

# Yokohama General Plan (Long Term Vision)

## Introduction

Following the opening of the Port of Yokohama to the outside world in 1859 (Ansei, Year 6), Yokohama emerged to shine as the gateway for Japan's modernization, drawing in innovative spirits from both at home and the world beyond. As the City of Yokohama came alight with the dreams and desires of this new era of urban development, pioneering Japanese and traditional Japanese culture left the shores of Yokohama to cross over the ocean.

The Japanese economy grew enormously during the 30s and 40s of the Showa Period. As industrial activity further concentrated in city regions, increasing population in Yokohama threatened the city with a new variety of urban problems, like environmental pollution, and faltering infrastructure and services. In this background of urbanization, the city set forth its first *Yokohama General Plan* in 1973 (Showa year 48). For the next 30 years, this plan guided the citizens, organizations, companies and administrations of the city as they worked together to build the metropolis of Yokohama that we know today.

Today, as an aging society and declining birth rates trigger a dwindling population, and with globalization of the world economy continuing apace, Japanese society faces a momentous turning point, casting a shadow of doubt onto the future for many Yokohama citizens. Looking head on into this harsh situation, it is imperative that we share an accurate account of our times, and build a new type of city where anyone that harbors aspiration may reside.

As the heirs to this historical city from those who have gone before us, the year 2009 (Heisei year 21), 150 years from the opening of the Yokohama Port to the outside world, and 120 years since our city government was established, provides a junction for us to lay the foundation for a new Yokohama; one that is attractive, lively, and filled with hopes and dreams that are shared the world over.

With their sights cast 20 years into the future (until 2025), the people that preserve and uphold Yokohama have composed this new *Yokohama General Plan (Long Term Vision)* to form the city's basic policy for dealing with the various challenges that face us today. The *Yokohama General Plan (Long Term Vision)* provides the city of Yokohama's master concept in accordance with the Local Government Law, and represents the fundamental principles of this city's administration.

Hiroshi NAKADA  
Mayor of Yokohama  
June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006

## 1. The urban image of Yokohama

A city offering a new Yokohama-lifestyle based on people power and creativity.

Yokohama will continue to be a wonderful city with a vibrant population making full use of its knowledge and vitality. The city will continue to remain true to its history as a gateway to the rest of the world, and serve as a cornerstone of respect for peace and human rights. Regardless of age, gender, nationality or the presence of a disability, the people of Yokohama will show respect for a diverse array of lifestyles, and apply their own unique talents to improve their regional community.

It is the minds and actions of its citizens that will create the Yokohama of the future, and our city shall continue to serve as a source of allure and vitality by sharing our original Yokohama-lifestyle with the rest of the world beyond.

### (1) The power of people (accumulating vitality and wisdom)

Dynamic citizen ingenuity and a diverse, rich pool of human talent are at the heart of Yokohama's celebrated vitality. Depending on the region, going about daily life can bring a host of different challenges, but solutions can be found in the unique Yokohama-way of doing things, defined by making the most out of citizen ability. In addition, Yokohama aims to provide the context for leading fulfilling lives in safety and

security, where communities exhibit tolerance and generate new ideas by reaching out across generations.

Achieving these aims requires each citizen to look at the wider picture, have a sense of responsibility, and proactively contribute to their local community. By thus accumulating citizen wisdom and action, the city of Yokohama aspires to offer a vibrant lifestyle with appeal and dynamism.

## (2) Creative talent (making the most of local appeal and creativity)

One of Yokohama's greatest attractions is the city's abundant water and greenery, historical buildings and progressive skyline. Combined with these great physical attractions are the city's indiscriminant acceptance to cultural diversity, and its enterprising spirit always welcoming new technology and ways of life.

As globalization and the advent of IT spread throughout society, the world is becoming a much smaller place, where Yokohama's place in the world and our unique attractions are cause for celebration for the rest of the world to see. By attracting people, businesses and international institutions from both in Japan and beyond, we hope that integrating different sources of wisdom and culture will give our city new allure, and Yokohama will perform as a world-leading creative city that develops talent influential on a global scale.

