

# Sustainable Compact City Strategy Responding to the Declining and Super-Ageing Population:

## Compact City Planning through the Renovation of Public Transportation

### Toyama City



#### Background

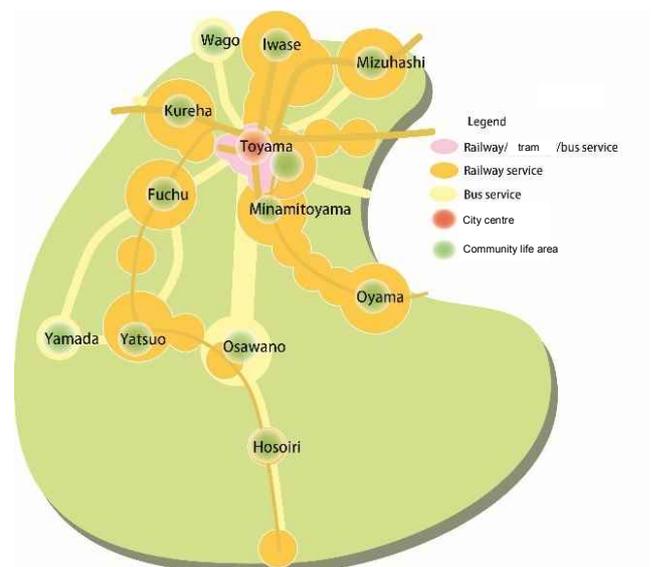
In order to achieve sustainable city planning and management responding to the declining and super-ageing population, Toyama City is a pioneer in addressing a compact city policy among all the cities in Japan.

With its flat and broad inhabitable area, its high rates of road construction and home ownership, Toyama City has a spread out city centre and the structure of the city has been built around traveling by car. This has resulted in not only an increase in city management cost but is also inconvenient for those residents who do not have the free use of a car. Thinking of the city planning strategy necessary to achieve sustainable city management and take responsibility for future residents, while responding to the future decline and ageing of the population, Toyama City is aiming to achieve “a concentrated type of compact city planning through the renovation of public transportation.” The city is aiming for an efficient and comfortable compact city by strengthening public transport and integrating many different lifestyle and urban functions alongside convenient public transport.

#### Purpose of Project

Through promoting the compact city policy, Toyama City is aiming to develop a community where even those who do not have free use of a car can live with security and comfort, a community where people can

choose to live in many different ways such as suburban living or urban living, a community where residents can always live full and active lives, and a community with sustainable city planning and management which takes responsibility for its future residents.



Urban structure Toyama is aiming for (Image)

#### Outline of Project

To achieve the development of a compact city, Toyama City has implemented various different projects under three different pillars of measures: “Revitalising public transport,” “Encouraging residents to relocate to zones along public transport lines,” and “Revitalising the city centre.”

For the first pillar “Revitalising public transport,” Toyama addressed the development and networking of light rail transit (LRT). In 2006, the first full-fledged LRT in Japan “Toyama Light Rail” was developed, and in 2009, the existing tramway was extended to create the tram loop line in the city centre. Currently, a project is being promoted to connect the LRT with the tramway under the elevated structure of a Shinkansen station.

For the second pillar “Encouraging residents to relocate to zones along public transport lines,” Toyama City set specific areas where people were encouraged to live: the city centre, areas within 500 metres of a railway station or tram stop, and areas within 300 metres of a bus stop on a high-frequency service bus route. Toyama City offers a subsidy to anyone who wants to build or purchase a house in these areas.

For the third pillar “Revitalising the city centre,” the all-weather open space with a large glass roof, “Grand Plaza.” was developed at the centre of the commercial area in 2007 to create a base of activity where people can gather and interact. In addition, to create opportunities for elderly people to visit the city centre, the city issues “outing passes” which offer discounts on transport fares and hung “hanging flower baskets” to create a better quality town which is enjoyable to walk around. In this way, the city has been implementing various different projects to enhance the situation in the city centre and create a flow of people.



Grand Plaza and light rail vehicle (LRV) on the loop line



Hanging flower baskets and banner

## Progress and Achievements

One of the features of Toyama City is that the city has promoted city planning, to respond to the declining and ageing population and focused on a long-term vision for the future, long before the decline and the ageing of the population became an obvious problem.

In addition, to achieve real city planning, the city has been taking a cross-sectoral and comprehensive approach covering various different areas including not only urban policy but also welfare policy, environmental policy, infrastructure development, education policy, and agriculture policy.

Moreover, the mayor himself goes along to the local communities to proactively explain the measures, to share the future vision with the residents and to promote public-private partnership projects. Furthermore, resident registry data is presented and analysed with a geographical information system (GIS), and visualised effects of the measures are then used to create understandable explanations of the measures for residents and for planning new measures.

## Effects of Project

The compact city policy has achieved results slowly but steadily.

In terms of the social dynamics of the population in areas where people are encouraged to live, those moving-out of the city centre used to surpass those moving-in, but since 2008, those moving-in have

surpassed those moving-out. Also, in areas where people are encouraged to live alongside public transport, the trend of those moving-in surpassing those moving-out has continued since 2012. Concentration of the populations in areas where people are encouraged to live has now started to take off.

In addition, the number of tram users used to continue to decrease but have started to increase since FY2007. Improving the convenience of public transport has had an effect.

Measures to promote public investment and living in the city centre have also yielded results including vigorous private investment and an increasing number of primary school pupils in the city centre.

## **Outlook**

It is most important to keep pushing ahead with the compact city policy. In about three years, Toyama Light Rail running north of Toyama Station and the tram running south of Toyama Station will be connected under the elevated structure of Toyama Station. When this north-south connection is made, the transport hub function of Toyama Station, the convenience of the tram, and access to the city centre will all be dramatically improved.

With the population ageing, it is also important to think of city planning from the perspective of health, not only in terms of the well-being of residents but also the control of social security payments and sustainable city management. Developing an attractive community with convenient public transport where people feel comfortable walking due to the compact city policy can produce effects such as more opportunities to go out and develop social capital, and can greatly contribute to extending healthy life expectancy.

Toyama City aims to develop an appealing and sustainable community where every resident can achieve prosperity and live in security. To achieve this, based on compact city planning, it is necessary to enhance the city's comprehensive strengths including welfare, education, culture and economy, and to enhance the

city's resilience against all threats including natural disasters. The city will not stop promoting projects to achieve this goal.

## **Reference URL**

<http://www.city.toyama.toyama.jp/toshiseibibu/toshiseisaku/kikaku/urbanimprovementproject.html>

(Japanese only)

<http://visit-toyama.com/>

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