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Green Belt Policy in South Korea

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KRIHS Korea Research Institute for
Human Settlements

About KRIHS

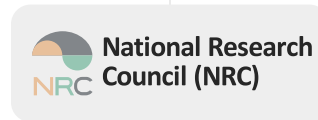
Korea Research Institute
for Human Settlements



About KRIHS

Governance

KRIHS and other government-funded research institutes in the areas of economics, humanities and social sciences are supervised by the **National Research Council for Economics, Humanities, and Social Sciences (NRC)** under the Prime Minister's Office.



26 research institutes in economics, the Humanities, and the social sciences

- Approval of budget and management plan of research institutes
- Appointment of president and auditor
- Evaluation of research institutes
- Planning and coordination of researches among institutes
- Other major decision making for institutes



About KRIHS

Brief History

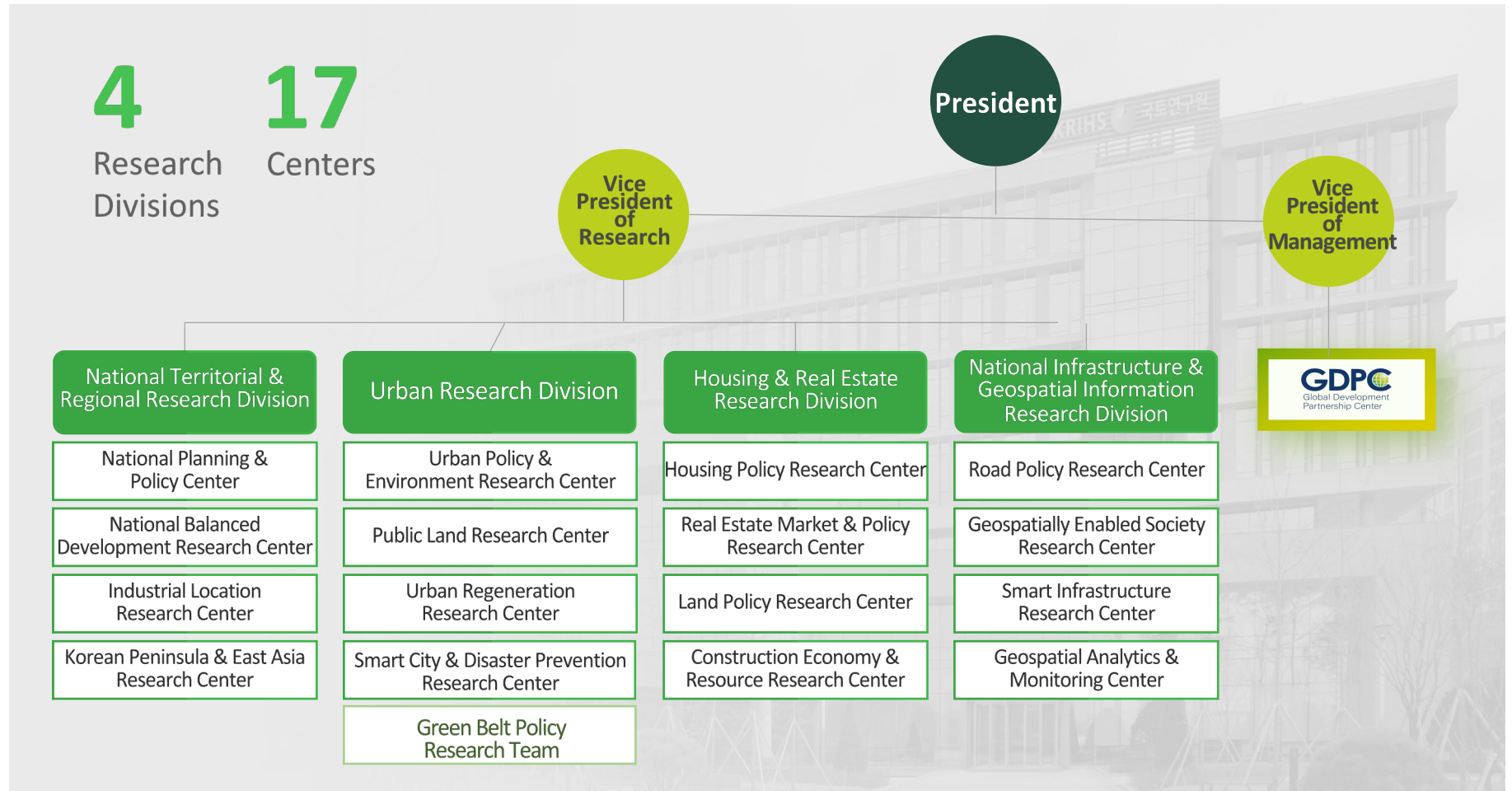


- 2025** ○ **OCT** 47th Anniversary of KRIHS
- 2023** ○ **OCT** 45th Anniversary of KRIHS
SEP Inauguration of 18th President, Gyo-Eon Shim
- 2018** ○ **OCT** 40th Anniversary of KRIHS
JUL Inauguration of 16th President, Hyun-Soo Kang
- 2017** ○ **JAN** Relocated to Sejong
- 2010** ○ **DEC** Establishment of the Global Development Partnership Center (GDPC)
- 1999** ○ **JAN** Establishment of National Research Council for Economic, Humanities, and Social Science (NRC)
- 1994** ○ **APR** Relocated to Anyang, Gyeonggi-do
- 1981** ○ **JUN** Consolidation of the Regional Development Institute (subsidiary of KAIST) into KRIHS
- 1978** ○ **DEC** Enactment of the KRIHS Promotion Act (No. 3140)
OCT Establishment of KRIHS

About KRIHS

Organization

KRIHS is composed of 4 Research Divisions and 17 Centers, divided by research areas.



