

# Urban transformation of Seoul and Tokyo by legal redevelopment project

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## **Abstract:**

After World War II, Seoul and Tokyo had experienced similar urban problems as part of their rapid urbanization and had been developed western planning systems to modernize their urban structures. Seoul and Tokyo had very similar planning schemes for redevelopment, which consisted of legal urban redevelopment projects and subsidies under the Urban Redevelopment Law. The differences in their government operations system and application of development tools caused differences in their urban structures.

This article describes each government's efforts and legal systems to illustrate the spatial transform of central areas in Seoul and Tokyo using documentary research and GIS data. This article is intended to address implications on the downtown redevelopment policies of Seoul and Tokyo. And to conclude, 2 Asian mega cities have lost many traditional urban structures under legal redevelopment project until 1990s. Fortunately their planning schemes are changing by making them aware of how redevelopment projects should make conserve traditional urban structures.

**Keywords:** *Urban structures, Seoul, Korea, Central area, redevelopment, legal redevelopment scheme*

## **Introduction**

Most Asian metropolitan areas have been growing at a rapid rate since the 20th century. It is very difficult to control the development pressure in these Asian cities that are rapidly urbanizing with an explosive increase in population. This is also happening in Seoul and Tokyo. They experienced population explosion and concentration with rapid economic growth. These caused a severe housing shortage. Squatters have thus emerged where people could get land, no matter how small. The governments of these two big cities have been trying to solve this urbanization problem for decades via redevelopment or new town development at residential areas. Only individual redevelopment has been happening in downtown Seoul and Tokyo for a long time. Thus we often see contrasting views of small and old buildings lined up along narrow alleys behind modern high-rise buildings.

These two Mega cities' urban structures, including their downtown problems, are very similar in many ways. Seoul and Tokyo have physically inferior structures in each central areas that are represented by narrow and congested street patterns and old wooden houses' concentration that could hardly withstand disasters. However, there are no concentration of immigrants or low-income people, no infrequent crimes. They still have economic, social, and cultural potential as central business districts of capital cities, though.



**Figure 1.** *Urban Spatial Pattern of Seoul*



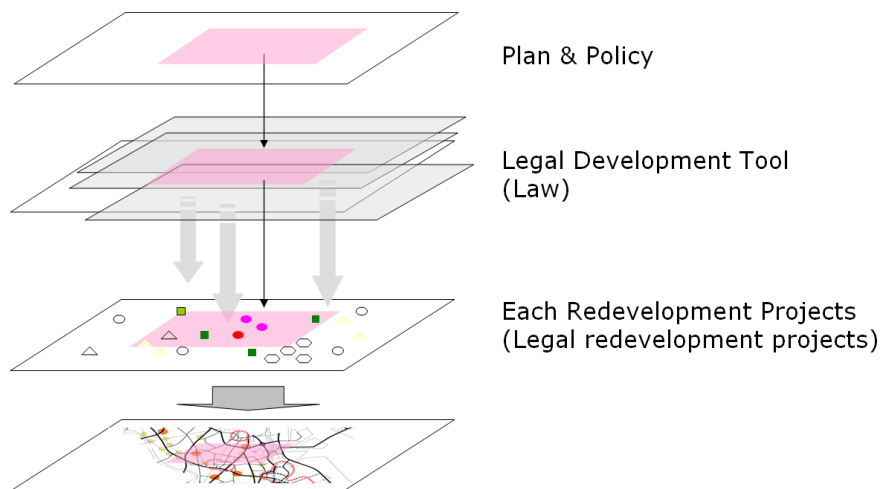
**Figure 2.** *Urban Spatial Pattern of Tokyo*

**Table 1. Downtown Problems**

	<b>CBD Areas of Seoul and Tokyo</b>
Population	Decline
Employment Concentration of Immigrants	None
2 <sup>nd</sup> Industry Activities	Decrease
3 <sup>rd</sup> Industry Activities	Increase
Land Price	High
Insufficiency of Infrastructure	Partial insufficiency
Vitality	Active
Concentration of Low-Income People	Not serious
Frequent Occurrence of Social Problem	Not serious
Physical Deterioration (Building)	Need improvement
Physical Deterioration (Infrastructure)	Need improvement

Seoul was influenced by Tokyo's modern planning system during Korea's Japanese colonial period from 1919 to 1945. With the same legal base, they developed a planning system that included the establishment of the Urban Redevelopment Law to convert the traditional central business district into a modern space. The difference in the applications and management of the system has been causing differences in the urban structures of Seoul and Tokyo since the 1950s. Thus, this article will describe legal schemes and operations to illustrate the spatial transform of central areas in Seoul and Tokyo.

