

Trends Concerning Land in FY2017
Basic Measures in Relation to Land in FY2018

Abstract

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Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

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"Trends Concerning Land in FY2017" and "Basic Measures in Relation to Land in FY2018" are created based on the provisions of Article 10, paragraphs (1) and (2), of the Basic Act for Land (Act No. 84 of December 22, 1989).

Part 1 Trends Concerning Land

Chapter 1 Trends in Land Prices and Land Transactions in FY2017

The Japanese economy in fiscal 2017 continued a moderate recovery in the context of improved employment and rebounded consumer spending.

Section 1 Economic Situation Surrounding the Real Estate Market in Japan

(Change in GDP)

Influenced by rebounded consumer spending and increased capital investment in the private sector, Japan's real GDP in 2017 experienced positive growth for the full year.

(Trends in corporations)

The fund-raising environment of corporations has been in good condition in the context of continuation, etc. of monetary easing by the Bank of Japan. Concerning the changes in manufacturing and sales facilities D.I. (diffusion index), the sense of equipment overcapacity among companies changed to shortages in 2017 from excesses up to 2016 in manufacturing and remained unchanged as slight shortage in 2014–2016 in non-manufacturing, but the sense of shortage grew in 2017.

(Trends in households)

Concerning the employment environment, employers' perceptions regarding excesses in employment had fallen since the July–September quarter of 2009 in the whole industry and changed to a sense that there was a labor shortage in 2013. The sense of a labor shortage grew further in 2017. The active opening rate has been rising consistently since the July–September quarter of 2009. Regarding consumption by households, it showed a fifth consecutive uptrend compared with the preceding quarter since the October–December quarter of 2016.

Section 2 Trends in Land Prices

According to the publication of the land values of standard sites by MLIT, with regard to trends in land prices comparing the published land prices as of January 1, 2018, to those of the preceding year, the national average volatility increased for residential

land for the first time in a decade, and that of commercial land and all uses increased for three consecutive years.

Concerning three major metropolitan areas, the average volatility for residential land increased slightly, while the range of that of commercial land developed.

The average volatility in rural areas has been sliding for residential land. However, the degree of the slide has reduced. The average volatility for commercial land rose for the first time in 26 years, and that for all uses moved out of a decline. The average among Sapporo City, Sendai City, Hiroshima City and Fukuoka City showed an increase in both residential and commercial land, exceeding those of three major metropolitan areas.

Looking at the changes by land use, thanks to a supportive effect of demand by the continuation of low-interest rates, residential land prices have been recovering around convenient areas, while employment and income conditions continued to improve nationwide.

Regarding commercial land, the desire to open stores and hotels etc. was strong in central parts of major cities in response to an increase in foreign tourists and other visitors from inside and outside Japan as well as increased turnout thanks to progress of redevelopment and other projects. The profitability of commercial land is generally improving, as office building vacancy rates are generally continuing to decline and rents are improving in some areas. In this context, willingness to invest in real estate was strong and commercial land prices were generally firm, partly because the financing environment was favorable for corporate investors and others owing to monetary relaxation.

By area, the average volatility of residential land in the Tokyo and Nagoya areas increased five years in a row, while the average volatility of residential land in the Osaka area changed to an increase from flat this time. The average volatilities of commercial land in the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya areas also increased for five consecutive years.

Figure Changes in Land Price Volatility (annual)

		(unit:%)														
		Residential land					Commercial land					All uses				
		FY2014 Property price index	FY2015 Property price index	FY2016 Property price index	FY2017 Property price index	FY2018 Property price index	FY2014 Property price index	FY2015 Property price index	FY2016 Property price index	FY2017 Property price index	FY2018 Property price index	FY2014 Property price index	FY2015 Property price index	FY2016 Property price index	FY2017 Property price index	FY2018 Property price index
Nationwide		▲ 0.6	▲ 0.4	▲ 0.2	0.0	0.3	▲ 0.5	0.0	0.9	1.4	1.9	▲ 0.6	▲ 0.3	0.1	0.4	0.7
Three major metropolitan area		0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.6	1.8	2.9	3.3	3.9	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.5
Tokyo area		0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.7	2.0	2.7	3.1	3.7	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.7
Osaka area		▲ 0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.4	1.5	3.3	4.1	4.7	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.1
Nagoya area		1.1	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.8	1.8	1.4	2.7	2.5	3.3	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.4
Rural districts		▲ 1.5	▲ 1.1	▲ 0.7	▲ 0.4	▲ 0.1	▲ 2.1	▲ 1.4	▲ 0.5	▲ 0.1	0.5	▲ 1.7	▲ 1.2	▲ 0.7	▲ 0.3	0.0
Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima, Fukuoka		1.4	1.5	2.3	2.8	3.3	2.0	2.7	5.7	6.9	7.9	1.6	1.8	3.2	3.9	4.6
Other		▲ 1.8	▲ 1.3	▲ 1.0	▲ 0.8	▲ 0.5	▲ 2.6	▲ 1.8	▲ 1.3	▲ 0.9	▲ 0.4	▲ 2.1	▲ 1.5	▲ 1.1	▲ 0.8	▲ 0.5

Data: MLIT "Land Market Value Publication"

Note 1 Region Classifications are as follows:

Three major metropolitan areas: Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya

Tokyo area: Cities including existing cities and suburb improvement zones based on Metropolitan Region Development Law

Osaka area: Cities including existing cities and suburb improvement zones based on Kinki Region Improvement Law

Nagoya area: Cities including urban improvement areas based on Chubu Region Development Improvement Law

Rural District: Regions besides the three major metropolitan areas

Other: City areas besides Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka among rural districts




Note 2: FY2014 Publish: FY2014 Land Market Value Publication (Jan.1, 2013–Jan. 1, 2014)

FY2015 Publish: FY2015 Land Market Value Publication (Jan.1, 2014–Jan. 1, 2015)

FY2016 Publish: FY2016 Land Market Value Publication (Jan. 1, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016)

FY2017 Publish: FY2017 Land Market Value Publication (Jan. 1, 2016–Jan. 1, 2017)

FY2018 Publish: FY2018 Land Market Value Publication (Jan. 1 2017–Jan. 1, 2018)

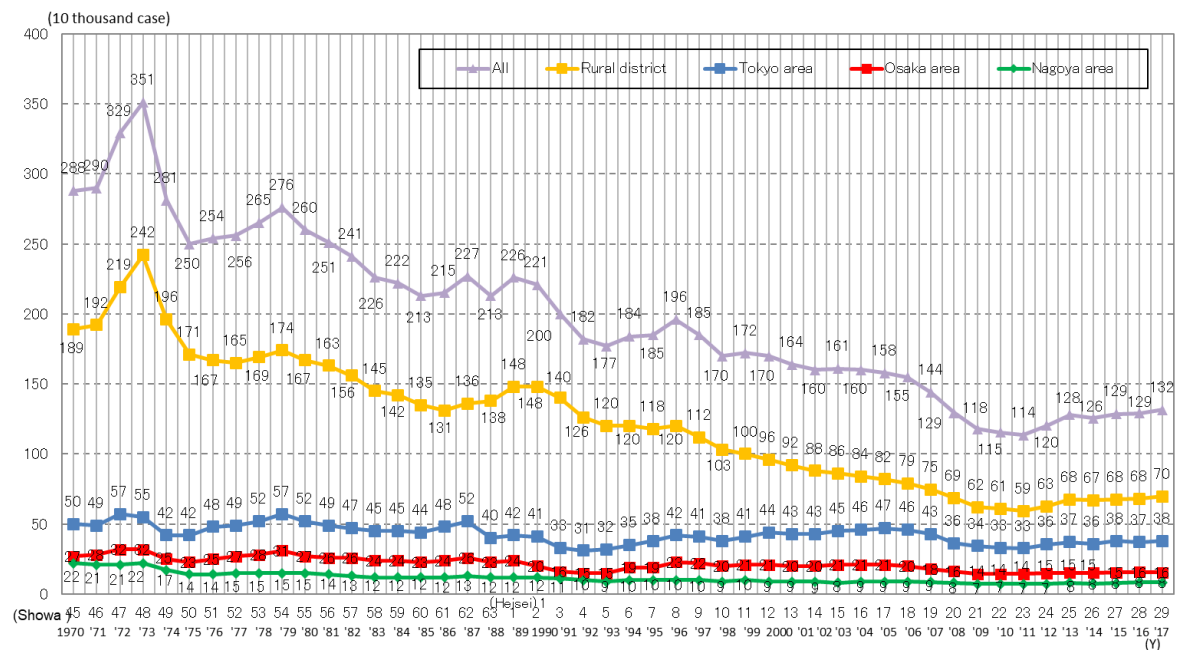
Note 3:  Decrease rate reduced from a year earlier, increase rate expanded from a year earlier  Decrease rate expanded from a year earlier, increase rate reduced from a year earlier  Unchanged from a year earlier

Section 3 Trends in Land Transactions

(Changes in the number of land transactions, etc.)

The trends in land transactions are followed by the number of transfers of ownership registered through buying and selling according to "Registration Statistics Monthly Report" by the Ministry of Justice. The number of land transactions across the nation totaled 1.32 million in 2017 (up 2.1% from the previous year). The breakdowns of the increase are up approx. 20,000 for rural areas and about 10,000 for the Tokyo area.

Figure Changes in the no. of land transaction buying and selling

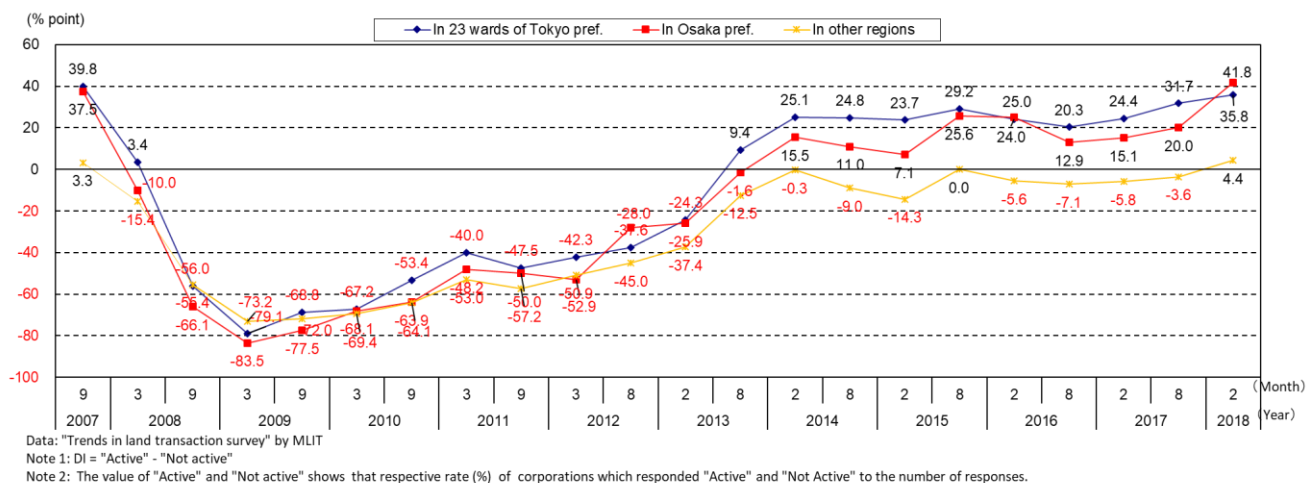


Data: "Registration Statistics Monthly Report" by the Ministry of Justice
 Note: Area classifications are as follows.
 Tokyo area: Saitama Pref., Chiba Pref., Tokyo Pref., Kanagawa Pref.
 Nagoya area: Aichi Pref., Mie Pref.
 Osaka area: Osaka pref., Kyoto pref., Hyogo pref.
 Rural districts: Regions except for above

(Perception of land transactions by corporations)

According to the Survey of Land Transaction Trend conducted by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the diffusion index (DI: the rate of corporations responding that transaction activity is "vibrant" minus the rate of corporations responding that it is "sluggish") regarding the perception of the current land transaction situation at the location of the headquarters increased for Tokyo's 23 wards, Osaka and other regions, and the values were positive in all regions. Especially, the number for Osaka increased greatly, exceeding those of Tokyo's 23 wards.

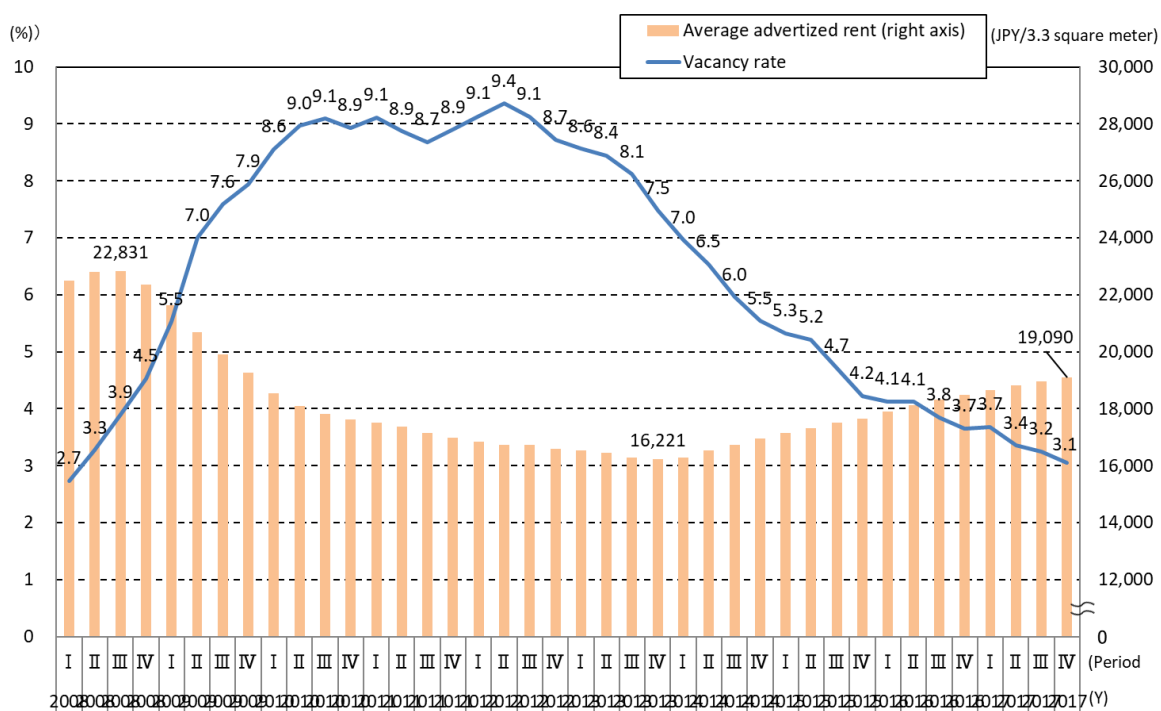
Figure DI in relation to current state of land transactions



(Trends in the office market)

Against the background of widening according to increasing the number of staff members and improving locations etc., the vacancy rate continued to decline in the five inner-city wards of Tokyo (Chiyoda Ward, Chuo Ward, Minato Ward, Shinjuku Ward and Shibuya Ward), dropping to 3.1% in the October–December quarter of 2017. Average offering rents continued to rise since the January–March quarter of 2014.

Figure Changes in rental price of office rooms and vacancy rate



Data: Miki.com Co., Ltd.

Note: Values between I and IV are average of monthly value.

(Trends in the residential market)

The total number of new housing starts was 964,641 units in 2017, down 0.3% from the previous year. The numbers by purpose were 419,397 units (up 0.2% from the previous year) for houses for rent and 255,191 units (up 1.9% from the previous year) for houses built for sale. The number of new houses for rent remained at the 400,000 level, the same as the previous year.

Regarding the condominium market trend, the price of a newly built condominium in the Tokyo metropolitan area is in the higher 50 million yen range and in the high level of 80,000 yen level per square meter. The average price for the Kinki region showed a slight decline. However, the price per square meter has been on an upward trend compared with the previous year, though the price per square meter dropped slightly in the October–December quarter in 2017.

