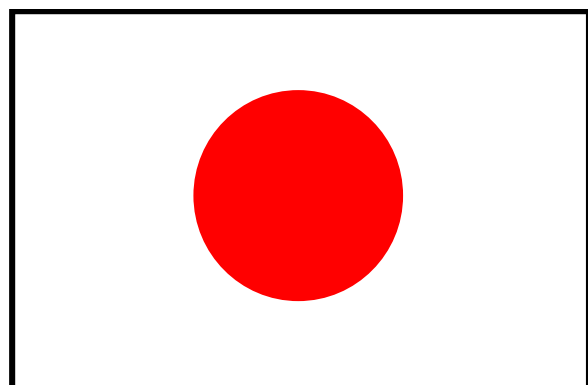


A Dialogue on Urban Development between Europe and Japan

*With the support of the Prefecture of Niigata, the City of Niigata, INTA,
The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Japan*



Reflections from an INTA panel on the future of Niigata

European cities in their regional and international context	4
Being an international city	5
A specific position at national level	6
A specific position as regional metropole	6
The “Gateway Cities”	7
Niigata has the assets to project itself internationally	8
Measures	13
The planning strategy – Urban Form and Landscape	14
The Development Issues	15
The Identity	15
Measures	16
The Goals	16
Objectives and Policies	17
To protect and enhance Niigata’s natural assets	17
To establish a polycentric city region	17
To reinforce the role of the central city	17
To enhance the character of the central city	17
To enhance connectivity and mobility	17
To establish governance arrangements that ensure implementation	18
Living in a compact network of livable cities	19
Niigata – a dynamic, yet relaxed city	19
Ingredients for Sustainability	20
Measures	20
The Housing Issues	21
Commerce	24
Measures	24
Leisure and culture	24
Mobility	25
Measures	25
New transportation plan for the agglomeration	25
Transport plan for the city proper	25
The Urban Strategy – towards an aesthetic of public space	28
Viser l’excellence en matière d’aménagement urbain.	28
City centre, public spaces	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The centrality axis.	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The riverfront axis	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The complementary activity axis.	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The “metropolitan grid”	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The Riverfront	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
Scale of Renewal	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
The Commercial Poles of the Structured City	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
Measures	32
Breaking the Governance Barrier	33
A Strategy for Niigata 2020	33
The 2020 Forum	33
An Urban Institute	33
Standing Council on Development	33
Consultative Council for Development (CCD)	33
Expansion and Promotion Committee	33

Foreword

Placed under the effective chairmanship of both the Governor of the Prefecture and the Mayor of the City of Niigata, INTA organized in November 2004 a 4-day conference with European and Japanese urban practitioners; this exchange being part of a dialogue between Europe and Japan on urban development policy.

Niigata is – at Japanese scale – a medium size city with over 650 000 inhabitants in the central part and 850 000 people in the metropolitan area. Located on a coastal agricultural plain on the Japan sea, north-west of Tokyo, Niigata is also an active harbour, surrounded by a mountain range, a well known skiing destination.

In order to make the exchange and dialogue as constructive as possible, the meeting combines several features:

- A series of keynote addresses,
- Two rounds of panel discussions,
- An extended technical visit covering several critical urban issues,
- Concurrent technical commissions,
- A collective presentation by INTA team,
- Finally, a closing debate.

Each member of the INTA team was invited to make a formal presentation, to participate into the panel discussions, to contribute to the collective exposé on a series of critical Urban issues:

- *Strategy for Revitalising Medium-Size City*
- *Waterfront Regeneration*
- *Urban Development capitalising on Historical Heritage*
- *Public Transport Policy – the mobility question*
- *New Housing Policy for new Urban Development*
- *Commercial and Retail policy – Containing Urban sprawl*
- *Landscaping and public space – beautifying the city*

These issues reflect the current concerns of Niigata, and more generally of medium size Japanese cities, confronted with rapid uncontrolled urbanisation, dual rhythm of development at the detriment of the rural areas and the need to regenerate the core city areas to keep and attract customers and inhabitants.

In this context, INTA called a group of European practitioners, each one being experienced and familiar with the above issues. Each member of the team prepared in advance a presentation on his field of expertise as keynote address. Following the technical visits and concurrent sessions, the INTA team produced *overnight* a series of short presentations reflecting its views and recommendations on the various urban issues discussed during the preceding days.

The report that follows is the collective contribution of the INTA panel to the discussions in Niigata.

Reflections from an INTA panel on the future of Niigata

Our reflections cover two main parts:

A summary of the current situation in Europe with regard the place and role of cities in an international open economy

Our own interpretation of the potential of Niigata and related policy options.¹

European cities in their regional and international context

- Barcelona was a major regional centre in Spain; it is now an emerging metropolis in southern Europe.
- Lille was a regional centre in the periphery of France; it is now emerging as a major node in the development corridor between the British Isles and continental Europe.
- London and Paris are no longer just national capitals, but represent Europe as global cities.
- Berlin is being transformed from a divided, isolated city to a major capital and gateway between Central and Eastern Europe competing directly with Vienna.

Cities and towns have to adapt to their new relative locations and to their new positions in the European urban hierarchy that manifests itself in a number of potential opportunities and threats.

Within certain densely populated regions, towns and cities are co-operating more than those in less densely populated areas by, for example, developing different specialist functions. In regions with a balanced urban system and a strong level of spatial cohesion, such co-operating clusters of towns can provide a good opportunity for sound regional development in the future, as they enlarge the general service level and business conditions of the region as a whole. In more polarised regions, of the 'Paris' type, imbalances between a central major metropolitan area and the surrounding towns and settlements are making the emergence of networks of co-operation more difficult. In more thinly populated regions, the potential for developing co-operative regional clusters of towns is more limited because of the distances between them. However, networks of co-operation could still help ensure that such areas attract the optimum

¹ There may be in few places a repetition of ideas and analysis; this reflects the intention to preserve the individual opinion of the INTA panel without to much editing.

amount of economic activity possible. In the face of global competition, networks are also beginning to emerge at the transnational and continental level, but are as yet limited mostly to the exchange of experience, without any real regional, strategic development dimension. The development of such a dimension at the continental level could assist in enhancing the global competitiveness of regions, and at the transnational level could help improve the development potential of the towns and regions involved.

In addition to the spatial changes there are also major factors creating new economic opportunities for many of Europe's towns and cities :

- the opening up of middle and eastern Europe,
- the population and political pressures of the external European Union areas,
- the further liberalisation of trade and traffic,
- the globalisation of the economy,
- rapid technological change

Being an international city

This notion of "international" city is not a simple one and implies different types of strategies and policies.

