Induction of Public Housing with the Location Optimization Plan

- Case Studies of 42 Cities in Japan -

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Abstract

This study analyzed planning methods for guiding the location of public housing. As a result, the following findings were obtained concerning the future location guidance of public housing using the Location Optimization Plan. The location of public housing complexes were guided by the method of consolidation, reorganization, or abolition based on whether they were located inside or outside of the residential induction area. The site of a public housing complex is located in a residential induction area. Residential complexes in large and conveniently located areas were incorporated into the residential induction areas when the zones were designated.

Furthermore, in cities where the entire administrative area was not within the scope of the site selection plan, the location balance of residential complexes was taken into consideration. The cities had established their own zones defined in their urban master plan to guide the location of public housing complexes even outside of the residential induction areas.

Keywords: Public Housing, Location Optimization Plan (LOP), Public Housing Longevity Plan (PHLP), urban function induction area, residential induction area, Compact City

1. Introduction

Public housing is a facility provided to people in need of housing at low rents through the cooperation of the national and local governments based on the Public Housing Act (1951). In 2015, about 60% of public housing was more than 30 years old and was due for renewal. In order to prepare for this problem, each municipality had been formulating a plan to extend the life of public housing since 2009.

As a result, as of 2020, 94% of municipalities in Japan had formulated this plan. In addition, the Location Optimization Plan (LOP), which was institutionalized under the Law on Special Measures for Urban Revitalization revised in 2014, requires effective utilization of land and buildings owned by municipalities. Public housing is defined as one of the facilities to be integrated into urban function and residential induction areas in this LOP.

Therefore, this study investigates the policies and measures for guiding the location of public housing in 392 cities in Japan that have formulated and announced their LOP as of the end of July 2021. Furthermore, by analyzing the planning methods of the preceding municipalities, we aim to gain knowledge on the location guidance of public housing in future LOP.

2. Methodology

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This study will survey 392 cities nationwide that have published LOPs to determine how public housing is handled in these plans. For the obtained plans, we will sort out whether or not there is any mention of location guidance for public housing in the community development policy, guidance policy, etc.

The methods for guiding the location of public housing are classified into three categories: "consolidation," which aims to consolidate the housing within the residential induction area; "reorganization," which aims to rebuild or redevelop the housing within the residential induction area; and "abolition," which aims to abolish or remove the use of the housing outside the residential induction area.

3. Planning Methods for Location Induction of Public Housing in Japan

(1) Measures for Location Induction of Public Housing in the Public Housing Longevity Plan

In Japan, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) has established the formulation guideline for the Public Housing Longevity Plan (PHLP)\(^1\). This guideline states that when selecting project approaches for public housing management, a management policy (continuation or use discontinuation) should be determined based on the current location environment and other social characteristics of the housing complex location. In evaluating the location, convenience, local balance, and whether the site is inside or outside of disaster hazard areas will be considered. Specifically, "If the site is conveniently located near public transportation such as railroads and buses, or near public utility facilities, living convenience facilities, and educational facilities, it is evaluated as suitable for continued management of the complex. Furthermore, the specific project methods (maintenance, improvement, or reconstruction) are determined based on the current physical characteristics of the residential building and the future stock volume.

Thus, there are no specific rules regarding the induction areas in the guidelines. However, during the planning process, an evaluation is made based on the location of the complex and the amount of future stock. This allows some of the public housing complexes to be consolidated in areas with convenient public transportation, such as urbanization promotion areas and residential induction areas.

(2) Measures for the Guided Facilities in the Location Optimization Plan

The LOP defines the necessary public facilities in the urban function induction areas in accordance with the "community planning policy" and the "urban function induction policy"\(^2\). The guided facilities include not only public utility facilities but also private commercial and medical facilities. In the guideline for the LOP, there is no mention of public housing in the examples of guided facilities. Therefore, it can be interpreted that public housing is included as part of the private housing to be concentrated in the residential induction area.

