

A study on ways to implement waterfront enhancement projects properly reflecting the views of local residents

[Abstract]

In urban areas, people's interest in the sea and seashores is waning owing to the economically oriented use of seashores, and, as a consequence, seashore culture is declining. Conventional waterfront projects tended to create things according to particular values (mainly of suppliers), and the waterfronts thus created are not always satisfactory to the public. In order to make the waterfront of Tokyo Bay more attractive, therefore, it is necessary to let a wide range of stakeholders take active part in waterfront projects in a horizontal cooperation relationship.

In this study, with the aim of making the Tokyo Bay waterfront more attractive through cooperation among diverse stakeholders, a goal was set and ways to capture the views of the local residents in the Tokyo Bay area were studied. Then, a tool (information sharing through a Web site named "UNGAN") for enabling diverse entities to share views and feelings by sharing information so that even more effective efforts can be made through horizontal cooperation was created, and the Tokyo Bay Rediscovery and Enhancement Program was drawn up as a way to form a waterfront enhancement project by using the Web site.

1. Study items

Figure 1 shows the study flow (study items).

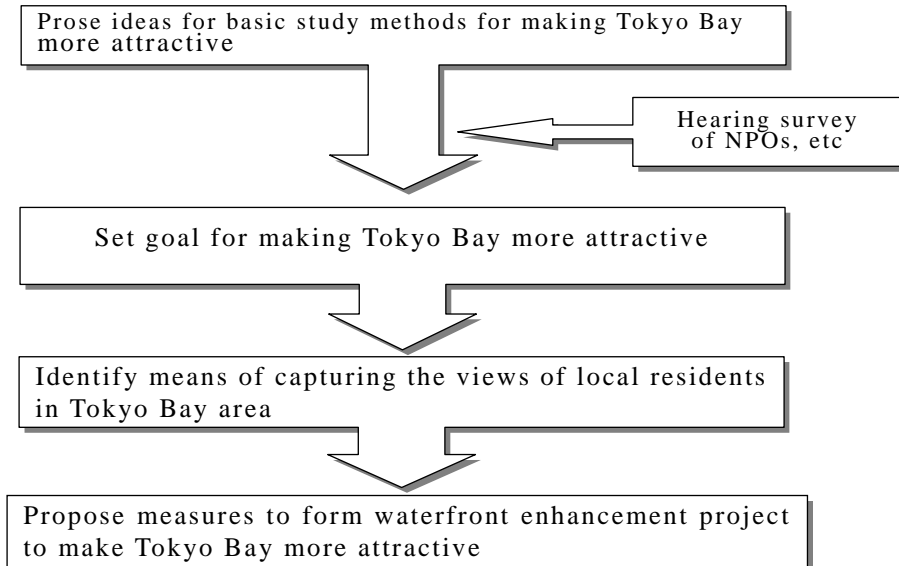


Figure 1. Study flow

2. Study method

(1) Collecting and collate information

Information concerning seaside development projects (including overseas projects) was collected and collated to gain basic information that can be used to make Tokyo Bay more attractive. The information thus obtained was studied to consider principles and goals for efforts to make the Tokyo Bay waterfront more attractive. Information on port, river or other infrastructure projects for which consensus building was achieved through cooperation between the government and citizens' groups or local residents was also collected to consider ways to make a waterfront more attractive, such as the allocation of tasks to be performed in sharing information. Furthermore, information concerning examples of projects that are providing new ways of spending time at seashores, projects that have made waterfronts and coastal waters more attractive by deregulation or other means, and examples of systems for keeping a waterfront attractive was collected and collated.

(2) Hearing survey

A hearing survey on sea-, seashore- and canal-related needs was conducted of NPOs and other organizations that are actively engaged in such activities as seashore environmental learning, community building involving the hinterland areas and water recreation such as canoeing in the sea, seashores or canals in the Tokyo Bay area.

(3) Meetings of the Committee on Creation of Attractive Tokyo Bay Waterfront

The Committee on Creation of Attractive Tokyo Bay Waterfront (chaired by Prof. Takeshi Kitazawa, Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, The University of Tokyo) composed of academic experts, experts on tourism, community planning, ports and harbors, etc., and administrators (port authority personnel) was formed to obtain guidance on ways to make Tokyo Bay more attractive. As an organization subordinate to the committee, the Space Working Group (chaired by Mr. Nobuharu Suzuki, Associate Professor, Yokohama City University) was formed to deliberate on concrete measures to be taken and tasks to be performed to make Tokyo Bay more attractive.