In this article, the institutional development of the redevelopment policy of Seoul and Tokyo will be examined to point out the characteristics of CBD areas and their redevelopment problems via documentary studies. Then the distinguishable features of Seoul and Tokyo will be demonstrated with case studies. Finally, this article is intended to address implications on the downtown redevelopment policies of Seoul and Tokyo.



**Figure 3. Redevelopment Scheme**

## **Establishment of institution**

### ***The era of post-war urban reconstruction (1945-1960s)***

Seoul and Tokyo were ruined by air raids during the World War II(WWII). Most of their built-up areas were burned and many houses were destroyed during the war. The end of WWII brought Seoul not only independence but also civil war, via the Korean War of 1950-1953.

28 percent of Central Tokyo (23 wards), about 195km<sup>2</sup>, was burned in WWII. Thus, the Japanese government enacted its 1946 Plan(War Disaster Restoration Plan 1946) which allocated about 200 km<sup>2</sup> for land readjustment, much more than the burned area. The government could not help cutting down this area to 1/4 (50 km<sup>2</sup>), however due to its reduced budget. Land readjustment created new roads, widened roads, built high-rised concrete buildings, and so on, to the construction of a fireproof city. Most urban commercial and business areas were excluded from the amendment plan, however, because they were assigned principal road developments the under the 1923 Earthquake Disaster Resoration Plan. Thus, the reconstruction of central business areas happened in the traditional urban structures in the Edo period (1603-1868).

Seoul was one step behind Tokyo in urban structure restoration because of its civil war. Much of the refuse built squatter areas on irregularly occupied lands in Seoul's central areas. There was socio-economic confusion and a conflict and poverty problem until the mid-1960s. Even though Seoul Post Reconstruction Plan(1961) was formulated after the war, the housing shortage was a more urgent issue than the need to restore urban structures. Ironically, Japan capitalized on the Korean War and achieved rapid economic growth. With such rapid growth, the demand for large-scale commercial and business buildings in downtown also increased. Thus Tokyo enacted its Urban District Remodeling Law(Remodeling Law) in 1961. The Remodeling Law allowed land purchase and land readjustment. It made possible not only the improvement of infrastructure but also the promotion of the construction of modern buildings. Most developments occurred, however, not in central areas but in sub-center areas.

### ***The era of institutional improvement (late 1960~1980s)***

In this period Urban Redevelopment Laws were established with the need for collective planning and private-sector participation.

In the 1960s Tokyo maintained and constructed road system, such as its Metropolitan Expressway, to prepare for the 1968 Tokyo Olympics. It did not change its urban framework much, however, because most of the roads were built over the old moats of Edo Castle. The development of highway systems, however, caused suburb development with a rapid urban sprawl. Thus Tokyo enacted its New Urban Planning Law to control unplanned mini-development and urban sprawl. The next year, the Urban Redevelopment Law (Redevelopment Law) was also enacted. Even though Tokyo already had a Remodeling Law for redevelopment projects, a new law was needed to prompt private-sector investments. The Urban Redevelopment Law in 1969 introduced the Urban Redevelopment Project (URP) including its procedure, conditions and incentives. The private sector developed large-scale commercial-business buildings based on URP in the Yamanote area, where there were aristocratic residences or government offices in the Edo era. URP is a large-scale scrap-and-build redevelopment tool with which

developers can get FAR incentives and subsidies by building roads and small public spaces. On the other hand there were still traditional urban structures with narrow streets and wooden commercial buildings that had to be improved. For this, developers could not use URP because owners of small lots did not want joint developments with other landowners.

