

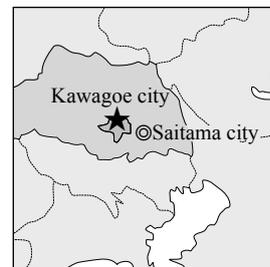
Section 2. Various initiatives by local governments, communities and businesses

1. Initiatives by local governments and communities

(1) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on townscapes featuring historical buildings

[Kawagoe city, Saitama Prefecture: Efforts to rejuvenate the city with its historical assets]

Kawagoe, a traditional commercial city, began to see its traditional downtown decline in the mid 1960s, as the commercial center was moving to more convenient areas around the train stations. The traditional downtown, which features Kurazukuri or traditional merchant houses, attracted the expert attention for its cultural values. Yet there were no initiatives to preserve the historical townscape as a whole.



In 1983, however, local junior shop owners, historians, and architects who were interested in the future of the city's historical townscape gathered to launch "Kawagoe Kuranokai", a group committed to preserving the townscape.

Prompted by the group, the association of shop owners in the Ichibangai shopping street established "rules on street development," a voluntary agreement aimed at town-making that makes good use of Kurazukuri. The agreement required shop owners to gain the approval of the "townscape committee"—made up of shop owners, residents, experts and city officials—before refurbishing their shop buildings. The similar arrangement was adopted by another shop owner association in the neighboring Kawagoe Ginza shopping street, which set up a review board called "Taisho Roman Committee" in 1994.

Ichibangai shopping street



The Kawagoe municipal government moved to support these initiatives. It launched a comprehensive plan that transcended the barriers between the sections in charge of cultural assets, commerce and industry, and city planning.

Under the plan, the municipal government designated Kurazukuri as cultural assets. It put in place a commerce and industry support program designed to subsidize the refurbishment of historical buildings. The municipality also established a townscape ordinance (effective from 1989) and relevant subsidies. As part of city planning, it laid power lines underground and made other improvements to the road in the city.

Kashi-ya Yokocho or Confectionery Row



The initiative of the local community was unabated. In 1993, residents' associations and others launched a town-making organization, prompting the 1999 designation of a Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings under the municipality's city planning.

Kawagoe Kuranokai, for its part, began to offer consultation service for residents and organize awareness-raising events.

These efforts have been successful. The annual total of tourists who visited Kawagoe jumped from about 2.6 million around 1980 to some four million today.

Similar initiative by another municipality (title only):

Kurashiki city, Okayama Prefecture: Townscape preservation for the Bikan Historical Quarter in Kurashiki city

[Aizuwakamatsu city, Fukushima Prefecture: Town-making in the Nanukamachi street]

The Nanukamachi shopping street, located in the city center, began to decline in the mid 1950s. With fewer visitors, more and more shops were forced to close. The shop owners' association had no choice but to leave the city's federation of such associations and then disbanded itself altogether.

Some junior shop owners took action to address the plight. They noted that historical buildings constructed in the Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), or early Showa (1926-1989) eras are scattered along the street. These shop owners thought they could turn these buildings to their advantage and create an attractive shopping street based on the concept of a street reminiscent of the Taisho era. They talked to other shop owners and rallied their support, resulting in the establishment in 1994 of the "Nanukamachi Streetscape Council."

Thanks in part to the council's effort to attract visitors to the Nanukamachi street, the first council member who refurbished his shop—removing modern building materials and exploiting the original charm of the traditional building—succeeded as a shop owner. Other members follows suit. To encourage such refurbishment, the council now solicits tenants and offers counseling service to its members.

Aizuwakamatsu city, for its part, grants subsidies to the refurbishment of historical buildings and vacant shops. It offers other kinds of support, including paving alleys with bricks and creating the community square where various events take place.

Other local efforts include: organizing events such as "Kimono Shanari Walk," a walking event where people wearing kimono walk down the street, antique fairs, and jazz festivals; running retro-style buses around the city center—a circular route bus service called "Haikara-san"; and remodeling the building of JR Nanukamachi Station—a gateway to the Nanukamachi street center—as a western building reminiscent of the Taisho era. Thanks to these efforts, more and more tourists are seen strolling down the street and fewer and fewer vacant shops are seen along the street. Now neighboring communities are following the example of the Nanukamachi initiative.

In 2003, the Tohoku District Transport Bureau of MLIT, local municipalities, transport operators, and tourism service providers jointly launched a project to revitalize intercity public transport in western Fukushima Prefecture. The project resulted in a number of new services, including an excursion ticket called "Aizu Gurutto Card," which offers the holder free access to railway and bus services in the region and discount access to local tourist facilities, as well as through service between the JR East line and a private line (Aizu railway).

Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Makabe-cho, Ibaraki Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on historical resources

Inuyama city, Aichi Prefecture: Historical street development in the Inuyama castle town



Nanukamachi street



Nanukamachi Station



[Kaneyama-cho, Yamagata Prefecture: “Townscape Development Centennial Movement”]

The Townscape Development Centennial Movement in Kaneyama, a town based on a long history of forestry, is aimed at creating a beautiful living environment that harmonizes with nature throughout the town.



The townscape hinges on the Kaneyama-type housing, a kind of building constructed with a traditional method using locally-produced Kaneyama cedar. It features a gable roof of dark brown or black colors, plastered walls of white or natural colors, and exterior walls made of cedar. Since 1978, the Kaneyama municipal government has organized a home building contest every year to commend “high-quality buildings” that fit the townscape (the contest is now organized by the Kaneyama chamber of commerce and industry under contract from the municipal government).

Based on the experience in this contest, the municipal government in 1984 launched a local housing plan titled “HOPE Plan,” which was designed to put forward a standard Kaneyama-type housing and show the future direction for townscape development efforts. It established the “Kaneyama Townscape Ordinance” in 1986, setting out building standards and offering subsidies to new housing construction that meet these standards.

Traditional Kaneyama-type buildings



Modern Kaneyama-type buildings



The Kaneyama municipal government sought the involvement of the architects locally associated with their communities from the very beginning. It also organized an overseas study tour for residents and town hall staff between 1992 and 2002 as part of its continued efforts to raise the awareness of the residents.

Now, more and more residents are involved in townscape development, with Kaneyama-type housing accounting for some 80% of the annual housing starts. The spread of Kaneyama-type housing, in turn, is leading to improved skills of local builders, more young people willing to become carpenters, the promotion of local forestry, and encouragement to the local growers of flowering trees and shrubs.

The Kaneyama municipal government has also taken a series of steps to support the townscape developing initiative. Among such steps are: restoring a traditional clay-walled building as a townscape development museum “Kurashi-Kan”; restoring an old post office building of modern architecture as a community center “Interaction Salon Post”; paving alleys so as to look like gravel walks; and developing parks and squares.

A cluster of Kaneyama-type buildings



The beautiful townscape that is thus being developed is attracting more visitors. This in turn is nurturing in residents a sense of confidence and attachment to the town.

Such confidence and attachment is reflected in “Taniguchi: Shiki no Gakko,” a facility which allows visitors to have hands-on experience in a rural environment; “Sugisawa: Kyosei no Mura,” a space for exchanges between city dwellers and locals; and “Sanchoku Group Yumeichi,” a group of residents who process and sell locally-produced vegetables and edible wild plants.

Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Ueno city, Mie Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on a historical townscape

Kyoto city, Kyoto Prefecture: Preserving traditional Kyomachiya houses, including handing them down to future generations

[Bungotakada city, Oita Prefecture: Building a town of the Showa era]

The initiative to build a town of the Showa era (1926-1989) in Bungotakada has been launched by a group of local shop owners in the shopping district in the city, who were concerned that the district was on the wane. In an effort to find a way out, they conducted a fact-finding survey. The survey found that over 70 percent of the buildings in the district had been constructed in or before the mid 1960s. Capitalizing on this fact, they decided to develop a district reminiscent of the mid Showa era. To rally support for this project, they organized lecture meetings and symposiums.



Local shop owners in the district have refurbished the exterior of their buildings to create an atmosphere of the mid Showa era. They have also initiated a number of programs, including “Showa no Otakara Machikado Hakubutsukan (The Street Museum of Treasures from the Showa Era),” where each shop displays an item telling its history; “One shop, One product,” where each shop develops and sell its original product; and “Okamisan Ichi,” where the wives of shop owners jointly hold a fair.

An item telling its history



The Bungotakada municipal government, for its part, has put in place a scheme to support refurbishments aimed at improve the townscape. It has also rebuilt a farm warehouse as “Showa Roman Kura” a facility that displays items from the mid Showa era. The municipal government has invited a dagashi museum called “Dagashi-ya no Yume Hakubutsukan” in the facility (dagashi refers to cheep sweets many people associate with the mid Showa era).

“Showa Roman Kura” is managed by the city’s chamber of commerce and industry, which takes charge of overall coordination of the initiative to develop a town of the Showa era. The chamber also provides guide service by local volunteers popularly known as “A Guide to Showa Street.”

This town-making initiative has rejuvenated the shopping district, which was little known to tourists. Now over 250,000 tourists visit the district in a year.

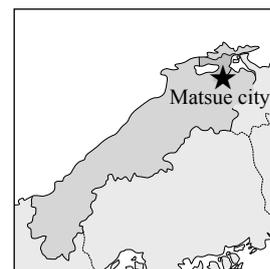
Streetscape of the town of the Showa era



(2) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on waterfront resources

[Matsue city, Shimane Prefecture: Restoring Matsue Horikawa]

Matsue Horikawa (canals), which had originally been developed as the inner and outer moats around Matsue Castle, has long been popular as the symbol of Matsue as a city of water. However, the water was increasingly polluted primarily because domestic waste water flew into the canals.