3. Study results

3-1 The goal of making Tokyo Bay more attractive

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, in waterfront evaluation, people may be poorly aware of the fact that the number of facilities that can be used by the public, such as public access facilities and green open spaces, is increasing.

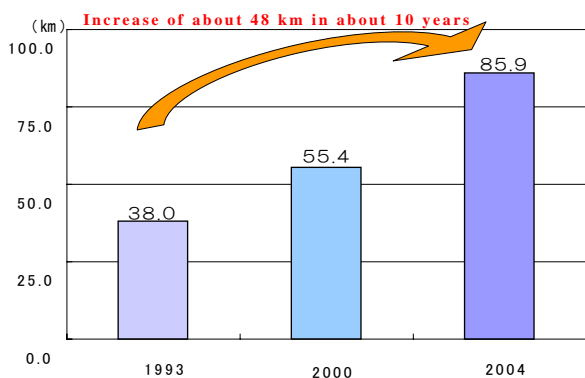
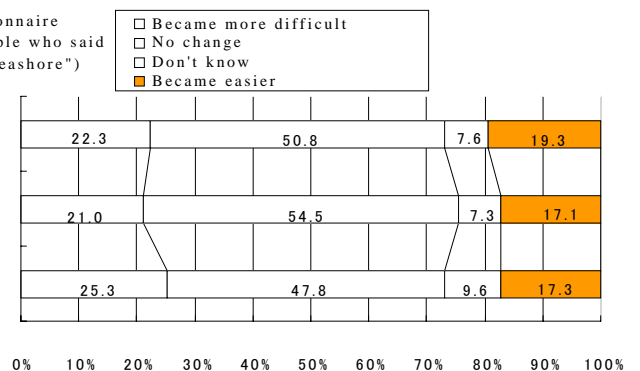


Figure 2. Changes in length of Tokyo Bay public access facilities over time

Seashore accessibility compared with 10 years ago

(Note: Questionnaire survey of people who said "went to the seashore")



Source: Survey on Seashore Needs, Cabinet Public Relations Office (1986, 1994 and 2000 surveys)

Figure 3. Seashore accessibility compared with 10 years ago

One factor contributing to this, it is thought, is the fact that as Tokyo Bay has become increasingly more artificial in the nature-poor Tokyo area, people became gradually estranged from the bay. As a result, various events, play, industries and maritime transportation that used to be part of the local seascape or shorescape have been rapidly lost. It is necessary, therefore, to pay attention to the sea (Tokyo Bay) that exists in front of our eyes and the sea (Tokyo Bay) that has been deeply involved with the fostering of the culture of the Tokyo area and create a waterfront that is capable, as an integral part of the living environment, of meeting the public's needs. This makes it necessary to start at a more basic level. In other words, basically it is necessary for all people concerned to jointly define the kind of seashore they wish to have and participate in seashore-based activities so that people find a seashore-based life style enjoyable, the seashore becomes closer to an ideal form of waterfront, and they become aware of the fact that the seashore is their shared property.

In view of the above, the goal of the efforts to make Tokyo Bay more attractive has been defined as **"establishing a life style and creating a waterfront culture so that people become aware of the fact that the waterfront of Tokyo Bay is their shared property and act accordingly."**

3-2 Proposed system for information sharing designed to achieve the goal of making Tokyo Bay more attractive

(1) Basic concept

In order to enhance the attractiveness of Tokyo Bay, it is important that people have opportunities to go to the seashore and experience its atmosphere and pleasures so that they can discover the charm and pleasantness of the seashore through experience and various events. As shown in Figure 4, the process in which people notice the charm and problems of the seashore through experience so that by participating in various efforts, they discover their own ways of enjoying seashore experience and come to think that they want to participate again is important.

