

Minato Mirai 21 Yokohama, Japan

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Image Sources:

Above: *Jupiter Images* website, <http://www.jupiterimages.com/Image/royaltyFree/200505106-001>
Left: Yokohama, Japan”, *Pixdaus* website, <http://pixdaus.com/single.php?id=144040>

Below: Japan - “A Guide to Japan”, <http://www.hcteuropa.com/japan/travel.htm>; Yokohama - “Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects” Brochure, vol. 81, 2010



Minato Mirai 21 is a 1.2-mile urban redevelopment of the waterfront of Yokohama, Japan’s second largest city behind Tokyo. *Minato Mirai 21* literally translates to “the future port city of the 21st century”. Since the mid-19th century, Yokohama has remained Japan’s main trading port and industrial base, the country’s “gateway to the world”¹. Minato Mirai 21 is the core of Yokohama’s comprehensive ‘Plan for the 21st century’, an initiative by the municipal government in 1981 to revitalize Yokohama’s port area, establish the city’s independence from Tokyo, and decentralize business functions from central Tokyo. This vibrant development continues to evolve and grow, exhibiting “elements of smart growth, public/private partnerships, an extensive transportation network, mixed-use programming, and 24-hour nodes of activity”², which attract new businesses, residents, and more than 50 million visitors every year.

^{1,2} Rebecca Green and Tatsuo Nishimoto, “Reviving Japan’s Gateway”, *Urban Land*, Mar. 2005, p. 65.

“MM21’s ambition is to become an international cultural centre active around the clock, an information city of the 21st century, and a human environment surrounded by water, greenery, and history”.

- Zhong-Jie Lin, “From Megastucture to Megalopolis: Formation and Transformation of Mega-projects in Tokyo Bay”, *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Feb. 2007, p. 80.

"After studying the prominent waterfront developments of the world, we had a better understanding of what was needed to make this project work." – Shiro Hamano, GM, Yokohama Urban Planning Bureau (Green, p. 66)

History of Yokohama

1854 - Commodore Matthew Perry of the U.S. Navy negotiates a trade treaty with Japan, and Yokohama becomes a commercial trading city.



Cdre. Matthew Perry's meeting with Japanese officials in 1853. Image Source: "About Japan", A Teacher's Resource website, <http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/>

1868 - The Yokohama port is developed for trading silk, particularly with Great Britain.

1899 - Yokohama is the most international city in Japan, with foreign areas stretching from Kannai to the Yamate Bluff area and the large Yokohama Chinatown.

Sept 1923 - The Great Kantō earthquake, killing an estimated 23,000 people.

1930 - Yamashita Park on the waterfront is built, using reclaimed land from the rubble of the quake.

1930s - Rise of heavy industries. Entrepreneurs build factories along reclaimed land to the north of the city, which eventually becomes the Keihin Industrial Area.

A Disconnected City

In the 1960s, Yokohama was a disconnected city; the North was a strong transportation hub that linked to Tokyo with rail lines extending into the growing suburbs, the South was a center for businesses and local government, and the central waterfront area was largely occupied by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Corporations shipbuilding dockyards and industrial functions, separating the North and South into "two isolated cores without a true city center" (Lin, p. 65). The city was also unable to cope with an increasing population size; people went to Tokyo for businesses, commerce, entertainment and culture. Yokohama was regarded as a "huge suburban town" (Lin, p. 80).



Minato Mirai 21 District prior to the start of construction work (1980) Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

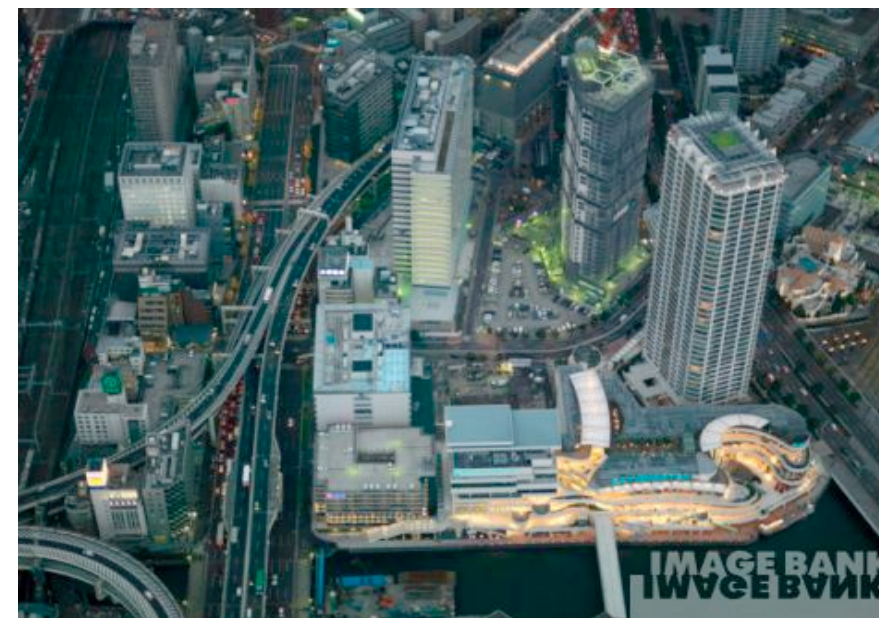
The solution was to look to the central waterfront area, which comprised of the old harbor, industrial areas and freight handling areas stretching between the modern district around Yokohama station and the old historical center at Kannai, as a place to reinforce a city center. There were 3 main objectives:

