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Local Governments' Initiatives on Central-City District Renaissance and Suburban Land Use Control

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1. A Synopsis of Today's Urban Structure and Regulatory Reform

Fumio KAJIWARA

Senior Director Highway Bureau, Oita Prefecture

1-1 Today's Urban Structure and the Significance of Regulatory Reform

—One of the Current Issues Facing Provincial Cities

Pushed by the increasingly better access to motorized transportation, among other factors, the disorderly urban sprawling has accelerated throughout Japan in recent years. Not only have the effects of public funding poured into urban centers been diminished, additional investments in new public projects are needed in the outlying suburban areas, resulting in wastes of funding and increasing burden on the environment.

With the projected population decrease and an increasingly aging society, it has become crucial to ensure that the location of any development of large-scale customer-drawing facility or public project that could potentially impact the urban structure of an expansive region must be properly reviewed through city planning process with inputs from the regional communities. To facilitate the orderly development of urban areas

through city planning, parts of the City Planning Act, Building Standard Act, Parking Facility Act and New Residential Built-up Area Development Act are to undergo revision (Cabinet Decision dated Feb. 6, 2006).

As a part of this regulatory reform, zoning will be tightened by taking into account the broader regional impacts a project may have. Under the new city planning system, zoning may be revised in a more timely manner with participations by residents. Projects that may significantly impact the infrastructure and environment of the surrounding areas, such as development projects that exceed a certain scale for retail shops, restaurants, theatres, cinemas, exhibition halls, gaming centers or stadiums will be more closely regulated. Even the undesignated areas will be subject to designation so that land-uses in these areas may be restricted.

After the regulatory reform takes place, local governments will play a major role in the revitalization of their own central-city district. Municipalities are expected to take charge by exercising their authorities in city planning, and prefectural governments are expected to carry out regional coordination so that the effort of a municipality on city planning will not be undercut by the laissez faire stance adopted by its neighboring municipalities. The part of report concerning regional coordination calls for municipalities to exercise "careful judgment." What exactly is "careful judgment?" What specific actions are municipalities expected to take? This article will try to answer these questions by providing a summary analysis of the nationwide regulatory reform and examining the situation in Kyushu and the challenges it faces.

1-2 Outline of the Partial Revisions on City Planning Act and Building Standard Act

Basically, the revised laws now specifically require the development of a large-scale customer-drawing facility with potential impacts on urban structure to undergo a city planning review process. The community's "careful judgment" is to be exercised by the prefecture so as to ensure the development of proper sites through city planning process.

Following is a synopsis of the partial reform (prepared by the author based on information provided on the HP of Ministry of Infrastructure, Land and Transport).

(1) Regulations on Development in Urban Promotion Areas and Land Use Areas

Developments of large-scale customer-drawing facility will no longer be approved in areas zoned for specific land use unless a zoning decision is made to revise or relax the land use in the Category II residential areas, quasi residential areas or industrial areas.

(2) Regulations on Development in Undivided and Undesignated Areas

In principle, the development of a large-scale customer-drawing facility is not permitted anymore in undesignated areas within an undivided city planning area or a quasi city planning area.

(3) The creation of a Zone Planning System to Relax Land Uses

In land use areas that are now subject to stricter regulations under 1) or 2) and undesignated areas within an undivided city planning area, a new zone planning system (development promotion zone) will be established so that developments of large-scale customer-drawing facility may be approved under the system.

(4) Expansion of Quasi City Planning Area System

Requirements for quasi city planning areas have been relaxed to allow the designation of more areas that show the need for an orderly utilization of lands, including farmlands. And the authority for

making designations has now been given to the prefectural governments.

(5) Eliminate Problems with City Planning Procedures and Strengthening Regional Coordination Procedures

More people, including certain developers, will be granted the authority to make city planning proposals. Furthermore, to improve regional coordination, prefectural governors have been granted the authority to summon municipalities involved for hearings when negotiated consents are needed on municipal city planning decisions.

(6) Reform of the Development Approval System

The criteria for approving large-scale developments in urbanization control areas have been abolished so that permits may be issued for public utility development projects, such as hospitals, welfare facilities, schools and government buildings.

The limited space here does not allow detailed information to be provided, and only the aforementioned major areas of reform are given.

Case studies of the cities in the Kyushu region will be provided below. I will also examine today's local governments, how they plan to deal with the issues, and, lastly, how land uses should be controlled.

2. Fukuoka Prefecture's Initiatives

Nobuhiro YOSHIDA

Chief of Urban Planning Building and Urban Division, Fukuoka Prefecture

2-1 Present State of Central-City Districts in the Prefecture

In Nougata, a city located about 30 km east of Fukuoka, both the amount of sales and the number of pedestrians have dropped to about half of what they were 10 years ago (Figures 2-1 and 2-2).

Furthermore, in Amagi, a city located about 30 km south of Fukuoka, not only has the commerce, but the city hall, the citizens' hall and national government offices have also moved to the suburb (Figure 2-3). The amount of sales generated in the central-city district has plummeted to about 20% of the peak. These cases illustrate the significant impact from the decentralization of urban functions from the city center toward the suburbs (Figure 2-4).