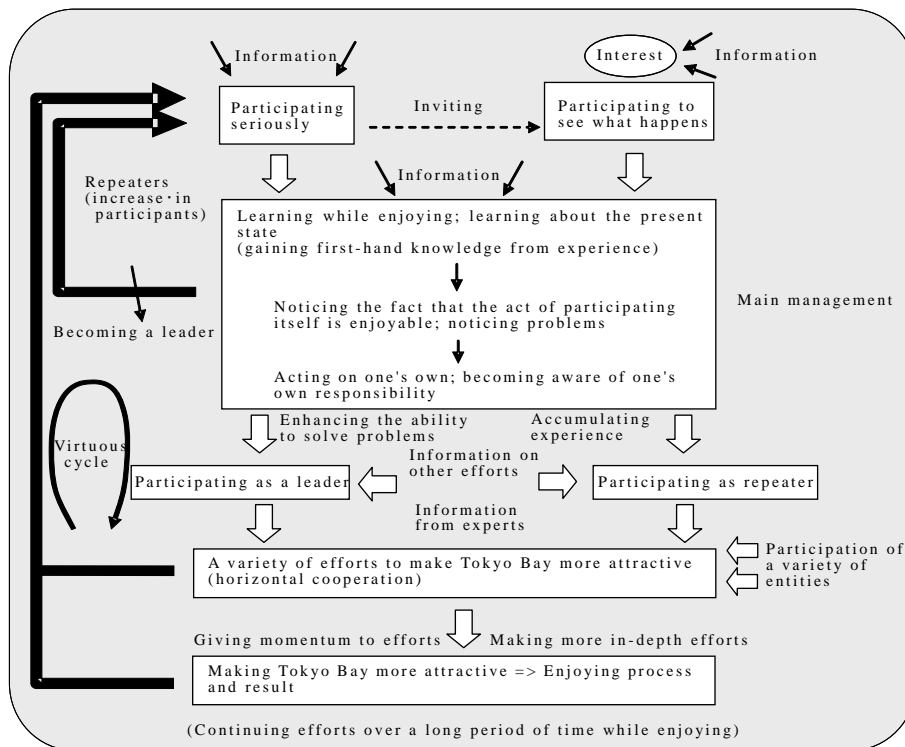


Figure 4. Basic concept (system) for achieving the goal

(2) How the system works

If a system for sharing information is to be developed in order to realize the process mentioned above, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that unlike other types of infrastructure such as roads and rivers, the sea and ports are not the kind of space familiar to ordinary people as shown in Figure 5.

When trying to organize efforts involving the public for a sea- or port-related project, before moving on to the consensus building stage, we need to take time at the stage where the awareness of a particular problem such as a problem concerning the present state of the sea or a port is to be shared by many people.

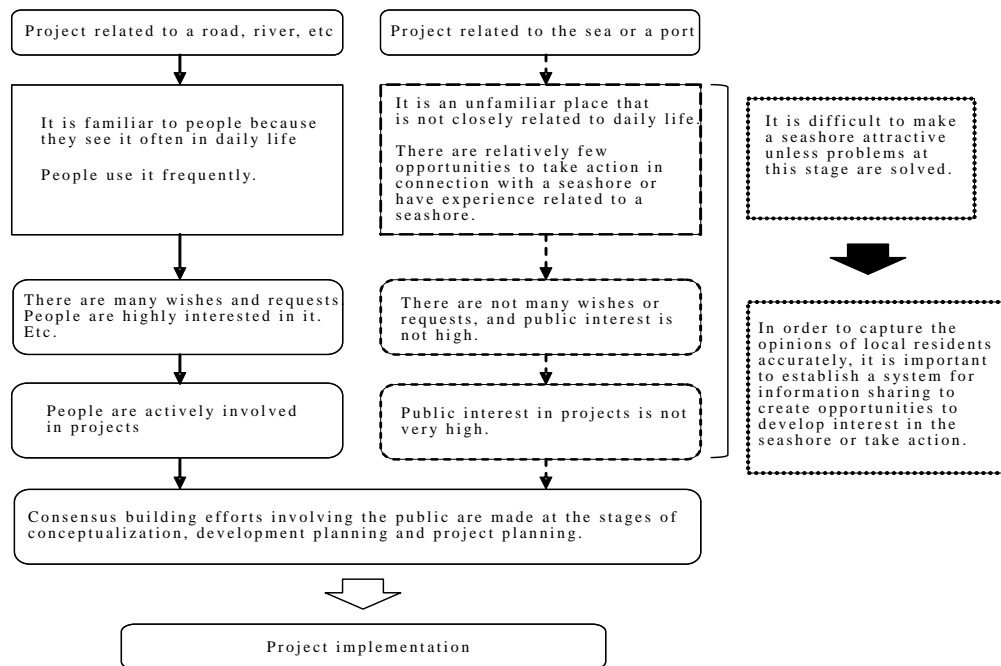


Figure 5. Differences from the consensus building process for other types of infrastructure

It is important, therefore, to (provide opportunities to) share information among various people and entities. It is believed that such opportunities will serve as the most basic means of stimulating public interest in and concern about seashores and promoting cooperation among various entities so that people can share thoughts and feelings and cooperate with a greater number of people by enjoying seashore experience themselves and working to make seashores even more attractive.

