

Papers on the Local Governance System and its Implementation  
in Selected Fields in Japan No.1

**People and Local Government**  
**—Resident Participation in the Management of Local Governments**

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## Foreword

The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) and the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) have been working since 2005 on a “Project on the overseas dissemination of information on the local governance system of Japan and its operation”. On the basis of the recognition that the dissemination to overseas countries of information on the Japanese local governance system and its operation was insufficient, the objective of this project was defined as the pursuit of comparative studies on local governance by means of compiling in foreign languages materials on the Japanese local governance system and its implementation as well as by accumulating literature and reference materials on local governance in Japan and foreign countries.

In 2006, continuing from the previous year, we compiled various materials, for example “Statistics on Local Governance (Japanese/English)” and “Glossary on Local Governance Used in Japanese Official Gazettes (Japanese/English) (Supplementary Edition)”, and conducted a search for literature and reference materials concerned with local governance in Japan and overseas to be stored in the Institute for Comparative Studies in Local Governance (COSLOG). We also finished compiling “Up-to-date Documents on Local Autonomy in Japan” on two themes on which we had been working since 2005, and made a start on a new research project, “Papers on the Local Governance System and its Implementation in Selected Fields in Japan”, for which we decided to take up 4 themes.

This project is to be continued in 2007, and we aim to improve the materials so that they will be of real use and benefit to those who are working in the field of local governance.

If you have any comments, suggestions or inquiries regarding our project, please feel free to contact the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) or the Institute for Comparative Studies in Local Governance (COSLOG) of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).

July 2007

Michihiro Kayama  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)  
Tatsuo Hatta  
President  
National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

## Preface

This booklet is one of the results of research activities conducted by the Institute for Comparative Studies in Local Governance (COSLOG) in 2006 as one part of a 5-year project that started in 2005 entitled “Project on the overseas dissemination of information on the local governance system of Japan and its operation”, sponsored by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). For the purpose of implementing this project, a “Research committee for the project on the overseas dissemination of information on the local governance system of Japan and its operation” has been set up, and a chief and deputy chiefs with responsibility for the project have been designated from among the members concerned with each research subject.

“Papers on the Local Governance System and its Implementation in Selected Fields in Japan” (2006, Volumes 1-4) were written under the responsibility of the following four members.

(Chief)

Satoru Ohsugi, Professor, Faculty of Urban Liberal Arts, Tokyo Metropolitan University

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Yoshinori Ishikawa, Director of the Mutual Aid Association of Prefectural Government Personnel

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This booklet, the first volume in the series, is about people and local government — resident participation in the management of local governments, and was written by Professor Ohsugi.

Taking the concept of civic autonomy as its central focal point, it gives an overview of the legal status of “residents”, outlines various systems of participation by residents, and explains the development of the diversity of forms that participation by residents has taken in recent years.

We will continue to take up new topics, and add to the series.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Ohsugi, and also to other members of the research committee for their expert opinions and advice.

July 2007

Hiroshi Ikawa

Chairperson

Research committee for the project on the overseas dissemination of information on the local  
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# **People and Local Government — Resident Participation in the Management of Local Government**

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In order to realize the decentralized society, it is important to expand community self-governing whereby local residents can be involved in community development with their own will and responsibility.

This paper discusses the involvement of local communities (as the leading figures in local development) in local government (as the strategic enforcement body), with particular reference to formalized resident participation in the management of local government. I will examine several real-life examples of community self-governing models implemented within the traditional local government framework and also the newly decentralized forms of local government.

## **1. Legal relationship between local government and residents**

The legal relationship between local government and residents is predicated on the street address of the resident. Under Article 10 of the Local Autonomy Law, every person is defined as a resident of the municipality (i.e., city, town or village) within whose boundaries his or her domicile address is located, and also of the prefectural government within whose boundaries the municipality is located. The municipality represents local government at the basic level, while the prefecture represents local government at the wider regional level. Provided that a person has an address, this definition of the person as a municipal and prefectural resident holds legal status irrespective of the person's wishes. This approach has been virtually unchanged since the promulgation of legislation defining municipalities in 1888 (together with subsequent amendments defining prefectures, also in 1888).

Residents have the right to equal access to a range of services furnished by local government, but are required to contribute financially, in the form of taxes, contributions, user fees and other charges, towards expenses incurred by local government activities.

Municipal governments are required to maintain accurate records of their residents in the form of a continuously updated Basic Resident Register showing name, date of birth, gender, head of household (or lineal relationship to head of household), family register, and date of formal certification as a resident. This data has been converted to electronic form on a national scale, creating a nationwide system known as the Basic Resident Register Network System.

Members of local assemblies and heads of local governments can only be elected by Japanese citizens with a defined age requirement who have been resident at an address within the relevant local government region for at least three successive months in order to exercise voting rights. Members of local assemblies must fulfill the residency requirement (i.e., they must be

resident at an address within the relevant local government region for at least three successive months) in order to be eligible for election, although prefectural governors and municipal mayors are exempt.

Figure 1 illustrates the legal framework for resident participation in local government. The Initiative was introduced in a bid to augment democratic representation as part of the first round of local government system reform in 1946. Table 1 shows the current configuration of the Direct Demand system. The Initiative is available only to persons who are eligible to vote — that is, Japanese citizens with a defined age requirement who have been resident at an address within the relevant local government for at least three successive months.

### **Figure 1 Major forms of resident participation and legal basis under current law**

#### Indirect resident participation

- Election of local government assembly members and leader: Article 93 of the Constitution of Japan, Public Offices Election Law and Local Autonomy Law Articles 17 – 19

#### Direct resident participation

- Initiative: Local Autonomy Law Articles 74 – 88
- Town/Village Residents' Meeting: Local Autonomy Law Articles 94 and 95
- Residents' Demand for Audit: Local Autonomy Law Article 242
- Residents' Action: Local Autonomy Law Article 242 (2)
- Referendum on Designated Legislation: Article 95 of the Constitution of Japan, Local Autonomy Law Articles 261 and 262
- Petitions: Article 16 of the Constitution of Japan, Petition Law, Local Autonomy Law Articles 125 and 125
- Appeals: Local Autonomy Law Article 109

**Table 1 Initiatives under the Local Autonomy Law**

	Number of signatures required	Presented to	Response	Remarks
1) Enactment/ alteration/abolition of bylaws	At least 2% of persons registered on electoral roll	Head of ordinary local public body	The assembly must be convened within 20 days of receipt of the demand to prepare an amended version of the relevant bylaw/regulation together with an accompanying opinion statement.	
2) Demand for audit		Audit commissioners	The audit is performed and the results are released.	
3) Demand for audit by external auditor under contract			The audit commissioner forwards the demand to the local government head with an accompanying opinion statement. The head convenes the assembly within 20 days to present the demand. If the demand is adopted by the assembly, the auditor contract is drawn up, the audit is performed and the results are released. If the demand is rejected, the procedure described in 2) applies.	Where the relevant bylaw states that an audit may be performed by an external auditor under contract rather than by the audit commissioner
4) Demand for dissolution of assembly	At least one-third of persons registered on electoral roll (or, for a total population of over 400,000, the sum of one-third of 400,000 (= 133,333) plus one-sixth of the number in excess of 400,000)	Election Administration Commission	A dissolution vote is held and the assembly can be dissolved by majority consent	Demands cannot be accepted during first year after election
5) Demand for dismissal of assembly member			A dismissal vote is held and the person can be dismissed by majority consent	
6) Demand for dismissal of local government head		Head of ordinary local public body		
7) Demand for dismissal of senior public service personnel			The demand is presented to the assembly and if at least two-thirds of members are present and if at least three-quarters of those present agree, the person can be dismissed	Demands cannot be accepted during the first year of employment (for vice-governor and deputy-mayor and chief accountant and treasurer or first six months of employment (for Election Administration Commission personnel)

## **2. New developments in the relationship between local government and residents**

The relationship between local government and residents is defined by the relevant legislation and historical precedent as described in Section 1 above. In recent years, this relationship has been influenced by reforms and the principles underlying the reforms. In Section 1, we saw how decentralization has given greater weight to the principles of self-determination and responsibility at the regional (i.e., local government) level, necessitating a systematic expansion of community self-governing frameworks. Concepts such as the “New Public” and New Public Management (NPM), the latest buzzwords of administrative reform, have also had a significant impact on the relationship between local government and residents.