## **2. The 5 supporting pillars of Yokohama's urban image**

### **(1) A crossroads for the world's wisdom**

Following the open of the Port of Yokohama to the outside world, the city became a gathering point for scores of people filled with vision and talent from within Japan, and across the globe. Always at the forefront of the times, the city of Yokohama grew into an international port city offering a new type of appeal and dynamism. Yokohama shall provide a rich environment for people from both inside and outside Japan to gather together, by encouraging the value of intellectual resources and pursuits, and developing the next generation of global leaders by providing a sound educational environment and watching over the next generation of our city.

As home to a number of international organizations and research centers, we will promote the interaction of people from around the world bringing with them a range of cultural backgrounds and technologies so as to create new culture, new art, and pioneering technology. Essentially, the city of Yokohama aims to be a source of world knowledge and wisdom by promoting our unique brand of urban creativity.

### **(2) A source of dynamism for pioneering new endeavors**

The city of Yokohama's geographical location and role as a port city have paved the way for modern industrial activity to accumulate and grow, contributing to the vitality of our city. Among a backdrop of intense intercity competition and the spread of globalization and information technology, Yokohama aims to provide an environment for many people to thrive, and seeks to attract companies from far and wide by creating new business chances in Yokohama. With the creative power unleashed by concentrating high technologies and people combined with new employment opportunities, Yokohama aims to be a dynamic city allowing both people and business to flourish.

### **(3) A comfortable city supporting a variety of work and life styles**

As over-concentration in Tokyo triggered a rapid expansion of Yokohama's residential areas, strategies to attract industrial activity and make an attractive city center have succeeded in making our city into a world-class metropolis that is lived in, worked in and enjoyed by many. As working styles diversify and expected roles based on age and gender gradually shift, Yokohama aims to support women and the elderly in leading fulfilling lives in the community and at home according to their own individual values. Moreover, Yokohama aspires to be a place where people can live comfortable and healthy lives by

encouraging citizens to take initiative in improving their communities according to the local character of the natural environment and neighborhood.

#### **(4) An environmentally-friendly city made by local wisdom**

Since how we live our daily lives has implications for the global environment, it is our responsibility to give constant consideration to the environment and act accordingly. As environmental problems continue to intensify on a global scale, it is crucial for us to actively protect our immediate surroundings and build upon experience contributing to a high-quality environment, thereby fulfilling our role as a member of global society.

In this way, the city of Yokohama strives to become an “environmental port”, demonstrating to the world beyond a city with a healthy circulation of economic and natural activity: A city where people and nature coexist, and where drawing together people, technology and information related to the environment gives rise to new forms of environmental technologies and services.

#### **(5) A safe and secure city offering peace of mind**

In order to lead a life with peace of mind, it is necessary to guard against uncertainties such as natural disasters, crime and illness. In spite of change occurring within our communities due to an aging society, falling birth rate and declining population, safe and secure neighborhoods can still be preserved by community members reaching out to each other for mutual support. By aggregating the individual wisdoms and pursuits of each city member, Yokohama aims to put in place the social mechanisms to create a safety net allowing us to lead abundant lives.

### **3. Direction and strategies to reach our goals**

#### **(1) Bring people together from different cultural backgrounds**

In order to remain true to its role as a gateway to the rest of the world, it is crucial for Yokohama to lay the groundwork for a vibrant city lifestyle by producing globally recognized talent and attracting a diverse array of cultural identities. To achieve this, the city of Yokohama aims to:

- A) Foster a cosmopolitan population that understands Yokohama’s and Japan’s history and culture, with sufficient ability to communicate with people from around the world.
- B) Create a city with high regard for human relations regardless of nationality that allows diverse cultures to coexist.
- C) Use Yokohama’s technological prowess and the diverse talents of its citizens to provide a bridge between Asia and the rest of the world, and to actively collaborate with other cities around the globe, emphasizing contributions and contact with other Asian countries.

#### **(2) Lead fulfilling lives through sound education**

Providing numerous opportunities for lifelong learning from childhood to later in life is a key aspect in fostering people to play an active role both at home and abroad, lead fulfilling lives, and harbor dreams for their own future. To achieve this, Yokohama aims to:

- A) Provide ample educational opportunity for an assorted range of personalities and needs, and offer an educational system where people can take a second chance.
- B) Allow schools, family and the community to work together to support the independence, and self-reliance of our youth.
- C) Allow people supporting a community to develop the skills and abilities to resolve community issues.