Figure Changes in newly built housing starts by purpose

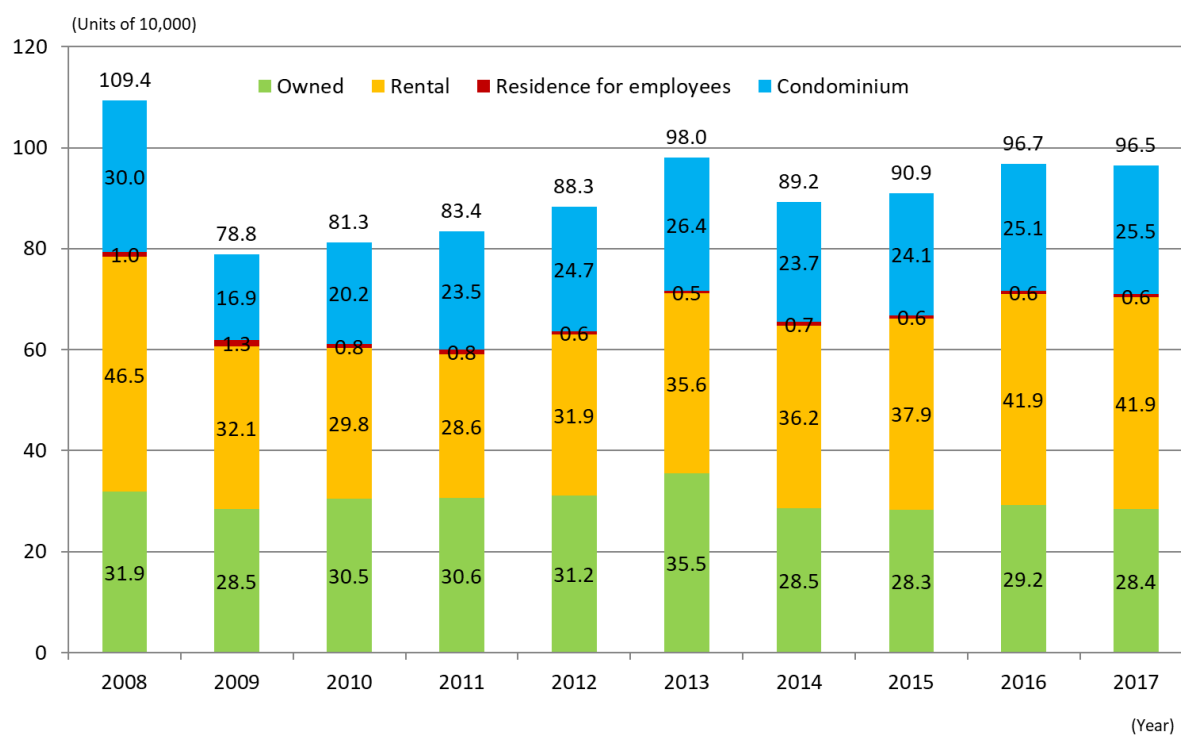
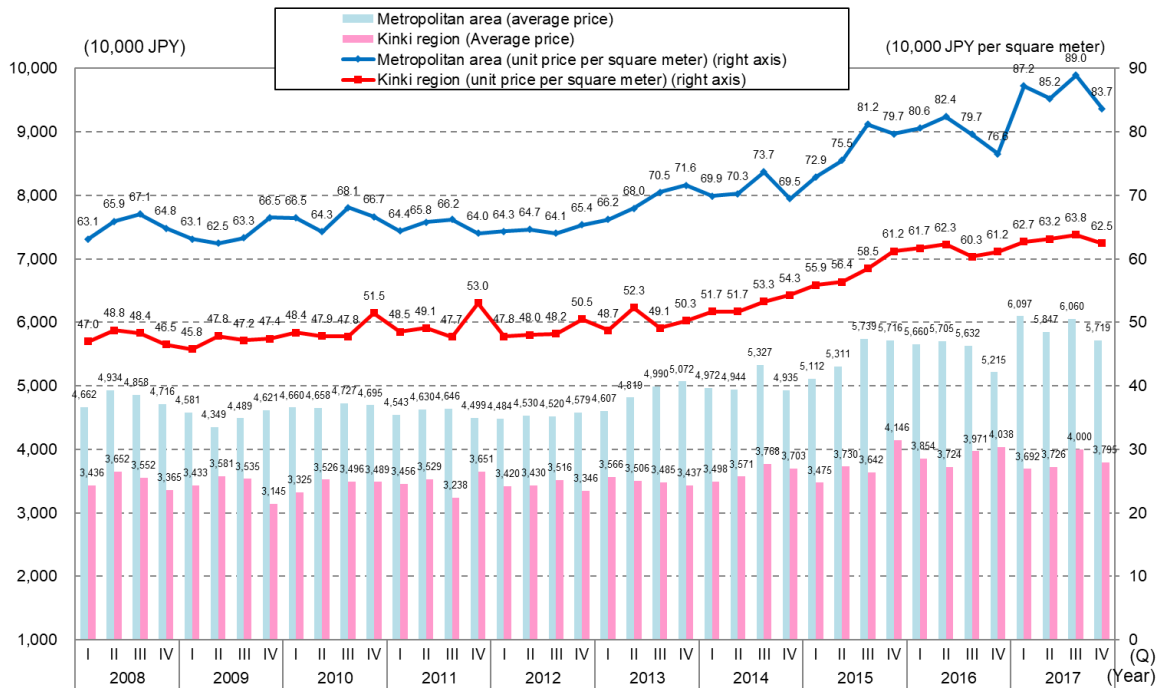


Figure Changes in newly built condominiums in metropolitan areas and the Kinki region



Data: "Trends in Condominium Market in the country" by Real Estate Economic Institute Co., Ltd.
 Note: Area classifications are as follows.

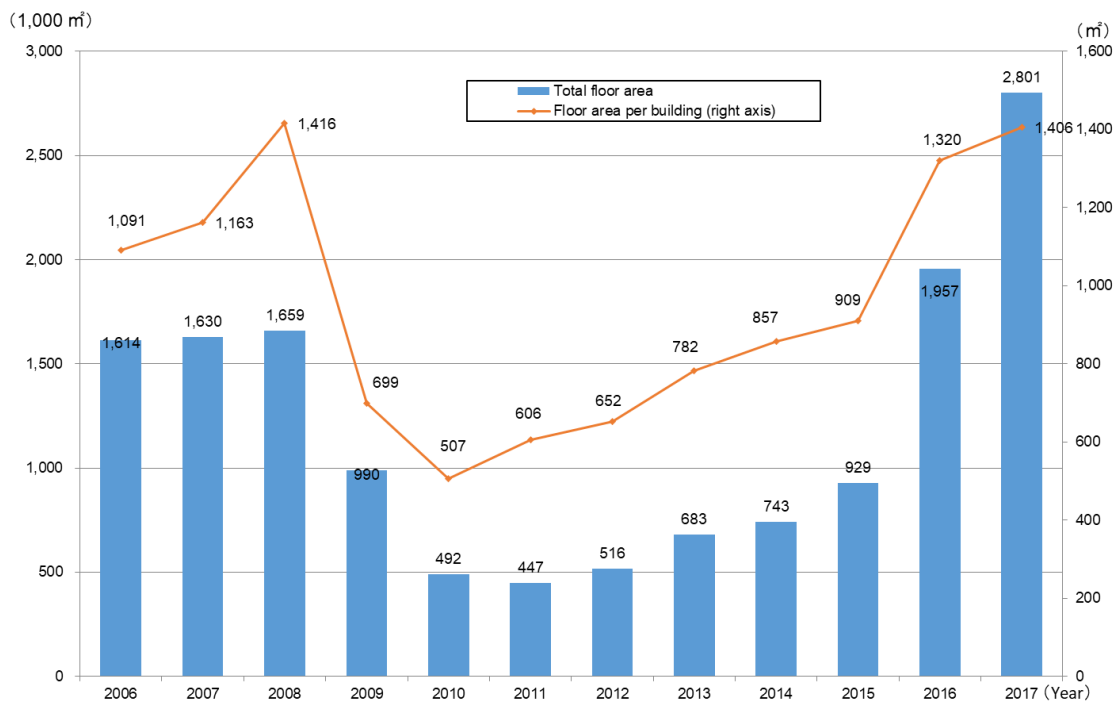
Metropolitan area: Saitama Pref., Chiba Pref., Tokyo Pref., and Kanagawa Pref.
 Kinki region: Shiga Pref., Kyoto Pref., Osaka Pref., Hyogo Pref., Nara Pref., and Wakayama Pref.

(Trends in miscellaneous real estate)

Concerning accommodations, demand has been growing in response to the recent increase in foreign tourists. The area for groundbreaking of buildings for accommodations and the gross area per building have been on the increase recently. Especially the area for groundbreaking, which has about tripled in the past two years.

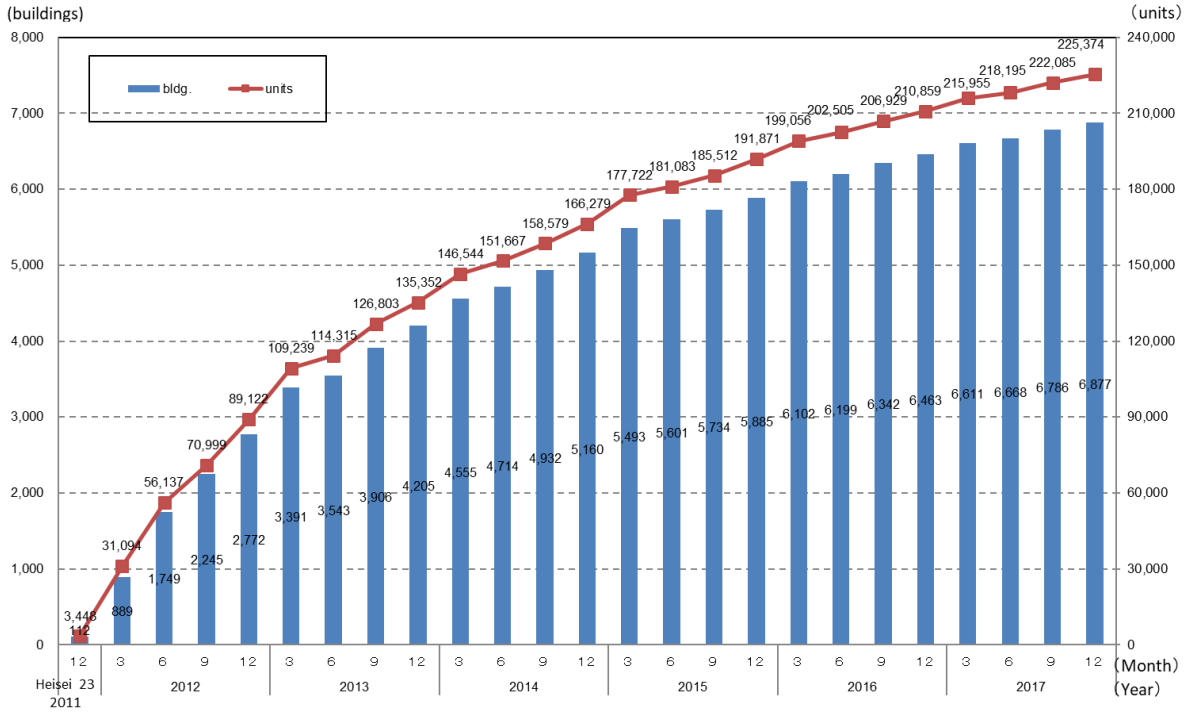
The registration status of residences with services for elderly people has been on the increase both in the number of buildings and units since 2011.

Figure Changes in area of construction starts for the accommodation industry



Data: MLIT "Construction Starts Statistics Survey"

Figure Registration status of housing with elderly care



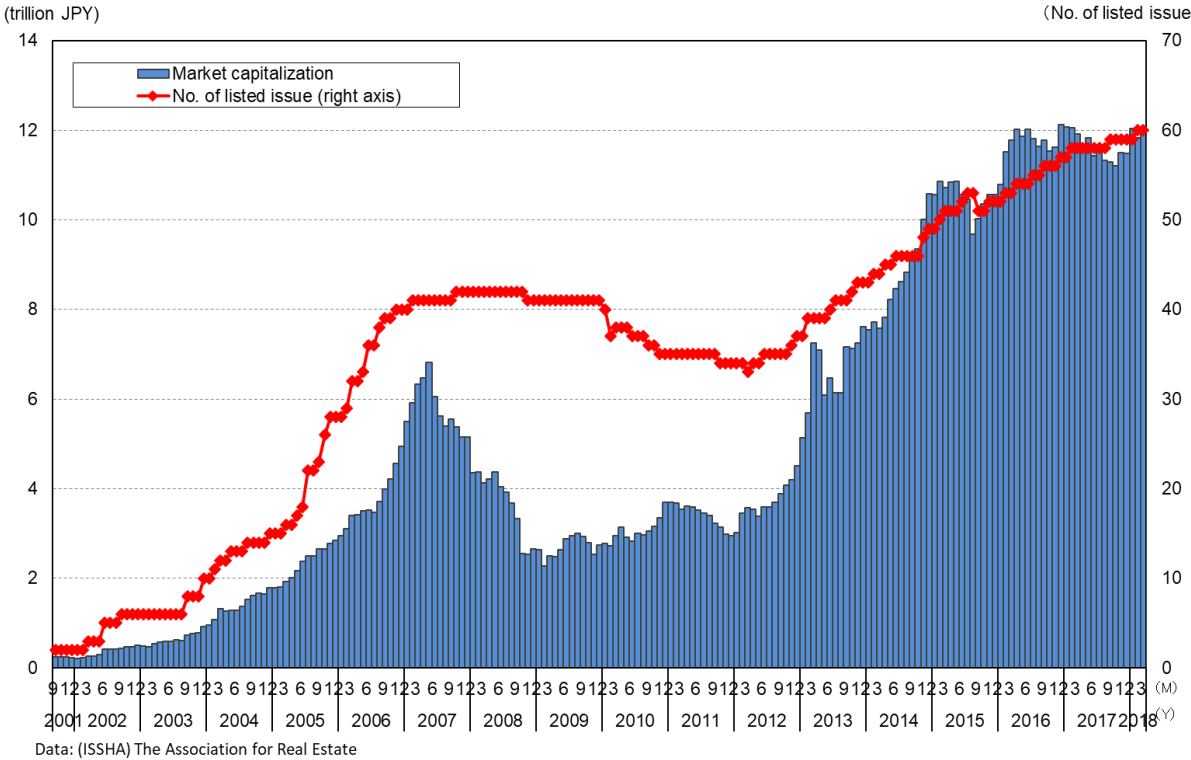
Data: MLIT

Section 4 Trends in the Real Estate Investment Market

(Trends in the J-REIT market)

There were three new listings of J-REIT in fiscal 2017. As of the end of March 2018, 60 different stocks of J-REIT were listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange and the current aggregate market value of real estate investment trusts was about 11.9 trillion yen.

Figure Changes in the number of J-REIT listed issues and the market capitalization



Section 5 Trends in Land Use

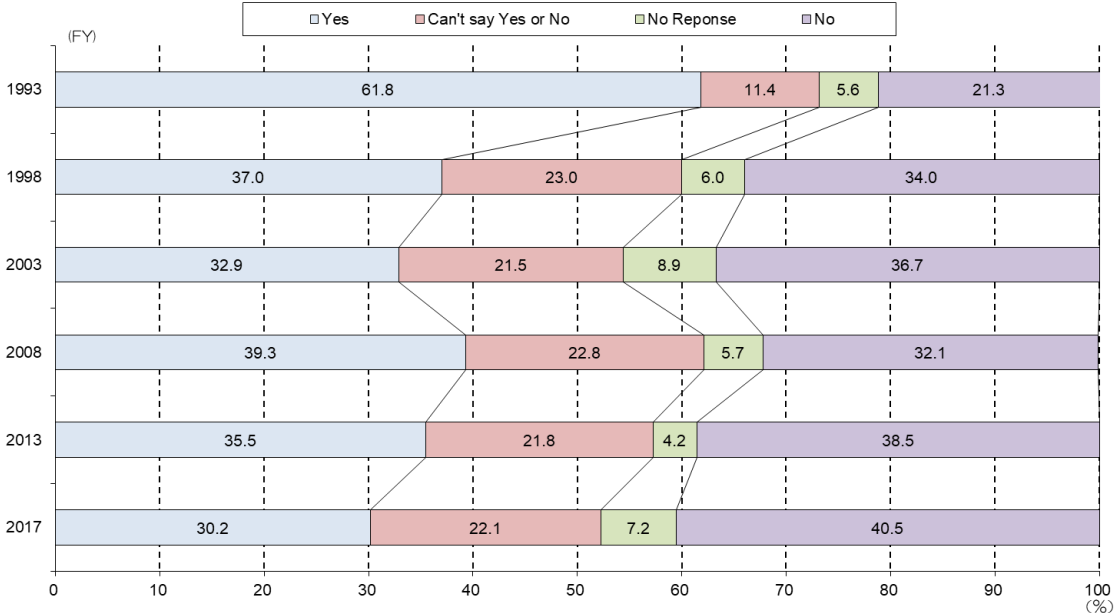
As of 2016, the total area of Japan was approximately 37.80 million hectares. Forest land accounts for the largest portion (25.06 million hectares), followed by agricultural land (4.47 million hectares), thus marking a decrease from the previous year. When combined, forest land and agricultural land account for about 80% of the national land area. In addition, developed land, such as residential and industrial land, amounts to 1.94 million hectares, roads occupy 1.39 million hectares, surface water, rivers, and canals cover 1.33 million hectares, and fields total 0.34 million hectares.

Section 6 Situation and Perception of Land among Corporations and Households

(Perception of land among households)

According to the "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues" conducted by MLIT every year, the percentage of people answering "Yes" to the question "Do you think land is a profitable asset compared with deposits/savings or stocks?" has been declining year to year, falling to 30.2% in fiscal 2017. The percentage of people answering "No" to the question has been increasing year by year, reaching 40.5% in FY2017.

Figure 1s land a profitable asset compared with deposits/savings?



Data: MLIT "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues"
 Note: Major metropolitan areas: Tokyo area, Osaka area, and Nagoya area
 Tokyo area: A group of municipalities that includes existing urban areas and suburban development areas provided by the national Capital Region Development Act
 Osaka area: City area including existing area according to Kinki area improvement law and Kinki improvement area
 Nagoya area: City area including city improvement area according to Chubu area development improvement law
 Rural districts: Areas other than major metropolitan areas
 Others: City areas other than Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka among rural districts

Section 7 Situation Surrounding Real Estate, etc. after Earthquakes

Looking at the trends in land prices by prefecture based on the 2018 Publication of MLIT in the three most disaster-afflicted prefectures, residential land prices in Iwate Prefecture continued to decline, by 0.6% (down by 0.4% as of 2017), and commercial land prices declined by 1.7% (down by 1.8% as of 2017). Residential land prices in Miyagi Prefecture increased by 2.7% (up by 2.4 % as of 2017) and commercial land prices increased by 4.8% (up by 4.7% as of 2017) showing that the rate of price increase expanded both for residential and commercial land. Residential land prices in Fukushima Prefecture increased by 1.4% (up by 2.1% as of 2017) and commercial land prices increased by 0.8% (up by 0.8% as of 2017) showing that the rate of price increase remained unchanged.