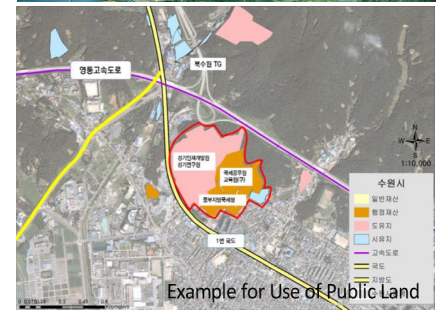
About KRIHS

Urban Research Division

Conducts policy research to enhance urban **vitality** and improve urban infrastructure for sustainable urban development

Affiliated Centers

- Urban Policy & Environment Research Center
- Urban Regeneration Research Center
- Public Land Research Center
- Smart City & Disaster Prevention Research Center

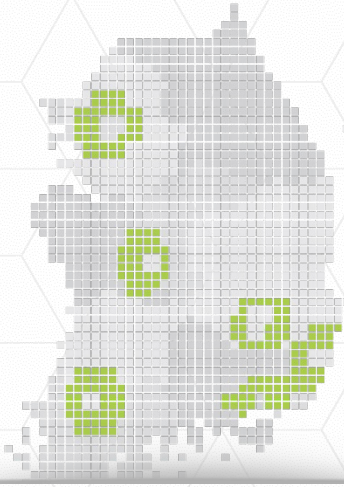


Contents

I . Introduction of the Greenbelt System (1970s)

II . Adjustment and Utilization of Greenbelt Zones
(1999 ~ Present)

III . Evaluation of the Greenbelt System



I

Introduction of the Greenbelt System

1 Background of the Greenbelt System Implementation

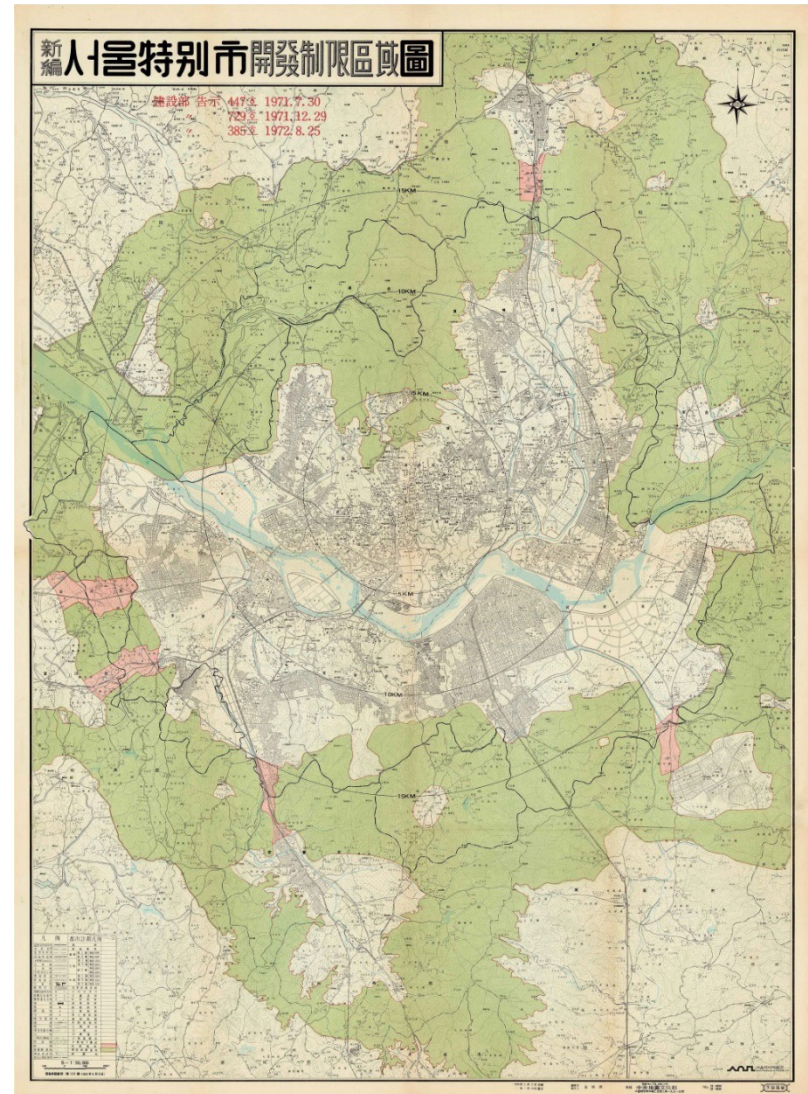
In the 1960s, rapid industrialization led to a massive influx of population into the outskirts of major cities, including Seoul

Massive population influx resulted in housing, traffic, and environmental issues

+

Uncontrolled urban sprawl destroyed green spaces in the outskirts

Greenbelt System (Restricted Development Zone) to curb urban sprawl in metropolitan outskirts was introduced mainly to address urban issues around major cities by fully revising Urban Planning Act (Jan. 19, 1971)



Map of Greenbelt in Seoul (1972)