These circumstances prompted some members of the local junior chamber of commerce and industry to set up an association aimed at revitalizing the canals called “Yomigaeru Horikawa no Kai.” The association advised the Matsue municipal government to operate pleasure boats on the canals. Other civic groups began to rent boats for visitors and held awareness-raising events.

In response to these efforts, the governmental entities in FY1994 formulated an emergency action program to improve the water environment called “Seiryu Renaissance 21.” Under the program, the governmental entities took integrated action to clean the canals, including drawing water from Lake Shinji, dredging the canals, and expanding sewerage. They also conducted bank protection works, built water-amenity terraces, and helped renovate the neighboring shopping streets.

These efforts by both residents and governmental entities resulted in smooth water flows and an improved quality of water in the canals. By 1997, pleasure boats sailed on the canals. The pleasure boat operator employs middle-aged and older people as boatmen, providing them with opportunities for job and self-fulfillment.

The tourists’ look at Matsue from its canals has also prompted the landscaping of canal-side roads and canal banks by the municipality and that of canal-side homes by residents.

Pleasure boat



A canal bank viewed from a pleasure boat



Numerous tourist facilities have been built, including a hands-on workshop near a pleasure boat station, which was originally a historical building and preserved as such by request from local residents. In 2002, some 4.6 million tourists visited Matsue.

Dou Parade

Efforts have also been made to turn Matsue into a long-stay resort. For example, new events were added in 2003 to “Dou Parade”, a traditional drum festival in “Kamiarizuki” (October according to the lunar calendar in the region). They are the Kamiarizuki walking event and Musha Gyoretsu, a samurai warriors’ parade, in commemoration of Matsue Castle.



Similar initiative by another municipality (title only):
Oyama city, Tochigi Prefecture: Initiative capitalizing on the Omoi River

Case Study Column: Restoration of the basin along Lake Biwa and the Yodo River

Numerous efforts are being made in the basin along Lake Biwa and the Yodo River to conserve the habitats for diverse organisms, including precious endemic species. Such efforts include: restoration and conservation of reed swamps and detention ponds (man-made ponds along a river); the introduction of a high-tech sewage treatment system ahead of other prefectures; environmental education for primary school pupils; and river cleanup and water-quality inspection activities by municipalities and NPO in the basin. One municipality in Shiga Prefecture, Omihachiman, has recently launched an initiative to build an eco-friendly city in cooperation with the industrial, governmental, academic and private sectors.

Local municipalities have developed docks along the Yodo River, prompted by traffic disruptions in the wake of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in January 1995.

The municipalities in the basin continue to work together to pursue symbiosis with nature while banking on the historical and cultural resources in the basin.



“Uminoko,” a ship of Shiga Prefecture designed for environmental education



Local pupils inspect water creatures in the Ina River as part of the integrated monitoring initiative by local residents.

(3) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on cultural assets including works of literature

[Obuse-machi, Nagano Prefecture: Building a country town rich in life and culture]

Obuse's town-making efforts revolve around Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), a famous Ukiyo-e painter, as many of his works are in the town. The Obuse municipal government opened the "HOKUSAI Museum" in 1976 to preserve and exhibit his works. In 1983, it also opened to the public a residence where Hokusai often stayed as another museum called "Yuzenro." Residents around "Yuzenro" suggested that its neighborhood should be landscaped to match the view of the museum. Based on this suggestion, the stakeholders—including the residents and developers—stroke an agreement aimed at ensuring that swaps of land plots and constructions of homes and shops do not mar, and rather enhance, the local landscape. The municipal government, for its part, paved an alley with blocks of Japanese chestnut trees—a local specialty.



Streetscape near "Yuzenro"



The municipal government in 1986 adopted the slogan "a country town rich in life and culture" for its integrated development program. Under the program, the municipality established "eco design standards," a set of voluntary guidelines on the desired types, colors and materials of buildings in the town. It also designed some districts as zones for town-making that put to good use the historical and cultural atmospheres in the region. In 1989, a center for home building consultations was opened. In 1990, the municipal government established an ordinance aimed at building "a country town rich in life and culture." The ordinance allows the municipal government to subsidize and commend compliances with the "eco design standards" when constructing buildings, setting up billboards, and planting hedges.

All these efforts have raised the awareness of the whole town with regard to landscapes, increasing the number of buildings of Obuse's traditional architecture style characterized by gable roofs and stud walls. In addition, cultural facilities, including public and private art museums have been constructed one after another. As a result, more than 1.2 million people visit Obuse every year from around the country.

Obuse is also committed to growing flowers. The initiative to build a town full of flower has been originated from a student council of a local junior high school, which started in 1980 to build flower beds with a golden age club and a parents group. Now the initiative has spread to the whole town.