Looking at trends in land prices in Kumamoto and Oita prefectures, where the Kumamoto Earthquake struck and caused land damage, both residential and commercial land prices decreased as of the 2017 Publication of MLIT in both prefectures. However, places whose land prices climbed increased, leading the average land prices of prefectures to an increase as of the 2018 Publication of MLIT.

Based on the 2017 Publication of MLIT for Mashiki town, which was severely impacted by the earthquake in the prefecture, residential land prices declined owing to deteriorated functioning of facilities providing daily living conveniences and other factors caused by the widespread damage. The regions where reconstruction has been promoted were expanded. Residential land prices in these areas increased by 2.0% in response to an increase in demand, and 2.2% for commercial land prices in response to infrastructure construction.

Figure Changes in the volatility of land prices (annual, areas struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and the Kumamoto Earthquake in 2016)

	Residential land					Residential land				
	Volatility(%)		No. of sites in 2018			Volatility(%)		No. of sites in 2018		
	2017	2018	Increase	Unchaned	Decrease	2017	2018	Increase	Unchanged	Decrease
Iwate Pref.	▲ 0.4	▲ 0.6	19 (28)	43 (39)	62 (60)	▲ 1.8	▲ 1.7	1 (0)	21 (21)	31 (30)
Miyagi Pref.	2.4	2.7	284 (284)	51 (53)	76 (64)	4.7	4.8	98 (85)	15 (13)	30 (29)
Fukushima Pref.	2.1	1.4	202 (208)	44 (43)	67 (59)	0.8	0.8	58 (57)	17 (13)	26 (25)

Data: MLIT "Land Market Value Publication"

Note: Number of sites in () are values based on the 2017 Publication

	Residential land					Commercial land				
	Average Volatility(%)		No. of sites in 2018			Average Volatility(%)		No. of sites in 2018		
	2017	2018	Increase	Unchanged	Decrease	2017	2018	Increase	Unchanged	Decrease
Kumamoto Pref.	▲0.1	0.6	82(51)	42(58)]	▲0.1	1.9	39(31)	10(9)	25(31)
Mashikimachi	▲4.5	2.0	4(0)	0(0)	0(3)	▲6.2	2.2	1(0)	0(0)	0(1)
Oita pref.	▲0.3	0.1	64(34)	34(32)	51(78)	▲0.5	0.2	31(11)	20(20)	31(42)

Data: "Property price index FY2018" by MLIT

Note 1: Volatility is calculated based on continued sites only.

Note 2: In () of no. of sites is the no. of sites of Property price index FY2017

Note 3: Increase Decrease

Chapter 2 Changes Surrounding Land and Measures in Relation to Land since the Meiji Era in Japan



It has been a full 150 years as of 2018 since the Meiji Era started in 1868. This chapter focuses on the Meiji 150 years as a good opportunity. Section 1 describes an overview regarding requests and measures that our forerunners faced and conducted in that era, which enables us to use them as a reference when we face the same changes and have to study measures in the future and to understand the current situation in relation to land and the root causes of problems. With such a perspective, Section 2 considers problems to be handled for measures in the future in relation to land based on the contents of Section 1 and specialty of land as property.

Section 1 Changes in Measures in Relation to Land based on the Changes in Situation since the Meiji Era

1. Constitution of modern land ownership and improvement of information in relation to land from the beginning to the mid-Meiji Era

(1) Private ownership system of land and the Land Tax Reform

The Meiji government changed the existing feudalistic system in order to face the great Western powers. The government rushed to constitute the centralized modern nation breaking the control system of the feudal domains that divided the country in provinces as well as trying to develop the economy by accepting more free economic activities.

With regard to land, the government permitted a freer private ownership system of land by lifting the feudal restriction, including giving permission to cultivate fields freely, the lifting of perpetual prohibition of buying and selling of fields and the removal of land division restriction, etc. in 1871–1872 in relation to land ownership of the Edo Era. The government published certificates of land title from 1872 and the Land Tax Reform in 1873 and implemented it. The purpose of the Land Tax Reform was to standardize the land tax system nationwide. The Meiji government changed payment in kind based on the amount of harvest to payment in currency at a fixed rate, which ensured stable revenue from tax regardless of a successful or unsuccessful harvest. The fixed rate enabled farmers to take profits according to the increase of harvest. Further, the government provided farmers with the right to decide which crops to produce. It is said that the reform enhanced the willingness of farmers to produce crops.

In this way, we can see that the Land Tax Reform in this era built the basis of the development of the economic system. The activities in relation to the Land Tax Reform, such as the investigation of land, the confirmation of land ownership, the decision of locations and prices of land, the publication of certificates of land title and the preparation of maps and land registers, became the basic information regarding current land. Persons outside villages became able to own land because the use and the sale of land were defined as individual freedom. The custom of payment per village changed to a system whereby the landowner with a certificate of land title after publication was the owning party (payment per individual). We can see the source of the public perception of land changing to "a thing" like general property which individuals can own, use and dispose of freely.

The system of compulsory purchase of private land for the public has been incorporated since the system of certificate of land title was established in 1872. The system of compulsory purchase was enhanced and used for improvement works such as river development, railroad, electricity and ports, etc., and the construction of hospitals and schools, which supported the modernization of the Meiji Era.

(2) Authentication of land title

The Meiji government confirmed land ownership by publishing certificates of land title from 1872 and authenticated the mortgaging and listing of land (setting the right of pledge and mortgage) and the buying and selling and transfer of land. "The mortgaging and listing of real estates and regulations on listing" was enacted in 1873, and "The regulations of buying and selling and transfer of land" in 1880. These regulations provided that when mortgaging and listing and when buying and selling, the verification and the tally seal of a town office (currently municipal office) be necessary. The town office would make books of the verification and the tally seal, which was a big step back from the function of the private act of the certificate of land title.

Thus, the system of authentication conducted by municipal offices in relation to the buying and selling of land and the setting of mortgage was enacted. "The Registration Act" was issued and set up in 1886 as a system the government conducted directly.

Since its issue, the clerical work of registration was handled by a justice court (after the issuing of the Law Governing Organization of Courts of Justice in 1890, handled by a district court). Along with the Civil Code coming into force in 1898, "The Immovable Property Registration Act" was enacted in 1899. However, it is said that the manner of registration was inherited.

(3) Private act on land - Establishment of the Civil Code

The compilation of the Civil Code started since the early Meiji Era in the government. The so-called the old Civil Law (Boissonade Law) was issued in 1890 with the Daijokan Declaration. However, its execution was postponed. As a result, the present "Civil Code" was issued in Laws item no. 89 on April 29, 1896. Based on the Civil Code, the basic laws and regulations for ownership such as proprietary rights as well as public contracts.

Real estate was defined as "land and its fixtures" in the Civil Code (Section 86). Additionally, real rights such as land ownership, superficies, perpetual right of tenant farming, easement, lien, pledge (pledge for real estate) and mortgage were defined as rights in relation to land (real estate). At the same time, it made the right of lease credit (defined as real right in the old Civil Law). When a tenant builds a self-owned building on land owned by another, protection of a tenant was not sufficient. Therefore, the lease was amended later in the Special Laws.

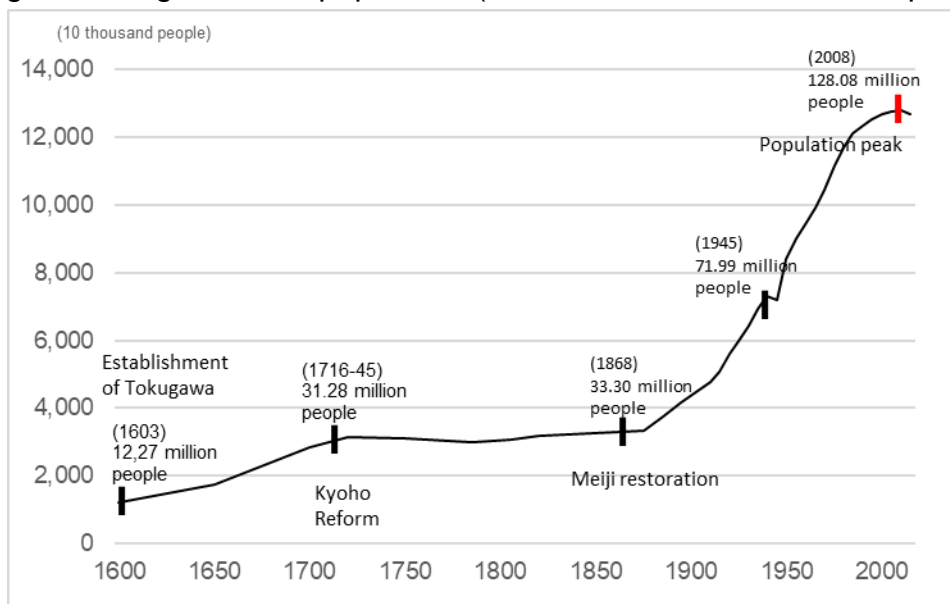
In "Registration Law of Real Estate" established based on the execution of the Civil Code, preserving, setting and transferring the rights mentioned above were defined as the target of registration.

2. Increase of urban population from the Meiji Era to the Second World War and the systematic improvement in city areas and the management of land and building leases according to the population increase

(1) Increase of urban population after the Meiji Era to The Second World War

The total population of Japan had continued to be almost flat between the 31 million and 33 million level for 150 years before the Meiji Restoration. However, the population has been consistently increasing for the most part for 150 years since the Meiji Restoration, reaching 128 million, four times the population before the Meiji Restoration (Figure 2-1-1). The reasons for the population increase are the development of commerce and industry under the free economic system and the increase in national whole productivity and the improvement of healthcare, sanitation and nourishment. The improvement of sanitation standards was related to the improvement of urban infrastructure, such as water supply, etc., mentioned later.

Figure Changes in total population (From the later Edo Era to the present)



Data: National Land Agency "Distribution of population over the long term in chronological order in Japan" (1974)

Note: From 1920, "National Census Report", "Population Estimation Annual Report", "Population corrected by interpolation population, according to the result of the National Census of FY2005 and FY2010 by the then Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications

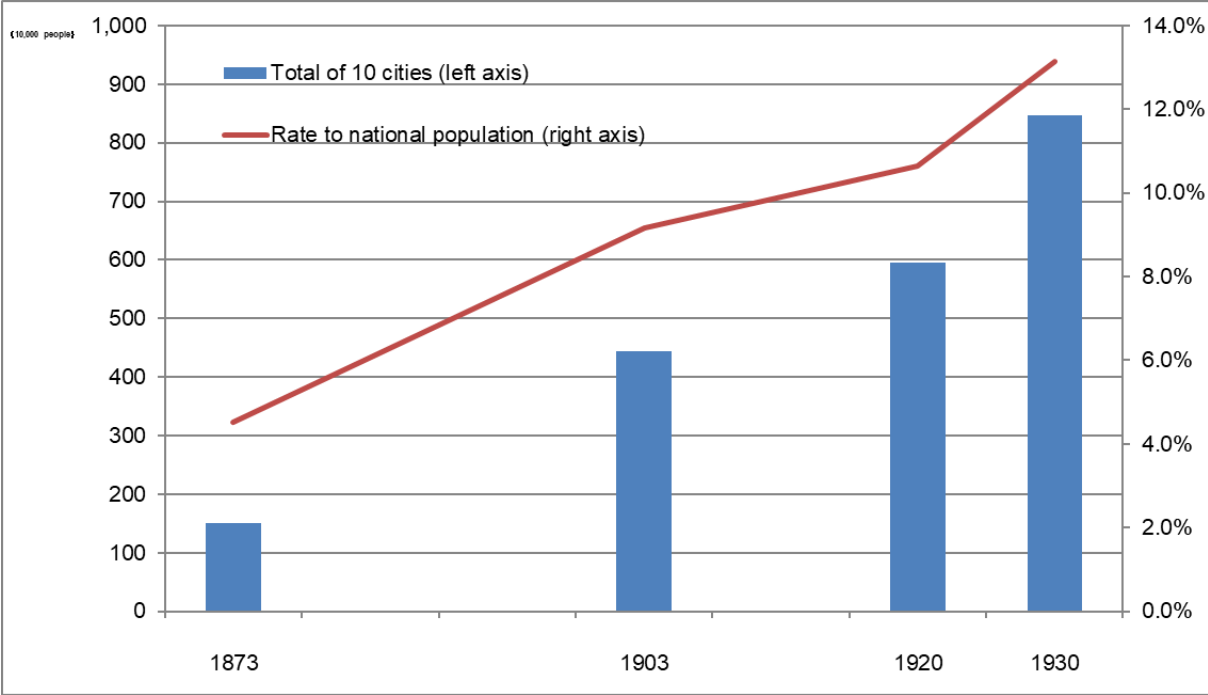
Urbanization had advanced with the development of the economy and industry. The silk and spinning industries flourished in the early to middle period of the Meiji Era in Japan. At the beginning, these industries were mostly operated as household industries. In the middle period, they gradually changed to factory industries. Further, the mechanization of these industries (the Industrial Revolution) followed, which led the population to move from agricultural to urban areas. At this point urbanization went ahead. The improvement of transportation facilities such as railroads and ports supported the development of industries through the transportation of products as well as the increase in the urban population through the transportation of daily commodities.

The development of industries around the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) became stable, increasing the number of factories and expanding the size of industry in light industries, while the heavy industries such as ship building, vehicles, machinery and steel, etc. developed considerably.

Furthermore, chemical industries, such as drugs and fertilizer, developed drastically thanks to the boom after the First World War (1914–1918), besides the light industries and the heavy industries. The number of factories and factory workers considerably increased. The commerce and service industries also grew and the urban population expanded nearer to where workers and such places as factories were gathered.

In Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, small and medium-sized factories were established one after another around big factories and houses and shops increased, creating city areas with a mix of living and industry. Land reclamation of swampy areas and shallows were conducted in littoral regions, and factory zones began to appear, which led to the later Keihin–Hanshin–Chukyo industrial zone. The population of the three big cities for a little less than 20 years from 1903 to 1920 increased respectively, from 1.82 million to 2.17 million in Tokyo, 1 million to 1.25 million in Osaka and 0.29 million to 0.43 million in Nagoya.

Figure Changes in population in 10 cities



Data: "Summary of Japan Topography" used for 1873, "Japanese Empire statics of population statistics" for 1903, "National Census" for 1920 and 1930 prepared by MLIT.
 Note 1: 10 cities: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Yokohama, Kyoto, Kobe, Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka
 Note 2: For Fukuoka in 1873 based on the sum of "Fukuoka" and "Hakata"

(2) Urban legal system for design improvement of urban areas

The Meiji government tried to build a modern nation with awareness of Western nations and concentrated especially on modernizing Tokyo as the capital. Regarding the traditional urban problems in the Edo Era, conflagration and spread of contagious

diseases have been pointed out. Further, the width of roads was small, especially in castle towns where there were many crank-shaped roads and square-shaped space in consideration of military purposes. Therefore, improvement of urban infrastructure was needed.

Tokyo, which inherited the urban structure of the Edo Era, was no exception. The symbolic construction was Ginza Bricktown from the early Meiji Era to 1877. It was constructed after the Ginza Conflagration in 1872, including broadening and construction of new roads. Furthermore, building design was unified with the use of bricks, from the perspective of fire prevention.

After the Tokyo-Fu Notification, "Fire prevention line and roof terrace restriction regulations" were established in 1881, and "The Renewal Tokyo municipality regulation" was issued in 1888.

Based on the regulation, 1) Purification plants were built, with drains using pressurized pipes which was the modern water supply business. At the same time, 2) Arterial roads were improved and broadened. Regarding especially water supply, it was effective not only in the improvement of sanitation, but also in firefighting.

In response to the rapid development of modern industry, urban cities such as Osaka, Nagoya, Yokohama and Kobe, etc. had been developed at a rapid pace, as well as Tokyo.

Based on this situation, the "City Planning Act" and "Urban Building Law" were established in 1919. "The improved Tokyo Municipality Regulation" was repealed in January 1, 1920, when new acts became effective. Both acts targeted Tokyo and other urban cities, seeking to improve the frame of urban cities by conducting improvement of land reallocation, etc. and controlling the use of land, comprehensively setting the planned areas for development from the center of a city to the suburbs.

Following the Great Kanto Earthquake in September 1923, the "Special City Planning Act" was established and urban cities were improved after the disastrous earthquake by conducting land reallocation, etc.

(3) Development after the establishment of the Civil Code in relation to land and building leases

Industries and capitals had begun to gather in urban cities from the midterm of the Meiji Era to the Second World War, especially before the Russo-Japanese War. In response to this, populations rapidly flocked to urban cities around big metropolitan cities.

However, much of the housing was under land leases and building leases. One of

the reasons was the possession of wide land in urban cities.

