

# An Examination of Age-Friendliness of the City of Suwon

## 1. Outline of the Age-Friendliness Examination

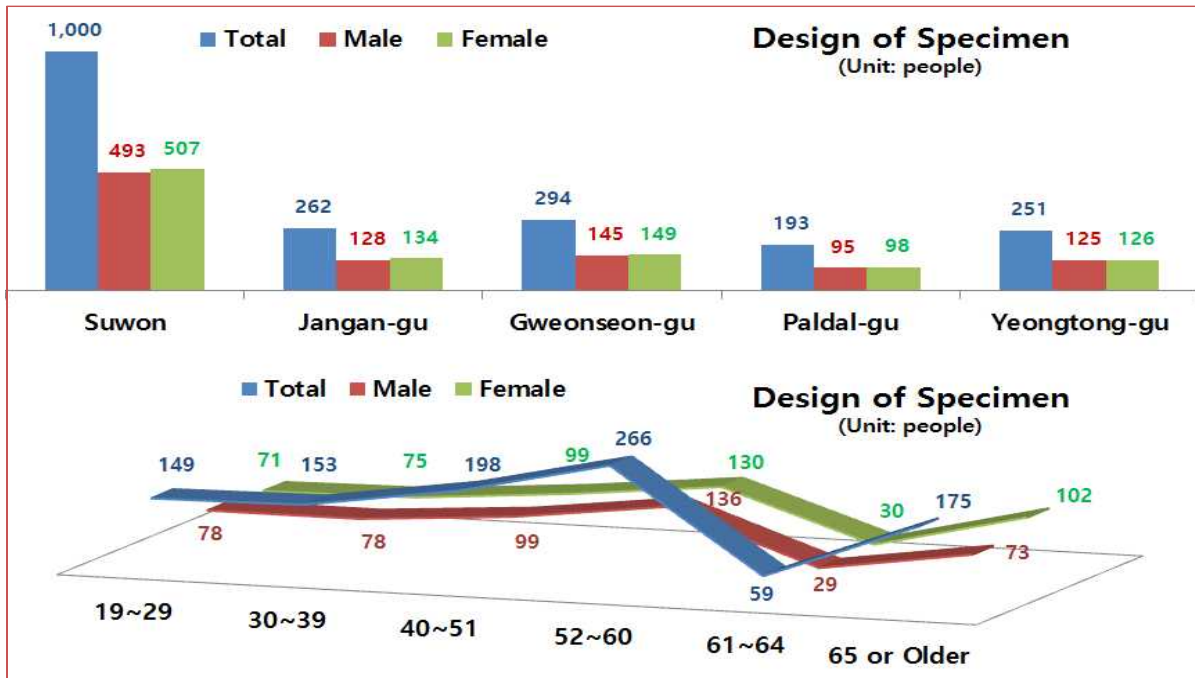
- In order to promote an age-friendly environment in the City of Suwon in the general fields of communication & information, local community support, and health services, all which are relevant to the deciding factors of Suwon's physical environment, socio-economic environment, and health and social services, citizens' evaluation and recognition of age-friendliness are examined and the results are to be used as basic resources and also for issue-making and preparing action plans to make Suwon an age-friendly city.
- Age-friendliness and policy experience level were examined multi-dimensionally on the total population of 1,000 male and female adults including baby-boomers (52-60 years old), preliminary aged people (61-64 years old), and Suwon citizens of ages 19 or older who were selected with their residential districts, ages, and gender considered so that the research results may be generalized over all districts of Suwon.

