


Research Article

Redeveloping Tokyo's Meiji Jingu Gaien Area: The Metropolitan Government's City Planning Runs Amok

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Abstract

The landscape of the Meiji Jingu Gaien area of Tokyo is famous; it has a ginkgo-lined avenue and various sports facilities, including national stadiums and facilities used by ordinary citizens. The large-scale redevelopment of this area has been planned and implemented on the basis of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's district plan in 2013 in the wake of Tokyo's bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games. This paper examines the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's actions since the formation of this plan, mainly on the basis of the Metropolitan Government's official documents and Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly minutes and considers their implications.

Keywords: Tokyo; Tokyo Metropolitan Government; Meiji Jingu Gaien; City Planning; Deregulation-Oriented Urban Redevelopment

Introduction

Meiji Jingu Gaien (Jingu Gaien), the Outer Garden of Meiji Shrine (founded in 1920) in Tokyo dedicated to Emperor Meiji and the Empress Dowager Shoken, has several sports facilities, including the National Stadium (built in 1958 as National Kasumigaoka Stadium, rebuilt in 2019 as New National Stadium), Jingu Stadium, which is used for professional and college baseball games (built in 1926), and Prince Chichibu Memorial Rugby Stadium (built in 1947). The old and new National Stadiums are the site of the opening ceremony of the 1964 and 2020 Olympic Games. Jingu Gaien also contains the prominent historic ginkgo-lined avenue leading to the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery (built in 1926) (Asakuno 2006). (Map 1; Photo 1). Recently, the area's redevelopment project led by private organizations under the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) city planning function has been in the public eye. Growing concern has been triggered by critical comments made by the Japan ICOMOS National Committee since late 2021, prominent figures such as the late musician Ryuichi Sakamoto and the writer Haruki Murakami, and ordinary citizens about the cutting down of the ginkgo trees for redevelopment. The major newspapers, the *Asahi Shinbun* (Asahi) and the *Mainichi Shinbun* (Mainichi), both disapproving of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) administration, recently criticized

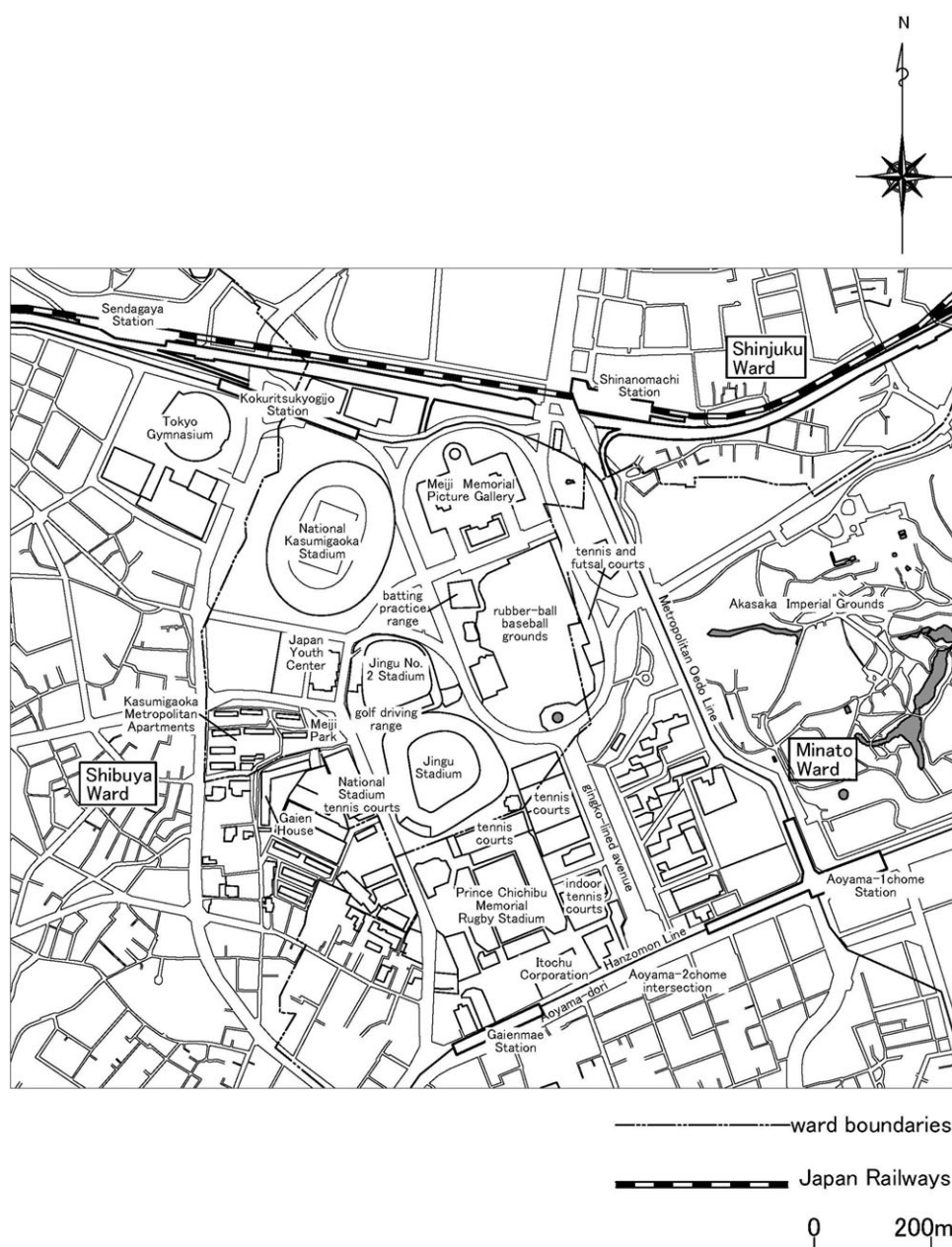
the redevelopment in their editorials, particularly concerning the felling of trees (Asahi 2023a, 2023b; Mainichi 2022, 2023a, 2023b). However, cutting down ginkgo trees, symbolic as it may be, is only part of this urban redevelopment. This paper examines the background and various issues related to the Jingu Gaien redevelopment, arguing that there are concerns about certain aspects on the TMG's stance on this redevelopment that should be addressed.

The Jingu Gaien redevelopment project took advantage of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as a national policy to rebuild the National Stadium and create a sports cluster. The Olympics have been viewed as an opportunity for large-scale urban development and redevelopment (Chalkley and Essex 1999). At the time of the 1964 Olympics, the first time the games were held in Asia, large-scale civil engineering projects symbolized by the Shinkansen bullet train and the Metropolitan Expressway were quickly implemented, dramatically transforming Tokyo. Despite the price paid to the environment and the burden placed on construction workers, the 1964 Olympics have been recognized as a symbol of Japan's recovery from the devastation of World War II. The 2020 Olympic Games were a statement of Japan's determination to be a significant global power (Whiting 2024). However, there were also concerns that the project might be carried out unreasonably under the guise of "for the Olympics," that it would only benefit the general contractors, especially those involved in the National Stadium, and that the opposition movement would be weak and silent (Leeds 2004; Hashimoto 2004).

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Map I: Jingu Gaien area before the 2013 district plan.