Wide land was possessed owing to the land grant of samurai residences in the Edo Era and later buying up, etc. About 70% of Edo city was occupied by samurai residences before the Meiji Restoration. Land confiscation was done for most of them. Part of the land after confiscation was changed to official land. Other land was sold to private individuals, which allowed some merchants and nobles to possess wide areas. In Tokyo's old 15 wards (currently Chiyoda Ward, Chuo Ward, Minato Ward, Bunkyo Ward, Taito Ward, part of Shinjuku Ward, part of Sumida Ward, and part of Koto Ward) in 1912, the number of landowners of privatized land where land tax was imposed was about 18,000. About 2.2 thousand persons who owned more than 33,057 square meters owned nearly 70% of land among them.

Looking at such a situation, as seen in (1), the protection of the lessee was poor in the Civil Code, which became a social issue and a theme for land policy. First, the "Laws in relation to the protection of buildings" was established in 1907, followed by the "Act on Land Lease" in 1921 proceeding the protection of land lessees. In addition, there were many rental houses in the Edo Era. The Civil Code didn't protect building lessees sufficiently. Therefore, the "Rental House Act" was enacted in 1921.

The "Rent Control Act" was established in 1939, and the "Act on Land Lease" and the "Rental House Act" were revised in 1941. Also, the justifiable reason system was introduced. The interest of lessees was strengthened even after taking the special cause into consideration that it was under the Second World War time structure.

As seen above, the principal of free of contract went through the Civil Code. To respond to the social demand for protecting lessees, the revision had been gradually made.

However, at that time, leasedland had continued to be supplied, forming major land supply of urban cities in Japan. The land supply under lease contracts had started to decay in 1955 or later. After the Great Kanto Earthquake in September 1923, the "Temporary Land and Building lease Act" was enacted in 1924 from the point of view of the protection of land and building lessees that suffered the earthquake

3. Reconstruction from war damage of the Second World War and forming a new order in relation to land

(1) Urgent measures regarding housing and urban cities just after the war

Around 10 million people lost their houses during the Second World War. The number of people who returned from outside Japan amounted to 4 million. The supply of housing was an urgent necessity for the government. A "Construction guideline of

temporary prefabricated houses for affected cities" was decided by the Cabinet in September 4, 1945, which enabled the supply of 0.3 million temporary prefabricated houses using state subsidies.

Moreover, the government issued "Urgent Housing Measures" in November 1945, as winter had been approaching. The measure provided that governor, etc. be able to set up the right to utilize usable and available constructions among ex-military housings, dormitories for factory workers, vacant houses, etc.

"Urgent Measures Restricting to Transfer into Urban Cities" was issued in March 1946. The transfer into the Tokyo area and cities such as Osaka, Kobe and Fukuoka etc. was prohibited, in principle. The "Act of Temporary Restriction of Construction" was established in May 1946, which restricted construction of nonessential and non-urgent buildings besides small-sized housings in response to a lack of materials. "Provisional Law of Land and Building Leases for Suffered Cities" was enacted in August 1946, setting out that countervailing power of land lease right shall remain, even if the building of land lessee was damaged.

The reconstruction of urban cities which burned to the ground was an urgent necessity. Therefore, The Reconstruction from War Damage Office was created in November 5, 1945. Two months later, on December 30, the "Basic Guidelines of Reconstruction Plan for War Suffered Areas" was set out and the execution of reconstruction works of 115 cities was decided in the Cabinet. In September 1946, the "Special City Planning Act" was established in the same way as that for the Great Kanto Earthquake.

The laws mentioned above were temporary and were enacted soon after the end of the Second World War. Most of them were abolished at a later date.

(2) Dissolution of wide landowners according to democratization of the economy

Japan lost the Second World War and was occupied by the allied forces. More concretely, indirect rules were applied such that the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) was set and Japanese government followed the Supreme Commander's order. The Supreme Commander, Douglas MacArthur, ordered "Five Great Reforms" in October 1945. One of them was the democratization of the economy.

The democratization of the economy in the early occupied country was promoted based on three pillars: liquidation of the Zaibatsu, farmland reforms, and the establishment of trade unions. The farmland reforms were aimed at breaking the old feudal relationship between landowners and tenant farmers and to greatly increase the number of independent farmers, which was ordered by the GHQ in December 1945.

The Japanese government also had the idea that the farmland reforms were necessary to increase agricultural productivity and secure food delivery, and submitted a draft bill to the Cabinet in December 1945 (the First Farmland Reform). However, the GHQ judged that it was not sufficient and rejected it. The Law Concerning the Special Measures for the Establishment of Landed Farmers was issued in October 1946 and the Second Farmland Reform went into effect. Based on the Act, a large amount of tenanted land was bought forcibly by the government and sold to tenant farmers who plowed there. As a result, independent farmers and land increased significantly. The landlord system was almost entirely cleared away. The system of wide land ownership was dissolved.

Additionally, the "Property Tax Act" was issued in November 1946, which imposed tax on private property to confiscate war profits and make them a financial resource for after-war administration. Land was included with the property, and the tax rate reached to 90% at the maximum. Therefore, the system of wide land ownership in urban areas was dissolved.

(3) System Reform by Democratization in Social Aspects

The Constitution of Japan was issued in November 1946 and came into force in May 1947. Regarding property rights, they are set out in Article 29 as follows:

- (1) The right to own or to hold property is inviolable.
- (2) Property rights shall be defined by law, in conformity with public welfare.
- (3) Private property may be taken for public use upon just compensation therefor.

While the Meiji Constitution, Article 27, set out that "(1) Property rights of people of Japan are not to be infringed; (2) Measures necessary to be taken for the public benefit shall be any provided for by law," "Compensation" is expressed in the new constitution.

The land expropriation law established in 1900 remained effective under the new Constitution. However, it was pointed out that some concepts in the law were incompatible to democratic consideration. The new land expropriation law was established in 1951, which democratized approval procedures for business and the decision process for the amount of compensation.

The Civil Code was drastically revised in 1947, in which basic principles such as the dignity of the individual and the essential equality of both sexes and rights accruing to

the head of a household were diminished. The system of inheritance whereby the eldest son takes over the social position and all properties when a householder dies was abolished.

In addition, a chapter for local governments was set out in the Constitution of Japan, something that did not exist in the Meiji Constitution. The Local Government Law was established in the same year the Constitution of Japan was established—1947. Regarding Shoup's recommendations, which affected later tax revision greatly, to strengthen the tax resource of local government became one of pillars for local tax. A fixed property tax was established in 1950 instead of a land tax. According to the establishment, the land-book prepared for use as the standard for assessment of land tax was transferred from tax offices to registry offices with attached maps. According to the revision of Law concerning Registration of Immovables in 1960, Ledgers were transferred to the title part of a register.

4. Start of development and measures for problems in the period of high economic growth from the mid-1940s to 1980s

(1) Start of development for economic growth

Emergency measures in relation to housing and cities soon after the end of the Second World War were as described above. The fundamental problems were to develop the devastated country and reconstruct and grow the weakened economy. Shortly after the end of the war, in September 1945, the "Land Plan Basic Policy" was announced and in September of the next year, the "Reproduction Plan of Land" was announced.

For the purpose of increasing food production, industrial rehabilitation, and reconstruction from war damage, the following was required: 1. Reclamation of newly developing areas and non-developed areas; 2. Planning of population allocation by block, dividing the country into 9 blocks; and 3. Expanding economic, social, and cultural functions by district (11 rural districts in the country).

The appropriate state of the Land Plan was then investigated under the National Land Plan Council controlled by the prime minister from 1947. After discussion under the Comprehensive National Land Plan Council in 1949, the "Comprehensive National Land Development Act" was enacted in 1950. Based on the Act, the Specific Area Comprehensive Development Plan was established. Integrated river development, etc. followed from 1953, while the "Hokkaido Development Act" was established in 1950.

In addition, the Rural Areas Development Promotion Act was enacted as follows:

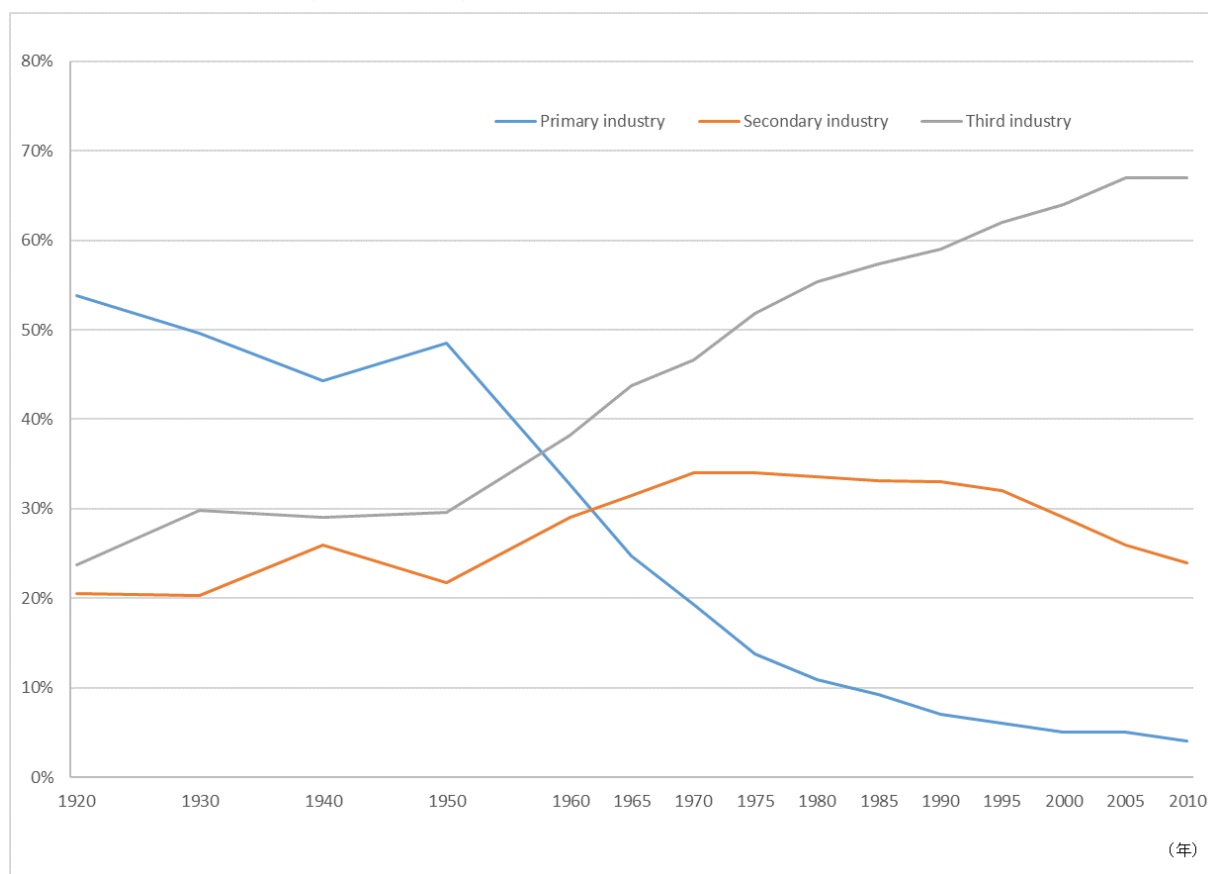
Tohoku region (1957), Kyushu region (1959), Shikoku region (1960), Chugoku region (1960), and Hokuriku region (1960). Based on the establishment, the Each District Development Promotion Plan was established. Furthermore, the "Country Investigation Law" was established in 1951. Surveys such as the land classification survey, water survey etc. to research natural conditions including national land resources and a cadastral survey to investigate landowners and boundaries and area started. These were surveys to utilize, develop and conserve national land.

Moreover, in order to promote the improvement of basic infrastructure that supports Japan's economic growth, the "Harbor Act"(1950), the "Road Traffic Act (1952)", and the "National Land Development Traverse Motorway Construction Law (1957)" were established. Then, the improvement of basic infrastructure was promoted. The "Law for electric power resources development promotion" was also enacted in 1952.

(2) Countermeasures against various problems during the period of high economic growth

Japan's economy heading toward reconstruction after the Second World War achieved high growth that had not been seen in the world. First of all, the Korean War started in 1950, which brought a Japan economic boom for special procurement. After that, while a recession came several times, there were high economic booms in the mid-50s (Jinmu Keiki, Iwato Keiki) and the mid-60s (Izanagi Keiki). The real economic growth rate from 1965 to 1970 was about 10%. Such high economic growth was seen thanks to private-sector capital investment and technological innovation, a consumption boom, etc. based on a positive financial policy and monetary and fiscal policy by the government. Especially, results of technological innovation were introduced in the areas of steel, machinery and chemical and mechanization and the automation of facilities was promoted. Further, new foreign technology was introduced in the petrochemical industry and the coastal industrial zone of steel petrochemicals, etc. was created. These are the results of pursuing an economy of concentration for the import of materials and export of products. The development of these industries led to the development of a third industry, such as the commerce, financial business and service industries. The working population had shifted from primary industry to the secondary and third industries. According to the shift, populations shifted from rural districts to urban areas, concentrating particularly in the Pacific Belt Zone, including Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka, and Kitakyushu.

Figure Changes in population rate by industry



Data: Prepared by MLIT based on the "National Census"

Note: The no. of employees of 15 years old or older changed into the industry classification FY2000
The no. of persons at all ages who had an occupation for 1920 and 1930.

The no. of "home front population" individuals of all ages who had an occupation except for foreigners besides South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, Sakhalin and the South Sea Islands for 1940.
The no. of employees of 14 years old or older, except for Japanese who are registered on the mainland and foreigners for 1950.

Regarding Okinawa Pref., the no. of employees of 14 years old or older according to the result of 5% extract collection for 1960

Based on the FY2005 National Census. Special collection result using new industry classification "Classification impossible" is omitted.

High economic growth brought people a good life, but various problems occurred at the same time. Pollution problems such as the pollution of seawater and rivers and air pollution, as well as overpopulation and underpopulation, were representative.

Regarding countermeasures against overpopulation and underpopulation, the government promoted arranging and distributing populations and industries besides the Pacific belt zone and the Tokyo area for the development of the whole country to prevent uniaxial concentration in the Pacific belt zone and the Tokyo area. This was a decision of National Land Planning and a plan for the decentralized arrangement of industries etc. was based on it.

In addition, measures for housing problems such the tide of population into urban cities, in which urban sprawl rapidly expanded, needs for a high degree of utilization and updates of functions of urban cities, and soaring land prices owing to high demand for housing and offices needed to be addressed urgently. As seen above, political measures in relation to land supported and led to Japan's high economic growth.

5. Development of measures in relation to land during the economic bubble and after the burst of the economic bubble from 1985 to 2007

(1) Soaring of land prices during the economic bubble and countermeasures against it

Regarding the soaring land prices during the so-called economic bubble, starting from commercial areas in the center of Tokyo from the 1980s, it caused a rise in land prices for operating zones in city center areas. As a turning point, the rise in land prices expanded to the surrounding and other major urban cities.

In response, government established the "Ministerial Conference on Land Prices" (later changed to the "Ministerial Conference on Land Policy").

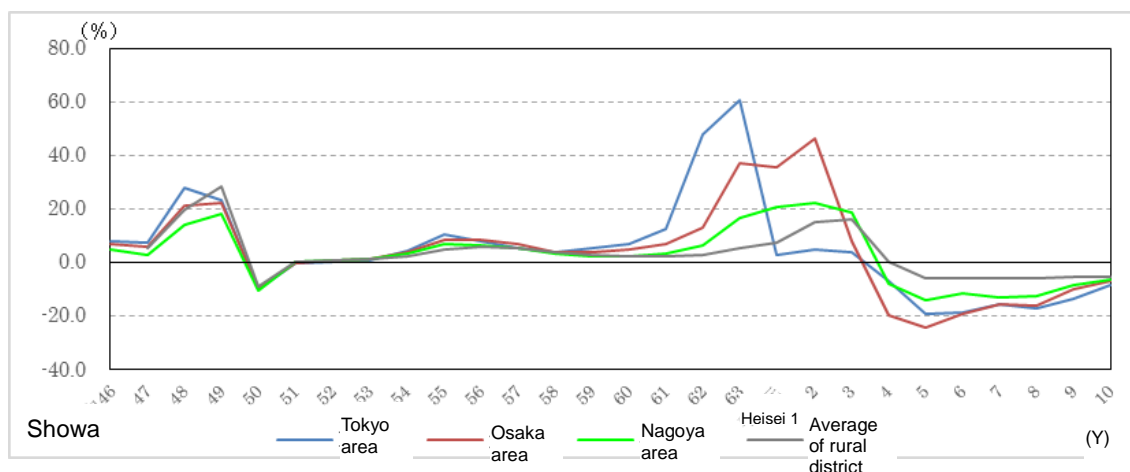
Based on a discussion by the "Land Measures Study Committee" established under the Second Administrative Reform Promotion Council, which was the advisory body of the prime minister to face such soaring land prices, countermeasures were arranged and promoted.

In particular, the "Guideline of Emergency Land Countermeasures" in 1987, the "Guideline of Comprehensive Land Countermeasures" in 1988, and the "Guideline of Comprehensive Land Countermeasures Promotion" in 1991 were decided in the Cabinet. The de-centralization of urban cities and industrial functions etc., the promotion of housing and residential land supply, measures for the tax system, the creation of a supervised area system of land transaction, improvement and enhancement of land use planning, and countermeasures against financing restrictions in relation to land, etc. were comprehensively conducted. In addition, the "Basic Act for Land," which set out the basic principles in relation to land, was enacted in 1989.