The municipality has been providing full support to this initiative. It opened Floral Garden Obuse in 1992 and Obuse Flower Center in 1997 as a base for promoting flower plants and their seeds and seedlings as new local products. The municipal government sent its officials and residents to Europe to study advanced floriculture there. The participants in this study tour, after returning home, played a leading role in flower gardening in Obuse. This in part helped the flower-planting drive to spread to the whole town. The municipality now commends families, communities and schools that are committed to flower gardening at a flower contest and the "Obuse Landscaping Award" contest.

In 2000, Obuse launched the "Open Garden" program whereby private gardens are opened to the tourists. For this program, the municipality published the "Obuse Open Garden Book," which introduces such private gardens. With this

guidebook in hand, more and more tourists now stroll around the town and interact with local flower enthusiasts. Such exchanges are giving rise to increasing hospitality of the whole town toward the visitors. In fact, a group of residents has been organized to make wooden benches and install them in the town.

“Open Garden”



Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Ashikaga city, Tochigi Prefecture: Town-making based on Ashikaga School

Kaga city, Ishikawa Prefecture: Town-making through Kutani ware

Enzan city, Yamanashi Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on Kanzoyashiki

Izushi-cho, Hyogo Prefecture: Town-making by residents capitalizing on the history as a castle town

Yamaga city, Kumamoto Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on a historical streetscape

Sakaiminato city, Tottori Prefecture: Town-making centering on cartoon character “Kitaro”

Matsuyama city, Ehime Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on Ryotaro Shiba’s historical novel “Saka no ue no kumo” (Cloud above the hill)

(4) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on the local life and environment

[Yasuzuka-machi, Niigata Prefecture: Putting snow to good use and promoting country life experience]

Yasuzuka is located in one of the heaviest snow belts in Japan. With a declining population, this town has been making all kinds of efforts to conquer, utilize and enjoy snow.

In 1986, the town of Yasuzuka put snow itself on the market—for the first time in Japan—under the band name “Yuki no Takuhaibin (Snow Delivery Service).” Yasuzuka made a headline when it brought 450 truckloads of snow to the “Good-by Korakuen Snow Festival” held in Tokyo in 1987. As a result, Yasuzuka remarkably developed name-recognition as a snowy town, and changed the public recognition of snow as a bottleneck—burden, nuisance, and the root cause of the exodus to the cities. Snow is now widely recognized as a useful resource.



Yasuzuka has been also committed to using snow energy. Since 1987, the municipality has put in place a program to store snow during winter and use it during summer as a cooling agent to preserve agricultural produce and provide cool air to schools and welfare facilities in the town.

In 1989, the municipality set out a plan to build a “cultured snowy town”—an initiative to serve as a role model for town-making in the snowy region. To put the plan into practice, the municipality in 1990 established a research organization called “Yukidaruma (snowman) Foundation.”

Heavy snow



“Yuki no Takuhaibin”



Yasuzuka and the other five municipalities that constitute Higashi Kubiki District launched the “Higashi Kubiki town-making committee” in FY1992 to address the common agenda. Since then, the committee conducted various activities.

One example is the “Echigo Inaka Taiken” (“experience country life in Niigata”) program launched in 1998 by the six municipalities to revitalize the district through tourism that offers hands-on experience in farming. The program is primarily designed to “ensure that participants can fully enjoy genuine country life, the natural environment and farming.” It offers more than 70 courses, ranging from nature-based experience to environmental education and farming experience.

Experience in farming



The six municipalities are committed to promoting the program. To meet diversifying needs, they offer numerous courses that would not have been possible without efforts that transcend the municipal borders. Based on expert advice, they work together with communities and businesses concerned to solicit participation of primary and middle schools mainly in the metropolitan area, which now enjoys easier access to the Higashi Kubiki District after the Hokuetsu Express Hokuhoku Line started operation in 1997. Yukidaruma Foundation serves as a clearing house for this program.

The number of participants in this program has been on the rise as schools, prompted by the introduction of “hours for integrated learning,” now put more emphasis on hands-on experience. The success of the program has a favorable impact on the district. Farmers enjoy direct economic benefits in the form of lodging charges and training fees. Local

senior citizens are energized by contact with children from the cities. Tourists, who tended to concentrate in winter, now visit the district all year around.

Thanks to these efforts, over 500,000 tourists visit Yasuzuka every year.

The six municipalities have been designated as the Higashi Kubuki Special Zone for Structural Reform for agriculture by the central government. This designation allows for lease of farmland to allotment garden operators and brewing of crude sake by farmers. Banking on these advantages, the municipalities plan to expand the program, including the number of courses for families from the cities.

Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Kami-machi, Miyagi Prefecture: “Food Museum”

Himi city, Toyama Prefecture: Plan to construct the “Himi farming and fishing village museum”

Kaseda city, Kagoshima Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on bicycles

[Oasa-cho, Hiroshima Prefecture: Building a recycling-oriented town with oilseed rape]

Concerned with an accelerating exodus from Oasa to the city, a group of locals thought something has to be done and gathered day after day to discuss the matter. They decided to participate in the “oilseed rape eco project” that had originated from Shiga Prefecture. In autumn 2000, the group suggested to the Oasa municipal government that Oasa should build a recycling-oriented town on oilseed rape. A score of residents supported this suggestion and established an organization called “INE OASA.”

This project is aimed at putting in place a local system to recycle oilseed rape. Under the project, rape is grown in idle farmland in the town as the first step. The second step is to extract oil from harvested rape and sell the oil. The third step is to use the oil for cooking at home and school. The fourth step is to collect waste rape oil and refine it to produce biodiesel fuel (BDF) for municipal buses and farming equipment. In addition, the rape residue produced by extraction is used as compost.

Non-profit organizations (NPO) played a central role in this project. Funds to procure equipment to refine waste oil came from contributions by residents and subsidies by the municipal government and the community chest. The municipal government, for its part, uses BDF for buses it operates and subsidizes farmers who grow rape.

Residents play a role in collecting waste rape oil. The NPO conducts awareness raising activities, including organizing lecture and presentation meetings and issuing PR newsletters.

This project led to tourism promotion and environmental education using oilseed rape. In 2003, Oasa hosted the third national “summit” meeting on oilseed rape.

Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only)

Numata-cho, Hokkaido: Building a town that cohabitates with snow

Seto-cho, Ehime Prefecture: Wind power generation

Kunigami-son, Okinawa Prefecture: Promoting eco tourism



Municipal bus powered by BDF



Oilseed rape field

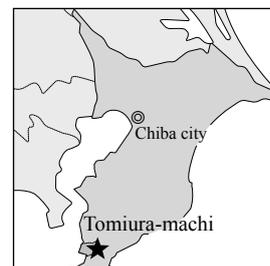


(5) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on local key industries

[Tomiura-machi, Chiba Prefecture: “loquat club project”]

Tomiura, a production base for Boushu loquat for more than 250 years, was seeing its key industries—agriculture, fisheries and tourism—on the decline. The town was also facing a serious problem of a decreasing population.

These circumstances prompted the town mayor to exercise strong leadership and establish within the municipal government a taskforce aimed at rejuvenating these key industries. The taskforce studies ways to connect resources scattered throughout the town to launch rejuvenating projects. This led to the establishment of the “loquat club project.” As a base for this project, the municipality opened “Road Station Tomiura—Biwa Kurabu (loquat club)” in 1993.



In addition to Roadside Station Tomiura, other facilities are scattered throughout the town, including “Hana Club,” a flower examination station where visitors can pick up flowers; “Strawberry Experimental Farm” where visitors can pick up strawberries; and “Biwa Picking Experimental Farm,” where visitors can pick up loquats grown in greenhouses as well as open fields. These hands-on facilities are part of the effort to develop a resort farming system that even pursues plant breeding and innovative planting methods in order to attract tourists. They have also developed new products such as jams, soft serve ice creams, and jellies made from loquats that have failed to meet market standards. Such loquats were once regarded as having no commercial value and were disposed of. In 2003, “Hana Club” was designated as the second roadside station in Tomiura.

Roadside Station Tomiura



The loquat club project is committed to promotion as well. It works with loquat and flower growers and small-scale operators of tourism-related businesses such as Japanese Inns (an inexpensive Japanese-style accommodation like a bed-and-breakfast), restaurants and bars to promote tourism resources scattered in the region (Minami Boso) as a whole to traveling agencies. The loquat club project has an integrated system for placing and receiving orders, which makes it possible to charge a travel agency—which offers bus tours and other forms of packaged tours—in a lump. This system is also aimed at ensuring that tourists will not flock to a tourist attraction at one time.

As part of culture promotion initiative, Tomiura organizes a puppet play festival, supports “Watching Tomiura,” a group of people who explore local treasures, and sponsors “Biwa Club Salon,” a series of lecture meetings where local intellectuals and audience talk over a cup of loquat tea.

The “loquat club project” has succeeded in division of labor for viable and efficient management. The municipal government takes charge of the sectors that have public implications and a large impact on the town, including the management of the above-mentioned facilities and cultural programs. Commercial business such as shop operation and tourist promotion is taken care of by Tomiura Co., a private company wholly owned by the municipal government.

Thanks to the project, a total of 4,000 tour buses come to Tomiura and some 670,000 people visits Roadside Station Tomiura every year. Tomiura Co. has been in the black. The project has created jobs that accounts for one percent of local employment. It has many spin-off effects, including stable production for local farmers and development of

highly skilled human resources in the town.