2 Objectives of Greenbelt Designation

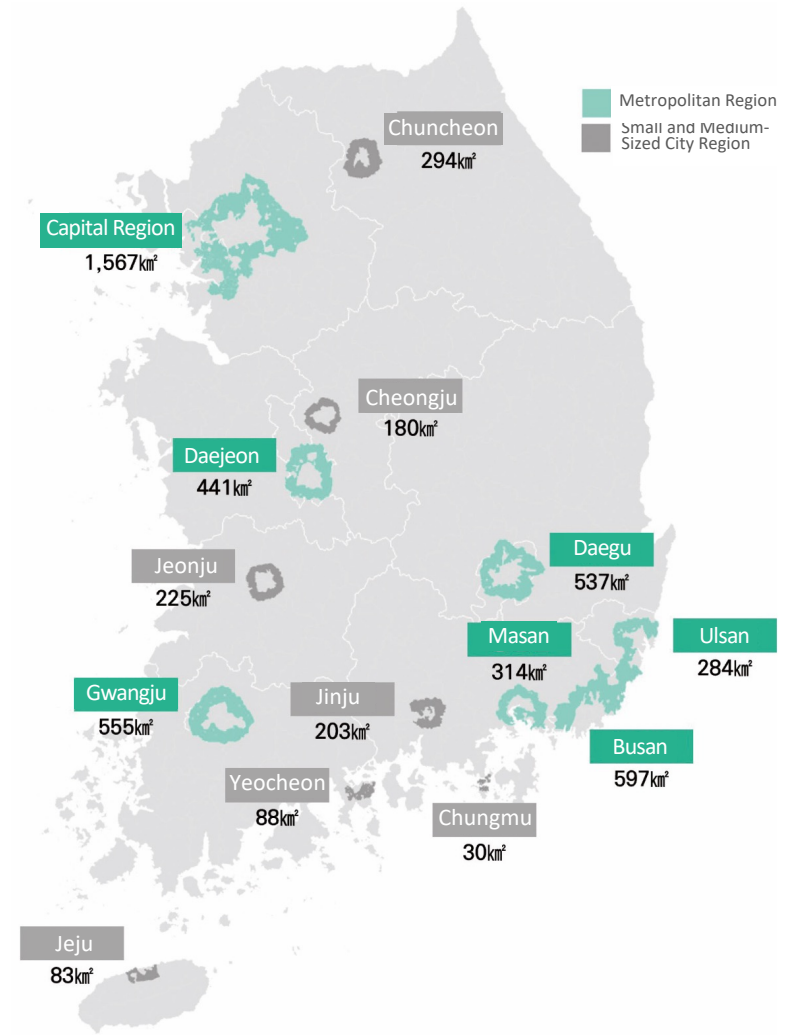
1. Designated areas where development is restricted to prevent the **disorderly expansion** of the city and to avoid the **merging of adjacent areas** into a continuous urban expanse
2. Areas where development is limited to **preserve natural environments and ecosystems**, ensuring a sustainable and healthy living environment for residents
3. Strategic areas with development restrictions to **safeguard national security interests**
4. Regions where development is controlled to **maintain the city's identity** and to **manage sustainable and appropriate growth**

3 History of Greenbelt Designation (1970s)

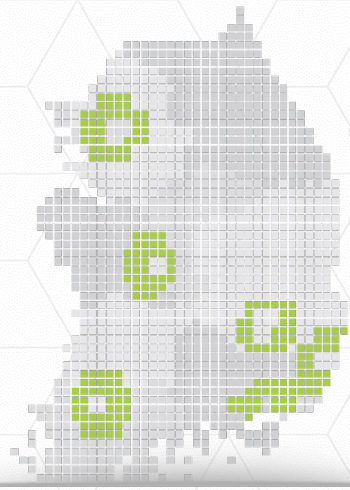
From Capital Region (1971) to Yeosu Region (1977) a total of 8 phases designated 14 metropolitan areas, covering 5,397 km² (5.4% of the national land)

* No additional designations have been made since then

Div.	Designation Date	Designated Area
1st	1971. 7. 30.	Inner Capital Region (1st/CR)
2nd	1971. 12. 29.	Suwon and Anyang in the Capital Region (2nd/CR), Busan Region
3rd	1972. 8. 25.	Outer Capital Region (3rd/CR), Daegu Region
4th	1973. 1. 17.	Gwangju Region
5th	1973. 3. 5.	Jeju Region
6th	1973. 6. 27.	Provincial Capitals (Daejeon, Chuncheon, Cheongju, Jeonju), Ulsan, Masan-Jinhae, Chungmu region (Tongyeong), Jinju Region
7th	1976. 12. 4.	Banwol (Sihwa Industrial Complex) in the Capital Region (4th/CR)
8th	1977. 4. 18.	Yeocheon Region



Greenbelt Designation Status (1971-1977)



II

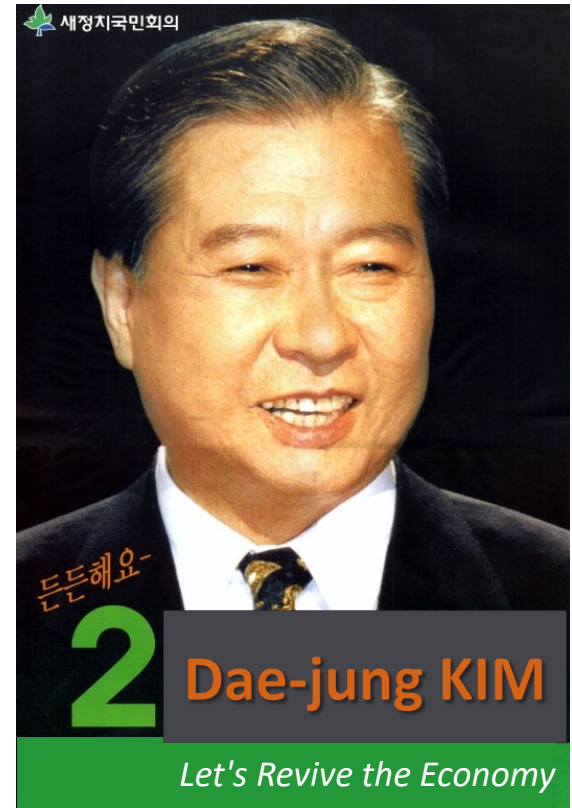
Adjustment and Utilization of Greenbelt Zones

1 Background of Greenbelt Adjustment (Late 1990s)

For over 20 years following the initial designation, strict activity restrictions without boundary adjustments led to numerous public complaints

The 15th Presidential Election (1997) included a promise to adjust greenbelt zones, changing the principle of maintaining unchanged boundaries.