### **2.1 Impact of decentralization**

The promulgation of the Omnibus Decentralization Act in 2000 transformed local government system in Japan. Here, I will examine the impact of decentralization reforms on the relationship between local government and residents, including the debate on decentralization that culminated in the enactment of the Act.

#### **(1) Greater self-determination**

Let us first consider how the reforms have confirmed the role of residents as the mainstay of local government.

The intermediate report of the Decentralization Promotion Committee during the first wave of decentralization reforms called for an increase in self-determination as the first step in to achieving true decentralization. The report emphasized the importance of self-determination, stating that “as far as possible, citizens should be afforded the right of self-determination over issues that directly concern them, through democratic systems open to all classes of citizen irrespective of age, gender and vocation. Only by establishing the foundations for community-driven, gender-equal democratic institutions at the local government level in this way can we promote the sound growth of congressional politics at the national government level.”

However, legislative reform with respect to the legal relationship between local government and residents has been minimal, particularly in light of the stated objective of boosting self-determination. The first set of recommendations released by the Decentralization Promotion Committee called for measures to boost resident participation in local government, including an overhaul of the Initiative. This prompted a number of initiatives, as described below.

Under amendments to the Local Autonomy Law in 1997, a mechanism for demanding external audits on a contract basis (shown as 3) in Table 1) was introduced as part of the decentralization reforms. The aim of this mechanism is to augment the introduction of an external auditing system to ensure the impartiality and competency of audit processes and provide additional checks and balances, thereby promoting the self-determination and responsible conduct

by local government. Where audits carried out under contract rather than by the Audit Commissioner are stipulated by a bylaw, residents have the right to request an external audit performed on a contract basis rather than by the Audit Commissioner. This gives residents a greater range of choices.

Subsequent amendments to the Local Autonomy Law in 2002 saw a reduction in the minimum number of voter signatures required for a direct demand petition involving dissolution or dismissal where the local government population exceeds 400,000. The new minimum threshold is defined as the sum of one-third of 400,000 (= 133,333) plus one-sixth of the number in excess of 400,000 (shown as 4) through 7) in Table 1). Other changes give residents greater powers to demand audits with the introduction of a mechanism for the Audit Commissioner to recommend temporary suspension of activity under the Residents' Audit Application System. Residents also enjoy improved access to legal recourse through a restructuring of Resident Appeal processes (for instance, a local government body can be named as the defendant rather than specific individuals) and the ability to have all legal expenses awarded against the local government body in the event that the plaintiff is successful.

Recent years there have been an increasing incidence of referendum not based on legislation, on issues such as construction of nuclear power plants and operation of US military bases. The first direct resident votes under municipal bylaws took place in 1996, in the town of Maki-machi in Niigata prefecture and also in Okinawa prefecture. In response to calls for referendum to be formally enshrined in legislation, the Decentralization Promotion Committee began deliberations on referendum as a means of promoting community self-governing. The deliberation process was then taken over by the Local Government System Research Council, and as yet no concrete outcomes have been generated regarding the establishment of a formal system of referendum (see *Report on Decentralization and Community self-governing, and Strategies to Boost Regional Tax Revenue* (2000). Nevertheless, amendments to the Special Law on the Merger of Municipalities in 2002 contained new stipulations on referendum in relation to discussion of the establishment of a Statutory Merger Council pertaining to municipal mergers.

## (2) Municipal mergers since the 1990s

The late 1980s saw the beginning of a concerted merger drive with the aim of boosting the size and administrative capacity of municipalities. Under the Special Law on the Merger of Municipalities, the number of municipalities in Japan has been reduced from 3,232 at the end of March 1999 to 1,821 as at the end of March 2006, over a period of just seven years.

The merger drive has impacted on the relationship between local government and residents in a number of ways. Firstly, the larger municipal boundaries mean that local governments now have larger populations. Also, local governments have been given greater authority, as a result of towns and villages being either incorporated into or redefined as cities, and smaller cities being redesignated as designated major cities, core cities or special case cities. From the perspective of residents, the merger process has altered the configuration of government services and user contributions and brought both qualitative and quantitative changes to the benefits versus payments



relationship. However, this does not affect the fundamental status of the resident in law as described earlier.

But the impact of municipal mergers on the relationship between local government and residents is not restricted solely to the legal status of residents. When municipalities are merged, there must be extensive discussion and deliberation in a range of areas, from administrative and operational details to formation of basic plans and development guidelines for the newly formed municipality. Such process presents unique opportunities for public access to and input into topics of discussion that would previously have been restricted to the public. Given the enormous potential impact of mergers on local communities, residents have in many cases taken an active stance in voicing their opinions to mergers and setting out prerequisites for mergers, through media such as public debate and referendum. Often this process has in itself raised awareness of the importance of community self-governing in merged municipalities.

### (3) Decentralization initiatives by local governments

Furthermore, local governments themselves have embraced the principles of decentralization and are starting to take the initiative in developing bylaws and strategies to promote community self-governing.

#### ( i ) Referendum schemes

Several referendum schemes have been trialed at the municipal level, although this has not been formalised in legislation at the national level. At the City of Mino, for instance, Article 8 of the Citizen Participation Bylaw (1997) states that referendum may be employed in cases where the mayor deems it necessary to solicit the opinions of local residents directly. This bylaw heralded the first move towards referendum on government policy issues in general, as opposed to previous ad-hoc measures formulated in response to specific policy issues. The Referendum Bylaw of the City of Takahama (2000), meanwhile, was the first such permanent bylaw to provide a procedure for referendum in response to a motion presented by a local resident. The inclusion of provisions for referendum in Municipal Charters has become the norm since the first such set of bylaws, the Niseko-cho Town Charter. Some municipalities, such as the City of Yamato, define the right to submit motions and demands via resident voting and set out voter eligibility criteria in their City Charter, but also provide separate referendum bylaw. The items of bylaws on referendum are becoming increasingly diversified as to scope, eligibility for submitting motions and demands, voter eligibility, voting systems and formats, and processes associated with voting outcomes.

#### ( ii ) Redefining the concept of the resident

Another example of initiatives by local governments is the redefinition of the scope of legal rights and responsibilities to include persons who do not fulfill the residential requirements.

At present, nearly all local governments have information disclosure bylaws (including general guidelines), and in most cases these recognize the rights of persons who do not fulfill the residential requirement (i.e. non-residents) to access government information. For example, Article

5 of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Information Disclosure Bylaw affords this right to a wide range of persons, not only those with a resident domicile within the metropolitan area but also persons, corporations and other groups with premises or offices within the metropolitan area, persons commuting to premises or offices within the metropolitan area, persons attending schools within the metropolitan area, and any other individual, corporation or group able to show good reason for requiring access to documents or archives held by the relevant government body.

Bylaws on public comment procedures frequently extend beyond the narrow scope of the resident as defined in law. For instance, Citizens' Public Comment Procedure Bylaw of the City of Yokosuka extends the right to submit opinions and other information on policies and measures adopted by the municipality to "citizens and others," including persons with a domicile within the municipality, persons with an office or premises within the municipality, persons commuting to an office or premises within the municipality, persons attending a school within the municipality, persons obliged to pay taxes to the municipality, and other parties with a direct interest in the matter subject to the public comment procedure.

In recent years, several municipal governments have gone one step further by setting out a Municipal Charter which enshrines the notion of the citizen as opposed to the resident (see below). For instance, Article 3 (2) of the City Charter of the City of Tama defines the citizen as a person who lives, works, or studies within the municipality or a group engaged in some form of activity within the municipality. Municipalities with their Charter generally extend the definition of the citizen beyond that of the resident to include any person who commutes to an office or premises or place of study within the municipality, operates a business within the municipality, or is a member of a community group within the municipality, irrespective of the person's actual place of residence.

In 2002, the City of Takahama amended bylaws on referendum to widen the scope of eligibility for direct voting. Eligibility was extended from the original definition of "persons with the right to elect members (including the head) of the assembly of the City of Takahama as defined in Article 2 Paragraph 2 of the Public Offices Election Law" to include all Japanese nationals and foreigners with permanent resident status aged 18 years and over who have been continuously residents in the City of Takahama for at least three months. The new definition was also applied to eligibility to demand referendum. At the City of Yamato, meanwhile, the City Charter and the Referendum Bylaw reduce the minimum age for eligibility for demands and voting to 16 years. In this way, the concept of the resident has been considerably expanded, even with respect to age and nationality.