European urban areas of international level present common some features: they accumulate international and other world functions, they have a good competitive basis, but they will have to deal with congestion. These international urban are themselves divided into three categories

- *'global cities'* - London, Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, possibly Berlin and one or two others - will continue to attract high-level functions such as multinational headquarters, international financial institutions and other commercial services
- *'metropolitan regions'* - such as the Randstad, the "Flemish Diamond" and Belgian central urban network, Rhein-Ruhr, Rhein-Main, Hamburg, West-Midlands (U.K.) - are reinforcing their international position by developing complementary specialisations in the different centres of the agglomeration and investing in overcoming the handicap of their industrial past

- *'capital cities* - most have potential on their own (especially capitals like Copenhagen, Stockholm, Lisbon, Helsinki, Madrid, Rome); some are facing specific challenges associated with their function as gateways to the EU (Vienna, Helsinki).

Obviously there are other levels of prominence that cities could achieve in the national urban structure:

A specific position at national level

The success depends on the existence of a relatively sound base by overcoming their structural difficulties such as:

- *'peripheral cities with a weaker urban function'* – these cities are having fewer development opportunities owing to long distances, dependency on traditional activities, declining population, severe climatic conditions, etc but cities such as Bari, Porto, Valencia, Rennes, Seville, Edinburgh have developed innovative development strategies and are proving that the effects of inherent structural constraints can be limited.
- *'older industrial cities'*, - these are cities which have the potential to develop new economies, but where much will depend on their new relative location especially with regard to the economic core area.

A specific position as regional metropole

The critical factor is the location of the metropole

- *'regional level cities in the national urban core area'* will have generally good growth potential, especially in service sectors
- *'regional level cities outside the core area'* will be dependent on their location; some will benefit from their location on a development corridor or from an attractive hinterland (Toulouse, Grenoble, Salzburg)
- *medium-sized cities in predominantly rural regions*, where much will depend on their location, can benefit from their natural surroundings as there is an increasing consciousness of the benefits that a high quality rural environment can provide.

The central common issue here is that circumstances call for towns and cities to adopt a new dynamism for developing their potential, that competition for mobile investment between cities is tougher, that not every town or city will find its new situation as advantageous as the old and that the European territory is not a level playing field. Many older industrial cities will have to continue with a long process of restructuring and diversification; other towns and cities will continue to be too dependent on one

major activity such as public administration, tourism or seaport functions; many towns in rural areas will continue to find it difficult to attract sufficient economic activity. But there are strong cities in the more peripheral areas that have the capacity to attract enough mobile investment for themselves and their surrounding regions. Those with specific functions, such as ‘*gateway*’ cities, have important new opportunities. Cities that find themselves in new dynamic positions can exploit those positions to reinforce the competitive position of Europe in the world.

Urban regions are competitive only if their towns and cities are motors of economic growth.

The competition in which they engage now takes place in an economy that is becoming increasingly global and liberalised. This competition could result in a polarisation between successful cities and less successful ones, which would not be remedied by co-operation alone. It also requires the internal development of those cities that are less well prepared for dealing with the new challenges. Other cities and towns require particular attention in view of the decisive boost which their dynamism may be expected to produce: these include the “***gateway cities***” which give access to the national territory (major seaports, intercontinental airports, cities where fairs and exhibitions are held, cultural centres) and small towns which can provide a driving force for the revitalisation of declining rural areas.

The “Gateway Cities”

In Europe, the so-called “gateway cities” include some peripheral metropolitan areas which have shown that they can build on specific advantages such as lower labour costs or special links with former colonies or neighbouring non-member countries. The development of their strategic European role as gateway cities would not only help them to face their particular “gateway” problems but could also contribute to achieving a more balanced economic development of the EU. Since this contributes to the competitiveness of the European Union as a whole and to redressing imbalances within its territory, this trend is encouraged and care is taken to ensure that benefits also extend to the hinterland of the cities concerned.

Some cities suffer from little or no success in attracting mobile investment. The lack of attractiveness of a town or city may be explained by a number of varying factors and one or more remedies may be applied on the basis of specific needs. These could

include education and training for the local labour force, the development of the capacity to innovate, improved modern infrastructure (like access to the world wide information network) and public facilities, and urban regeneration.

Many of these less attractive cities have an excessively narrow economic base dominated by a single industry whose decline has resulted in the downturn in the local economy. A similar process may occur elsewhere in view of the threats to sectors that have hitherto held out well. Sometimes, the urban economy is stagnant because it is dominated by one less dynamic sector such as non-commercial services. In all these situations, it is clear that the competitiveness of the urban areas depends on policies to diversify their economic base.

In some mainly rural areas of the European Union, towns do not succeed in asserting themselves as motors of regional development. However, the economic diversification required of these rural cannot usually be restricted to rural activities in the narrow sense of the term. Paradoxically, the future of the countryside often lies in its towns, which should be regarded as the starting point for economic growth based primarily on firms which can develop the potential of each area.

In this policy aim, the basic purpose is to improve the role of cities and towns as dynamic centres for economic activities, with a particular stress on the development of rural areas.

These elements of analysis, present at different degrees in most European cities, are also relevant in the case of Niigata.

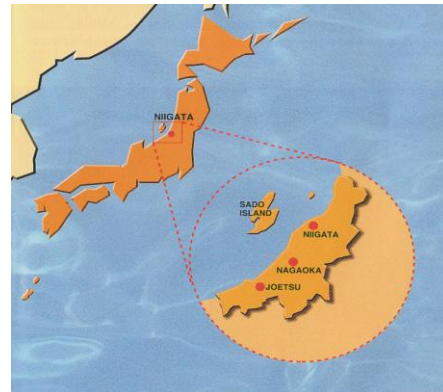
Niigata has the assets to project itself internationally

Niigata presents a wide range of opportunities to assert itself as region and as city i.e. as a regional gateway; both the city and the Prefecture of Niigata have many of the features identified earlier to play a major role at all levels: international, national, regional

Niigata City is located approximately 300km Northwest of Tokyo and at the Japanese gateway to Northeast Asia. It is the largest Japanese city along the coast of the Sea of Japan and has a population of about 530,000 with a land area of 231.94km².

Traditionally, Niigata has been outward looking in its development and has welcomed overseas

influence. Now, more prosperous than ever, the people of Niigata are ready to follow their natural leaders into new projects like **the PEARL project**.



Niigata is the capital of Niigata Prefecture and it is a pioneering prefecture in the promotion of active exchanges with countries and regions in Northeast Asia. The **Bandajima redevelopment** is proof of the Niigata Prefecture's vocation to deeper exchanges with the North East Asian region, which consist of China, North and South Korea, Mongolia, Russia and Japan. The Bandajima Building is already the seat of the Economic Institute for North East Asia (ERINA), set up to promote economic relations between Japan and other countries in North East Asia and to the development of North East Asian economic zones.



As a **port city**, Niigata has a long history and is distinguished for being the site of one of only five international ports opened in 1868 when Japan resumed contact with other countries after nearly 250 years of self-imposed isolation. Since that time, Niigata has developed into one of Japan's most important modern international ports

and has been designed by the Government as the only “core port” on the Japanese Sea Coast. Together with the Port of Naoetsu, they provide sea transport services to Korea, China and Russia as well as the South East Asia.