In the area of information sharing, a growing number of local governments are using community-based SNS (social networking service) and blogs by involving the public in editing and disseminating locally generated information for the purpose of revitalizing the local community and promoting public involvement in local administration.

In view of these trends, it is thought that methods using the Internet (Web sites), which enables its users to exchange views and information without heeding where and when they are sent or received and to exchange information and views with many unspecified individuals, are very useful. A system for Web-site-based information sharing, therefore, has been developed.

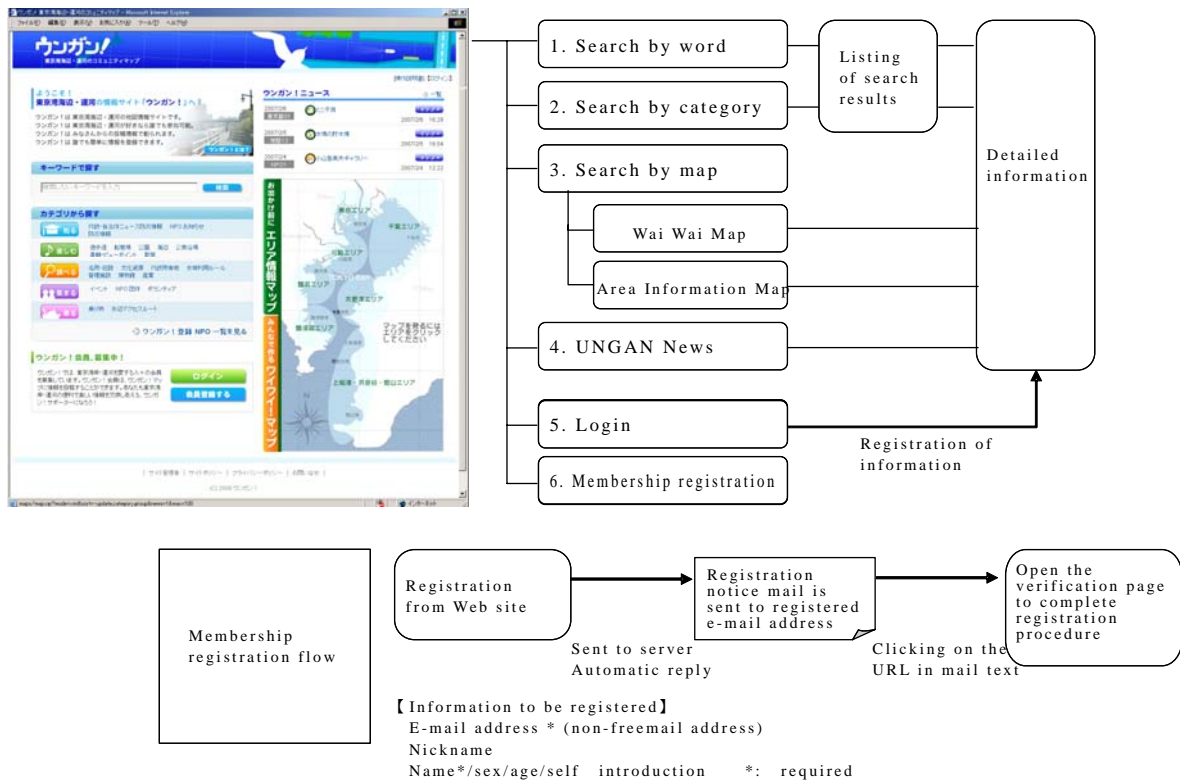


Figure 7. Setting up the Tokyo Bay portal site "UNGAN"

3-3 Proposed measures using the Tokyo Bay portal site

The Tokyo Bay portal site "UNGAN" mentioned above is a tool designed to generate "seeds" and "needs" and create an attractive waterfront by involving many and diverse people and sharing information so that the public can take part in the efforts to create an attractive waterfront.