As examples of other spin-off effects, private businesses in the town opened shops and restaurants. Local residents developed products for sale at the roadside stations.

Flower picking experience



Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Ryujin-mura, Wakayama Prefecture: Integrated development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries

Kozan-cho, Hiroshima Prefecture: Promoting exchanges between city dwellers and locals through integrated development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries

Mugi-cho, Tokushima Prefecture: Scuba diving program to promote local fisheries

Aya-cho, Miyazaki Prefecture: Eco-friendly farming

[Kitakyushu city, Fukuoka Prefecture: Kitakyushu Eco-Town Project]

Kitakyushu city has put in place the Kitakyushu Eco-Town Project, aimed at building a town committed to resources recycling. The idea is to capitalize local human resources and technologies developed as a key industrial base and draw on the past experience of civil society and the private and public sectors working together in overcoming industrial pollution. The ultimate goal of the project is to “achieve zero emission (producing no waste) in the long run by diverting all kinds of waste emitted from one industry to be used as materials for other industries in the area.”



The project is being implemented based on the advice from the “Kitakyushu eco industries promotion council,” made up of representatives from industrial, governmental and academic circles. Kitakyushu city has already taken a number of steps. For example, the city lured recycling and other environmental-related businesses to the Hibikinada district of Wakamatsu ward, which has many advantages, including vast reclaimed land and easy access to port facilities and a final disposal site. The city is taking a strategic approach to promote eco industries. To this end, the city is promoting: (i) environmental education and basic research; (ii) empirical studies to develop recycling and other environmental-related technologies by collaborative efforts among businesses, government agencies and universities; (iii) efforts to make recycling and other environmental-related industries commercially viable.

Kitakyushu Science and Research Park



The Kitakyushu municipal government has taken steps for better service for its citizens as well. For example, it promotes risk communication (sharing risk-related information through dialogue) with citizens through information disclosure. And it has already developed a “one window” procedure for prompter processing of things.

Comprehensive Environmental Industrial Complex



The city is now trying to lure new eco businesses that emphasis reuse or rebuilding rather than recycling. In luring businesses, the city maintains close coordination with the initiative that capitalizes on the special status it gained under the central government’s structural reform program—designation as a Special Zone for Structural Reform for international physical distribution.

Similar initiative by another municipality (title only):

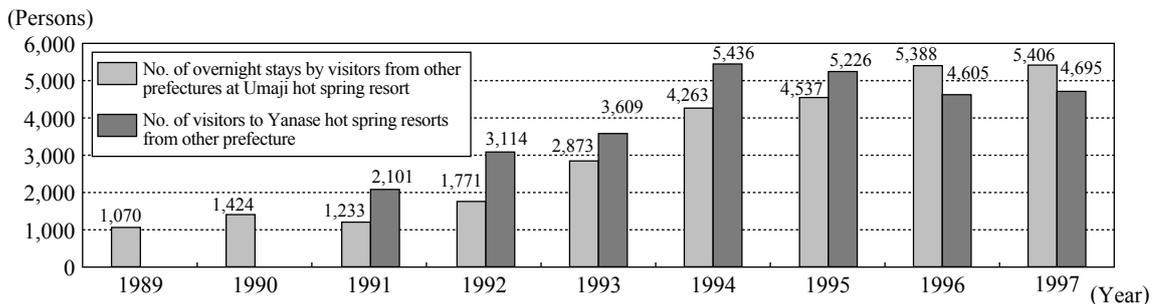
Naoshima-cho, Kagawa Prefecture: Town-making involving nature, culture and the environment in harmony

Case Study Column: The opening of an expressway and its effects on Umaji-mura, Kochi Prefecture

In January 1992, the section between Kawanoie and Ootoyo of the Kochi Expressway was opened, providing the first expressway link between Kochi and a neighboring prefecture. This event has many effects on the areas surrounding this section.

One such area is Umaji, Kochi Prefecture. The visitors to Umaji and Yanase hot spring resorts from other prefectures tripled to 10,101 between 1991 and 1997, five years after the section was open to traffic.

Changes in the number of visitors to Umaji and Yanase hot spring resorts from other prefectures



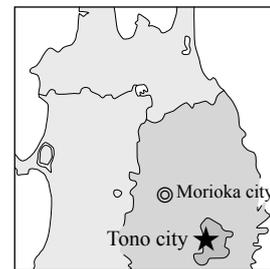
Source: Umaji municipal government

During the same period, sales of products made from aromatic citrons, a local specialty, jumped threefold to some 1.84 billion yen.

(6) Case studies on remarkable community initiatives

[Tono city, Iwate Prefecture: Community development with women playing a central role]

Ayaori, a rural district in the western part of Tono, has a community development council comprising all the households in the district. Under this “liaison council for community building in Ayaori-cho,” many groups work together toward community development.