The **Japan Sea Rim**, a region with rich culture, caring people and global perspectives all of which help to establish Niigata as a strong base for the Era of Japan Sea Exchange. This region will see dynamic transfers of people, goods and information as well as extended exchanges in a variety of fields, such as business and culture, in the coming years.

Niigata's **accessibility** is guaranteed. The city is very well connected. Niigata Airport is a flourishing international gateway, with regular flights to cities in Russia, China and Korea. The extension of its runway to 2,500m, which was put into operation in 1996, has greatly expanded Niigata Airport's opportunities, making direct flights to the West Coast of North America and Eastern Europe possible.



Currently, many chartered flights between Niigata and overseas locations are being put into operation. Also, domestic flights are abounding. In addition, the Joetsu Shinkansen bullet train and the Kan-etsu, Hokuriku and Joban Expressways form a high-speed transportation system that links the region to Tokyo.



In **economic** terms, Niigata, as Japan's number one rice producer, is also developing an advanced food processing industry based on the advanced technology used in

various products made of rice such as rice snack foods and mochi (rice cakes), as well as rice wine (sake).

In addition, **International Exchange** is already a reality through the Niigata NGO Network founded in 2002 to exchange communication and cooperation among Niigata's NGOs that are channelled internationally by the Niigata International's Association.

Regarding **Education**, it is important to highlight the remarkable strides made in Japanese science and technology over the last few decades which have been accompanied by no less outstanding achievements by Japanese industry. The time has already arrived in which there is the need for a new approach to science and technology, one that can facilitate the formation of a positive, balanced and supportive relationship between man's environment and the progress and needs of industry. With this aim, the Nagaoka University along with the Niigata Industry Creation Organization and local businesses produce unique projects to strengthen Nagaoka's industries.

On the other hand, Niigata has the highest percentage of high school that enter vocational schools with 2.465.000 people.

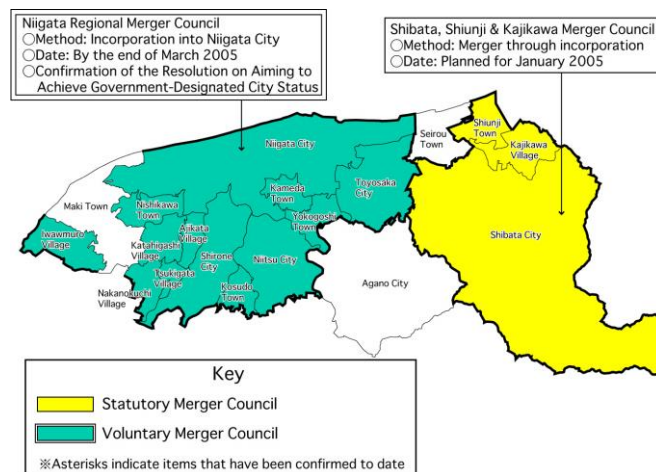


Regarding cultural and tourist facilities, among which is the **Niigata Stadium “Big Swan”**, which was built in 2001 and can hold up to 42,300 spectators making the city a center point of international news. Another cultural point is the Japanese crested ibis – internationally protected Toki- which has become a symbol of goodwill between Japan and China.

Urban Policy in Perspective: a Dialogue on Urban Development between Europe and Japan
Niigata – Japan – 8th-11th November 2004

Niigata City has clearly identified its vision as being an international city on its own; that requires a series of measures to fulfil that goal.

- Geographical location there is hardly any national competition on this side of Japan
- Good accessibility and communication infrastructure to East coast of Japan
- 2.5 million people living in the Prefecture; this is a critical mass to play a significant role at national and international levels,
- Merging new municipalities into the Niigata City precinct solves some critical boundary questions when it comes to plan for development



- Dynamic transfer business, living culture and good environment
- Innovation potential to compete successfully

Therefore, the strategy could concentrate on few issues:

1. Urban diversity, to use the opportunities of metropolitan development to widen the range of urban environments the region has to offer;
2. Economical synergy by promoting clusters of economic activity (agro-industry, bio-technologies, conservation of agricultural species and variety, industrial fishing, fine chemistry, etc.), and deciding on their location throughout the Prefecture.
3. Defining strict urban growth boundaries to guarantee ongoing agricultural use;
4. The development of Niigata as a regional hub (Shinkansen, regional and local train, harbour, airport), being of strategic importance as a node in the metropolitan transport system;
5. Rethinking the transport system to overcome the negative influence of low density and

dispersed urbanisation on the efficiency of the transport system;

6. Scanning cultural facilities and events to assess what is the cultural production of the region and its quality level.

Measures

- a) Improvement of the attractiveness of Niigata City for mobile investment
- b) Diversification of the economic base of the city and the region
- c) Reinforcement of the economy of small towns in rural areas where a solid urban development base is difficult to establish
- d) Extend the airport
- e) Improve the terminal passenger
- f) Marketing in limited regions of the world
- g) Design a “Landmark” to signal the entrance into Japan through Niigata
- h) Urban renewal
- i) International animation – invite a Nobel Prize scientist to work with the University of Niigata

One question has not been addressed: the relationship between the port and the city. Niigata is not a City-Port in the sense that the port activities and its spatial structure are still separated and autonomous from the city; nonetheless, the strength of the city is somewhat related to the port and the relationship that could be established between the maritime and urban spheres in terms of industrial, technological or social activities. The development of the waterfront cannot be limited to the riverfront but has to include the all maritime faced as well

The planning strategy – Urban Form and Landscape

The new planning strategy should aim at reconciling apparent conflicting objectives:

Globalisation → versus national and local identity

Competition between people and territories → versus conviviality & solidarity

Competition for business and power → versus partnership – either public-private (PPP)
or public-public

1 Le nouveau territoire conjugue une forte présence agricole et une douzaine de « human settlements » autour de NIIGATA qui se trouve ainsi doté d'un rôle phare dans un ensemble désormais unifié. Cette situation apparaît comme un atout de développement durable associant respect de la nature et réponse aux besoins d'urbanisation

2 De nombreuses zones jusqu'alors agricoles environ 1% du territoire est urbanisé chaque année- ont été récemment consacrées au développement urbain et économique de ce nouvel ensemble ouvrant de larges opportunités d'installation et de construction.

3 De nombreuses infrastructures ont également consommé des parties importantes du territoire mais leur qualité et leur importance semblent suffisantes pour assurer une mise en réseau satisfaisante du territoire au moins pour longtemps.

4 Sous réserve d'inventaire et à quelques exceptions près, il semble bien que désormais les autorités puissent adopter une politique volontariste privilégiant la qualité des aménagements et le respect d'un bon équilibre environnemental.