- Create an economically independent Yokohama
- Improve port functions and transform the waterfront into a citizen's harbor
- Decentralize Tokyo with respect to its official, commercial, and international conference functions (Lin, p. 66).

In the 1970s, the city was able to successfully negotiate with Mitsubishi to relocate their shipyards, and formalized planning of the city was able to begin.

Design Ideology

The planning and design for an improved Yokohama was inspired by the megastructural movement of the 1960s, which "... represented an idealistic effort to create total environments that serve as model cities of their eras." (Lin, p. 73). These urban schemes for autonomous urban cities were by a group of architects known as 'Metabolism', which included their mentor Kenzo Tenge (1913-2005). The term "Megastructure" was coined by Fumihiko Maki who defined it as "a large frame in which all the functions of a city or part of a city are housed ... made possible by present technology" (Maki, *Investigations in Collective Form*, 1964, p. 8).



Aerial view of Yokohama featuring the Yokohama Station Image Source: Getty Images, <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/sb10066490q-001/>

Early Planning Process

The early planners of Minato Mirai 21 considered the spatial organization of the whole district and desired spacious greenery, numerous cultural facilities, preservation of historic buildings, "a carefully tailored skyline" (Lin, p. 87), and the use of advanced technologies that would showcase a new type of business and cultural urban center in the age of information technology and economic globalization. A grid street system was proposed, in contrast to the labyrinthian streets of many Japanese towns where inadequate zoning resulted in overlapping and undefined land uses. There was a strong desire to offer a traffic plan that would support vibrant urban activities and make streets safe and comfortable for pedestrians while creating a more attractive vista.

History of Minato Mirai 21

Feb. 1965 - City of Yokohama announces Redevelopment Plan, one of six major projects.

1970s - The Yokohama ports face increasing demands to accept larger ships and to adapt to changes in international trade. National government is pushing for Tokyo Bay waterfront reform and decentralization of Tokyo.

Nov. 1978 - City of Yokohama and various national organizations form the Planning and Investigatory Committee for the Overall Improvement of Yokohama City Center and Waterfront Area. Basic plans are announced.

1980s - Japan's "bubble economy". The value of land increases, resulting in a series of large-scale developments around Tokyo Bay in rediscovered waterfront areas.

Oct. 1981 - Project officially named Minato Mirai 21. Detailed planning is finished and infrastructure development begins.

Feb. 1983 - Urban plan including land readjustment adopted.

Mar. 1983 - Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd.'s, a major port occupant, must relocate its shipyard, because the site could no longer support further growth.



PLANNING PROCESS

Minato Mirai 21, con't.

Feb. 1989 - Sakuragicho Station Plaza opens.

Mar. 1989 - Yokohama Exotic Showcase (YES '89) held (through October). Yokohama Maritime Museum opens. Yokohama Minatomirai Railway Company is established.

Oct. 1989 - Urban plan for Minato Mirai 21 Central District adopted.

Nov. 1989 - Yokohama Museum of Art opens (work initiated: 1985).

July 1991 - Pacifico Yokohama (Pacific Convention Plaza Yokohama) completed (work initiated: 1989).

Feb. 1993 - National government approves Yokohama Business Core City Basic Concept.

Sep. 1993 - The Bank of Yokohama Head Office Building opens (work initiated: 1990). Yokohama Royal Park Hotel Nikko opens.

Apr. 1994 - Kokusai-bashi Bridge (Kokusai-odori Boulevard) opens.

Dec. 1994 - Bay Shore Route of Metropolitan Expressway opens between Haneda and Yokohama Bay Bridge. Apr. 1995 - Minato Mirai 21 Information Center opens.