### **(3) Care for our children and allow them to grow**

The healthy growth of our children so they may shoulder future generations is fundamental to building a city with hope for the future. Providing a city where people can live and raise their children naturally in this age of diversifying lifestyles requires society as a whole to watch over children and take pleasure in the joy of it. For these reasons, Yokohama strives to:

- A) Eliminate the anxieties and burden of child rearing by sharing child support across society so we can lead less demanding lives and share our dreams with our children.
- B) Provide residential environments geared towards child rearing, where kids can play and learn in safe neighborhoods with good access to medical care, and public spaces are free of barriers.
- C) Facilitate communities that support child-care through intergenerational cooperation, and youth actively participate in local communities.

### **(4) Improve our city's vitality by creating original Yokohama appeal**

Enhancing Yokohama's vitality calls for attracting cultural arts and international institutions that will further draw in many types of people, and whose interaction will release Yokohama's unique character and potential. To achieve this, the city of Yokohama will:

- A) Aim to be a dynamic city with competitive edge that makes the most out of its unique location; provides an airport, harbor, roads and railways that function in unison; and actively seeks out new sources of business and tourism while attracting up and coming industrial activity.
- B) Improve the harbors that are a source of Yokohama's vitality by bolstering our harbor's logistical functionality for the world and the rest of Asia, and improving our ocean as a place for recreation and relaxation.
- C) Aspire to be a city where urban lifestyles and abundant nature coexist sustainably, and where people enthusiastically carry out environmentally-sound business, technological development and consumption.
- D) Aspire to be a city where the agricultural that puts food on our tables and our urban lifestyles coexist side-by-side. As a major consuming region, the city of Yokohama aims to actively promote local-production for local consumption, and allow urban agriculture as source of safe and fresh agricultural produce for us to enjoy.

### **(5) Create new possibilities through the active exchange of information**

Dramatic advances in information technology have ushered in a new age where information is freely exchanged beyond the limits of time and distance. For the city of Yokohama, it is important to create new potential by actively exchanging information and building a society where all members can freely, and easily, have access to information technology. To achieve these aims, the city of Yokohama will:

- A) Use the city's wisdom and creative energies to compose and distribute innovative information around the world.
- B) Generate new ideas, technologies and business opportunities by actively promoting information exchanges with diverse arrays of people from around the world.
- C) Proactively employ transmission technology to build consensus in local communities, and to improve the efficiency, convenience and problem solving across many issues, such as disaster and crime prevention.
- D) Support the active exchange of information using the right know-how, technology and manners while properly protecting personal information.

### **(6) Design workplaces that make the most of individual personalities**

Creating a society where the will and effort to work are properly rewarded, and where everyone understands the importance and value of a job, are important aspects to leading a fulfilling life with dreams for the future. To achieve this, the city of Yokohama aims to:

- A) Allow citizens to select from among a range of vocations and work-styles regardless of age, gender, presence of a disability or nationality, and solely based on their individual personality and capabilities.
- B) Make flexible labor conditions allowing choice in whether one continues a career when having a child or caring for someone.
- C) Provide an environment that supports challenging spirits, where people have ample opportunity to use their individual strengths for self-improvement, and to acquire more knowledge and skills.

#### **(7) Build upon easy and comfortable lifestyles**

Allowing everyone to take an active role in the local community and live in a manner suitable to local lifestyles and conditions is a key part for everyone to lead comfortable lives in today's aging and shrinking society. To achieve these ends, the city of Yokohama will:

- A) Aspire to offer an efficient transportation system and high-quality residential environment in agreement with local conditions supporting a variety of lifestyles.
- B) Aim to be a compact city with spaces for leisure, learning, and relaxation near train stations, and provide work and living spaces that anyone will find amenable.
- C) Design our city so that local citizens can actively participate in Yokohama's development, and protect our city's scenery while reflecting on each region's character, like historical buildings, water, greenery and culture.

#### **(8) Secure an environmentally-friendly city for future generations.**

Cooperation among multiple people and institutions, and each stakeholder considering and acting on environmental issues is a key aspect for building a high-quality, environmentally sound city for future generations. To achieve these aims, the city of Yokohama will:

- A) Reduce waste materials and encourage reuse and recycling to create a sustainable recycling-based society.
- B) Promote energy conservation to mitigate environmental problems such as the heat-island phenomenon and global warming, and develop and use new-energy technologies that cause less environmental impact.
- C) Create a healthy and pleasant city abundant in natural environments that are close at hand and that offer habitat for a diverse array of plants and animals, such as the ocean, rivers, green space and parks.
- D) Appreciate the multifaceted purposes of agricultural lands, which in addition to providing for agricultural production, also afford disaster prevention, landscape conservation, educational opportunities and form part of the natural environment.