Les quelques orientations fondamentales qui pourraient selon nous guider les choix sont les suivants :

- a- Renforcer le réseau des « human settlements »
 - Affirmer la polycentralité du territoire en renforçant les centres existants et en veillant à ce que les éléments fondamentaux de cette centralité : services, commerces, éducation, et facilités de communication soient maintenus ou améliorés. Une plus grande densification de certains secteurs en particulier par l'utilisation des friches pourraient être encouragée par une plus grande attractivité de ces secteurs.
- b- Stopper l'étalement urbain
 - Mettre un terme pour les vingt prochaines années à tout nouveau grignotage du territoire agricole, sauf à la marge et par extension des centralités existantes
- c- Renforcer le centre de la ville pilote

- Redéfinir le périmètre de la centralité de Niigata qui pourrait être compris entre la rue des Temple au Nord, la gare au Sud et les deux ponts adjacents au pont de Bandai. Cela représente un total de 200 hectares environ dont 25 hectares de rivière et deux kilomètres de berges dont l'aménagement peut être complété..
- d- Stopper l'évolution des centres commerciaux
 - La territoire dispose déjà de 22 centres commerciaux. Une politique de centralité exclut toute nouvelle implantation au risque d'aller à l'encontre des objectifs voulus en terme d'attractivité des centres où au contraire les plus grandes facilités pourraient être accordées à toute activité commerciale.
- e- Affirmer l'eau comme élément identitaire et fédérateur
 - L'eau constitue un élément d'identité du territoire et la mise en valeur du fleuve en particulier est un enjeu majeur des prochaines années. A Niigata il constitue l'espace fédérateur des quartiers de Niigata Island et de Nuttari. L'embouchure emblématique pourrait donner lieu à moyen terme à un réaménagement lui-même porteur de l'image de NIIGATA.
- f- Viser l'excellence en matière d'aménagement.
 - Doter la ville d'un ou plusieurs "Flagship projects" en matière architecturale.
 - Mobilier urbain.
 - Actions pour l'amélioration du paysage nocturne par des illuminations moins conventionnelles.

The Development Issues

- a) What will give Niigata a unique identity within its regional, national and global context?
- b) How to achieve balance between rural and urban character?
- c) How should the city, country and the network of settlements complement each other under the new governance arrangements?
- d) How can the character of the urban area be enhanced?
- e) How can the destruction of the rural landscape be stopped?
- f) How can connectivity and mobility be improved?
- g) How can Niigata seize the opportunity?

The Identity

The interaction between man and nature has shaped Niigata as a people and as a place:

'The Water' has brought prosperity connectivity and pleasure

'The Green landscape' has given productivity and a pleasant green setting

There is currently a tension between urban and rural areas. In future Niigata can be a place where man and nature, people and place are in harmony. This is the essence of sustainability. Throughout urban and rural Niigata the shared identity will be:

'Water' and 'Landscape'

'Blue' and 'Green'

Measures

- Development of a "Water-Green" culture by which the built environment balance the green one; the international position of Niigata requires a different balance between rural and urban areas by which the built environment is giving more prominence than now over the green land.

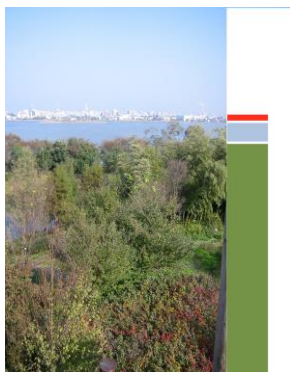
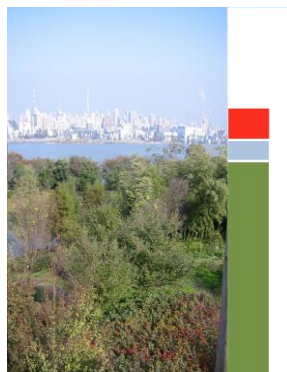


diagram of current situation



a new balance

- Stop scenario. The quantity and quality of infrastructure (roads, bridges, large amenities, etc.) are such that a pause in public investment seems necessary in order to shift towards investment for improving the quality and density of existing infrastructure.
 - Shift towards more density where possible, greener elsewhere
 - Ensure productive use of green lands for crops or recreation conservation or cultural tourism
 - Interdiction or balance: 1m2 destroyed in the paddy fields should be balanced by 1m2 of garden in the centre.

The Goals

- h) To create a sustainable community
- i) To create a place which is safe, green and beautiful
- j) To create a unique identity giving Niigata the image of a 'green and blue' city region
- k) To create an attractive, competitive and vibrant city

- l) To establish governance that will achieve the creation of such a place.

Objectives and Policies

- a) To protect and enhance Niigata's natural assets
- establish and enhance a network of green and blue corridors that give structure to the city region
 - strictly control development to retain existing green landscape
 - promote and facilitate development in existing urban areas
 - ensure continued productive use of rural land for crop production or by 'rural regeneration initiatives' that introduce alternative activities such as recreation, conservation or cultural tourism.
- b) To establish a polycentric city region
- define the role and relationships of urban settlements through a regional development strategy.
- c) To reinforce the role of the central city
- identify, promote and facilitate development of brownfield sites
 - explore potential release of port land for development around Toki Messe and integrate this with the city
 - establish Bandai City as the primary retail offer
 - establish urban quarters based on character and use
 - create an historic urban quarter on Niigata Island
- d) To enhance the character of the central city
- create a 'green canal landscape' on key streets on Niigata Island
 - create a 'green corridor' from Kamifurumachi across Bandii Bridge to Niigata station
 - create a 'green river corridor' from Toki Messe waterfront along the Tsuen River
 - enhance the Shinano River corridor through integrated landscape, land use and urban design strategies
 - introduce public realm and urban design guidelines
- e) To enhance connectivity and mobility
- identify and improve priority transport routes
 - establish the airport, port and station as key gateways within an integrated network

**Urban Policy in Perspective: a Dialogue on Urban Development between Europe and Japan
Niigata – Japan – 8th-11th November 2004**

- establish an integrated transport system
 - encourage walking, cycling and boating
- f) To establish governance arrangements that ensure implementation
- establish a shared vision for urban form and landscape, 'Niigata 2020'
 - develop a partnership approach between public, private and community sectors, 'Niigata United'
 - prepare a programme of priority projects with responsibility for funding and implementation identified, 'Next in Niigata'

Living in a compact network of livable cities

Niigata – a dynamic, yet relaxed city

(Citizen's Charter 1989)

We have seen many impressive examples of new developments in the centre of Niigata and the immediate surroundings. We are told that the city was a compact one and that its identity was dependent on rice farming, and its connections to the wider Asiatic world. Urban quality involved the link between the city and the paddy fields – green space.

It appears that it is important to the citizens and their leaders that the city retains its link with the paddy fields and the sea. One issue that has been identified to us is the extent to which the existing planning control system is sufficiently robust to stop Niigata City sprawling out further into the paddy fields to the detriment of that green environment and the city centre itself.