Seoul had no special rules or plans for redevelopment in early periods. In 1971, it introduced an Urban Redevelopment Project into its Urban Planning Law. The project did not have enough prescriptions for redevelopment, though. Seoul still struggled with a housing shortage. When Seoul enacted its Urban Redevelopment Law In 1978, business and commercial area redevelopment was separated from housing redevelopment. The government wanted to redevelop squatter settlements and prompt housing supply. It did not want to redevelop central business and commercial areas, however, which would promote population concentration. Thus broader central business areas were designated as Legal Urban Redevelopment Areas (URAs) regardless of their necessary or potential. All individual redevelopment movements in the URA were strictly prohibited except for large-scale development projects that complied with the Urban Redevelopment Plan.

In the 1970s Seoul and Tokyo formed institutional foundations that consisted of the Urban Redevelopment Law and the Legal Urban Redevelopment Project. Both URPs were scrap-and-build methods in merging lots. Tokyo's legal URP did not consist of restrictions, however, as did Seoul's. The landowners and developers in Tokyo could choose to use the legal URP or not. Those who did not want to use the legal URP were able to rebuild their buildings individually under the Architecture Standard Law or the Urban Planning Law. This was not allowed in Seoul, though.

### ***The era of explosive redevelopment projects (1980s~1990s)***

After the oil shock in the 1979, world market gradually recovered. The business recovery of Korea and Japan was especially amazing, though. The strength of the Japanese economy in the 1980s led the gravity-defying climb of land and stock prices in the late 1980s. Korea's rapid transformation into a wealthy and industrialized economy in this short time was termed "the Miracle on the Han River." It achieved this growth surge through manufacturing-oriented exports. Seoul successfully hosted the 1988 Summer Olympics and showed how it had changed from a heap of ashes after the civil war.

In Tokyo, many big redevelopment projects were proposed during this period which later caused the country's bad debts. Even the Tokyo metropolitan government rushed into this redevelopment project boom, such as via waterfront development. The Nakasone cabinet also enacted a deregulation policy to promote private-sector investments. It caused the boom and bust in the property prices of Tokyo, called the bubble economy. It also made developers devote themselves to speculating on buying land. It did not matter how small the land was. Developers built office buildings everywhere they could. This almost wiped out housing stocks and brought land price up so high that most families could no longer afford to buy a house in downtown areas. The depopulation of downtown areas was accompanied by an increase in transportation cost, unbalanced daytime and nighttime populations, and a decrease in taxes. The restoration of the population via linkage programs that linked new redevelopment projects with housing

supply became one of the most important policies of the municipal government.

With Seoul's economic growth, its population kept increasing to 10 million in 1988. Seoul upheld a redevelopment restriction policy in its central business area due to its housing shortage problem. Policy makers thought downtown redevelopment caused Seoul's population increase. They could not help switching their policy line in the mid-1980s, though. The first reason for this was the great demand for office buildings, because major firms wanted to build their own head offices in central areas. The other reason was that Seoul had to improve its physical environment so that it could host national events, such as the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympics. In 1984, Seoul temporarily allowed individual developments in central areas and permitted FARs by up to 1,000%. This made possible Seoul's modern urban spaces in its central areas.

The bubble economy of Japan collapsed in the early 1990s, and many big projects that were planned in the late 1980s were postponed or canceled due to socioeconomic instability. Land prices dropped drastically and became an excuse for the mass-production of bad debts. The Japanese economy went into long-term stagnation, called "the lost 10 years." Seoul also experienced stagnation with the bankruptcy of construction companies during its Economic crisis in 1998. It did not take long to recover, however, unlike Tokyo. Both cities enacted a regeneration policy in the 2000s.

***The era of urban regeneration with deregulatory policy (late 1990s~)***

Economic depression pushed policy change from strong land or redevelopment control to emphasis of efficiency in land use. Both Seoul and Tokyo promulgated a deregulation policy that promoted effective land use and the improvement of urban structures to solve economic stagnation.

Many policies were proposed to induce urban redevelopment projects in brown-fields, vacant lands and low-development-status lands in central areas. Deregulation and incentive zoning became key issues in central area redevelopment. Deregulation was supported by a number of urban economists who argued that city planning regulations were responsible for inefficient urban development patterns.

Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan released 21<sup>st</sup>-century projects for urban renaissance and founded the Urban Renaissance Headquarter (URH) within the Prime Minister's Cabinet in May 2001 to promote comprehensive urban regeneration. URH formulated guidelines to concentrate the collective efforts of the public sector and designated Priority Urban Redevelopment Areas (PURAs) under the Urban Renaissance Special Measure Law in June 2002. Also, the Mayor of Tokyo supported the urban renaissance policy to reinforce Tokyo's city competitiveness. The deregulation policy, with the decline of land and construction costs, made big projects, which projects were proposed bubble period, feasible in central areas. This happened only in development-possible areas, however, and not in development-necessary areas. Thus, Tokyo also reinforced an incentive zoning system such as a deregulatory district plan for traditional urban structure areas.

Seoul amended its Urban Planning Law and Urban Redevelopment Law (Urban and Residential Environment Improvement Law) in the early 2000s to allow comprehensive planning and effective control of individual redevelopment projects, because Seoul originally realized city

competitiveness not only for up-to-date buildings but also for urban environment elements such as landscapes and traditional urban structures. The Cheonggecheon Restoration is a symbolic project that shows the change in the development paradigm of Seoul. Seoul enacted a deregulatory policy to allow individual redevelopment of central business and commercial areas. The government no longer exclusively used the scrap-and-build method; various redevelopment tools were invented to improve central areas. It is still hard work, however, to preserve traditional narrow roads and old wooden houses that are unable to meet the legal standards.

Seoul and Tokyo enacted a deregulatory regeneration policy in the 2000s. Many articles evaluated such policy as being capable of promoting redevelopment projects. There are still doubts, however, as to whether or not it could contribute to the improvement of the quality of urban structures. Thus an attempt will be made in this paper to figure out the features of urban transformation based on a redevelopment policy and legal redevelopment projects using case studies in the next chapter.

**Table 2.** *Development of Urban Planning System*

	<b>Tokyo</b>	<b>Seoul.</b>
1919	City Planning Law	
1934		Direction for Urban Area
1945	Post-war Reconstruction Plan	
1952		Seoul Post-war Reconstruction Plan
1961	Urban District Remodeling Law	
1962		Urban Planning Law
1968	New City Planning Law	
1969	Urban Redevelopment Law	
1971		Urban Planning Law (Amendment)
1975	Urban Redevelopment Law (Amendment)	
1976		Urban Redevelopment Law
1978		Seoul Urban Redevelopment Plan
1982	Nakasone Deregulation Policy	
1984		Deregulation Policy for National Event
2000		Urban Planning Law(Amendment)
2002	Urban Renaissance Special Measure Law	
2003		Urban and Residential Environment Improvement Law
2005		Urban Redevelopment Promotion Law

### **Redevelopment projects and urban transformation**

There are the three reasons for the amendment of the legal redevelopment systems of Seoul and Tokyo; the establishment of urban infrastructure, the reconstruction of inferior buildings, and the improvement of urban landscapes.

#### ***Construction of modern urban structure***

Seoul and Tokyo were also ruined by war and thus enacted a legal redevelopment system to promote the establishment of urban infrastructure based on modern urban planning standards. Most central areas in Seoul and Tokyo had physically inferior infrastructure such as winding paths, narrow alleys less than 4 meters wide, hardly any parks, wooden buildings, and so on.

The easy and fast way to establish urban infrastructure is scrap-and-build method. Most legal URPS that were carried out under the Urban Redevelopment Law were aimed at the construction of modern buildings packaged with public facilities. This seemed reasonable and efficient way to utilize of urban areas. Tokyo has had more options than Seoul, which had only one option: legal URPs. Whoever wanted to carry out redevelopment projects in central areas in Tokyo were able to choose one or more among URPs under the Urban Redevelopment Law, Special District Zoning under the Urban Planning Law, Comprehensive Design under the Architecture Standard Law, and other methods under various related laws.

