

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law and Commentary

-To accomplish our goal of constructing Hiroshima as a symbol of eternal peace-

Foreword

Owing to the loss of all of its revenue sources in World War II and the inflation that followed the war's end, Hiroshima found itself in dire financial straits, lacking the resources to undertake reconstruction. The Japanese government itself was on the verge of bankruptcy, with many other cities in desperate need of reconstruction funds. Although there was general recognition that the devastation of Hiroshima was of a greater magnitude than that of other cities, special legislation was required for the city to receive preferential assistance.

After extensive efforts, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law was enacted on August 6, 1949, the fourth anniversary of the atomic bombing. According to the law, former military and other land owned by the national government was transferred to the city as part of a set of measures giving preferential assistance.

In conformity with the law, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan was adopted in 1952.

Hiroshima was reconstructed in accordance with the law and the plan, which even today serve as the basis for town planning.



The City of Hiroshima

■ Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law

(Purport of this Law)

Article 1 It shall be the object of the present law to provide for the construction of the city of Hiroshima as a peace memorial city to symbolize the human ideal of sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace.

(Explanation)

This article declares the meaning and import of this law. All peoples throughout the world seek genuine and lasting peace as an ideal. The intent of this law was to construct Hiroshima as a city that symbolizes lasting peace and Japan's renunciation of war.



Fig.1 Panoramic view after bombing (Oct.1945-Mar.1946)

(Planning and Endeavors)

Article 2 Special town planning for the construction of Hiroshima Peace Memorial City (hereinafter referred to as the Peace Memorial City Construction Plan) shall include, in addition to the planning provided for by Article 4 of the Town Planning Law, planning of facilities to inspire the pursuit of lasting peace and such other cultural facilities as would befit a peace memorial city.

2 The special town planning endeavors to construct the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City (hereinafter referred to as the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors) shall be developed for the purpose of implementing the Peace Memorial City Construction Plan.

(Explanation)

This article identifies two types of Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors. One focuses on transportation, sanitation, safety, economics and other important urban facilities. The other involves cultural facilities specifically indicative of a peace city. The Peace Memorial Park, the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims (Memorial Monument for Hiroshima, City of Peace), the Peace Memorial Museum, and Peace Memorial Hall were built as peace memorial facilities.

(Reference)

The Nakajima District is located in the center of the City and lies between the two rivers, the Motoyasugawa and the Honkawa. It was formerly one of the city's main business districts. In 1946, much of this area was set aside as Nakajima Park under the Hiroshima



Fig.2 Nakajima District after bombing

War Damage Reconstruction Plan.

Upon approval of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan in 1952, the Atomic Bomb Dome and the immediate environs became part of Nakajima Park which was renamed Peace Memorial Park.

In accordance with the Town Planning Law, the Park and the Atomic Bomb Dome were designated as a memorial to world peace.



Fig.3 Present Nakajima District

(Assistance for Endeavors)

Article 3 Relevant agencies of the national and local governments shall, in light of the significance of the purpose described in Article 1, render every possible assistance to the expedition and completion of the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors.

(Explanation)

This article stipulates that prefectural and municipal governments, in addition to the national government, are required to provide assistance through involvement in the construction of the peace city. The purpose of this assistance is to promote construction and improvement of the peace city, and such assistance is to be offered proactively, without waiting to be asked.

(Reference)

In 1952, Heiwa-ohashi Bridge and Nishi-heiwa-ohashi Bridge were constructed under direct control of the national government. The railings of these bridges were designed by world famous Japanese-American Sculptor *Isamu Noguchi*.



Fig.4 Heiwa-ohashi Bridge (1952)



Fig.5 Present Heiwa-ohashi Bridge

In May 2000, Bank of Japan made a decision to donate land and building of former Hiroshima office to the City of Hiroshima without compensation on condition that this building is designated as a national important cultural property.



Fig.6 Former Hiroshima office of Bank of Japan

(Special Subsidies)

Article 4 As deemed necessary for the execution of the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors, the national government may, Article 28 of the National Property Law notwithstanding, transfer ordinary assets to those local public entities mandated to bear the expenses required by construction endeavors.

(Explanation)

By this article, approximately 35 hectares of nationally-owned former military property was donated without compensation to the city for construction of the peace memorial city.

(Reference)

These are examples of facilities constructed on the land donated by the national government.



Fig.7 Hiroshima Citizen's Hospital



Fig.9 Hiroshima Big Wave and Ushita Filtration Plant



Fig.8 Motomachi High School

Table1 List of former military property donated to the city

Intended purpose	Land area (m ²)
Educational facilities	146,888.26
Water supply facilities	171,153.39
Welfare facilities	1,513.44
Sanitation facilities	25,974.91
Total	345,530.00

(Reporting)

Article 5 Those engaged in executing the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors shall strive to complete said endeavors promptly and shall submit progress reports to the Minister of Construction at least once every six months.