What is special in this initiative is the role of women. When a farmland consolidation project was put in place in this district, women from farming households requested that a public restroom be installed in the middle of farmland. This led to the first case in which a public restroom was constructed in 1997 under a farmland consolidation project in Japan. In making this request, these women set up a group called “Ayaori women’s group to make dreams come true.” The group has been committed to community development since then.

When the community center “Tono Kaze no Oka” was established in Ayaori in 1998 (the center was designated as a roadside station in 1999), this women’s group opened “Yumesaki Teahouse,” a restaurant that serves local foods cooked using a variety of locally-grown agricultural produce. In 1999, they obtained the status of a joint enterprise cooperative to run the restaurant. They purchase such agricultural produce locally, for example, from a group of young farmers and a middle school that grows vegetables in its yard. This practice is effectively promoting chisan-chisho or the “produce locally, consume locally” campaign in the district.

The group is leading the community development initiative with other activities as well. They produce manure and weave clothes from wool, from which the name “Ayaori” was originated. In cooperation with other rural groups in Iwate, Aomori and Akita prefectures, they also plan and manage a gathering called “Nabe Nabe Summit,” where each group serves their local nabe ryori or food cooked in a pan. City dwellers are also invited to this gathering. In July 2003, the group set up a separate association “Ayaori wo Genki ni Suru Kai (association to make Ayaori vibrant).” The association takes advantage of a vacant shop to process and sell substitute crops.

As if to follow the example of the women’s group, local young farmers organized a group called “Ayaori Mugen Kai 21” to play a leading role in local farming. The group is pursuing efficient farming. A part of the consolidated farmland in Ayaori is entrusted with this group.

Similar initiatives by other municipalities (titles only):

Takasaki city, Gunma Prefecture: Town-making in partnership with citizens

Odawara city, Kanagawa Prefecture: A research institute that conducts pilot projects and develops itself with the participation of citizens

Takefu city, Fukui Prefecture: Community development planning by each district

Tajimi city, Gifu Prefecture: Opening day-care centers for the elderly

Nanayama-mura, Saga Prefecture: Building a vibrant village

Rice paddies and the public restroom in Ayaori



Yumesaki Jaya



(7) Case studies on town-invigorating initiatives (titles only)

Otaru city, Hokkaido: Tourism promotion capitalizing on natural and historical resources

Kamikawa-cho, Hokkaido: Flower planting in Sounkyo

Kakunodate-machi, Akita Prefecture: “Kakunodate Film Commission”

Fujinomiya city, Shizuoka Prefecture: Local revitalization initiative through Fujinomiya yaki-soba (fried noodles)

Asuka-mura, Nara Prefecture: Town-invigorating plan

Kurume city, Fukuoka Prefecture: Developing the Kurume Rokkakudo Square

Case Study Column: Local revitalization with the opening of Noto Airport

On July 7, 2003, Noto Airport opened, linking Noto and Tokyo with about one hour. This air service has been running at more than 90 percent capacity for five months in a row since the opening.

The first plane to land at Noto Airport



The 19 municipalities and businesses in the Noto Peninsula have been working together to promote the airport and the region. For example, they have been mounting a drive to promote local tourism in the metropolitan area with the catchphrase “Noto—a healing peninsula.” In January 2003, they opened a pilot shop called “Noto Furusato-Kan” in Yuraku-cho in Tokyo. The municipalities even pay part of air fares for locals.

When the airport opened, local taxi companies and others started share-ride, large-sized taxi service popularly known as “Noto Airport Furusato Taxi” to and from the airport.

The areas around the airport are in the steady process of being developed as well. The Japan Aviation Academy (enrollment capacity: 920) recently moved next to the airport. An industrial park was also developed in one of these areas.

The terminal building of the airport houses 16 government agencies—the first of its kind in Japan. Another Japan’s first is the designation of the airport as a roadside station. These are some of the attempts to invigorate the airport and its surroundings.

(8) Case studies on initiatives capitalizing on international exchanges

[Shimonoseki city, Yamaguchi Prefecture: Town-making capitalizing on exchanges with South Korea]

Serving as a traffic node between the main island of Japan and the Kyushu Island, Shimonoseki is also linked by ferry service with Pusan, South Korea.



The Green Mall and other shopping streets in the downtown area have a rich international flavor with many Korean meat restaurants and shops dealing in Korean foods and other products. In response to the dwindling number of visitors to this area, the local chamber of commerce and industry and shop owners' associations took action. In cooperation with a local international exchange organization, they organized an event called "Little Pusan Festa" in 2001. At the event, traditional Korean dance was performed, Korean costumes exhibited, and Korean products and foods sold. The fact that a large number of people came to the event encouraged the shop owners concerned. Since then, this event has been held every year with more features—taekwondo exhibition, kimchi making, and "Pottali" fare—and more PR activities.

