

Korea Institute of Registered Architects KIRA

ARCASIA Council meeting, Incheon, Korea

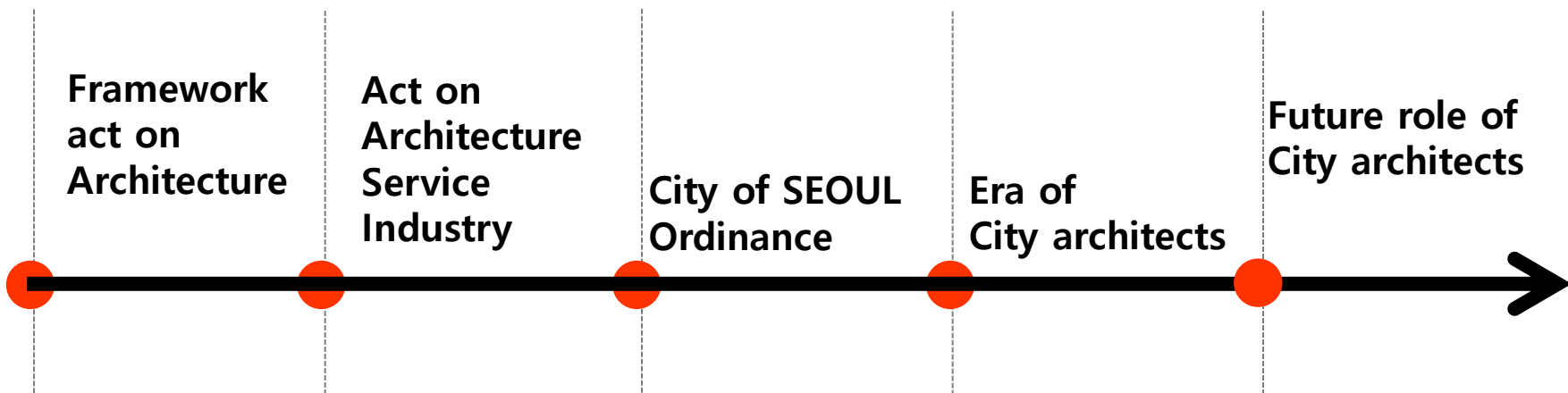
“ City Architect’s role in Korea ”