This trend can be seen beyond Nougata and Amagi. Every city throughout the prefecture is undergoing a similar transformation. As illustrated by Figure 2-5, prior to 1970s, most of the large commercial facilities were built within commercial areas located in the central-city district. However, increasing number of such development projects are now located in an industrial area or an undesignated land use area in the suburb (Figure 2-5).

Moreover, in recent years, even public utility facilities, such as cultural centers and large hospitals, are being built in suburban urbanization control areas or undesignated land use areas in increasing number (Figure 2-6).

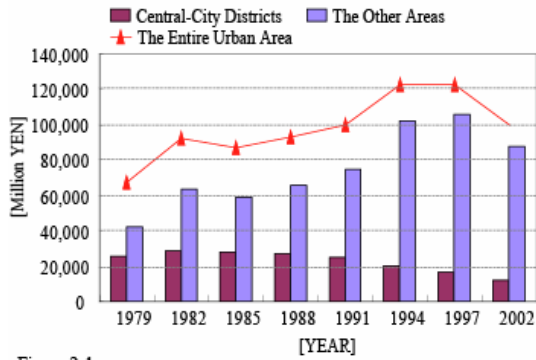


Figure 2-1. Changes in Retail Sales in the Nougata Metropolitan Area

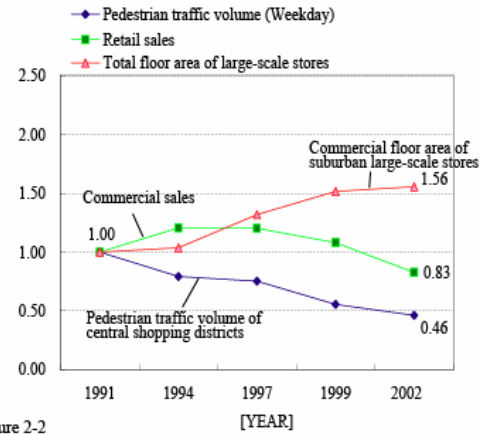


Figure 2-2 Increase in the Floor Space for Large-Scale Retail Stores and Changes in Pedestrian Traffic in the Central Shopping District

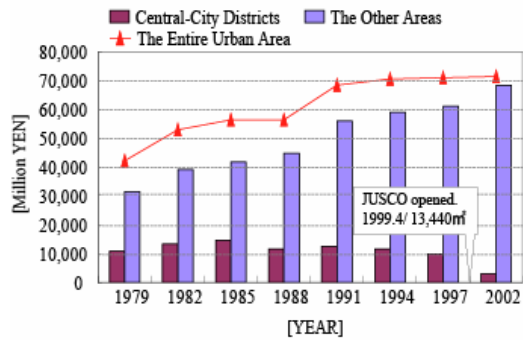


Figure 2-4 Changes in Retail Sales in the Amagi Metropolitan Area

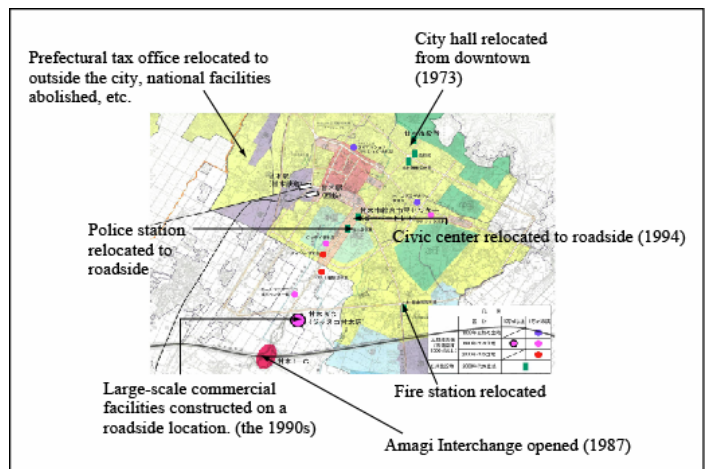


Figure 2-3 Decentralization of Urban Functions (Amagi City)