Minato Mirai 21 Corporation

In 1984, the Minato Mirai 21 Corporation was established as a third sector organization (a hybrid of the public sector and private enterprise) to coordinate the design of this \$20 billion project, to facilitate processes and ease cooperation among more than 50 government agencies involved in the project, as well as to coordinate governmental efforts at the municipal and national levels with those of the private sector. "MM21 Corporation was able to take ideas and goals from all sides and produce tangible results. They were in a position to cut through the red tape and had the industry know-how to do it right." – Toshihide Yoshimura, executive officer of Mitsubishi Estate's Yokohama Branch (Lin, p. 66). This was a true model of public/private partnership: Yokohama was responsible for land reclamation, land adjustment, and construction of infrastructure and public facilities; private companies invested in business and housing developments after the infrastructure was built; and MM21 was responsible for planning of the project and operation of public facilities. The chief planner, Masato Otaka, one of the founding members of the Metabolist group, called for a multi-functional urban district for 10,000 residents and 190,000 workers on 465 acres of waterfront, 190 of which were to be built on reclaimed land.

The Minato Mirai 21 Project

Primary Objectives

- 1. A More Self-Sufficient Yokohama**
Prior to the Minato Mirai 21 project, Yokohama's city center was divided into two areas: the Kannai/Isezakicho District and the Yokohama Station Area District. Minato Mirai 21 District consolidates and integrates the two areas and concentrates companies, shopping centers and cultural facilities in these areas. This creates jobs and bustling recreational areas for citizens, invigorates the local economy and establishes an economic infrastructure that enhances Yokohama's self-sufficiency.
- 2. A Transformed Role for the Port**
The introduction of wide expanses of parkland and green space, such as Rinko Park and Nippon-maru Memorial Park, is creating a waterfront environment where people can relax and enjoy themselves. The port also houses a variety of international conference facilities and central port administration services.
- 3. A Decentralized Capital Region**
The Minato Mirai 21 project is designed to facilitate decentralization of the official, commercial and international conference functions formerly concentrated in Tokyo and to promote more balanced metropolitan development.

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Urban Vision

- 1. A Round-the-Clock Cosmopolitan Cultural City**
Pacifico Yokohama (Pacific Convention Plaza Yokohama) integrates office, cultural and commercial facilities in proximity to urban housing, enabling the area's extensive convention facilities to serve as a center for cross-cultural exchange. A lively, appealing, cosmopolitan city in tune with trends from across the globe is emerging.
- 2. A 21st Century Information City**
Minato Mirai 21 is an information city, buzzing with a constant stream of economic and cultural information. It is attracting a cluster of high-tech, knowledge-intensive, global enterprises' executive HQ and R&D operations, as well as divisions of many government agencies.
- 3. An Inviting City Offering Ample Waterfront, Open Space and Heritage**
Harmony between people and nature is emphasized, highlighting the waterfront's charm and treasuring green spaces. Preserving the Aka-Renga Soko (red brick warehouses) and stone docks evoking Yokohama's historical heritage, Minato Mirai 21 forms a spacious city environment framed by the sea and attractive greenery, and steeped in historical ambience.

Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

"We understood that in times of uncertainty, forward progress was essential. To do that, it needed to be clear that we were just as committed then as we were on day one." – Hiroshi Nakada, Mayor of Yokohama (Lin, p.68)

Funding

At the onset, there were no government subsidies, so the city used fees assessed on surplus soil removed from other construction projects. Additional funds came from property sold to private investors. More than \$84 billion has been invested into megaprojects around Tokyo Bay. The 1st stage of development took place during Japan's bubble economy, which saw rapid development and rents skyrocket. In 1996, after the boom's collapse, official land prices were half at 1991 peaks, rents in the commercial sector were half or a third of what they had been, and there was a 10% vacancy rate. Work slowed drastically in the 1990s, and the public and private landowners together revisited the master plan to determine ways to move forward. MM21 carried out economic incentive plans to keep projects moving and to encourage relocation of businesses to this area, such as 50% reduction in property and city planning tax for up to 5 years, and subsidies, such as 10% of invested capital up to \$45M per corporation) that targets the information technology, biotech, imaging, convention, and environment industries. MM21 also focused on constructing cultural facilities and open spaces to host large events, such as the 1989 YES-Fair and the 2002 World Cup, to attract tourists from Japan and abroad, to attract investments into the city's development, and to present an image of the place to the world. Rather than leave large plots of designated business zones undeveloped and unused, provisional land use was being promoted with 10-year fixed-term leases available on several commercial facilities.



