



KRIHS Policy Brief

KRIHS ISSUE PAPER

Publisher : KRIHS
www.krihs.re.kr

Directions for Basic Plans for Cities and Counties (Gun) in the Era of Slow Growth: Implications from the Perspective of the National Land Planning System

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Summary

1. Since the National Land Planning Assessment System was implemented in May 2012, 69.7 percent of the total of 89 plans reviewed were basic plans for cities and counties (*gun*).

- Many of the plans should be improved in terms of reflecting the basic ideas of land management and aligning with higher (e.g., the national comprehensive territorial plan) and associated plans.

- The plans failed to qualify as instructional and strategic plans due to vague nature and contents. The plans also focused on increasing target populations and expanding development sites rather than offering visions and goals for the next 10 to 20 years.

2. Despite the decreasing population trend, most plans overestimated target populations.

- There has been a forecast for a population decrease in regions outside Seoul and its vicinity and a faster reduction in the national population. Despite that, most plans for cities and counties were drawn up for increased target populations.

※ After analyzing 123 plans, their target populations were found to be 38.7 percent larger than the population registered in 2015.

3. Despite the slow economic growth, the plans kept aiming for more sites for urbanization under the premise for development and growth.

- Targeting a population size without considering the reality was directly linked to expansion of the site to be urbanized despite faster shrinking cities. It also causes unnecessary budget spending (e.g., building additional urban infrastructure) and inefficiency.

※ In 99 plans, sites subject to urbanization were increased by 287 km²: special and metropolitan cities were planned to decrease by 18 km², while cities were planned to increase by 219 km² and counties by 86 km².



Policy implications

- ① Encourage cities and counties to draw up basic plans in harmony with the basic ideas of land management (fairness, efficiency, eco-friendliness) by bolstering the plans in terms of eco-friendly land management and balanced development of the land.
- ② The basic plans are plans to realize key upper-level geospatial plans (the national comprehensive territorial plan, comprehensive land plans for provinces [*do*], etc.). The status of the plans can be raised by offering tangible changes to local residents with a focus on infrastructure addition in response to new demand.
- ③ The reality and changes to the conditions should be considered such as shrinking cities and their populations and slow economic growth, and so forth. The target population should be set based on objective and scientific grounds. Land use plans should be drawn up reasonably. Measures are also needed to respond to the trend of building metropolitan-like cities.
- ④ An improved role of the land planning evaluation will help the performance of the planner's self-evaluation when drawing up a basic plan for a city or county. The effects of the plan can be improved by both performing the evaluation and monitoring the land plans.