

# Initiatives for Housing, Land, and Basic services in Japan's National Land Planning

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## 1. Japan's National Land

## 2. Initiatives for Housing, Land, and Basic services in Comprehensive National Development Plan

## 3. Current National Spatial Strategy (National Plan)

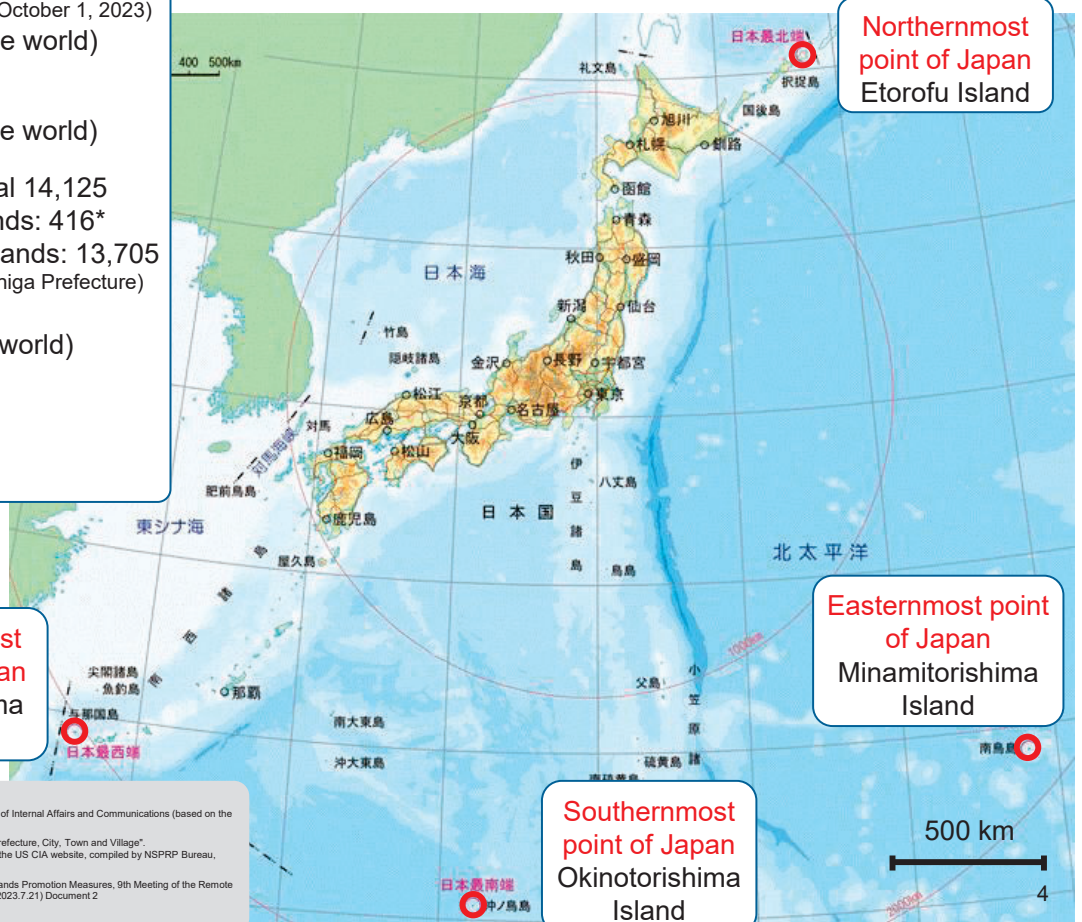
- Guiding principles and approaches to various  
issues related to housing, land and Basic services-