The redevelopment involved demolition of the Kasumigaoka Apartments, an inexpensive rental Tokyo Metropolitan housing complex, to make way for constructing a new national stadium. The newspapers pondered the apartments that would disappear (or had disappeared). The National Stadium was built by demolishing the wooden metropolitan housing and other buildings constructed immediately after the war for the 1964 Olympics. Residents whose homes were demolished moved into newly constructed Kasumigaoka Apartments. In July 2012, approximately 230 households were still residing in the apartment's 10 5-story reinforced concrete buildings, which had a shopping district with 8 stores on the premises, when the TMG informed them of the relocation plan owing to the building demolition. Many residents were elderly and considered this their final home, and for some, it was the

second time in their lives that they had been evicted by the Olympics (Kataoka 2015; Takemoto 2015; *Nihonkeizai Shinbun* 2016; Fujiwara 2019; Hashizume 2021). However, the newspapers did not touch upon the unreasonableness of the process leading up to their demolition, which will be examined in this paper.

The TMG placed the highest priority on the formation of a sports cluster in Jingu Gaien. It left implementation of the proposals to four operators (Mitsui Fudosan [a real estate company, and the Jingu Gaien redevelopment project operator], Meiji Jingu Shrine, Japan Sports Council [the operator of the sports facilities in the area], and Itochu Corporation) and the Japan Amateur Sports Association (JASA; renamed the Japan Sports Association in 2018). However, it was the TMG that led the way in developing a plan that required extensive deregulation, for example, for



Photo 1: Ginkgo-lined Avenue toward Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery [Caption: Viewed from Aoyama-2chome intersection. Taken by the author on 2 March 2024.].

the construction of high-rise buildings in the scenic area. In September 2005, the then Metropolitan Governor Shintaro Ishihara expressed his determination to bid for the Olympics in his policy speech at the ordinary session of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) (TMA Ordinary Session 2005). Many discussions followed about whether the current National Stadium should be renovated or a new stadium should be built; in the case of a new stadium, there was also the question of where it should be located. There was also the messy situation in which Zaha Hadid's design for the new National Stadium in Jingu Gaien, which was selected through an international competition in 2012, was withdrawn in 2015. Meanwhile, the TMG announced a draft district plan for the Jingu Gaien area in February 2013. The purpose of the redevelopment was said to create a bustling sport, cultural, and exchange district that would be the face of Tokyo and attract visitors from Japan and abroad, and to maintain the elegant landscape, while promoting commerce, business, culture, and exchange by introducing the high-level use of land, inducing high-quality private development, and introducing urban functions such as business, commerce, exchange, etc. (TMGBUD 2013).

A few years leading up to the announcement of this plan were crucial for the TMG to formulate the plan's broad lines and lay the groundwork to ensure its smooth implementation through behind-the-scenes discussions and consultations. Such activities became apparent in 2018 through the release of public records upon request. In the TMA, the Communist Party persistently criticized that former Prime Minister Mori was the mastermind behind the plan that was formulated solely on the basis of behind-the-scenes discussions and consultations only for the benefit of a few stakeholders. Were such doubts and opposition unfounded,

or were there any problems in the process of formulating the plan and the subsequent attitude of the TMG? This study examines the process of formulation of the redevelopment plan and the subsequent TMG's oratory by analyzing the TMG documents, the minutes of the TMA, and other related materials. It then considers how this case of Jingu Gaien redevelopment should be viewed in the context of the development of city planning in Japan.

Since the Meiji period (1868–1912), Japanese city planning has been characterized as a national project to build Tokyo, the country's capital city befitting a modern nation. The first City Planning Law, enacted in 1919, was based on statism ideology. Without an effective civil society, the centralized, top-down city planning system allowed the government to define the public interest (Smith 1978; Sorensen 2002). City planning has developed to create infrastructure for economic activity by using specific methods, rather than aiming to establish a grand design on the basis of broad discussions. Local authorities were considered government agencies in city planning, and citizen participation in the planning process was minimal (Hein 2003; Sorensen 2005). Even during the democratic reforms after World War II, the 1919 City Planning Law was not revised, and public participation in the law that was finally enacted in 1968 was inadequate. At the same time, the viability of the plan was weak. The centralized, top-down system was typified by the fact that the authority to approve plans lay with the national government rather than with local authorities. The attention of the local authorities was focused on the central government, not on its citizens. Under such circumstances, the public, marginalized in the planning process, was generally indifferent to the plan and did not actively seek to adhere to what the plan required. However, citizens were

adamantly opposed to city planning restricting their private rights, and enforcement against such opposition was weak. This was well illustrated by the fact that reconstruction plans after the Great Kanto Earthquake were drastically scaled back owing to opposition from landowners and that during Tokyo's war-damage reconstruction after World War II, unauthorized buildings were built one after another on sites designated as roads and open spaces, making it difficult to implement the plans. Thereafter, it remained as if the plan would become unfeasible if even one resident objected. Against this backdrop, city planning and development based on deregulation such as relaxing floor-area ratios and volume transfers, enabling the construction of high-rise buildings, has accelerated since the 1980s and especially the 2000s to promote large-scale redevelopment by private developers (Tiratsoo, et al. 2002; Ishida 2004; Hasegawa 2021).

Various deregulation measures in the Jingu Gaien redevelopment project secured the authorization to construct skyscrapers in a scenic area that would otherwise have been impossible. Thus, this case may appear to be just one example of how the governing body continues to favor huge construction projects. In recent years, however, it has become necessary to formulate policies from a broad perspective, keeping in mind such issues as climate change, financial constraints, declining birthrates, and aging facilities, which often requires painful tradeoffs, naturally making it impossible to satisfy all stakeholders. As floods and landslides caused by torrential rains and other disasters occurred throughout Japan, the positive attitude toward national land resilience, mainly civil engineering projects as a disaster countermeasure, became clear. "River Basin Disaster Resilience and Sustainability by All," a basin-wide flood control program implemented collectively by the national government, prefectures, municipalities, businesses, and residents, is being promoted, and measures such as levee improvement, dam construction and rehabilitation, among others, are being accelerated (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism 2008). As of April 1, 2024, 1732 of Japan's 1741 local governments have adopted local resilience planning (Cabinet Secretariat 2024). The October 2019 typhoon also influenced the turning of the tide on the pros and cons of civil engineering projects, as the Yamba Dam, once considered a wasteful public works project that had its construction halted, was found to have been effective in preventing flooding (Yanaginuma and Sakata 2020). In addition, maintenance and renewal of aging water supply facilities has become a nationwide issue as population decline reduces water rate revenues. In 2022, Miyagi Prefecture became the first prefecture in Japan to outsource the operation of its water, sewage, and industrial water systems to the private sector in one package to reduce costs (Taruda 2022). Meanwhile, the construction of onshore and offshore wind power, solar power, and other renewable energy facilities in Japan is facing difficulties owing to opposition from local leaders and residents who are concerned about the impact on the environment and landscape, the impact on the fishing industry, and the fear of landslides and other disasters (Nitta and Saito 2021; Yomiuri 2022, 2023). Abroad, some state governments in the

United States have been stripping local communities and residents of zoning authority to promote the construction of renewable energy facilities (Martucci 2024). But when it comes to residential neighborhoods in large cities, in Vancouver, for example, low-density neighborhoods lobbying to uphold single-family zoning rules have opposed higher densities, helping to push their real estate property values into astronomical figures (Paul 2023).