September, 2025



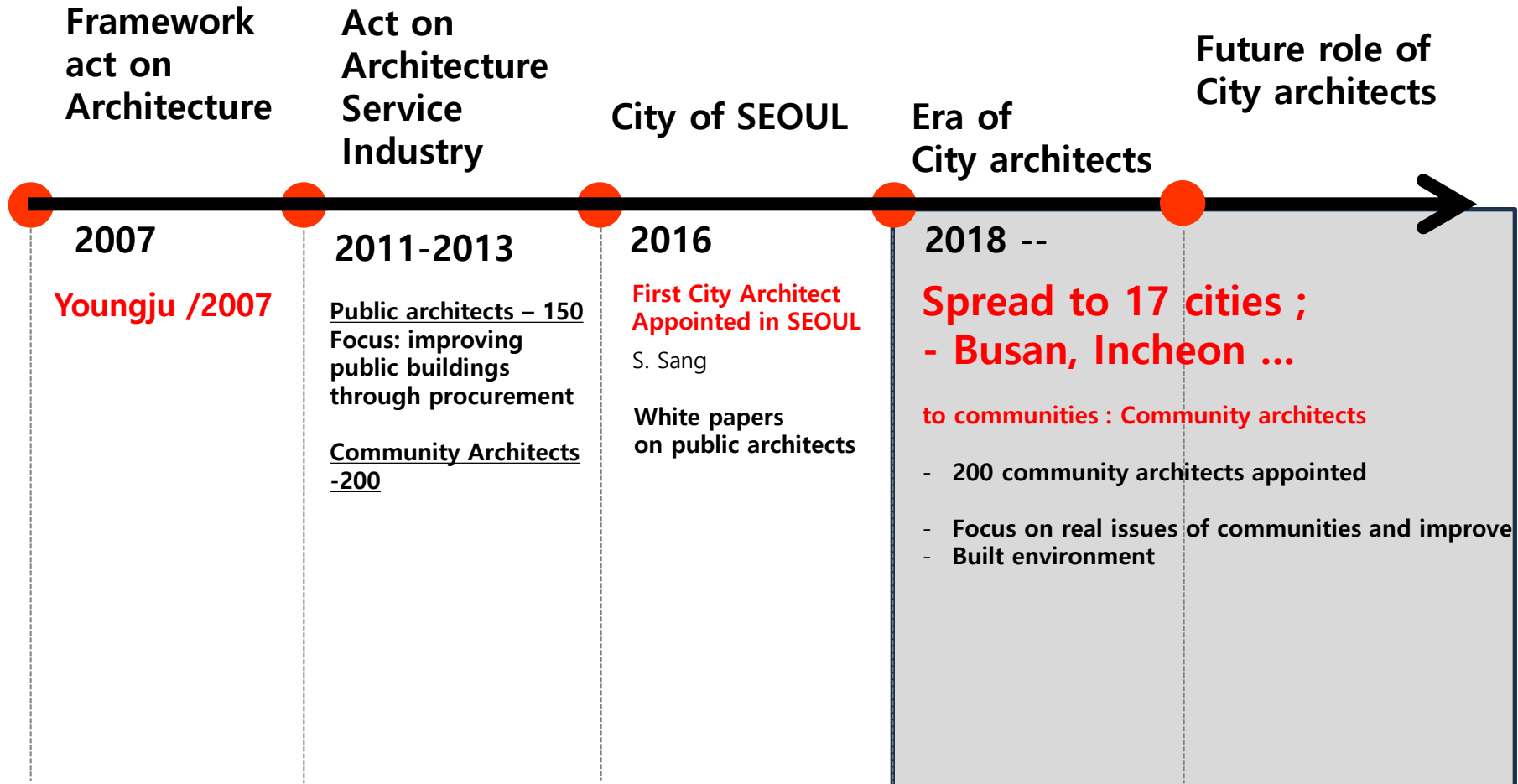
City Architect(s) : introduction and changing role

- **Government administration reform : private sector expert participation**
- **Chief architect, (總括建築家) – 2007 onward**
 - based on article 23 of Framework act on Architecture / 建築基本法
 - to improve the quality of public architecture and spatial environment through professional advice and comprehensive planning by a chief architect related to architecture, design competitions and urban development
- **Several municipalities enacted ordinances regarding “chief architects”**
- **National Architectural Policy Committee established , 2008**



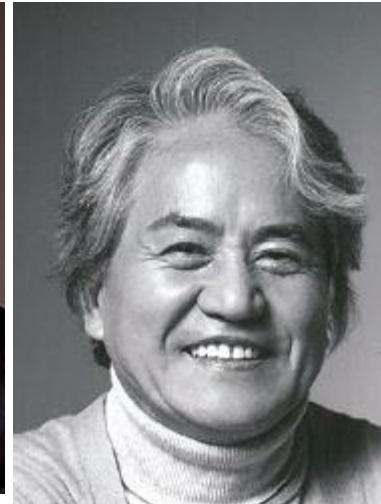
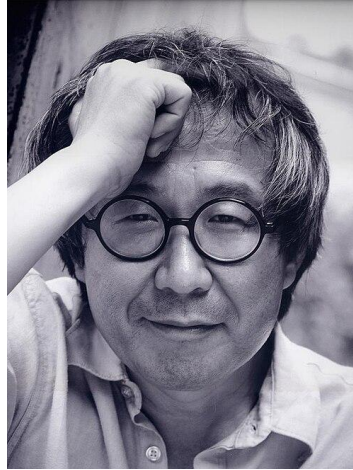
City Architect(s) : spread to other cities

