

# The Sixth Kobe City Master Plan

– Kobe in 2035

City of Kobe

## **1. Formulation of the Master Plan**

Kobe City’s comprehensive master plans—the new Kobe City Concepts (established in 1993), the Fifth Kobe City Master Plan (established in 2011), and the Kobe 2025 Vision (established in 2021)—will all reach their final stages in March 2026.

As Japan faces nationwide population decline and a falling birthrate and aging society, in order to promote sustainable urban development into the future, it is necessary to clarify the vision and direction that both residents and the municipal government should pursue for Kobe and to jointly manage the city from a long-term perspective.

Accordingly, the city has positioned the formulation of a new comprehensive master plan not only as an opportunity to foster greater civic participation in municipal governance, but also as a catalyst for sharing common values within the administration and promoting coordinated, consistent policies across departments.

The new Kobe City Concepts were formulated through extensive deliberations by the council, incorporating a wide range of opinions from over 60,000 residents. These Concepts do not set a specific end date; rather, they articulate Kobe’s “fundamental principles” that remain constant in any era, describing the value the city continues to cherish and pass on to the future as well as the vision it seeks to achieve going forward.

Based on these Concepts, the new Master Plan, which is positioned as their subordinate plan, was developed as a ten-year guideline that outlines the desired state of Kobe in 2035 and the directions for realizing that vision, taking into account the city’s history, current conditions, and increasingly diverse and complex social issues.

In formulating the plan, discussions were held with a wide range of residents and stakeholders through more than 100 workshops. In addition, opinions were collected via web-based surveys and through the use of GIGA School terminals from elementary and junior high school students within the city. In total, more than 50,000 people participated in the planning process.

## **2. Kobe City Concepts**

Kobe is a beautiful port city surrounded by the mountains and sea.

Since opening our port to the people of the world, this city has been a birthplace of culture and popular trends.

Kobe is a city with many sides to explore.

Urban city centers coexist with rural mountain villages,

and the elegant cityscapes, vibrant old streets,

along with the winding hills that lead into town all offer a different view every day.

Kobe is a city full of warmth and human connection.

We come together through our strong bonds that help us overcome challenges and hardships,

and with our open spirit that celebrates diversity.

Kobe always welcomes everyone with a gentle embrace.

Kobe has inherited many things over the years,

and we will continue to make contributions both at home and abroad—fostering connections across generations and perspectives as we march on forward into the future.

With the technology and knowledge gathered and cultivated over time, Kobe is a city that nurtures pioneering industries and trailblazers,

and a place where people gather from across the seas and skies to create new value for the future.

A place where everyone can pursue their dreams, helping and supporting each other along the way.

A city where rich nature intertwines with people's lives, and everyone can find their own happiness.

We will continue to shape our city into one we can proudly call our own, passing it on to the generations to come.

The opening section of the Concepts reflects on Kobe's history and urban development, portraying three defining characteristics that are uniquely Kobe: **“a beautiful port city surrounded by the mountains and sea,” “a city with many sides to explore,”** and **“a city full of warmth and human connection.”**

Although Kobe is a major metropolitan city, it is richly endowed with natural surroundings such as the sea and mountains. Since early times, it has flourished as an international port city characterized by a spirit of enterprise and innovation, giving rise to new trends and cultures. Mt. Rokko, which has become a lush green mountain through continuous human stewardship; *satoyama* landscapes dotted with thatched-roof houses;

long-cherished scenic sites; the coastlines of Suma and Tarumi; streetscapes featuring Western-style buildings; bustling markets filled with people; charming old-fashioned neighborhoods; and the views from winding hills woven into daily life—all of these are assets that have been protected and nurtured by generations past. Moreover, each time Kobe has faced major trials such as war damage, floods, and earthquakes, people who love the city have come together across nationalities and races, respecting and supporting one another to overcome those challenges. It is because of these bonds that Kobe is imbued with a sense of kindness, where diverse individuals acknowledge one another and offer mutual support.