Thus, reaching consensus in planning and implementation is far from easy. Above all, compared with the national land resilience, the construction of renewable energy facilities in Japan, even equally relevant to climate change and large-scale natural disasters, has been subject to local opposition and not progressed smoothly. In the case of Jingu Gaien, which is facing citizens' opposition and media attention, the focus of the issue seems considered to be the felling of trees. To repeat, however, that point relates to only a part of a large-scale redevelopment project based on deregulated planning that aims to create a sports cluster in a scenic area in the heart of Tokyo by constructing high-rise buildings while protecting the landscape. As an example of deregulation-oriented city planning for redevelopment in central Tokyo, what does this case reveal regarding governance structures that favor large-scale construction projects?

2013 district plan for the Jingu Gaien area

In February 2013, the TMA's Urban Development Committee (TMAUDC) discussed the district plan for the Jingu Gaien area, which relaxed restrictions on the maximum floor-area ratio and the maximum height of buildings. The TMG side stated the purpose of the district plan as follows. Taking the opportunity of the reconstruction of the National Kasumigaoka Stadium, they would reorganize and improve parks and plazas, along with updating existing sports facilities and related facilities, to form a world-class sports cluster in Japan. In addition, they aimed to create a more attractive and user-friendly district by introducing lively facilities along Aoyama-dori that would contribute to the enhancement of the district's attractiveness and vitality, such as business, commerce, culture, and exchange and by preserving the historical urban landscape and green environment centered on ginkgo-tree avenue. During the discussion, the proposals in the plan were criticized by the Communist Party, although the TMG's clandestine activities were yet to be revealed. Communist Party member Oshima questioned the appropriateness of relaxing the height restrictions in the scenic area, where the original height limit was 15 meters, to allow constructing a 70-meter-high building to house the headquarters of the Japan Sport Council (JSC) and the relocated Japan Youth Center (Map 2.) In response, Machida, Director of the TMG's Urban Development Policy Department, pointed out that the Tokyo Scenic Area Ordinance allowed exemptions from height restrictions for buildings where public community development was carried out in harmony with the surrounding landscape and the scenery was effectively maintained. He stated that the proposed district plan would



Photo 2: Saturday afternoon at the rubber-ball baseball grounds [Caption: The plaid-patterned building to the left of the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery is the hotel in question. Taken by the author on 2 March 2024.].

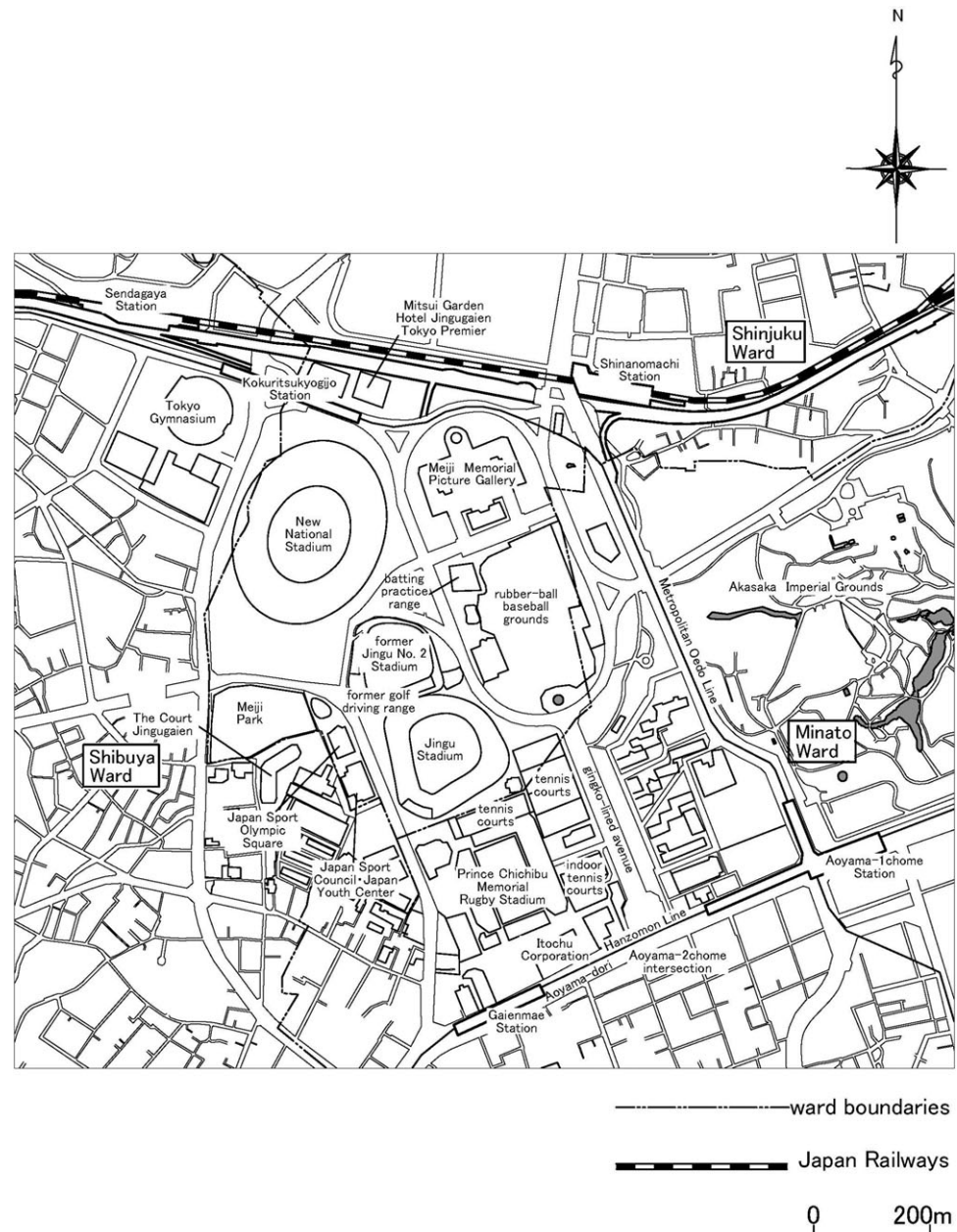
preserve the historical landscape and natural environment centering on the ginkgo-lined avenue and the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery by defining the redevelopment promotion zone. The plan sought to create a new urban space in Tokyo where greenery, elegance, and vitality coexisted, along with the sports facilities to be developed. He affirmed that there was no problem in seeking the exemption from the height limitation because the district would maintain and improve the area's elegance.

