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CHAPTER 3

COMPREHENSIVE CONTROL OF LAND USE AND RESIDENTIAL LAND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINE

Comprehensive Control of Land Use and Residential Land Development Guidelines

Difficulties with Land Use Regulation

The method of preventing indiscriminate developments by implementing planned developments, as was the case with Kohoku New Town, would be more effective if there had been less pressure from developers. Systematically, residential land development was left uncontrolled until around 1970. Land use was left to the discretion of individuals to an undue degree, because of the excessive respect for land ownership. However, this did not mean that laws and regulations related to land use did not exist at all. There were various laws and regulations related to land use, but they were hardly effective. In developed countries in the West, rigid land use restrictions are imposed, even if they protect land ownership. The development of farmland and forest into residential land would have significant impact on surrounding districts and the entire city. Because land is an "environmental asset" serving as the foundation of communities, it is natural that the land use should be controlled appropriately. Land ownership involves certain obligations. The delay in the legislation of land use control revealed the fact that despite being an economically advanced country, Japan's urban policies were still in their infancy.

Problems including abnormally high land prices, confusion over land use, and the lack of public land had been pointed out early on, and the establishment of social rules related to land and the land price control were considered as issues of great concerns. I had taken every opportunity to give officials at the central government a request to establish a fundamental land policy, but the answer I have always received was, "As you suggest, a land policy is very important. But it involves many other ministries and cannot be solved by our ministry alone. We have to wait for the right time."

While respective ministries kept saying the same thing, the land issue has gone out of control.

Everyone acknowledges that the land use control forms the basis of city planning. But why was it left untouched? The reasons for this were as follows:

(1) Even with considerable effort, the results are not as spectacular as those of construction projects. Even with the results of great efforts, if left unchecked, disorderly and worst situation are only kept in check in a better condition with little effect to be seen.

(2) Stakeholders including industries and landowners hold considerable power and exert political pressures. If the government tries to suppress their power, it would cause political backlash from these people because they would be frustrated by the decrease in their profits.

(3)–The orderliness of the city as a whole can be achieved through appropriate land use control, and interests of individuals can be protected in the long run. However, because nobody speaks for the benefits of the city as a whole and many people act on the basis of immediate individual interests, the government inevitably have to confront many opponents in order to ensure benefits of the entire city, or more simply benefits of all citizens. As a result, they would be attacked by many citizens and businesses.

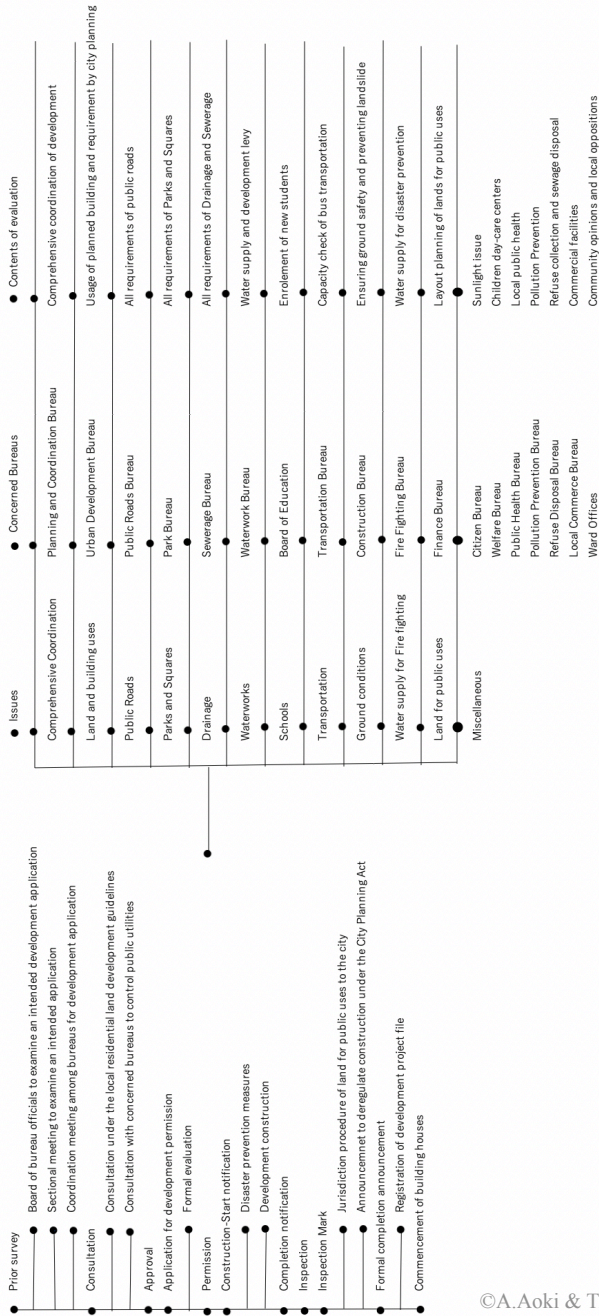
(4) When there is a conflict between those who wish to develop land and those who wish to preserve land, there is no solution which would satisfy both sides, and even the most reasonable solution will always leave both sides dissatisfied.

Comprehensive Land Control Section

Under such circumstances, a typical approach taken by local governments was to keep their intervention to a minimum and avoid being involved any further by automatically applying existing laws and regulations related to land use and development to each case. They had no choice, because the central government did not do anything about it.

Despite such circumstances, the Planning and Coordination Bureau decided to deal with the issue of land use as one of their major

Examination process chart from the beginning to the completion of a development application



missions. It was by no means an easy task. I have often been told, "It's dangerous. You'll get burned!" In fact, I got burned many times, and very severely sometimes. Still, I managed to survive. We successfully created a comprehensive and concrete control system for land use and development, thanks to strong motivations instilled through many painful experiences. Land use is the basis of city planning. Laws and regulations related to land use can be used and implemented toward a certain goal from comprehensive perspectives, instead of being applied separately. When certain laws and regulations are insufficient, one can either decide not to use them, or the interpretation of the laws and regulations can be broadened according to issues at hand. If existing laws and regulations are not sufficient, new rules are sometimes made. Issues including large-scale developments and building permits would be controlled comprehensively. Likewise, land purchase by the city and public sectors for development would also be controlled comprehensively.

This task was initially handled by a specially established group, which was later renamed "Comprehensive Land Control Section." There were only six members in this section including the section chief, but it was a tough job because they had to deal with issues including land use, development, the establishment of basic policy regarding public land acquisition and disposal and so on. Of course, they would work with many related officials, bureaus engaging in dealing with land use, applying respective laws and regulations, purchasing land and so on. The chart on the next page shows an example of the workflow and framework of the Yokohama City bureaus dealing with residential development in Yokohama. The list indicating names of bureaus gathered by the Comprehensive Land Use Control Section to address the issue of land use shows that so many bureaus were involved in resolving the issue of land use. We had to deal with large-scale issues including building permit and land purchase. We needed to look at things from a comprehensive perspective, instead of focusing on circumstances individually. Because each bureau and sections dealt with their specialized tasks, the Comprehensive Land Use Control Section was able to operate in a small group while addressing a broad range of tasks.

Spread of Indiscriminate Developments

As mentioned previously, Yokohama is conveniently located within a close proximity from Tokyo and has a rich culture. The rapid urbanization and concentration of population was especially evident in the Tokyo metropolitan area from the mid-1950's to mid-1960's. The population exceeded the capacity in Tokyo and flooded into the Yokohama area. The topography of Yokohama is mostly hilly with an elevation of around forty to eighty meters. They had largely remained untouched before the war, but with the advancement of civil engineering equipment, it became easier and economical to develop the area.

At the beginning, hills would be roughly cut to form stepped-profile sections. But due to the lack of structurally effective retaining walls to hold the vertical cliffs, they would often collapse after the concentrated heavy rain and debris would fall onto inhabitants living below the cliff. Next, a tremendous amount of rainwater would gush downstream because the trees had been completely cut down for development. The rainwater, flowing over the edges of quiet water streams and natural rivers surrounded by lush green grass, would flood downstream undeveloped areas and cause significant damage. Indiscriminate developments thus cause damage not only to people directly involved, but also to many other people. It was negligent on the part of the central government to allow unregulated developments on the basis that the restriction would infringe upon the property rights of the developers that would endanger the lives and rights of many people.

The local government could no longer afford to dismiss the matter after suffering casualties, even without applicable laws. Local governments of cities suffering from issues related to developments of cliffs and slopes, including Kobe, Yokohama, Kagoshima and Himeji, enacted the "Ordinance for the Restriction of Civil Works on Sloped Land" around 1960. It was a weak law stipulating that those planning to do civil work on a slope are required to submit notifications to the Mayor before starting the construction, but it had some preventive effects by establishing technical criteria and providing guidance accordingly. After seeing the achievements of the local governments, the central government finally enacted the "Act

on Regulation of Residential Land Development" in January 1961 and enforced the law in February 1962.

However, this law, also known as the "cliff law," covers only a narrow range of technical aspects stipulating that retaining walls should be constructed and water should be drained in developing the cliff area. The problems that come with residential development are more than about just cliffs, which are of course important. People who moved in as a result of residential land development need to use various public services in the city in order to establish a life and settle in the city without trouble. Making efforts to simply create a flat land and provide residential plots is not enough to prepare necessary conditions for urban life.

For example, roads and waterways need to be connected to main roads, main waterways and rivers, and nursery schools, and parks are also needed. Shops, community centers, and cultural facilities may also be needed. Hospitals, banks, and post offices will be necessary. Main lines, water resources, sewage lines, sewage treatment plants, and waste incineration plants will also be needed. Transportation services including buses and trains and many more things would be necessary. City life is possible only when these urban facilities and related services are appropriately provided.

Because the suburban areas in Yokohama, which used to be hilly with farming villages, had been suddenly converted into residential areas, it naturally lacked these essential elements. Even though the residential areas are built, all the necessary urban facilities have to be constructed. In essence, there should be a proper land use plan, and urban facilities should be built as necessary in areas to be developed, or develop only areas where necessary facilities are available. Moreover, it would be necessary to ensure green land for future use, and consider how the development should reconcile with farming villages.

Residential land development in the early 1960's was mainly randomly purchasing land and building residential land in areas completely detached from the city, while the city functions remained underdeveloped. This happened not only in developments by private sectors but also in developments by public sectors including The the Housing Corporation. Large-scale developments including remote and inconvenient places were carried out in order to make meeting the quota of housing construction units a top priority. This was because remote and inconvenient places were cheaper and easier to

purchase in large quantities. However, land prices of the surrounding areas skyrocketed as a result of the development, and it became extremely difficult to purchase land for schools, park, and artery roads around the area.

While the local government should officially bear costs for many of these facilities and services, local tax systems and finances of the local government were rigid and they were unable to provide financial resources in a timely fashion to meet such urgent demands. On the other hand, they were not allowed to increase local taxes to meet the financial demands. As a result, the local government's finances collapsed by accepting the rapid population growth from Tokyo, and they were unable to provide necessary facilities and services. All they could do was to provide temporary relief, and the residents, who were unhappy due to the lack of roads and more, were becoming increasingly frustrated. Developers, indifferent to the inconveniences of residents, would come in, make profits, and move on to the next place. In the beginning, some local governments even thought about inviting the Housing Corporation, but after it became clear that it would become a financial burden on the local government after all, there were calls to say, "No more housing complexes allowed."

Background Behind the Enactment of the Residential Land Development Guidelines

The unusually rapid residential land development took place while existing issues including undeveloped urban facilities, financial difficulties of the local government, and soaring land prices were left unsolved. It would stand to reason that land owners and developers should not only develop land for their own benefits but also bear considerable costs to compensate for significant impacts and burdens imposed on others. But the government was reluctant to impose restrictions on private rights.

Under such circumstances, Kawanishi City (in Hyogo Prefecture), which had been under serious financial pressure due to a large number of large-scale developments, had to spend the entire annual budget for the paving work of a public housing. They issued the Residential Land Development Guidelines in May 1967 in order to

meet the urgent needs for building plots for schools and to request developers to pave roads from the beginning. As a result, local governments decided to request developers to cooperate on the development of urban environment. Prior to this case, Kawasaki City established the Public Housing Site Development Exaction System in August 1965 and started asking developers to cooperate on providing facilities for roads, waterworks, public cleaning, firefighting and so on, in addition to building plots for schools.