Although at first sight the system is clear, with Urban Promotion Areas encouraging development and Urban Control Areas restricting development; in practice, according to local partners, the system does not act in a consistent way. Urban Control Areas are sometimes re-designated as Urban Promotion Areas and development permitted. The criteria and the process involved are not clear to us. What is clear to us is that the farmers benefit from selling land, developers benefit from providing housing, shopping and other out of town facilities which draw people away from the city centre and encourage additional car use. The long term impact on the core of the city may not be clear to local people who are living with small regular incremental change and the gradual eroding of the direct link between city and green space, and the decline in both inner city population and commercial and social activity.

We are not equipped to say precisely how this can be solved, but unless it is we fear that a point could be reached that makes it difficult to stop this 'sprawl effect' – that the city centre may decline irreversibly and the green paddy fields disappear under suburban concrete. The image of Niigata would be more of an empty downtown of some American Cities than the current Japanese one.

One option might be for all the interested parties – the City, the neighbouring towns, the Prefecture, the farmers and other parties to look at whether the city should be allowed to

sprawl further, to 'take stock' and look at how other cities have managed to protect their 'green belt', 'green lungs' or equivalent, and to consider whether the local plan needs to be more specific.

Ingredients for Sustainability

The physical and social well being of towns and cities is a vital factor in economic development. It provides further justification for working towards an integrated model of a sustainable city, although approaches will vary considerably depending on local circumstances. Few essential features are of particular importance for spatial development strategies:

- control on the expansion of cities,
- the mixing of functions and social groups within the urban fabric (particularly in large cities where areas of exclusion are arising),
- the prudent management of the urban ecosystem (particularly water, energy and waste),
- the development of means of access which are both effective and environmentally friendly,
- the conservation and development of the cultural heritage.

Measures

- (a) Control the spread of housing on the green land, pending review of current practices involve the City, the neighbouring towns, the Prefecture, the farmers and other parties look at how other cities have managed to protect their green land consider whether the local plan needs to be more specific
- (b) Exchange of experience on, and provide support to, effective methods to reduce urban sprawl; alleviate excessive urban pressure in certain coastal areas.
- (c) Improve the business, environmental and social service infrastructure of cities located in the less favoured areas, including basic needs functions.
- (d) Promotion of comprehensive urban planning strategies aimed at achieving social and functional diversity notably with a view to combating social exclusion, and including the re-use of previously developed land.
- (e) Promotion of a prudent management of the urban ecosystem, including the protection and development of urban open spaces and green belts.
- (f) Promotion of sustainable accessibility in urban areas through appropriate location and land-use planning policies.

The Housing Issues

What we say from now on is on the assumption that the 'greenfield' development process should be reviewed, and that attempts should be made to protect and grow the central core of the city. Part of this is making the city more attractive and affordable to live, work, and play in. We have therefore 4 proposals:

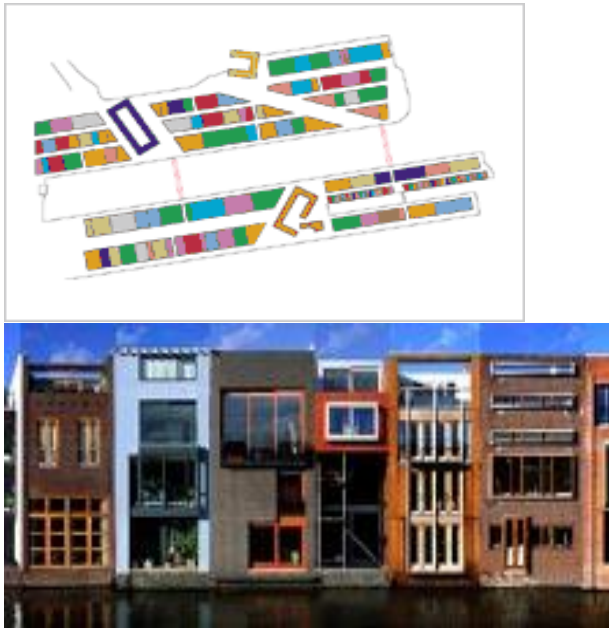
1. Stimulate the efficient use of brownfield land. One option would be to prepare a Brownfield Land Action Plan within an overall review of efficient land use within the city. The elements of the Brownfield Land Action Plan would include:
 - a) Mapping all the brownfield land in the city
 - b) Include information on key sites – e.g. ownership, contamination, access, planning status, etc
 - c) Set priorities in terms of which sites could be promoted for development or for public space and a timetable for 'Making it Happen'.

2. Make best use of the existing housing. The character of a city is determined as much by the nature of its housing as by its iconic buildings. Niigata began on the island next to the sea, and north of the Furumachi shopping area where there are some fine examples of traditional Japanese timber houses, local markets and the area bordering the Temples and Shrines. This could be an even more attractive place to live, to be proud of and to visit as a tourist. We suggest that you build upon the traditional timber house, the shrines and the local markets. These are now interspersed with new housing on the original plots and where plots have been amalgamated higher rise buildings have been included. We propose that you undertake a pilot project demonstrating how rehabilitation of these fine buildings and the integration of new housing can make for the beautiful city and attract people back into the heart of the city. This would be a significant pioneering project for Niigata, leading the way in sustainability, in line with the Japanese Urban Development Corporation's priority 'the development of urban infrastructure to support healthy cultural urban lifestyles'². The elements of this renewal project (which is based on area renewal programmes in Europe) are:
 - a. Designate a small area (say 1sq.km) as a Housing Renewal Area. The suggested area is north of the new road. Include all properties – houses and commercial businesses.

² The Building Center of Japan (2003) *A Quick Look at Housing in Japan*

- b. Undertake a survey of the area – social and technical: who lives there, what they think about their housing and their area, their willingness to get involved and their ability to pay for repairs.
 - c. Share the results of the survey with the residents and owners in the area. Since this will be a community activity, setting up a residents association and bringing the various agencies responsible for providing services in the area, and thus creating a local partnership will enable coordination and information flow to be achieved.
 - d. Establish a funding arrangement to assist those not able to pay for the full cost of repairs themselves – experience in Europe has shown that public funding “up front” creates a climate of confidence for individual and institutional private sector investment.
 - e. Technical advice should be provided. The University may be willing to help with this (as with the technical survey)
 - f. The City should demonstrate its commitment to improving the image of the area by burying the electrical wiring, as it has done in the commercial districts, as part of a general improvement of the ‘streetscape’
 - g. Consider development proposals for the gap sites.
3. Create new high-density housing on the waterfront. This too is an opportunity for Niigata to lead the way in the provision of high density, high quality family attractive housing that is also suitable for the growing elderly population for whom city living is an appealing prospect. We have two options, one from Japan itself, the other a variation on a European proposal.
- a. Continue to support the effort of the delta community to improve access, water quality and to create a park land between the Shinano and the Agano rivers
 - b. The ‘Skeleton Infill’ is a contemporary way of providing quality housing, and enabling the individual household the opportunity of designing their own apartment. This, as the name implies, has the developer providing the frame and then selling a horizontal ‘slot’ to the family or elderly person.
 - c. ShinanoDock is another version of the concept of self-development. Based on a successful Dutch project in Amsterdam it is a dense urban housing programme within a Japanese context. It caters both to the aspirations of middle-class urban dwellers and to a social agenda for regeneration and community renewal. ShinanoDock is located in a dock area on the waterfront of Niigata serving maritime services in the North Asia Region. As part of the phased regeneration of these now disused areas, a residential project of 250 dwellings is set for this zone, dictating a high density of housing, despite the predominant market demand for a suburban self-contained house. This type of development will demonstrate that family

housing is not incompatible with dense urban areas. It should reverse the predominant social trend towards a dense urban core inhabited only by childless couples, singles and the extremes of high and low income, and a suburban fringe occupied by middle-class families.