Oshima then questioned why the Kasumigaoka Metropolitan Apartments were added to Meiji Park while the National Stadium tennis courts were excluded from the park. Both the apartments and tennis courts would have to be removed. The apartments were considered a complex to be rebuilt on-site rather than demolished. Machida stated that the Kasumigaoka Apartments area would be added to the city planning park to secure barrier-free flow lines and retention spaces, which are open spaces essential for spectators to visit the New National Stadium safely and comfortably, which would have a capacity of approximately 80,000 people. Excluding portions of the park in the proposed district plan was intended to consolidate related facilities, such as securing the site for the Japan Youth Center, which had to be relocated owing to the reconstruction of the National Stadium and the headquarters of the JSC, as operator of the New National Stadium. Oshima criticized the TMG for suddenly notifying residents of the Kasumigaoka Metropolitan Apartments the previous year, most of whom were elderly, that they would be relocated to a new location and that the timing of the relocation was uncertain. However, when Oshima asked about the relocation, the TMG official simply responded that the timing had not yet been decided

and that they would take appropriate action (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2013).

At the May 2016 TMAUDC meeting, changes to the district plan for the Jingu Gaien area and the city planning park Meiji Park were discussed. The principal changes would allow constructing a 60-meter-high building to serve as a new venue for the JASA and the Japan Olympic Committee (Japan Sport Olympic Square in Map 2), alongside the 70-meter-high building accommodating the JSC and the Japan Youth Center already under construction. Shiraishi of the Communist Party criticized the project: "Two super high-rise buildings... are rising up, blocking the original view, and it cannot be said that they contribute to the environment and landscape appropriate for a scenic area." He also questioned the history of the district plan change. The TMG representatives responded that it started with the JASA first submitting a request to the TMG for relocation on December 22, 2015. Shiraishi further inquired about the estimated cost of the site and compensation for reconstructing the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium, which then housed the headquarters of the JASA, because of its designation as a priority development area in Yoyogi Park (Map 3). The TMG would acquire the site of the said gymnasium under the guise of expanding Yoyogi Park in preparation for the Tokyo Olympics, and the JASA would receive a considerable amount of the difference. However, the TMG's Ueno only reiterated that the park project in Yoyogi Park was completely different from the district plan in Jingu Gaien and that the related lands would be handled appropriately in the park project in the Yoyogi area (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2016a: 61).

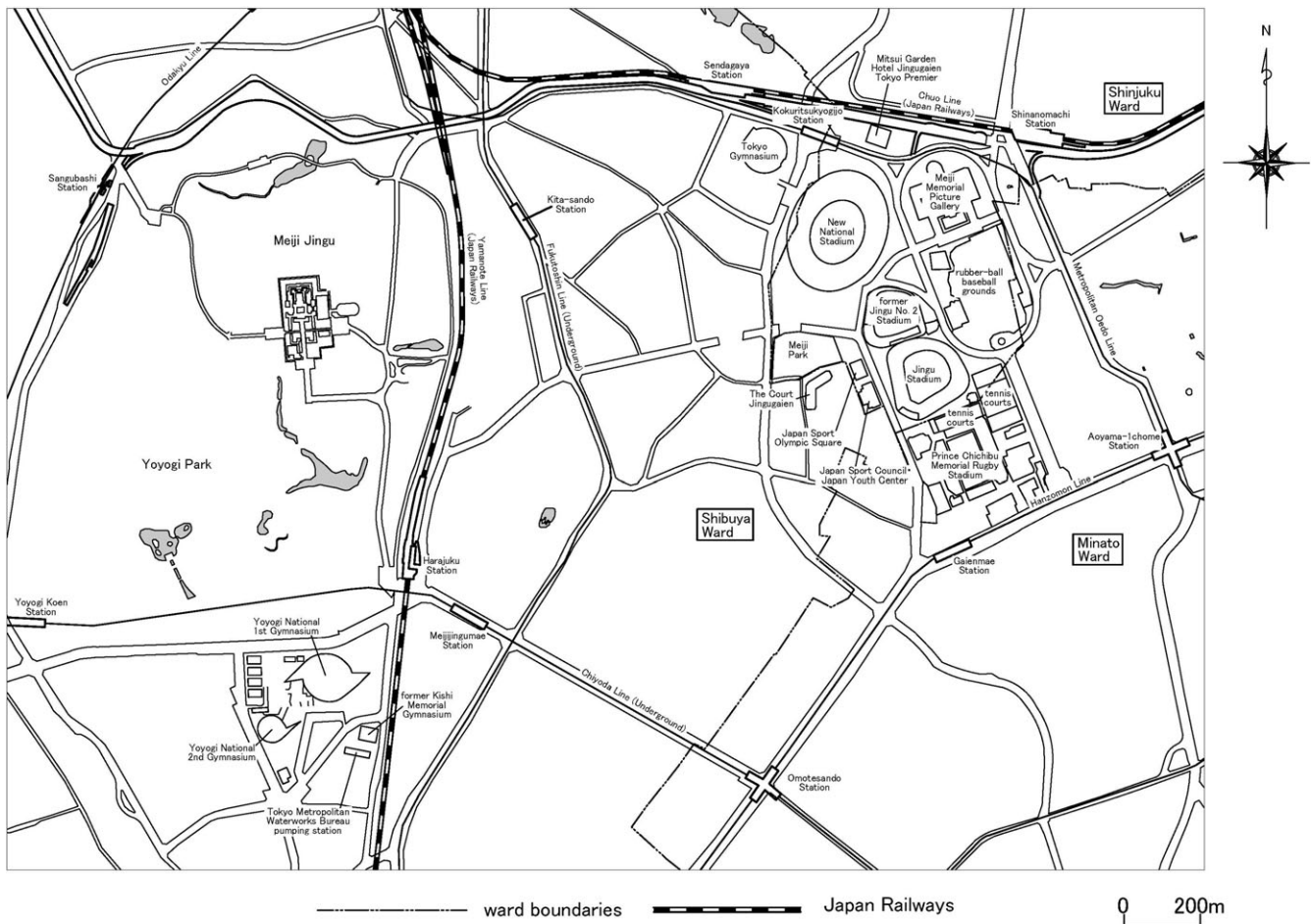
In November 2016, the same committee discussed further changes to the district plan for the Gaien area. The change



Map 2: Jingu Gaien area in 2023.

would allow constructing a 50-meter-high hotel (to become Mitsui Garden Hotel Jinguaien Tokyo Premier) north of the New National Stadium by Meiji Jingu and Mitsui Fudosan. The district was originally zoned as a medium-to-high-rise residential district, which would have precluded constructing 50-meter-high buildings. However, as explained by TMG's Ueno, the district plan that defined the redevelopment promotion zone was "a separate system from the current city plan to guide desirable land use," on the basis of this system, "a 50-meter-high hotel can be built." Specifically, the land use policy of the district plan called for "the accumulation of commercial, social, and other functions that will create an attractive and lively atmosphere for the formation of a sports cluster," and the latest change called for "the introduction of lodging, social, and other functions that will create a lively

atmosphere." Thus, the district development plan was proposed that assumed a commercial zone that was appropriate for future land use. In addition, once the district development plan was established, the TMG's Scenic Area Ordinance allowed exemptions from building height restrictions in cases where scenic conditions could be effectively maintained. Shiraishi, however, dismissed the change in the district plan as a "change to relax restrictions . . . so that the 50-meter-high Jingu Gaien hotel, which was not originally permitted, could be built." He pointed out that "seen from the fountain [at the southern end of the rubber-ball baseball grounds] in the Picture Gallery, the 50-meter-high Jingu Gaien Hotel will appear to the west of it, which will greatly affect the spacious landscape (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2016b: 40 and 41)."