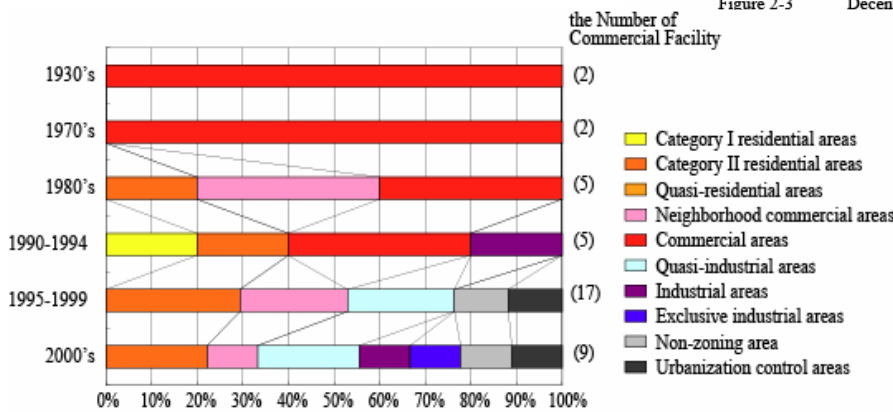


Figure 2-5 Large-Scale Shopping Developments according to Time and Land-Use Area

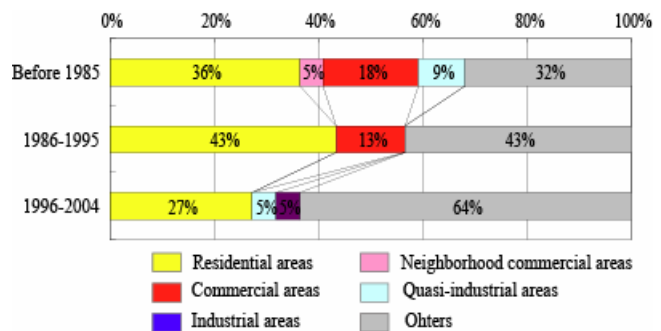


Figure 2-6 Locations of Facilities such as Municipal Culture Centers in Fukuoka Prefecture (Number of Cases)

As the urban functions are being shifted to the suburbs, under-populated parts of the city are growing in size. The data (Figure 2-7) clearly shows a trend of decreasing population density as the DID area expanded. If the urban sprawling continues at this pace, we will have large urban areas that must overly rely on automobiles for transportation, placing a severe strain on the environment. Among other potential negatives, such urban areas are also expected to require a larger budget to maintain and manage their public facilities, bringing down the cost-effectiveness of administrative budget (Figure 2-8).

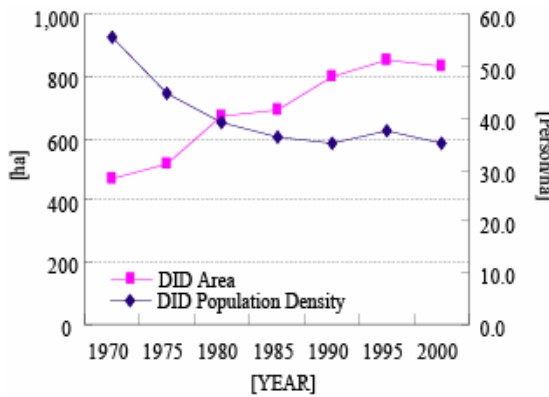


Figure 2-7 Changes in DID (Nougata City)

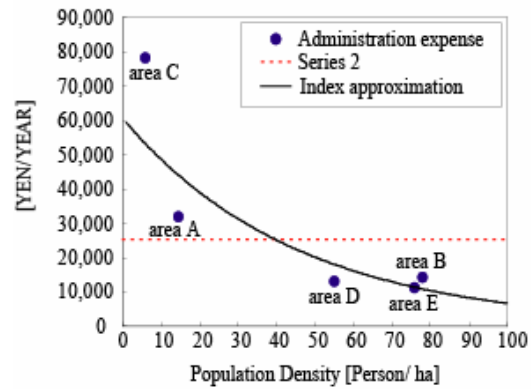


Figure 2-8 Relationship between Population Density and Per-Resident Administration Expense (Maintenance + Renewal)

2-2 Fukuoka Prefecture's Basic Philosophy

Recognizing the need to switch from the past policy of building urban areas with decentralized urban functions to a policy of building cities with a core area that provide urban functions, Fukuoka Prefecture has decided to promote the revitalization of its central-city district by shifting urban functions back to the downtown area.

To carry out such a policy, the prefecture has adopted a three-pronged approach: (1) promoting residential development in the city, (2) creating more attractions that draw people to the city, and (3) placing large-scale customer-drawing facilities in appropriate locations.

My discussion here will focus more on (3).

The key to redevelop the downtown area is the proper placement of large-scale customer-drawing facilities that potentially could greatly impact city planning. When the impact of a development project is likely to reach beyond a single municipality, it is important to evaluate the proposed location for such a project from a regional perspective. The prefecture plans to draft a vision concerning the location of large-scale customer-drawing facilities. It will provide the basic philosophy on the location of such a facility for each regional metropolitan area, as well as specific areas where the prefecture is trying to lure the development of such facilities and specific areas where the development of such facilities is re-

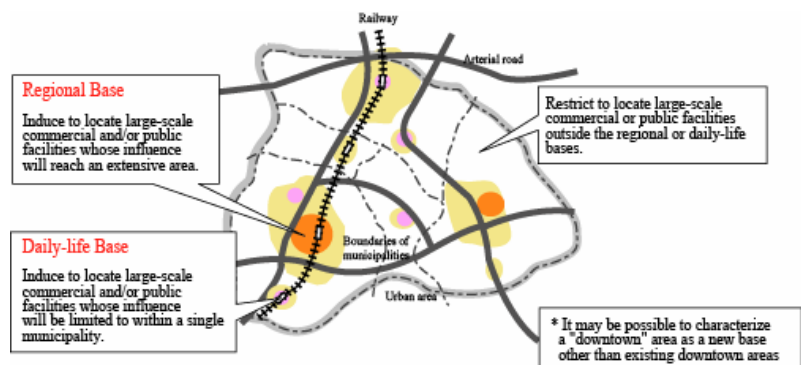


Figure 2-9 Image of the Vision on Developments of Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facility

stricted. The prefecture hopes such a vision and the revised City Planning Act, among other regulations, will help bring development projects for large-scale customer-drawing facility to the proper locations (Figure 2-9).