ShinanoDock is based on a new approach towards the familiar demands of single-family houses –private outdoor space, a secure parking space, safety and individuality. Usually associated with a suburban and low-density form, ShinanoDock created a framework for high-density living that nevertheless satisfied all the demands of a conventional household. It proposed a typology that was also reminiscent of traditional models in street layout and proportion. ShinanoDock set strict yet imaginative rules for the development including guidelines for streetscape, parking, private open space, storey height and plot width. The innovation of ShinanoDock is its reinterpretation of the single-house form for a high-density area (average 100 dwellings per hectare). The innovation is that the project reacts to its exposed dockside position and dense residential brief by introverting what might usually be public space into private voids within the homes. By stipulating that 30-50% of each dwelling should be void, e.g. a patio courtyard at high or low level, the plan eliminated the need for private gardens at front or back, or ‘public’ open space exposed to the harsh weather conditions. It also provided extreme privacy and security for the resident families, with gates to the ground floor also part of the rules. The patio house typology made possible a simple rectilinear street pattern with narrow, deep-plan (sometimes back-to-back) and tall houses between the road and the river, reflecting the traditional Japanese canal houses. Dwellings were built right up to the water’s edge, enabling safe private moorings to encourage the residents to use and enjoy their waterside location.

Commerce

Three main shopping zones in the City compete for local and regional customers:

- the 'Apita zone' of warehouse-type buildings to the South;
- the Furumachi street zone in the Northern part of the centre;
- the Bandai City zone in the Southern part of the centre.

Measures

- a) Prepare a retail and commerce master plan at the level of the new agglomeration
There is an urgent need for regulation to control the spread of warehouse-type retail buildings to the South of the city, along the major traffic routes. If the necessary legislation does not exist it should be introduced as soon as possible to prevent further erosion of the rural landscape and damage to trading in the central area of the city;
- b) Strengthen the position of Bandai City as the principal luxury shopping destination through creation of better external environments, such as landscaping and seating, where opportunities arise.
- c) Kamifurumachi Street is potentially a "Great street" but it needs help to assume this role. We recommend modest interventions by way of help to the 'co-operative' for improvements to canopies, lighting and signage.
- d) Introduce measures to assist young entrepreneurs with setting up businesses in Furimachi Street. This help could be by way of advice on marketing or business finance, or direct help through 'start-up' grants.
- e) Promote artistic and cultural development along the entire length of Furimachi Street, comprising an animation programme, provision of artists' workshops, common exhibition space and a community development programme.

In several shops, cultural collective showroom could be organized together with a series of workshops and exhibitions on youth and street culture. Some shops could be transformed as space for watching and making video, comic strips, cartoons. Artists and craftsmen could be offered studios and workspaces for a period of 6 months at a time. No rent to be charged on the condition that the tenants opened their studios to the public twice a week and ran workshops for interested local residents and schools.

Leisure and culture

Continue to improve access to water and landscape in a sustainable way

Mobility

Measures

New transportation plan for the agglomeration

- Develop regional link with coastal cities with a light train
- Improve communities to cities links
- Organize a hierarchy of good connexions transport network
- Develop main centralities transport to reinforce the urban pattern.
- Develop systematically park and ride platforms near terminus and stations in low-density areas if extension of existing lines towards the airport and the university is not feasible – students going to University by cars!



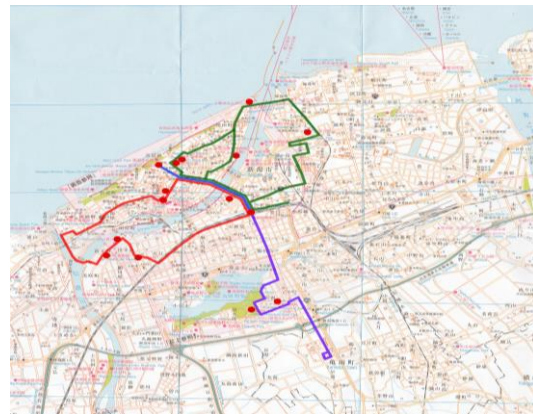
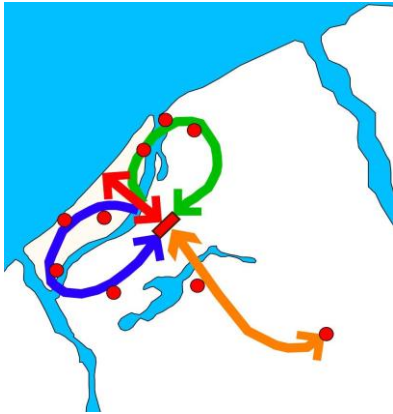
Transport plan for the city proper

A sustainable development will imply a reduction or restriction of the use of private car at least in the central part of Niigata city; two series of measures seem adequate:

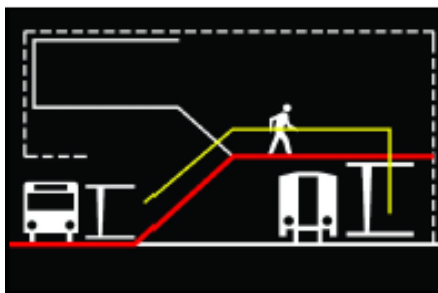
Reduction in car park facilities so that car drivers are induced to use collective means of transport – the reduction in the number and size of open plots used for car park could free land for other development

Resizing streets; some streets in the Furumachi areas are too wide, creating a physical obstacle slicing the urban landscape between blocks; traffic segmentation could be introduced by ways of a complete redesigning of the streets. Access to the area should be restricted and the widening of the existing streets by demolishing old houses at the right of the new bridge seems unnecessary.