The middle section declares a commitment to continuing to protect, utilizing, and enhancing these Kobe traits that have been cultivated and passed down by previous generations, while continuing to make contributions both at home and abroad—fostering connections across generations and perspectives.

The concluding section distills the opinions and messages received from many residents and presents Kobe’s desired future vision: **“a city that nurtures pioneering industries and trailblazers,” “a place that creates new value for the future,” “a place where everyone can pursue their dreams,”** and **“a city where everyone can find their own happiness.”** These visions serve as guiding principles for advancing further by building upon the Kobe traits inherited from previous generations. By pursuing the future vision of Kobe created together with its residents, a love for the city is fostered and a sense of pride in the city is nurtured.

The Concepts embody the residents’ enduring desire to continue to refine what makes Kobe uniquely Kobe, nurture a sense of pride in the city, and pass it on to future generations.

### 3. Kobe's Past and Present

#### ( 1 ) Economic Development of Kobe

##### ① A City that Grew with the Opening of the Port

Following the opening of its port in 1868, Kobe established a foreign settlement where foreign residents were permitted to live and conduct business. Stylish Western-style buildings were constructed one after another, European and American trading companies set up operations, and imports of cotton and iron, along with exports of tea and raw silk, flourished. As a result, Kobe rapidly developed into one of Japan's leading trading ports. In the early years after the port opened, trade centered on light industry. However, under the policies of the Meiji government, Japan promoted heavy industrialization, and in step with the nation's overall industrial modernization, heavy and large-scale industries such as shipbuilding, steelmaking, and electrical machinery greatly advanced Kobe's economy. Consequently, talented individuals and excellent technical capabilities were drawn to the city.

From the early 1900s to the 1910s, as Western culture spread and demand for bread and Western-style confectionery increased, baking and confectionery techniques were introduced from the West. This led to the emergence of numerous bakeries and patisseries throughout the city. At the same time, the production of Western-style clothing and footwear flourished around the foreign settlements, establishing well-known brands such as "Kobe Clothing" and "Kobe Shoes." Industries such as pearl processing and synthetic leather footwear manufacturing also developed, and Kobe became widely recognized as a center of fashion in Japan. Jazz and sports such as golf were also introduced to Japan through Kobe. The city's distinctive openness as a port town naturally embraced diverse cultures, creating fertile ground for the emergence of new cultural trends within Japan.

As the number of foreign visitors to Japan increased, Western-style residences were built not only in the foreign settlements but also in areas such as Kitano and Shioya. Kobe thus developed as a modern city characterized by rich international diversity and a vibrant mix of cultures. During the postwar reconstruction period, small factories for metalworking and shoe manufacturing clustered in Nagata Ward, forming warm, close-knit local communities with a strong sense of human connection. Shopping streets thrived and became lively gathering places for local residents.

Today, Kobe offers a living environment in which foreign residents can feel secure, with international schools, diverse religious facilities, and restaurants serving cuisine from around the world. Global companies have established their Japanese bases in the city, enabling international professionals to thrive, while creative and culturally refined talent from Kobe continues to expand its presence on the global stage.

In this way, since the opening of its port, Kobe has welcomed many foreign residents and consistently embraced diverse cultures and new ideas from abroad. Through its unique and dynamic development as an international city, Kobe has played an important role in supporting Japan's economic growth and cultural advancement.

## ② Industrial Transformation in Response to Changing Times

Kobe's industrial structure has undergone significant transformation in response to changing times. In light of two oil shocks and the rise of overseas shipbuilding and steel industries, the city moved away from its long-standing reliance on heavy and large-scale industries that had supported its economy since the opening of the port. The city promoted fashion-related industries such as apparel and pearls as well as the convention industry by leveraging its internationally diverse cityscape and rich natural environment. As a symbolic milestone, PORTPIA '81, held to commemorate the completion of Port Island, attracted as many as 16 million visitors. In addition, to advance and diversify existing industries, Kobe has fostered the development of electronics and precision manufacturing, and since the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, has actively promoted the attraction of medical and biotechnology industries. Looking further toward economic revitalization and enhanced competitiveness, the city has also placed strong emphasis on attracting growth-oriented companies and highly skilled human resources, including investing in startups expected to achieve rapid growth.