# 1. JAPAN'S NATIONAL LAND

## National Land of Japan



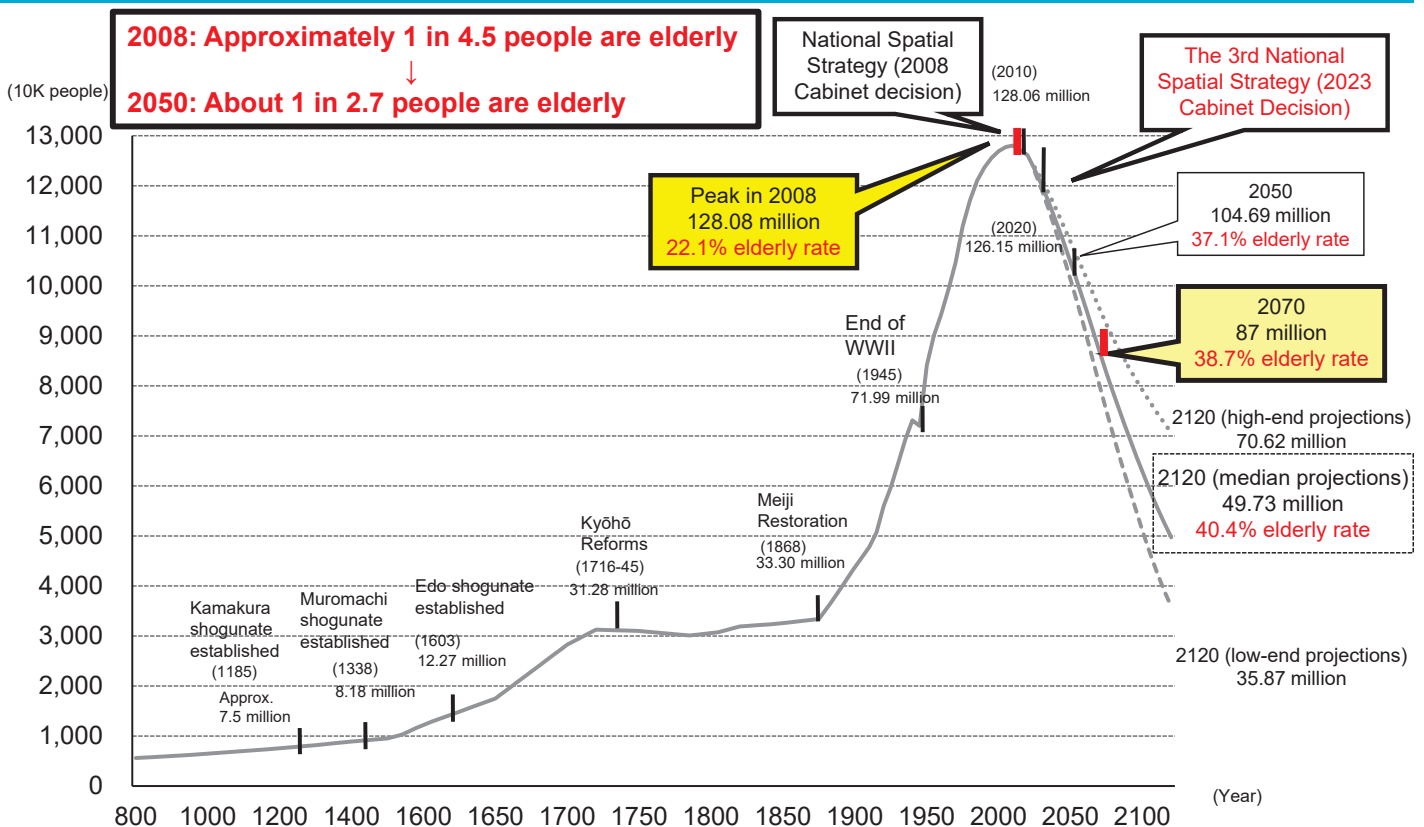
- Population (estimate as of October 1, 2023)  
124,352,000 (12th in the world)
- Area (as of October 1, 2022)  
377,975 km<sup>2</sup> (61st in the world)
- Number of islands: Total 14,125  
Remote inhabited islands: 416\*  
Remote uninhabited islands: 13,705  
\*Includes inland remote islands (Shiga Prefecture)
- Nominal GDP  
\$4.2 Trillion (4rd in the world)
  - (1) US: \$27.3 Trillion
  - (2) China: \$17.8 Trillion
  - (4) Germany: \$4.5 Trillion
  - (5) India: \$3.5 Trillion



Sources:  
Population: Population estimates by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (based on the census population as of October 1)  
Area: GSI Press Release, 2023.12.21, "2023 National Area Survey by Prefecture, City, Town and Village".  
World ranking based on the "CIA - The World Factbook" from the US CIA website, compiled by NSPRP Bureau, MLIT.  
Number of islands: National Land Council, Subcommittee for Remote Islands Promotion Measures, 9th Meeting of the Remote Islands Designation Study Subcommittee (2023.7.21) Document 2  
Nominal GDP: World Bank, WDI (World Development Indicators)

	Comprehensive National Development Plan (CNDP)					National Spatial Strategy(NSS)		
	CNDP1	CNDP2	CNDP3	CNDP4	CNDP5	NSS1	NSS2	NSS3
Legal basis	Comprehensive National Land Development Act					National Spatial Planning Act		
Cabinet Decision	October 5, 1962	May 30, 1969	November 4, 1977	June 30, 1987	March 31, 1998	July 4, 2008	August 14, 2015	July 28 2023
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition to high growth economy</li> <li>Overpopulation and disparity in income</li> <li>National income-doubling plan (Pacific Belt Zone Project)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High growth economy</li> <li>Concentration of population and industry in metropolitan areas</li> <li>Advancement of information technology, globalization, and technical renovation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stable economic growth</li> <li>Signs of decentralization of population and industry</li> <li>It became obvious that national resources and energies are limited</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentration of population and various functions in Tokyo</li> <li>Employment issues in non-metropolitan areas are more serious for reasons such as drastic structural changes in industry</li> <li>Advancement of full-scale globalization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global age (Global environmental issues, mega-competition, and exchanges with Asian nations)</li> <li>Decreasing population and the aging society</li> <li>Information-oriented society</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great turning point for socioeconomic conditions (population decrease/aging, globalization, and development of information and communication technology)</li> <li>Change/diversification of values of Japanese people</li> <li>Conditions surrounding national land (single-polar single-axial land structure, etc.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current of the times and issues surrounding the national land (rapid population decrease and declining fertility rates, unprecedented aging, impending catastrophes, aging of infrastructures, etc.)</li> <li>Change in the values of Japanese people (growing sense of "rural regression," etc.)</li> <li>Change in national space (increase in low-use/unused land, vacant houses, etc.)</li> </ol>	<p>"National Land at a Major Turning Point in the Era"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases in Risks Threatening Regional Sustainability, Safety and Security (Unprecedented population decline, declining birthrates and an aging population, disaster risk, and climate crisis)</li> <li>Changes in Lifestyles and Work Styles after COVID-19 Catastrophe (New movement to return to local areas and rural areas)</li> <li>Changes in the Position of Japan in a Time of Global Turbulence</li> </ol>
Basic Objectives	Well-balanced development between regions	Creating Affluent Environment	Improvement of the general living environment	Formation of a multipolar country	Prepare the basics for a Multi-axial structure	Construction of national land where various regional blocks develop autonomously / Creating national land that is beautiful and comfortable to live in	Promotion of Active Interaction-led Spatial Development	National Land that Connects Local Power to a New Era - Establishing New Regional Management that Supports Japanese Islands -
Scale of Investment	About 16 trillion yen	1966-1985 About 130-170 trillion yen	1976-1990 About 370 trillion yen	1986-2000 About 1000 trillion yen	Presenting the direction of investment focus and efficiency without presenting the total amount of investment.			