- Introduction of city architects in Korea



City Architect(s) : City architects in various cities

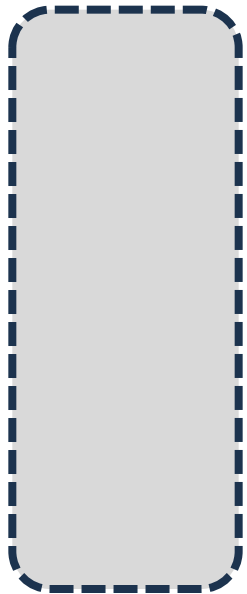
- Notable city architects :



City Architect(s) : SEOUL case study

- Introduction of city architects : Case study –Seoul

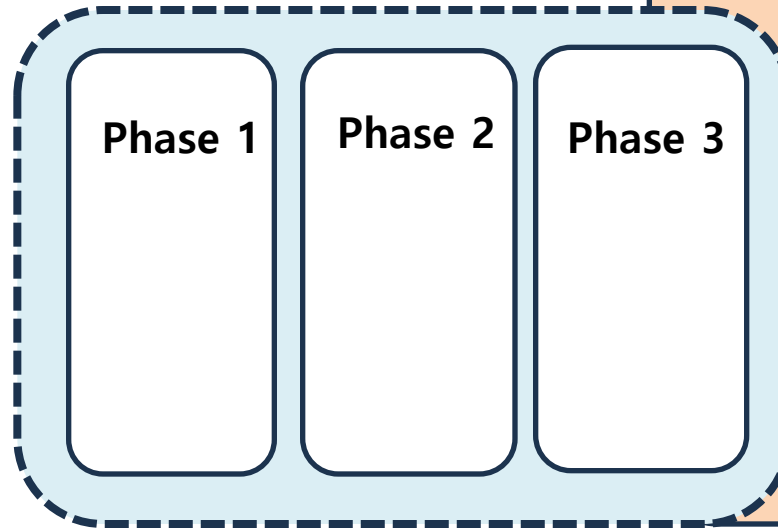
Framework
act on
Architecture



Act on
Architecture
Service
Industry



City of SEOUL :
city ordinances on architecture

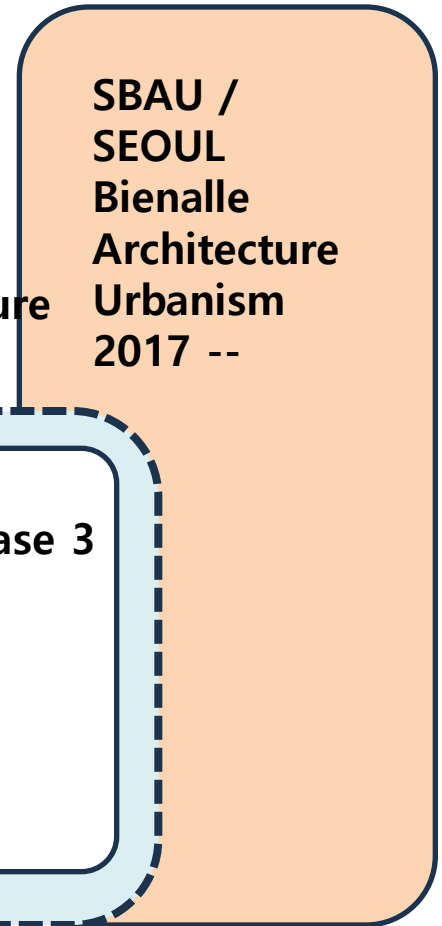


2012-2015

2015-2017

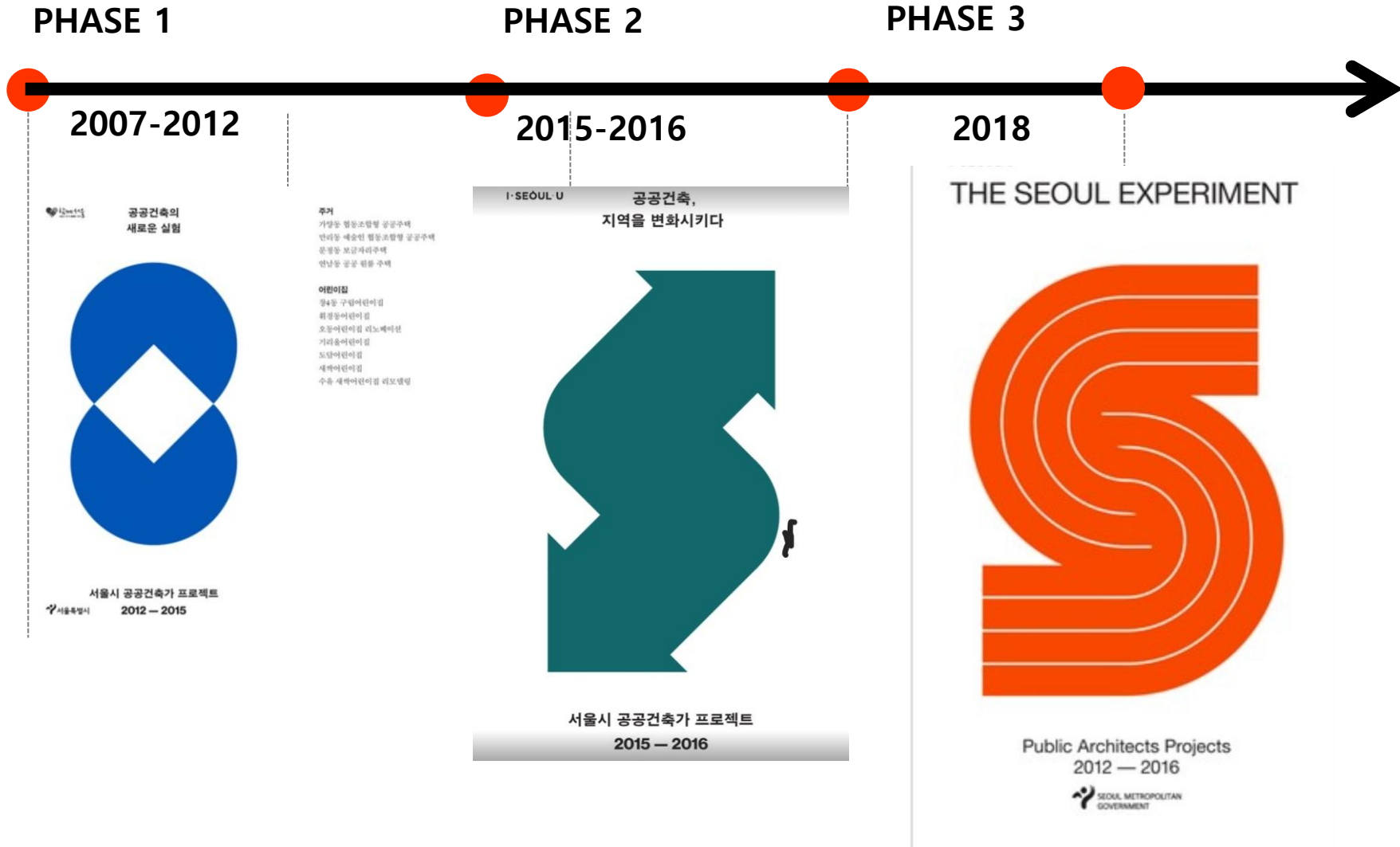
2021

SBAU /
SEOUL
Biennale
Architecture
Urbanism
2017 --



City Architect(s) : Outcome of each Phase; Seoul

- Introduction of city architects in SEOUL



City Architect(s) : outspoken to civic matter

- Notable city architects : cityhall competition in Cheongju

신춘규 건축사



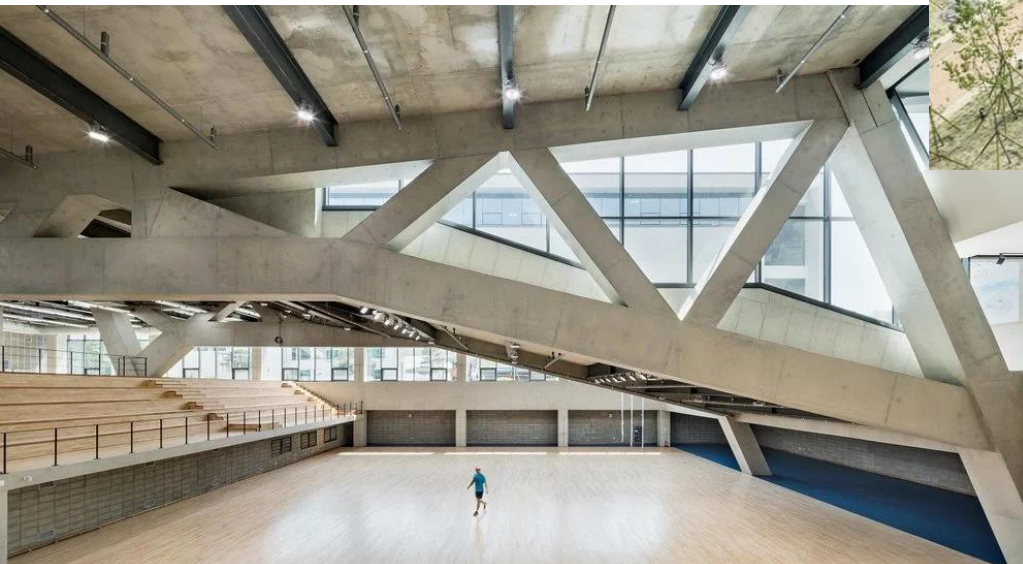
City Architect(s) : City architects in small cities

- Case study: Yeongju (population : 97,000)



City Architect(s) : Case of small city

- Case study: Yeongju (population : 97,000) : series of good public buildings