On the other hand, budgetary and financial support measures for the LOP include the Public Housing Development Projects. In this project, subsidies are provided for the cost of removing and relocating existing public housing when it is removed and reconstructed. This project provides subsidies for the cost of removing and reconstructing existing public housing. If the new public housing is located within residential induction areas, or if it is relocated and reconstructed from outside residential induction areas, 1/2 of the removal and relocation costs will be subsidized. Conversely, the subsidy rate will be reduced to 1/3 in the urbanization control area and the special landslide disaster prevention zone. This will discourage new public housing construction in areas that are not suitable for residential induction, such as the urbanization control area.
4. Case Studies of 42 Cities in Japan

We tabulated the description of methods for guiding the location of public housing in 392 cities. (Table 1) As a result, there were 42 "cities with a policy" in which the policy on location guidance is described in the public housing managed by the municipality. In some cases, such as Niihama City in Ehime Prefecture, these methods were used to proactively guide the location of new buildings.

In addition, there were 25 "Project only cities" with a description of a public housing development project for some public housing managed by the municipality.

The number of "Cities without policy" with no policy statement was 325. Note that about 1/3 of the cities classified as having no policy had less than 10 public housing complexes under their management. These are considered to be cities where there is no need to actively seek location guidance.

Table 1. Policy on Guiding the Location of Public Housing in the Location Optimization Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hokkaido</th>
<th>Tohoku</th>
<th>Kanto</th>
<th>Chubu</th>
<th>Kinki</th>
<th>Chugoku</th>
<th>Shikoku</th>
<th>Kyushu</th>
<th>All Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cities with policy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project only cities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cities without policy</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>352</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>392</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parentheses ( ) are the number of cities with less than 10 public housing complexes.

5. Case Studies of Location Guidance Policies for Public Housing Complexes

The 42 cities classified as "Cities with policy" in the previous part are analyzed. These cities are guiding the location of public housing through either consolidation, reorganization, or abolition, in accordance with the community planning policy and urban function induction policy of their LOPs. Among them, based on the characteristics of the LOP, we will conduct a detailed analysis of each planning method for "(1) cases linked with the Public Housing Longevity Plan", "(2) cases in which residential induction areas are designated in consideration of the location of housing complexes," and "(3) cases linked with the Urban Master Plan".

(1) Cases Linked with the Public Housing Longevity Plan

In the PHLP of Esashi Town, Hokkaido, the criteria for determining the location of public housing complexes is whether they are inside or outside of residential induction areas. Convenience is evaluated based on whether the housing complex is within the residential induction areas. Or, even if it is outside of residential induction areas, it is evaluated based on whether it is located within a 5-minute walking distance from bus stops. Of the 42 cities, two cities used this method: Esashi Town and Omuta City, Fukuoka Prefecture.

(2) Cases in which Residential Induction Areas are Designated in Consideration of the Location of Housing Complexes

Niihama City, Ehime Prefecture, has 44 housing complexes, and the percentage of the population living in public housing is 4.7%. Therefore, public housing is one of the most important policies in the city's housing policy. Furthermore, there are plans to rebuild public
housing on a large scale, and the city has designated an area that is expected to become more convenient with the construction of the bypass as residential induction area. In other words, at the process of designating the residential induction area, the plan was made with the location of housing complexes in mind.

In addition, Niihama City is using the method of consolidation, reorganization, and abolition to systematically guide the location of all housing complexes owned by the municipality.

(3) Cases Linked with the Urban Master Plan

In Kitakami City, Iwate Prefecture, the Kitakami Urban Planning Area is designated as part of the administrative area, and the entire city area is not designated as the LOP area\(^5\). Therefore, in consideration of regional balance, Kitakami City has established its own "community centers" in areas outside the urban planning area in the LOP, based on the regional concepts of the Kitakami City Urban Master Plan. For this reason, public housing is being concentrated in residential induction areas within the scope of the LOP. Outside of the plan, public housing is being concentrated and reorganized into community centers.

6. Conclusion

This study analyzed planning methods for guiding the location of public housing in cities that have published the LOP. As a result, the following findings were obtained concerning the future location guidance of public housing using the LOP.

The location of public housing complexes were guided by the method of consolidation, reorganization, or abolition based on whether they were located inside or outside of the residential induction area. The site of a public housing complex is located in a residential induction area. Residential complexes in large and conveniently located areas were incorporated into the residential induction areas when the zones were designated.

Furthermore, in cities where the entire administrative area was not within the scope of the site selection plan, the location balance of residential complexes was taken into consideration. The cities had established their own zones defined in their urban master plan to guide the location of public housing complexes even outside of the residential induction areas.

In the future, when each municipality revises its urban master plan, LOP, and PHLP, it is hoped that these findings will be taken into account in guiding the location of public housing.

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