Social mobility has risen considerably as a result of advances in transportation and telecommunications technology, particularly motorization and information technology in society. Socio-economic activities also take place over a much wider area. This is one of the factors driving the municipal merger process. The discrepancy between traditional government boundaries and the loci of daily life and socio-economic activity can no longer be ignored. This fact may be well appreciated by local government, as the basic unit of government administration and the one that relates most closely to local communities. Redefining the scope of eligibility is another strategy for

alleviating this discrepancy than municipal mergers.

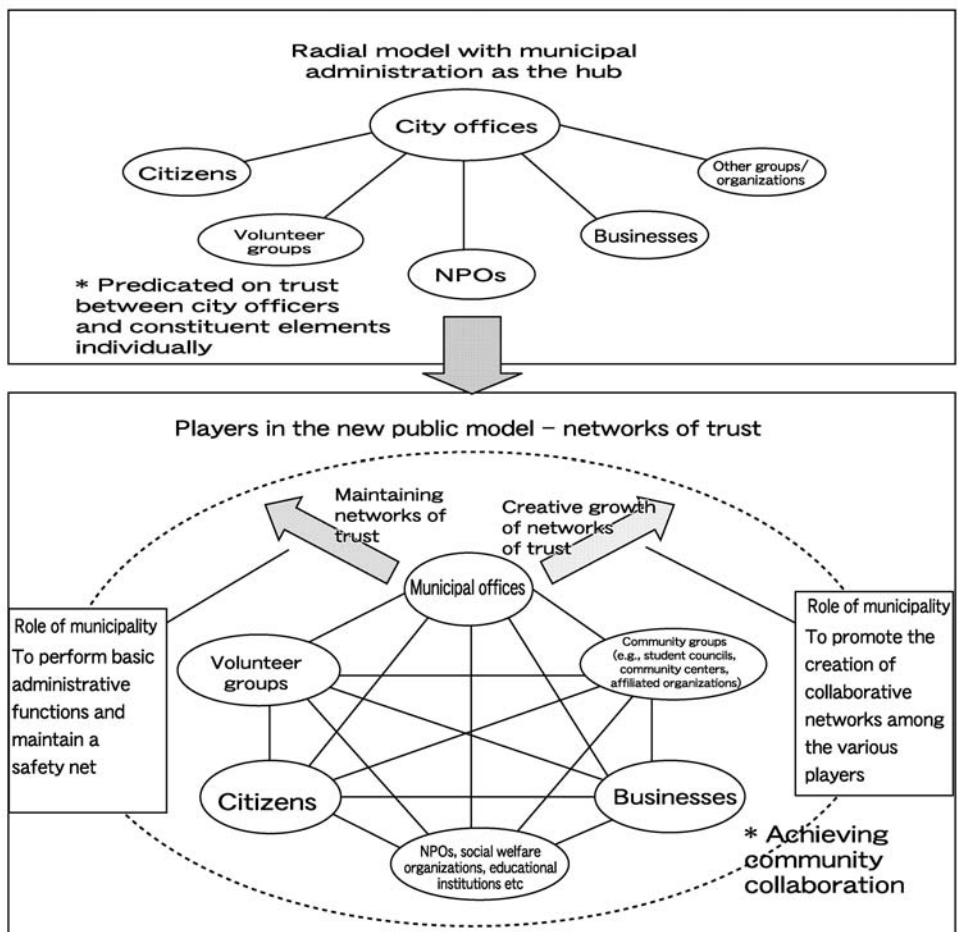
## **2.2 The “new public” model and the relationship between local government and residents**

In this section I will briefly discuss the collaboration between local government and residents in line with the concept of the “new public” model. I will begin by looking at the examples of two local governments that have actively promoted the “new public” model.

In 2002, the City of Yamato released bylaw for promoting citizen activities designed to foster the “new public” model. The first local government bylaw with the term “new public” featured in the title, the bylaw set out a framework and principles for the creation of the “new public” model involving citizens, community groups, businesses and government working together on an equal footing in accordance with their respective rights and responsibilities. The preamble to the bylaw notes that “today, citizens, community groups and businesses are in a position to participate actively in the public domain that has traditionally been the preserve of government. It is now normal to expect a range of choices for the benefit of the individual. To this end, we call the “new public” the “public” created by a shared endeavor based on a diverse range of values and viewpoints. The preamble further states that “we can share time, knowledge, funds, venues and information among individual citizens, community groups and businesses with wider society as social resources for the benefit of all. Government too must provide its resources and participate in the formation of social resources, which form the basis for participation by citizens, community groups and businesses in the “new public” model and the seeds of a brighter future.”

The City of Tama constitutes an excellent example in this regard. Most of the jurisdiction of the City of Tama is within the New Town area, where the population is expected to begin aging very rapidly in the near future. To this end, the City of Tama has posited the creation of new support mechanisms as a key management objective. This signifies the development of “networks predicated on trust” involving citizens, NPOs, businesses and local government collaborating and working together, sharing roles and responsibilities in a fair and equal manner, identifying local issues of concern and interest, contributing knowledge and developing solutions in order to share and help improve local services, in accordance with the new public model depicted in Figure 2. Under this approach, the new role of the municipal government is to perform the essential duties of local government and provide a safety net, placing the emphasis in two areas: maintaining trust-based networks that provide solid support for trust in networks, and promoting the creative development of trust-based networks to promote the development of networks involving collaboration between a range of different interests.

**Figure 2 “New public” model espoused by the City of Tama From the conventional public model to the “new public” model**



Source: The City of Tama Administrative and Financial Restructuring Plan, City of Tama, 2004, p. 9

This approach is reflected in debate at the national level. For example, the *Report on the Future of Local Governments* issued in 2003 by the 27<sup>th</sup> Local Government System Research Council observed that local governments are required to set up new collaborative frameworks in response to activities undertaken by community groups, NPOs and other organizations at the local level. The Report also singled out community self-governing, noting that local government is not the only entity that provides services at the local level. It should work together with residents and key partner bodies such as community organizations, NPOs and other private-sector entities to create “new public” spaces.

### 2.3 Local governance and the relationship between local government and residents

In considering the impact of new public management (NPM) on the relationship between local government and residents at both the theoretical and practical levels, I shall first examine the phases of the image of the resident predicated on the disciplinary relationship for local governance between local government and residents.

Although Japan is often accused of being slow to embrace NPM, a number of progressive local governments (such as Mie Prefecture) were already introducing NPM style administration

reforms in the mid-1990s, ahead of the national government. Thus, notwithstanding differences of scale, it can be said that NPM-style elements are being introduced to local government administrative reforms.

NPM is a very broad concept; the definition of NPM can vary between different theorists and in different contexts. Nevertheless, as Ohsugi (2001) reports, it is generally accepted that NPM consists of the following elements:

- ( i ) Separation between policy-making and executive arms of government;
- ( ii ) Substantial delegation of authority to lower-level organizations such as executive departments (“internal decentralization”); and
- ( iii ) Outcome-oriented focus predicated on competitive principles.

In this light, NPM may appear to be no more than a theory of internal administration in government. However, many theorists actually view NPM with a customer-focused approach. In this way, NPM can and should be considered as a tool (or supporting body of theory) for enabling residents as principals to govern the local government (or agent) in the context of local governance.

Through the clarification of the governance relationship between local government and residents under NPM, I will define the phase of the image of the resident as shown in the diagram.

First let us consider the resident as a voter. By voting in elections for local assembly members and heads of a local government, the resident can be defined as principal to control its local government.