Because Yokohama City marked the highest population growth rate among major cities in Japan at that time, they had been discussing the need for measures against these issues from early on. Yokohama City had established the Council for Measures on Residential Land Development and started discussing details in September 1966 before Kawanishi City started discussing details of the enforcement guidelines, but they were unable to reach a conclusion. Yokohama City, as one of the major cities (termed government ordinance-designated city) had authority comparable to that of the prefectural government, which paradoxically imposed some constraints. For this reason, they were reluctant to establish a new system like the "guidelines" established by other cities apart from the existing law system.

The internal council, after discussing the matter for nearly two years, was also reluctant to establish a new system. As mentioned earlier, respective sections and bureaus only wanted to continue the practice as stipulated by the existing laws and regulations. They considered that was all they had to do, even though the city faced serious issues.

The Board of Education suffered the most significant impact. Unlike those in charge of other facilities, they had to come up with necessary measures to build enough schools to accept children (pupils and students) in coming April as soon as possible. Moreover, national subsidies were not provided for the purchase of building plots, even though the building plots for schools were large in size and the land prices were rising. They desperately tried to obtain enough building plots in the areas where the population was growing rapidly, but failed to do so. As a temporary measure, they built prefabricated school buildings in schoolyards. On the other hand, in order to demand an increase in the subsidy rate from the government, the city of Yokohama took the initiative to organize the Superintendent of Education Council on Social Increase in the

Metropolitan Areas, which was later expanded into a national organization called the National Council of Superintendents for Social Increase, and became a major force in pressing for improvements in the national system. However, the improvement of the system takes time and it also has its limits. The Board of Education was naturally in favor of the city's decision, provided that the new guidelines would facilitate the purchase of building plots for schools. On the other hand, the Building Control Bureau and the City Planning Bureau, which were in charge of granting permissions for residential land development and rezoning, were strongly opposed to the idea, firstly because they only wanted to engage in administrative work in an appropriate way as stipulated by the existing laws and regulations, and secondly because they did not want to bear the brunt of oppositions if they were to yield to the pressure imposed by the Board of Education and establish a new system. They argued that they were not responsible for the purchase of building plots for schools, and that the Board of Education should come up with necessary measures for it.

Tama Den-en Toshi Development and Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding

During this period, Tama Garden City development by Tokyu Railways posed a serious problem. The plan was to build a new railway called Den-en Toshi Line and develop a large urban area with a population of 400,000 spanning across three cities including Kawasaki, Yokohama, and Machida. Yokohama City accounts for about half of the total population. This area was located at the farthest point from the city center of Yokohama and was difficult to access due to the lack of transportation, and had remained sparsely populated until then. Due to the construction of the new railway, however, the situation suddenly changed and it was going to be directly connected to the city center of Tokyo.

Rezoning is a considerably rational framework of urban improvement under the current system. But it was limited to the rezoning of parcels by exchanging and consolidating the land and the

construction of roads. However, this did not guarantee the maintenance of the schools in question, the fire station, the garbage incinerator or the sewage plant. In addition, this area was very far from the city center of Yokohama and this was a residential district planned specifically for people moving from Tokyo. Under these circumstances, the taxes paid by citizens who have lived in Yokohama and had nothing to do with this area had to be spent entirely on the construction of urban facilities here and this meant that the city government would not be able to provide any service for those who have been living in Yokohama.

Therefore, it would be reasonable to request the developer who developed this district to provide the city with necessary building lots for schools from the developed site, and the city would build and operate the schools on it. It would follow the same logic as the "polluter pays" principle for the pollution problem. Of course, the new residents in this district would pay taxes, but that would not be enough to cover all the costs in the existing system. Therefore, taxes would be used for the construction and operation of buildings including schools, and the developers who were responsible for the construction would be asked to pay for the most difficult sites for schools and other facilities.

Negotiation regarding this matter was difficult at first. According to the current regulations, the local government was responsible for schools and there was no reason for Tokyu to pay for the building plots for schools. The city told Tokyu that they would buy ad spaces in the four major newspapers to publish full-page newspaper ads with a message saying, "The city advises those who plan to live in Tama Den-en Toshi to enroll their children in private schools, because public schools will not be built for the time being due to financial reasons." They would not be able to sell residential plots they developed if such ads were to be published. Tokyu relented, set up a meeting with the city, and a memorandum of understanding was signed between the developer and the city under which the developer would bear some of the costs of the elementary and junior high schools and other necessary city facilities. Yokohama City, which earlier had established the Pollution Prevention Agreement that preceded the law, achieved success again in bridging the gap in the law here with a memorandum of understanding.

The Planning and Coordination Bureau was responsible for working out details of the agreement while on the other hand,

considering how the agreement can be put into general use. Tokyu, which cooperated in concluding the memorandum of understanding, showed a great deal of understanding of the actual circumstances in the city at the time. There were many developers which had been carrying out much worse developments than this. Tokyu was one of the best developers. It would be unfair to leave other developers' developments as they are.

Enactment and Implementation of the Residential Land Development Guidelines

As mentioned earlier, however, the Yokohama City Residential Land Development Monitoring Council which was established within the city government with the aim of creating a new system had been extremely passive as ever. The Planning and Coordination Bureau, which had been newly established, had meetings with respective bureaus involved. We strongly suggested our idea that all bureaus involved should join forces, instead of working separately, to face the reality that we were still unable to obtain building plots for schools, and solve the issue somehow. We also successfully persuaded them by reminding our recent achievement, saying that it would be unfair if we did not make other developers pay the same amount of money that we had made Tokyu pay for the Tama Den-en Toshi development. Some posed an objection saying, "Is it not against the law? Are the guidelines a law or a regulation?" to which we answered in a far-fetched manner, " The guidelines are guidelines, and not a law or a regulation, of course. They are requests to residential land developers to bear some of the costs because there is no leeway in the city government's budget."

There was an opinion that the guidelines should be an ordinance. Regulations should be discussed and decided by the city council, but the thing was that it would be difficult to address comprehensive issues such as residential land development based on regulations. This is because it is stipulated that regulations should not conflict with laws. Considering the fact that laws are established based on the "vertically divided system" of respective ministries and bureaus, they would pose restrictions on the residential land development issue.

The Planning and Coordination bureau prepared a draft of the Residential Land Development Guidelines anyway. After heated discussions in the city office, the Residential Land Development Guidelines were enacted in July 1968 and came into force on September 1 in the same year.

The guidelines were basically handling standards for the residential land development within the city government administration. They suggested that places which would not be able to meet the standards should not be developed and those who wish to develop residential land should conform to the standards. It should be noted that the guidelines had been publicly announced in advance so that they would serve as basic rules that residential land developers should conform to in addition to imposing restrictions on handling procedures within the city office.

The guidelines comprehensively cover urban facilities including roads, sewage treatment systems, rivers, parks, and schools that are covered under various laws, set standards for residential land development, curb development in areas where these facilities cannot be developed and provide developers building plots for the construction of necessary urban facilities at a cost of three thousand yen per tsubo (approximately 3.3 square meters). The amount of money to be paid was decided based on the Tama Den-en Toshi development memorandum of understanding which had been recently concluded between Yokohama City and Tokyu.

The fact that Yokohama City, one of the major cities in Japan, took the initiative to enact the guidelines has had a huge impact, because none of the government ordinance-designated cities (or major cities) had yet to draw up guidelines at that time. Small cities like Kawanishi City had no legal authority over residential land development because it was just a request and had nothing to do with the law. On the other hand, ordinance-designated cities would inevitably face many issues when enacting guidelines, because the relationship between their guidelines and the existing laws would be extremely problematic.

We were immediately called up by the Ministry of Construction. They wanted to know about the actual situations. As soon as we entered the room, they said, "When did Yokohama City become an independent state?" They were probably implying that the guidelines were beyond the limits of national laws. We had a heated exchange for about two hours. An official from the Ministry of Construction

official said, "This would not be sufficient to solve the land problem." to which we responded, "We know that. But in fact, you should take necessary actions to solve the land problem. Can't you take more appropriate measures for this?" They replied, "It is difficult to take actions, because the building plot problem involves various ministries." In response we said, "Well, there is nothing else we can do then. Until you come up with better measures, we at the city government has no choice but to deal with the problem this way." The heated exchange continued, but it was agreed that the guidelines were requests to developers and not directly related to the laws.

We also faced difficulties in putting the guidelines into effect. We had to ask respective bureaus who were opposed to the enactment to act as liaisons. Some of them were very cooperative, while others said, "The Planning and Coordination Bureau made them, not us." There were many complaints and nasty comments from bureaus acting as liaisons against the Director of the division in charge at the City Planning Bureau with comments such as "Why do you impose the burden on us?" Criticisms were directed solely at me who was a "newcomer" from outside. I naturally didn't appreciate this, but someone had to take the blame in order to secure benefits to all citizens and implement new measures. In fact, the bureaus in charge who had opposed us started to cooperate and the guidelines were put into effect because someone played the role of a villain. As of December 1, 1977, 885 cities, towns and villages nationwide had a general guideline for residential land development, according to the current survey. There is probably even more today. Now, the Residential Land Development Guidelines have become more than just a safeguard for local governments but have also become basic rules and generalized rules for residential land developments in cities. It became clear that comprehensive issues that can never be solved by the "vertically divided" administration, such as the development of residential land, is to create a general guideline that is under the responsibility of the mayor elected by the public and who represents the citizens.

Guidelines are not laws. They are de facto city laws created by the head of the government directly responsible for citizens by fully using his knowledge and abilities to take necessary actions. In the case of Yokohama in particular, the city's specific achievement, which was the agreement the city made with Tokyu, became the

basis for the generalized guidelines. Instead of abstractly creating rules out of the blue, we tackled the difficult problem at hand and made painstaking efforts to create a specific example. I think it was a wise move. After creating a successful one, we can universalize it as the next step.

The enactment of the Residential Land Development Guidelines, along with the undergrounding of highways, were two major projects undertaken in the first year of the Planning and Coordination Bureau's existence. The guidelines were put into effect under the city's strong leadership. Over the next twelve years, the financial benefits to the city would exceed 300 billion yen, depending on the method of calculation. If the city did not have this system and solely followed the existing laws, it would have either gone completely bankrupt or would have been forced to stop all the projects.

Delineation Stipulated by the City Planning Act

The Reality of Delineation

The next major issue for the land adjustment team was the "delineation" under the City Planning Act which had been recently put into effect in 1969.

The "delineation" referred to a system of dividing land into "urbanization promotion areas" that promote urbanization and "urbanization control areas" that limits urbanization which had been put into effect by the City Planning Act in 1969. The "delineation" was the first effective method in the history of the legal system of controlling land use in Japan, and even though it had some problems, its significance should be recognized. Its purpose was to prevent unbridled land use by those who exercised private rights to develop land indiscriminately.

Laws like this are usually enacted according to subsequent government ordinances, ministry ordinances, and notification by the Ministry of Construction (the competent authority) which were issued later on. Therefore, these system cannot be used effectively,

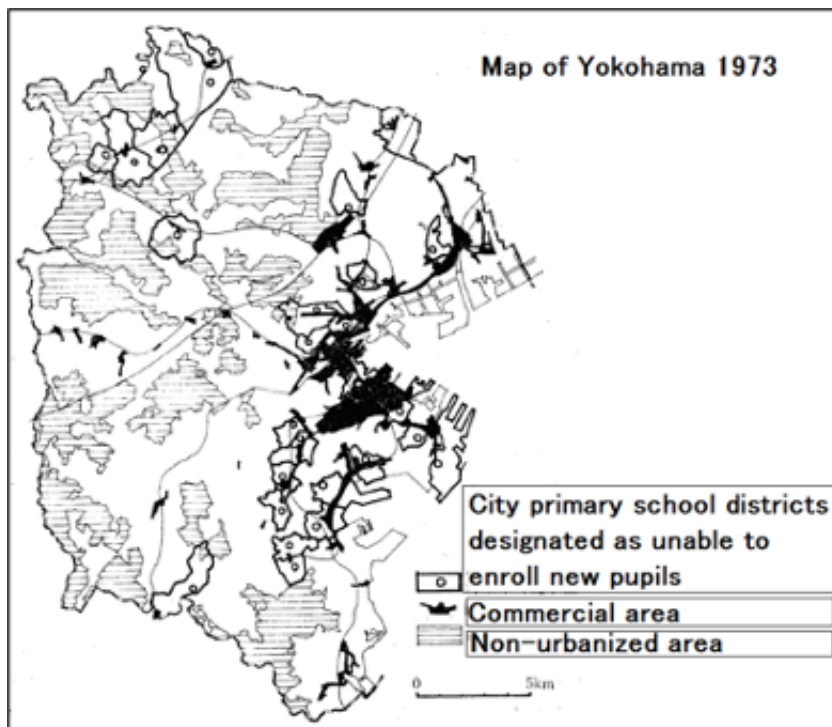
and it is applied mechanically without a strategy or policy theory tailored to each region. Most of other local governments handled the "delineation" in such manners because sections and bureaus in charge belonged to the "vertically divided system" of the local government and therefore had no strategies or policies for the entire city. It was also difficult for other sections and bureaus to intervene. This was also because the top personnel in the city office preferred to play it safe by simply following notifications issued by the competent authority. They only made few political compromises with proposals by sections and bureaus in the "vertically divided" system without discussing policies. We could perhaps say that the standards set by the central ministries at least prevented disorderly political pressures without future prospects.