Thanks to these countermeasures, the prices of land in three major metropolitan areas decreased in 1991, and in rural areas decreased in 1992.

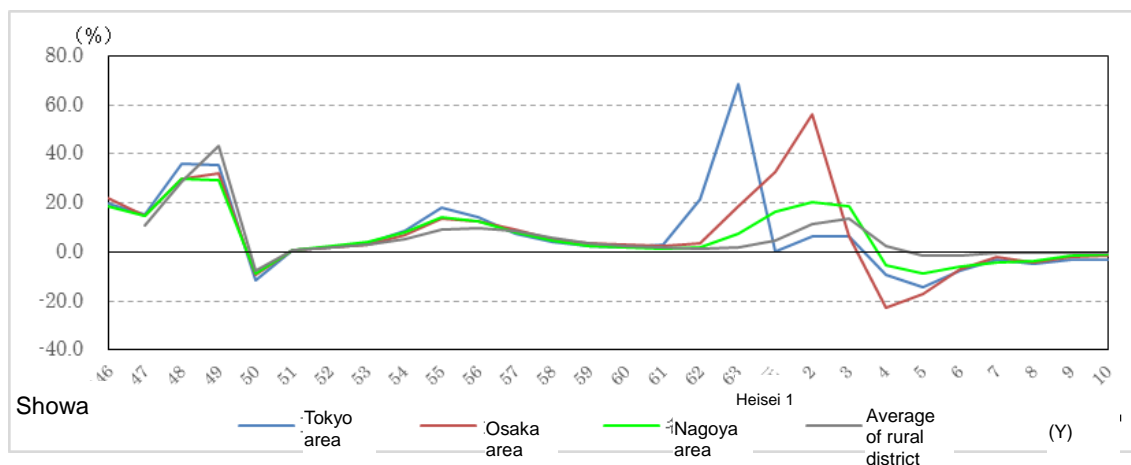
Figure Volatility of Published Land Prices

[Commercial land]



Data: MLIT "Land Market Value Publication"

[Residential land]



Data: MLIT "Land Market Value Publication"

(2) Development of policies related to land after the burst of Japan's economic bubble

The soaring prices of land during Japan's economic bubble hit its peak in 1990 as a national average. After that, the land prices continued to decline. Based on this situation, the Land Value Tax was halted in 1998. A special land-holding tax introduced in 1973 during the period when land prices were soaring was halted in 2003. Some of the measures introduced during the economic bubble period had been terminated.

After the burst of the economic bubble, a situation which can be understood as a late effect of the land value bubble occurred, which was massive bad debt and bad assets, failure of financial institutions, an increasing number of corporations and

households going into insolvency, the decline of capital investment and consumption and consequent deflation, and an increase in low use vacant lots in urban cities, etc.

Especially, as a result of vast loans becoming irrecoverable bad debt, land as security was "held for the long term", which deteriorated the attractiveness of urban cities.

Under these circumstances, new development of land policies had been strongly demanded, beginning with the promotion of effective use of land to respond specifically to the structural changes of Japan's economy and society, a plan to form free and easy housing and living environments, and promoting the creation of comfortable and safe towns and communities, etc. Then, based on a discussion and a report in the Land Policy Council, the "New Comprehensive Guideline of Land Policy Promotion" targeting "From Possession to Use" etc. in land policy was decided in the Cabinet in February 1997 and the measures were put in place.

To promote the use of land effectively, the fluidization of real estate is necessary. The system of securitizing real estate was improved as one of the structures and proceeded.

In addition, the Urban Rejuvenation Headquarters was founded in 2001, making the prime minister general manager to promote the update and renewal of urban cities and enhance urban city functionality and improve the living environment where the update and renewal were delayed owing to the late effect of the burst of the economic bubble while handling social and economic situations, such as rapid computerization, globalization and the decreasing birth rate and aging population, was required. The "Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Renaissance" was established and planned to promote systematic and prioritized measures in relation to the urban renaissance.

Furthermore, along with the burst of economic bubble, Japanese society had been moving into a mature society from a growth society. Under such circumstances, a good and high-quality life attracted public interest. The "Basic Act for Housing" was established in 2006. There was a plan to change "Securing quantity of housing" based on the "Act for Housing Construction Plan" to "Enhancement of the quality of housing, including living environment".

Moreover, the "Landscape Act" was established in 2004, which enabled the creation of a system to develop good landscapes in urban cities and rural districts. Along with this act, the "Soil Contamination Countermeasures Act" was enacted with high interest in environments, and related efforts have been promoted.

An earthquake hit the Hanshin area and Awaji Island on January 17, 1995, later

called The Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. After the earthquake, the "Act on Special Measures Concerning Disaster-Stricken Urban District Reconstruction" had been established. The act was used for the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck on March 11, 2015. In addition, public perception of disaster prevention and disaster reduction after both earthquakes was raised and various acts were enacted.

Looking at the prices of land after the burst of the economic bubble, the increase in land prices owing to high demand in real estate in parts of the Tokyo area for a period from 2006 was found in response to the continuation of economic expansion which had started from February 2002, being the longest one following the Second World War.

However, owing to the global financial crisis starting from the problem of subprime loans in the United States, the economy of Japan declined again. The prices of land, which began to show a rise for a period of time, declined again. The prices of land showed a trend which found a base around commercial areas of the three major metropolitan areas from 2014. Land prices for all uses and commercial use changed to an increase in the national average in the published land price guideline in 2016.

6. Countermeasures against a society with a population decrease from 2008 to 2017

As described in "2", the population of Japan had been increasing almost constantly since the Meiji period. However, its peak came in 2008, with a population of 128.08 million and then the population began to decrease. In addition, according to a moderate-range estimate in 2017 by National Institute of Population and Security Research, 127.09 million in 2015 will decrease to 110.92 million, and then to 99.24 million in 2053, and to 88.08 million in 2065 at last. A population decrease is thus expected for the time being.

Furthermore, according to an estimation by the Land Policy Office of MLIT, among 1 km-meshes where people live as of 2010, population will decrease in 2050 to less than a half in about 60% of the meshes and to zero in about 20%. A full-scale population decrease is coming to Japan.

We have not experienced such a society until now. Further, a rapid population decrease soon after the increase in total population especially in metropolitan areas has brought the necessity of taking measures against various problems, and various efforts have been commenced.

Concerning political measures regarding land, downsizing of urban cities and countermeasures against vacant houses are among the problems being faced.

As the problem of lands of unknown ownership detailed in Chapter 3 is expected to become more serious, political measures should be different from the previous ones that assume increasing population and expansion of urban cities areas.

Section 2 Political Measures in Relation to Land in the Future based on Changes over 150 years since the Meiji Era

1. Four types focusing on the background of political measures regarding land since the Meiji Era

Major measures in relation to land since the start of the Meiji Era are described along with the background in Section 1. There was a large number of political measures regarding land over 150 years. Their theme and the degree to which the government concentrated on them are different based on the social requirements of each period. Section 1 describes only a part of them roughly. Focusing on the background of political measures, they can be sorted into the following four types.

- (1) Political measures in relation to land as part of reforms of the whole government
- (2) Political measures in relation to land as the basis of industry and life
 - <(2)1. Political measures to solve the problem of a population increase in urban areas in response to changes of industrial structure>
 - <(2)2. Political measures in relation to the creation of safe, trusted and good life and good urban cities>
 - <(2)3. Political measures for a society with a population decrease>
- (3) Political measures for the soaring of land prices
- (4) Political measures in relation to land as part of urgent measures soon after severe damage

2. Efforts required in the future

Four types of political measures sorted in "1" include those which may need countermeasures in the future and the execution of measures continuously from the past or based on experiences in the past.

Countermeasures needed in the future according to the types in "1" above are as follows.

Regarding "(1) Political measures in relation to land as part of reforms of the whole

government”, political measures have been promoted according to the needs of national policy and strong public needs in the early period of the Meiji Era, referring to Western countries. It is expected that new political measures in relation to land would be required as a part of measures for the needs of national policy in future.

For example, a project to make use of administrative information considering individual privacy has been promoted as part of reforms of the whole government. In relation to land, a review has begun on the ground for improvement of processing technology for information, including geospatial information etc. and the problem of lands of unknown ownership etc. regarding digitalization, creation of open data for administrative information in relation to land owned by the government etc., and cooperation regarding property register books.

Regarding <(2)1. Political measures to solve the problem of a population increase in urban areas in response to changes of industrial structure> of “(2) Political measures in relation to land as the basis of industry and life”, it may be necessary to consider the future possibility of structure change we have never experienced in the areas of industry and ways of living. Looking back over the 150 years since the Meiji Era, residential areas have moved to regions where people can travel to work by train, etc. according to areas of concentration of industry in urban zones. Therefore, the population has been concentrated in metropolitan areas along with industry.

However, thanks to enriched improvement of information and communication technology and express transportation networks, there may be an expansion of the possibility that offices etc. including the headquarters function, will be located in rural areas or people will choose a working form like tele-work, for which there are no limits in terms of space.

A different movement from the existing one may be expected to increase from the point of view that some industry promotes enhancement of productivity and a reform of work style and from the background where some people aim at returning to the country or living in two different regions, etc. as another living style.

Looking at such a possibility, as pointed out in the Second National Spatial Strategies (decided in August 2015 in the Cabinet), a heavy concentration in Tokyo of the national population and various functions has continued and the problem of overcrowding exists. It is necessary to promote regional revitalization to correct such a situation and aim to develop national land in a balanced manner utilizing the unique characteristics of nature, culture, and industry, etc. of each region suitable for the future era.

Regarding <(2)2. Political measures in relation to the creation of safe, trusted, and good life and good urban cities>, first of all, it is important to grasp changes in public needs for "safe, trusted, and good life" and a good urban image and regional image

such that not only citizens of Japan, but also foreigners, desire to live, visit, and locate their offices for business in such cities. Promoting the reconstruction of urban cities and the creation of communities, etc. needed may be necessary.

Regarding <(2)3. Political measures for society with a population decrease>, it is expected that those measures will become increasingly important. The birth rate has been chronically low. Therefore, even if the birth rate is recovered, it is inevitable that a decrease of total population will continue for further decades.

Additionally, according to the moderate-range estimate in 2017 by National Institute of Population and Security Research, the decrease from 2015 to 2040 is expected to be 0.647 million. While the decrease from 2040 to 2060 is expected to be 0.904 million, presenting accelerations in decreasing speed.

Political measures in relation to land in the future must therefore be planned on the premise of accelerated population decrease.

Based on this premise, more hard work is necessary for political measures contributing to the compactification of urban cities that the government has already been working, as well as countermeasures against vacant lots and houses.

Concerning the problem of lands of unknown ownership, we may also say that it is an inevitable problem according to changes in various systems over the 150 years since the Meiji Era and the trend of the recent population decrease. There is a possibility that the problem will become more serious in the coming full-scale society with a population decrease and the age of mass inheritance. It is necessary to review measures for appropriate use etc. of land of unknown ownership and restrictions and solutions regarding the emergence of land of unknown ownership.

It is expected that a minimum amount of "maintenance" in addition to "use" will become important, preventing external diseconomy brought by land, as it would seem difficult to use all land effectively across the nation in a future society with a population decrease. Concentrating on the possibility which contributes to "Safe, trusted, and good life" and the "Formation of good urban cities" of (2)2 should be necessary without regarding a population decrease as negative phenomenon.

For instance, to form attractive urban cities and towns, making use of vacant lots and houses as living spaces and business spaces with rooms, for the local community to use vacant lots and houses as temporary common spaces, etc., integrating vacant lots and houses, and using selectively national land based on the degree of disaster risk noted in the Fifth National Land Use Plan (decided in August 2015 in the Cabinet) can be opportunities.

Regarding “(3) Political measures for the soaring of land prices” and “(4) Political measures in relation to land as part of urgent measures soon after severe damage”, if required in the future, it is necessary to take countermeasures properly without failing to learn from experiences in the past. Analysis and verification of measures in the past and effects are important. It is also necessary to proceed with the measures according to the concern level regarding trends in land prices, disaster prevention and disaster reduction, as well as reconstruction, in advance based on them.

3. Spread and Education of Perception in relation to Characteristics of Land

There is a case in which the difference in characteristics of land from the characteristics of other property may be a cause of the background of the policy in relation to land over the 150 years since the Meiji Era started.

For example, regarding land of unknown ownership, one cannot dispose of or lose land even if it becomes unnecessary. In addition, neighboring units of land relate to each other. Therefore, leaving land unused may become obstacle to the environment, crime and disaster prevention and projects of developing fields and forests in the neighborhood, causing external diseconomy in productivity. The characteristics of land include such a possibility. Further, as set out in Section 2 of the Basic Act for Land, land is the essential base for public activities. Official welfare shall thus take priority. However, there are examples in which land of unknown ownership has disturbed the progress of official projects.

Regarding the soaring land prices during the bubble economy period, it was easy for the price of land to rise because land was immovable and limited in quantity and not able to be reproduced when demand exceeded supply. Additionally, when land was bought and kept according to free private property rights in the same manner as other property without recognizing that land has the characteristic of official property, land becomes unused and prices soar.

The government mainly plans and executes policies. However, not only the government, but also public recognition in relation to the characteristics of land, which has the aspect of official property different from those of other properties, is important to enhance the effects of government policies and prevent cases in advance which cause difficulties.

October was set as the “Month of Land”. The activity to spread and educate the basic principle in relation to land by seeking cooperation with local public bodies and related groups has been developed. Looking back over the 150 years since the Meiji Era began, we believe it is very important to conduct such basic and sincere activities.

Chapter 3 Public Awareness and Solutions Surrounding the Problem of Lands of Unknown Ownership

The problem in relation to land of unknown ownership (land whose owner is not clear immediately based on the property register book or even if an owner is specified, any contact is impossible) has become obvious in Japan, which is facing a population decrease and super-aging society. The social situation has been changing such that public awareness in relation to land as property has become diluted owing to the decline of the necessity of land use and poor correspondence among relatives and a failure to register through inheritance for several generations.

First, Section 1 of this chapter describes the current situation of land of unknown ownership, giving examples of various surveys and cases in which difficulties were encountered owing to land of unknown ownership in order to grasp the actual situation.

Second, Section 2 considers public awareness regarding areas surrounding land of unknown ownership based on findings of public questionnaires conducted by MLIT. To close, it describes comprehensive management and future measures by the government regarding the problem of lands of unknown ownership.

Section 1 Actual Situation of Land of Unknown Ownership and Cases in which Difficulties were Encountered

1. Actual state of land of unknown ownership

(Land owner etc. in cadastral survey FY2016)

As a result of the survey regarding ownership of land, etc. in relation to the cadastral survey for 622,608 units among 1,130 areas (563 municipalities), land whose ownership, etc. is unknown accounts for 20.1% in the registry of real property, which may represent the outer edge of land of unknown ownership. By area, the highest rate of land of unknown ownership is 25.6% in forested areas and 14.5% in metropolitan areas (DID areas).

While a local public body, which is a major conductor of a cadastral survey, conducted the survey based on family registers and resident cards and hearing investigations, the results showed eventually that land of unknown ownership amounts to 0.41% among all land. We may see it as the most limited land of unknown ownership.

Figure Survey on land ownership etc. in the FY2016 cadastral survey

	Survey results by area (note)				
	[The value in () is the rate of surveyed target units. The value in [] is the rate for Not found in register alone]				
	All	City area (DID)	Residential land	Farmland	Forests
The no. of units targeted for survey	622,608	79,783	98,775	200,617	243,433
1. Location in register	497,549 (79.9%)	68,203 (85.5%)	81,610 (82.6%)	166,648 (83.1%)	181,088 (74.4%)
2. Not found in register alone	125,059 (20.1%)	11,580 (14.5%)	17,165 (17.4%)	33,969 (16.9%)	62,345 (25.6%)
2-1 Transfer of ownership not registered (Inheritance)	83,371 [66.7%]	5,152 [44.5%]	10,399 [60.6%]	24,375 [71.8%]	43,445 [69.7%]
2-2 Transfer of ownership not registered (Buying and selling, exchange etc.)	1,192 [1.0%]	30 [0.3%]	198 [1.2%]	786 [2.3%]	178 [0.3%]
2-3 Address change not registered	40,496 [32.4%]	6,398 [55.3%]	6,568 [38.3%]	8,808 [25.9%]	18,722 [30.0%]
3. Conclusively missing	2,526 (0.41%)	304 (0.38%)	134 (0.14%)	689 (0.34%)	1,399 (0.57%)
Reference: Boundary unfixed	10,140 (1.6%)	2,014 (2.5%)	1,438 (1.5%)	2,264 (1.1%)	4,424 (1.8%)

Data: MLIT "Survey on land ownership, etc. in the FY2016 Cadastral Survey"

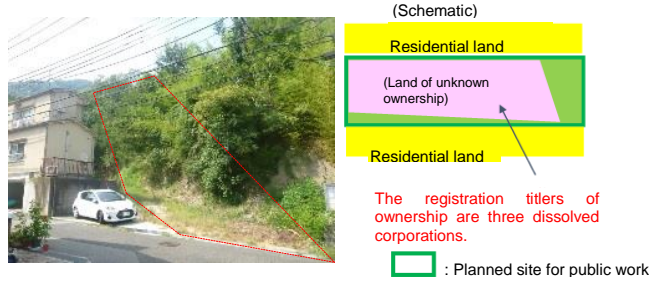
Note: Classified according to the maximum proportion in each region because of the inclusion of various areas (DID, residential land, farmland, forests) for the area.