City Architect(s) : definitions

City of SEOUL : architecture ordinance article 36, 37

Glossary of City architect/ Public architect/ Community architect

Chief (City) architect : A private sector expert ("Seoul Chief Architect") may be appointed to provide advice on the establishment of the city's spatial policy and strategy, or to provide general coordination and supervision of major projects,

Public architect

A professional who plans, designs, or oversees, coordinates, and manages the entire project process from planning to design, construction, and maintenance/management stages to ensure consistency in the plan.

Community architect

- Advise on key issues related to community-level architecture and spatial environment.
- Develop community-level publicness maps and identify policy initiatives through field surveys.
- Serve as coordinator for public and private projects in the community's architecture and spatial environment sectors and promote pilot projects.

City Architect(s) : legal clauses

The Framework Act on Architecture / 건축기본법

- Legislated in December, 2007
- To enhance quality of life in terms of safety and living environment by identifying obligations of each party involves in Architectural design.
- **The first legislation to perceive architecture as a part of culture.**
- Major outputs: **National Architecture Policy Commission /
(article 23)
Private sector expert to participate the advancement of public architecture**

National Architecture Policy Commission

- Established in December 2008
- Vision: Beautiful land, Comfortable living space
- Objectives: Create a noble living space
 - Build for green growth
 - Build basis for creative architectural culture

Participation of private sector experts can be assigned to enhance : presidential decree 21

- Public Design Competitions, Coordination of Urban Design and development

City Architect(s) : introduction and changing role

Further Considerations

Despite the benefits, there are ongoing debates about the role of city (public) architects. Koreans are actively discussing how to bring balance of innovation with the legal framework.