The 'Greenbelt Improvement Plan,' emphasizing 'Environmental Assessment and Urban Planning First, Release Later,' was finalized and announced (July 22, 1999)



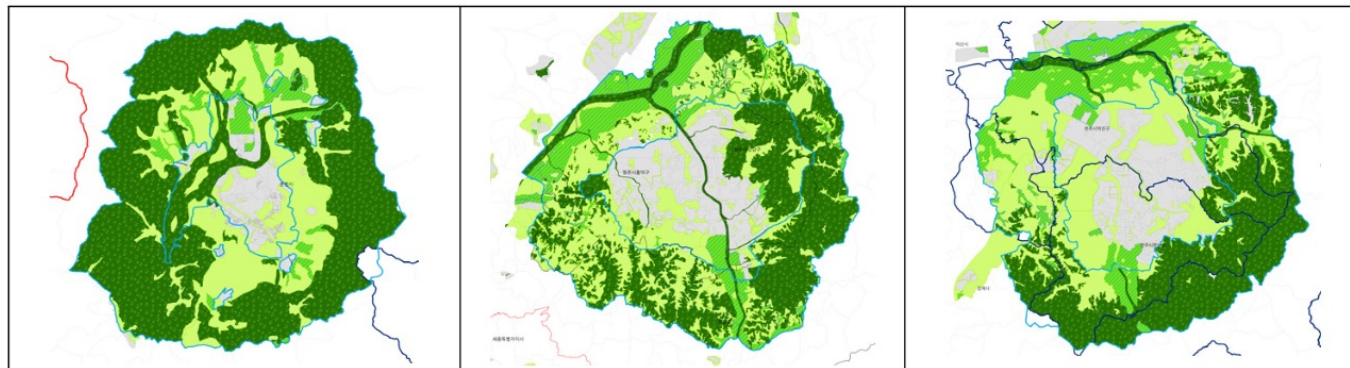
15th Presidential Election Campaign Poster

2 Adjustment of Greenbelt Zones

- Full Release in Small and Medium-Sized Cities

Low development pressure and limited effectiveness of greenbelt designation led to the full release of small and medium-sized cities from greenbelt restrictions (2001-2003)

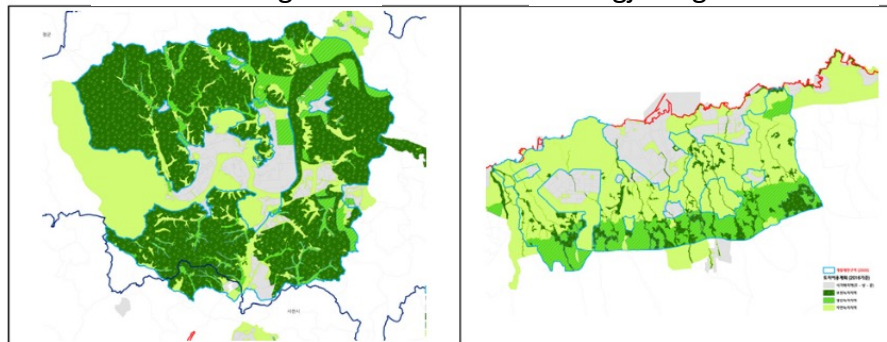
Subdivision of Green Areas in the Fully Released 7 Regions



Chuncheon Region

Cheongju Region

Jeonju Region







Jinju Region

Jeju Region

 **Greenbelt Zones (2000)**

Land Use Plans (2016)

-  Urbanized Areas (Residential/Commercial/Industrial)
-  Greenbelt for Preservation
-  Productive Green Areas
-  Natural Green Areas

© Kim Jung-eun et al. (2017)

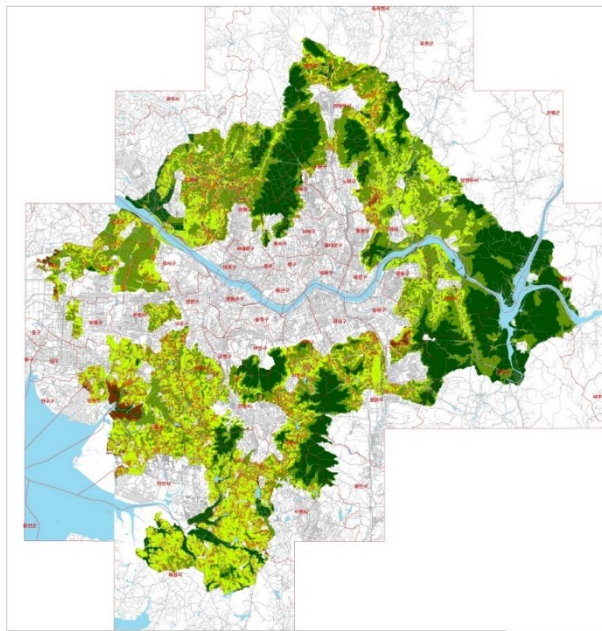
Korea National Spatial Data Information Portal, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MOLIT)