The prefecture and municipalities will share the responsibility for approving the location of any large-scale customer-drawing facility. Municipalities are primarily responsible for reviewing proposals for large-scale development projects that have a potential impact on only one municipality. The prefectural government, on the other hand, oversees proposals for large-scale development projects that potentially may impact multiple municipalities (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1 Shared Roles of Prefecture and City on the Proper Placement of Large-Scale Customer-Drawing

Types of large-scale commercial or public facilities		Prefectural government leads coordination.	Municipal (city, town, village) government leads coordination.
		[Facilities covered]	[Facilities covered]
		Large-scale commercial or public facilities whose influence is likely to exceed a single municipality.	Large-scale commercial or public facilities whose influence is generally limited to a single municipality.
Commercial & Entertainment	Commercial facilities, stadiums, culture halls, theaters, cinemas, and other	• Total floor area of the facilities given in the left column exceeds 10,000 square meters.	• Floor area of commercial facility space is in the range of 3,000 to 10,000 square meters.
Public service & welfare	Public facilities (base facilities of national and/or local public entities: government buildings, municipal offices, principal libraries)	• Public facilities to be developed by national or prefectural government	• Public facilities to be developed by municipal government
	Hospitals	• None	• Those with 200 beds or more
	Social welfare facilities	• None	• Those with a capacity of 200 people or more

The decision on whether to grant approval for a large-scale facility that has a regional impact will be made objectively by taking into account the opinions expressed by relevant municipalities and employing the help of Prefectural Urban Planning Council (Figure 2-10).

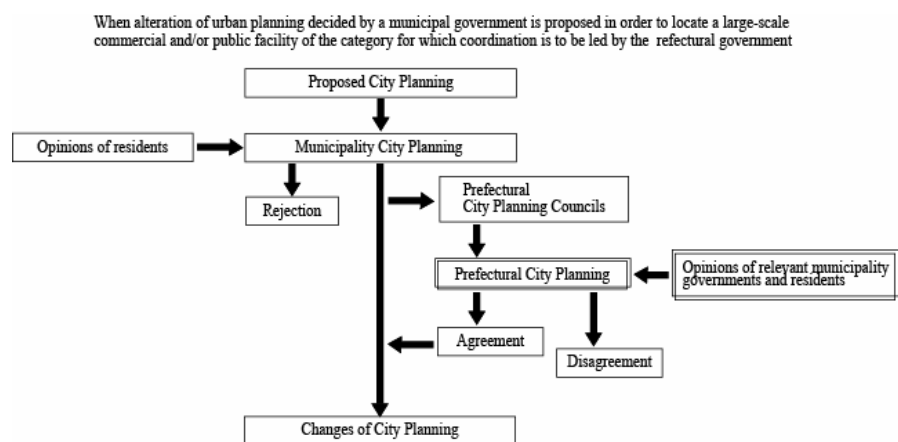


Figure 2-10 Flow-Chart for the Proper Placement of Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facilities



Figure 2-11 Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facilities that have Closed

central-city districts in order to ensure large-scale customer-drawing facilities are built in the proper locations. Finally, it is also crucial to draw up measures to deal with any potential withdraw of a large-scale customer-drawing facility. Some large-scale suburb-type retail stores have withdrawn after only a few years of operation, thereby significantly disrupting community-building plans and greatly impacting urban structures (Figure 2-11). Therefore, it is necessary for businesses to draw up some sort of manifest that specifies meas-

ures to alleviate the impact of any potential withdraw of new large-scale customer-drawing facilities from the suburban areas.

2-3 Future Initiatives Planed by Fukuoka Prefecture

Based on the basic philosophy mentioned above, Fukuoka Prefecture plans to carry out specific measures listed below.

(1) Drafting a Vision concerning the Location for Developing Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facilities

A location-vision will be drafted during fiscal 2006 through consultations between the prefecture and municipalities.

(2) Developing an Assessment Method to Serve as a Tool for Evaluate Changes in City Planning

An assessment method will be developed as a tool to evaluate changes in urban planning so as to allow the use of an appropriate city planning method suited for each individual community.

(3) Actions in Response to the Expanded City Planning Proposal System

Under the expanded city planning proposal system planned under the regulatory reform, businesses such as large-scale retail stores will be eligible for submitting proposals. And businesses such as the existing non-conforming (existing facilities that would face difficulties for expansion or remodeling) large-scale customer-drawing facilities are expected to submit proposals for zone planning and change of land use, etc. that must be reviewed and ruled on in a timely manner.

(4) Preparing a Guideline for Designating Zones for Specific Use

A guideline will be prepared for municipalities on designating zones for specific use aimed for seeking the ministerial approval under the basic plan for central-city district revitalization.

(5) Designation of quasi urban planning area

After the legislative reform takes effect, the prefecture will have the authority to designate quasi city planning areas in areas outside of a city planning area. Accordingly, quasi city planning areas will be designated in the region as soon as the revised laws take effect.

(6) Handling of Last-Minute Facilities before Full Implementation of the Revised City Planning Act

Handling of proposed developments of large-scale customer-drawing facility before November of next year, when the part of the regulatory reform on tightening regulations will be implemented

(7) Discussion on How to Carry Out Regional Coordination involving Multiple Prefectures

The council set up by Kyushu Governors Alliance will take up a discussion on this issue.