## Long-Term Population Trends in Japan



Source: National Land Agency, "Long-Term Time Series Analysis of Population Distribution in the Japanese Islands" (1974).  
 Note: Figures from 1920 and beyond are added from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Population Census," "Annual Population Estimates," and "Interpolated Corrected Population Based on the Results of the 2005 and 2010 Censuses," and "Population Projections for Japan (2023 Projections)" by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. Values are for the total population of Japan (including foreigners).

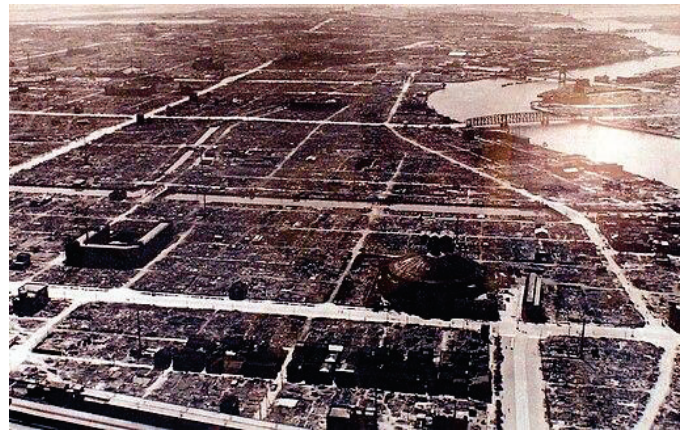
(Units: 10,000 hectares, %)

	2020	2033	Share		
			2020	2033	
<b>Farmland</b>	437	414	11.6	11.0	
<b>Forests</b>	2,503	2,510	66.2	66.4	
<b>Wilderness land</b>	31	31	0.8	0.8	
<b>Water areas, rivers and channels</b>	135	135	3.6	3.6	
<b>Roads</b>	142	147	3.7	3.9	
<b>Building land</b>	197	198	5.2	5.2	
	<b>Residential land</b>	120	119	3.2	3.2
	<b>Industrial land</b>	16	17	0.4	0.5
	<b>Other building land</b>	61	61	1.6	1.6
<b>Other</b>	334	344	8.8	9.1	
<b>Total</b>	3,780	3,780	100.0	100.0	

※Concerning national land use for farmland areas, estimates are indicated in the Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas based on the National Land Use Plan. These figures are provisional estimates for farmland areas in 2030 under the Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (decision by the Cabinet on March 31, 2020). If the estimates for farmland areas are changed by the Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas, these goals are deemed to be changed based on figures equivalent to those in 2033. In this case, targets for other areas (devastated farmland) are deemed to be changed based on the changes to farmland areas.

## 2. INITIATIVES FOR HOUSING, LAND, AND BASIC SERVICES IN COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Postwar reconstruction, food production increase, electric power development, natural disaster control



After Bombing of Tokyo on March 10, 1945

- Establishment of the **National Land Comprehensive Development Act (1950)**
  - Designation of areas for specific comprehensive development
  - Promotion of development for severer geographical and natural conditions areas
  - (Formulation of a national plan)

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## Housing policies in CNDP1

### Chapter 6 Development of Housing and the Living Environment

#### Section 1 Housing Construction

##### 1 Direction of Housing Construction

- The objective of the housing policy is to enable all the citizens to live in houses of certain scale meeting certain quality criteria and live in sound environments.
- The development of houses and living environment constitutes one of the basic requirements for national welfare improvement. Also, from an economic perspective, it serves as the foundation for continuous, stable development of the national economy that requires the improvement of human abilities and the smooth migration of labor.

(ellipsis)

- For this reason, we plan to introduce the following measures in an early stage.
  - (A) To make long-term forecasts or establish a long-term plan concerning the supply and demand of housing land.
  - (B) To encourage local public entities, Japan Housing Corp., and other similar organizations to develop a large number of housing sites on a large scale in order to use the sites for government and private housing construction.
  - (C) To promote the construction of high-rise buildings and work toward rational use of land.
  - (D) To institute comprehensive measures to stabilize land prices, including a range of new measures.

Incidentally, comprehensive and systematic housing site development is required from a wide-area viewpoint.

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During the period of rapid economic growth, the population and the number of automobiles increased, concentrating in urban areas, resulting in noticeable road and rail traffic congestion.

【Arterial road in the Tokyo metropolitan area】



【Rail Congestion】



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#### IV Major Objectives of the Plan

##### 3. Plans for Environmental Conservation

##### 3-7 Major Planning Objectives for Preserving the Environment in Metropolitan Areas

##### (2) Improvement of the Residential Environment in the Metropolitan Areas

(ellipsis)

- Thus it is necessary to improve the environment and raise the quality of housing while ensuring the availability of large numbers of dwellings. Such facilities as housing, parks, water, sewage, nurseries, schools, medical care facilities, shopping facilities pedestrian roads where motor traffic is prohibited, etc. must be provided.
- The number of commuters from the outer city to the inner city in 1985 will reach 3.2 million in Tokyo, 2.3 million in Osaka and 1.1 million in Nagoya. This represents almost triple the 1965 figures for Tokyo and Osaka, and a five-fold increase for Nagoya. A system of mass commuter transportation will be required to keep up with the increase of commuters.
- Residential construction in the cities should shift from the old pattern of single, wooden dwellings to the construction of medium-and high-storied shared dwellings. In the suburbs, construction of this type of dwelling and related environmental facilities should proceed apace. New towns should be built up with land readjustment and traffic systems. (ellipsis)

