

# Prospect of Future Housing Life

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## 1. Introduction

The missions of the Housing Department are to contribute from the technical aspects to ensuring that people can live in comfortable houses in good health, safety, and security, securing the level of quality that is required of housing and construction and promoting the private sector's efforts to conserve energies and reduce the levels of carbon emissions, among other things.

To realize these missions, we at the Housing Department have been engaged in the development of draft technical standards, technical guidelines, etc., by investigating, testing, researching, and developing the following items from a variety of angles: 1) housing plans and construction and management of public housing and similar types of dwellings, 2) plans for living environment and the indoor environment of buildings, 3) housing production and other building productions, 4) housing performance, and 5) information systems relating to housing demands, planning, production, distribution, management and other similar areas. At the same time, we have been engaged in efforts to disseminate the results achieved and technical findings gained through these activities by providing training, technical guidance, etc.

## 2. Housing Life Master Plan and Housing Department's Initiatives

To perform the above missions, we at the Housing Department have been engaged in research and development efforts to achieve the objectives specified in the Housing Life Master Plan (National Plan). The Housing Life Master Plan (National Plan) is a ten-year master plan that has been developed based on the Basic Act for Housing (enacted in 2006) with the aim of ensuring and promoting the stability and improvement of people's housing life. The Housing Life Master Plan is reviewed and updated roughly every five years, and the latest master plan was endorsed by the Cabinet in March 2016.

Table 1 shows an overview of the Housing Life Master Plan (National Plan). In addition to making efforts to achieve these objectives, we at the Housing Department have been engaged in research and development aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of building production, including those of buildings other than residential houses, in the field of building production, as well as research and development aimed at improving building environmental performance, including those of buildings other than residential houses, in the field of building environment.

**Table 1. Eight Objectives of Housing Life Master Plan (National Plan)**

- 1. Ensure a safe and secure housing life for younger households that desire to get married or have children, as well as for the child-raising generation.**
  - (1) Create an enabling environment for these people to choose and secure the type of housing that they want.
  - (2) Create an enabling environment for these people to fulfill their desire to have and raise children, thus contributing to an effort to achieve the desired birth rate of 1.8.
- 2. Realize a housing life where elderly people can live independently.**
  - (1) Improve and/or supply housing to ensure that people can live a whole life in safety and security.
  - (2) Create a living environment where people can secure housing in the community they desire to live in and can have access to nursing care services, medical services, and other living support services within the sphere of their daily lives.
- 3. Ensure a steady supply of housing for people who need special care in terms of securing housing.**
  - (1) Create an enabling environment for the following people—who have difficulty in securing housing in a market on their own (persons requiring special assistance in securing housing)—to secure housing in which they can live a safe and secure life: low income earners, elderly people, people with disabilities, child-raising families (especially single parents and households with more than two children,) welfare recipients, people from other countries, homeless people, and others.
- 4. Establish a new housing circulation system that goes beyond the "Housing Sugoroku (Japanese Backgammon)".**
  - (1) Create the new flow of housing that goes beyond the Housing *Sugoroku* (whose goal is to purchase a single-family house), where the value of housing assets is maintained through proper maintenance and rebuilding or remodeling and is highly evaluated by markets, and where such housing assets are circulated in markets and inherited from generation to generation.
  - (2) Address diversifying housing needs by expanding remodeling investments and stimulating housing demand due to the relocation of dwellings and create a new driving force in a housing market in an era of declining population.
- 5. Renew housing stock to make it safer and higher in quality through renovation and remodeling.**
  - (1) Renew housing stock to make it safer and higher in quality through the renovation or remodeling of houses that do not meet the earthquake-resistant requirements (approximately nine million households), houses that do not meet the energy efficiency requirements and houses that are not barrier-free, among other things.
  - (2) Improve the safety and quality of housing, such as improving earthquake resistance performance, by promoting the renovation or remodeling of dilapidated condominium buildings where there are many unit owners and thus it is uniquely difficult to build consensus among them.
- 6. Promote the utilization or removal of rapidly increasing vacant or abandoned houses.**
  - (1) Control an increase in the number of vacant or abandoned houses by promoting their utilization and systematic dismantling or removal.
  - (2) Contribute to the regional revitalization efforts by promoting measures to cope with increasing vacant or abandoned houses in a comprehensive manner as the number of such houses is significantly increasing in regional areas.
- 7. Promote the growth of housing life industry that contributes to the realization of strong economy.**
  - (1) Contribute to the revitalization of regional economies by recruiting and fostering people who will be future leaders in the housing life industry, and create an enabling environment to supply high quality and safe housing.
  - (2) Contribute to further improvement in convenience for dwellers, as well as to economic growth, by promoting the growth of new housing life-related businesses.
- 8. Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of residential areas.**
  - (1) Aim to upgrade a living environment and a community to richer ones in ways that are appropriate for regional characteristics.
  - (2) Ensure and enhance the safety of dwellers by promoting the implementation of measures for the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, etc., in line with the principles of National Resilience.