1983



1989



1994



1997



2010

Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

Minato Mirai 21

Minato Mirai 21, con't.

Sep. 1996 - Yokohama Sky Building opens (work initiated: 1994).

Apr. 1997 - City plan for Shinko District adopted.

July 1997 - Queen's Square Yokohama opens (work initiated: 1994). Whole of Minato Mirai-odori Boulevard opens, including temporary two-lane zone. Kishamichi Promenade opens.

June 1998 - Yokohama Minato Mirai Hall opens.

Sep. 1999 - Shinko District opens.

Nov. 1999 - Grand Mall Park opens.

July 2001 - Pacifico Yokohama's exhibition halls expanded (work initiated: 1999).

Sep. 2001 - Yokohama Triennale 2001 held.

Mar. 2002 - Yamashita Rinko Line Promenade opens. Pedestrian Plaza in front of Sakuragicho Station completed.

May 2002 - Yokohama hosts FIFA World Cup (International Media Center established).

Sep. 2003 - Modification of land readjustment plan authorized (expanded to 101.8 ha).

Most skyscrapers are concentrated along the Queen Axis, parallel to the shoreline "to create an impressive skyline to showcase a thriving urban centre . . ." - Lin, p. 84

Minato Mirai 21, con't.

Feb. 2004 - Minatomirai Line opens (work initiated: 1992).

Sep. 2004 - Minatomirai Business Square opens (work initiated: 2002).

Sep. 2003 - Modification of land readjustment plan authorized (expanded to 101.8 ha).

Feb. 2004 - Minatomirai Line opens (work initiated: 1992).

Sep. 2004 - Minatomirai Business Square opens (work initiated: 2002).

June 2006 - Land readjustment replotting announced.

July 2006 - Yokohama Minatomirai Sports Park opens (work initiated: 2005).

June 2006 - Land readjustment replotting announced.

July 2006 - Yokohama Minatomirai Sports Park opens (work initiated: 2005).

Jan. 2007 - Marinos Town opens (work initiated: 2005).

Nov. 2007 - Designated the target model zone in the Cool City Center Pilot Program administered by the Ministry of the Environment.

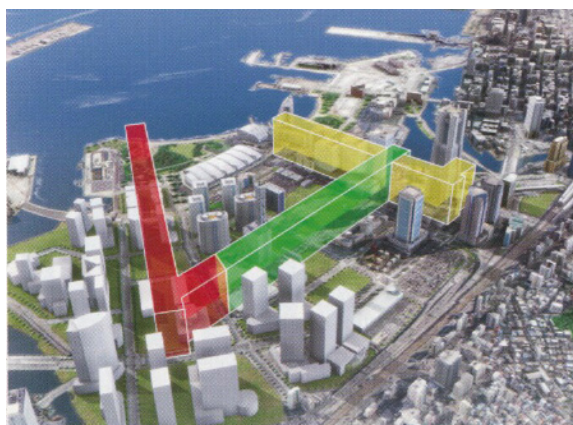
May 2008 - The Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

King, Queen, and Jack - An Axis Plan

The planning approach to Minato Mirai 21 is very different from what Japan has taken traditionally since the Edo-era. The European idea of axis and boulevard has taken the place of organic, un-centered urban growth and street system. The district has three urban axes that maintain connections with existing urban centers and railway stations, and help to move people through MM21 to the seashore: the King Axis (starts from Yokohama Central Railway Station), the Queen Axis (starts from Sakuragicho Railway Station), and the Grand Mall Axis (Jack; intersects the other 2 axes in the middle of the city). Not only do these axes help to phase the development of the city (e.g., the Queen axis was the first to be developed in order to maximize its economic impact and establish a variety of uses early on), these axes also serve as linear open spaces and vistas with distinct qualities.