Map 3: Location of the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium [Caption: Demolition of the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium started in August 2019].

TMG's clandestine activities revealed

In 2018, the situation unfolded even further, with the disclosure of the TMG's internal documents. The Communist Party pursued allegations that the TMG had distorted the administration over purchasing the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium site, the headquarters of the JASA, by purchasing the site with compensation and, thus, giving preferential treatment to JASA. At the TMA's ordinary session, Shiraishi asked whether the TMG had informed the JASA of designating the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium site as a priority development area for a metropolitan park before December 15, 2015, when the TMG announced the designation (TMG Bureau of Urban Development (TMGBUD) 2015). The designation announcement was made a week before the JASA submitted a request for relocation to the TMG. He also asked if the JASA had approached the TMG regarding the relocation before announcing the designation, particularly Yoshiro Mori, former Prime Minister and former President of the JASA. Takashi Henmi, the TMG's Chief Engineer, responded differently from the previous response in May 2016 that stated that the JASA had requested the TMG relocate to Jingu Gaien on December 22, 2015. He now stated that the TMG had positioned developing a sports cluster in the Jingu Gaien area in its "Tokyo in 2020" plan expressed in December 2011 (TMG 2011a: 42–3). In April 2012, it proposed to the JASA that it consider relocating the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium to form such a cluster. Since then, the JASA had made inquiries to the TMG regarding use of land owned by the TMG as a site for relocation. Henmi also stated that during subsequent consultations on the relocation, the TMG had informed the JASA of the candidate sites it was considering. He further revealed that the JASA had been considering rebuilding the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium on-site since around 2004 and that the TMG had been consulted about city planning regulations since the gymnasium was located within a city planning park area. However, he could find no record of any consultation or approach from Mori to the TMG regarding this relocation (Minutes of the TMA Ordinary Session 2018).

At the TMA's Special Budget Committee meeting in March 2018, Sone of the Communist Party pursued this change in the TMG's answer and questioned whether the previous answer had been false. He asked what was true—the previous answer was that the TMG first learned of the JASA's intention to relocate in December 2015 or that the TMG proposed the relocation to the JASA in 2012. He pointed out that a recent disclosure request by the Communist Party revealed that a meeting among senior officials of the TMG had already begun discussing relocating the JASA to Jingu Gaien in August 2011 and that Ueno, who had answered Shiraishi at the Metropolitan Assembly 5 years later, was present at that meeting. Henmi, TMG's Chief Engineer, replied that he believed that Ueno's former answers did not constitute false answers per se but that "there were parts of the explanations that lacked politeness." Sone suspected that the TMG did not admit to the false answer because they feared that involving politicians, including former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, would be revealed. However, the TMG again responded that it

had found no record of any such efforts by Mori (Minutes of the TMA Special Budget Committee 2018: 346).

Sone then introduced the four documents disclosed in the request for disclosure. The document with the earliest date was a minute of an August 19, 2011 meeting of seven TMG officials, including two vice-governors, the chief engineer, and two department heads, regarding redeveloping the Jingu Gaien area. It has many undisclosed blacked out parts, which are difficult to read, but the following points stand out. First, the Chief Engineer Yasui stated, "We would like to consider whether it is feasible to make arrangements for turning the [Jingu Gaien] area into a sports mecca, for example, by involving the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium here." A vice-governor asked what would happen to JASA's original site. Yasui responded, "For example, the TMG could buy it," to which the other vice-governor replied, "And the JASA would secure the land over here [Jingu Gaien]." However, JASA first preferred to rebuild on-site, which would require a land swap. Since the candidate site was the Tokyo Metropolitan Waterworks Bureau's pumping station, which was located on state-owned land, it was deemed that on-site reconstruction would not be easy owing to the relationships with the Metropolitan Waterworks Bureau and with the Ministry of Finance. Regarding the relocation of the residents of the Kasumigaoka Metropolitan Apartments, Yasui confirmed that it would be possible to secure accommodation in nearby metropolitan apartments. It was a year before the residents were notified about relocation (TMGBUD 2011a).

The second earliest document related to a February 28, 2012 meeting between former House of Representatives member Koichi Hagiuda, who was unsuccessful in his bid at the time, and TMG's Chief Engineer Yasui, regarding reconstructing the National Kasumigaoka Stadium. Metropolitan Governor Ishihara asked Hagiuda to meet with officials from the TMG about this matter. Mori also told him to "coordinate across the board" between the Ministry of Education, JSC, and TMG. Hagiuda stated, in connection with the forthcoming decision on the design of the new National Stadium, that "It is too late for the TMG to wait for the national government to step forward" regarding redeveloping the Jingu Gaien area. Yasui responded, "I am aware of this, and my bureau is leading the study in consultation with the vice-governors, and we are considering the matter internally." Hagiuda responded, "We need to consider a wide area, and when we realize [a large-scale project], we will be back in the LDP administration. We can only take this opportunity now to improve this area." Yasui stated that, about the plan for reconstructing the Jingu Gaien area, "the TMG would like to essentially create a rough draft and have the JSC propose as it is." To this end, he asked Hagiuda if a "counter partner" on the JSC side could coordinate with the TMG. Hagiuda, citing the name of a JSC board member on loan from the Ministry of Education, responded "Let's meet with the three of us." Hagiuda further stated, perhaps to Yasui's surprise, that the JASA had said they would like to move to Kasumigaoka and be in the same building as the JSC. It was difficult to rebuild the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium on-site

owing to the difficult negotiations with the Ministry of Finance over using the state-owned TMG Waterworks Bureau pumping station site for its rebuilding (TMGBUD 2012a).

The third document recorded a May 10, 2012 meeting of the two vice-governors, the chief engineer, and two department heads. The record stated, “Vice-Governor Sato will meet with former Prime Minister Mori on or after May 15 of the same month (accompanied by Chief Engineer Yasui).” It also noted that at a party held at a hotel on January 7, the chief engineer and Uchida, an LDP Tokyo Metropolitan Federation executive who was unsuccessful in his bid at the time, were introduced to Mori and that Uchida told Mori that the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium should be relocated in conjunction with the rebuilding of the National Stadium. The record even stated that “Vice-Governor Sato had told Mr. Uchida and Mr. Mori about the relocation before” and that after the projected meeting between Sato and Mori, “arrangements should be made to meet with Advisors Uchida and Takashima [another LDP Tokyo Metropolitan Federation executive who was unsuccessful in his bid at the time] as soon as possible.” As for the Kasumigaoka Metropolitan Apartments, it also said that, considering the likely “timing of the announcement of the design competition” for the New National Stadium, the residents “will not be told about the relocation until around July.” It further noted that “The site of the Kasumigaoka Apartments will be included in the ‘scope of consideration’ for the design competition (not conditioned as a site for reconstructing the stadium)” (TMGBUD 2012b).