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Chapter IV. principal Measures for Realization of the Plan

(2) Preparation of Transportation Systems

4) Formation of Regional Transportation Systems

- Preparation of transportation facilities will be made in the metropolitan areas, with emphasis on the following; (1) to lighten railway congestion and road snarls together with efforts to improve the access to trunk transportation; and, (2) to induce the development of surrounding areas of the core cities, etc., particularly the improvement of single-core structure in the Tokyo metropolitan area.
- Regarding railways, **efforts will be made to construct new lines radiating from downtown, such as the New Joban line**, and to further double the existing double-tracks by making good use of special tax measures, in addition to endeavors to raise expediency by improving loop lines which will be integrated into one body with the above-mentioned lines or more frequency of trains. As one of the ways to advance these measures, the policy of passenger-service orientation of the present freight lines will be pushed. Efforts to have facilities, including station buildings, contribute to the rationalization of movements and the stabilization of traffic streams will be made by improving them as complex terminals equipped with functions such as public services of various kinds and information services.

Legislation of housing construction plans, large supply of public housing

- 1955: Ten-year plan for housing construction: Solve a shortage of 2.72 million housing units. Supply 250,000 housing units each year.



- 1957: New five-year plan for housing construction



- 1964: Seven-year plan for housing construction



Enactment of the Housing Construction Planning Act (1966)



First five-year plan for housing construction (1966-1970)  
Realization of one housing unit for one household

During the plan period, 2.6 million public housing units were supplied.

Example of New Town development



Tama New town (Tokyo) 【1971】  
Number of housing units : 58,239  
(supplied by UR: 10,954 (rent) 16,659 (sale))



Soka Matsubara (Saitama) 【1962】  
Number of units : 5,926 (rent)

## Integrated development of Housing & Commercial Complex with suburban highspeed railway



The University of Tokyo (Kashiwanoha-campus)



Image courtesy: Kashiwa City



Demonstration of Autonomous Driving Bus

Image Courtesy: The University of Tokyo's Website

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## CNDP4-Signs of demographic change-

### Chapter III. Framework of both Population and National Land Use

#### (1) Population

##### (Total Population)

- The Japanese population, which has doubled from 60.74 million in 1925 to 121.05 million in 1985, will level off at some 136 million in some 30 years from now. In other words, the population living on the Japanese territory of around 380 thousand square kilometers will increase by only about 15 million in the future. This represents a phase of very small population increase in the 21st century which is different from the 20th century when continuous increases were the rule.
- The long-term trend, then, sees a population in 2000 estimated to be 131.2 million, an increase of 10 million in 15 years, or an average annual increase of 600,000 to 690,000, much smaller than roughly one million for the past 15 years. A problem imposed on this plan is how to promote a better relationship between people and the national land under this modest population growth.

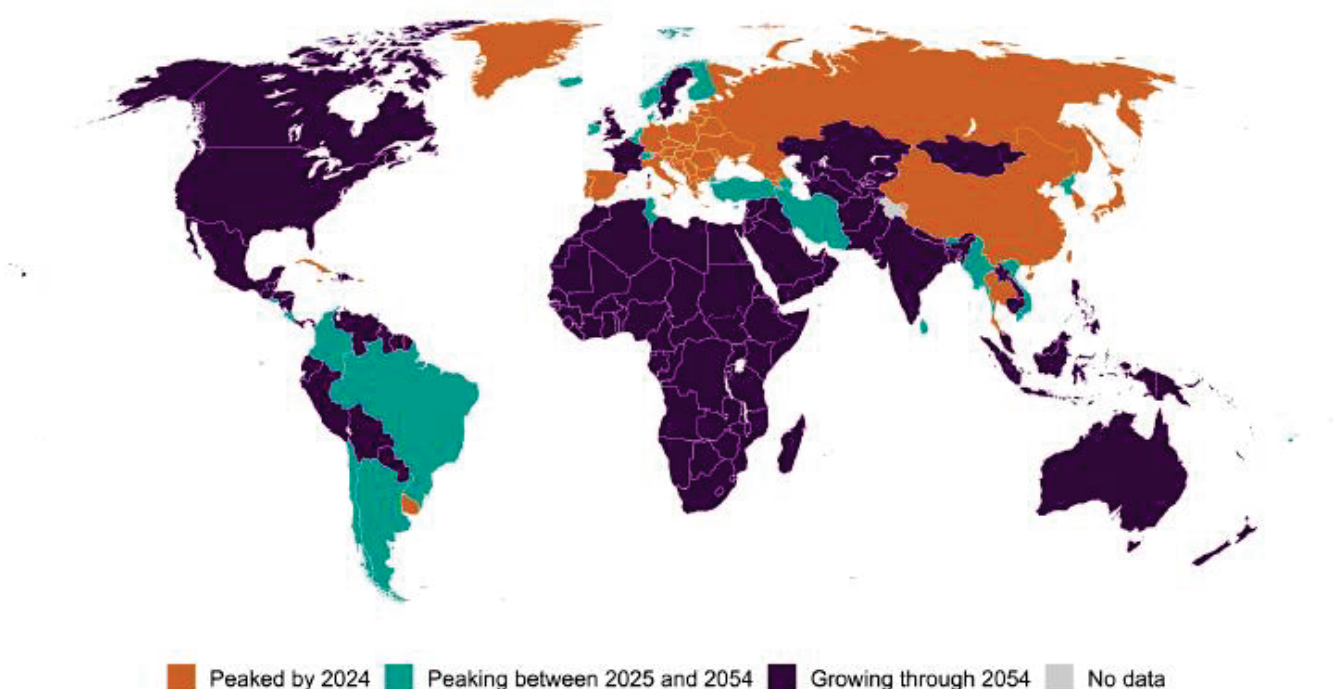
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# 3. CURRENT NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (NATIONAL PLAN) - GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES TO VARIOUS ISSUES RELATED TO HOUSING, LAND AND BASIC SERVICES-

