

Mid-term Evaluation on the Implementation of "Preservation & Regeneration of Bukchon"

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The policy for "Preservation & Regeneration of Bukchon" started in late 1990's when the landscapes of Bukchon area were rapidly scarred by demolishing Hanoks and developing multi-family houses in Bukchon. The residents were at a crisis and demanded Seoul city mayor establish a new policy for preservation and regeneration of Bukchon.

Seoul Development Institute(SDI), along with the representatives of the residents, Seoul city officials, and other experts, setup a policy for Preservation & Regeneration of Bukchon in 2000. Hanok registering system was implemented in July 2001 as a starting point of full-scale preservation and regeneration of Bukchon.

The issues of mid-term evaluation on the 4-year implementation of the policy came to the fore to identify its results and problems, to decide whether we should move forward with this project which is supposed to completed by 2006, and to implement a new policy of managing Bukchon in the long run. The background and objectives of this study are composed with these issues.

The main objectives for this study are to document significant changes in Bukchon caused by 4-year implementation of "Preservation & Regeneration of Bukchon" in detail, to evaluate the effects and problems of the policy by interviewing residents and other interested groups, and to give a direction to the long-term policy for preservation and regeneration of Bukchon.

The evaluation on the implementation of Bukchon policy consists of three major parts.

The first part is what we accomplished during 4-year implementation. Based on our evaluation, we found remarkable achievements such as significant improvement of residential environment and living conditions of Hanok, which led to maximizing economic value of Hanoks in Bukchon and increasing new residents in Hanoks. Considering the landscape management of Bukchon, we also found out some weak points due to the lack of institutional framework.

The second part is about the effects and problems of administrative systems and resident participation for implementing Bukchon policy. In the initial stage, the governmental office was opened in Bukchon, and public officers had served for the residents in the center of Bukchon. It was very meaningful attempt to restore residents trust at the time. However, weakened administrative systems caused by the change of managing department became one of the serious problems. Even though resident participation rate had been relatively high and showed the possibility of residents governance, there still remains much to be done, including resident participation in official decision-making processes and securing representativeness of residents organization.

The pros and cons of Hanok renovation are the last part of this study. 353 out of 912 Hanoks in Bukchon had been registered. Among the registered Hanoks, 230 had significantly improved exterior and living conditions. However, there are growing needs to improve Hanok renovation managing system and design guidelines for Hanok renovation because of serious problems on renovation quality or too standardized patterns of Hanok renovation.

Based on this evaluation, this study suggests some policies and plans as follows.

- 1) A policy for setting up long-term vision of Bukchon will be established as well as the existing Bukchon policy, which should be fully and consistently supported.

2) It is necessary to expand Historical and Cultural Aesthetic District into the whole Bukchon area for managing the landscape in Bukchon, to rearrange the subdivision of general residential zone as the first class, and to establish Bukchon Urban Design Plan after all. We need to set the building standards which particularly regulate commercial uses, heights and forms of the buildings in Hanok crowded area based on residents' own demands as well as other related plans that specify expanded Cultural Properties Protection District for the preservation of cultural landscape around Changdeok-gung Palace.

3) The existing Hanok Renovation Guidelines should be revised to improve the quality of Hanok renovation. Hanok renovation manual or the best practices for residents and constructors will be very helpful. Seoul Metropolitan Government needs to manage a small construction crew, or authorizes public architects to improve renovation management system.

4) We recommend an integrated managing body which is fully responsible for "Preservation & Regeneration of Bukchon" to solve sharing-the-work system associated with Housing Bureau, Cultural Affairs Bureau, SH Cooperation, and Jongno-gu. To do so, Department of Urban Design in Housing Bureau should control all Bukchon related works for the time being, and install additional managing department fully oriented with Bukchon, such as Bukchon Office, in the short-term. Over the long time, a specialized managing organization, such as Bukchon Foundation, composed with both residents and government officers should control Bukchon works.

5) There is also an urgent need to revise the existing Building Code which doesn't show enough consideration to the characteristics of Hanok. In addition, we need to modify the legal system for offering exceptions from making parking lots in each Hanok to preserve the attractiveness of small alleys in Bukchon. Setting up a legal basis in the national-level laws to overcome the limitations of Bukchon project in accordance with Local Ordinance of Seoul Metropolitan Government, and protecting historical living environments like Bukchon are also very important.

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