With a population of 800,000 inhabitants spread on the metropolitan area, Niigata has reached a point in its development where it has to envisage a more sustainable transport system such as a tram on right-of-way lanes or a combined tram-train system or a Bus Rapid Transit network. Whatever the system retained the importance is to create an efficient collective transport network comprising a main trunk and a double-loop LRT lines



- A central major line from north to south, to link Niigata station and the sea side at the West coast Park
- A West circle line linking Niigata station, Dekky, Prefectural office, Chisoku Art museum,
- A Eastern circle line linking the station to Niigata city museum, or former Niigata Customs house, Niigata minato tunnel, or Yamadai park, etc...
- A South extension linking Niigata station to the Toyano Lagoon, Niigata prefecturel sports park, Taakasawa museum of folkart and the Apita shopping centre.
- Re organization of the bus network to complete and harmonize the whole transport network
- Make good connections and develop multimodal integrated hub.
- Renewal of station and station areas



Urban Policy in Perspective: a Dialogue on Urban Development between Europe and Japan
Niigata – Japan – 8th-11th November 2004



- Dedicated cycling path in the city centre –protect cyclists during the harsh weather season by providing public and or private sheltered bicycle parking



The Urban Strategy – towards an aesthetic of public space

Viser l'excellence en matière d'aménagement urbain.

Doter la ville d'un ou plusieurs Flagship projects en matière architecturale.

Concevoir un mobilier urbain plus homogène ou distinct pour chaque quartier.

Initier des actions pour l'amélioration du paysage nocturne par des illuminations moins conventionnelles.



A) STRUCTURING THE URBAN FORM OF THE CITY OF NIIGATA

Consider necessary to provide a Niigata City lacks of an apparent global structure, derived from a logical distribution of the spaces for the most significant basic uses related to its most relevant characteristics; as put in evidence through the documentation provided, various meeting and inspections in situ.

In this sense it is considered advisable to induce the cristalisation of the following structural axes:

1. The centrality axe.

It is conceived as the main “activity axe” which will interconnect the two differentiated commercial centres of Bandai City and Furumachi, along Masaya-Koji street, Bandai Bridge and Higashi-O-Dori street.

2. The riverfront axes.

They are proposed as two linear zones, located in the margins of the Shinano River, and conceived as the zones of concentration of the open-air leisure and compatible cultural facilities of a regional importance (museums, library, concert halls, etc.).

Of these two axes, the one located in the southern front should interconnect the centrality axis with the regeneration area to be developed around Nishi-Kou.

3. The complementary activity axes.

They are conceived as a set of linear zones, perpendicular to the riverfronts and located in both margins of the river, which would constitute a system of pedestrian, friendly access, to the riverfront promenades. They could be redesigned as boulevards – streets with wide sidewalks, planted with trees. –on whose sides, medium density mixture of collective dwellings and retail would be enhanced.

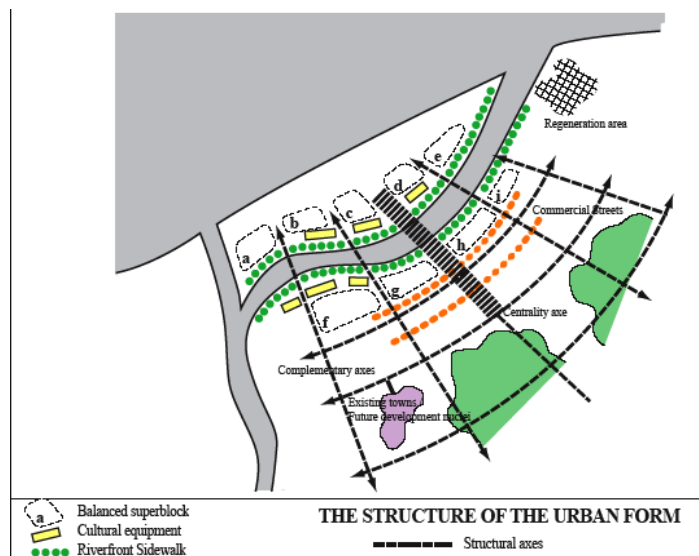
4. The superblock areas of “balanced” single family dwellings and collective dwellings.

They are conceived as “virtual” groupings of the existing blocks, located between the complementary activity axes. They should be used as references for an ordered distribution of medium density collective dwellings, to be integrated with the existent, predominant single family dwellings. Inside each superblock area, it should be left the necessary extension of green land as to allow the immediate safe refuge of its inhabitants, in case of earthquakes or catastrophic situations, which would produce the collapse of surrounding residential buildings.

5. The “metropolitan grid”.

Linking with the grid established, within the consolidated urban areas, by the complementary activity axes, a “metropolitan grid” is proposed, as the geometric, scaled reference, for long range extensions of the city.

The metropolitan grid, which would define the spatial corridors to allocate the necessary infrastructures for future developments, would integrate, when met, the existing villages, which might become complementary urban development nuclei.



B) THE RIVERFRONTS

The recently landscaped riverfronts are considered as very attractive pedestrian spaces for leisure and open-air activities. Nevertheless they have been perceived as underused spaces of whose panoramic advantages should be obtained bigger profits for the inhabitants of Niigata.

For that reason it is proposed the concentration along underdeveloped blocks, located inside the riverfronts in a number of high quality cultural and recreational facilities, of regional importance.

The extreme north-east of the southern front should be elongated till connecting with the regeneration area around Nishi-Kou.

C) SCALES OF NEEDED RENEWAL

These are two singular areas to which special plans of renewal should be applied.

a) The commercial street of Furumachi 1 and adjacent fringes of residential use.

The Special Renewal Plan is considered as the most effective instrument to make of Furumachi 1 an upgraded, revitalized fashionable commercial street. The Special Renewal Plan would include the neighbouring pockets of single family housing.

Its content would define the buildings and complementary elements that should be rehabilitated and preserved and for that purpose included in a catalogue, which should specify for each of them the desirable degree of intervention.

Besides, the Special Renewal Plan would establish a set of design guidelines which should orientate each one of the subsequent building projects. Once approved, the defined “special renewal area”.

b) The Regeneration Area.

The old industrial area located around Nishi-Kou, already obsolete, should be regenerated by means of an Urban Regeneration Plan.

This Plan would provide for a new development area with mixed compatible uses and predominance, of the residential as the basic use.

The regenerated area would be linked to the riverfront boulevard, leading to the centrality axe.

D) THE COMMERCIAL POLES OF THE STRUCTURED CITY.

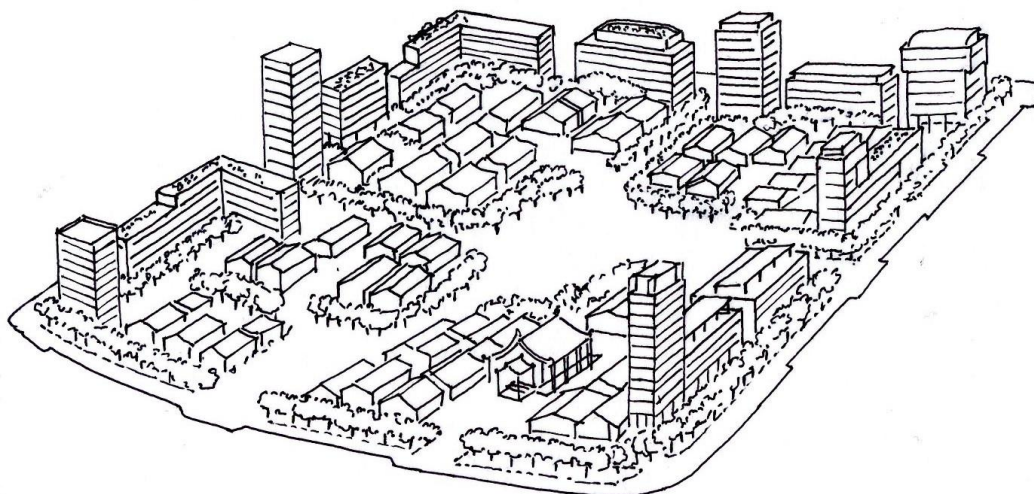
The already existing commercial attraction of Bandai City and Furumachi will be reinforced and upgraded by means of their structural integration in the centrality axe.