District Map showing axes. Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

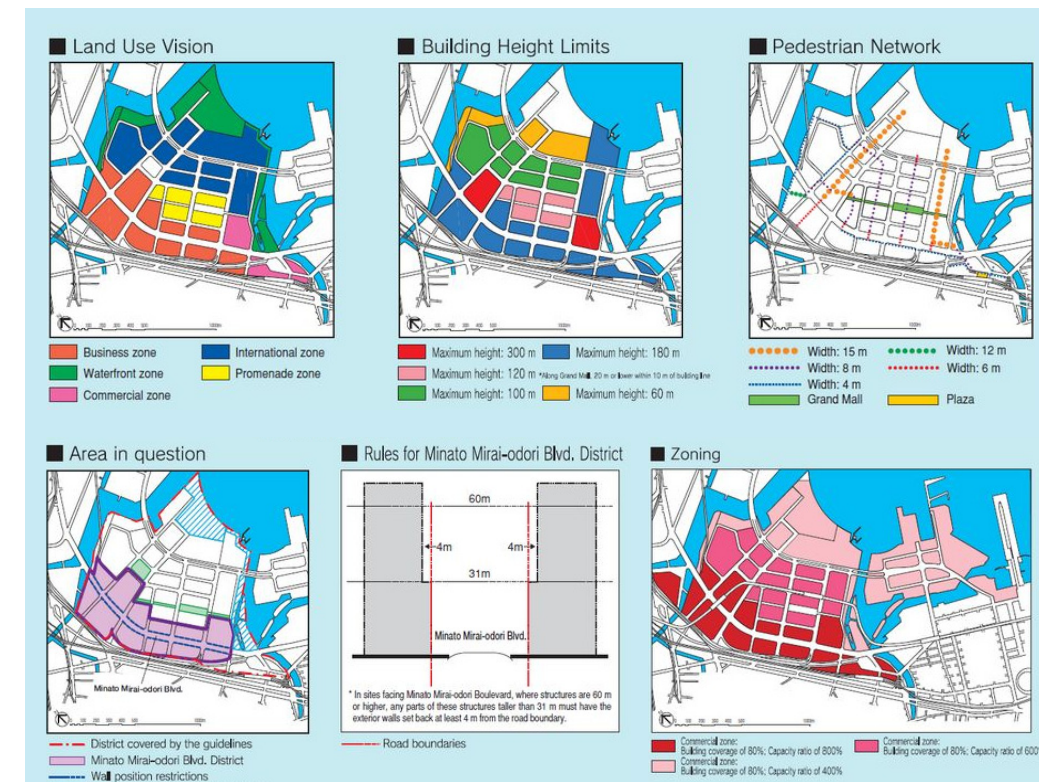


- Queen Axis - South, vibrant inner mall, moves through several large commercial spaces
- King Axis - North, open mall links diversified land use zones
- Jack Axis - Center, spacious, open mall, extensive greenery, links cultural destinations

Image Source: Rebecca Green and Tatsuo Nishimoto, "Reviving Japan's Gateway", *Urban Land*, Mar. 2005, p. 66.

Basic Agreement on Town Development

In 1988, the Basic Agreement on Town Development was signed between Central District Landowners and other parties. The goal was for landowners to take the initiative in creating rules for urban development in order to achieve "balanced" development and organized growth. The framework covered: water and greenery; skyline, streetscapes, roadside landscape, and vistas; shared spaces (public art, etc.) and pedestrian spaces; night-time lights; architectural design; interior activity floors (program/functions); color schemes and outdoor advertising; and car and bicycle parks. With regard to buildings, there are standards for minimum site scale, height, pedestrian networks, and setback of exterior walls. The agreement also stipulates the urban management systems needed for advanced information systems, disaster prevention, environmental support, and for smooth integration with adjoining urban districts.



Urban Zoning

One of the goals of Minato Mirai 21 is to create a busy, attractive area that has employment opportunities for the local residents. Under the City Planning Law, the entire area is designated a commercial zone

Images Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

Minato Mirai 21, con't.

Aug. 2008 - Takashima 2-chome Pedestrian Bridge opens.

Sep. 2008 - Yokohama Triennale 2008 held.

Dec. 2008 - Minato Mirai-hashi Bridge (Kokusai-odori Boulevard) opens.

Feb. 2009 - Yokohama Minato Mirai 21 Corporation established

Apr. 2009 - EXPO Y150:150th Anniversary of Opening of the Port of Yokohama (held through September).

July 2009 - Water Promenade opens.

Aug. 2009 - Nissan Motor Co., Ltd., Global Headquarters opens (work initiated: 2007).

Dec. 2009 - Yokohama Blue Avenue opens (work initiated: 2007).

Mar. 2010 - TOC Minatomirai opens (work initiated: 2007). FUJI XEROX R&D SQUARE completed (work initiated: 2008).