2. Cases encountering difficulties in relation to use and management of land caused by unknown ownership

(Cases in which the registered holder of land to lease for use is a dissolved corporation)

The cases are such that the landowner was not specified when trying to lease land for use as a countermeasure against steep slope collapse risk. The land is in a forest and is 5,280 square meters. The registered holders of ownership of the land are three corporations that were dissolved (owned about 130 square meters, about 650 square meters, and about 4,500 square meters, respectively). The property register book was revised in 1980, 1982 and 1995, which was the latest revision. The three corporations described above were all dissolved.

Figure Cases in which registration holders of ownership of land for use or rent is a dissolved corporation



Data: MLIT "Special Session of National Land Development Council Land Policy"

The three dissolved corporations, which are the registered holders of ownership of the plots of land, were not liquidated and legally left. Therefore, the agreement for land lease necessary for starting the countermeasure is not available. One process that could be useful is for community residents to make a petition for appointment of a liquidator to a court and set landowners, and then proceed with construction. However, there are problems of cost allocation, and the procedure would take time. Therefore, the liquidator at that time has been searched for continuously and a solution is being sought.

Section 2 Analysis of Findings Regarding Public Awareness Surrounding the Problem of Lands of Unknown Ownership

Since public awareness of land seems to be closely related to the problem of lands of unknown ownership such that public awareness lacks interest in land, MLIT conducted two surveys as follows.

- (1) "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues" ("Survey of Public Awareness") with randomly selected people.
- (2) "Web survey in relation to land not used for residence, fields and forests" ("Vacant lots") for people who own vacant lots ("Web survey in relation to vacant lots")

This section describes awareness in relation to land surrounding the problem of

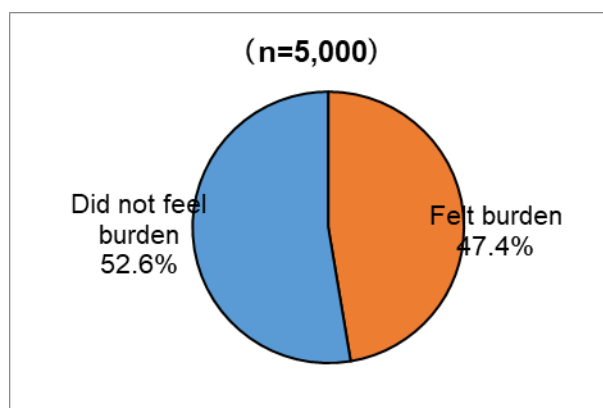
lands of unknown ownership from the following points of view: "Feeling of burden of the landowner", "Intention in relation to owned vacant lots", "Responsibility of landowner", "Abandonment of land ownership", and "Disclosure of information about landowner".

1. Feeling of burden of the landowner, actual state of maintenance of vacant lots and relation to the feeling of burden

(1) Feeling of burden to own land
 (Simple tabulation of Web survey for owners of vacant lots)

Figure Feeling of burden regarding owned vacant lots (simple tabulation)

In the Web survey for landowners of vacant lots, 47.4% of landowners said "Yes" to the question "Do you feel a burden regarding owning vacant lots?" (If a landowner owns more than one vacant lot, he/she is asked to consider the farthest vacant lot.)

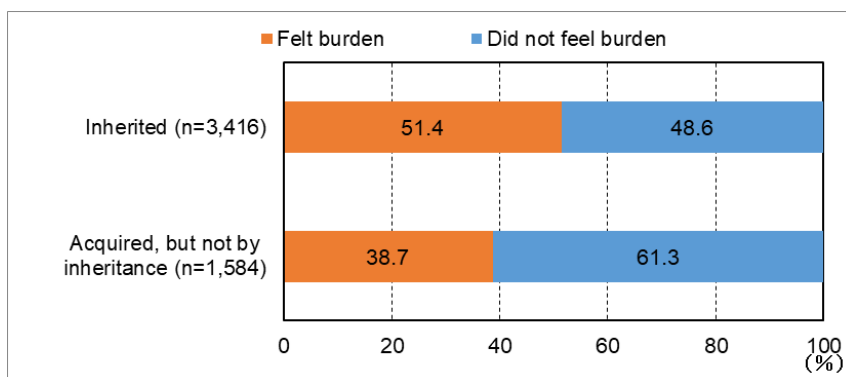


Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

(Differences in acquisition reasons of owned land (whether inherited or not)

Figure: Feeling of burden regarding owned vacant lots (by way of acquisition)

Looking at feeling of burden by acquisition reason, 51.4% of landowners who inherited such vacant lots said "They felt a burden for owning vacant lots". Also, 38.7% of landowners who acquired such land other than the reason of inheritance felt a burden, showing a result that the rate of "Yes" was higher for landowners who inherited vacant lots. That is, landowners who intend to own vacant lots by his/her own will feel less of a burden.



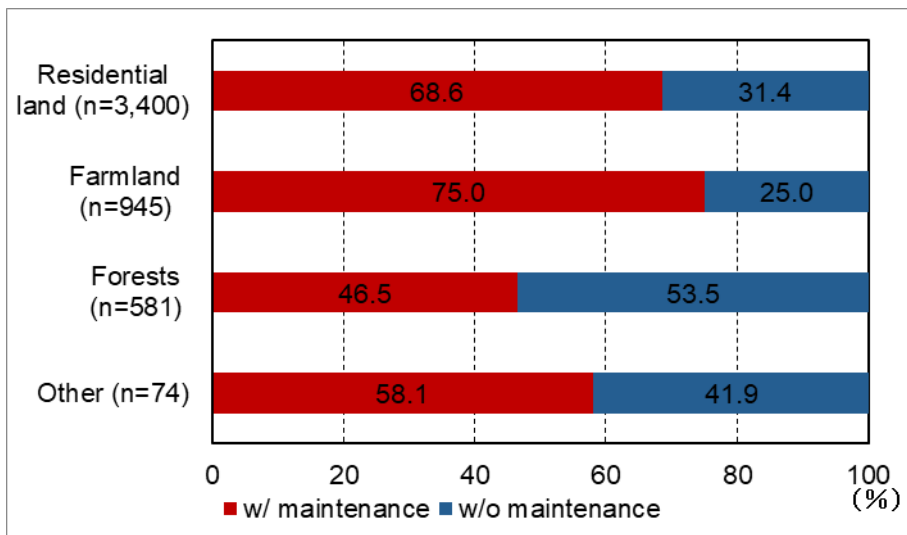
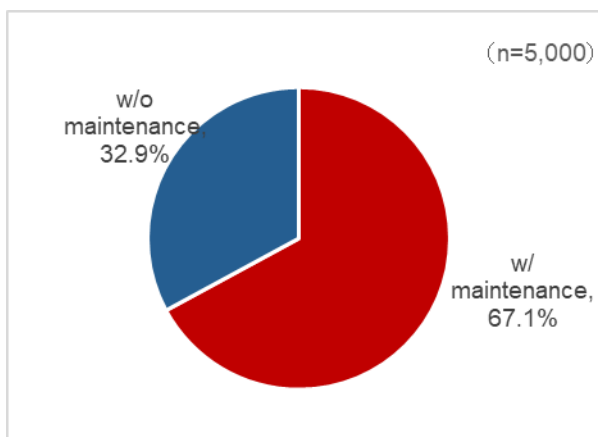
Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

(2) Relation between actual state of maintenance regarding owned vacant lots and feeling of burden

(Actual state of maintenance regarding owned vacant lots)

A simple tabulation on "Doing or not doing maintenance" regarding owned vacant lots (cases in which a landowner lets a third party maintain vacant lots are included in addition to cases in which a landowner maintains vacant lots by him/herself.) shows that 67.1% of landowners replied "Do maintenance." By use purpose, the figure is 75.0%, vacant lots are fields, showing a high rate, it amounts to 46.5%, whose vacant lots are forests, showing low rate. The rate of not maintaining unused lots in forested areas was high.

Figure Maintenance frequency by landowner of owned vacant lots

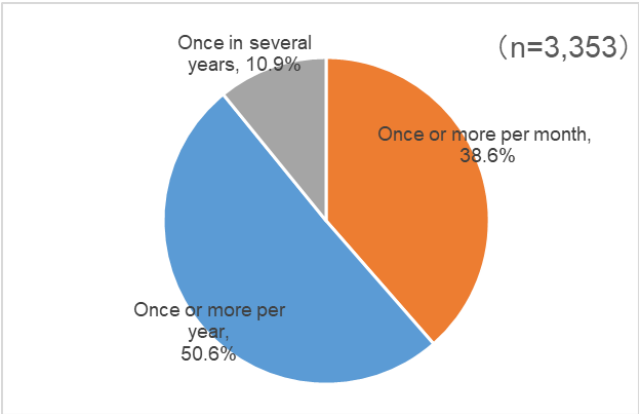


Data: MLIT "Survey on Web site in relation to lands not used"

According to the questionnaire on the frequency of maintenance for landowners of vacant lots, the highest rate, 50.6%, replied, "Once or several times a year". 38.6% replied, "Once or several times a month".

Relation between actual state of maintenance and feeling of burden regarding owned vacant lots)

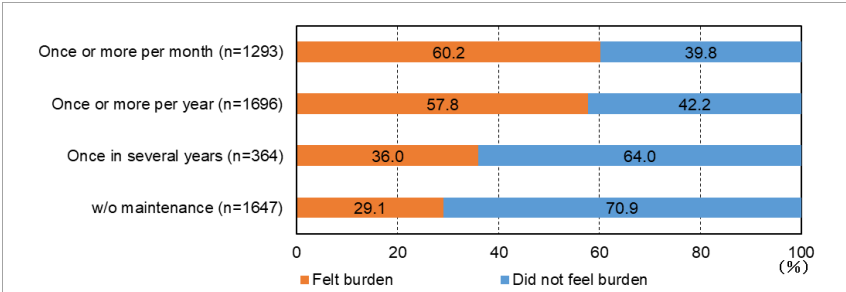
Summing up the feeling of burden by the frequency of maintenance of owned vacant lots, 60.2% of landowners who said the frequency of maintenance was "Once or several times a month" replied, "Felt a burden", the largest number of them. Meanwhile, the figure was 57.8% for "Once or several times a year" and 36.0% for "Once a year". The rate of landowners who replied, "No maintenance is done for vacant lots" was 29.1%, the smallest number of them.



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

The findings show that landowners who frequently manage owned vacant lots felt an increased burden. The survey also revealed that the more landowners do maintenance on unused vacant lots, the more they feel a burden.

Figure Feeling of burden to owned vacant lots (by maintenance frequency)



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

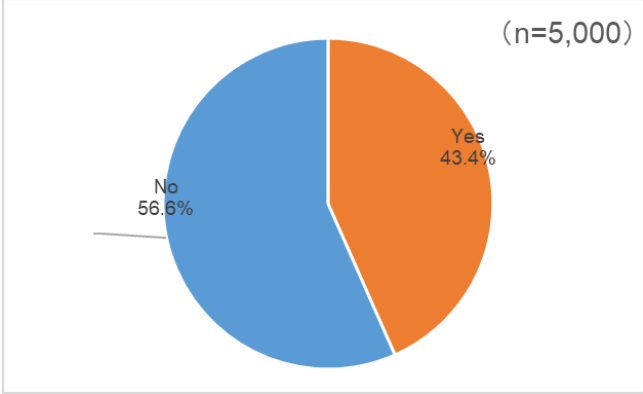
2. Intentions for owned vacant lots

(1) Do you want your successor to inherit owned vacant lots?

(Based on data from the Web survey for landowners of vacant lots)

According to the survey, for the question "Do you want your relatives, etc. to inherit the owned vacant lots?" 56.6% among them replied, "No".

Figure Do you want your successor to inherit owned vacant lots? (Simple tabulation)

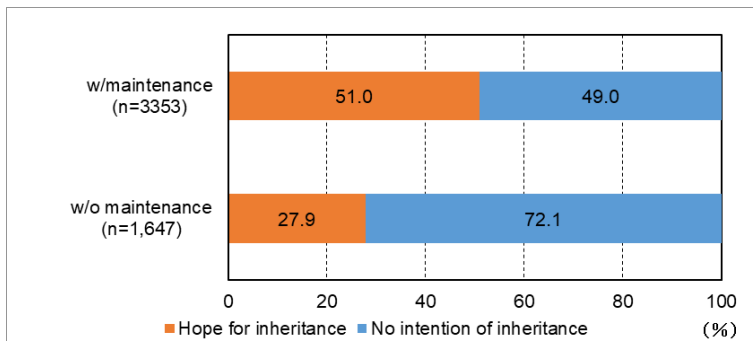


Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

(Difference in whether landowners manage vacant lots owned or not)

Looking at the difference in inheritance intention whether landowners managed owned vacant lots or not, the rate that said they do not want relatives etc. to inherit vacant lots was high among landowners who do not manage such lots (72.1%).

Figure Intention of owned land inheritance to your relatives (by w/ or w/o maintenance)



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

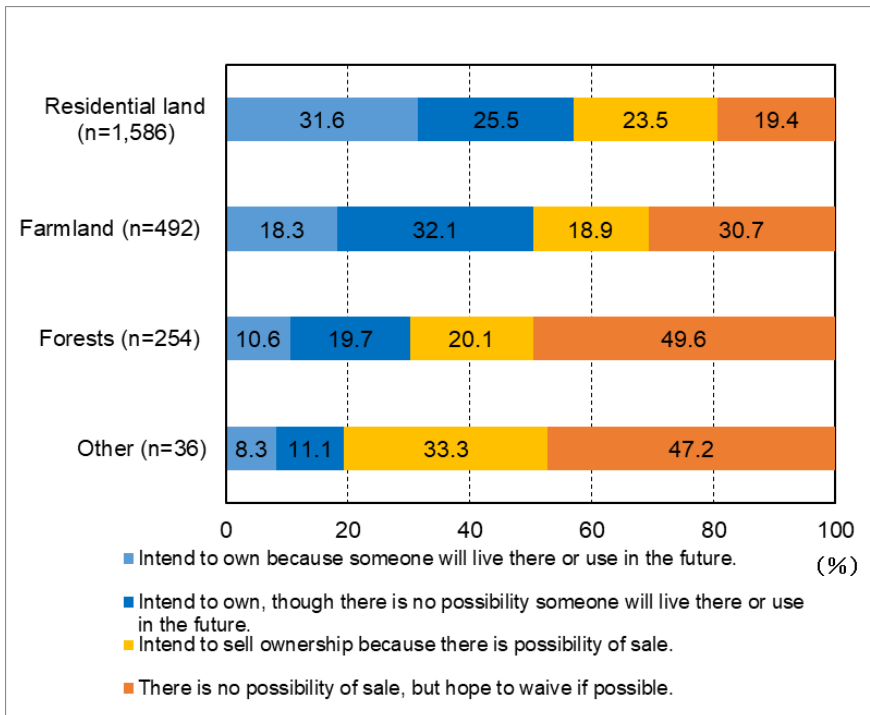
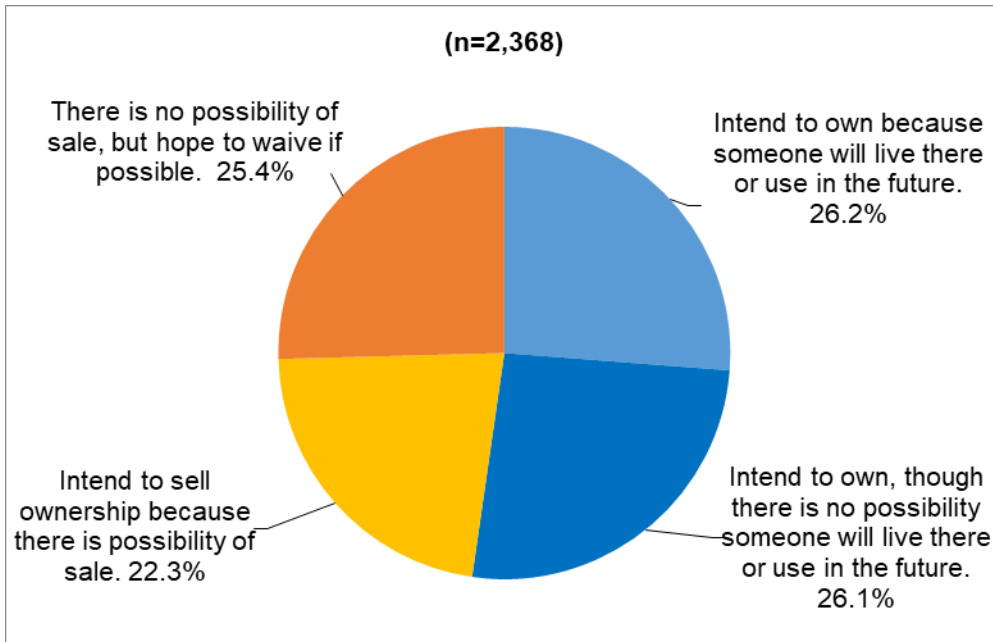
One may suppose that landowners who manage vacant lots want relatives to inherit them. However, the rate of landowners who do not manage owned vacant lots and replied that they do not want relatives to inherit them was high. This is because they do not find positive meaning for the inheriting of vacant lots they do not manage to their successors.

(2) Future intention for vacant lots, for which landowners feel a burden
(Do you want to waive the ownership of land for which you feel a burden?)