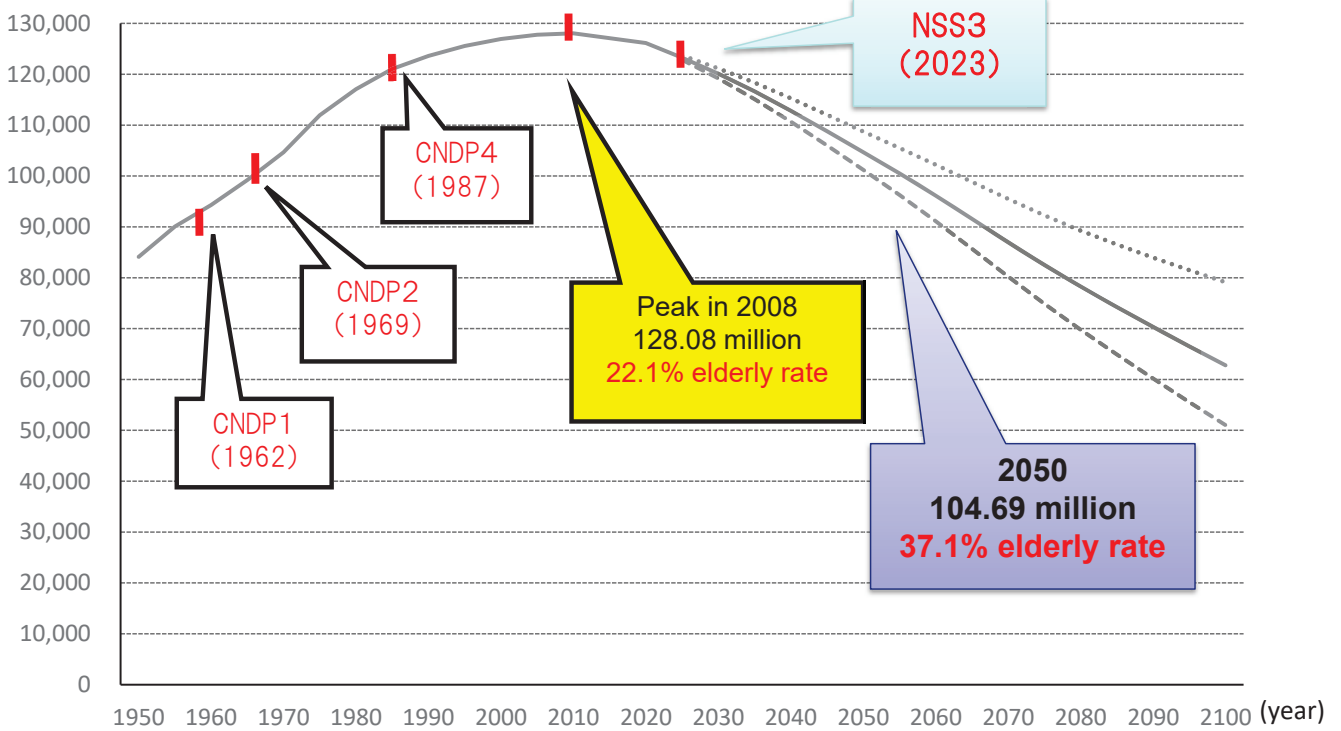
## Projected population peak

Countries and areas by timing of the observed or projected population peak



Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations ["World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results"](#)

(Japan: thousands)



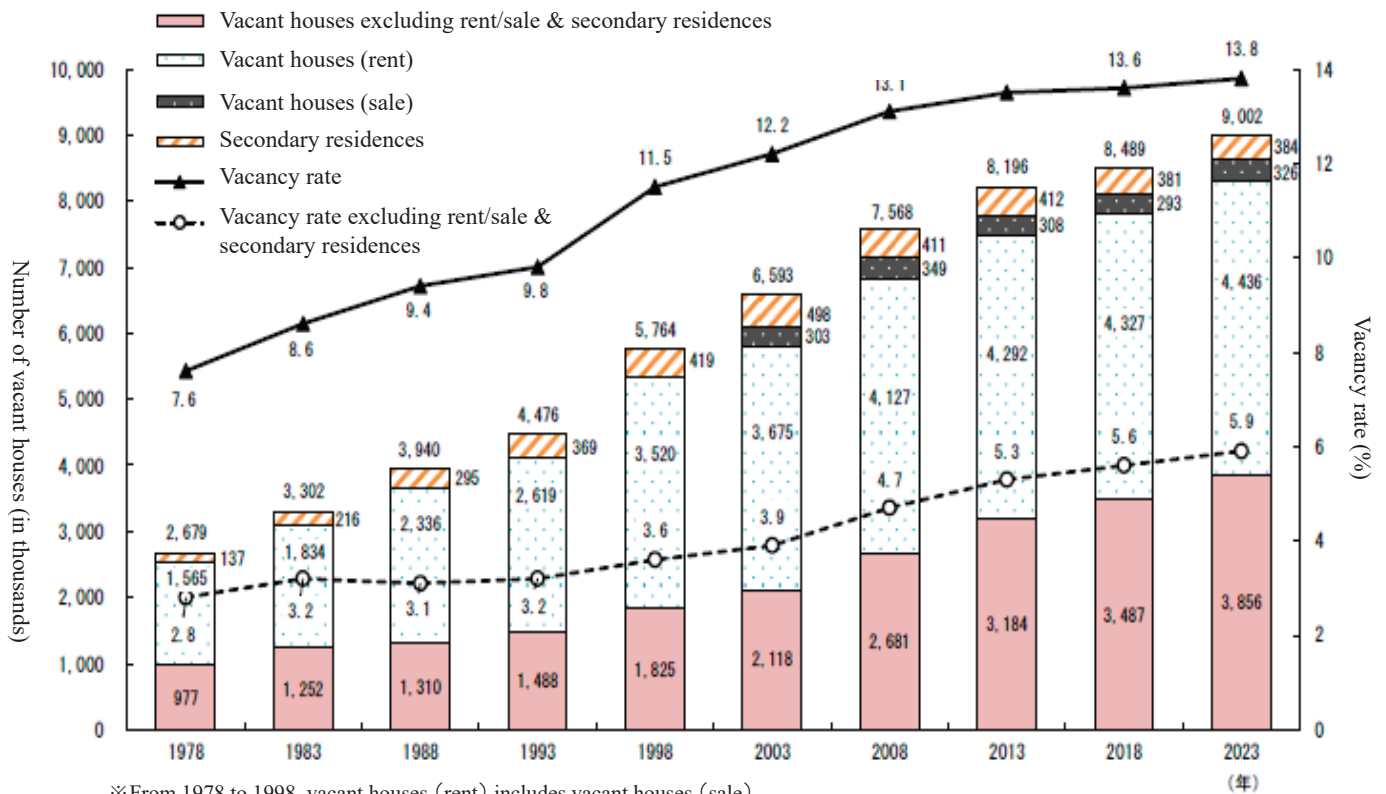
Japan:

Source: Long-term analysis on population distribution in Japan (National Land Agency, 1974)

(Note) The data from 1950 and later is based on "Population Census", "Population Estimates" and "Population interpolation estimated from 2005 and 2010 census results" (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications), and "Population Projections for Japan (estimated in 2023)" (IPSS). Value is total population of Japan (including foreigners)

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## Vacant houses trend



※From 1978 to 1998, vacant houses (rent) includes vacant houses (sale).

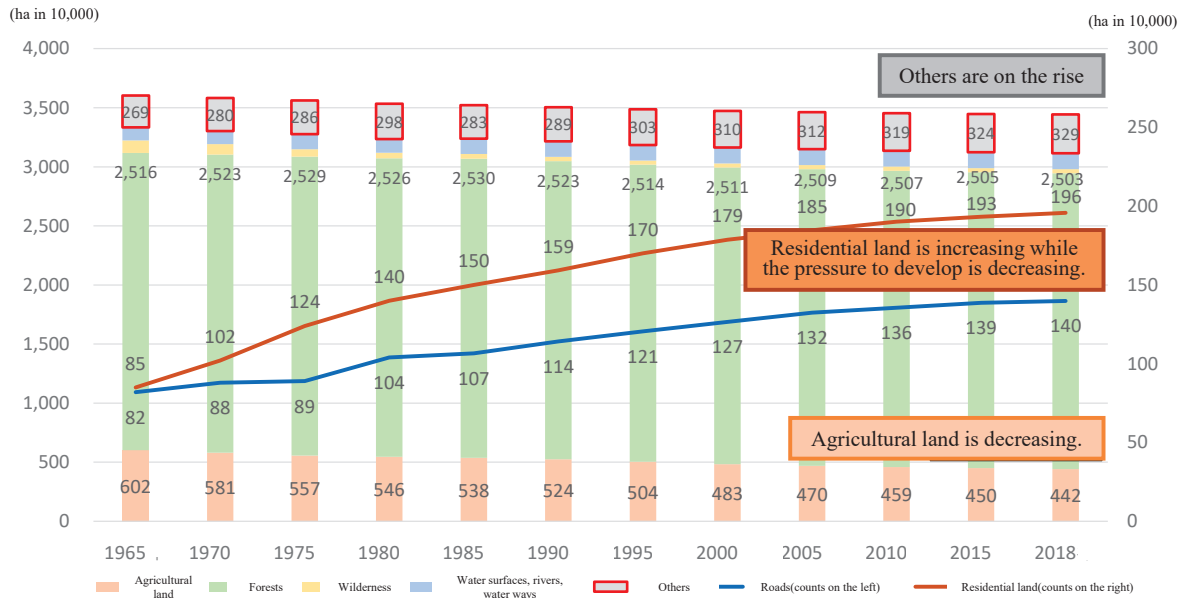
Sources: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications '2023 Housing and Land Survey: Basic Statistics (Final Count) on Housing and Households [https://www.stat.go.jp/data/jyutaku/2023/pdf/kihon\\_gaiyou.pdf](https://www.stat.go.jp/data/jyutaku/2023/pdf/kihon_gaiyou.pdf) English translation at MLIT

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○ Although the demand for new urban land use has decreased, the conversion from agricultural land to new urban land use has proceeded. On the other hand, underutilized and unused land has increased in urban areas.

In 2019, 12,800 hectares of farmland converted to urban land use. (2022 White Paper on Land)  
 Among houses with no family living, the number of vacant houses was about 8,500 thousand in 2018, hitting a record high.