As a result, while being adjacent to the economic areas of Kyoto and Osaka, Kobe has maintained an economic circulation rate of over 100% on its own, forming an independent economic sphere. Looking ahead, even as the concentration of functions in Tokyo continues to intensify, it is important to sustain and further develop Kobe's economic sphere. At the same time, by strengthening collaboration with Kyoto, which is centered on traditional industries and tourism, and Osaka, which is centered on business and finance, and by generating economic synergies among these cities, Kobe can play an important role in helping the Kansai region grow into an economic area on par with Tokyo.

## (2) Population Trends in Kobe

### ① Historical Population Trends

Following World War II, Japan experienced its first baby boom during the postwar reconstruction period, leading to a sharp rise in the birthrate and steady population growth. Subsequently, during the period of rapid economic growth beginning in the 1960s, population movement from rural areas to urban centers intensified. In Kobe, this trend culminated in the population reaching 1.5 million in

1992. The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake caused the first population decline in the postwar period, with the population temporarily decreasing to approximately 1.42 million. However, as reconstruction progressed, the population gradually recovered and surpassed its pre-earthquake level in 2004.

Meanwhile, across Japan as a whole, the declining birthrate and aging of the population have progressed against a backdrop of changes in lifestyles, increasing diversity in the timing of marriage and childbirth, and extended life expectancy resulting from advances in medical technology. Consequently, Japan's population began to decline after peaking at 128.08 million in 2008. Reflecting this nationwide trend, Kobe's population also peaked at 1.54 million in 2011 and has continued to decline since then.

## ② Demographic Characteristics of Kobe

Kobe is home to a wide range of higher education institutions, attracting students from across Japan. As a result, the city shows a net in-migration trend among young people aged 18 to 23. In particular, a large number of students move to Kobe from other cities within Hyogo Prefecture and the Kinki region, reflecting the strength of the city's academic and research environment. However, from around age 23 onward, when many people enter the workforce, a pronounced net out-migration trend emerges. Population outflows to the Tokyo metropolitan area are especially significant, contributing to a decline in Kobe's working-age population and raising concerns about the impact on the local economy. By contrast, net in-migration is observed among middle-aged and older people in their 40s to 60s. Many people relocate from western Japan and western parts of Hyogo Prefecture in search of Kobe's urban amenities and convenient transportation access. In particular, Nishi Ward and Tarumi Ward tend to attract a relatively large number of residents from surrounding municipalities.

## ③ Future Population Outlook

In 2024, the number of births in Japan fell below 700,000, marking the ninth consecutive year of record lows. In the near future, even the Tokyo metropolitan area is expected to begin experiencing population decline, and the decrease in population across Japan as a whole is projected to accelerate further, with significant impacts anticipated on the economy and daily life.

Japan's labor force, which stood at approximately 70 million in 2024, is projected to decline to around 63 million by 2050. This trend raises concerns about reduced corporate productivity and slower economic growth. In particular, the long-term care sector is expected to face a shortage of more than 1.2 million care workers by 2050.

To respond to these issues, it is essential to adopt a sustainability-oriented perspective, including the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and automation.