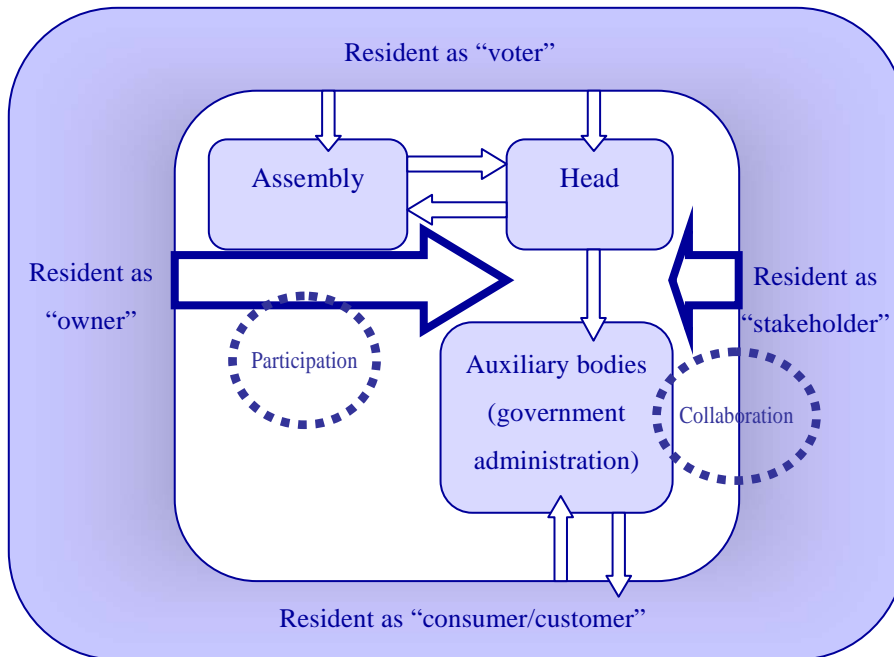
The resident is also the beneficiary of government services. In addition to enjoying the benefits of these services, the resident, as the consumer of the service, plays the role to monitor and evaluate the quality of service and the competency of the delivering body.

Next, the resident as a taxpayer plays the role of “owner” to demand a commitment to strategic management of local government. In addition to exercising the right to vote as enshrined in law, the resident can take part in local government management and policy formulation processes using a variety of participation tools.

Finally, the resident is a stakeholder relative to local government under the terms of contracts and agreements on specific programs or in designated areas of administration. Here we are talking about the “shadow government” businesses and organizations providing products and services under contract in forms such as procurement, public works projects and outsourcing of administrative functions. In recent years, the traditional sub-contracting model has been augmented by new forms such as PFI (Private Finance Initiatives) and designated administrator arrangements, while in addition to traditional private-sector providers, citizen activity groups such as volunteer groups, NPOs and community groups are thought to be partners for business. These organizations interact with local government through collaborative initiatives predicated on the new public model described earlier. This collaborative approach supports participation in local government policy formulation processes at the planning stage, as well as traditional involvement in policy execution at the implementation stage. In this way, the resident defines his ability to govern and influence

outcomes in local government from the local governance perspective.

**Figure 3 Phase of the image of the resident in local governance**



### 3. Resident participation in local government management

Resident participation can take several forms: social participation (through participation in community activities, for instance), political participation (by exercising the right to vote, to be elected, to engage in political activity), and participation in administrative processes. Resident participation generally refers to the last of these three. Here I will consider recent developments in participation in local government management.

#### 3.1 The systemic resident participation guarantee

##### 3.1.1 Municipal Charter and Citizen Participation Bylaw

One of the central themes in resident participation has been the issue of how to provide systematic protection of the rights of the resident to be part of the resident participation process. In recent years, we have seen moves to accommodate this issue under the local government bylaws such as municipal charters and citizen participation bylaws, as discussed above. Table 2 describes systematic approaches such as Basic Autonomy Bylaws with the detailed contents of each.

**Table 2 Basic autonomy bylaws and stipulations**

	Niseko Town Charter	City of Suginami City Charter	City of Tama City Charter	City of Iga Basic City Charter	City of Yamato City Charter
Role of charter and supremacy clause	○	○	○	○	○
Definition of terminology		○	○	○	○
Basic principles and concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Rights, roles and responsibilities of those engaged in local government operation	Residents/citizens	○	○	○	○
	Community	○		○	○
	Assembly	※	○	○	○
	Assembly members	※	○	○	○
	Head of government (+ executive organ)	○	○	○	○
	Local government public servants	○	○	○	○
Basic principles of government operation	Organization	○	○	○	○
	Basic Vision and comprehensive plan	○	○	○	○
	Disclosure, provision and sharing of information	○	○	○	○
	Government procedures	○	○		○
	Personal information protection	○	○	○	○
	Evaluation of government performance	○	○	○	○
	Accountability	○	○	○	○
	Financial management	○	○		○
Participation, collaboration and local governance structures	Basic principles of participation and collaboration	○	○	○	○
	Participation in planning processes	○		○	○
	Participation in formulation of bylaw	○			○
	Participation by members in advisory councils and other organs	○	○	○	○
	Public comment processes	○	○	○	○
	Referendum	○	○	○	○
	Demands and petitions under referendum		○	○	○
	Eligibility for referendum				○
Conference for promoting local governance			○	○	
Cooperation with national and prefectural governments	○	○			
Cooperation with other local governments	○	○			
Review for Bylaw	○	○		○	
Delegation		○	○		
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right of children to participate in community development processes</li> <li>• Inaugural address of mayor upon election</li> <li>• International exchange programs</li> <li>• Collaborative initiatives with persons from other municipalities</li> <li>• Systematic development of bylaws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights and responsibilities of businesses and other groups</li> <li>• Provision of government services</li> <li>• Collection of local taxes and charges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal assembly</li> <li>• Election of heads of government</li> <li>• Autonomy of the municipality</li> <li>• Participation formats</li> <li>• Support for participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-requisites for referendum</li> <li>• Community self-governing framework</li> <li>• Legal structures</li> <li>• Employee policy formulation</li> <li>• System of safeguards for those who disclose information in the public interest</li> <li>• External audit processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomous interpretation of laws and regulations</li> <li>• Principle of governance on financial policy</li> <li>• Equality and cooperation</li> <li>• Children</li> <li>• Guidance for investor entities</li> <li>• Atsugi Base</li> </ul>

Source: City of Yamato Planning Department, *Documents: Municipal Charter Prepared by Citizens*, 2005, page 5 (partially modified)

### (1) Municipal Charter, or Basic Autonomy Bylaw

Municipal Charter, or Basic Autonomy Bylaw, often called the “Local Government’s Constitution,” set out the basic principles of the municipality, including a supremacy clause. From the perspective of resident participation in local government management, it is important to consider how the right to resident participation is guaranteed and how the role of resident participation in local government is stipulated as part of the governing structure.

These evaluation standards suggest a willingness to enshrine resident participation in local government in the relevant bylaws, and this is borne out by the composition of the bylaws listed in Table 2. Figure 4 shows the Town Charter of Niseko-cho. Article 10 explicitly guarantees the right to participate in community development issues by stating that “we residents are the chief protagonists of community development and we possess the right to participation in community development processes.” Elsewhere, Article 18 Paragraph 2, regarding the roles and responsibilities of the assembly, states that “the Assembly shall make every effort to solicit views and opinions from the town population broadly, ” while Article 18 Paragraph 3 states that “the Assembly is obliged to provide explanations of its decisions and of the processes involved in reaching those

decisions to the residents as the holders of sovereignty in the municipality.” Stipulations regarding the roles and responsibilities of the municipality as an executive organ contain similar provisions explicitly, such as Article 31 on participation in committees and other organs, and Article 32 on obligations regarding providing responses to opinions, requests and complaints.