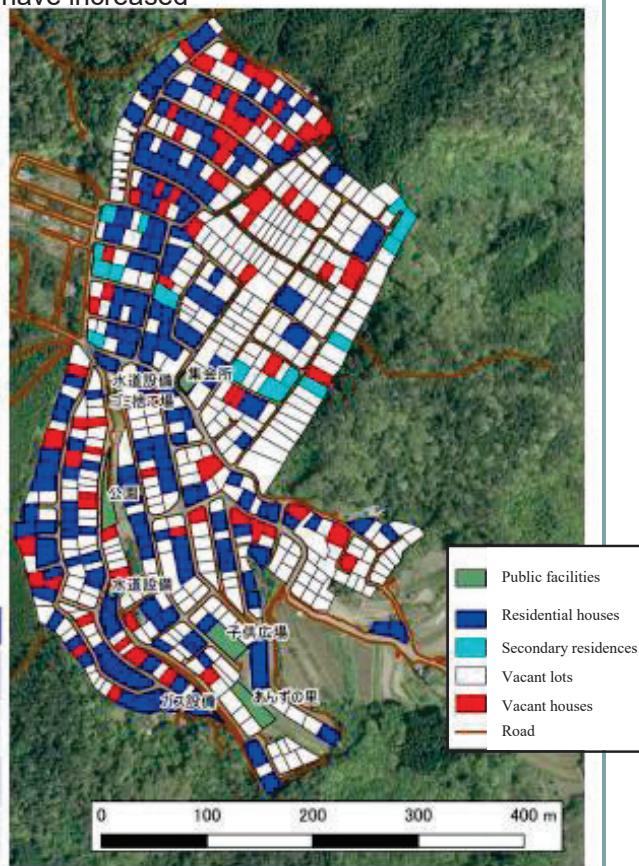
(Statistics Bureau of Japan, "2018 Housing and Land Survey")



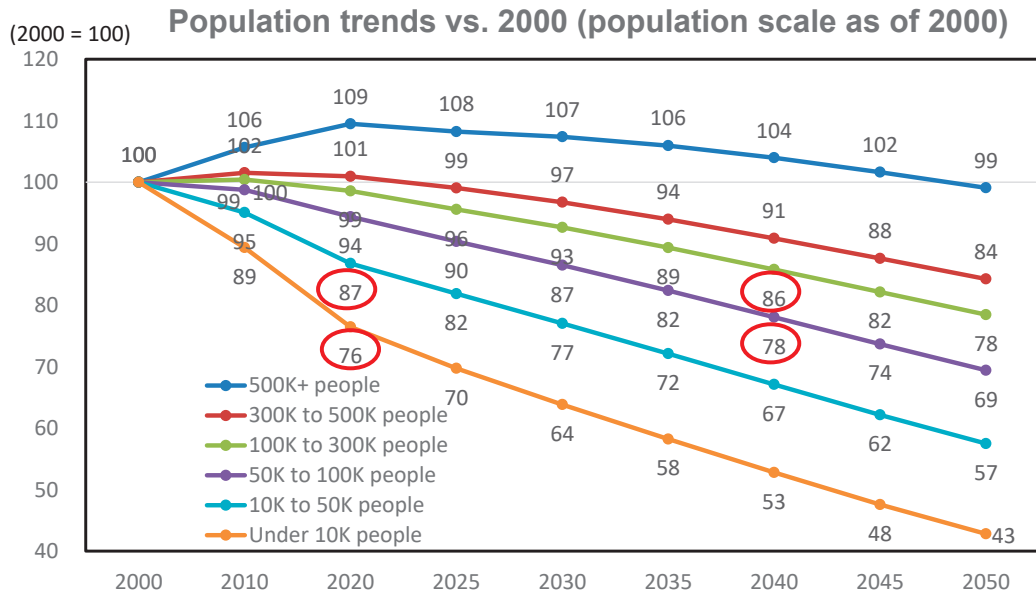
Source: Prepared by the National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau, based on the Survey on Existing Land Use 21

## Current status

Area where vacant land and vacant houses have increased



- Looking at population forecasts by municipality population as of 2000, population decline is more severe in municipalities with lower populations.
- Smaller municipalities with populations under 50,000 have seen population decline in the last 20 years, and further acceleration is expected.
- The risk of population decline is also emerging for medium sized municipalities with populations between 50,000 and 300,000.



Source: 1. Compiled from Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, "Estimates of Future Population by Mesh (H30 Estimates)," and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "National Population Census" Data until 2020 from Census, data for 2025 and beyond are estimates.  
 2. The total number of municipalities, including the Tokyo special wards as a single municipality, is 1,719.

## Outline of the Amendment to the Basic Act for Land

\*Amendment by the Act Partially Amending the Basic Act for Land, etc. (Law No. 12 of 2020)

Reconstructing land policy from the perspective of ensuring proper "use" and "management" of land in response to a declining population society  
 ⇒ Clarifying the importance of "management" so as not to have a negative impact on the surrounding area in the law as a whole ("purpose", "basic principles", "responsibilities", "basic measures")

<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p><b>Challenge: revitalizing the region under a declining population, ensuring sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Effective use of land and real estate (Optimal use of already used land, creative use of underused or unused land)</li> <li>② Disaster prevention and mitigation, prevention and elimination of external diseconomies in the region (Measures for owner-unknown land, measures for underused or unused land, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basic principles &amp; responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure proper "management" along with proper "use" and "transaction" of land</li> <li>○ Clarify the responsibilities of landowners, etc. (Add provisions for clarifying rights such as registration and clarifying boundaries)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basic measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review "basic measures" from the perspective of ensuring proper "use" and "management" of land (Add provisions for measures for underused or unused land and owner-unknown land)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basic Land Policy (newly established)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarify the specific direction of "basic measures"                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a management perspective to the land planning system</li> <li>• Basic Land Policy (newly established)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Promote the development of a real estate market that contributes to smooth transactions of existing stocks, etc.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching demand for land, including underused or unused land and owner-unknown land, and encouraging effective use,</li> </ul> </li> <li>Promote efforts to promote measures for poorly managed land, etc.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an information infrastructure through efforts to facilitate and speed up cadastral surveys, and enrich and update real estate information, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Houses (vacant)

- It is necessary to have a perspective that promotes the use of vacant houses in response to local demand, and that leads to the revitalisation of the local economy, etc.

