

Seoul, the capital city of the Republic of Korea, is the political, economical, governmental center of the country. As of the end of 2011, Seoul had a population of some 10,528,774 people with a total of 4,192,752 households. This represented roughly a quarter of the population of the Republic of Korea. The Seoul Metropolitan area consists of Seoul Special Metropolitan City, Incheon Metropolitan city and Gyeonggi province surrounding Seoul. Its population is 24.5 million (as of 2011) which is almost a half of Korea's whole population.



Figure 1: Korea map and location of Seoul



Figure 2: map of Seoul

► *Administrative arrangement and planning fabric*

The administrative organization of the Seoul special city consists of city, district (*gu*), and subdistrict (*dong*). City mayor and governor of district are directly elected. There are 25 autonomous districts and 522 subdistricts. In 1988, a district was upgraded to a local autonomous entity from a sub-administrative agency of the city. As an autonomous organization, ward office handles both works delegated from the city and its own functions that are handled by city governments in other jurisdictions. Subdistrict provides closest administrative services for everyday life of residents in neighborhood.

The Seoul Master Plan is a comprehensive plan outlining the basic spatial structure and long-term development direction and a guideline for the Urban Management Plan. These plans should be in conformity with National Comprehensive Plan and Regional Plan as Seoul Metropolitan Area. The purpose of the Urban Management Plan is to provide guidance for implementation plans and to regulate building construction activities.

► *Urban identity and some critical issues*

Seoul is the centre of political, economic and administrative decision-making and management functions. Since most of headquarters are located in Seoul, its influence spreads over the country, and as one of the world city, it's expected to have influence on not only Asia but also around the world. Seoul still commands almost one-quarter of the nation's GNP. The entire industry weight of the service sector is expanding and the trend of the economy as a service sector has been actively progressed. The cultural industries, multimedia & Entertainment, IT industry, and other new industries may be called the growing industries in the 1990s. Given a short technology term, the diversification of demand and rapid change of

preferences, these kinds of industry should have continuous cooperation among them and their workers. When it comes to the population, Korea has already become an aging society and population increasing rate became slow from 1990s, with the peak of 10.9 million in 1992, and currently the population is stable to 10 million. It could be a big challenge to achieve continuous national and urban growth.

Housing policy seemed successful with high diffusion rate and improved housing condition. However new challenges have recently occurred because of increasing housing price and changes of population and household structure. The rate of home ownership has been on the decline due to lack of affordable housing. There is also mismatch between conditions of supplied housing. For decades, detached dwelling or small housing supply decreased while large housing supply has increased. Since single-person and two-person households have largely increased from 1995 to 2005, it seems that the demand to smaller households housing has become more important. Therefore, it's necessary to keep up with the increasing demand for smaller households, and lower-class households.

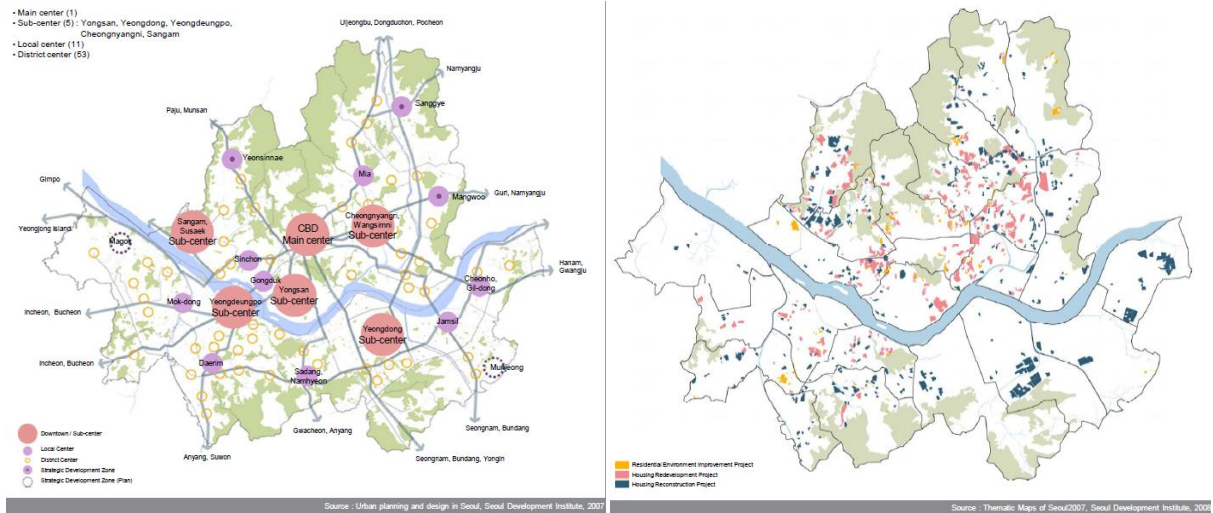


Figure 3: Spatial Restructuring Plan

Figure 4: Residential Environment Management Plan

► **Urban evolution and growth story**

Seoul has been rapidly growing and expanding for the last five decades. Even though the development restriction area was designated in 1971 to prevent urban sprawl and urban development and to preserve natural environment, expansion of Seoul metropolitan area was motivated by several causes; land readjustment and land development project to solve the housing shortage problem, Newtown project in metropolitan area surrounding Seoul, motorization and development of transportation network. Seoul city government is focusing on development considering infrastructure facilities with proper density and efficient management of limited land; it is because most lands in Seoul are already developed. From the Seoul Basic City Plan 2020, the direction of planning is changed from development-oriented-quantitative growth to growth management for quality of life and the goal of planning is eco-friendly, balanced and regional character focused development. Also it suggests Spatial Restructuring Plan making Seoul a multi-core distributed metropolis which is spatially divided into 5 neighborhood area for more balanced living environments among areas.