Timeline Sources:
 "History of Minato Mirai 21", *Minato Mirai 21* website, <http://www.minatomirai21.com/eng/timeline.php>

"Yokohama History", *Japanese Lifestyle* website, http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/travel/yokohama_history.htm

"Rather than being one of those places one thinks about visiting on the weekend, it's becoming the place to visit, now that one arrives right at its front door". – Eiji Kobayashi, manager of Yokohama Minatomirai Railway Company (Lin, p. 67)

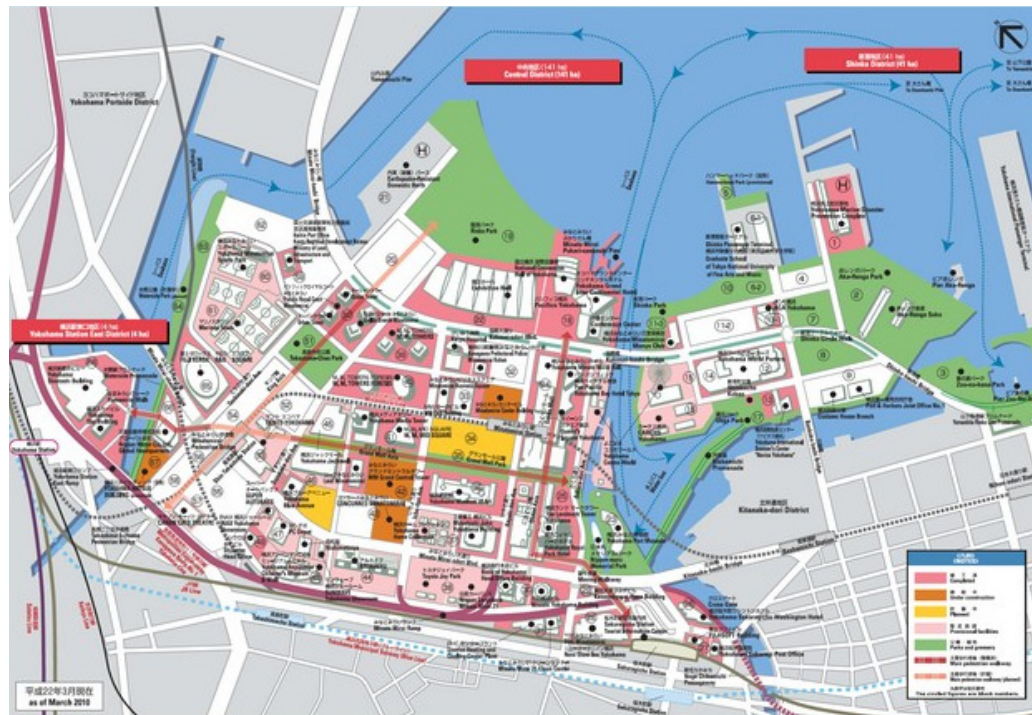
Land Usage	
Buildings (offices, commercial, residential, etc.)	87 ha
Roads and railways	42 ha
Parks and greenery	46 ha
Port facilities	11 ha
Total	186 ha

The Minato Mirai 21 project has been strategically designed to offer an esthetically superb cityscape with broad public appeal. . . . to create urban spaces where citizens can work comfortably, relax and have fun through leisure activities and shopping, and enjoy a secure, prosperous lifestyle.

– "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

Effects of the Minato Mirai 21 Project	
Employment	63,000 (2008)
Visitors (Central & Shinko Districts)	53 million (2008)
Companies	1,250 (2008)
Municipal tax revenues	¥14.3 billion (Fiscal 2008)
For the city of Yokohama	
Effects of investment in construction	¥2,2240 trillion (total)
Effects of business activity	¥1,1233 trillion (annual) (Fiscal 2004)

Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010



Development Map

Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010



Minato Mirai Pukari-sanbashi Pier

Image Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

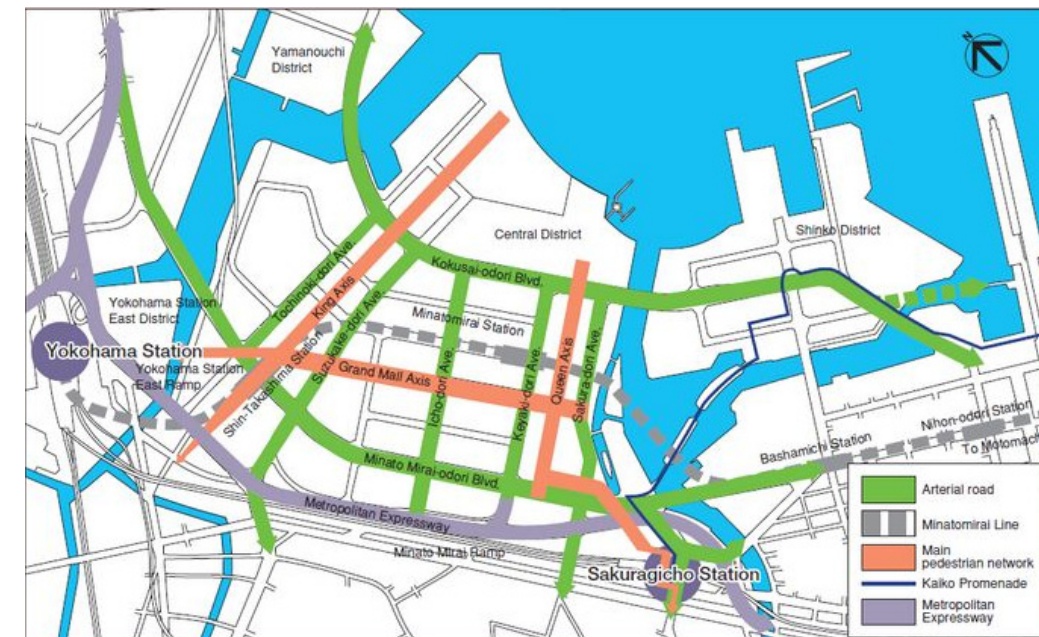


Grand Mall (Jack) Park

Image Source: M/M Grand Central Tower website, <http://www.mm-gct.com/>

Transit

Minato Mirai 21 has a complex circulation system that organizes pedestrian spaces, roads, highways, and rail lines on different levels – multi-level underground structures and overhead crossings. Existing railway lines connect to new subway lines, such as the Minatomirai line that goes through the Center District. Vehicles travel East-West on two main arterial roads, and intersect the city on smaller roads that have wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians and bikes. Existing railway stations are located along the old water front area stretching from modern Yokohama station to historic Kannai district. There are also two municipal bus systems as well as tourist buses that drop visitors off at sightseeing spots. MM21 is also accessible from the bay with water bus services.



A network of roads linking the Central District to outer areas.



Minato Mirai-odori Boulevard



Sakura-dori Avenue

Images Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

Yokohama Today

Area
434.98 km² (Feb. 1, 2010)

Population
3,672,238 (Feb. 1, 2010)

Households
1,577,852 (Feb. 1, 2010)

Registered foreign residents
78,671 (end of Jan. 2010)

Gross municipal product
12,904.8 trillion yen (2006)

Per capita income
3,190,000 yen (2006)

Value of trade through Yokohama port
12,994.5 trillion yen (2008)

Private business establishments
107,557 (Oct. 1, 2006)

Private sector employees
1,271,937 (Oct. 1, 2006)

Universities and colleges
11 (May 11, 2009)

Junior colleges
6 (May 1, 2009)

Source: "Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects" Brochure, vol. 81, 2010

Pedestrian Network

Minato Mirai 21 has an extensive network of pedestrian walkways throughout the area, with the three city axes serving as the main pedestrian corridors. The Queen Axis is equipped with moving walkways and links Sakuragicho Station with Pacifico Yokohama, Nippon-maru Memorial Park, and the Landmark Tower. The King Axis links Yokohama Station and Rinko Park. The Jack Axis is a 25 m wide corridor that connects the two axes. Many parks, plazas, open spaces, and promenades are accessible from all three axes:

Minatomirai Pedestrian Bridge (2008 - 2010)

This pedestrian-only deck crosses Minato Mirai-odori Boulevard, along King Axis and Jack Axis, and links the main gateway to the city, Yokohama Station, to the Central District.

Size: Along Jack Axis - 70 m length, 8 m width; along King Axis - 62 m length, 6 m width
 Developer: Urban renaissance Agency

Yamashita Rinko Line Promenade (2001 - 2002)

This promenade extends 550 m from Aka-Renga Park to Yamashita Park and is built on the elevated tracks of a former freight line. It is a “barrier-free” design that features ramps and elevators for easy access. From the promenade, there are views of the Port of Yokohama from Sakuragicho to the Yamate District.

Size: 550 m length, 3.5 - 6 m width
 Developer: Municipal Government

Sakuragicho Station Plaza (1987 - 2002)

The Sakuragicho Station Plaza has drop-off and pick-up points for buses and taxis, and a tourist information center that provides information on city events, planning projects, and tourist spots in Yokohama.

Area: 17,200 m²
 Developer: Urban Renaissance Agency, Municipal Government

Hamamirai Walk (2003 - 2009)

The Hamamirai Walk is a pedestrian bridge that links the east gateway of Yokohama Station to the Central District. It is an open pedestrian deck that links the Central Waterfront Promenade, the King Axis, and the Jack Axis.