"Little Pusan Festa"



Shimonoseki has taken steps to lure tourists from South Korea. For example, the local chamber of commerce and industry has put on the market—on an experimental basis—an inexpensive package tour using Kampu Ferry between Shimonoseki and Pusan. As part of its effort to extend hospitality to tourists, the Shimonoseki municipal government has published a guidebook that makes it possible to communicate with South Korean tourists by indicating words and phrases in the book.

"Kaikyokan"

The Karato waterfront district has many tourist attractions, including "Kaikyokan," (the new Shimonoseki Marine Science Museum), "New Karato Market," a fish market open to tourists, and "Kamonwharf," a commercial complex. As the district faces the Mojiko Retro District of Kitakyushu across the Kanmon Strait, the synergy effects can be expected.



Similar initiative by another municipality (title only):
Mitsushima-cho, Nagasaki: Tsushima CHINGU Music Festival

(9) Case studies on initiatives to work with other municipalities (titles only)

Taito-ku, Tokyo: “The Road of New Bill”

Toyonaka city, Osaka Prefecture: Revitalizing a new town with the neighboring municipality

Case Study Column: One year after the Tohoku Shinkansen Line extended to Hachinohe

More than one year has passed since the section between Morioka and Hachinohe on the Tohoku Shinkansen Line started operation on December 1, 2002. “Hayate” bullet trains link Tokyo and Hachinohe in two hours and 50 minutes, some 40 minutes less than before.

The annual total of passengers between Morioka and Hachinohe soared 51% to 4.18 million before the new operation started.

The extension of the Tohoku Shinkansen Line has had a great impact on the entire area of Aomori Prefecture. During a period of one year after the new operation started, the numbers of overnight stays at hotels in Hachinohe, the area around Lake Towada and other resorts rose significantly (about a 20 percent increase for the Towada lakeside resort). Souvenir stores and other commercial establishments in the prefecture had more customers in 2003 than in 2002. The similar growth was seen for tourist sites and events as well. The growth rates in the number of visitors during the same period was 100 percent for the Hachinohe district local industries promotion center, 190 percent for the Sannai Maruyama Archaeological Site, and 280 percent for the Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival.



2. Initiatives by businesses

(1) Cases studies on the development of unique products (titles only)

[Developing one-of-a-kind cars]

[Developing new technologies for the world]

(2) Cultivating new markets (titles only except for one case study)

[Warehousing and transport service for individual customers]

[Taxi and miscellaneous services]

[Meeting the needs of a graying population]

[Japanese inn for tourists from other countries]

[Local economy stimulation with free circular-route buses]

A local business that offers chartered bus services (anonymously referred to as “G Co.” hereinafter) suggested to a council of developers and other stakeholders in the development of the Tokyo waterfront subcenter that some kind of transport service should be provided to ensure better access to and between various facilities in the area. The idea was that increased flows of visitors would translate into increased business opportunities in the waterfront area. The council accepted this suggestion and they started “Bay Shuttle,” a fare-free bus service.

Later G Co. made similar suggestion to the Otemachi-Marunouchi-Yurakucho District Redevelopment Project Council and the NPOs concerned to help this strictly business district transform itself to a more commercial one. This led to the establishment of a taskforce aimed at implementing this shuttle bus project. This was how this bus service, popularly known as Marunouchi Shuttle was launched.

These two projects are characterized by the innovative cultivation of a new market—fare-free, circular route bus service in central Tokyo, which was made possible by local businesses and a passenger service provider.

In each of these two services, uniquely-designed low-floor buses are used. For the Marunouchi Shuttle service, electric buses have recently been introduced. The low-floor, low-emissions and low-noise buses have been specially developed to meet Japanese specifications

[Commercialization of internal expertise]

[A shift in thinking led to the development of a system to melt road snow without spraying water.]

[A building contractor starts a business of a different industry.]

(3) Environmental business

[Development of an eco-friendly concrete formwork]

Concrete formworks used at construction sites are often made of tropical timber plywood. There are growing calls for a reduction in the use of such formworks, which are usually disposed of as waste in the end. A business (anonymously referred to as “K Co.” hereinafter) succeeded in developing a permanent concrete formwork made of concrete, which was made possible by anticorrosive treatment that took advantage of the technology of its affiliated company. This high-durable formwork does not need to be removed after the concrete is set. This product is not only environmentally

Marunouchi Shuttle



friendly but also helpful in streamlining construction works. It is also helping revitalize local industry as a local concrete maker produces and sells this product. This product has obtained a certificate from the Public Works Research Center for its excellent construction technology, proving its credibility.

Permanent concrete formwork in place



Similar initiatives by other businesses (titles only):

[Pioneer in rooftop greening]

[Development of a diesel emissions reduction system]

(4) Working with different entities (titles only)

[Contracting out all the physical distribution operations]

[Bus information service using cell phones]

[A railway operator supports town-making]

[Developing and operating Techno Super Liners]