2-4 Future Urban Policies

The direction of city-building basically will remain the same with the goal of centralizing urban functions into a compact area.

However, not every city in Fukuoka Prefecture is expected to become a compact city because of the planned revisions on the three city-building laws, including the City Planning Act, and the aforementioned measures planned by the prefecture. Nonetheless, a system will be in place to help those cities aiming to become a compact city to achieve their goals. Considering the fact that cities at present have no means to their

disposal for achieving such a goal, making this proposed system available is a big step forward.

Of course, this system, once launched, is likely to run into different problems. It is important to keep in mind that appropriate coordination of the system will be needed whenever a problem is encountered.

Moreover, how to attract large-scale customer-drawing facilities to the downtown area that will bring people to the central-city district will continue to be a formidable issue to deal with, which likely will require a combination of policy measures that take advantage of what the local community has to offer. It is also extremely important for the residents, businesses and administrative agencies to actively get involved in order for these measures to be effective.

In any case, the attempt by local public groups to use the revised City Planning Law, among other regulations, as a tool to revitalize central-city districts is equivalent to setting sail for a sea unknown to anyone. To achieve what they set out to do, these groups will need the collective wisdom of the members of City Planning Institute attending this symposium.

3. Today's Miyazaki City and the Challenges that It Faces

Tetsunobu YOSHITAKE

Associate Professor, Engineering Department, Miyazaki University

3-1 The Development of a Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facility in Miyazaki City and the Challenges Involved

The large-scale customer-drawing facility that opened in Miyazaki City in May 2005 is located in an urbanization control area about 10-minute drive from the central-city district of Miyazaki with a size almost as large as downtown Miyazaki.

The developer once gave up on the project but was able to reach an agreement with the land owners at the eleventh hour on his second attempt.

Although the surrounding municipalities were against the project, due to the lack of a framework for bringing oppositions, they could not do anything more than lobbying the prefectural government.

Although detailed information could not be provided due to the limited space here, the site of this large-scale customer-drawing facility was never designated for development but remains a controlled area on



Opened: May 19, 2005
A single mall with two cores
Site area: 190,669 square meters
Commercial facility space: 77,355 square meters
Parking capacity: 4,070 vehicles (free of charge)
Number of stores: JASCO + specialty stores (160)

Figure 3-1
Location and Overview of AEON Miyazaki

the prefecture's zoning map. This can be viewed as a reflection of the prefecture's reluctance to interfere with municipalities' affairs under the decentralization of authority. But it is possible for the prefecture to get involved.

The problem is, despite the newly revised laws, depending on what stance

or methodology the administration would adopt, the location of a development project may still pose a problem to the regional urban structure.

3-2 Procedural Issues following the Regulatory Reform

From the perspective of a business operator, if the regulatory process for building a large-scale commercial facility proves cumbersome, the alternative may be to apply for an approval for change of land use or to divide up the facility to keep it under 10,000 m². This is likely to cause a tug of war among local governments trying to win over the development and achieve nothing at the end. This problem cannot be resolved as long as people think this is the way to do business based on the laws of the past. There needs to be a forum for discussions on the spirits of the laws or ordinances.

For instance, in Denmark, only 5% of the nation is designated for development, leaving the other 95% off limit to development. Any neighboring municipality has the veto power to a development proposal. If no compromise could be reached among neighboring municipalities, the Minister of Environment may step in to try to broker a deal. This may be a way to avoid the tug of war among local governments trying to lure a development project.

3-3 Future Urban Policies

As the decentralization of authority continues, it may be unreasonable to expect the local governments to take over the strict regulatory control. Letting the national government to set strict regulatory control standards and allowing the local authorities to relax the control according to each of their individual situation may be a better alternative. It may be too much to ask of the local authorities to exercise strict regulatory control. With that in mind, it is obvious that both the national government and local governments should be work together in future city planning, especially with respect to land-use control.

Table 3-2
Issues that Came to Light from the SC Approval of AEON Miyazaki

- Procedures and processes related to urban planning
- Continuity and flexibility of planning
- Administrative decentralization and coordination over an extensive area (Consistency of planning and local administrative discretion)
- Systems and functions of assemblies, advisory councils and external institutions
- Citizens' participation and information strategy
- Lawsuits related to urban planning

Particularity of Miyazaki (May also be found in other municipalities)

4. Today's Hisayamamachi and the Challenges that It faces

Koji TAMADA

Chief of Kyushu Office, Urban Environmental Research Institute

4-1 The Development of a Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facility and Its Effects

Hisayamamachi has tried to use settlement-zone planning to for environmental conservation and com-

munity preservation purposes, but the planning could not be applied to the settlement area where Torius Hisayama was built. With the abolishing of Large-Scale Retail Stores Law in 2000, a proposal to build a commercial facility came up. With the support of the administration, the development project for Torius Hisayama was approved as an agricultural village vitalization project aimed to convert farmlands.

The parcel on which Torius Hisayama sits on was secured through a 10 – 15-year lease under the land trust system, with the option for an extension. Torius Hisayama was proposed with the aim of invigorating the agricultural village, with facilities such as Genki-Ichi being built on the premise. But many residents became concerned about the deteriorated environment. Originally, Hisayamamachi designated 96% of its jurisdiction as controlled areas to preserve its environment and agriculture. However, with the outflow of young people, it was forced to change its policy. Hoping to invigorate the town and to provide conveniences that would benefit the town's elderly population, it endorsed the Torius Hisayama project. The difficult issue that Hisayamamachi faces is the antagonistic effect of community invigoration and environmental conservation against each other.