There are also stipulations guaranteeing procedures for resident participation in governing processes. Article 36 of the Niseko-cho Town Charter, for instance, stipulates resident participation in accordance with the Plan-Do-See management cycle, requiring “considerations to enable participation by local residents in all aspects of municipal affairs, including planning, implementation and evaluation processes.” Paragraph 2 of Article 36 further stipulates the obligation of the municipality to provide the following types of information in relation to resident participation by local residents in all aspects of municipal affairs:

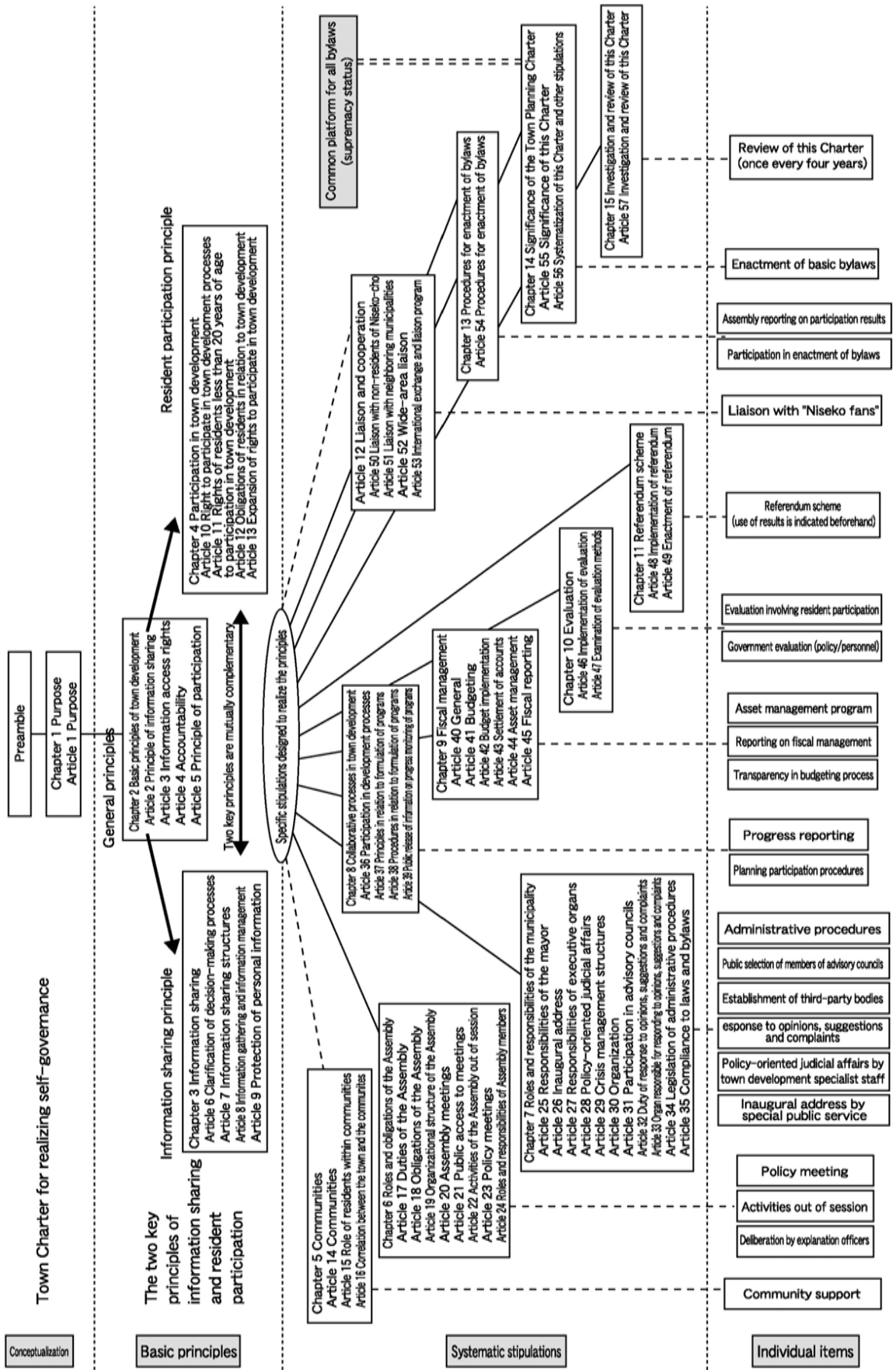
- ( i ) Proposals and requests for projects and information about sources of projects
- ( ii ) Details of alternate proposals;
- ( iii ) Comparisons with other local government bodies;
- ( iv ) Ongoing reporting on resident participation;
- ( v ) Plans and bylaws forming the basis for projects; and
- ( vi ) Other information as necessary.



Figure 4 Typical structure of city charters — Niseko-cho Town Charter

# Structure of the Niseko-cho Town Charter

Niseko-cho, Hokkaido Revised December 2005



Source: From Niseko-cho website

## (2) Resident participation bylaws

Bylaws on resident participation that were enacted at a relatively early stage were often very general in nature. They would set out the principles of resident participation and guarantee the right of residents to engage in resident participation, but generally did not stipulate actual procedures or other details. For this reason, they were known as “idea-driven.”

For example, the case of the City of Mino was the first enactment on community development, and in this sense was a forerunner of the municipal charter we see today. In recent years, some local governments (such as those of Niseko-cho) have provided highly detailed provisions on resident participation in their municipal charters, while other local governments (such as the City of Yamato) have begun providing separate bylaws on resident participation in addition to the municipal charters. As Table 3 shows, the trend is clearly towards providing ever more broad-reaching and detailed stipulations regarding information provision and the methodology of resident participation, known as “menu-driven.”

Article 6 of the Nishi-Tokyo City Citizen Participation Bylaw, for instance, stipulates that the executive organ shall incorporate the views and opinions of the citizens into municipal policy formulation processes via one or more resident participation procedures such as input into auxiliary bodies, public comment processes, public meetings, public workshops and referenda, except where prevented by emergency or other exceptional circumstances, in relation to the formulation of proposals such as plans and bylaws in the following areas, except where specifically prevented by law:

- ( i ) Formulation of general plans of basic policies of the municipality, general principles of programs in relation to specific areas of administration, and other aspects of a general nature;
- ( ii ) Formulation of Charters or Statements espousing a basic vision or direction for the municipality;
- ( iii ) Formulation of proposals for the enactment, amendment or abolition of basic bylaws for the municipality;
- ( iv ) Formulation of proposals for the enactment, amendment or abolition of bylaws with a direct and/or major impact on the daily lives and/or business activities of citizens;
- ( v ) Formulation of proposals for the enactment, amendment or abolition of bylaws imposing obligations on or limiting the rights of citizens; and
- ( vi ) Other matters where resident participation is deemed necessary.

There are also bylaws that stipulate community collaboration in addition to resident participation. These are known as “participation-collaboration integrated bylaws”

The Basic Bylaw for Resident Participation and Community Collaboration at the City of Komae, for instance, contain provisions for resident participation procedures and resident voting — the fundamental aspects of resident participation — together with the following stipulations:

- ( i ) The municipality shall provide support for citizen public interest bodies, including financial support in the form of subsidies to promote the work of citizen public interest bodies and their activities; and
- ( ii ) The municipality shall provide citizen public interest bodies with opportunities to participate

in municipal processes and procedures, including opportunities to participate in the work of the municipal government in a manner that utilizes the specialist knowledge and skills and unique local characteristics of citizen public interest bodies.

Some local governments enact municipal charters, resident participation bylaws, referendum bylaws and collaboration bylaws separately. Other local governments choose to subsume all of the above into the municipal charters or resident participation bylaws. Still others adopt an intermediate approach between the two. Thus, there are many different approaches to the formulation of bylaws, and diversity is recognized in accordance with the previous experience in relation to the formulation of bylaws and the approach of each individual local government to the creation of bylaws.