Yokohama City's Strategies for Delineation

If Yokohama City had carried out the delineation without any policy according to notifications provided by the Ministry of Construction then, more than ninety percent of the city, except for a small fraction, would have been categorized as urbanization promotion areas. Yokohama City already had many railways and roads from Tokyo, and because there were low-lying hills and no large mountainous areas, it was physically possible to develop any part of the city.

As mentioned earlier, however, most of the major developers had development projects in Yokohama City, and the Housing Corporation also had ongoing projects in various areas. As a result, constructions of basic urban facilities were delayed, there was a serious lack of school facilities and parks, the greenery was lost, and the city's finance was on the verge of collapse. In response, the Residential Land Development Guidelines had been enacted as the last safeguard to survive such situations. Under these circumstances, we definitely had to make full use of the newly established system of delineation. The basic strategy of Yokohama City was to prevent indiscriminate developments that developers were carrying out on their own accord. By doing so, we would be able to alleviate the chaotic situations caused by these uncontrolled developments and ease the financial burden, while creating strategies to improve the city accordingly and create green spaces. First of all, we needed to

create conditions which would allow us to think about land uses in Yokohama more freely. In order to do so, it was essential to secure as many urban control areas as possible.



City primary school districts designated as unable to enroll new pupils and non-urbanised areas in the city of Yokohama as of February 1973(Source: Atsushi Naito, Activity volume v. Facility Volume-Challenge to special zoning restricting volume of residential use)

To put it more drastically, it would be desirable to designate all areas except the existing city areas and land currently being developed by those with vested rights as urban control areas. Then, it would be appropriate to grant development permissions to only areas

where urbanization is really needed and where appropriate environments would be provided as necessary. In other words, it would be better to urbanize areas that are appropriate from a holistic point of view, and that are guaranteed to have planned and proper urban facilities. Based on this idea, urbanization promotion areas in Yokohama City should be slightly more than half, or fifty-five percent of the entire city area, and the rest of the area should be designated as urbanization control areas. This was our first release of such a draft.

The rough plan, which was fairly radical for developers at that time, was submitted to the Municipal Council for Basic City Planning right away. The council, which was a triumvirate of academic experts, administration officials and city council members, deliberates on matters of fundamental importance in city planning and was recently established as part of the Planning and Coordination Bureau. Regarding the "delineation," the city council members requested that temporary council members from the city council be added. They wanted to add one or two persons from respective political parties. As a result, more than half of the council members were city council members. However, this was actually a good thing. The "delineation" itself was not an agenda for the city council, but it was not possible to carry out without consulting the city council. Therefore in this council, we were able to consolidate and reconcile the city council members' opinions and make necessary arrangements.

The meeting was interspersed with individual requests from each council members to categorize certain areas as urbanization promotion areas. The requests they made were solely based on personal benefits, instead of representing opinions of the ruling party or opposition parties. In contrast, the Planning and Coordination Bureau had to voice opinions in order to bring benefits to the entire city, because we could not expect the city council members to do so.

But in fact, meetings in the city office were even more intense than the council meetings. The City Planning Bureau and the Building Control Bureau, which are in charge of development permits, strongly urged the expansion of the urbanization promotion area in response to the draft plan that was completely different from the notifications issued by the Ministry of Construction. Considering the fact that these bureaus had suffered from indiscriminate developments for a long time, it would have been natural to assume

that they would use the new legal system to control developments, but they actually went in the opposite direction. The bureaus acting as liaisons to outside parties are susceptible to pressures from the city council and developers and make efforts to reduce pressures imposed on themselves rather than taking actions for the benefits of the entire city. In fact, the developers were eager to draw the line and create an established fact. When a new system is created, the facts that were created before that point must be acknowledged. A considerable number of areas were being developed at this point. As a result, urban control areas were reduced to twenty-five percent of the entire city area.

The percentage of urban control areas was significantly reduced compared to the radically high percentage proposed in the draft plan. But the condition for the inclusion in urbanization promotion areas were limited to areas that had already been established. But if we had not presented the draft plan, ninety percent of the city area would have become urbanization promotion areas, considering the opinions of the prefecture and the developers at that time. In light of that, we could say it was a success. The percentage is obviously much lower than the percentage indicated in the draft plan. But the target percentage had been set based on our strategy to increase urbanization control areas as opposed to the notification by the Ministry of Construction, which was a kind of self-imposed pressure. If we had set a relatively low goal, it would have been easier. Because typical city administration has no particular ideology, they do not set a target that is difficult to achieve to begin with. Instead, they set a realistic target in the original plan from the beginning. But it would be difficult to make progress in this way. On the contrary, the Planning and Coordination Bureau has ideas and strategies, and sets a high goal even if they are difficult. It is in this way that we can change reality, even just slightly.

As with anything, if a perfect score of twenty is given from the start, one would be able to achieve a perfect score without much effort. On the other hand, if a target of one hundred points is set, it may be difficult to score fifty or sixty points. Some people may say, "you did badly." But it would be much better than twenty points. It would be better to take on challenges and implement measures to achieve a high goal than following the city administration method in which they set an easy goal and play it safe.

The Outcome of Delineation

Because the delineation system of Yokohama City was established based on the principle and strategy autonomously set by the city and implemented through a method of going through careful procedures and absorbing anticipated oppositions, it bore much more significant results for urban developments than ordinary cities, which turned out to be valuable assets for the future. If many urbanization promotion areas had been designated then, there would have been little room left for the city to make policy changes in the future, which would have been the same situation as the situation from the mid-1950's to mid-1960's (Showa 30's) when indiscriminate developments had been carried out at will.

On the other hand, the delineation system of Yokohama City is extremely complicated. It was because the system was not about simply dividing the city into two types of areas, but was about trying to secure as many urban control areas as possible. In order to change a portion of an urbanization promotion area into an urban control area (as if making a hole in the urbanization promotion area,) the notification by the Ministry of Construction stipulated that the plot should no less than twenty hectares at that time, while it was permitted to change an approximately eight-hectare plot into a urban control area in Yokohama, in order to preserve prime farmlands.

In addition, areas which had been categorized as urbanization promotion areas in anticipation for further progress of development projects was to be reviewed five years later. As a result, areas where the development projects had made no progress were changed from urbanization promotion areas to urban control areas, which was called "reverse delineation."

There are many problems in drawing the line between the two due to the limitations of the system, and the government is also responsible for making the system ambiguous. The central government is unable to implement comprehensive strategies and it is politically on the verge of collapse because the delineation system is handled by the Ministry of Construction, the tax system is handled by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and farmland is handled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Although the delineation system of Yokohama City was not sufficiently thought out, the city was able to leave a considerable amount of assets for future generations at that time for the following reasons:

(1) We came up with the idea of a comprehensive strategy at an early stage, and had a system connecting the Planning and Coordination Bureau which implements the idea and other bureaus.

(2) We made a specific and strict draft plan at an early stage, and successfully consolidated opposing opinions by clearly specifying the conditions.

(3) In dealing with agricultural and green zones, we formed a viewpoint of urban agriculture at an early stage and established a positive collaborative relationship with the Agricultural Administration Bureau (later renamed as Green Administration Bureau.)

(4) We designated scenic areas and suburban green zone preservation areas which reinforces the delineation.

How this legacy can be utilized from the perspective of the entire citizens, rather than for the benefit of individual stakeholders, will be a challenge for the future.

Zoning and Floor Area System

Zoning Districts

Around the early 1970's, legal systems for land use, which had not existed in the past, were established one after another. As mentioned earlier, the delineation system was formally enacted in June 1970. Around the same time, the Building Standards Act was amended the same year. The summary of the amendment is as follows:

(1) Zoning districts were basically subdivided into eight types of zoning districts.

(2) The setback regulation on the north side was created to ensure that the north side does not block any daylight for the Category 1 residential exclusive districts which are favorable residential districts where single-family houses are expected to be built.

(3) A general floor-area ratio regulation (restriction regulation based on the designated ratio of the total floor area of the building to the site area) was adopted for all zoning districts.

(4) Along with the adoption of the floor-area ratio restriction system, the building height restriction for all zoning districts except the Category 1 residential exclusive districts (favorable residential districts where single-family houses are mainly built) was removed. (Previously, the absolute height limit was kept at 31m in commercial districts and 20m in residential districts.)

While the delineation system is about large-scale land division into urbanization promotion areas and urban control areas, the above amendment is about designating upper limits of the floor-area ratio (FAR) in subdivided zoning districts in urbanization promotion areas.

Zoning districts are designated in order to protect residential environments by excluding factories and large-scale shops in residential districts and keep large-scale shops and factories within designated districts.

Floor-Area Ratio Restriction

The floor-area ratio restriction complements what is not covered by the existing building coverage ratio (ratio of the floor area of the first floor of the building to the site area) restriction. Thanks to the advancement of construction technology after the war, it is possible to build multistory buildings with considerably large total floor areas. In commercial areas, the maximum allowable building coverage ratio is 90% to 100% depending on conditions. If a nine- or ten-story building is built, the FAR turns out to be as large as 900% to 1000%. If people continue to build buildings in such highly dense manners in all areas except areas like Marunouchi District in the middle of Tokyo which has wide streets, streets would not be able to handle all

the traffic and it would also pose too much burden on the water and sewage systems. It would be very dangerous during the time of disaster. The idea of a FAR is a measure of population and overall urban activity, and if this density increases too much, there will be a lack of urban facilities to accommodate the activity and will be overburdened. If a large floor area is to be obtained in a building, not only should the building go upward, but it should also obtain a large plot with roads, car parking, and a park suitable for the building.

Yokohama City's Designation Policy

Zoning districts and FARs must be color-coded in the map for each district. Here too, we set forth Yokohama City's policy and goal at the beginning regarding this matter. The important thing was how the city should make full use of these two systems, instead of mechanically applying the law.

In order to advance the series of ideas that have been adopted so far, we established four basic policies as follows:

(1) Controlling population growth (2) Preserving the environment
(3) Protecting the city against pollution and fire (4) Optimizing commercial and business development

Yokohama should not become an overpopulated city like Tokyo. These four principles should not only serve as principles but also be incorporated in the actual color-coding of the city map. Therefore, as a means of controlling the population growth as stated in (1), we set a policy to maximize Category 1 residential exclusive districts which are the most favorable residential environment and least dense. As a result, 45.3%, or nearly half of the designated zoning districts became Category 1 residential exclusive districts. By adding 12.4%, which is the percentage of Category 2 residential exclusive districts, it turned out that 57.7% or nearly 60% of the entire zoning districts were designated as residential exclusive districts where the FARs can be kept low and good residential environments can be ensured. National average percentages of respective designated districts are 20.5% for Category 1 residential exclusive districts and 18.4% for Category 2 residential exclusive districts. Compared to this, we can see how Yokohama City successfully designated many residential

exclusive districts, especially Category 1 residential exclusive districts with the best residential environments.