The fourth document was a record of a May 15, 2012 meeting when Vice-Governor Sato and Chief Engineer Yasui told Mori about a plan to redevelop the entire Jingu Gaien area in two phases: one before the 2020 Olympics and the other after these events. In the pre-Olympic period, the JSC headquarters and the Japan Youth Center would be relocated to a tennis court owned by the JSC. As for the Kasumigaoka Metropolitan Apartments residents, Vice-Governor Sato stated that it was “necessary to move forward with a plan as a national policy to have them relocate to nearby metropolitan housing.” Mori stated it would be a good idea to relocate the JASA to the JSC-owned tennis courts and asked how large a building could be built. Sato replied that the adjacent Meiji Park could also be used as a site and that deregulation, affecting heights and other aspects, would be possible. Regarding the post-Olympics period, Yasui explained to Mori the permanent sub-track at the former Jingu No. 2 Baseball Stadium site and the swapping of the Jingu Stadium and Prince Chichibu Memorial Rugby Stadium sites. Mori asked, “Mr. Sato, isn’t this a wonderful idea? We should live long” (TMGBUD 2012c).

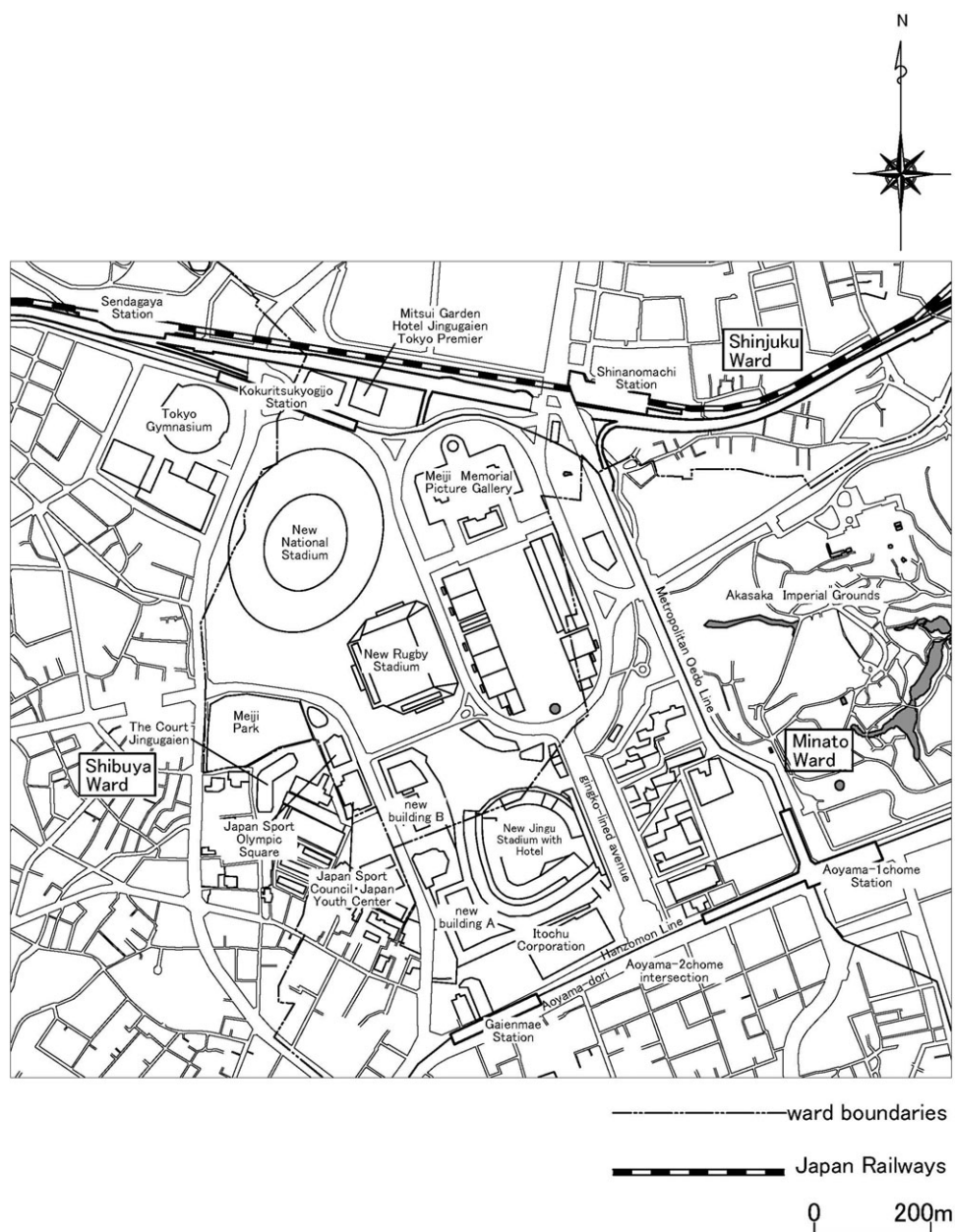
At the TMA’s Urban Development Committee meeting in March 2018, the Communist Party’s Shiraishi persistently pursued the TMG, wondering if Mori initiated the relocation discussion. He also repeatedly asked why Yasui, the former TMG chief engineer, had to exchange information with the unsuccessful former Diet member about rebuilding the National Stadium and why he and Hagiuda had to meet with the third person, the JSC official. However, the TMG side repeatedly stated that there had been various exchanges of

opinions between the JSC and the TMG, so there was nothing unnatural about discussing moving the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium. In addition, TMG’s Chief Engineer Ueno presented his own argument at considerable length. He asserted, “What is wrong with lobbying in the first place?” He stated that the TMA and Diet members’ understanding, support, and cooperation were essential for redeveloping the Jingu Gaien area as a national policy. Moreover, to obtain the cooperation and support of the rights holders in the area, “It is the TMG’s responsibility to make an effort at lobbying, and it is the TMG’s urban development responsibility and duty to do so.” He continued, “It is our job . . . What is wrong with such efforts? If there was any injustice or unfairness there, that might be a problem, but there was nothing wrong with that . . . Since there is no injustice in doing so, we do not see any problem.” In response, Shiraishi stated that if Ueno was willing to make a passionate speech in the moment, why did he hide the facts about the period before December 2015 when Shiraishi asked the question at the Urban Development Committee in May 2016? He further questioned whether Ueno had approached political parties other than the LDP if he said that it was necessary to reach out to legislators because it was a national policy. Ueno simply responded by repeating that he was seeking the support and cooperation of those willing to cooperate (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2018: 155).

Shiraishi further discussed the document dated May 10, 2012, which referred to the need for a conversation with two LDP Tokyo Metropolitan Federation executives who were former TMA members and had failed to be returned in the latest election. Shiraishi asked why the TMG had to discuss this relocation issue with these two unseated executives, but Ueno, who had been eloquent not long ago, simply repeated that he could not remember any details. Then Shiraishi further questioned whether Mori might have exercised political power concerning the case of the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium. He emphasized that the development of the sports cluster at Jingu Gaien was used to justify the relocation. The TMG side countered that it had already positioned the sports cluster in its administrative plan in December 2010 (TMG 2011b: 174), before the August 2011 meeting. However, Shiraishi asserted that the TMG side must have “intentionally . . . concealed” the history before December 2015 to “avoid being traced,” because it stated in 2016 that discussions about the relocation started after that date (TMAUDC 2018: 225).