2 Adjustment of Greenbelt Zones

- Partial Release and Utilization in Metropolitan Areas

Metropolitan areas with development pressure are being selected for partial release based on environmental assessments and metropolitan planning

Capital Region Environmental Assessment Map (2002)



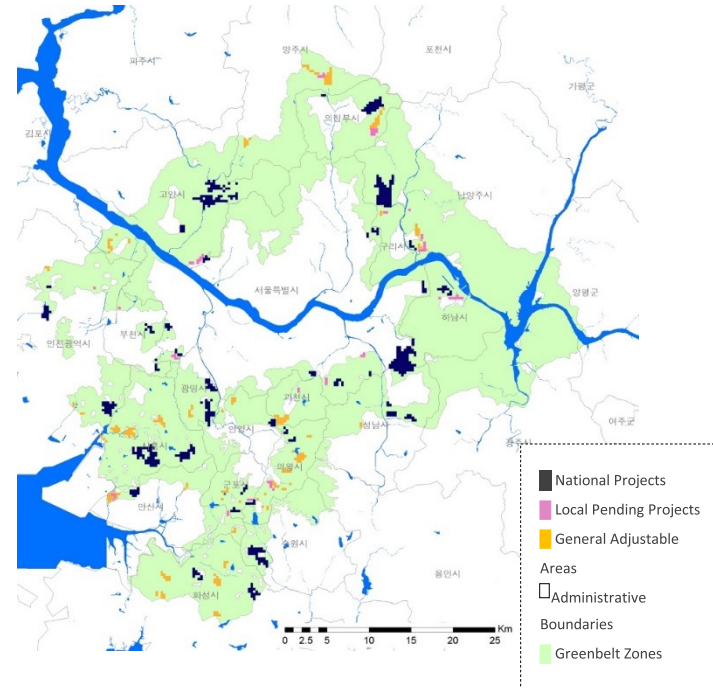
SCALE 1/100,000
2005.03.21

KRIHS

Legend

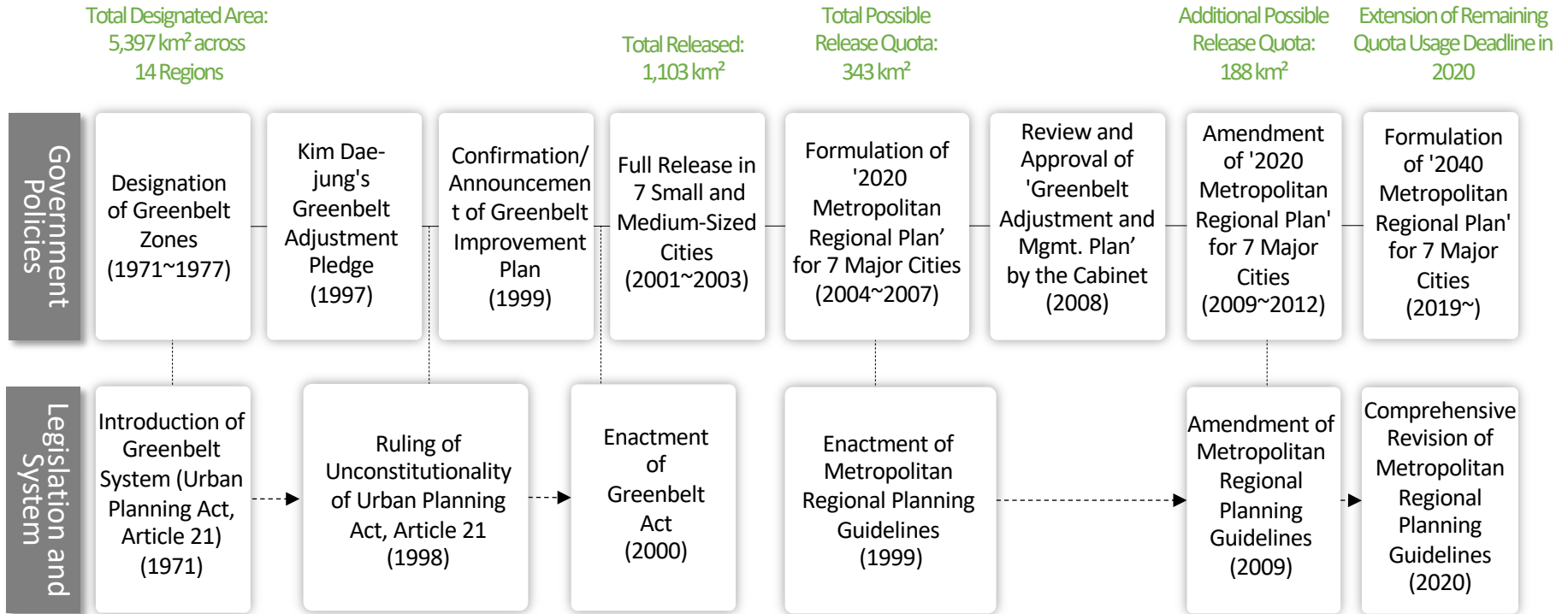
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5

Areas Identified for Possible Adjustment in the "Capital Region Metropolitan Plan" (2007)



© 2020 Capital Region Metropolitan Plan (2007)