#### **(9) Appeal to long term residence**

Making Yokohama a highly satisfying place where people choose to reside indefinitely demands the city appeal across generations to those at different stages of life. Of particular importance is appealing to younger generations, which is necessary for the dynamism of Yokohama to continue into the future. To achieve this, Yokohama aims to:

- A) Welcome those who come to Yokohama to live and participate as members of the community.

- B) Allow our residents to lead fulfilling lives across many years, and facilitate self-expression even when educational or vocational conditions alter our living environment.
- C) Be a city that appeals to youth and households raising children that supports different residential and recreational conditions for a myriad of lifestyles, and where people can choose from a selection of working situations.
- D) Promote a city where people support one another across generations and through civic action, and where the disabled and the elderly can lead active lives in the community.

#### **(10) Support relaxing and safe livelihoods**

Creating a society where people lead comfortable, spiritually rich lives in safety and security that extends into the future is a necessary step for everyone, not just those with disabilities and the elderly, to live safe lives within their respective communities. To realize this, the city of Yokohama aims to:

- A) Provide welfare and medical care institutions that respect individual dignity and are barrier-free, enabling everybody to live in comfort.
- B) Allow safe and healthy lives by providing society-wide support for voluntary physical and mental health management, and also preparing for emergency medical care and health crisis management.
- C) Become a region offering broad functionality to support safety and security, such as preparing for evacuation and medical treatment during emergency situations, and preventing crime.

#### **4. Basic approach to realize our goals**

Globalization of the world economy combined with a declining population driven by lower birthrates and the aging of society are generating new forms of administrative demands, further restricting administrative budgets. Making the most out of limited financial resources is essential for creating the type of city capable of flexibly accommodating social and economic change. Yokohama shall therefore create a safe and active society by each individual person and institution that makes up this city recognizing their own role and responsibility, and pulling together to make this a city with appeal and vitality.

#### **(1) The power of the people (creating new public services)**

Shifting socioeconomic conditions are giving rise to unprecedented issues that are difficult for citizens and the government to handle independently, demanding more flexible and diverse approaches to finding solutions. Gifted with a wealth of human talent engaged in spirited civic participation, Yokohama shall maximize this human resource to the best of its potential, and citizens and public institutions will join forces in mutual respect and understanding, while voluntarily reaching out to help one another.

##### **A) Independent citizen action**

In effect, the individuals of Yokohama shall do what they can on their own, and reach to help across generations, with self-directing efforts to merge knowledge and action originating in individual citizens. Doing so requires:

1. Active participation in community events and making the most of our own individual talents.
2. Local authorities, neighborhood associations and public-interest groups using their own individual strengths to compliment each other and build communities capable of solving their own problems locally.
3. Corporations that respect community programs out of social responsibility, and foster a culture of contributing to society.

## **B) Collaboration**

Citizens and the government shall make the most of their unique characteristics and deal with regional and social issues through collaboration, responding to diverse needs carefully, thereby improving the quality of public life. Achieving this requires:

1. Citizens and government looking at things on equal footing, being open about their respective intentions, and deepening mutual understanding.
2. Discussion between local stakeholders such as citizens, corporations and government institutions to build consensus and address issues according to local conditions.
3. Dealing with issues flexibly on a scale appropriate to the activity, according to social change and social needs.

### **(2) The role of government (local governments based on autonomy and decentralization)**

As authority has gradually decentralized to more local jurisdictions, promoting the unique “Yokohama style” to generate new attractions and vitality in our city is going to demand *autonomy* and *management* based on collaboration with citizens. In addition, the city shall set its sights on independent and autonomous city management bringing citizens a high-degree of satisfaction by engaging in administrative and financial reforms, and sustainable financial management. Achieving this will require:

1. Developing mechanisms to support civil activities and providing information to encourage voluntarily citizen participation in regional and social activities.
2. Developing mechanisms to support local communities in quickly and appropriately responding to local problems.
3. Cooperating with other municipalities to respond to large-scale issues extending beyond the borders of the city like disasters and environmental issues.
4. Enhancing autonomous policy-making skills to objectively analyze and become familiar with regional needs.