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Onagawa Town Reconstruction Project

— Onagawa Town, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan
2011—

Development of a future city beyond restoration to the original state

Key Issue

The town of Onagawa was so heavily damaged by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake that 85% of the area was devastated. Home to the Onagawa Fishery Port, one of Japan's leading fishery ports, the town was renowned for its scenic beauty, with its magnificent sawtooth coastline. Its industry and townscape were destroyed. The community sought swift restoration for the victims and reconstruction as an appealing place that attracts new residents and visitors while minimizing the number of original residents leaving the town.

Project Approach

New town development that supports its future

Committees and working groups based on public participation were set up for the purposes of systematically rebuilding the townscape of a devastated hometown for which people can feel pride, affection and feel comfortable to live in. With participation by a large number of residents, discussions were made on community development that can yield pride and affection for the area. With a vision of developing a town that coexists with the sea, a promenade that connects the station square and Onagawa Bay was set as a symbolic axis of the town, and the surroundings designated as commercial areas. Furthermore, compact town planning was achieved by positioning the town hall on a high ground next to the station and allocating civic core functions such as childcare services. For commercial facilities, the project adopted a system of leasing spaces to tenants in order to ensure that they will remain up-to-date and in step with the times.

Swift implementation of reconstruction-related projects to minimize residents leaving the town

For the purpose of reconstruction, rebuilding of the housing environment and industrial redevelopment were carried out in tandem. To quickly and simultaneously construct residential buildings, commercial facilities, educational facilities, wholesale markets, seafood processing facilities and other facilities, the project was undertaken in collaboration among the national, prefectural and municipal governments and private business operators, on the basis of relationship of trust with local communities. The Urban Renaissance Agency signed a partnership agreement with the Onagawa Town Government and provided comprehensive support for rapid reconstruction.

In each district of the town, a landscape axis along which the sea can be viewed is defined. As desired by local residents, the land level was raised to minimize the height of the tsunami seawall. The town was thus rebuilt in harmony with the sea. Photo courtesy of Onagawa Town



Around the Onagawa railway station, commercial facilities and tourist facilities were systematically located along the axis line that extends to the sea to create a lively space that attracts residents and tourists.

Data

Area: Urban area reconstruction project: 222 ha in the central part, 55 ha on remote islands and the peninsula
Project implementing body: Onagawa Town Government
Main facilities introduced: Public housing for disaster recovery, urban area in which the land level was raised, enhanced disaster prevention in fishing communities, new elementary and junior high schools, the Civic Core district (where public facilities are concentrated), and the promenade between Onagawa Station and the port