<b>Research Purposes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ An examination of citizens' demand for a policy to make city age-friendly</li> <li>▷ Resources to establish a driving strategy for the WHO recognition of an age-friendly city</li> </ul>
<b>Research Period</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ 1st: May 26 - June 5, 2015</li> <li>▷ 2nd: June 8 - 15, 2015</li> </ul>
<b>Research Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ One on one interview using a structured questionnaire</li> </ul>
<b>Research Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ 500 general citizens (19-51 years old)</li> <li>▷ 500 aged citizens (52 years old or older)</li> </ul>

<Table 1> Outline of the age-friendliness Examination

Categories	Number of Questions
Residential convenience environment	9
Local welfare and public health	11
Traffic convenience environment	12
Safety and age-friendly facilities	9
Social respect and care	10
Communication and information provision	6
Participation in local community activities	7
Use of aged human resources and employment support	9

<Table 2> Content of Questionnaire



<Figure 1> Design of specimen for age-friendliness examination

- The specimen was designed in three age groups of 52-60 years old, 61-64 years old, and 65 or older according to the aged population and gender distribution so that the results could be used for the establishment of the driving strategy for the WHO recognition of an age-friendly city. The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the guidelines of *WHO Age-Friendly City Guide* (2008) and *Revised Guide* (2015), and appropriate questions were selected to

reflect the situations in Suwon and to examine the policy experience level.

## **2. Result Analyses of Age-Friendliness Examination**

### **A. Residential convenience environment**

“The current residence is well equipped with water, gas, heating, and bathroom all of which are necessary for living” (3.57) marked the highest score, which was followed by “There is economic difficulty in finding an affordable residence if I want to move to other place” (3.35), “Service is necessary to support house renovation or repair” (3.34), “I like to continue living in the current local community where there are my house and neighbors” (3.28), “The current house structure provides free movement within the house” (3.26), and “I’d like to renovate the current house to prevent safety accidents and to remove physical inconveniences” (3.12) in the given order among those which scored higher than the average.

### **B. Local welfare and public health**

“Opportunities are provided to receive regular health checks (physical examination, preventive shots, etc.)” (3.17) marked the highest score, followed by “I can receive appropriate medical care either in a hospital or a local health center whenever a hospital examination or medical care is necessary” (3.04) among those scored higher than the average in the given order.

### **C. Traffic convenience environment**

“Information on public traffic such as public bus routes or schedule is easily obtainable” (3.20) marked the highest score, followed by “Pedestrian cross offers enough time to cross the street safely” (3.15), “Road signs and navigation guides are printed large and accurate to guarantee easy perception” (3.14), “Bus stops provide safe

waiting and convenient boarding and deboarding” (3.13), “Public transportation takes me to the desired destination any time” (3.06), and “Streets have good drainage and street lights” (3.06) among those with higher scores than the average in the given order.

#### **D. Safety and age-friendly facilities**

“There is a park or walking trail that are easily accessible nearby my house” (3.40) marked the highest score, followed by “There are benches or bathrooms for use if necessary in the park or the walking trails” (3.37), “The ground of the park or walking trails is safe and there are no blocking obstacles” (3.12), “Pedestrian passes that I use frequently are convenient to use with leveled ground and no blocking obstacles” (3.11), “There are leisure facilities or exercise facilities nearby that aged people can easily use” (3.07), and “There are enough number of public bathrooms, and they are clean for convenient use” (3.04) among those scored higher than the average in the given order.

#### **E. Social respect and care**

“More human rights activities are needed to remove discrimination or maltreatment of the aged people” (3.15) marked higher than the average, but all other sub-concepts scored lower than the average such as “There are institutionalized aged people discounts for cultural and/or sports facilities” (2.94), “All generation participation including the aged people is promoted for local festivals or events” (2.82), “There are society-wide respect and recognition of the aged as valuable people” (2.77), “There are many art or cultural festivals that all generation can participate in” (2.74), “There are frequent events for cross-generational harmony in local community” (2.69), “There is an education on aging and the aged people in schools and the aged are invited to school events” (2.66), “There are routine solicitation of opinions to figure out what needs the aged people have” (2.65), “Desires and preferences of the aged people are reflected in municipal

policies, and there are various such policies in effect” (2.65) in the given order.