3 Policy Changes in Adjusting Greenbelt Zones

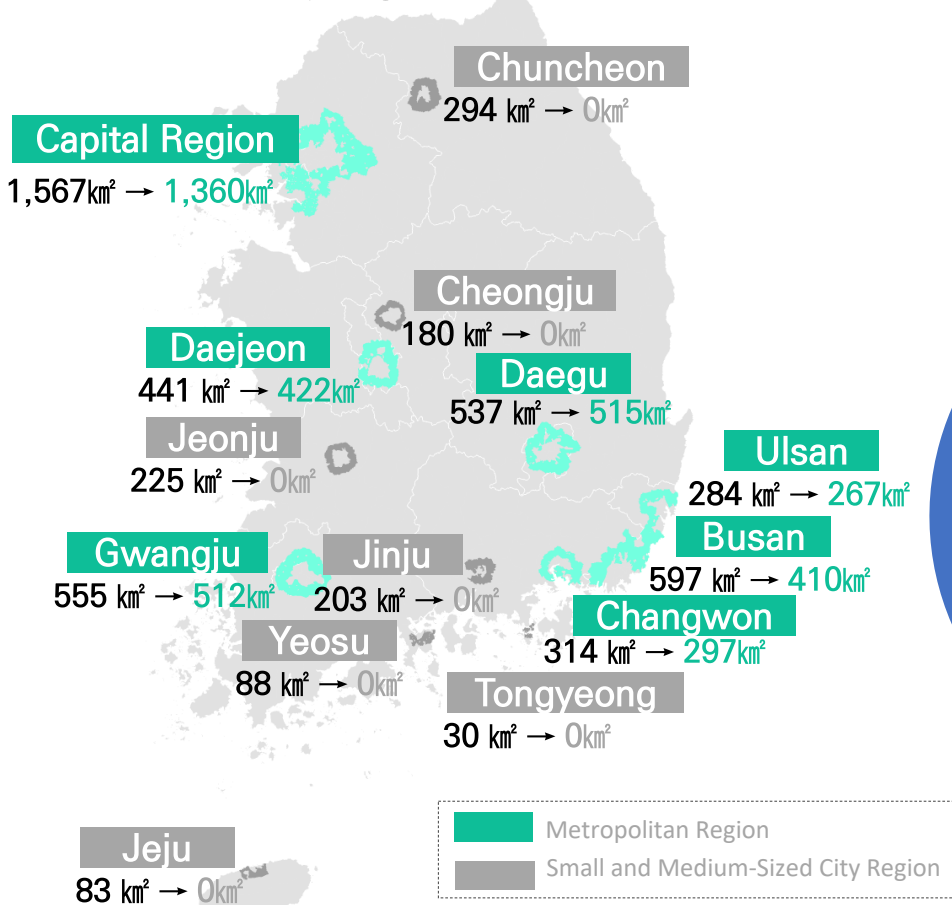


© Kim Jung-eun et al. (2017)

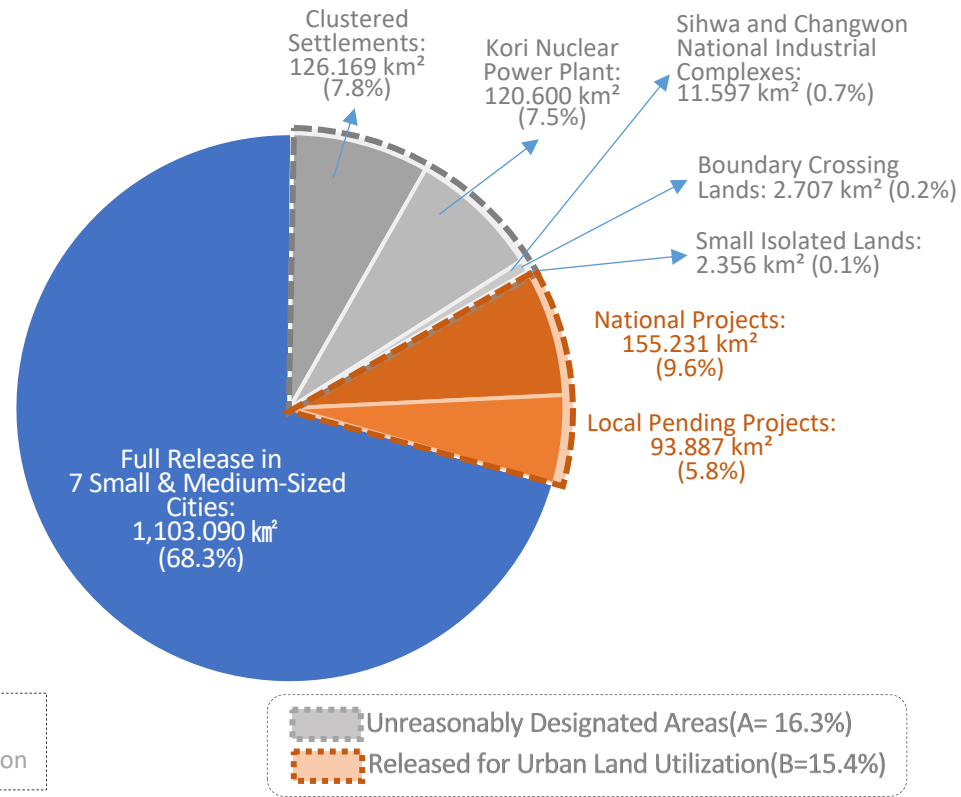
4 Status of Greenbelt Adjustments (2024)

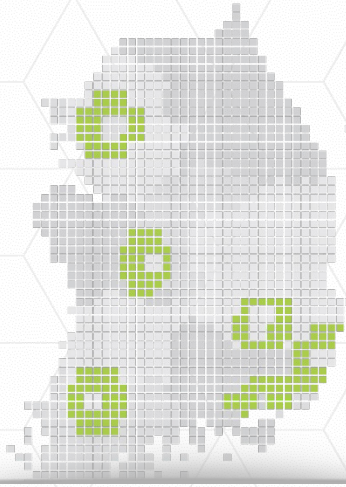
Approximately 30% (1,615 km²) of the initially designated greenbelt areas have been released nationwide by the end of 2024

