

# Depopulation and Restructuring of Public Facilities

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The paper discusses restructuring of public facilities and infrastructures owned by municipalities, which is one of the biggest tasks related to depopulation, and focuses especially on common public facilities (so-called "Hakomono"). First, I explain why restructuring of public facilities is one of particularly noteworthy issues in urban and regional planning in the phase of depopulation. Next, I outline the current situation regarding restructuring of public facilities in proportion to demographic transition in Japanese municipalities by using some existing surveys and statistics, and introduces the case of Iga City (Mie Prefecture), which actually promoted restructuring. Finally, I describes anticipations and expectations of common public facilities in the near future, in response to recent trends such as digitization and corona stagnation.

Restructuring of public facilities is regarded as a touchstone for clarifying whether a new and different way of urban planning under depopulation will be accepted by local governments and citizens. If public facilities cannot be reorganized corresponding to the pace of depopulation, it is seriously concerned that tasks like restructuring infrastructures and reorganizing built-up areas will be even more difficult and almost impossible.

However, aggregating the present status of formulation of comprehensive management plans for public facilities of local governments, promoted by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications from 2014, restructuring of public facilities has not progressed sufficiently, compared to the pace of depopulation, and many local governments cannot set specific goals for restructuring. Total floor area of public facilities has increased in the last three years in almost half (49.7%) of municipalities. Only 114 local governments (23.3%) among those have increased their population, while 375 local governments (76.7%) have decreased population but increased floor area of public facilities. Only 21.1% of municipalities have smaller floor areas of public facilities per capita in three years, which means most municipalities still tend to reinforce public facilities.

From the case of Iga City, it can be said to be important to set an overall goal of restructuring in response to depopulation and demand decline as a general rule, and try to proceed with efforts toward it. On the other hand, individual plans to restructure public facilities are often asked to be modified by several reasons, so it seems to be necessary to upgrade restructuring effort to adjust the change of the circumstance.

In the future, it will be necessary to carefully adjust the reorganization of public facilities in response to various new movements such as disaster response, technological innovation, and changes in the role of public facilities.