Table 3 Main types of resident participation bylaws

Title of bylaws		City of Koganei resident participation bylaws	City of Nishi-Tokyo resident participation bylaws	City of Komae basic bylaws on resident participation and community collaboration	City of Kyose basic town planning bylaws	City of Asahiwa resident participation bylaws	City of Kazawa bylaws on resident participation and promotion of resident participation	City of Simonsesi bylaws on community collaboration and participation in planning process	City of Matsuyama resident participation bylaws	City of Miyazaki bylaws on promoting community activities	City of Kagoshima bylaws on promoting resident participation in planning processes	City of Kyoto resident participation bylaws	City of Ishikari bylaws on promoting resident participation in government administration	City of Yoshikawa bylaws on resident participation in planning processes	City of Mino resident participation bylaws	City of Takarazuka resident participation bylaws
Date of promulgation		June 2003 1 April 2004	October 2002 1 October 2002	March 2003 1 April 2003	September 2002 1 April 2003	July 2002 4 July 2002	March 2005 1 April 2005	March 2003 June 1 2003	October 2005 5 October 2005	March 2001 1 April 2001	March 2003 1 June 2003	June 2003 1 August 2003	September 2001 1 April 2002	December 2004 14 February 2005	March 1997 1 April 1997	December 2001 1 April 2002
Date of enforcement																
General	1 Preamble	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	2 Objects	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	3 Definition of terminology	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	4 Basic principles	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participation stipulations	5 Scope of resident participation			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	6 Timing of resident participation			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	7 Method of resident participation			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	8 Implementation of resident participation			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Duties and responsibilities	9 Processes associated with opinions and outcomes			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	10 Public release of information			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	11 Role and responsibilities of residents	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	12 Role and responsibilities of municipality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Participation methodology	13 Role and responsibilities of municipal heads of government			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	14 Role and responsibilities of municipal employees			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	15 Role of Assembly			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	16 Responsibilities of citizen activity groups			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
information sharing	17 Participation in and public selection of members of committees and organs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	18 Public opinion surveys and hearings	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	19 Submission of opinions, suggestions and proposals	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	20 Public comment processes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Collaboration	21 Referendum			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	22 Procedures for public hearings, public meetings and workshops			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	23 Other participation processes			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	24 Public access to meetings and committees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Others	25 Meeting minutes and records	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	26 Information disclosure, provision and sharing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	27 Collaboration with citizens	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	28 Central coordinating facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Others	29 Support for community development activities			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	30 Promoting volunteer programs			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	31 Plans for promoting resident participation			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	32 Council for promoting resident participation and research council	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Others	33 Promoting to join community organization			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	34 Evaluation of administration and evaluation committee			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	35 Delegation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	37 Interim measures			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Source: Based on the City of Hachioji documentation

### (3) Systemic guarantees of resident participation mechanisms

Figure 5 illustrates various different forms of resident participation, including but not limited to the standard options of resident participation under municipal charters and resident participation bylaws. For each form of resident participation, Figure 5 indicates, from the perspective of the resident, the degree of opportunity (in other words, the number of residents considered eligible to take part) and the level of involvement and commitment.

#### ( i ) Public representation on advisory committees

There has been a significant increase in public representation on advisory committees in recent years. Generally this involves allocating a certain number of places (or sometimes all places) to residents on auxiliary bodies such as advisory committees set up to deliberate on new areas of policies, bylaws or programs. Residents are selected through a public application process. In some cases the basis for this is provided individually under stipulations in the establishment guidelines of each advisory committee, while in other cases municipal charters, resident participation bylaws or general guidelines on the establishment of the advisory committees generally.

To date, this approach has generally been confined to internal studymeetings. Even advisory committees have generally been hand-picked by the local government head, usually from consultants and experts and representatives of key groups (or their recommendations). Inviting members of the public to serve on advisory committees not only improves information disclosure, but by allowing residents to serve as committee members, it gives residents a direct voice in policy formulation processes.

There are several issues with resident participation via public application. The number of places on a committee is necessarily limited, so only a fraction of the residential population can be represented. As a result, the resident representative(s) may not be an accurate reflection of resident opinions. Also, time or other constraints may restrict the number of people who are able to apply for representation on the advisory committee, or may result in non-representative selection. The location and timing of meetings and the number of meetings is generally pre-determined, which limits opportunities for debate and discussion. And finally, there is a tendency for the meetings to be led or even dominated by the municipal offices.

#### ( ii ) Citizens conferences

It is only in recent years that public representation on committees has been widely embraced by local governments. An even more recent development is the advent of citizens conferences, where residents play a greater role than in local government committees. In its purest form, the citizens conference is a body consisting solely of citizen representatives which is set up and operated by citizens. In practice, where the purpose of the citizens conference is to debate new policies, bylaws or programs, it will often be set up by the local government, which will also provide assistance with secretariat duties. Nevertheless, the citizens conference is qualitatively different from advisory committees in several important respects: citizens, as the constituent representatives of the conference, are responsible for the decisions of the conference; similarly, the

citizens have much greater responsibility in those management matters which are directly connected to the decisions of the conference; the proportion of citizens represented is very high, even though consultants and experts may also be present as representatives; the citizens conference is generally much larger in scale; and it usually meets more frequently. Citizens conferences are often employed in the initial phase of development of municipal charters and the formulation of comprehensive plans (discussed below).

(iii) Public comment processes

Traditionally there have existed several avenues via which residents can voice their opinions directly to the local government head and other officials. These include the “letter to the mayor” approach (and the more recent e-mail version thereof), which is free of restrictions with respect to scope and period, as well as community monitoring schemes whereby a government-appointed monitors solicit opinions on a regular basis regarding all aspects of local government operation.

Local governments are starting to introduce formalized public comment processes that require the government to solicit community views and opinions on key policy issues, to incorporate these into policy, and stipulate accountability. As yet, few municipalities have gone as far as the City of Yokosuka in issuing a dedicated set of citizens’ public comment bylaws for this purpose. In an increasing number of cases, the public comment process is based on the municipal charters or the resident participation bylaws, or stipulated in the general guidelines.

Care must be taken to ensure that the scope of the public comment process is clearly defined in the relevant bylaws or stipulations. Vague or unclear wording can and often does lead to overly arbitrary use of the process. The City of Yokosuka bylaws, for instance, stipulate the scope as follows. (Note that this excludes direct submissions to the government assembly regarding urgent or emergency matters and minor matters submitted in accordance with the direct applications scheme as stipulated in Article 74, Paragraph 1 of the Local Government Law.)

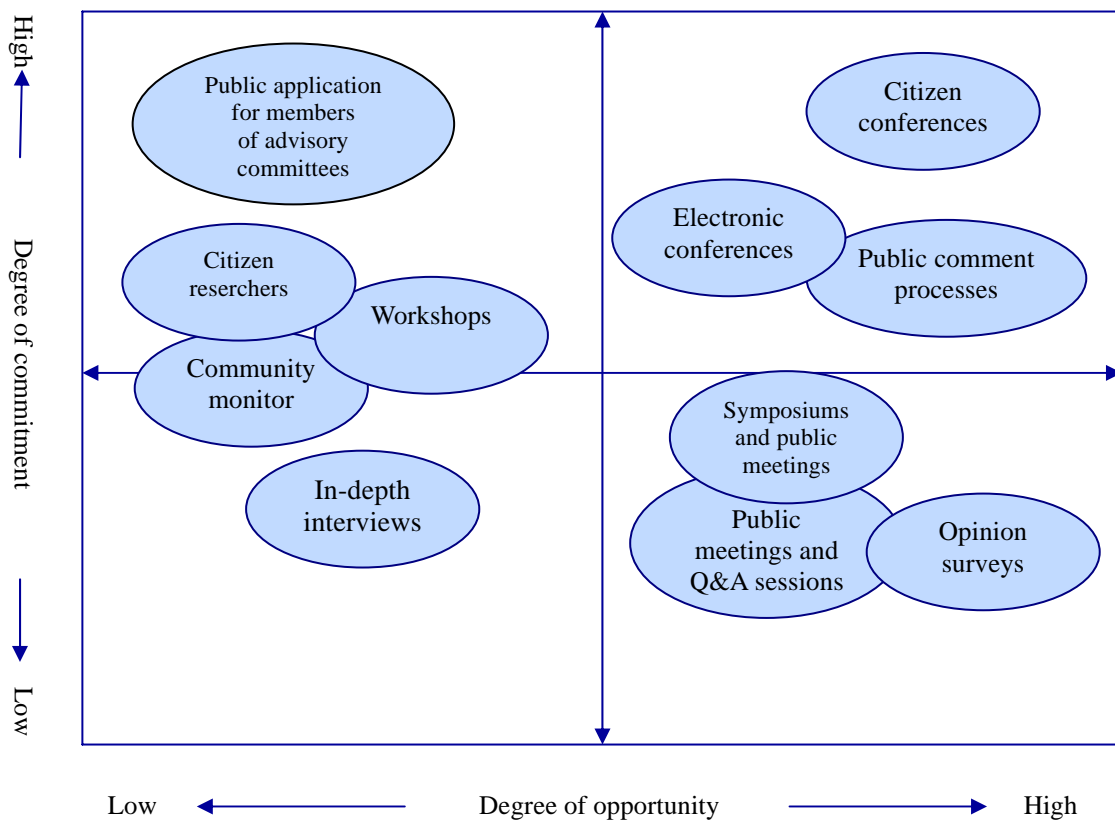
- i ) Formulation of proposals for the enactment, amendment or abolition of basic bylaws for the municipality, bylaws with a direct and/or major impact on the daily lives and/or business activities of citizens, and bylaws that confer or impose rights or obligations (except those of a financial nature) on residents and others;
- ii ) Enactment, amendment and abolition of bylaws (including regulations) and guidance guidelines with a direct and/or major impact on the daily lives and/or business activities of citizens, and other administrative guidance principles;
- iii ) Formulation and amendment of comprehensive plans and other programs that set out the basic policies of the municipality and programs that set out the basic principles of policies in specific areas of government administration and other matters of a basic nature;
- iv ) Formulation and amendment of documents such as Charters and Statements that set out a general direction for the municipality; and
- v ) Any decision not to proceed with amendments to bylaws undertaken on the basis of a review of the said bylaws performed in accordance with a provision in said bylaws requiring a review to be undertaken following a certain pre-defined period after enactment.