2 The Prime Minister shall report to the Diet once each year the status of the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors.

(Explanation)

This article made it clear that construction of a peace city was not just a Hiroshima issue.

The peace city was a national project supported by the will of the Japanese people. Thus, the Japanese people as a whole were to receive annual progress reports presented to the Diet. To date, the total cost of the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors amounts to some 1.7 trillion yen.

(Responsibility of the Mayor of Hiroshima)
Article 6 The Mayor of Hiroshima shall, with the cooperation of residents and support from relevant organizations, establish a program of continuous activity toward completion of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City.

(Explanation)

In addition to working toward the swift completion of the endeavors, the Mayor of Hiroshima is required by this law to strive ceaselessly as befits the mayor of a peace city to bring Hiroshima ever closer to being the ideal Peace Memorial City. In addition, all of Hiroshima's residents are hereby obligated to strive, in the spirit of peace and cooperation, to fulfill the promise of "Hiroshima, the Peace Memorial City."

(Reference)

These are examples of assistance from citizens and local financial circles.

Preservation work of the A-Bomb Dome was carried out three times (1967, 1990, 2002) funded largely by the donations of private citizens. And, As well, Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium was built in 1958 as center of sports with the donations of local financial circles.



Fig. 10 A-Bomb Dome under first preservation work (1967)



Fig. 11 Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium after completion (1958)

(Application of the Acts)
Article 7 Unless otherwise stipulated by this law, the Special Town Planning Law and the Town Planning Law shall apply to the Peace Memorial City Construction Plan and the Peace Memorial City Construction Endeavors.

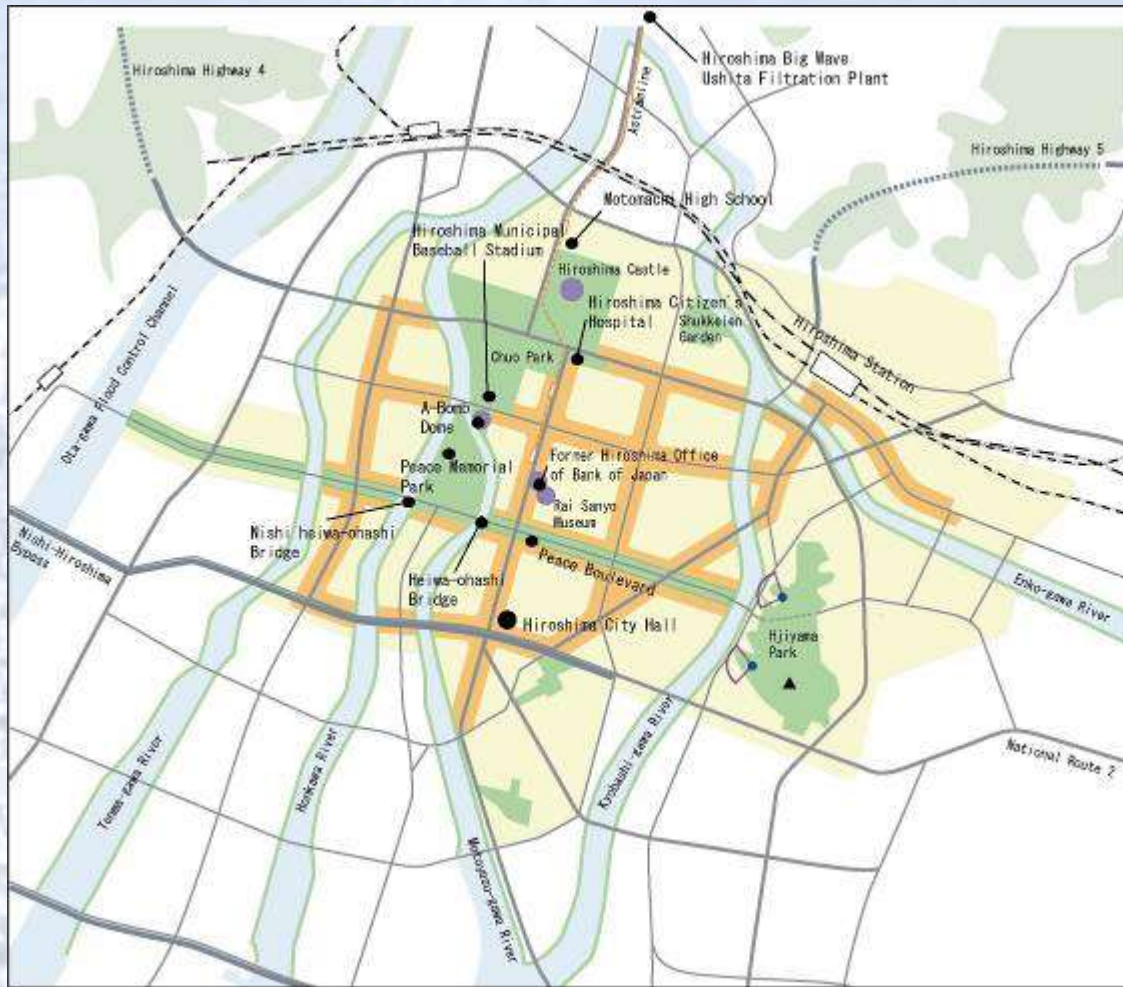


Fig.12 Map of related facilities to the law

■ Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan

In conformity with the law, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan was adopted in 1952. It specified the following measures:

Outline of the plan

- 1 To build a park of 12.21 hectares in the Nakajima District near the hypocenter of the atomic bomb explosion, to be designated as a memorial place and called Peace Memorial Park.
- 2 To designate an area of 58.74 hectares (44.1 hectares in the present plan), including the site of Hiroshima Castle, to be called Chuo Park, and to build many other parks in the city.
- 3 To plan riverside green tracts, so as to enhance the attraction of the rivers flowing through the city from north to south; furthermore, to preserve tracts of woodland in surrounding mountain areas.
- 4 To lay arterial roads in a grid pattern using as an axis the 100-metre-wide road which runs through the centre of the city from east to west.
- 5 To establish an efficient sewerage and drainage system, since most of the urban area of the city lies on the delta.

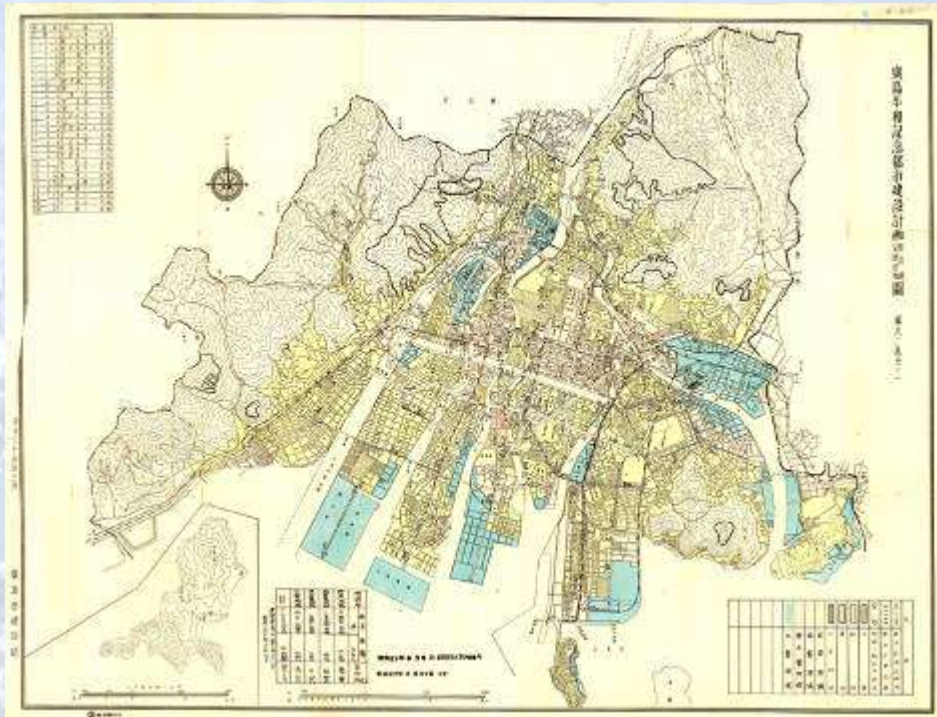


Fig.13 Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan (1952)

Table2 Major contents designated in the plan

Description	Scale	
	As of Mar. 1952	As of Jan. 2003
Memorial Places	1 site (12.21ha)	1 site (12.21ha)
Roads	27 Roads (95.44km)	145 Roads (416.59km)
Parks	78 locations (219.67ha)	410 locations (619.69ha)
Green Tracts	8 locations (398.34ha)	14 locations (421.00ha)
Land Readjustment Sites	2 sites (1,520ha)	14 sites (1,541ha)
Sewerage	1,172ha of sewerage disposal area	15,191ha of sewerage disposal area
Zones for Certain Uses	3,644ha	15,195ha
Urban Development Sites		7 sites (9.4ha)
District Plan		36 sites (1,772ha)

To accomplish our goal of becoming an “International City of Peace and Culture,” Hiroshima today is vigorously pursuing urban redevelopment and promoting a variety of public works projects, all in accordance with the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan.

City Planning Division, Urban Development Bureau, the City of Hiroshima
 1-6-34 Kokutaiji-machi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, 730-8586 Japan
<http://www.city.hiroshima.jp/>
 E-mail:tokei@city.hiroshima.jp