FARs designated by the current law are too large to maintain good residential environments. For example, FARs designated by law in Category 2 residential exclusive districts and residential districts are 200%, 300% and 400%, but we decided to apply only 200%, the lowest percentage. The FAR of 200% seems rather small, as it amounts to only twice the size of the plot. But if we estimate the population of Yokohama based on the area of the Yokohama city area (subtracting the area of all roads) under the condition that all houses would be built with the FAR of 200%, it turns out, surprisingly, that the city area is able to accommodate thirty million people. Even if factories, shops and public facilities are excluded, it is still able to accommodate more than twenty million people. At this rate, the city would be extremely overcrowded. Since the percentages of Category 1 residential exclusive districts are 50, 60, 80, 100, and 200%, it would be possible to prevent overpopulation and maintain residential environments by increasing Category 1 residential exclusive districts as much as possible.

The FAR restriction system adopted by Yokohama City were much more strict than typical cities, but it still turned out that Yokohama City would be able to accommodate 1.15 million people if houses are to be built at a maximum. This leaves the city as a whole in a bind. Considering the fact that Yokohama City ended up with this result although the city has more Category 1 residential exclusive districts than typical cities and the FARs of houses are generally set at the lowest possible percentage, designated ratios of typical cities are way too high. Several years later, the Ministry of Construction finally realized that and reduced the lowest allowable ratio from 200% to 100% and 150%, but it was unfortunately too late. It would be difficult to apply these values and they would lose credibility unless they are indicated at the time of actual application. The Ministry should stipulate the adoption of the floor-area ratio restriction system, designate the maximum allowable ratio, and the minimum allowable ratio should be left to the wisdom of respective local governments.

Yokohama City's zoning districts and FARs were considerably strict in order to protect residential environments. But it was relatively easy to pass because the recently established delineation system was successful and because the city would still be able to

accommodate more than 10 million people under the proposed conditions. Even a city council member who was an ardent supporter of development said, "Accommodating more than 10 million people in the city would be an outrageous plan." Needless to say, this was not a plan but rather an assumption based on the maximum allowable percentages. Because we made this clear in the figure first, we were able to avoid pressure from those who wanted to increase the figure. If we had let them do as they please, they would have pressured us into changing Category 1 residential exclusive districts into Category 2, increase FARs and so on. If that had been the case, the situation must have been much worse for the citizens. They all wanted higher FARs for their own benefits, but it was actually like digging their own graves. It was effective to indicate the figure beforehand, because nobody represented all the citizens' opinions.

FAR Restriction of Residential Use for Individual Use Districts

Moreover, there were three new methods that we created on our own. The first one was a method of restricting the volume of housing in commercial districts. Commercial districts are originally defined as districts where shops, department stores, office buildings and others are planned to be built. Therefore, designated FARs are high, ranging from the lowest percentage of 400% to the highest percentage of 1000%. Generally, commercial districts are designated in convenient areas located near stations. However, in cities within commuting distance from Tokyo such as Yokohama, office buildings and commercial buildings originally needed for the city are not built, but instead condominiums for commuters to Tokyo are often built.

If condominiums like these are to be built with an FAR of 400% or 600%, extremely difficult situations would arise. In addition to the lack of natural light in these residences, there would be no room to make children's playgrounds. If a residence with a FAR of 500% was to be built, this would mean that an elementary school and junior high school with roughly the same total floor area would be necessary. At this rate, condominiums and schools would have to be built alternately along the streets. But since building plots in commercial districts are too small to accommodate schools, it would

be extremely difficult to purchase building plots for schools considering the high land prices.

In fact, the Housing Corporation built a high-rise apartment building in front of Isogo station before the FAR restriction system was established. Because the building had an extremely high FAR, schools in the district were not able to accept all students. We therefore asked them to stop the construction of commercial facilities on the first floor and sell it to the city at a low price. The first floor was given to the city and was turned into classrooms for first to third graders.

While there were some problems, we wanted to show them that the high FAR meant that there was a need for schools. It would be difficult to build apartment buildings with high FARs and build spacious schools at the same time. In many European cities, there are many apartment buildings combined with schools.

There was also a plan to build several high-rise condominium projects in Isogo before the establishment of the floor-area ratio restriction system. After many negotiations, we successfully made agreements with the developer to restrict the FAR, and the developer provided a building plot for an elementary school, which was small but sufficient for the apartment complex, at no cost. Negotiations like these take a long time and energy. It was at this time that the floor-area ratio restriction system was established. There was no reason for us not to take advantage of this. Areas in front of Isogo station, however, are large reclaimed land in front of the station and suitable for commercial facilities and office facilities, and was therefore designated as commercial districts. This meant that the minimum allowable FAR would be 400%.

Developers would want to build a condominium to the limit, but this would cause the same problems. In addition, those who planned to build condominiums would pressure us into raising the FAR to 500 or 600 %.

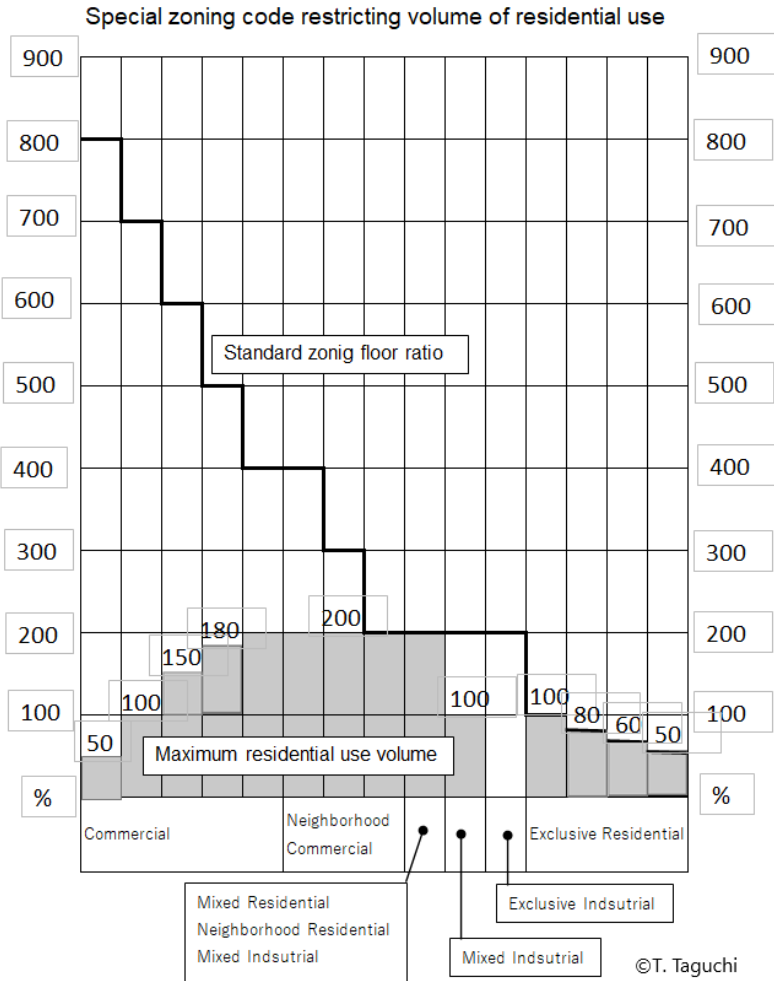
In light of this situation, we conceived the FAR restriction system for individual use districts. The FAR for commercial districts were set high because the districts were originally intended for commercial facilities and office facilities. If this was going to be a residence, they don't need such high FARs. 200%, which would be the maximum FAR for residential environment, may be set as the maximum. In fact, 200% is the maximum allowable FAR for residential districts in Yokohama. High FARs in commercial districts

means that high concentration of commerce and businesses are expected there. It would be inappropriate to see family members' underwear and futon mattresses hanging from balcony handrails of apartment buildings, and land prices in this district is extremely high.

Because it would be impossible to obtain building plots for schools in commercial districts with high FARs exceeding 800%, the FAR for residential zone can be zero. As shown in the illustration, we decided that the FAR for residential zone in the commercial district with an FAR of 800% was designated as 50% which was the minimum percentage; the FAR for residential zone in the commercial district with an FAR of 400% was designated as 200%, which is half of the commercial zone. Moreover, the FAR for residential zone in industrial zone districts were decided, with the aim of balancing the pollution due to industrial activities with residential zone. For example, the FAR for residential zone in industrial exclusive districts with an FAR of 200% was designated as zero to prevent the coexistence of industrial zone and residential zone.

This floor-area ratio restriction system for individual use districts is a means to rationally combine uses and FARs. Although it should normally be approved in the city planning system, it is impossible to do so in the current law. For this reason, Yokohama City incorporated it in the Building Standards Act ordinance based on the Building Standards Acts and enacted it after voting at the city council. The Ministry of Construction made an outrageous argument that the Building Standards Act did not plan to cover ordinances of this nature, but we brushed off the opposition. While their argument may be right if the law is interpreted in a rigid way, but there is no reason for them to complain about ordinances enacted voluntarily by local governments with the aim of creating something new according to the current situation.

The Board of Education, which had been struggling to find measures to secure building plots for schools, issued "Guidelines for the Construction of Condominiums and Other Housing Complexes" and designated two types of "unaccommodatable school districts" to discourage construction of condominiums and restrict the number of residence units. This was an extreme emergency measure, but I thought that the city should take the responsibility for the school at all costs, rather than this type of arbitrary decision by the administration. Considering the fact that the laws dealing with architecture and development have been too lenient, we wanted to



clarify the range of responsibility to be shared between builders and the city administration in light of the actual situation.

Moreover, we intended to create a balance among different social pressures in establishing the floor-area ratio restriction by setting a "regressive" FAR regulation of residential zone, or by lowering the FAR of residential zone in commercial areas with higher FAR. This was because higher FARs are generally preferable for all.

Landowners would pressure the city to set high FARs regardless of whether they want to start construction right away, or what the status of development in the surrounding area is. But based on this system, if higher FARs are designated, FARs of condominiums are reduced. Therefore, social pressures would be balanced out and the FARs are set appropriately in this way, instead of having to deal with social pressures to raise FARs.

Height Restriction

While there were some points of progress in the amendment to the law, one of the big problems was that the height restriction of buildings was removed and replaced by the FAR restriction. In my view, however, they should be treated as completely different dimensions.

The problem of access to sunlight, one of the major social problems in many areas at that time, is caused by tall buildings. It does not make sense to unconditionally remove the height restriction simply because the FAR restriction was established. It would only cause more problems.

In addition, the city's skyline is mainly determined by building heights and they completely change the views and the cityscape. The building height restriction cannot be replaced by the FAR restriction. Building heights, which have significant impact on the city's overall skyline, should be a matter of interest for all citizens regardless of who has the land ownership. In the past, aristocrats in the city of San Gimignano, Italy competed with each other by building high towers representing their strength and power. The towers ended up becoming of no use except as observatories. People today would not tolerate living in the city full of houses like these.

The Ministry of Construction also complained about this matter saying that they had just succeeded in removing the building height restriction. But there was a good way to deal with this matter. Yokohama City set height control districts within the current legal system to stipulate building heights within the existing legal framework without making new guidelines. While the height control districts basically follow the designated building height of 31m for commercial districts and 20m for residential districts, more specific

details are stipulated. The city had been dealing with the issue of access to sunlight by making guidelines and setting up a consultation room, and they established the setback regulation on the north side as an official rule for solving the issue. This was about restricting building height to fit within the slanted setback line specified for each district so as not to block the sunlight in neighboring sites on the north side.

Yokohama City Urban Environmental Design System

While the building height restriction was established, the heights of existing buildings already varied and was difficult to align the eaves at the same level as is done in Europe. Moreover, in order to enforce restrictions on building heights and FARs, it would be better to indicate in advance the conditions under which they can be lifted. While the law stipulates that the restrictions can be lifted upon the Mayor's permission, the administration thoughtlessly and frequently granted permissions to individual cases under political pressures.