(iv) Other processes

Workshops are another common mechanism for promoting dynamic community input. There are also newer initiatives involving community study groups. A good example is the Kanazawa Citizen Research Institute for Community Development at the City of Kanazawa. Consisting of residents selected via a public application process, the citizen researchers take an active role in studying the policies of the municipality.

A balanced combination of the various mechanisms — including public representation on advisory committees, formalized public comment processes, public symposiums and forums for sharing information and educating local communities, and hearings and information sessions on specific issues — provides a solid platform for efficient and effective community involvement at all stages of the management cycle.

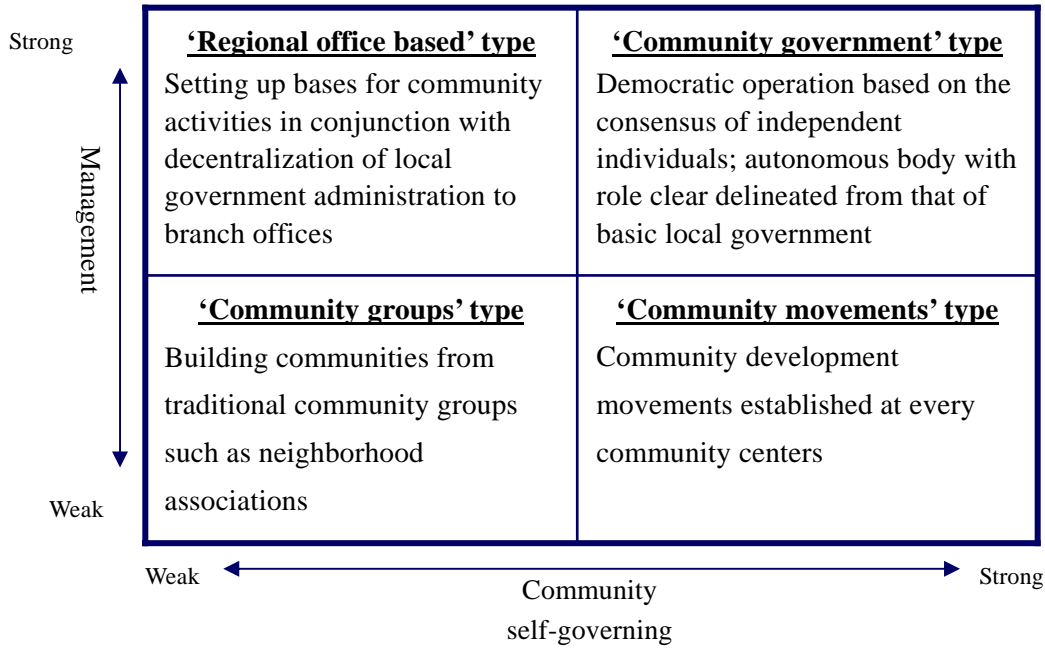
**Figure 5 The Various Approaches of Citizens' Participation**



### 3.1.2 Decentralization within municipality

Decentralization within municipality can take a variety of forms, as illustrated in Figure 6. While area of resident participation is restricted, compared to resident participation in local government overall, by limiting the scope of participation to more familiar local units, it provides a more direct reflection of the views and opinions of local residents.

**Figure 6** Types of decentralization within municipality



Urbanization since the early 1970s has caused an ongoing decline in the sense of belonging among communities. Although considerable effort is now made to support community activities tailored to local characteristics, there are large discrepancies in the level of community involvement among each area even within the same municipality. Generally speaking, community self-governing has yet to be fully embraced. This is illustrated by the absence of systematic legal initiatives, with the exception of the granting of corporate status to neighborhood associations under 1991 amendments to the Local Government Law.

Recent years have seen an increased emphasis on community self-governing at the community level. For example, the decentralization movement has heightened increased awareness of self-determination, whereby residents take on responsibility for the development of the local area, typically through community development initiatives such as city planning. Meanwhile, the important role of local communities in addressing local issues is increasingly recognized. The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake demonstrated that in times of crisis, sound local community structures greatly facilitate the subsequent rehabilitation process. Meanwhile, day-to-day crime prevention and crime awareness initiatives at the whole community level are seen as an effective means of improving physical safety and security, especially in light of the recent spate of violent crimes against children. Finally, community support and helping others are increasingly important as the age of the population steadily increases.

The process of municipal mergers, with its emphasis on the integrity of merged regions, runs the risk of rapidly eroding the sense of traditional localities. This is particularly true in cases involving a smaller municipality that is subsumed into another, which are common among municipalities with much older and thinner population. For this reason, the ex-head offices of merged municipalities are sometimes retained as branch offices (known as General Branches in cases where most functions and services are available to residents) or annexes of the newly merged



municipality, in order to maintain a connection with the regional area. Other initiatives designed to boost community self-governing in merged regions in the aftermath of the merger drive of the 1990s include: areal advisory committees established in accordance with the Special Mergers Law; areal self-governing districts (a general system) established in accordance with the Local Autonomy Law; and areal self-governing districts and special merged districts established in accordance with the Special Mergers Law. These are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4 Establishment of areal self-governing organizations**

	Areal advisory committees	Areal self-governing districts (general)	Areal self-governing districts (special)	Special merged districts
Legislative basis	Special Mergers Law, Article 22	Local Autonomy Law, Article 202 items 4 – 9	Special Mergers Law, Articles 23 and 24	Special Mergers law, Articles 26 – 57
Objectives	To debate issues as instructed by the head of government, and provide opinions where necessary	To assume certain functions under authority of the head of government To act as a conduit for the views and opinions of the local community	As for Areal self-governing districts (general)	To facilitate the integrity of the merged municipality by acting as a conduit for the views and opinions of the local community, providing efficient administrative processing at the regional level, and working to improve the convenience of local residents
Corporate status	No	No	No	Yes (special local public body)
Administrative size	For each municipality/region prior to merger	In each designated sub-region	Same as municipalities/regions prior to merger	Same as municipalities/regions prior to merger
Period	Specified within municipalities prior to merger	None specified	Specified within municipalities prior to merger	Up to five years
Operation/operation	Specified within municipalities prior to merger	Office (head is administrative official)	Ward chief permitted in place of office head	Head of special merged zone
Organ of discussion/debate	Areal advisory committee	Areal conference (appointed for period of up to four years)	Areal conference (appointed for period of up to four years)	Special merged zone conference (appointed for period of up to two years)
Number in existence (number of municipalities)	230	17	38	6

Note: Number in existence is taken from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications website (data as of March 31, 2005)

Source: Ohsugi, 2006

There are other cases of decentralization within municipality. At the City of Toyota, for instance, heightened awareness of local self-governing at the merged municipalities has spread to other areas of the merging municipality, with the result that the ex-city area has been divided up to form areal self-governing districts in accordance with Local Autonomy Law.

Some local governments are also taking the initiative by adopting different mechanisms from those described in Table 4, which are based on legislation. As we have seen, normal practice is to set out some form of stipulations pertaining to community within municipal charters.

Article 24 of the Municipal Charter of the City of Iga, for instance, defines the resident self-governing conference as an organization that enables participation by any and all residents residing in certain regions where the formation of joint awareness is possible, as well as neighborhood associations and purpose-specific groups, and provides an opportunity for discussion and resolution of areal issues. Article 25-2 further stipulates that the mayor shall, upon receipt of notification of the establishment of a resident self-governing conference, treat the conference as an advisory body to the mayor and a vehicle for reaching agreement and making decisions on behalf of the relevant region in relation to important matters for the municipality. Areal advisory committees are granted the authority to reach consensus and made decisions as an advisory body under the Special Mergers Law.