Discussions after the Olympics

After the postponement due to coronavirus disease-2019 (Covid-19) and the eventual implementation of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the TMA’s Urban Development Committee discussed further changes to the Jingu Gaien District Plan in December 2021. The maximum floor-area ratio would be altered again to allow constructing high-rise buildings of 185 and 190 meters in height (“new building A” and “Itochu Corporation” in Map 4). The additional district development plan provided the plaza in front of the Picture Gallery and the north-south corridor as major public



Map 4: Jingu Gaien area after redevelopment [Caption: Referring in part to TMG, 2022: 14].

facilities and a new sidewalk-like open space as a district facility. The parks and community development system, which allowed for both urban development and maintaining parks and green spaces, would be used to abolish or renew sports facilities and remove some areas from the city planning park on the basis of the private company's plan. The Communist Party's Harada asked if there was any "recognition" that constructing Itochu's 190-meter-high building near the ginkgo-lined avenue would "destroy the landscape." Ono, Director of the TMG's Urban Development Policy Department, responded that the building would be "outside the scope of the viewpoint from the Aoyama 2-chome intersection [the point where the ginkgo-lined avenue and Aoyama-dori Street intersect orthogonally] overlooking the front of the Picture Gallery, and that it would not damage the view of the stately ginkgo trees." Harada then questioned the

appropriateness of constructing huge baseball and rugby stadiums, which would cause the loss of various facilities that had been familiar to the public, such as the Jingu No. 2 Baseball Stadium, rubber-ball baseball grounds, a batting practice range, a golf driving range, tennis and futsal courts, and tennis courts at the JSC (Photo 2). Ono responded by emphasizing that a central plaza was proposed between the new rugby stadium and the new baseball stadium, allowing children to run around safely and providing space for yoga and other events in which a wide range of Tokyo residents could participate. However, Harada was skeptical that people would come all the way here to do yoga, away from the parks they were familiar with. He then criticized that the definition of green space under the parks and community development system included rooftop plantings of hotels and sidewalk-like open spaces. It was "a mechanism to [make it] look as if the

plan has increased the amount of green space by putting in ‘green space, etc.’ rather than by limiting exclusively to green space and by including sidewalks as green space” (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2021: 52, 53, and 78).

At the March 9, 2022 TMA Special Budget Committee meeting, Harada criticized the methods used to make two nearly 200-meter high-rise buildings institutionally possible, particularly the redevelopment promotion zones. The floor-area ratio required for their height was insufficient for constructing two high-rise buildings. To compensate for the inadequate floor-area ratio, the TMG accepted a proposal from a private stakeholder “to transfer the floor-area ratio from the TMG’s common property, the city planning park, to the skyscrapers, which no one had ever done before.” He called this proposal problematic. The plan “gave up part of the park area to make room for the skyscrapers, while losing the rubber-ball baseball grounds, golf driving range, and futsal field,” and even abandoned a permanent sub-track for the national stadium to be laid on the Jingu No. 2 Stadium. As revealed in the reply from Ueno of the TMG, in July 2014, it became difficult to install the track, mainly because there was no room to install it. Instead of providing the sub-track, a grass plaza would be laid out between the new rugby stadium and the new baseball stadium. This was because, as Harada pointed out, “in order to have the two skyscrapers build up the floor-area ratio to the fullest, the plaza had to be provided as an institutional requirement.” Harada stated, “In other words, because of the priority given to building the skyscrapers, the plaza had to be built, and the sub-track could not be built . . . Ultimately, the metropolitan government sacrificed the sports cluster for the skyscrapers.” Then he yet again asserted, “It is only because it is the key plan of former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori” (Minutes of the TMA Special Budget Committee 2022: 362 and 364).

Harada then accused the TMG of perverting the national city planning guidelines. At the March 16, 2022 Urban Development Committee, he stated that the TMG was aware of the “high hurdles” in applying a district plan, including redevelopment promotion zones, when considering reconstructing the National Stadium in September 2011. The redevelopment promotion zone is a method that enables intensive land use and transfer of development rights in deteriorated urban areas. The central government’s City Planning Guidelines provided the following examples of where this method could be applied: first, integrated redevelopment on a considerable amount of underutilized land, such as the sites of factories, warehouses, railroad yards, or port facilities; second, integrated development on reclaimed land; third, integrated land use conversion to residential areas on agricultural land or underutilized land in residential zones; fourth, reconstructing aging housing complex; and fifth, redeveloping densely built-up areas with a high density of wooden houses. Harada argued that none of the examples provided in this guideline applied to a case such as that of Jingu Gaien; however, the TMG side insisted there would be no problem in the case of Jingu Gaien. Ono, Director of the Urban Development Policy Department, asserted that

the five cases in the city planning guidelines were “only examples, and I understand that the city planning parks and green spaces in the Center Core Area [area within the Metropolitan Expressway Central Circular Route] . . . have the same characteristics as those cases in that the land has not been used rationally.” He concluded, “Therefore, there is nothing wrong with it from a city planning standpoint” (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2022a: 181 and 182).

At the November 11, 2022 Urban Development Committee meeting, Harada showed the Urban Development Bureau’s documents dated September 15, 2011, which referred to the “high hurdles” discussed during the March 2022 meeting in applying district plans, including redevelopment promotion zones, as the national government would need to revise its city planning guidelines (TMGBUD 2011b). He also questioned the appropriateness of the contents of the fact sheet regarding the Jingu Gaien redevelopment project, which the TMG released in August 2022 to provide broad information on urban development in the Jingu Gaien area. It stated that the discussions on this matter began with the signing of the basic memorandum of understanding in April 2015 (TMG 2022: 5), despite the communication with former Prime Minister Mori and others before that, which had been clarified in the TMA meetings. Moreover, asked about when Mitsui Fudosan real estate development was first involved in discussions about the plan, the TMG side responded that coordination with landowners and other parties had been underway since the district plan was decided in 2013 and that those “parties” included Mitsui Fudosan with rights to an office building in the district. However, they could find no record of any discussions with Mitsui Fudosan before the 2015 signing of the basic memorandum of understanding.

The statement in the fact sheet claiming that redevelopment would increase the amount of open space and the “green ratio” was also questioned. The green ratio was a “first-ever indicator” that had never been used in city planning before. It “expresses the area for greenery, for the canopy of a large, hundred-year-old tree on the one hand, for things like lawns and rooftop plantings on the other,” but “does not measure the amount or volume of greenery at all.” The TMG acknowledged that the draft environmental impact assessment submitted to it by the operator in July of the previous year stated that the amount of greenery would be less than the current level after construction. At the same time, the TMG side underscored that the draft stated, “The plan is to manage and nurture the area properly, and the content and degree of change in the amount of greenery is indicated as being small.” Harada also questioned the statement in the fact sheet that the height of the ginkgo trees would not be blocked by buildings along the ginkgo-lined avenue when viewed from the designated viewpoint. He maintained, “If you look from the middle of the ginkgo-lined avenue, you will see the wall and fence of the new Jingu Stadium, as well as the huge panel, the stadium hotel, and the skyscraper.” The TMG side replied, “As for how it looks from the ginkgo-lined avenue, it varies depending on where you look.” Moreover, there was some doubt about how the

number of trees cut had been calculated. Harada criticized the fact sheet as being “intentionally constructed to make the number of trees cut appear small.” It was no longer a fact sheet but “a fake sheet,” he said (Minutes of the TMAUDC 2022b: 44, 45, 48, 49, and 74).