### 3. Strategic Management of Safe and Secure Living Functions in Community

As shown in Objectives Nos. 1 through 3 of the Housing Life Master Plan, in a hyper-aging society with a declining population, it is necessary to create a living environment in which everyone from children to the elderly can live a safe and secure life in a community. On the other hand, amid the prospect of increasing fiscal constraints on national and local governments, it has become an urgent task to address the issue of decaying social capital. In the field of housing, it is necessary to make the effective utilization of public housing, which plays the role of a housing safety net in support of the housing security for people as a resource for ensuring housing security in a community, by rationally and efficiently managing and maintaining the existing public housing stock. Also, it has become an important task to develop a centralized urban structure in which people can walk in safety and security. It is necessary to optimally locate community living support functions, such as life convenient facilities, welfare facilities, and medical centers, by relocating them to the hub of a community, such as a public rental housing estate, through the realignment or consolidation of existing housing stock or the converted use of existing buildings, among other things.

Given these circumstances, we at the Housing Department have launched a general technology development project entitled “Development of Technology for Strategic Management of Safe and Secure Living Functions in Community” (from FY 2015 to FY 2017) in collaboration with the Building Department and the Urban Planning Department. In this project, based on the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, we have been engaged in the following research and development activities to resolve technical problems that impede achievement of a more rational management of safe and secure living functions in a community, including public housing. The results of these research and development efforts will be utilized for the development of draft technical standards, technical guidelines and manuals, etc., in support of measures taken by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and local governments.

#### Overview of Research and Development

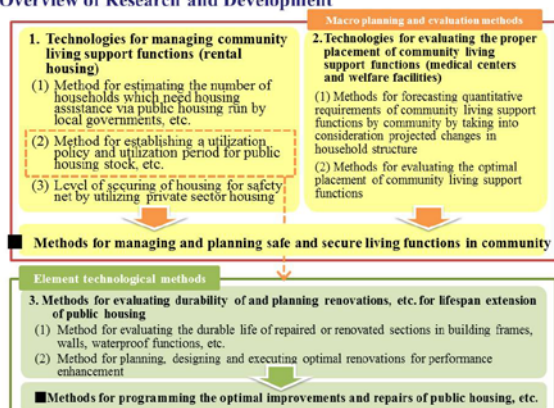


Figure 1. Overview of Research and Development Activities

1) Development of Technology for Management of

### Safe and Secure Living Support Functions in Community

For use by local governments, develop a method of estimating the future number of households that need housing assistance (via public housing) from mid-to-long term perspectives and by community. Based on such future forecasts, study the development of methods for the planning of housing safety net that covers the utilization, maintenance and improvement of public housing stock, the utilization of private sector housing stock, and the promotion of the development of an appropriate level of private sector housing, among other things.

2) Development of Methods for Forecasting Quantitative Requirements and Optimal Placement of Community Living Support Functions

In order to evaluate a plan for the optimal placement of community living support functions (such as welfare facilities and medical centers), including building them next to a public rental housing estate, develop a forecasting program to estimate the quantitative requirements and optimal placement of such community living support functions in chronological order by taking into consideration the population and area requirements for each function that are appropriate for changes in population and household structure.

3) Development of durability evaluation and planning methods for renovations, etc., for lifespan extension

Develop a method for estimating the durable life of repaired or renovated sections in building frames, walls, waterproof functions, etc., that greatly affect the extension of the life of public housing stocks. Also, develop a method for planning repairs or renovations to reasonably improve the durability of a building according to its present state. In addition, develop a method for developing a mid-to-long term program that specifies the content of the optimal level of renovation for durability improvement and lifespan extension for each individual public housing stock according to its current specifications and level, expected length of use, etc., as well as the content and timing of subsequent renovations, etc.

### 4. Conclusion

In terms of three basic areas of life: food, clothing, and housing, the Housing Department assumes a key role in the housing area and provides a variety of support services relating to people’s lives from technical aspects. Everyone has a special thought about housing life and seeks the level of comfort desired in a housing life. In order to further satisfy these housing life needs, we at the Housing Department will continue to take on challenges to achieve the harmonization of people’s feelings and technology.

☞ For further information, please visit the following:

1) Housing Life Master Plan (National Plan) (endorsed by the Cabinet on March 18, 2016)

[http://www.mlit.go.jp/jutakukentiku/house/jutakukentiku\\_house\\_tk2\\_000032.html](http://www.mlit.go.jp/jutakukentiku/house/jutakukentiku_house_tk2_000032.html)