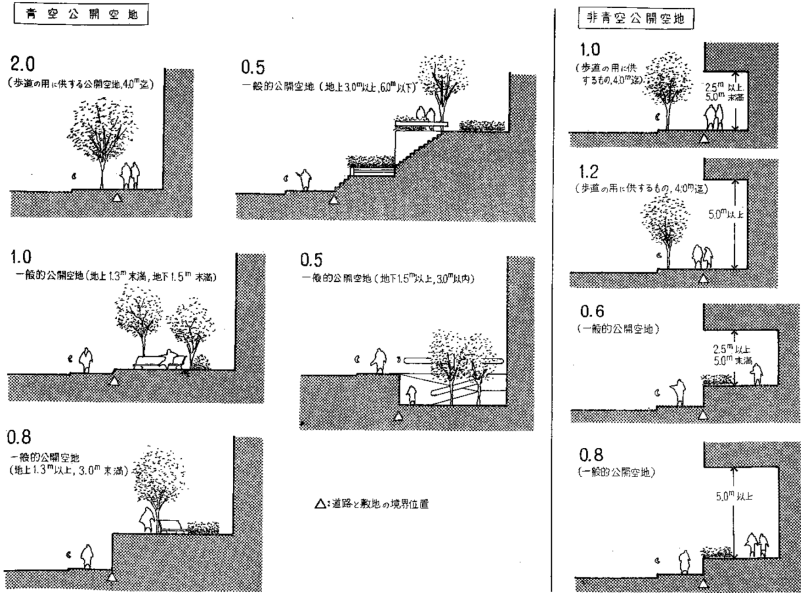
Under such circumstances, there is no point in limiting the height. In response to this situation, the "Yokohama City Urban Environmental Design System " was established. Under this system, building height restrictions are relaxed and "bonus" percentages are added to the designated FARs if open public spaces are provided for the citizens. This is not just about regulating everything, but is also about rewarding efforts that give back to the public by creating scarce public spaces and lifting some of the strict regulations in return.

This was not just about regulation, but was about a measure guiding towards positive directions. As shown in the illustrations on the next page, the degree of contribution of open public spaces is calculated by determining a coefficient based on the evaluation according to the degree and type of open public spaces.

The "Comprehensive Design System" established by the central government is similar to this system, but this is applied only to considerably large-scale sites in the city centers.

The system established by Yokohama City, on the other hand, was about creating small-scale public spaces in each district to compensate for the lack of public spaces in the city and provide

citizens spaces for relaxation by setting strict regulations first and make adjustments accordingly, instead of prioritizing large-scale architectural projects.



Environmental Design System
(Source: Yokohama City Housing and Architectural Bureau, 1973)

Yamate District Scenic Conservation Guidelines and the Operation of Land Administration

Yamate District and Issues Surrounding Condominiums

The hill adjacent to the Kannai district in Yokohama is called Yamate Hill. This area was added in the first year of Bunkyu era (1861) as a new foreign settlement to the Kannai foreign settlement which had become too small to contain a growing number of foreign residents. Yamate Hill has a number of thin ridges where one can enjoy dramatic views of the undulating sceneries. It also offers wonderful views of the port beyond the city area. Foreign residents preferred to live in this area and built various facilities including mission schools, church, theater, cemetery, and promenades. It was the most exotic place in Yokohama.

After the war, however, people started building mid- and high-rise condominiums around this area. There was even a plan to build a high-rise condominium right below the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery located on the slope. If the building would reach the maximum allowable height of 31m, the 30-meter high Yamate Hill including the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery on the slope would practically become its "private garden."

In contrast, people who had been enjoying views of the Kannai district and the port beyond from top of the hill on the opposite side would end up with views of the walls and windows of the condominium only. Minato-no-Mieru-Oka Park (meaning "park on the hill with a harbor view"), which is also located on top of the hill, would also end up becoming a "park on the hill with a condominium and without a harbor view." The Yamate district residents raised their voice in protest.

The respective bureaus in charge had already given permission for the construction of the apartment building below the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery. It was no easy task for us to try to change it. The negotiation hit a deadlock, and it was even brought up for questioning at a plenary session of the city council. We had to somehow persuade the parties involved. The problem was not just about the condominium, but was about the future of the Yamate district. That was why we had to somehow solve the issue surrounding this condominium and make it a successful case. But it was an exhausting task. I still vividly recall the bitter taste of the beer I had with my two staff members after we went to negotiate with the persons involved and exhausting ourselves. In the end, our persistent efforts paid off and both parties agreed on a plan which was fairly close to the Planning and Coordination Bureau's proposal for the future of Yamate.



View towards the port from Yamate Hill

Enactment of Yamate District Scenic Conservation Guidelines

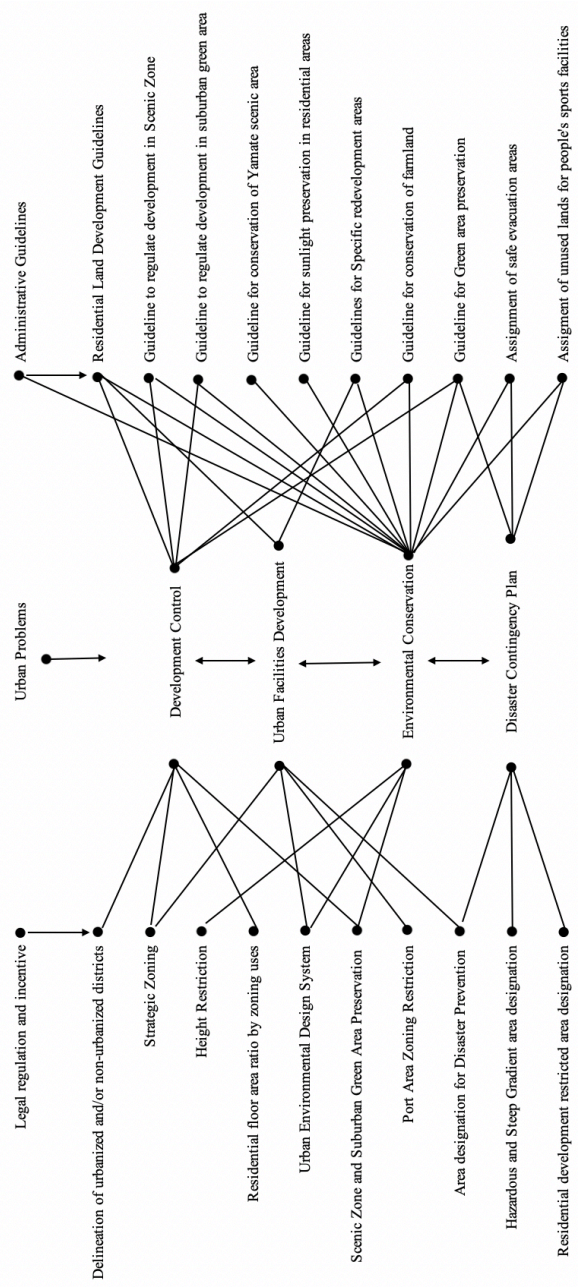
After that, we immediately thought about ways to generalize this approach. The problem with the previous procedures was that the respective bureaus and departments including the Building Control Bureau and Park Department mechanically applied the respective laws they dealt with and granted permissions. But all bureaus involved had to get together and think about the future of Yamamote. The Planning and Coordination Bureau was still in its infancy, and it was difficult to obtain cooperation from other bureaus involved. Nevertheless, the fact that the Residential Land Development Guidelines was working well and achieving successful results meant a lot. We therefore decided to make guidelines in order to deal with a comprehensive problem like this, and enacted the "Yamate District Scenic Conservation Guidelines" in November 1972, more than six months after the condominium issue was resolved.

One of the features of this guidelines is that it places values on incorporating scenic views, which were rarely discussed at that time. It addresses citizens' right to scenic views in particular, establishes certain points of view, and restricts building heights in order to secure views from designated viewpoints. People did not pay attention to the issue of scenic views at all at that time, but eventually started discussing it in many cities. These guidelines became the forerunner of scenic ordinances to follow.

The administrative guidelines is not about simply writing down guidelines on paper. Such guidelines would not be effective in the current power structure or would never be enacted in the first place.

These guidelines were created as a result of long negotiations and struggles with two condominiums and were meant to be generalized in the same way as other guidelines. Moreover, guidelines should not be left as they are, but should be continuously bolstered using other systems when the opportunity arises. After the enactment of the guidelines, zoning districts were designated based on the guidelines, as well as the establishment of ordinances and standards for dealing with development regulations within the scenic area. In addition, the Outdoor Advertisement Act and ordinances set standards and prohibitions for permits for this district, and the Food Sanitation Act limits the areas in which coffee shops, restaurants, etc. can operate.

Comprehensive use of areas and districts designation based on "Yokohama Method"



While these various laws had been administered mechanically by various bureaus in the past, they can be applied and administered much more effectively based on the guidelines. In this case, the guidelines set comprehensive standards for the operation of various laws and regulations.

The laws and regulations that local governments have to deal with are diverse, but if we can indicate certain direction based on local issues and bring together the power of all the bureaus concerned, we can achieve considerable results. Planning is about creating a direction, and coordination is about bringing all the bureaus together and leading them in that direction. Planning and coordination are not separate but work together to bring positive results.

Development of Comprehensive Land Administration

As a result of such administrative guidelines, the General Land Coordination Division has become involved with all types of issues regarding land use in the city, as well as with land use issues in order to effectively consider city-owned public housing. There are various types of administrations related to land, but none of the other local governments understand the whole picture and make decisions from comprehensive viewpoints. The General Land Coordination Division of Yokohama City was one of the few examples where they operated based on such comprehensive viewpoints.

Their work encompasses many aspects as mentioned earlier.

(1) Designation of areas and districts (especially the delineation designating urbanization promotion areas and urbanization control areas, and the designation of areas and districts including use districts and FAR districts)

(2) Enactment and operation of the Residential Land Development Guidelines. Establishing a policy for the permit of important residential land development and the authorization of land.

(3) Handling of special permits under the Building Standards Act.

(4) Operational policies of the National Land Use Planning Act and the Public Land Expansion and Promotion Act.

(5) Policy and coordination with the city and the Land Development Corporation for land acquisition and the use of city-owned land.

(6) Develop standards for the management and setting the disposal and handling criteria of the land obtained based on the residential land development guidelines.

(7) Acquisition of the city's building plots (including released corporate land) and setting a policy for its use.

(8) Enactment and operation of guidelines regarding access to sunlight, scenic views among others.

I cannot discuss these things in details here, but they cover all aspects regarding land and land use.

In order to implement these things, the first step is to make use of the current laws and regulations on a voluntary basis. As I mentioned in the delineation and zoning districts sections, laws have different effects depending on the way they are applied and operated. Laws are not something one simply uses, but something one makes the best use of. Secondly, rules not stipulated in laws should be reinforced by making ordinances and guidelines. The existing legal systems are insufficient and it is necessary to complement what is missing. Thirdly, the limited government fund must be used efficiently in purchasing and using building plots. Fourthly, it is necessary to establish a communication and coordination system to utilize these things.

While it would be a nuisance for individuals and business owners to have their land use controlled, they are left uncontrolled, the overall urban environment would be destroyed, disasters may occur, the quality of life may decline, and we may not be able to live safely, conveniently, and comfortably in the city. As mentioned earlier, there are methods we can use, even if they might be inadequate to a certain degree. These systems implemented by Yokohama City are summarized and shown in the chart on the next page.

In general, the Building Control Bureau and the City Planning Bureau deal with handle laws regarding land use, while the acquisition of building plots are handled by different sections in respective project sectors. In some cases, the land development corporation of one of the local governments arbitrarily purchased land independently and caused problems. In this case, on the other

hand, both parties cooperate in obtaining and using building plots in effective ways.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the issue of land use forms the basis of city planning, but it is the most challenging task. Among many challenging tasks I have taken on, this issue posed the most serious emotional burdens on myself. The strict control of land use may incur many stakeholders' enmity. It would be the easiest decision for the administration to loosen the control and win favor of many stakeholders. But this would mean going back to the chaotic era where there was no means to control land use and development, and would be impossible to protect all citizens' benefits this way. We should promote methods of controlling land use and development which had been created through trials and errors in the chaotic situation based on standpoints of all citizens.



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CHAPTER 4
URBAN DESIGN TO CREATE
A MORE HUMANE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Urban Design Team and Kusunoki Square

Inception of Urban Design Team

Yokohama City had set a goal of becoming a "city everybody wants to live." In order to achieve the goal, it is necessary to implement a basic urban planning to create a safe and convenient living environment. Moreover, it is also important to make the city beautiful, delightful, and lively. I think it is quite understandable that people finally started paying attention to the idea of urban landscape and urban aesthetics in recent years, but this is only natural since humans with feelings and sensibilities will be living here.

