvements from various perspectives in consideration of the differing circumstances affecting different communities in greenbelt zones—for example, critics urge policy makers to consider the condition of the local infrastructure and the level of pressure to undertake development.

- District-specific plans mandating improvements to infrastructure, which were adopted in 2009, have not been implemented either because they are not feasible or because local governments lack the necessary resources.

- Communities where there is significant pressure for development have insisted that restrictions be eased further to make development more feasible and that sectional development be permitted. These demands have not been met because the circumstances do not satisfy the criteria for the easing of restrictions and improvement of infrastructure.

3. Therefore, in communities that remain underdeveloped, local governments should be allowed to choose how best to improve and manage infrastructure in consideration of the needs of those communities. The criteria for determining whether an area's land-use restrictions should be lifted should also be eased further as a means to encourage infrastructure improvement projects.

Implications

- ① **Regulations concerning how much land area a project can cover should be eased further when necessary to ensure that infrastructure improvement projects can proceed unimpeded:** If the scope of an infrastructure improvement project (in terms of land area to be developed) is found to exceed the size allowed by the regulations, development restrictions should be further eased to allow an increase of up to 30 percent in the allowed size (within the quota for deregulated area designated by the respective local government). In this way, infrastructure improvement projects will be encouraged in communities where pressure for development is high.
- ② **Regulations concerning land area should be deregulated for communities in which the implementation of urban development plans has faced protracted delays:** In cases where proposed urban planning facilities need to be reduced in scope or cancelled due to low implementation feasibility, development restrictions should be further eased to allow for deregulation of land in excess of the current size limits (but within the quota for deregulated area designated by the respective local government). In this way, proper action can be taken regarding urban planning facilities for which implementation has been delayed for an extended period of time.
- ③ **Infrastructure improvement projects should be allowed to proceed concurrently:** It should be possible to divide areas in which the infrastructure needs improvement into multiple units so that multiple development projects can proceed at the same time. This can facilitate the upgrading of infrastructure in a community where development has been delayed as a result of various circumstances.
- ④ **After the deregulation of development restrictions, local governments should take over project management:** The authority to manage projects should be delegated to local governments so that they can plan and design their communities in keeping with urban development plans that have been customized to suit specific economic and social conditions. This change will also simplify administrative procedures and save time in cases where plans need to be adjusted.