Designated and Released Greenbelt Areas by Region (Initial → 2024)



Greenbelt Release by Type and Area/Percentage





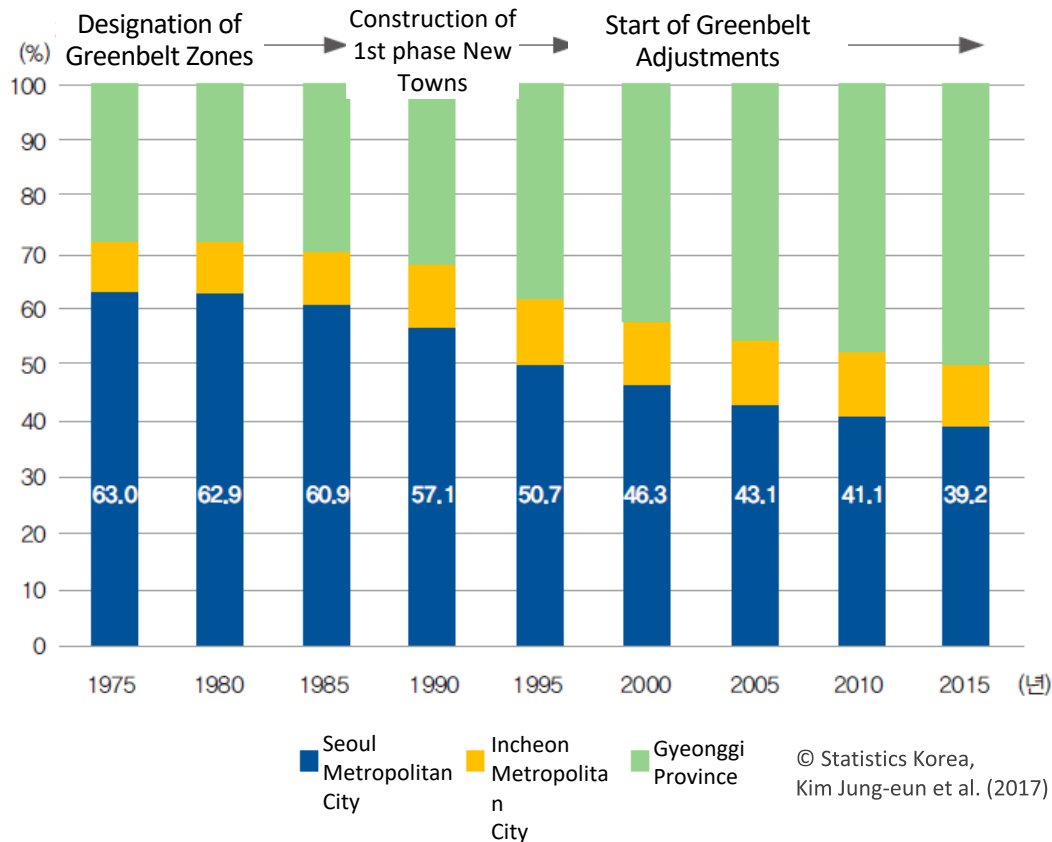
III

Evaluation of the Greenbelt System

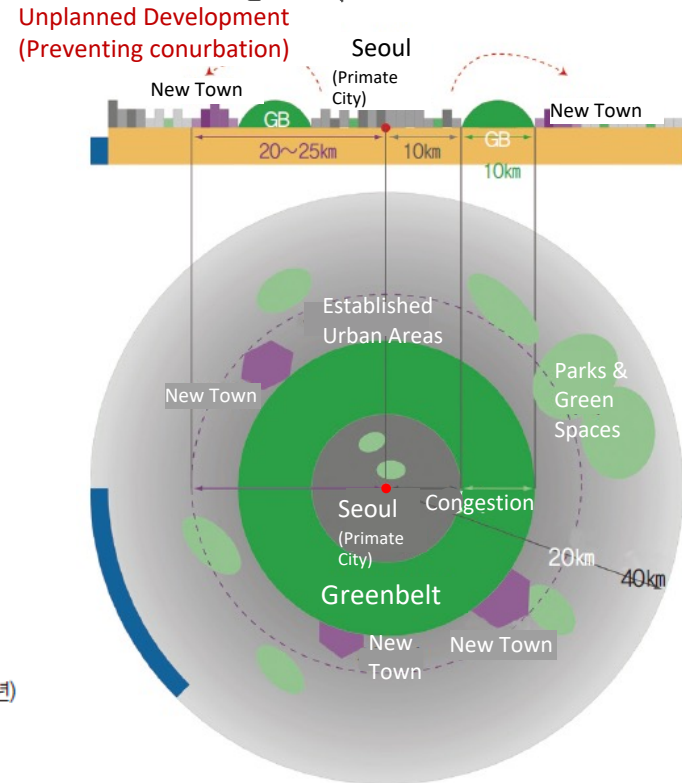
1 Rigid Boundary Operation in Urban Growth Management

Prevented disorderly city expansion and provided urban land for public use, but rigid zoning has caused urban sprawl by delaying development responses

Population Trends in the Capital Region(1975-2015)