While efforts including strategic projects and land use control described so far are extremely important in establishing basic conditions, this alone will only create a framework and shape of the city. Among these, human perspective must be brought in to think more carefully about making urban spaces beautiful, unique, and attractive. By doing so, people living in the city would feel a sense of attachment and peace, take pride in the city, and would want to continue to live there in the future. Urban design is a profession to create such urban spaces.

The word "urban" means "relating to a city," and is also used in the word "urban design." But unlike other forms of design, this does not mean that a single person designs the city. The city is created by many entities with various purposes over a long period of time. There is no end to urban planning. It is a never-ending process as long as the city is alive and exists there. Urban spaces would be chaotic if the many entities that make up the city act disjointedly and without order. Therefore, it is necessary for the citizens and other parties to design an orderly and harmonious design for the entire city as a whole, while respectively exercising their autonomy. Instead of having a single party design the city in a uniform manner, parties involved should set basic directions and principles for the entire city and create a sense of unity, rhythm, and humanistic spaces for the entire city in collaboration with respective businesses. Urban design is about creating overall principles, coordinating and providing

guidance regarding matters between principles and designs created by respective parties involved, and in some cases, designing part of it to lead and compliment the overall design based on this idea.

Urban design was taken up by some of the architectural journalists from around middle to the end of the 1950s, but at that time they viewed urban design as something to be created by many parties involved, while ignoring the dynamics of social relationships. But this trend disappeared after 1965. One of the things I wanted to do upon joining the Yokohama city office was to put urban design into practice.

In the beginning, we had no choice but to ask outside experts to help us since nobody in the city office was capable of handling the matter. Experts including Takashi Asada, Masato Otaka, Fumihiko Maki, Souri Yanagi, Kenji Ekuan, Kiyoshi Awazu, Ren Suzuki among others helped us, but we needed more people other than these outside experts in order to seek ideal principles for citizens, coordinate between different values, and put ideas into practice. Moreover, there were not enough capable urban designers outside the city office. If we had an urban design team in the city office, we would have been able to bring out the best skills of respective professional designers from outside in a more efficient manner.

One day, Shunsuke Iwasaki, who had studied urban design at Harvard University, came to see me out of the blue. I had known him for some time, and asked him to join the city office. After he started working at the office, design-oriented persons who would have probably felt they did not fit in the city office took interest and started working in the Yokohama city office, and more young employees in the city office started to take interest in urban design. A small urban design team led by Iwasaki was born at the Yokohama city office; it was the first urban design team of local governments in Japan.

Restoration Work After Completion of Subway Construction

Urban design should not be limited to the realm of visions and ideas, but should be better understood and accepted by citizens through specific practices.

The first project the team worked on was a small square in front of the City Hall called "Kusunoki Square," named after a camphor tree planted there as a landmark. Even though the site was located in front of Kannai Station owned by the Japan National Railway and the City Hall, the place was considered a "back entrance" to both the station and the City Hall and not a very pleasant space. In addition, the "back entrance" area in front of the station and the City Hall was frequently flooded at high tide, because a polluted canal called Ha-Ooka River adjacent to the site was directly connected to the sea. Because this area was a reclaimed land over a soft ground, it had completely submerged and become a "zero-meter above sea level" zone.

This was an important place serving as a connecting point to Odori Park in the Green Axis Plan as mentioned previously. While some had been suggesting since long ago that something had to be done to improve this area as it was right next to the station and the City Hall, it had been left as it was for a long time because the entire area had been unusable for a long time due to an open-cut excavation for the subway construction.

At the end of 1973, however, we obtained information that the long-term construction was finally completed and that the earth was about to be backfilled to restore the area to its original condition. The Yokohama city office is a large organization with approximately thirty-thousand employees, and minor matters including ground restoration work would be usually implemented without being checked. This work in particular was handled by and budgeted by the Transportation Bureau, and their budget is decided based on public enterprise accounting, which means that only major points are checked and the bureau can implement the budget at will, unlike general accounting financed by tax revenue.

The first step to implementing comprehensive administration is to obtain necessary information under such circumstances, and we had managed to do so in this case. It would be almost meaningless to restore the ground to its original state. We therefore decided to submit a proposal to build a pedestrian-friendly recreational area for citizens based on the budget for the restoration work. This restoration would naturally take longer than the simple restoration to its original state. The Transportation Bureau said, "We would be in trouble if we can't finish the restoration work by March when the budget meeting

starts at the city council." Their concern was understandable, because the construction site was right next to the city assembly hall.

A special meeting was organized to discuss this matter, and even a matter of this scale involved not only the Transportation Bureau but also six other bureaus including the Road and Highway Bureau in charge of road management, Green Space Planning Bureau in charge of planting trees, General Affairs Bureau in charge of the city hall management (because the site is in front of the city hall,) and Urban Development Bureau in charge of disaster prevention district development, Sewage Bureau in charge of underground installation, and Planning and Coordination Bureau which organized the meeting. In addition to these bureaus, the City Council Secretariat in charge of city council members' car parking and Waterworks Bureau, as well as parties outside the city hall including the Kanagawa Prefectural Police, Tokyo Electric Power Company, and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation were also involved.

A draft which was created in a week's time by the urban design team was presented. If this was five years ago, they would protest that they didn't know how to explain the matter to the city council and the discussion would be too complicated to settle. But the Planning and Coordination Bureau's accomplishments over nearly five years were enough to convince them. They were probably impressed especially by our powerful implementation of the underground expressway construction. After agreeing that a few months delay would be acceptable, we set out to proceed with the implementation plan.

Up until now, all they had to do was to fulfill responsibility within their respective bureau. While the City Council was something to be feared, they only had to deal with respective standing committees to which their respective bureaus belong in the "vertically divided system." This is why they would rather stick to the idea of restoring it to the original state so as not to spread the problem to other bureaus. Ideas based on comprehensive viewpoints would be created only by those taking a neutral stand, namely the Planning and Coordination Bureau.

Creating Kusunoki Square

The urban design team's plan was to relocate roadways, plant trees in front of the city hall, and create a pedestrian-friendly square with benches installed on both side. The parking lot, which is unavoidably necessary, is lowered one level and surrounded by greenery in order to avoid creating a desert-like appearance so that it is almost unnoticeable to those who walk through the square. The ground is paved with brick tiles to reinforce the connection between the square and the City Hall and is designed in such a way that it naturally looks like part of the City Hall building. A newly designed light tower using the city's symbol mark as a motif was installed.

A new square which looked completely different from the original state was successfully created based on the budget of the restoration work with an additional investment amounting to as little as twenty percent of the budget. Today, the square serves as the main entrance to the City Hall, and highlights the presence of the City Hall designed by architect Togo Murano, which had looked rather dark and dull until then. It would have taken many times longer and cost several times as much if it had to be done all over again after restoring it to its original state.

In other words, it may cause significant waste of time for the citizens if things are implemented by a single bureau without thinking comprehensively. On the contrary, the same amount of money can be used holistically and can be very effective if used at the right time. Until then, respective bureaus had been implementing plans separately and causing significant losses where we cannot see it. It is possible to make the city more beautiful and create pedestrian-friendly and humanistic spaces. It is not a matter of money, but of a strong determination.

Things did not end there. This small-scale success of transforming the area in front of the city hall into a beautiful square inspired those involved in the Bashamichi Shopping Avenue to embark on the development of new shopping avenues. Furthermore, those in the Isezakicho area, who were further inspired by Bashamichi, transformed the avenue into a pedestrian-only shopping avenue. Considering the fact that one good example inspired those involved in the shopping avenue to take action, the cost for the restoration

work caused ripple effects which expanded into a wider range beyond expectation.

This square was named "Kusunoki Square" after many camphor trees ("kusunoki" in Japanese) were planted there, which was intended as an easy-to-remember and friendly-sounding name. While there is no name plate displayed on the square, it is everybody's favorite place and the name "Kusunoki Square" is known to all the people in the town.



Kusunoki Square

The construction of the square, relocation of roadways and car parking, and planting of trees were implemented as part of a single project. But urban design does not end with a single project. Since then, the city hall extension work started in front of Kusunoki Square. The urban design team provided guidance so that the design harmonizes with the existing building and square. A privately-owned building was also constructed on an empty lot on the other side. The

urban design team requested the party involved to set back the front facade and expand the sidewalk, modify the architectural design in such a way to create a sense of unity with the surroundings, and make signs much smaller than the original size.

The information board newly installed at the square was also designed by the urban design team, and the design will be incorporated for the renovation of Kannai station in front of the square in the near future.

Urban design, taking the square as an example, covers a wide range of missions including relocating roadways and reusing land effectively to create a pedestrian-friendly square and making good use of a budget which would otherwise likely to be wasted. In this case, however, the urban design team's mission did not end with the design of the square, but also included continuing efforts to create a sense of unity around the Kusunoki Square even if parties involved in constructions around the square vary from the city to the Japan National Railway to private businesses. They cannot be simply solved by a set of laws and regulations, but it requires comprehensive abilities to maintain consistent ideas and tenaciously engaging parties involved at the right timing while considering the situations they are in.

Pedestrian Space and City Center Promenade

Urban Design and Creation of Urban Space

What should not be misunderstood in urban design is that it is not confined to superficial makeup. If urban design was nothing but a single effort to build a sophisticated-looking building or square, it would be the same as powdering only one's nose. As mentioned previously, the form, material and color space of the entire urban space, even though the project entities may differ, are intended to create a sense of unity, rhythm, and expression of unique characteristics through collaborative efforts of respective parties. In addition to this, it is also about establishing basic principles for the

composition of a city and implementing them through specific methods. For example, it may be compared to a proper makeup method that begins by applying foundation on the entire face instead of powering some parts of the face. It is also important to think about clothes and accessories to go with the makeup, maintain a healthy body, acquire rich sensibilities and culture, and develop attractive qualities. One might actually end up looking unseemly if someone's look is imitated only by simply powdering the nose and putting on a lipstick.

Among the basic values that are lacking in the modern city and are desired in the future are unique and attractive characteristics of the city and the creation of places for humane life. The places should be designed in such a way that citizens living there grow to love them, feel a sense of attachment and joy and take pride in their city. Moreover, they should bring a sense of richness and rhythm to people's life so that people wish to continue living there in the future.

In order to specifically embody these values, we need to address the following themes: (1) Creating morphological orders and rhythm in urban spaces, (2) Respecting topography and climate, (3) Introducing water, greenery, and nature into the city, (4) Respecting history, (5) Restoring pedestrian spaces and connecting them, (6) Providing places for interactions among citizens, (7) Organizing unique urban events, (8) Bringing back a sense of touch and introducing the human scale, (9) Considering needs of the socially vulnerable, (10) Installing street furniture, (11) Actual citizen participation in urban planning, and (12) Enhancing creative joy and artistic quality.

Various themes as mentioned above are involved, and each of these themes has been specifically addressed and implemented step by step in Yokohama's urban planning. There is not enough space to cover all the details here and now, but I would like to talk about the provision of pedestrian spaces.

When we first ran into the issue of the expressway, we strongly acknowledged the imbalance among today's automobile society, city, and people. We presented measures to handle vehicle traffic as a comprehensive transportation policy that go beyond the authority of the city, and lobbied all quarters involved in addition to doing what we could within the city office. There is no denying the automobile society, but we thought about ways to secure places for people there by providing pedestrian spaces and re-acknowledging the value of

walking. Pedestrians should be able to assert their rights in today's automobile society instead of being pushed aside by cars.

While walking is the most basic characteristics of humans, the act of walking was associated with pain and hardship in the past. Considering the fact that automobiles alleviated the burden associated with walking, walking should be more enjoyable and rhythmical today. In addition, pedestrian spaces allow people to look at the city with their own eyes and make the city a more humane place.