Size: 100 m length, 12 m width
 Developer: Municipal Government

Takashima 2-chome Pedestrian Bridge (2004 - 2008)

This pedestrian deck passes over Route 1 and links Takashima 2-chome to the Central District. It is part of the network that extends from the south gateway of Yokohama Station to the King Axis.

Size: 80 m length, 6 m width
 Developer: Municipal Government

Green Space and Water Network

Minato Mirai 21 makes use of its waterfront location with numerous green spaces linked by promenades to showcase the special features of the waterside environment. Including Grand Mall Park at the heart of the Central District, a green network covering the whole of the district is taking shape. Most park spaces are planned along the waterfront to ensure access to the water and pedestrian circulation. Parks and greenery comprise 1/4 of the total area, or 115 acres.

Zou-no-hana Park (2006 - 2009)

This park was created to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Port of Yokohama. It offers views of the waterfront and the restored 19th century breakwaters.

Area: 3.6 ha
 Facilities: Resthouses, lawn space, terraced embankments, breakwaters
 Developer: Municipal Government

Shinko Park (1998 - 2001)

Shinko Park offers an intimate connection to the waters edge and a grass lawn from which to enjoy the harbor views.

Area: 2 ha
 Facilities: Lawn space, terraced embankments, emergency underground water tanks
 Developer: Municipal Government

Kishamichi Promenade, Unga Park, Promenade (1995 - 2001)

This promenade and park were along old railway tracks.

Area: 2.2 ha
 Facilities: Garden path, lawn space, water square
 Developer: Municipal Government

Rinko Park (1998 - 1999)

Rinko Park follows the curve of the waterfront. It is the largest park in MM21.

Area: 9.3 ha
 Facilities: Lawn space, terraced embankments, tidal basin, parking lots, concession stands, emergency underground water tanks
 Developer: Municipal Government

Waterside Park and Promenade (2006 - expected: 2011)

The Waterside Park opens to views of the Katabira-gawa River. The Promenade will link Minato Mirai-odori Boulevard to Route 1.

Area: Park - 1.3 ha, Promenade - .2 ha (330 m length, 6 m width)
 Facilities: Pedestrian walkway
 Developer: Urban Renaissance Agency



Parks and open spaces



Image Sources: “Yokohama Minato Mirai 21: Plans and Projects” Brochure, vol. 81, 2010



EVALUATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Successes

Like Seattle, Yokohama had disconnected cores within the city. The waterfront was historically dominated by port and heavy industries, and the planners desired to have the waterfront be a strong urban center to link the city.

Unique model of public/private enterprise.

Good planning and innovate incentive programs ensure development will continue, even through economic hardships.

Good emphasis on a well-connected and integrated public realm.

Access to Minato Mirai is fast and accessible, particularly if one uses the rail lines (~30 minutes from Tokyo).

Extensive amenities provide opportunities for people to stay and enjoy themselves, especially 24/7.

Aggressive plan to attract new businesses, residents, and visitors by making the entire area a commercial zone.

Thoughtful historic preservation plans that renovate and adaptively reuse historic buildings and structures, such as the transformation of old railways into parks and promenades, as a means to celebrate the city's history and port identity.

The most interesting contrast is the "futuristic" look of buildings in the central district and the historic preservation efforts made to evoke Yokohama's heritage, notably in the Shinko District.

Zoning and building height regulations shows the different characteristics of these two areas. It helps the transition of super modern urban scenery into historic Kannai area. Shinko Waterfront park is another good example.



Images Source: Personal photo, 2010

Opportunities for Improvement

Over-investment and over-control has resulted in underutilization of the highly designed facilities and public spaces.

Maintenance is creating another issue when the area is under-occupied and under-used. Decrease in anticipated revenue generated in the area is causing more burdens to the city to maintain the facility. Employment especially, is a lot less than what was projected.

According to the master plan, resident facilities is planned for 10,000 residents, and 90,000 workers, yet it would be interesting how the planners will respond to the increasing middle-class population.

Long promenades. Paths do not meander. There are rarely elements of "surprise".

Overly prescribed pathways and walkways. Little opportunity to "wander" and explore. Feeling of being "shuttled" from one point and to another.

Out of scale. Large empty plazas, endless promenades, and towering skyscrapers make certain areas seem empty and exposed.

No opportunities to directly interact with the water. Yokohama was built on platforms due to sea level rises during storm surges and tropical cyclones and typhoons, where waves can swell up to 10 ft.



Images Source: Personal photo, 2009



Image Source:
Personal photo, 2009

Resources

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