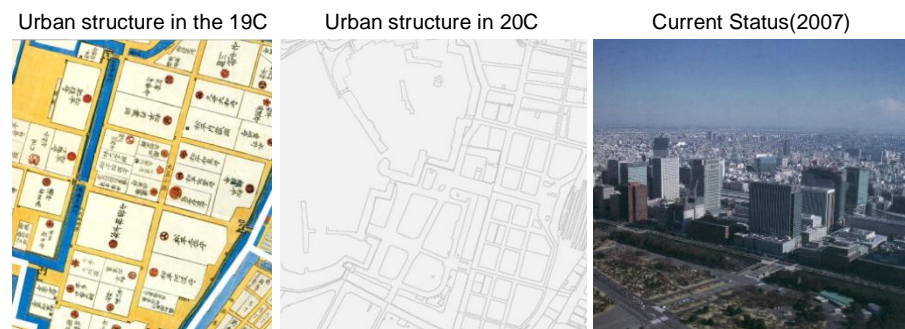
To achieve highly efficient land use (high-density development), developers often use legal redevelopment tools such as URPs in building new roads, parks, public spaces, and skyscrapers. The project cost is covered by sale of floors to individual investors. Before the collapse of its bubble economy, Tokyo gave various urban infrastructure equipment grants to individual developers. In recent years, however, the government has preferred indirect subsidies such as FAR incentives. Even though Seoul also has articles on redevelopment grants in its Urban Redevelopment Law, none of its redevelopment projects received direct subsidies from municipal or central governments. Seoul had only approval rights to control individual redevelopment projects.

A large part of redevelopment profits should be used to reduce landowners' allotments in Seoul and Tokyo. The agreement of landowners is the most important element in building up URPs. They want to be guaranteed stability in their business or residence. This system makes it difficult for URPs to be adjusted in lower-potential areas, where no increase in the price of equity after the URPs can be expected. Economical efficiency of scale is at least standard for legal URPs. As a result, infrastructure improvement from legal URPs tends to occur not where they are needed but where they are possible.

Seoul and Tokyo enacted special laws to promote comprehensive redevelopment projects under the theme "Urban Regeneration or Urban Renaissance" in the 2000s. They emphasized the necessity and urgency of urban central areas' redevelopment to achieve city competitiveness. There were also enactments of intensive support programs such as simplification of the urban planning process and financial supports.

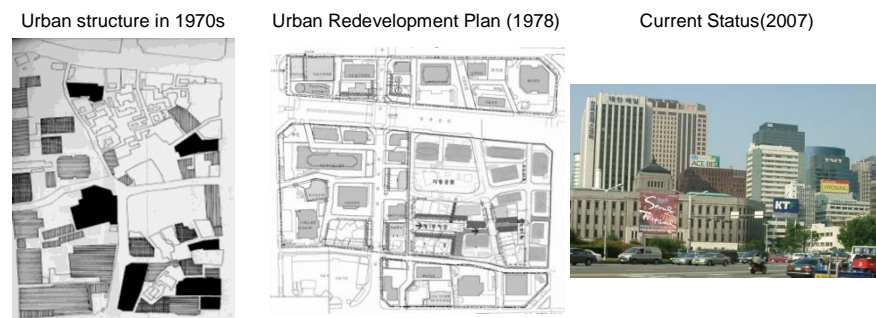


Only large-scale redevelopment was carried out in previous aristocratic sites in the Yamanote-areas of the Edo era in Tokyo. Marunouchi is a typical modernized urban area. A private developer, the Mitsubishi group, bought up about 104 ha of the Marunouchi area and built modern urban structures there in the early 1900s. Each site is bigger than 1 ha, and has high-rise modern buildings similar to those in Manhattan, New York. Before the 2000s, landowners who wanted to reconstruct their building could select one of several incentive zoning systems under the Urban Planning Law or the Architecture Standard Law. Now, they frequently use the designation of special zones under the Urban Renaissance Special Measure Law. The government allows FAR of up to 1800% by these law.



**Figure 4.** Urban structure and figure of Marunouchi, Tokyo

On the other hand, Seoul does not have enough land to carry out large-scale redevelopment projects in central business areas. The scrap-and-build method such as slum clearance is only one solution for constructing modern urban structures. This is why Seoul has restricted individual redevelopment projects with its Urban Redevelopment Plan under its Urban Redevelopment Law. Land coordination is necessary for redevelopment, to carry out legal URPs. Mugyo, in Seoul's central area, is a successful business redevelopment project implemented under the legal redevelopment system.



**Figure 5.** Urban structure and figure of Mugyo, Seoul

It is difficult to merge individual lands and to carry out redevelopment in central business and commercial areas because of their high land cost and complicated ownership. Some developers merge small lots in redevelopments for real estate speculation during periods of economic prosperity such as bubble economy. Most of landowners, however, prefer to maintain the status quo rather than to participate in risky projects.