Other communities are also confronting similar issues. It is worthy to note, however, that the majority of the community residents, especially farm owners, are in favor of earning rental incomes rather than tending their farmlands.

4-2 Hisayamamachi's Urban Structure

The eight settlements in Hisayamamachi were relatively similar in size. Each settlement has only a few stores without any traditional downtown district. The opening of Torius Hisayama has created a district that resembles a city center. From the perspective of urban structure for the metropolitan area that encompasses Fukuoka City and its neighboring municipalities, this is clearly one of the large-scale customer-drawing facilities in the suburbs.

Initially the development plan reportedly envisioned up to 3-million customers annually. It now receives more than 10-million customers a year, illustrating how large of an urban area that it serves. In fact, there are customers who come from as far away as Yamaguchi.

From a perspective of the metropolitan area, one may think that "Nagasaki is spoiled by Fukuoka and Tenjin." Structurally Tenjin is the center of Kyushu. Its effect on the central-city district varies depending on whether you are examining it from a perspective of the Fukuoka metropolitan area or the entire Kyushu area. In other words, the area debate on urban structure could vary greatly depending on how it is perceived. Therefore, some very careful analyses are required especially when dealing with regional coordination or a local government's authority and identity.

4-3 Hisayamamachi's Future Initiatives

Among the eight settlements, the five that have yet to finalize their agricultural community zoning plans have taken steps toward drafting a controlled area zoning plan in response to the regulatory reform. To preserve the local community and conserve the environment, it is also important to set aside zones that may be used for residential developments that would contribute to community vitalization. Toward that end, steps have been taken in preparation to enact a town development ordinance, comply with town development plans such

as city planning master plan, establish a system for town-development groups to make proposals and set up a basic framework for the government and private businesses to work together. Going forward, it is essential to carry out community renaissance while still maintaining an emphasis on the environment, a task that requires a delicate balancing act.

4-4 Future Urban Policies

Many of those who have been involved in urban planning probably at one time or another held a negative view on urbanization. But the proposition of community vitalization should not be left up to a handful of experts to decide. That way of tackling an issue belongs to a time of the past. The dilemma between convenience and environment will continue to exist for cities. For that reason, eventually a comprehensive decision will have to be made on urban policy.



Figure 4-1 Torius Hisayama Built on Both Sides of a Trunk Road
Mismatched Natural Environment and the Landscape along the Route

5. The Present Situation for Kumamoto Prefecture and Challenges It Faces

Shiro UNO
Graduate School Professor, Kumamoto Gakuen University

5-1 Present Situation and Issues concerning Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facilities in Kumamoto Prefecture

In the past decade, there have been 13 large-scale commercial facilities (with a floor space of 10,000 m² or more) opened in Kumamoto Prefecture, mostly by AEON or Izumi. Kumamoto has been turned into a harvest ground for the two ever since Kotobukiya and Nikonikodo filed for bankruptcy. Most of these developments are located in urbanization control areas, undesignated areas or quasi industrial zones.

A project to development an agricultural testing ground owned by Kumamoto Prefecture has been the focus of people’s attentions. Initially, there was a talk of turning the testing ground into a FAZ, but that plan eventually fell through. It was then decided to lure a shopping center to the site through a competitive process. Kumamoto, with its excellent residential zoning, does have a need for some shopping facilities to serve the daily necessity of its residents. However, the plan calls for a commercial facility with a floor space of more than 20,000 m², thus drawing concerns about its impact on the central-city district.

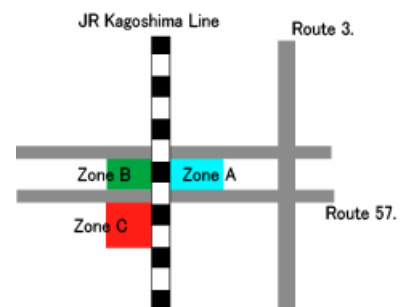
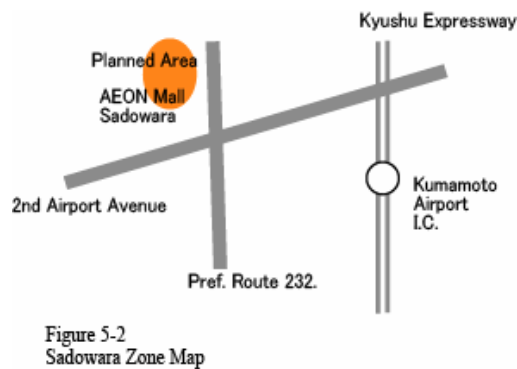


Figure 5-1
Agriculture Testing Ground
Proposed Site of Development (Zones A – C)

Another project that is garnering attentions is the proposed AEON Mall to be built in the Sadowara District in Kumamoto City. The proposal, although still undergoing a preliminary review, obviously will lead to a further deterioration of the traffic congestion on Airport Route 2 and should be viewed as incompatible to the city. The pending decision by the city undoubtedly will be closely scrutinized. (As this article is being written, a report has been release indicating that Kumamoto City has rejected the development proposal.)