On February 16, 2023, metropolitan governor Yuriko Koike issued the enforcement authorization of the redevelopment project. In strong opposition, Izumi of the Communist Party said at the TMA Special Budget Committee meeting, “I must say that this is proof that the governor does not listen to us. We should rescind the approval even now.” He also questioned the results of selecting the operator for the Prince Chichibu Memorial Rugby Stadium reconstruction in August of the previous year. Kajima Construction Corporation and Mitsui Fudosan Estate group won the bidding for the project with an overwhelmingly low price compared with other bidders. Both JSC, the ordering party, and Mitsui Fudosan, the receiving party, were “fellow operators” of the Jingu Gaien redevelopment project, and it was “inevitable to say that the bidding was a rigged one among operators.” The TMG, however, merely stated that the selection of the project sponsor was the JSC’s responsibility and should be handled appropriately by the JSC, and that it was “not in a position to answer or evaluate the amount of the bid.” Izumi further stated that some of the green areas in the project area that were classified as type A or type B scenic areas, subject to strict regulations on tree cutting, were changed to type S scenic areas, making obtaining permits for tree cutting easier. During the discussion, the TMG admitted that, although Shinjuku Ward made this change, the TMG had requested it (Minutes of the TMA Special Budget Committee 2023a: 301, 317, and 320).

The *Mirai Kaigi* (Future Conference), a group of embittered and spin-off Assembly members from Governor Koike’s supporting political party, *Tomin First no Kai* (Tokyoites First), also criticized the proposed new rugby stadium as an event facility rather than a sports facility (Minutes of the TMA Special Budget Committee 2023b). It pointed out that the group that won the bid for constructing the rugby stadium included mass media such as the Yomiuri Shinbun newspaper, Nippon Television Network, Nippon Broadcasting System of the radio company of Fuji Sankei Group, and Avex, an entertainment company in the music, video, and digital businesses, in addition to Mitsui Fudosan. It asked, “Did Governor Koike transform the redevelopment of Jingu Gaien into a redevelopment for event facilities to capture the mass media?” The TMG brushed off the suggestion, replying, “The JSC solicited and selected the operators, and it is incorrect to point out that the TMG has transformed the project into a redevelopment project for an event facility.” However, another party, the Japan Innovation Party of Tokyo, stated that, while it was not opposed to redevelopment, simply proceeding with the stipulated procedures would not gain the understanding of the people of Tokyo and that there were many voices of opposition. The party therefore urged that the governor should actively show her attitude and message of being close to the people of Tokyo (Minutes of the TMA Ordinary Session 2023a: 115 and 121).

Seikatsusha (Ordinary Consumer) Network of Tokyo, a local political party of Tokyo, also argued that because citizen participation had been insufficient, it was important for the TMG to take the initiative in discussing the matter with the operators as well as people of Tokyo. Furthermore, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan argued that the redevelopment plan needed to be reviewed. The TMG, however, stated that it had provided opportunities to hear the opinions of the public on the basis of its ordinances and procedures and that it had provided opportunities for broad participation by the public through public comments and explanatory meetings (Minutes of the TMA Ordinary Session 2023b, 2023c). However, as opposition to tree felling smoldered, the TMG requested the operator to review the project, and the operator’s revised proposal to reduce the number of trees cut from 743 to 619 was issued, but the media also reported that the reaction of residents was not favorable (TBS NEWS DIG 2024).

Conclusion

In the case of Jingu Gaien, it was the Communist Party that kept criticizing this redevelopment in the TMA. Other parties were initially in favor of the redevelopment and did not question the formulation process. The thrust of the Communist Party’s argument was that Mori, a former prime minister, was the mastermind behind the plan, and that the plan was developed entirely through behind-the-scenes discussions to benefit his wishes and a few interested parties. However, it seemed that Mori and the TMG’s intentions were more in line with each other than that Mori was the mastermind behind the project, as the TMG was eager to redevelop the area on a large scale. In addition, behind-the-scenes discussions themselves are not procedurally illegal, while there are no procedural flaws in the approval of the plan.

Still, concern arises about the TMG relying too heavily on behind-the-scenes discussions. As the TMG side articulated in the TMA, the lobbies were made to gain the support and cooperation of those willing to cooperate. They are a very limited number of LDP politicians, and nothing else is communicated in the formulation process to any others. There is no indication of an intention to solicit a wide range of opinions, discuss any objections or doubts, and seek to build a consensus during the formulation process, rather than after the formulation is completed. Moreover, regarding the behind-the-scenes discussions, the TMG has given different answers in the TMA over the years, with contradicting content, which it had to admit to itself that it lacked politeness. Under the circumstances, it was difficult to foster firm confidence in TMG’s city planning, and once doubts and opposition to certain proposals of the plan such as the tree felling surfaced, it has been difficult to suppress them with active public support.

However, while public attention to the cutting down of the ginkgo trees, for which celebrities have spoken out, has been high, the public, which is marginalized in the plan’s formulation process, has remained generally indifferent to

the issues involved in this process. Issues related to the behind-the-scenes discussions that were harshly pursued in the TMA have not been covered much in the media. Likewise, the decision to demolish the metropolitan housing complex did not generate large-scale objection and opposition at the same level as that of the cutting down of the ginkgo trees, either in the political arena or in citizen movements. Soon after the district plan was first discussed in the TMA in 2013, the Communist Party, while opposing the Olympic bid, left it out of its campaign pledge book for the TMA because it deemed the issue less important than other issues. This meant removing the demolition of the Kasumigaoka Apartments as an issue (*Nihonkeizai Shinbun* 2013). A letter sent to the TMG in 2016 by a disabled resident who had refused to relocate stated that, owing to the suffering from the disability combined with the relocation issue, the person became “confused and neurotic. I deeply regret and apologize for the trouble.” It continued, “I would appreciate it if you could forgive me for what I have done. Please, I want to move into [specific name blacked out] metropolitan apartment and would like your permission” (Aoyama 2021: 96).

With the effects of climate change being keenly felt, the need for national land resilience has become imminent, and a system involving everyone from governments to residents has been established. As an example of deregulation-oriented city planning for redevelopment in central Tokyo, the case of Jingu Gaien shows that, especially in the process of formation of a plan, there is insufficient explanation and discussion as to why it is in the public interest to build high-rise buildings in the scenic area. Moreover, even if the characteristics of the area are public-goods-like, there is very limited room for input into the plan in its formation process for those who are not stakeholders with direct interests in the area. Under the circumstances, the public, traditionally marginalized from the planning process, is not likely to be concerned about the various issues in the planning process or the treatment or fate of residents of the Kasumigaoka Apartments. While that may be expedient for this type of redevelopment, it should be an issue that needs to be addressed proactively by governing bodies, such as TMG and TMA themselves, as an issue that needs to be changed, not just taken advantage of.

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