Sometimes, isolated redevelopment projects are allowed to build “towers in space” in a neighborhood. Someone has criticized, however, that this breaks

the balance of nature in the region, and causes environmental burdens, destroys landscape, and leads to problems between neighborhood buildings.

**Urban contrast under legal redevelopment system**

Seoul and Tokyo considered for a long time modern urban structure such as those in Manhattan more desirable than their traditional urban structures. Thus, Seoul and Tokyo longed to reconstruct their inferior urban infrastructure, such as their low-level wooden buildings along narrow alleys. It was not easy to carry out legal URP in these cities, however, due to the difficulty of land coordination. Especially, densely populated wooden housing areas spread due to the rapid growth of the westside of Central Tokyo. Over 6,000 ha of Tokyo 23 wards consist of high-density wooden houses, unsound housing environments, and lack of roads or other infrastructure. These areas are still unsolved problem spots that are weak against disasters such as fires or earthquakes.

Even though they are located in commercial zones with 600% more FARs, they will not be able to use all of those FARs because of the diagonal line restriction under the Architecture Law. The diagonal line restriction based on the front road is related to a building's height. It forbids individual redevelopment projects in small lands that face narrow alleys, which are everywhere in central areas in Seoul and Tokyo. It is easier to use up FARs for lands that border main roads and to get FAR incentives under the current system. That is why small old buildings are seen behind of contemporary buildings at the sides of main roads.

Buildings on lands that border main roads in Tokyo have especially changed from low-level buildings to 10-to-15-story buildings. Redevelopment is carried out on lands located at the sides of main roads, even though it is very easy to build high-rise buildings, called pencil buildings, on very small lots that face main roads. It hardly happen in inner blocks.

Pencil building of roadside

Inner block (behind of roadside)



**Figure 6.** Urban figure of Kanda (roadside and inner block), Tokyo

Seoul's problem is more severe. Even if a piece of land is located beside a main roadside, it is difficult to secure permission for an individual redevelopment there if the land belongs to URPA. In URPA, only large-scale

redevelopment projects are allowed under the Urban Redevelopment law. This is why no pencil building can be found in central areas in Seoul. Small and old buildings are located along the main road in URPA. Moreover, landowners prefer to maintain the status quo than to participate in a risky project.



**Figure 7.** Change in urban structures and figures in Jongro, Seoul

#### **Improvement of the urban redevelopment system**

In the late 1990s, Seoul and Tokyo faced the high pressures of globalization and city competition. They thus planned the reconstruction of their central areas based on global standards. They also needed new redevelopment tools, however, that would enable them to simultaneously improve their urban infrastructure and conserve their historical urban structure.

Tokyo launched special laws and policies, such as its Urban Renaissance Special Measure Law (2002), to regenerate urban structure in central business and commercial areas. The law allows redevelopment projects to get high FARs with the improvement of public facilities. It is focused on large-scale redevelopment, as an economy-invigorating policy. It can contribute partly, however, to conserving some historical buildings via FAR transfer from historical buildings to others. The main beneficiaries are the buildings constructed in 1970-80s that had used up their own legal FARs. In the late 1990s, they needed reconstruction because of their physical and functional deterioration. Also, a new policy allows additional FAR incentive when individual redevelopment projects make commercial use of low-levels, establishment of public spaces, and so on. (Figure 5)

Tokyo also introduced a deregulatory policy to promote individual redevelopment projects by amending its Architecture Standard Law and Urban Planning Law. It eased restriction in architectural forms with diagonal lines via participation in a district plan. A district plan eases the set-back rule and allows narrow alleys as informal daily roads. It was hoped that this would help redevelop inner blocks.

In the 2000s, landowners started to propose their own plan with government organizations to revitalize and improve the image of their area. Thus, area management organizations appeared and became active. The Urban Renaissance Special Measure Law helped certify these movements and plans such as by authorizing private urban regeneration plans. It is a remarkable change that individual redevelopment projects are beginning to pay attention to other projects and to their areas.