5-2 Benefits and Impacts Brought by Large-Scale Customer-Drawing Facilities

There have been questions raised on the benefits of large-scale retail stores. Although such developments provide employment opportunities, tax revenues and shopping convenience, their long-term impacts on the broader region are controversial.

Although the number of jobs created has been on the rise in recent years, but they are all part-time positions. The number of full-time jobs has actually dropped along with the number of self-employees and employed family members. What is worthy to note is the decrease in the number of employees in the wholesale industry. While large-scale commercial facilities have been credited with creating employment opportunities, but their benefit, if any, is minimal because the new jobs are all part-time positions.

Even the expected increase in tax revenues did not materialize. According to the Saga City's basic plan on central-city district renaissance, the property-tax revenue from the central-city district is on the decline.

Moreover, even the benefit of shopping convenience may not be so clear cut. Based on the results of a survey conducted on residents of the greater Fukuoka metropolitan area, respondents who think the area has become "more convenient" and those who think it has become "more inconvenient" have cited "convenient daily shopping" and "inconvenient daily shopping," respectively, as the reason, illustrating the fact that these facilities have provided convenience to some and brought inconvenience to others.

These evidences suggest the benefits on employment, tax revenue and shopping convenience may be localized and short-lived, and that there may be problems with respect to their long-term impacts on the broader region. The increased convenience for consumers brought on by the competitions among retailers cannot be denied. However, we need to recognize that, basically, the retailer industry does not pad the consumers' wallets, it just provide more choices.

5-3 Future Urban Policies

Kumamoto Prefecture has come up with a guideline on opening large-scale customer-drawing facilities. However, the guideline, focusing on how such a project should benefit the community, fails to specify any specific target areas for such a project and the extent of contribution such projects must provide, making any coordination difficult. The "coordination" or "judgment" probably will not become clear until specific proposals are submitted for review. Nevertheless, Fukushima Prefecture has passed an ordinance concerning commu-

nity contributions and begun to enforce it. The ordinance is significant in that it also sets the guideline for regional coordination.

In addition, the studies of city planning and retail have never been examined in an integrated way in the past. I believe studying the relationship between the two disciplines will contribute greatly to the development of a true urban policy.

6. The Dilemma of Land Use Control and the Target Area of Urban Policies

Fumio KAJIWARA

Senior Director, Highway Bureau, Oita Prefecture

6-1 Actions of Local Governments in Response to the Regulatory Reform

The debate on large-scale customer-drawing facilities was divided to begin with. Even among heads of local governments, there are some who welcome such development projects and yet there are those who oppose such projects. As with the debate on regulatory theory versus market theory, urban planning scholars and economists sometimes hold opposing views on this issue. There is also a problem with respect to the division of authority on city planning between the prefecture and municipalities. Presently, Fukushima Prefecture has taken a lead in regulating where retail developments ought to be by passing an ordinance on opening retail stores.

Moreover, the 10,000- m^2 criterion for floor space established by the revised law may reignite the debate concerning “the issue of setting a scale-standard” in urban planning. With the regulatory reform, developers may look for alternatives such as seeking an approval for land-use change, proposing to use the land for a purpose in the fringe area, proceeding to have the decision made at the city, town or village level, lobbying community residents (especially farm owners) to actively campaign for what they are aiming for, establishing development promotion zone, giving priority to development projects that do not exceed the 10,000- m^2 criterion, or employing the proliferation approach by building retail spaces along a certain route and then linking them together subsequently. The regulatory reform may very well create some unintended negative effects. Local governments are put in charge of dealing with these issues.

Moreover, in addition to large-scale customer-drawing facilities that have been the focus of our attention, residential policies are also an important issue in urban planning. Some local governments that allowed large-scale residential developments to take place in their suburbs have been expanding the urbanized area by making lands available to residential developers. There is a need for a comprehensive analysis on the demographic distribution of residents and the future residential policies because it is essential to examine the urban structure, including past residential policies and future projections and measures to be taken. Obviously, the revised laws, in principle, should enable a better control over the development of large-scale customer-drawing facilities. However, there are leading-tools that take advantage of the zoning plans, opportunities for land-use change, and loopholes such as the floor space standard that businesses or developers

may try explore to their advantage.

Since there have been some local governments in favor of luring large-scale customer-drawing facilities in hope of rejuvenating their communities, whether all the local governments will point their vectors in the same direction toward regulation remains to be seen. The prefecture governments, being delegated the authority to make regional coordination, will probably have a difficult time in making decisions.

Therefore, it may be a good idea to craft a procedural flowchart, a standard procedure or an ordinance in anticipation of businesses seeking development opportunities. To do so, however, objective assessments must be performed on the potential effects on urban structure, including the affected areas, the degree of the potential effect and any benefits. If developments in the suburb are to be restricted in favor of developing projects in the central-city district, there must be adequate incentives, which requires setting aside a budget and devising measures to consolidate the rights to the existing parcels located in the central-city district.

In this case, the site selection for the central-city district becomes an issue as well. This is an issue that cannot be decided by a single local government alone. But when multiple local governments in a region are involved, it is likely they all want the site for the central-city district to be located in their own jurisdiction, thereby kicking off a tug of war. Determining the area where the urban structure will be affected is another issue that needs to be addressed by the local governments through objective analyses of not only the suburb and central districts but also the urban areas in neighboring cities.