Bandai City should be oriented towards a fashion conscious, national and international clientele. The restructuring of existing buildings and new ones, as well as the reurbanization projects should pay a special emphasis to the landscape design of the open public spaces and the quality of building.

Furumachi, the second pole of the centrality axe, would be focused as the commercial area, to provide for most of the consuming needs of the price conscious average citizen.

A general reurbanization projects should be undertaken to remove visually unappropriate elements, and upgrade pavements, lighting and landscaping.

As a component with specific identity within Furumachi, the commercial arcades should be improved.



Design of a superblock

E) PLANNING FOR A SAFER CITY.

The risk of personal casualties produced by possible earthquakes and natural disasters has been taken into account in the proposal for the design of the superblocks areas.

Each superblock would integrate a green open space whose surface should be large enough to accommodate the surviving people resident within the block.

From this immediate refuge – to which everybody should reckon as the place to move in the case of alarm – the population could afterwards be assigned to the available public buildings adequate for this emergence purpose.

Measures

- a) Requalify the public spaces in the old centre:
 - for pedestrians, bicycles, district community, children...
 - make the centre as a garden, enhancing the green landscape or design a central square to mark the focal point of the city
- b) Adopt a Green Master plan with specific guidelines for the new public spaces
 - Design a Green canal and Blue canal in an iconic mode reminiscent of ancient canals
 - Improve streetscaping by introducing more unity of pavement, street borders, signage, street lighting, flowers pots,
- c) Landmark projects
 - Stone “gates” at the entrance of the Bandai bridge, reminiscent of the traditional Japanese entrance of stone castle where the architectural concern with presenting an image of power and prestige to outsiders is best illustrated.
 - A landmark monument at the mouth of the Shigano river

Breaking the Governance Barrier

A Strategy for Niigata 2020

Strategic options

Operational measures

Priority actions

The 2020 Forum

A Development Consortium of all local and regional players

An Urban Institute

to provide technical support to the project and monitor follow up and implementation

Standing Council on Development

Cooperation between policy bodies and political decision makers

Consultative Council for Development (CCD)

Mobilization of local energies

Expansion and Promotion Committee

Optimization of the cooperation process by diversifying the sources of funding for development.

L'extension de la Ville de NIIGATA par l'agrégation de 12 nouvelles communes crée des conditions nouvelles de management du territoire à cette échelle. C'est sans doute l'occasion de répreciser des stratégies et des objectifs à long terme pour l'ensemble de ce territoire et de formuler une nouvelle pratique de gouvernance que cette échelle et l'ambition de NIIGATA impliquent.

1 NIIGATA 2020

L'idée est de formuler pour la nouvelle ville de NIIGATA une Vision commune et partagé de son avenir dans un document stratégique et opérationnel : NIIGATA 2020. L'objectif 2020 est une manière de préciser une échéance à moyen terme. Ce terme est naturellement indicatif et doit pouvoir dans sa définition être périodiquement ajusté. Cette vision doit s'appuyer sur

une analyse la plus complète et la plus partagée possible de la situation actuelle. Elle doit se concrétiser par la formulation de la manière la plus claire et la plus consensuel possible de trois niveaux de décisions :

- 1- les décisions d'ordre stratégiques
- 2- Les décisions en termes d'objectifs opérationnels
- 3- Les mesures concrètes qui en découlent et qui constituent les priorités d'action.

Un FORUM est créé à cette occasion.

Le pilotage politique est assuré par la mairie de NIIGATA associé à la Préfecture et aux représentants du Gouvernement. Le FORUM lui-même intègre les forces vives de la commune (associations et syndicats divers), les représentants des différentes autorités locales et des administrations centrales, et fait appel aux compétences externes en tant que de besoin.

Le pilotage opérationnel de ce Forum peut être confié à une équipe ad hoc sous la forme d'une Agence Urbaine.

2 UNE GOUVERNANCE adaptée aux nouveaux besoins du développement.

La conception du NIIGATA 2020 et sa mise ne œuvre implique par souci d'efficacité et de performance que soit sans doute rechercher une meilleure synergie dans trois domaines spécifiques :

1- Coopération entre décideurs

Les décisions qui devront être prises dans les années à venir pour répondre aux ambitions affichées pour NIIGATA impliquent une concertation permanente et organisée entres ses principaux décideurs. Mairie, Préfecture, mais aussi toutes les composantes du Gouvernement qui à titre divers interviennent sur le territoire (agriculture, infrastructures routières, portuaires, aéroportuaires, éducation, santé culture pour ne citer que les principaux). Affirmer puis appliques les orientations stratégiques fondamentales obligent chacun à se positionner et à prendre les décisions réglementaires financières politiques qui en découlent pour répondre aux objectifs de cette vision.

Il s'agit au fond de créer un Conseil permanent du développement

2- Mobilisation des énergies

Il semble que de nombreux citoyens dans de divers domaines, (culture, éducation, heritage et urbanisme, environnement mais aussi dans les domaines du loisir du commerce et du business) aient un grand attachement à leur ville et des idées pour contribuer à son développement. L'un des challenges du Conseil du Développement sera d'être en mesure

d'entendre ces suggestions et de les associer aux décisions politiques. Un Comité consultatif du développement se réunissant périodiquement pourrait répondre à cet objectif.

3- Optimisation de la coopération Public Privé

Le développement de NIIGATA ne peut se faire qu'en s'appuyant fortement sur le secteur privé. Anticiper davantage les besoins et les attentes mais aussi susciter et encourager les investissements en terme immobiliers, commerciaux ou industriels nécessitent une démarche volontariste pour rapprocher les deux secteurs et développer les plus grandes synergie financière et opérationnelle possible. Un Comité d'expansion associant le public et le privé pourrait être doté de missions spécifiques dans ce domaine : recherche de partenariat, recherche de financement sur les secteurs jugés prioritaires.

In that context it could be useful to publish an investment strategy, based on recent policy documents, financed by the main pension funds and life insurance companies of the Prefecture. This investment strategy then should lead to a public-private committee on spatial investments consisting of departments, mayors and representatives of the main private investors.