**Figure 8.** Conserved modern building under a redevelopment project in Tokyo

At the same time, Seoul introduced a downtown development plan and restored Cheonggecheon to promote the redevelopment of its central business and commercial areas. They were meaningful events not only because the public sector started to lead redevelopments but also because Seoul changed its policy from restriction to deregulation. Seoul also eased its restrictions by amending its Urban Redevelopment Plan. The new plan introduced various redevelopment methods besides the scrap-and-build method. Seoul reduced its Urban Redevelopment Project Areas. It also allowed medium-scale redevelopment projects and tried to keep old alleys with the traditional urban structures.

Original plan

Amendment plan



**Figure 9.** Change in the Urban Redevelopment Plan of Seoul

Seoul also introduced and expended its district plan for the conservation of traditional urban structures outside its Urban Redevelopment Project Areas. The district plan regulates land use and architecture but it is not as strict as the Urban Redevelopment Plan. It will be able to control individual redevelopment projects for the improvement of the urban landscape.

### Comparison of Seoul and Tokyo

Seoul and Tokyo started from the same planning system in the early 1900s, and have influenced each with respect to their legal systems based on their

similar physical and socioeconomic environments. They have developed different types of urban structures by the differences in their operation of planning system.

Seoul's redevelopment projects have been strongly controlled by the central government's policy of restraining population concentration. It appeared as a strong redevelopment prohibition in the redevelopment direction and method in Seoul for decades. The regulatory system was recently eased partly via decentralization. The Seoul metropolitan government is still formulating powerful legal redevelopment plans, however, for most of its downtown areas. Individual developers have little chance of choosing redevelopment tools.

On the contrary, individual landowners or developers in Tokyo have wider choices among redevelopment tools. After the collapse of the bubble economy, the government cut down direct support via subsidies. It counted on the improvement of public spaces and building reconstruction for whoever wanted to redevelop their land. Thus, redevelopment happened only on a few pieces of land where such projects were possible. Most landowners do not want to carry out risky redevelopment projects in downtown areas.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Seoul and Tokyo

	<b>Tokyo</b>	<b>Seoul.</b>
Policy maker	City government → Ward government	Central government → City government
Policy decision	Public basement planning (public= landowners)	Advocacy planning (Planner = public sector = government)
Redevelopment Plan's binding power	Proposals of location and direction Flexible Plan	Detail plan at the district level Strong restriction
Boundary of application	Part of central commercial and business areas	Most central commercial and business areas
Object of redevelopment	Rules for redevelopment purpose by possibility	Rules for redevelopment direction & methods by political decision
Application of legal system	Landowner's decision	Policy maker's decision

Both cities formulated an urban regeneration policy to promote private sector redevelopment projects. Although policy makers intended to restructure the urban environment and promote international competitiveness, private developer focused only on more profitable redevelopment projects. Most of these redevelopment projects happened on large seed-lands. This was more profitable and less risky than merging small lots. Most urban central business and commercial areas are behind from redevelopment. This is why various degrees of urban contrast between old and new buildings can be easily seen in Seoul and Tokyo.

Now, Seoul and Tokyo are trying to find alternative redevelopment methods and individual redevelopment inducement tools for. A district plan could be

one way to improve inner blocks' deteriorated buildings without destroying traditional urban structures.

### **Conclusion and implication**

Seoul and Tokyo launched very similar planning scheme for redevelopment, which consisted of legal urban redevelopment projects and subsidies under an Urban Redevelopment Law, and they had the same intent to modernize urban structures. The difference in their levels of public participation and application of tools made the characteristic of their urban structures different, though. Government of Seoul still has a strong right in planning permission than Tokyo's. Eventhough landowners want or not to develop central commercial and business areas, political decision or government permission take priority over the law. On the contrary to this, Tokyo give priority to landowners right than necessity. Government of Tokyo has amendmended law to promote landowner's decision for redevelopment. Seoul and Tokyo have some similarities that they had a devoted legal redevelopment system for promote the establishment of modern urban structure in central business and commercial areas. Neither of these two cities has been successful, however, in solving its inner block's decay with a legal system.

In recent years, Seoul and Tokyo changed the policy direction of their downtown redevelopment. They realized that modern urban structure such as those in Manhattan were not only solution to solve urban problem and that their traditional urban structures could be attractive with their identities and origins for city competitiveness. It is expected that these changes will help improve inner blocks and conserve old urban structures for the next decades.

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