Thus, even if the primary goal is to restrict large-scale customer-drawing facilities in the suburbs, the prefectures should identify the issues concerning urban structure and their visions on those issues, which will require some “preparatory works.”

Before the revised City Planning Act takes effect, municipal as well as prefectural governments must do their “preparatory works,” including establishing a framework for making coordination and carrying out inter-sectional fine tuning of the structure of the new framework. Of all the preparatory works, the most challenging one is perhaps the determination of a target area. It has been pointed out that changes affecting the urban structure are the problems. There need to be studies conducted to examine the affected area and the extent of such structural changes. And since multiple local governments are involved most of the time, there must be discussions on who should play the leadership role in making decisions, should a leading approach be adopted and what means should be employed to achieve that—for instance, establishing an ordinance or law, or lobbying the administration. And the dilemma between environmental conservation and community renaissance is also a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed. Taking all of these issues into consideration, the following section will provide some of the proposals concerning future urban policies.

6-2 Determining the Urban Policy Target Area

In reality, the works by local governments in preparation of the regulatory reform include administrative issues such as changes in the methodology and application of “basic survey for city planning.” For example, prefectures have the authority to determine a quasi city planning area, but there is a question on whether they are ready. Systems or tools for city planning generally require a considerable length of time to be established. The administration must provide, with confidence, specific long-term and mid and short-term policies. The role of prefectures will be reduced by the transfer of some authorities to municipalities, but the coordination among

municipalities will still be difficult. The role of regional coordination and its significance are not limited to the developments of large-scale customer-drawing facility.

When dealing with land-use control issues, it is important to closely examine the affected area, the groups of population who feel they are been affected, the purpose for implementing control and who should exercise the control. Furthermore, it is also crucial to look into what means to adopt and the potential extents of benefits and effects in the area being examined. In addition, area-specific measures and the relationship with other areas must also be studied to explore ways for resolving problems. Shown below is the procedure for such “logical composition concerning the scope for examining policies aimed at resolving or alleviating problems related to land-use control” called “the image of the area.”

The local governments must fine-tune “the image of the area,” identify who is to make the integrated coordination among the various sections in the administration, make a distinction between the administration’s responsibility and accountability, and follow the “informed consent procedure” while fulfilling their “responsibilities” on land-use controls regardless of whether it’s inside or outside of a zone.

Any survey or analysis of urban structure begins with examining the historical background on how the urbanization took place and goes on to examine various policies and social and economic changes to provide a projection for a particular city. It is an important piece of work for city planning. Conducting a “survey” on urban structure will help in disclosing information (informed) helpful for discussing urban policies and is crucial for obtaining the consent of residents and the city council. Information disclosure up to now has been criticized for its limited scope consisting of an announcement of the plan and the collection of opinions. Merely providing a future plan is not very persuasive. It is important for a city or a district to disclose, in easy to understand language, the issues involved, plans to alleviate or resolve the problems identified, the rationale of the proposed plan and its potential effects. This is the “informed consent” process in urban planning.

The urban planning issues that each provincial city faces are different from city to city. They cannot be resolved based on the decisions made by some experts or the administration. Full disclosure of these urban planning issues in plain language to all residents depends on establishing a forum for providing and discussing results of the basic survey or analysis. The discussion should begin on an area closest to the residents and move on to the policy affecting the entire city while making comparison against other areas. The discussion should continue while the potential benefits are examined. Furthermore, a “progressive mutual control” is needed to resolve or alleviated urban problems and the dilemma between the central-city district and the suburb of a provincial city.

6-3 Conclusion

The conclusion may be divided into three principle parts.

It should be pointed out that many important issues concerning the overall urban planning are hidden behind the regulatory reform that draws a line between the suburb and the central-city district.

These issues are: (1) the difficulty involved in establishing what area is a suburb and what area is a central-city district, (2) the responsibility and mechanism for making city planning decisions, and (3) area debates. Some of these issues may affect each other, however, it will be difficult to work out issues under the bilateral structure described in (1). Each side has its own argument against each other. But each may also benefit by

making trade-offs with the other side. The local governments do not appear to have reached any conclusion on how serious this bilateral problem is and how to selectively deal with some of the issues. The responsibility and mechanism described in (2) are issues that the local governments need to confront seriously. As illustrated by the case involving Miyazaki City, with respect to dealing with the procedure without creating legal problems, it is important to think about how the problem should be brought up. By focusing on the procedure, rather than the positives and negatives of large-scale retail stores, the significance of the issues on responsibility and mechanism becomes apparent.

As for (3), the determination of target areas, the analysis and procedure for “the image of the area” described in the preceding section are essential. Depending on the target area defined, the way to resolve an issue may be different, leading to different responses or policies. As the typical case study involving Hisayamamachi showed, the issues vary depending on whether they are viewed from the perspective of the entire Kyushu region, the greater Fukuoka metropolitan area or Hisayamamachi. This case study provides an easy to understand illustration of the area debate.

When dealing with an issue concerning urban structure, rather than merely looking at its own jurisdiction, a local government must take into consideration the area where realistic urban activities take place.