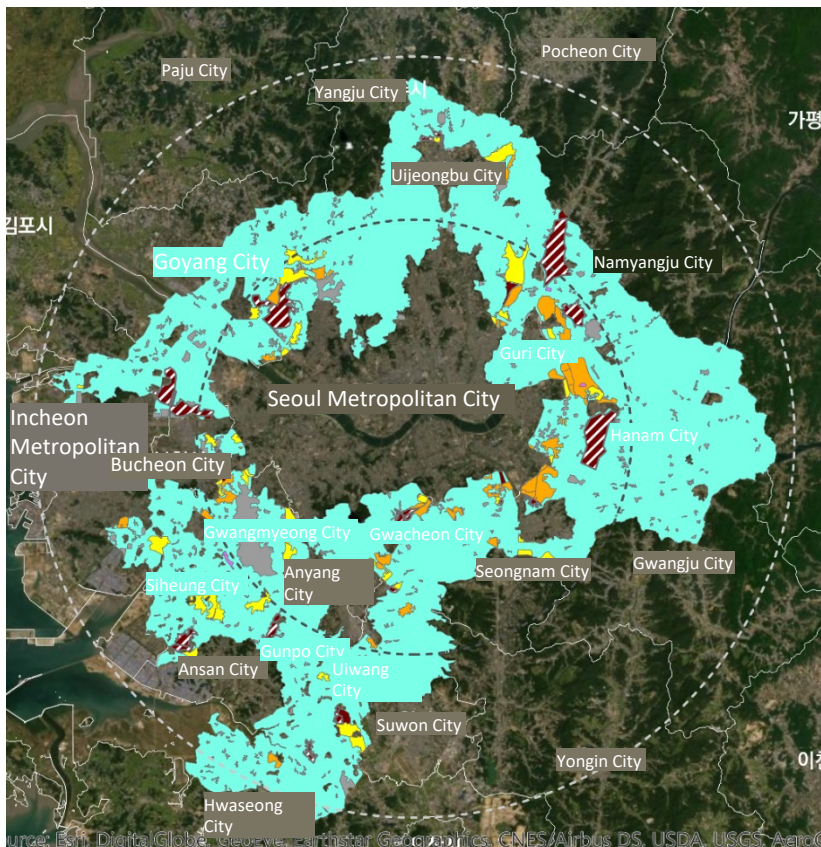
Conceptual Diagram of Capital Region Spatial Structure



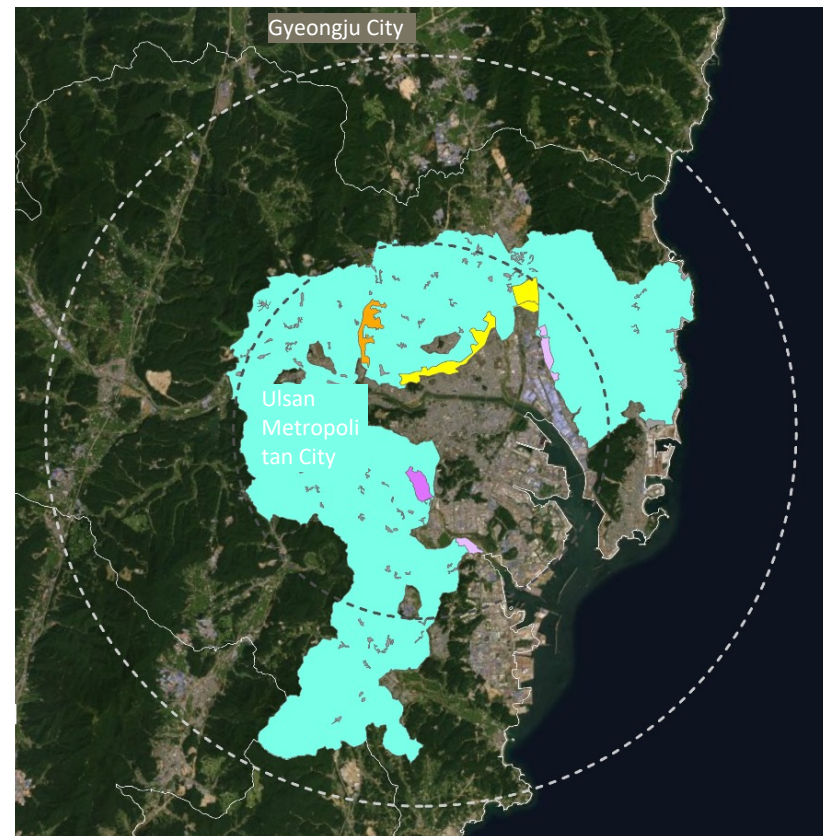
© KIM J.E.(2015)

2 Greenbelt Shape Distortion Weakens Its Function

Adjustments based on economic and environmental considerations have led to the disruption of the belt shape or the reduction of its width in some areas



Status of Greenbelt Releases in the Capital Region



Status of Greenbelt Releases in the Ulsan Region

3 Utilized as a Means to Boost Regional Competitiveness

Relaxing Criteria for Greenbelt Releases in Non-Capital Regions as a Means to Achieve Balanced National Development

Expanded Delegation of Authority

(June 2023)

Expanding Authority for Greenbelt Releases to Non-Capital Local Gov'ts: 300,000 to 1,000,000 m²

National Strategic Projects

(April 2023)

Exception for National Strategic Projects in Non-Capital Regions: Semiconductor, materials, components, and equipment industries can exceed the release limit

Reduced Minimum Width

(July 2023)

Reducing Min. Width for Greenbelt Zones in Non-Capital Regions: 5 km

4 Operational Direction for the Greenbelt System

Establishing a **sustainable** greenbelt utilization and conservation system that **both current and future generations** can enjoy together

Goal1

Thoroughly preserving areas of high conservation value as **attractive recreational spaces**

Goal2

Re-establishing balanced adjustment principles that consider national land development and greenbelt functions

Goal3

Strengthening public benefit and environmental soundness for unavoidable release projects

Goal4

Building a **strict and systematic management framework** to eradicate illegal activities

Thank You

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