In response to the question "Do you want to waive ownership of the land?", for landowners of vacant lots who replied that they felt a burden, more than half of them replied that they want to continue to be the landowner. "Yes" and "No" to the question of the probability of use of land were almost same. Meanwhile, 22.3% among them replied, "I am going to sell [the land] because I have a opportunity to" and 25.4% replied, "Although I have no chance to sell [the land], if I can, I want to release it".

Summing up by the purpose of owned vacant lots, 42.9% of landowners of residential land, 49.6% of landowners of fields and 69.7% of landowners of forests replied, "I'm going to sell [the land]" and "I want to release it".

Figure Intention to waive the ownership of vacant lots which you feel burden



Data: MLIT "Survey on Web site in relation to lands not used"

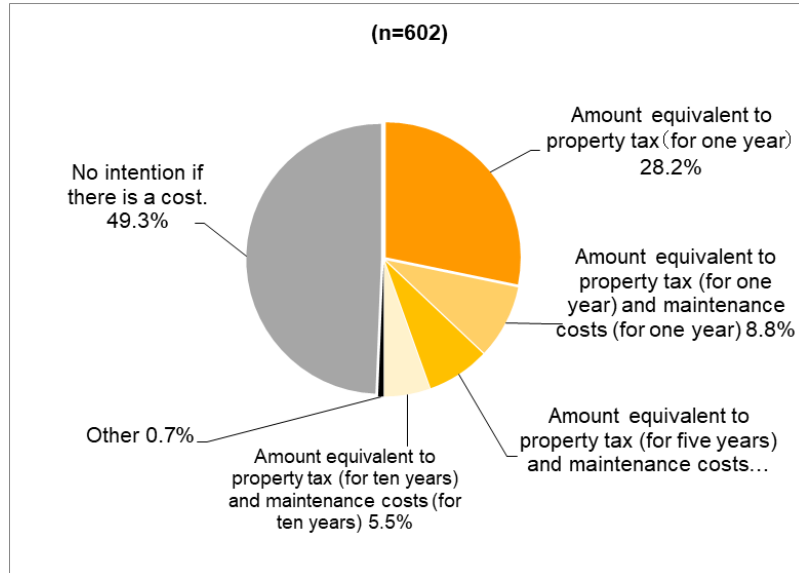
(Burden of costs for waiver)

Regarding the rate of the reply that "I have no chance to sell [the land], but if possible I want to release it", the following increase was seen: 19.4% among landowners of residential land, 30.7% among landowners of fields and 49.6% among landowners of forests.

In response to the question "How much would you pay to release owned vacant lots owned?" for landowners who replied above, 49.3% among them said, "I do not want to release [the land] if I have to pay any cost" even if they felt burden regarding land ownership.

Meanwhile, 28.2% of them replied, "Up to an amount equivalent to the fixed assets tax (for one year)". The findings show that half of them replied that they would like to waive ownership of land even if they have to pay a fixed cost.

Figure How much do you pay for the waiver of rights of vacant lots that you own and feel a burden for?



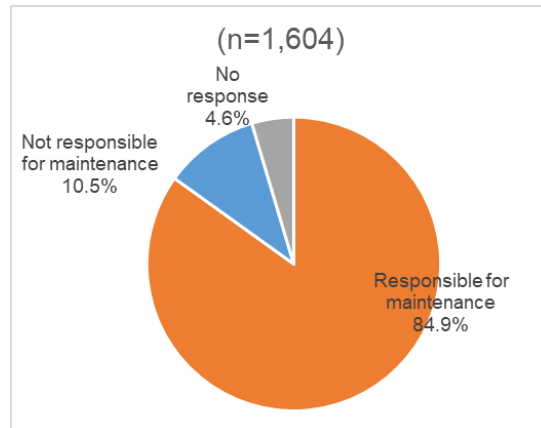
Data: MLIT "Survey on Web site in relation to lands not used"

3. Responsibility of landowner

(Simple tabulation of survey on public awareness)

In response to the question "Do you think that a landowner is responsible for maintenance such as mowing etc. to prevent a negative influence on the neighborhood, even if the land is not used?" 84.9% among the public replied, "A landowner is responsible for maintenance."

Figure Responsibility of landowner (simple tabulation)

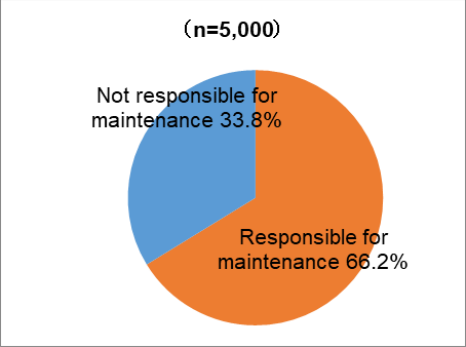


Data: MLIT "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues"

(Simple tabulation of Web survey for landowners of vacant lots)

According to the same questionnaire for landowners of vacant lots, 66.2% among them replied, "A landowner is responsible for maintenance", about two-thirds. However, compared with the result of survey on public awareness, findings are low at a certain rate.

Figure Responsibility of landowner (simple tabulation)



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

(Differences in whether a landowner takes care of and registers vacant lots or not)

Over 70% of landowners think they are responsible for maintenance among those who own vacant lots and take care of or register them properly. Meanwhile, over 50% of landowners think they are not responsible for maintenance among those who own vacant lots but do not take care of or register them.

Figure Responsibility of landowner (w/ or w/o maintenance)

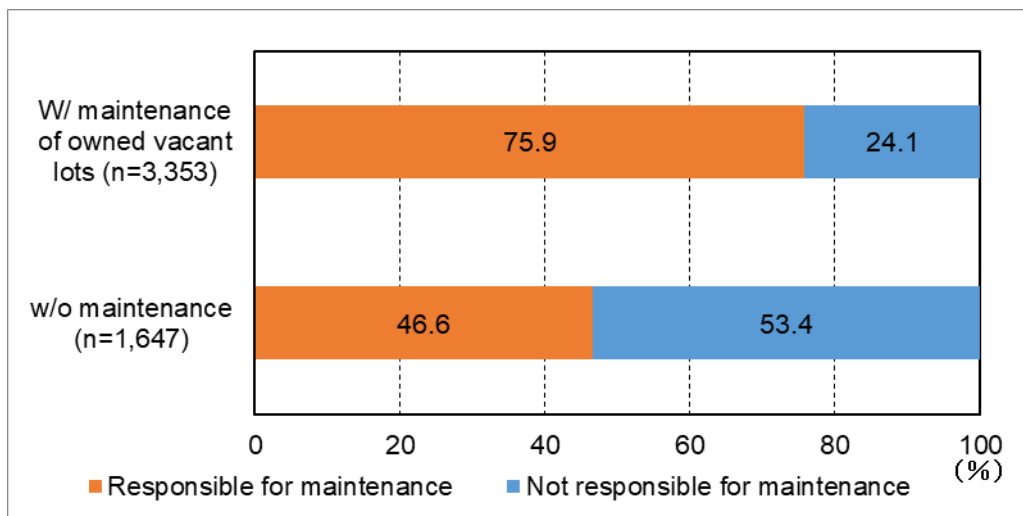
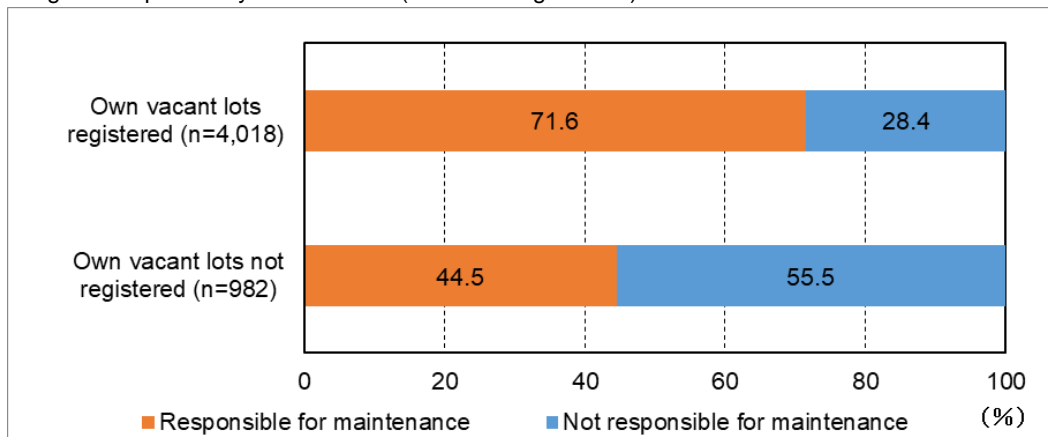


Figure Responsibility of landowner (w/ or w/o registration)



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

4. Waiver of land ownership

(Simple tabulation of survey on public awareness)

According to the questionnaire on public awareness, to the question "Would you waive land ownership when land becomes unnecessary?" 76.6% of them replied, "I would waive land ownership." In addition, 59.3% of the respondents who would accept such a waiver replied, "If I could pay a fixed cost, I would waive it" (45.4% of all respondents), and 40.7% of the respondents replied, "I would waive it without paying any cost." (31.2% of all respondents)

According to questionnaire, in response to the question "Who should bear various costs including maintenance costs of waived land?" for respondents who replied, "I would accept the waiver of land" (76.6%), 62.8% replied, "Local public bodies", 28.1% replied, "The government". The rate of reply "Local bodies such as a self-government association, etc.", which is not the government and rather closer to individuals, was 4.0%.

Figure Waiver of land ownership (simple tabulation)

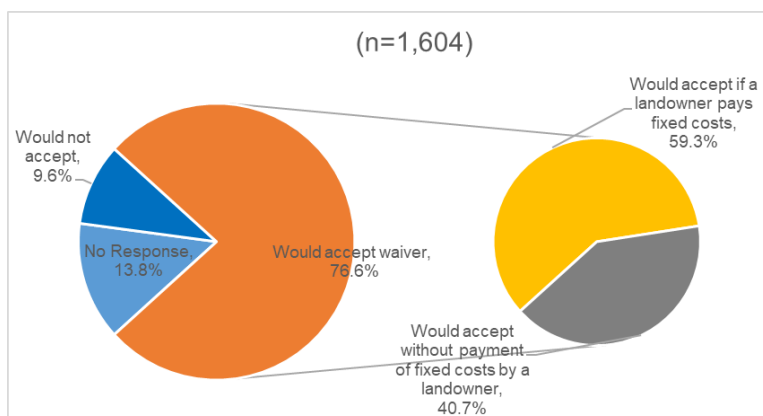
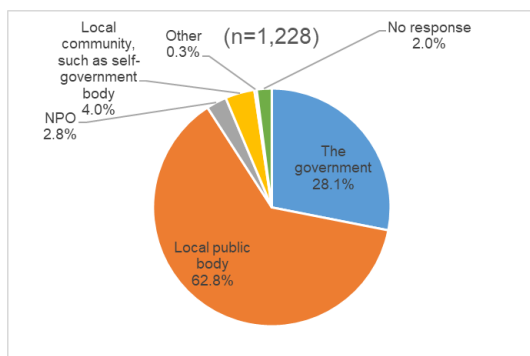


Figure Who should take over the waived lands?

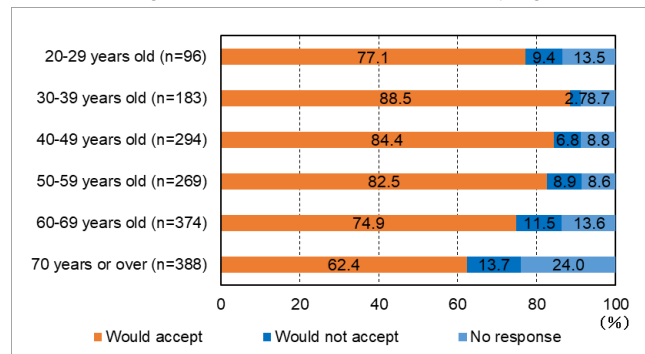


Data: MLIT "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues"

(Differences by age)

Looking at differences by age regarding the idea of waiver of land ownership, except for those in their 20s, the rate of respondents was on the decrease among those who replied, "I might accept waiver land ownership." Respondents over 70 years old excluded, over three-fourths of them replied, "Would accept waiver".

Figure Waiver of land ownership (by age)



Data: MLIT "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues"

(Simple tabulation of Web survey for landowners of vacant lots)

Similarly, in response to the question "Would you accept a waiver of land ownership?" to all targeted respondents of the Web survey, 69.0% of them replied, "I would accept a waiver", a lower figure than findings in the public awareness survey. On the other side, 48.8% of respondents replied, "I would accept a waiver if I paid a fixed cost", among whom said, "I would accept the waiver." (33.7% of all respondents), and 51.2% of respondents said, "I would accept a waiver without paying any cost" (35.3% of all respondents), showing almost the same rate. Compared with the survey on public awareness, the rate of the response "I would accept a waiver without paying any cost" was slightly high.

In addition, in response to the question "Who do you think should take over waived land including maintenance costs?" among respondents who replied, "I would accept the waiver" (69.0%), 54.1% replied, "A local public body", and 28.8% replied, "The government". Including the 9.4% who replied, "An official organization except for local public bodies", over 90% replied that an official organization should take over waived land, which remains unchanged compared with findings in the survey on public awareness.

Figure Waiver of land ownership (simple tabulation)

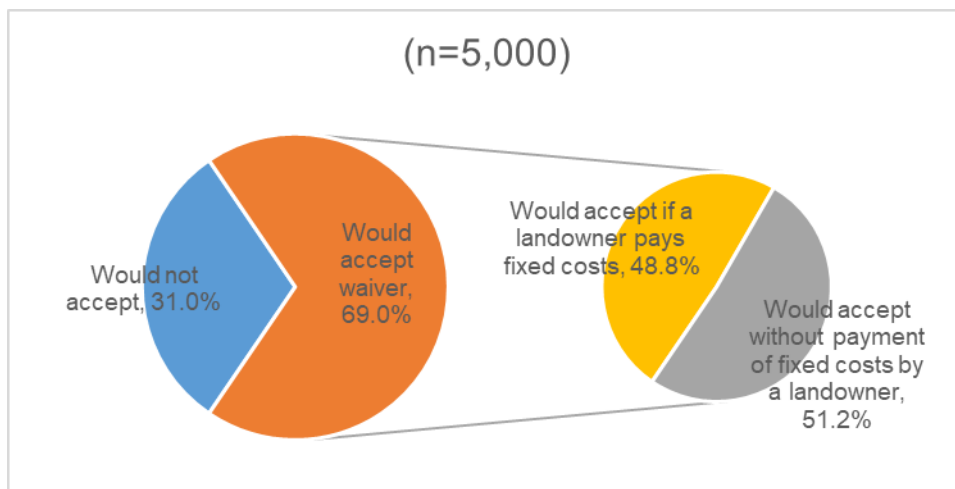
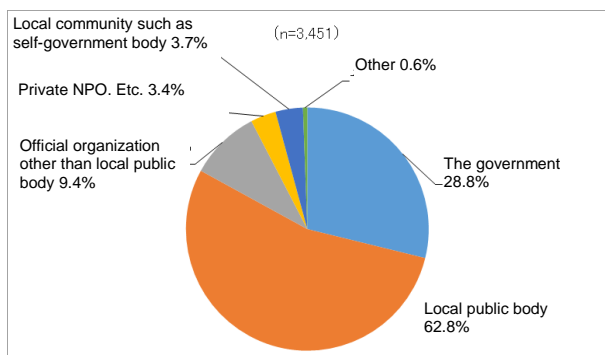


Figure Who shall take over the waived lands?



Data: "Web survey regarding unused land" by MLIT

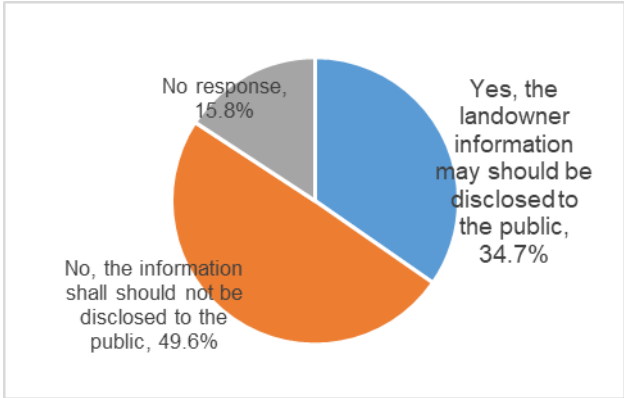
5. Disclosure of Landowner Information

(Simple tabulation of public awareness survey)

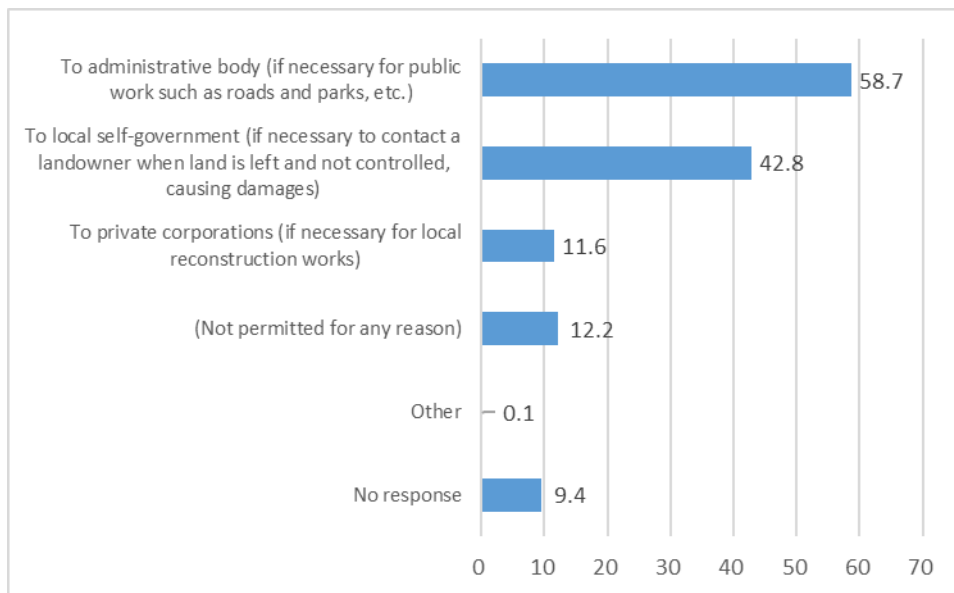
In response to the question "Do you think that landowner information should be disclosed so that anyone can recognize the landowner easily?" for all targeted respondents of the survey on public awareness, 34.7% of them replied, "Yes, the landowner information should be disclosed to the public". However, 49.6% of them replied, "No, the information should not be disclosed to the public", higher than the rate of those who said "Yes".