## **F. Communication and information provision**

“Newspapers, notices, and subtitles in broadcasting are printed in large letters for easy readability” (2.90) marked the highest score, followed by “Public institutions, hospitals, welfare centers provide kindly guides in easy language when inquired and asked for help” (2.89), “There are assistants to the aged people in public places like city hall, library, etc.” (2.82), “Printed information and oral communication are short and simple for easy understanding” (2.81), “City Hall and Residents Service Centers systematically provide necessary information for all citizens” (2.74), “Local residents of all ages have enough access to necessary information through newspapers, broadcasting, local newsletters, etc.” (2.73), all of which marked lower than the average in the given order.

## **G. Participation in local community activities**

“There are enough transportation methods to go to various kinds of events or attractive places” (2.92) marked the highest score, followed by “Various kinds of events, meetings, and attractions are held in places where anyone can easily find ways to” (2.87), “It is easy to obtain information on local community education or events (such as local events participation, convenience facilities use, transportation, etc.)” (2.86), “There are frequent leisure, entertainment, or sports events that anyone can participate in” (2.82), “There are various social activities (religious, cultural, hobbies, leisure, or voluntary activities) that aged people can participate in” (2.81), “There are frequent events or programs in which many generations can participate (grandchildren and other family members can participate together)” (2.68), and “There are places, facilities, or programs to resolve cross-generational conflict” (2.64), all of which scored lower than the average in the given

order.

## **H. Use of aged human resources and employment support**

“There are many cases in which aged people are not employed even after the completion of education programs for aged people employment” (2.78) marked the highest score, followed by “Various information, education and training programs are provided for the reemployment or the start of a business by women who experienced career discontinuity” (2.62), “There are job training programs for the employment of aged people” (2.56), “There is good assistance for employment or the start of a business after retirement to continue career and use the potential” (2.51), “There is no difficulty in obtaining information because there is abundant information on the employment or the start of businesses for the aged people” (2.50), “There is no age-based discrimination in employment, employment continuation, promotion, training, etc.” (2.49), “There are many opportunities for employment education for women, the disabled, or the aged people” (2.46), “Employment opportunities are provided for the aged people” (2.43), and “There are many jobs for the aged people” (2.38), all of which marked lower than the average in the given order.

## **3. Alternatives Suggested by the Results of the Aged-Friendliness Examination**

- Based on the research result as presented above, the happiness of all the aged people in Suwon is attainable when various factors are satisfied multiplicatively, and it should be promoted across all municipal policies.
- In order to solve the residential and safety issues for the aged people, an extended participation of individuals and family, public sectors including the local government, and various members of local community is necessary together with the construction of a

mutually organic cooperation system. Policies are needed to provide the aged people with employment, income generation, and opportunities to participate in local community development through social businesses or local community businesses because the aged people's employment contributes to the soundness of social insurance budget through the reduction of budget expenditure as well as the expansion of the social insurance budget income as a useful alternative for the provision of income-generation opportunities and for the decrease of labor power.

- A policy is needed to reduce the burden to household and public economy due to medical expenses by the reduction of care and cure demand by prioritizing preventive policies in the public medical service system of the prevention → care → cure cycle. On the one hand, it is necessary to enable leisure activities for the aged people by enhancing daily exercise facilities and park facilities that suit the aged people's physical and behavioral characteristics; on the other, various programs development, distribution and support are needed to use those facilities to enhance the aged people's health, the prevention of age-related diseases as well as to utilize the experiences of the aged people through local community-centered NGO, NPO, or volunteer activities, etc.
- It is necessary to provide the aged people with various lifelong education opportunities lest they be obsoleted from the knowledge and information society due to the difficulty in acceptance and use of various knowledge and information. The construction of municipal infra-structure that is friendly to the aged people's physical and behavioral characteristics provides convenience and safety not only for the aged people but also for all Suwon citizens. It is necessary to actively promote transportation facilities with better safety and convenience measure in order to enhance the aged people's activities.