In order to achieve that goal, measures to be taken by using the Tokyo Bay portal site, including the method of cooperation among related administrative organizations and other administrative measures, have been proposed, and the Tokyo Bay Rediscovery and Enhancement Program has been drawn up as an action plan for achieving the goal of forming a waterfront enhancement project designed to make Tokyo Bay more attractive.

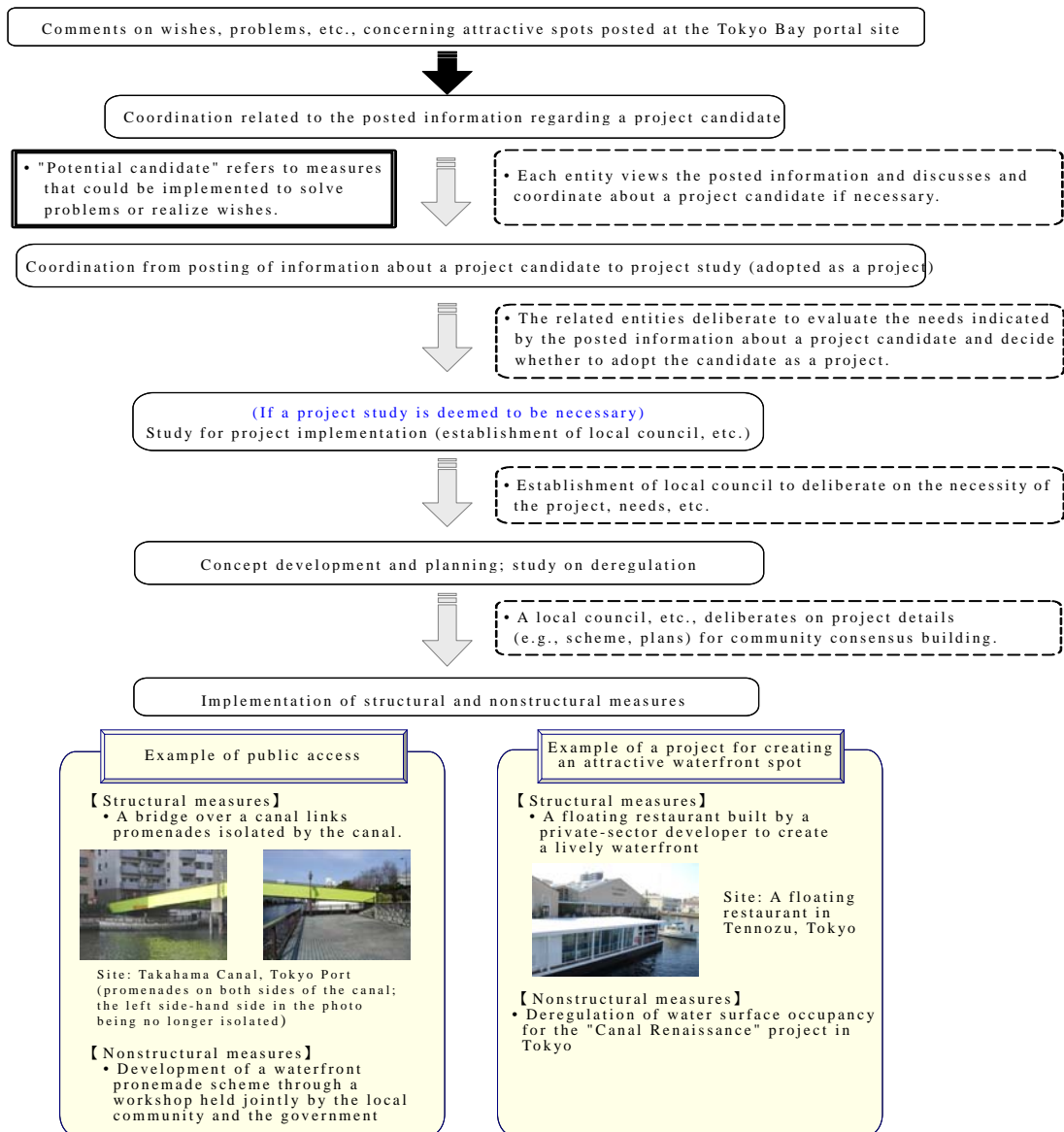


Figure 8. Proposed measures using the Tokyo Bay portal site