### Land

- In 2020, the Basic Act for Land was amended, and from the perspective of ensuring the effective use of land and a good environment in local areas, the importance of not only ensuring the appropriate use and trading of land, but also ensuring its appropriate management was recognized.
- It is important to select the most appropriate use and management of national land through a 'national land management concept' that clarifies land that should be prioritized for maintenance, including agricultural land, and seeks to change management methods, such as introducing rough or minimal management.

### Basic Services

- While making full use of digital technology, we will create a regional living area where essential services are provided on a sustainable basis, and we will work to solve local issues and improve the appeal of the region.

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## What is a "Regional living area?"

### <Objective> "National Land Combining the potentials of the regions in the New Era"

Creating communities where people can continue to live vibrantly and safely throughout the entire country

### <Policy for realization>

The creation of a system that allows people to live sustainably and comfortably in the future within the scope of their daily activities (i.e. their regional living area)

### <Perspectives necessary for sustainable and prosperous living >

To ensure that essential services for daily life, such as local public transport, shopping, medical care, welfare, nursing care and education, can be provided sustainably by making full use of digital technology.

#### <Imagination>

- Regional management from a "togetherness" perspective (shift to the concept of "combining, uniting and linking" services and activities)
- Improvement of the quality of community space through the thorough use of digital technology

#### <Area Concept>

- Flexibility of area ○ Flexibility of scale

#### <Concept of Promotion Measures>

- Promote initiatives from the bottom up based on local initiative and ingenuity
- Development of entities and systems to promote the formation of regional living areas
  - Formation of public-private partnerships that support regional management from a common perspective
  - Promote the participation of the private sector in the provision of services of a high public nature
  - Combination of services based on the concept of "combining, bundling, and linking" and construction of economic circulation within the region
- Cooperation with related policies and systems of relevant ministries and agencies

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# Positioning regional living areas in a multi-layered spatial structure



## What is a "Regional living area?"

**(Issues) Local Crisis**

- ✓ Population decline even in major regional cities
- ✓ Decrease or loss of the ability to provide daily living services
- ✓ vertically divided administration, limits of local government capacity

**(Goal) Formation of regional living areas**

By thorough use of **digital technology** and **regional management** from the "togetherness" perspective,

- **Optimization of convenience & combination** of daily life services
- Establish a mechanism for **economic circulation within the region**

⇒ Formation of **Regional living areas** where services are provided in a sustainable manner

<3 Points of regional management>  
 (i) "Collaboration of entities" through public-private partnerships  
 (2) "Business collaboration" that transcends sectoral boundaries  
 (iii) "Regional collaboration" that is not limited to administrative areas

Excerpt of **National Spatial Strategy (National Plan) (R5.7 Cabinet Decision)**

While thoroughly utilizing digital technology, form a regional living area where services necessary for daily life are provided in a sustainable manner, solve regional issues, and improve the potentials of the regions.

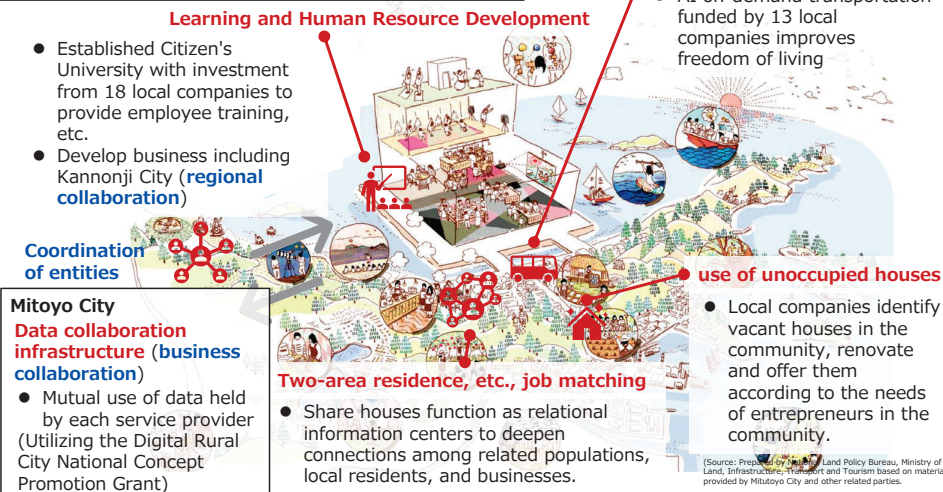
**A model case study for the formation of a regional living area (Mitoyo City, Kagawa Prefecture)**  
 Building a group of services to support the daily lives of citizens

**Basic Information on Mitutoyo City**

- Population: 61,000 (R2 national census)
- Second largest in Kagawa Prefecture

**Outline of Initiatives**

- Local companies are expanding their efforts to provide services that have become difficult to provide and maintain due to the shrinking market caused by the declining population, based on the concept of "mutual aid".
- By connecting these services through a data collaboration infrastructure, the government builds and implements a "basic infrastructure," a set of services that support the daily lives of citizens.
- Aiming to improve sustainability through overall optimization of services and economic distribution within the region, and to improve the well-being of residents.



- Creation of advanced model, support for accompaniment, and horizontal development cases through cooperation between the public and private sectors
- Promote the formation of regional living area through collaboration with related ministries and agencies, including coordination with new grants for the creation of local economies and living environments