In response to the question "To which kind of body do you think the landowner information should be disclosed?" for respondents who replied, "It should not be disclosed to the public", 58.7% of them replied, "To an administrative body (when needed for public projects such as the construction of roads and parks, etc.), the highest rate. This was followed by 42.8% who answered, "Local self-government, etc. (If land is left and not taken care of, which causes damage and someone has to contact a landowner, it should be disclosed.). Meanwhile, the rate of those who replied, "No disclosure should be allowed for any reason" was 12.2%.

Figure Disclosure of land ownership information



Results for the question, "To which kind of body do you think the landowner information should be disclosed?" to respondents who replied, "It should not be disclosed to the public." (Choose one or more)



Data: MLIT "Survey on the Public Attitude Toward Land Issues"

Section 3 Government Efforts and Future Measures against the Problem of Lands of Unknown Ownership

(Effort for FY2017)

The government decided the "Basic Policy of Finance and Economy Operation 2017" in June 2017 in the Cabinet. In relation to land whose owners are difficult to specify and which are common problems for public projects and consolidation of fields and forested areas etc. the government set out the policy that it shall review establishment of a new system which makes use available for official wide purposes corresponding to local needs and aim to present necessary bills in the next ordinary session of the Diet and at the same time review medium- to long-term problems with the registration system and the state of land ownership.

Based on these policies, the Subcommittee Special Group for Land Policy of National Land Development Council proceeded with a review in relation to the direction, etc. of the system to ease land use of unknown ownership which is urgent business and published the interim report in December 2017. Taking these situations into consideration, MLIT and the Ministry of Justice submitted "the Bills on Special Measures in relation to easement etc. of land use of unknown ownership" to the 196th session of the diet. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries presented "the Bills on Partial Revision of Promotion of Strengthen the Basis of Agricultural Management, etc." and "the Bills on Forest Management" to the session of the Diet.

(Efforts by the whole government)

As efforts by the whole government, the "Ministerial Conference with Related Cabinet Ministers to promote measures against land of unknown ownership" sponsored by the chief cabinet secretary was held on January 19, 2018, for the promotion of comprehensive measures that the government unites cooperating closely with related governmental organizations in relation to problems regarding land of unknown ownership. The conference consists of the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, the Ministry of Reconstruction and the chief cabinet secretary. Hearings from academics were conducted and MLIT, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications presented the current status and explained future schedules, etc. respectively. Further, related ministries shall proceed with a

review uniting the whole government in relation to fundamental problems such as how land ownership and the registration system should operate, etc. as well as promoting preparation to submit bills to the 196th session of the Cabinet in cooperation with related ministries under the leadership of each minister.

(Further efforts)

Regarding proper use and management of land of unknown ownership, as mentioned before, the new system was submitted to the session of the Cabinet. Medium- to long-term problems such as the ideal state, etc. of the registration system and land ownership shall be continuously discussed and proceeded.

In the future, the Ministry of Justice and MLIT shall proceed to review the basic system in relation to land ownership such as the ideal state of the responsibility of a landowner, etc., the appropriateness of making mandatory registration for inheritance and the propriety of a waiver of land ownership in cooperation of related ministries.

In addition, the system to specify landowner information shall be reviewed in cooperation of related ministries.

Part 2 Basic Measures in Relation to Land in FY2017

(omitted)

Part 3 Basic Measures in Relation to Land in FY2018

(excerpt)

Chapter 1 Dissemination of Basic Philosophy on Land

During the “Land Month” of October (October 1 is “Land Day”), the government works to disseminate the basic philosophies on land and introduce various measures and systems concerning land in collaboration with relevant organizations.

Chapter 2 Enhancement of Information on Land

Section 1 Systematic Maintenance of Land Information

In order to systematically maintain information on land ownership, utilization, transactions, prices and so forth, the government will conduct publication of the value

of standard sites and cadastral surveys, as well as grasp transaction information. It will also create and improve statistical data in order to clarify the actual state of land transactions. Especially in FY2018, the "Basic Survey of land and buildings for corporations" shall be conducted as a basic statistics survey on a five-year cycle.

Section 2 Promotion of National Land Surveys

The government promotes cadastral surveys, land classification surveys (including a land-use history survey), and water surveys.

Section 3 Promotion of Enhancement of National Land Information

As for digital national land information, the government will revise publication of values of standard sites and publication of values of standard sites by prefectural government. Concerning geospatial information, the government will prepare and update map information and geospatial information (i.e., social foundation) based on the basic plan for advancing the use of geospatial information that was decided by the Cabinet in March 2017.

Section 4 Enrichment of the Land Registration System

The government will focus on the intensive mapping of urban areas for which the lot numbers are not adequately registered and other areas requiring urgent mapping across the nation in order to provide them at registries.

Chapter 3 Accurate Understanding of Land Prices Trends

Section 1 Promotion of the Publication of Values of Standard Sites

The government will publish the results of analyses of trends in land prices based on the results of the standard sites expanded to 26,000 in 2019 Publication. It will also publish the results of analyses of the trends in land prices based on the 2018 investigation of prefectural land prices carried out by prefectural governors.

Section 2 Provision of Real Estate Transaction Prices

The government will conduct surveys on real estate transaction prices nationwide and publish information on transaction prices obtained in the surveys on the Internet on a quarterly basis.

Section 3 Development of Property Price Index

The government will announce the property price index (both for residential and

commercial) at the same frequency as that of the previous year, etc. to grasp trends of property price in a timely and accurate manner and try to improve the transparency of real estate markets.

Section 4 Enhancement of Real Property Appraisal

The government will promote measures based on the "Future Direction of Real Property Appraisal System (Proposal regarding measures for the time being)" compiled at a real estate appraisal system conference, continuing from last year.

In addition, the government will continuously conduct appraisal evaluation monitoring that includes an on-the-spot inspection of real estate appraisers to improve the reliability of real estate appraisers.

Section 5 Balanced and Proper Land Appraisal by the Public Sector

The government will make efforts to balance and optimize plottage in relation to fixed property tax and inheritance tax and properly reflect trends in land prices for suitable land prices and tax.

Chapter 4 Improvement of Real Estate Market

Section 1 Improvement of Real Estate Transaction Market

The government will start full-scale operation of a real estate comprehensive database and matching of vacant houses and vacant lots etc., strengthen mediation functions according to the start etc. of full-scale operation of the "National bank of vacant houses and vacant lots", revitalize the existing housing transaction markets based on the spread of "Feeling easy R House"(ANSHIN R House) etc., and improve the environment for the application of new IT technologies, etc. in real estate transactions using an IT-based explanation system for important points.

Section 2 Improvement of Real Estate Investment Market

According to the "Action plan for improvement of real estate investment market," etc., the government will hold seminars, etc. for promoting practical use of Corporate Real Estate (CRE) and Public Real Estate (PRE) etc., seminars in relation to healthcare REIT, and conduct appropriate control of promotion of earthquake-resistant and environmental friendly real estate formation.

Section 3 Land Tax Measures

In view of the enhancement of land transactions and the promotion of land use, the government will continue to implement tax measures for the acquisition, possession and transfer of land at each step.

Section 4 Support for Global Business Development in Real Estate Markets

The government will support the development and spread of systems contributing to improvement of the business environment in ASEAN countries, etc. through securing legal stability and improving systems and operations at sites.

Chapter 5 Improvement and Enhancement of the Land Use Plan

Section 1 Promotion of the Land Use Plan

In order to ensure a smooth transition and promotion of prefectural/municipal plans based on the National Land Use Plan (National Plan), the government will take necessary measures including surveys and information provision, while promoting proper and reasonable land use by properly implementing the general plan of land use.

Section 2 Promoting Proper Use of Land in City Planning

The government will promote appropriate implementation of the “Policy for Improvement, Development and Preservation of City Planning Areas” (master plan), which is laid out in each city planning area, and a formulation of the “Basic Policy Concerning Municipal City Planning” (municipal master plan). The government will also promote appropriate utilization of land use systems and support municipalities in developing location optimization plans based on the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Renaissance to promote the formation of compact cities.

Section 3 Coordination with National Land Policy

The government will conduct a continuous review for the formation of "Circulate Promoting National Land", which is the basic concept of National Spatial Strategies (National Plan).

The government will support businesses which spread to the regional economy effectively as "Regional Economy Towing Business" with full-scale measures such as budget, tax system, financing, and deregulation, using "Regional Future Investment Promotion Act" enacted in 2017 and creating high added value making full use of regional characteristics.

Chapter 6 Promotion of Housing Measures

Section 1 Promotion of Housing Measures

The government strives to promote basic plans for housing and the supply of public rental housing, implement a new housing safety net system using privately rented housing and vacant houses, actively promote housing supply in urban areas centered on big cities, and form good living spaces through redevelopment of existing urban areas. While continuing support for utilization and removal of empty houses, the government will support comprehensive measures for empty houses in partnership with private companies based on a plan for empty houses and pioneering model projects in partnership with experts. Furthermore, the government will work on enhancement of measures for housing acquisition through various tax measures, etc.

Section 2 Creation of Favorable Living Environment by Promoting the Provision and Management of Good Residential Land

The government will promote the supply of good residential land, while trying to support for actions to maintain and renew the residential environment utilizing existing funds with the cooperation of the government and private corporations regarding new towns facing a decrease in various activities in the community and other challenges owing to the advance of rapid population aging and decline.

Chapter 7 Promotion of Effective Land Use

Section 1 Promotion of Regional Revitalization and Urban Renewal

The government will further promote policy packages and individual measures according to stages of life respectively incorporated into the Comprehensive Strategy for Vitalization of Towns, People, and Jobs revised in 2017. The entire government will work toward further evolution of regional revitalization, while continuing support in terms of information, human resources and finance for local governments working on full-scale business development. It will also promote city regeneration in areas designated for Emergency City Regeneration as well as city regeneration nationwide, while at the same time promoting integral use of lots and reorganization of public facilities.

Section 2 Promotion of Urban Infrastructural Development and Enhancement of Disaster Resistance

In order to promote urban infrastructure development, the government will promote utilization of the know-how of private companies as well as the space above and below ground level. In order to enhance and strengthen the warning and evacuation systems based on the Sediment Disasters Prevention Act, the government will advance development of disaster-resistant towns by promoting the creation and publication of sediment disaster hazard maps by municipalities, grasping their progress, promoting

evacuation drills, raising residents' awareness of disaster prevention and enhancing disaster preparedness in cooperation with relevant local governments.

Section 3 Promotion, etc. of Use of Underutilized/Unused Land

The government will promote redevelopment, etc. of underutilized/unused land, such as former factory sites and filled land, and use of underutilized/unused land in cities by using the agreement to promote use of underutilized/unused land, and a system to authorize private green spaces. It will also promote enhancement of city functions and economic vitality in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Section 4 Development of Comfortable Residential Environment by Utilizing Farmland

With respect to farmland in urbanization promotion areas in regions with significant housing demand, the government will continue to promote the provision of residential land with a good living environment by utilizing farmland through the farming and residence association system. Meanwhile, it will promote use of productive green areas as places for exchange by urban residents through development of allotment gardens, for example.

Section 5 Promotion of Town Development for Coexistence of City, Greening and Agriculture

The government will promote town development smoothly through notifications on a green space authorization system for citizens to form nature-rich urban cities and a system for residential areas in the country, etc. in cooperation with related organizations, etc. and conduct a survey on problems and measures for utilization.

Section 6 Utilization of Land Owned by the Public Sector

The government will make adjustments for optimal use of national and public properties in cooperation with local governments by sharing information on national and public properties in certain areas and establishing coordination for optimal use of such properties while respecting the opinions of relevant local governments, etc.

Section 7 Facilitation of Public Land Acquisition

In order to generate the effects of public work projects at an early stage, the government will continue to promote land acquisition in line with "Land Acquisition Management," under which bottlenecks in land acquisition are examined and analyzed

with careful preparations being made regarding all stages from the planning of projects to their future use, along with ensured schedule control.

Section 8 Promotion of Measures for Land the Owners of Which are Difficult to Locate

After enactment of "The Bills on Special Measures in relation to easement etc. of land use of unknown ownership", "The Bills on Partial Revision of Promotion of Strengthen the Basis of Agricultural Management, etc." and "The Bills on Forest Management" submitted in the 196th session of the Cabinet, the government will improve governmental and ministerial ordinances in relation to the search for landowners and notify thoroughly new system for the introduction to promote utilizing land of unknown ownership, as well as fields and forests of unknown ownership.

In addition, regarding fundamental problems such as the appropriate state of the registration system and ownership of land, the government will promote a comprehensive investigation giving "the ministerial conference for promoting countermeasures against land of unknown ownership" held in January 2018 a central role.

Chapter 8 Promotion of Environmental Conservation

Section 1 Promotion of Measures Concerning Environment Conservation

The government will promote land-related measures for environmental conservation and give consideration to environmental conservation in various land-related policies and when selecting and implementing projects, based on the "Fifth Basic Environment Plan" approved by the Cabinet in April 2018.

Section 2 Appropriate Conservation of Farmland

The government will promote improvement of land conditions through infrastructure-development projects for enhancing agricultural competitiveness, etc. and subsidies for development of rural areas. The government will conduct measures to promote setting the right for use of reusable blighted farmland to the intermediary institutions that manage farmland, etc. for controlling and solving the generation of farmland.

Section 3 Ensuring Appropriate Conservation and Utilization of Forests

In order to maximize the multi-functionality of forests, the government will smoothly utilize reports on the status of reforestation after trimming based on the revised Forest Act enforced in April 2017, and provide guidance and advice to local governments and forest owners on the systematic development of forests based on the forest planning

system provided by the Forest Act.

Section 4 Proper Conservation of River Basins

In special river basins for comprehensive flood control measures, the government will establish river basin conferences consisting of the river divisions of the national, prefectural and municipal governments, and other divisions related to city, housing and land, as well as create river basin improvement plans to encourage proper land use in river basins and the control of rainwater runoff.

Section 5 Promotion of Proper Protection of Cultural Property and Creation of Favorable Landscapes Taking Advantage of Local History, Culture, etc.

As for historic villages and streetscapes, the government will provide guidance and advice to municipalities regarding the preservation and utilization of conservation zones for clusters of traditional structures. For landscapes created through interaction between people and nature, the government will advance the selection of important cultural landscapes while working to preserve and use them.

Chapter 9 Measures for Recovery/Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake

Section 1 Measure in Relation to Land Use

As measures concerning residential land, the government will promote measures against tsunami disasters, such as projects for promoting mass relocation for disaster prevention, projects to develop post-tsunami restoration centers and projects to enhance disaster prevention functions in fishery settlements as well as sediment disaster countermeasures and liquefaction. The government will also implement projects to recover farmland and agricultural facilities from the disaster, remove salt elements, and rearrange land in conjunction with recovery and removal, while supporting affected farmers who resume farming activities using devastated farmland in place of their evacuation or other areas that escaped disaster.

Moreover, the government will promote utilizing various special provisions of land use based on the Reconstruction Improvement Plan System set forth in the Law on Special Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Areas and support the smooth and prompt implementation of projects to develop urban areas and agricultural production bases.

Section 2 Measures in Relation to Housing

The government will support the provision of public housing for disaster victims. It

will also support disaster victims in rebuilding their residences by providing housing loans for disaster reconstruction and application of a special provision for disaster victims taking loans from the Japan Housing Finance Agency, as well as preferential measures on loaning for the promotion of workers' property accumulation.

Section 3 Efforts for acceleration of residence rebuilding and urban renovation

In order to ensure that the construction of disaster public housing, the development of land for private housing and other projects will advance according to the plan, and the government will steadily implement the successive acceleration measures that have been taken by the "task force for acceleration of house reconstruction and post-earthquake town reconstruction," while at the same time providing municipalities with finely tuned practical support through the "land acquisition acceleration task force" and the "construction acceleration task force".

Section 4 Measures in Relation to Land Information

The government will promote clarification of land boundaries through support for affected local governments in accordance with the implementation status of cadastral surveys and the development of maps for registries. The government will also provide the land measures departments of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures and Sendai City with information on registration of land transactions and real estate transaction prices in the respective prefecture or city.

Section 5 Tax Measures

The government will continue the tax measures at each stage of land acquisition, holding and transfer, as they are necessary to promote the reduction of burdens on victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake as well as efforts toward recovery and reconstruction.