Therefore, one of the important issues in urban design was to provide and create pedestrian spaces in the broad sense, and we took various methods as follows:

(1) Creating a park by constructing an underground expressway (example: Odori Park)

(2) Creating a pedestrian-only shopping avenue by restricting vehicle traffic and eliminating gaps between streets and sidewalks (example: Isezakicho Shopping Avenue)

(3) Building pedestrian-only green networks (example: Kohoku New Town Green Network)

(4) Building new sidewalks (example: Nanmon Dori and Kitamon Dori in Chinatown)

(5) Creating a square by eliminating streets (example: Bashamichi Square)

(6) Reducing the width of streets and increasing the width of sidewalks towards the street side (example: Bashamichi Shopping Avenue)

(7) Increasing the width of sidewalks towards the residential lot side due to the setback of wall surface line (example: Motomachi Shopping avenue, Bashamichi Shopping Avenue, and Nanmon Dori)

(8) Setting back buildings on corner sites and creating a square (example: Bashamichi Shopping Avenue)

(9) Complying with the urban area environmental design system and building guidance (example: Teishin Building, Sakuragicho Social Welfare Center, and Yamashita Park District)

(10) Using spaces under elevated railway tracks (example: Spaces under Kannai station)

(11) Improving convenience for pedestrians by providing signs, planting trees, and installing telephone booths (City Center Promenade, Bashamichi among others)

(12) Designing pavements on sidewalks (City Center Promenade, Isezakicho)

(13) Building an underground plaza (Yokohama station east exit underground shopping center)

These methods are often combined in various ways. Instead of simply using tax money, the method combining the widening of sidewalks and wall line setbacks were often used which were the result of concerted efforts of the citizens and the city administration.

City Center Promenade to the Port and Harbor

The symbol of Yokohama is definitely the port and harbor. Places that best characterizes Minato are Osanbashi Pier and Yamashita Park, and many people visit Yamashita Park on holidays. While Sakuragicho Station was originally the first Yokohama station where a steam engine made the first run in Japan in 1872, it is still considered the main entrance to Minato, and was difficult to find a way to Yamashita Park from there. In addition, there are well-known shopping avenues in the Yokohama city center including Motomachi, Isezakicho, and Bashamichi, but they didn't evoke an atmosphere of Minato and it was difficult to find how they were connected to Minato while these shopping avenues existed independently of each other.

Because of this condition, people who visited Minato on a holiday after getting off from Sakuragi-cho had to stop by one of the stores along the way and ask, "Which way is Yamashita Park?" "How can we get to Minato?" and so on. The store owners complained that this was hindering their business. One of the store owners I know asked me, " Can you make good direction signages somehow?" This provided a clue.

The office I had worked for before entering the Yokohama city office had been commissioned to design expressway signs. The signs they designed were installed on the Meishin Expressway first, and then the original design was put into use in expressways throughout Japan which became the familiar green signs we see today. Here, the basic idea is to respond to the era of highways by making the

characters large and easy to understand, and to be able to identify them clearly in an instant.

While signs for automobiles responding to the new era had been developed this way, signs for pedestrians had been long forgotten and remained undeveloped. It was necessary to bring back signs for pedestrians once more. Having lived in the Osaka region for a long time, I had often seen signs from the Edo period, including a solid stone pillar inscribed with a message, "8-ri (1 ri =approx. 3.9km) to the right." This sign must have been a comforting and reassuring experience for travelers as they passed through this place, as well as an encouragement. It still looks impressive, with a message written in a large, clear and easily legible style, and its height is kept low and gives it a sense of human-scale.

I wonder if there were any comparable signs for pedestrians after the Meiji period. Signs for pedestrians have been neglected ever since rapid motorization had begun. We decided to install new signs for pedestrians along the route connecting the three Japan National Railway stations, namely Sakuragicho (the first Yokohama station,) Kannai, and Ishikawacho, to Yamashita Park, which is the symbol of Minato, and renovate this route into a new promenade called "City Center Promenade." Odori Park was still under construction and not yet visible to the eyes of citizens, after we had struggled to construct the underground expressway seven or eight years ago. On the other hand, the promenade would be built and become visible to the eyes of citizens in a short period of time because it was to be renovated from the existing roads. While it is extremely important to come up with basic ideas concerning the relationship between automobiles and urban spaces and implement them, I thought it was necessary to use easier-to-understand methods at this point.

Pictorial Tiles and Sign Poles

We needed to change the way we think in designing signs along this promenade, which were completely different from signs for automobiles. Pedestrians look at signs while walking slowly or standing still. In addition, it would be even better to create signs that evoke the joy of walking. So I came up with the basic idea of embedding pictorial tiles with various patterns in the sidewalks

which would naturally lead the way to Minato as people follow them one after another. I happened to be friends with Etsuro Kato who was a professor of ceramics at Nagoya Institute of Technology from Seto. He would often tell me, " Can you think of any way to use more pictorial tiles and sign poles in architecture?" and so I presented my idea to him.

He responded that, " Pictorial tiles are usually embedded in walls where little friction occurs, and not in the floor where they easily wear away by friction." It makes sense, because patterns on beautiful pictorial tiles are painted on the base tiles and the thickness of the paint would be less than 0.1mm. Painted patterns would wear away easily by slight friction.

I persisted, "Please use your expertise to solve the problem somehow." We also thought about the possibility of using iron casting, but it just didn't feel right.

After some trial and error, an inlay form method was devised in which patterns are embedded in the base tiles instead of being painted on them. It was coined a "kintaro-ame" (synonymous to "cookie-cutter") method. In other words, the same pattern appears no matter how much the surface wears away by friction and it required a lot of hard work.

We decided that the first route of City Center Promenade would start from Sakuragicho Station with a long history. Pictorial tiles are embedded in sidewalks at 5-meter intervals. The number of tiles in each place varies from 1 to 4 to 9 and as many as 24. Places where many tiles are embedded have either special buildings or great views, and are designed to attract attention to these places.

In addition to embedding pictorial tiles called "road surface marks," City Center Promenade involved a series of installations and constructions undertaken by the city, including the installation of sign poles indicating the distance to Minato as well as nearby buildings and guide map boards, planting of trees, providing measures for the handicapped including the installation of Braille blocks among others. At that time, it was necessary to take advantage of the project name, or otherwise the development of sidewalks in the devastated city center area would have been left neglected.

Pictorial tiles along the first route are designed by Kiyoshi Awazu. The patterns include motifs related to the history of Yokohama and something that evokes the joy of walking, including Kurofune (black ships arriving from the west,) western-style houses, seagulls,

balloons, steam engines, red shoes, geta (Japanese wooden clogs) and more. You follow the tiles as if looking for some missing object while wondering what may come next, and arrives at Minato before you know it.

In designing the second route for Kannai, we decided to ask for citizens' cooperation by calling out, " Let's get involved in planning our city!" One's drawing would be preserved in the sidewalk in the city. One has a memory of scribbling on the sidewalk with a piece of chalk, and this was an opportunity to preserve a piece of his/her scribble in a pictorial tile embedded in a part of the city. We received as many as 1,028 entries. After the judging process, 32 entries were selected. The winners ranged from a 2nd grade boy to a 68-year old person. Two students from the school for the hearing impaired also won. Works by elementary school pupils turned out to be more compelling and interesting than the works by students of universities, high schools, and junior high schools. The drawing of a lighthouse by an employee at the city's public health center won the grand prize.



Sign poles



Pictorial tiles

Strategic Effectiveness of the Promenade

This project aimed to bring back pedestrians by letting people experience the joy of walking thereby restoring the rights of the pedestrians and to bring Minato and its citizens together. But these were not the only effects we were aiming for. I think that in the development of a long-lasting urban planning, an urban planning project should aim to bring about ripple effects continuing to the next project as well as multiple effects.

One of such effects was to direct citizens' attention not only to their own properties but also to streets in front of their homes.

We gathered the Mayor and those living and working along the promenade and established an organization that encouraged everyone to take care of the promenade. The elements along the promenades including the pictorial tiles, sign poles, and trees should be properly maintained by their hands so that they are always kept clean and welcoming to the pedestrians.

The most supportive of these calls came from private shops doing business. Private companies and offices also cooperated to a certain degree, and unfortunately the city office was the least cooperative of all. Those in the city hall said what was happening outside the city office was not their business. Although they were the ones who used these areas most frequently, they would limit themselves to a narrow frame of responsibility, and this situation happens in any local government. In large organizations, be it government offices or private companies, efforts like these are often neglected because nobody knows who is in charge. But we somehow successfully raised people's awareness of what is happening in the city outside of their own properties through the promenade projects. In addition to creating the promenade, we wanted people living and working in the buildings and stores in the surrounding areas to understand that they also play a certain role in urban planning.

Urban planning begins when citizens start to raise awareness and look at the shapes of their buildings, how they use them and show interest outside of their premises from the viewpoint of urban environment.

Pictorial tiles and other promenade props can be used in various ways. We attempted to use them to create networks among respective shopping avenues and main facilities of public corporations, all of

which had existed independently of each other. Creating networks may sound easy, but it is quite difficult to actually do so. During my days as a consultant outside the city office, I had presented a proposal to connect areas that had been totally disconnected at that time, including Isezakicho, Bashamichi, Yamashita Park, Nihon Odori, Chinatown, and Motomachi. The city also presented a proposal called the "3P" strategy, which was to build parks, plazas, and promenades, but it was soon forgotten. Such strategy based on fleeting motivation disappeared quickly.

I decided to use the promenade project to connect the city center, which I had been thinking about for nearly 10 years since I was a consultant. People would be able to enjoy walking around the city center by following the route of the promenade, and they could also walk around the connecting shopping avenues.

In particular, Motomachi, the contemporary fashion town, and Chinatown, the international town of gastronomy, which do not compete with each other and are located within a 3-minute walking distance of each other, have existed completely independent of each other until then. The street Nanmon Dori connecting the two towns looked too shabby for a shopping avenue that it barely served to connect the two towns. As a result, if one would ask, "Which way is Chinatown?" in Motomachi, nobody would know the way. Or, if one would ask, "Which way is Motomachi" in Chinatown, a person would point to a totally wrong direction.

We therefore decided that the third route of the promenade, or the Ishikawacho route, would pass through Nanmon Dori connecting Chinatown and Motomachi. Because the road width was only 10m, we faced a challenge in building sidewalks. Until then, pedestrians had to walk between the narrow gap between the guardrails and electric poles, but we somehow managed to build narrow sidewalks. Crabapple trees were planted there, and in springtime, pink flowers would bloom, and they would bear small fruits in autumn. Because the sidewalk was too narrow for large sign poles, we installed cute mini poles and the narrow sidewalks were paved by local residents, transforming Nanmon Dori into a completely new town.

Urban planning is not just about implementing public projects. Local residents cooperated in the promenade project and developed Nanmon Dori as a shopping avenue, and they also designated wall surface lines. Designation of wall surface lines is to align wall lines of buildings along the designated setback line when constructing new

buildings or reconstructing buildings. In this case, the setback line is set at 2 meters from the road frontage. While the wall lines would temporarily remain irregular during the transitional period, they would eventually align along the sidewalk and add considerable width to the sidewalk.

Regarding the setback of wall surface line, one may feel that part of his/her property was carved up for the benefit of pedestrians. But this was not an effort to widen the street forcibly and urgently. The sidewalk would be gradually widened when buildings would be reconstructed, and the widened sidewalk would contribute to improving the town's atmosphere and make it more enjoyable for visitors to walk around. It would greatly benefit the shopping avenue in the long run.

Motomachi Shopping Avenue, the well-known fashion town, implemented the wall surface line designation from the mid-1950's to the mid-1960's, and created pedestrian spaces as a result of setback. If they had not implemented the setback then, the district might have failed to meet the needs of automobile society later on. If everyone makes small compromises to enrich the entire shopping avenue from a broader perspective, respective stores will gain benefits in return someday. The mission of the city administration in urban planning is to provide guidance to people so that they cooperate with each other in creating good environment and gain benefits in return as a result of such efforts.

Yamashita Park Area and Pair Square

Seaside Street in Front of Yamashita Park

Places that best characterizes Yokohama are Yamashita Park and Kaigan Dori (which means a "seaside street") in front of it. This area was a foreign settlement when the Port of Yokohama was opened, and there is the former home of Doctor Hepburn who edited the first Japanese-English dictionary, "Japanese English Dictionary" and invented the Hepburn romanization system. Kaigan Dori was a

promenade that was highly praised as the "most beautiful street" by foreign residents living in the foreign settlement. Lot numbers were assigned in the foreign settlement, and foreign trading houses called "bankan" (numbered building), starting from "Ichibankan" (House No.1) or the Jardine-Matheson's trading house, lined up along the street, and the storied Grand Hotel was also there. The boat race on Sundays was one of Yokohama's special events.