### **3.2 Resident participation and local government plannings**

In this section I will provide a brief overview of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of local government plans, particularly basic initiatives and comprehensive plans with the emphasis on resident participation, as well as basic plans in specific areas of administration, in the context of systematic guarantees of resident participation as described above.

Municipalities are required under Article 2 (4) of the Local Autonomy Law to formulate basic initiatives authorized by the assembly for promoting administrative operation in the local region in a comprehensive and planned manner. The basic initiative is a plan at the basic policy formulation level that sets out a long-term planning time-frame (usually ten years or more) of the basic community development ideals and principles of the local government. At the policy formulation level, the basic plan is usually aligned with the plan period of the basic initiative, or is divided into several discrete periods. A rolling mechanism is employed during the plan period, or the plan period is often modified. Programs for lower-level operational processes include implementation plans, which in effect are linked to annual fiscal budgets and are usually reviewed every year or every two to three years. The basic initiative, basic plan and implementation plan are often collectively referred to as the comprehensive plan. Examples of basic plans in specific administrative areas include the city planning master plan, housing master plan, environmental basic plan, and health and welfare basic plan.

Local governments are increasingly embracing measures to promote resident participation in the formulation and amendment of basic plans. As we saw earlier, local governments are increasingly required to formulate municipal charter and Resident Participation Bylaw that make due provisions for resident participation in the formulation and amendment of basic plans.

Figure 7 shows the formulation process for Child Education Plan in the City of Hachioji, including a range of measures such as conference with citizens through public selection, surveys of elementary and junior high school students as well as local residents, promotional initiatives such as leaflets, magazines and public meetings, and avenues for discussion and debate such as conferences and symposiums.

**Figure 7 Citizen participation in the formulation of Child Education Plan at the City of Hachioji**

Materials of the 4th committee meeting  
March 18, 2006

Case 1.: Formulation of Child Education Plan

FY2007															
December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Citizens															
City															
Assembly															
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Some local governments have in recent years begun to employ citizens conferences in the formulation of basic initiatives and basic plans. A typical example is the City of Mitaka, where the Mitaka Citizens 21 Conference, established in 1999, is composed of individuals who can register themselves through an unrestricted application process, with no restrictions on participant numbers. The conference consists of 375 citizens. There is a full conference as well as ten sub-chapters. There have been 773 meetings over two years of operation. In many ways, this was the frontrunner of later efforts by local governments; although many have limited numbers, in reality all who apply are appointed to the conference, and are able to serve on sub-chapters and sub-committees convened as often as required. The “100 Citizens’ Conference for the Kamakura’s Tomorrow” at the City of Kamakura, for example, has 144 members; the Shinjuku Citizens’ Conference at the City of Shinjuku in Tokyo has 376; and the Urayasu Citizens’ Conference for Formulation of the Stage 2 Basic Plan at the City of Urayasu has 206 members. All cases are in excess of the nominal maximum places.

One example of the initiatives is the partnership agreement between the Mitaka Citizens 21 Conference and the City of Mitaka, which set out details of the respective roles and cooperation between the two. The agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of both sides, based on mutual adherence to the following three principles of collaboration with regards to the spirit of collaboration between Mitaka Citizens 21 Conference and the municipality:

- (1) Discussion and debate predicated on a level playing field;
- (2) Respect for the independence and autonomy of both sides; and
- (3) Close liaison and cooperation with regards to monitoring of ongoing progress.

Discussing the nature of post evaluation and validation structures is an important aspect of resident participation in program formulation. The partnership agreement at the City of Mitaka specifies that both the citizens and the municipality shall assume responsibility after the creation of the residents’ plan and continue cooperating, and further that the municipality must provide residents with ongoing reports on the progress of implementation, to ensure that the residents’ plan is implemented properly. To this end, the City of Mitaka issues an annual White Paper on Local Government Management.

Along with the introduction of self-evaluation procedures by local government, resident participation in these evaluation processes is also progressing. For instance, at the City of Tama, the Self-Governing Promotion Council of citizen members set up in accordance with the City Charter conducts external evaluations of operational processes. Similarly, at the City of Suginami in Tokyo, the results of a questionnaire survey of 1,000 local residents are used to complement the findings of an external evaluation committee of experts and consultants, in order to reflect the views of residents (who are the consumers of government services) in the evaluation process. The results are released publicly.

### **3.3 Partnerships and collaborative initiatives**

The conventional notion of resident participation in local government is predicated on the notion of residents as the object being given the chance to participate in the work of government as

the subject. It has been argued that true community self-governing requires a partnership of equality and cooperation between local communities and local governments operating on equal terms. This sort of debate resulted in the partnership between residents and the municipality in the formulation of comprehensive plan at the City of Mitaka. Many other local governments are beginning to work on developing similar partnerships with residents predicated on a level playing field.

A typical example would be the cooperative activities undertaken in accordance with the Bylaw for Promoting Citizen Activities for Creating a New Public at the City of Yamato. The City of Yamato Collaboration Promotion Conference, established by this Bylaw, serves as the central body for the operation of the Bylaw. It has a basic agreement with the municipality and carries out collaborative projects in line with collaborative project guidelines based on the basic agreement. The City of Yamato defines the respective roles and obligations of citizens, citizen groups, business and municipality with respect to collaborative activities, which are defined as projects that contribute to society and are implemented via collaboration on the basis of proposals and suggestions contributed by all parties.

Some projects are proposed by citizens, while others are proposed by the municipality, the latter being designed to provide value to citizens by augmenting the specialist expertise of government in addressing local issues with the specialist skills and flexibility of local communities. The City of Yamato uses a public application process to screen projects through processes such as public presentations, public adjustment and open investigation, based on the proposals of the Collaboration Promotion Council. There is a strong emphasis on information sharing based on transparent processes and communication, as exemplified by project reporting sessions convened after implementation. Collaboration is not limited to the project implementation level; it also extends to participation in planning processes. For example, in projects proposed by the municipality, proposals are accepted from citizens at the planning stage.

In this way, collaborative initiatives such as the collaborative projects at the City of Yamato are gradually spreading through local governments. Many local governments are adopting initiatives to promote collaborative undertakings through the establishment and utilization of public-application subsidy schemes connected to open public processes.



#### **4. Future outlook for the relationship between local government and residents**

Participation and collaboration are now considered indispensable key concepts in relation to the formulation of new policies and plans by local governments. However, in practice these can take a variety of forms and some local governments are more enthusiastic than others. In order to realize the decentralized society, resident participation in local government management will need to be further expanded. In this way, the study of the relationship between local government and residents will need to address the following issues.

Firstly, there is the legal status of residents and guarantees of the right to participation, as exemplified by residential eligibility requirements and initiatives. With respect to residential eligibility requirements, there is the need to reconsider the nationality and age requirements, particularly in light of the general trend towards smaller families, the steady aging of the population, and the overall population decline. In the future it will also be necessary to give further consideration to the debate on how far participation and collaboration can be achieved through local enactment within the framework of legal restrictions.

The establishment of local government management is also vital. Various initiatives are underway to consolidate the administrative and fiscal foundations of local government through municipal mergers and management reforms. In order to ensure substantive resident participation in local government, however, these initiatives must be predicated on efficient and effective management systems.

Finally, in order to achieve a matured relationship between local government and residents, it is necessary for residents and local government to share “citizens’ self-governing literacy” which constitutes the fundamental knowledge and methodology that is indispensable to active self-governing at the local level. For example, the City of Suginami in Tokyo has opened the Suginami Community University with the basic principles of:

- (1) to create a framework for learning designed to stimulate the desire of citizens to serve the community and encourage them to expand their potential;
- (2) to foster the emergence of “collaborative workers” and provide support for personnel development by NPOs and other groups contributing to the community through their work; and
- (3) to create a platform for collaboration in society that enables citizens to share their skills and expertise in addressing community issues.

Similarly, the City of Tama has opened the Community Activities Information Center as a space for disseminating information on citizen groups and activities within the municipality. The significance of local training and information sharing initiatives such as “soft infrastructure” that will lead to more fulfilling relationships between local government and residents is steadily being realized, and there are increasing efforts to start work on the development of concrete initiatives.



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