The Great Kanto Earthquake devastated these areas in a single morning, and the debris from the disaster was buried and Yamashita Park, the first seaside park in Japan, was built. Ginkgo trees were planted along Kaigan Dori, and their fresh green leaves in early summer and yellow leaves in autumn were especially beautiful. History was alive and well, and Kaigan Dori in front of Yokohama became the symbol of Yokohama once more.

However, this area was devastated again by World War II and the post-war requisition by the U.S. army. Yamashita Park was fenced off and Japanese people were prohibited from using it, while rows of prefabricated U.S. Army barracks were built throughout the site. It was a sad sight. After the release of requisition, squatters' stalls lined up along the street in front of Yamashita Park and completely blocked the view of the seaside park from the street. Moreover, a construction of a portside railway on the newly reclaimed land was underway, and an elevated railway was built over Yamashita Park. Remaining buildings were mostly rundown and it was far from a state to be called the "symbol of Yokohama" when the Planning and Coordination Bureau was born.

I had been studying this area from the time when I was working for a consulting firm, and had presented a proposal to redevelop this area as an important strategic point for the creation of Yokohama's unique city center. While the proposal was left ignored in the city office, I was still thinking about redeveloping the area as the symbol of Yokohama after I joined the city office.

This type of strategy cannot be realized by abruptly implementing a few projects. It is necessary to solve various issues and improve conditions little by little. Fortunately, the removal of street vendors, which had been under negotiation for many years, was finally carried out, thanks to efforts of the city's Park Bureau. While some compromises were made and their vested rights were approved to a certain degree, the street vendors' area was largely reduced and tidied

up to give a cleaner appearance. As a result, the port can finally be seen from Kaigan Dori in front of Yamashita Park.

Next, the city acquired a lot which later became a seed lot for the urban design guidance in this area. There was a lot combining the Yamashitacho No.3 lot and No.4 lot which constituted a city block with a total area of 10,944m². The city acquired only about 15% of the lot, specifically part of the No.3 lot with an area of 1,630m². This lot had been requisitioned and later released by the U.S. Army. It is extremely difficult for the city to acquire a lot without any confirmed purposes. But it was important to secure a lot, even though we were uncertain what we could achieve using a small lot like this.

There was a condominium nearing completion close to this lot, but we made a special request to the owner to refrain from having laundries being dried out on the balconies and have laundry drying place installed on the rooftop instead. This was because the faces south on the main road to Yamashita Park, and the laundries would be too prominent from balconies that would make the building look like a full dressed ship.

As for the hotel planned to be built in front of Yamashita Park, we were negotiating with the hotel because there were some issues with land acquisition. While we understood that land acquisition by the hotel might be unavoidable, we took this opportunity to emphasize the significance of this area and to solicit their cooperation. Furthermore, we suggested that they also purchase the adjacent lot, for the current site is slightly too small for a hotel. This was because we figured it would be easier for the city to make a request to them if they acquired a larger lot. But the acquisition of the adjacent lot did not materialize due to a number of internal problems on the hotel side as well as the high land price.

Later, the National Land Use Planning Act was enacted in 1974 which made it mandatory that those engaged in transaction of land exceeding a certain scale are legally obliged to submit a notification. The Land Adjustment Committee was established by the city with the aim of handling the notification from a comprehensive perspective, when it just so happened that the city received a notification that the lot next to the hotel would be used for the construction of a building for a religious organization. The city took this opportunity to make special request to them to follow the city's guidance in constructing the building and do their best to preserve the "Nanabankan" (No.7 House) that was the only remaining

historical "bankan" (numbered buildings in the foreign settlement) built on this lot before the Great Kanto Earthquake.

Yamashita Park Area Guidance Policy

The city also made request and provided guidance in order to deal with various problems that had arisen in this area. While these efforts had not been entirely successful, they took every opportunity to lay the groundwork for further development of this area as a starting point of the Green Axis plan and also as the symbol of Yokohama. It would have been impossible to achieve this in a conventional city office where employees mechanically processed paperwork in a sporadic manner.

Around this time, the urban design team compiled an outline of the guidance policy for the development and construction in the Kaigan Dori area in front of Yamashita Park. The idea must also be realistic and articulate. We therefore established principles as follows: (1) This area with a fantastic view of the port should be planned as a public place where many unspecified persons can come and go as much as possible avoiding the monopoly of specific individuals. Apartment buildings occupied by individuals should be avoided. (2) Considering the narrow width of sidewalks on Kaigan Dori, buildings facing sidewalks should be setback from the frontal site boundary by three meters and pave the ground with the same materials as the sidewalk pavement in order to add more width to the sidewalks. (3) Circulation routes of pedestrians and cars should be separated as much as possible and the car parking and drop-off area should be located in the back or on either side in order to avoid interrupting the pedestrian flow along sidewalks on the Yamashita Park side with car traffic. (4) A square along pedestrian roads should be provided as much as possible, and it should be designed to be in harmony with squares of other buildings. Details of guidance vary in each zone, and the items are indicated in the chart. As mentioned previously, various measures for this area had been taken before establishing the principles, and we established a more specific policy on this occasion.

Pair Square

A request was made by Kanagawa Prefecture to build a prefectural citizens' hall in this area, including a large hall that seats nearly 3,000 people. This area was indeed a prime location in terms of the character of Yokohama and Minato, as long as it was maintained properly. The site is located on the same city block as the city-owned lot mentioned earlier, and most of the city block was actually owned by the prefecture. The prefecture proposed to purchase the city-owned land and use the entire block for this construction. Although the city had its own independent use proposal, they decided to cooperate with the prefecture to promote the development of the Yamashita Park area.

On the occasion of the governor's petition to the mayor, he proposed that, "Although we will cooperate with the sale of the land, we want to develop this area as a distinctively Yokohama neighborhood in this district as a whole, so we want it to follow the guidelines such as for city's design and other matters." With this proposal, we presented the principles mentioned earlier to the prefecture.

Around the same time, a group led by the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry were planning to build the Yokohama Industry and Trade Center on the city block next to the Prefectural Citizens' Hall. The city made the same proposal to this building and also suggested that the two buildings which were scheduled to be completed around the same time should respectively build a square on their respective corner site facing each other across the street. They protested that they could not possibly build a square as large as 3,000m² aligning with the frontal setback in addition to contributing the three-meter frontal setback zone for the sidewalk in this extremely expensive land. We patiently negotiated with them, with the help of the Environmental Design System which we previously established, and solved the problem.

As a result, they built a set of two squares called "Pair Square" on the corner sites where the Prefectural Citizens' Hall and the Industry and Trade Center face each other, both featuring a design mainly using brick tile materials. While the respective buildings were built by different parties, they successfully built an urban space together beyond the bounds of architectural spaces. The urban design team's

mission was to provide direction and negotiate with both parties as necessary.

The 3-meter zone added to the sidewalk is paved using the same material as the existing flat paving blocks, and the boundary between the site and the road is almost undistinguishable. Gingko trees along Kaigan Dori spread out their lush green branches over the wide and continuous sidewalk. The widened sidewalk is studded with the same pictorial tiles. Looking closely, boundary marker stones are embedded here and there, almost unnoticed by most people. Pictorial tiles are also embedded in the building sites. If buildings had been built up to the frontal site boundaries, the effective width of the sidewalk along this road would have been 2.5m at most and branches of large Gingko trees would have to be cut down, which would have been a terrible sight. But now we have a spacious sidewalk with an effective width of 5.5m, or 8.0m (or more in some parts) including the tree zone.

In the beginning, the squares were originally set at 1.5m higher than the sidewalk. This height would have blocked the line of sight for the general public, and the significance of the squares would be diminished. We therefore advised that the height should be reduced to 120cm or even 90cm in order to avoid blocking the view. Even if it looks good on the plan, it is necessary to check the details even if the plan seems feasible, otherwise it would be impossible to achieve the original idea.

These types of architectural guidances are not based on laws and regulations. If it is decided by laws and regulations, it would be applied mechanically without promoting positive efforts to improve further. If it is decided in a fixed manner without knowing what the purpose of the building is, it would be difficult to achieve good results. Also, it would have been impossible to decide based on laws and regulations as there would have been strong oppositions. On the contrary, however, methods not based on laws and regulations are subject to many oppositions. Therefore, we have no choice but to repeatedly explain to them that collaborative efforts of all parties involved to create urban spaces would bring better results than the outcomes of individual and arbitrary actions of respective parties to assert themselves and do things on their own. It would be impossible to persuade them without the knowledge and convictions about design methods for creating integrated spaces. This is where a competent urban design team is needed.

Everybody tries to make the most out of their expensive land. As mentioned earlier, however, the guidance provided for this area is based on the idea of "you must lose a fly to catch a trout." While respective buildings seem to suffer losses by giving away part of their land, they actually contribute to improving the surrounding environment and consequently improve the impression of their building as well. In other words, while they seem to have suffered losses, they actually gained great benefits by improving the entire area. One can say that urban design is a design method of persuading people to focus on benefits of the entire area instead of focusing solely on instant benefits for respective buildings.



Pair Square



Former Nanabankan and the hotel

Today, Ginkgo trees along Kaigan Dori generously spread out their branches over the wide sidewalk. The two spacious squares allow for sufficient sunlight and wind to Ginkgo trees located on the north side of the buildings, enhancing the rich colors of their leaves. While the Industry and Trade Center had protested against building a square, the square in front of their building is now used as a contest venue for the "Minato Festival" as well as a popular gathering place where market stalls and carts are occasionally brought out. Looking back, it must have been a challenging task to build Yamashita Park after the Great Kanto Earthquake. And more than half a century later, recreation places for citizens and generous pedestrian spaces were finally added to the back side of the park.

It is also interesting to note that after the completion of the squares, the two buildings were in the end satisfied with the current situation. If they had insisted on their insignificant self-centered complacency and the city mechanically followed legal procedures, results like these would not have been achieved.

Continuation of Urban Design

One of the neighboring buildings is a hotel that had been undergoing planning procedures for a long time and the other is a building of a religious organization. In accordance with the principles mentioned previously, the city continues to provide guidance to these buildings during the design process while taking into consideration their respective uses. Because it is not based on laws and regulations, they can adopt unconventional and flexible approaches. They present their proposals with confidence foreseeing the future of the area instead of being at the mercy of respective parties. It is only by continuing to do so that the overall design direction of the area will be realized and become meaningful.

In the case of the religious organization building, they agreed to cooperate with us by preserving part of the old brick structure of Nanabankan facing the street and converting the building to a museum-like memorial hall. For this reason, the sidewalk maintains the original width along this part of the building. But this irregularity adds rhythm and unique qualities to this area, which may be a positive outcome of not following laws and regulations. Due to the difference in uses, this building and the hotel are divided in terms of circulation routes, while the square on the hotel side is designed to spatially harmonize with the preserved Nanabankan.

We had numerous meetings and negotiations in order to coordinate among these four buildings. While architects of respective buildings were relatively cooperative, this was not the case with the building owners. Therefore, a meeting was held with the urban design team including the architects and the clients.

Some would criticize other buildings while putting aside their own buildings. Some influential people would storm into the Mayor's office and complain he/she was treated unfairly by the administration. Some are reluctant to respond due to business

reasons. Nevertheless, the development of Kaigan Dori in front of Yamashita Park is gradually underway based on these principles. Urban planning can create new values if all parties involved collaborate towards a shared goal.

As one can see in these examples, the city did not make any special expenditures. Constructions to widen sidewalks, create squares, and preserve old historic buildings were all carried out by respective proprietors. If these works had been carried out by the city, the costs would have been outrageous and it would have put an enormous burden on the citizens. In addition, these works could not have been achieved only by spending money. It would have been difficult to decide on a plan due to many resistance, and arbitrary facts would have been prioritized over the plan without discussion before any progress was made. Even if the plan was made, it would have been by-the-book and not likely to bring better results. It would have been impossible to accomplish something as large as Pair Square.

Money, laws and regulations are important. But they cannot be put to good use without strong motivation, wisdom, and a comprehensive system to begin with. The Yamashita Park area was dramatically transformed not by arbitrary approaches but by our continuous efforts to carry out a single urban design policy while making necessary adjustments to respond to specific situations of each project.