### **(3) Urban Development in Kobe**

#### **① Urban Development to Date**

The development of Kobe has progressed alongside the expansion of railway networks. Due to the city's geographical features, with the Rokko mountain range rising nearby, railways were laid on the relatively flat coastal side during the Meiji and Taisho eras, and urban development concentrated along these rail lines. After World War II, population inflow into urban areas accelerated across Japan, and Kobe was no exception. During the period of rapid economic growth in particular, industrialization advanced and the population increased rapidly, creating strong demand for the expansion of residential areas. However, Kobe's land area of flat terrain was limited due to its location between the sea and mountains, leading development to extend into the foothills of Mt. Rokko. Consequently, unplanned development occurred, giving rise to problems such as environmental degradation and increased risk of landslides, making the securing of residential capacity an urgent issue. In response, transportation infrastructure was developed to support the creation of large-scale new towns on the northern side of the Rokko mountain range. The opening of the municipal subway and the extension of the Kobe Electric Railway improved access from suburban areas to the city center, significantly enhancing the living environment and facilitating population expansion along the routes in areas such as Seishin and Kita Ward. At that time, Kobe adopted a unique development method known as the Kobe-style approach, which involved cutting into the mountains, using the excavated soil to reclaim land along the coast, and thereby securing extensive tracts of residential land and industrial zones. This approach, often described as "bringing the mountains to the sea," became a distinctive feature of Kobe's urban development.

#### **② Current Situation**

With nationwide population decline, the aging of new towns, an increase in vacant houses and vacant land, and the resulting "urban spongification" have become common issues across Japan. In Kobe, the new towns that were developed in a planned manner have provided a comfortable living environment, with wide roads and well-maintained parks. However, as a certain number of years have passed since their development, the aging of residents, the outflow of younger generations, and the deterioration of housing and public facilities have become increasingly evident. In the foothill areas of Mt. Rokko, houses developed indiscriminately in the past have been left vacant and neglected, raising concerns

about negative impacts on the landscape and surrounding environment. In addition, in areas such as Port Island and Rokko Island, vacancy rates for offices and commercial facilities have risen, posing challenges to the maintenance of urban functions. These issues are closely related to past urban development and the city's geographical background, reflecting the distinctive characteristics unique to Kobe.

#### (4) A City that Has Overcome Numerous Disasters

##### ① History of Disasters

Due to its steep terrain in the Rokko mountain range and its location facing the Seto Inland Sea, Kobe has been struck by floods many times in the past. In particular, the 1938 Hanshin Flood caused catastrophic damage to the city as rivers overflowed following an intense downpour. This disaster prompted the advancement of erosion and sediment control works in the Rokko mountain range, and today more than 500 check dams have been constructed.

During World War II, Kobe suffered extensive damage from air raids. In particular, during the 1945 Kobe Air Raid, approximately 60% of the urban area was destroyed by fire, and the population declined to around 380,000. However, the postwar reconstruction plan led to the rebuilding of the city, and Kobe once again established itself as an international trading city.

The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was Japan's first modern direct-hit earthquake in a major metropolitan area, causing unprecedented damage to Kobe. The population fell from approximately 1.52 million before the earthquake to approximately 1.42 million, and the city was forced to pursue strict fiscal management in order to recover. However, in the relief efforts following the earthquake, within five months, a total of more than 1.22 million volunteers had come from across Japan and around the world. Disaster volunteerism became a social phenomenon, and the year 1995 came to be known as the "first year of volunteerism." Through major administrative and fiscal reforms, Kobe worked to overcome its financial crisis, and by 2004 the population had surpassed its pre-earthquake level. Additionally, land readjustment and redevelopment projects carried out in areas that had sustained particularly severe damage were completed with the conclusion of the Shin-Nagata South district project in November 2024, marking the completion of all reconstruction initiatives. In this way, Kobe has demonstrated a strong will to rebuild each time it has been struck by disaster and has achieved recovery through the unity of its residents.

##### ② Civic Pride

Kobe has long developed as an international port city rich in a spirit of enterprise and innovation.

Mt. Rokko, which was once barren, has been successfully restored through many years of reforestation efforts by countless people. Today, it protects residents' lives from disasters, is cherished by many, and provides a symbolic space for relaxation in Kobe. Moreover, each time the city has faced major trials such as war damage, floods, and earthquakes, residents have stood together and overcome adversity. This collective experience of residents joining hands to take on new challenges and overcoming various difficulties forms the very foundation of Kobe residents' love for the city and serves as a source of pride for Kobe.

On the 20th anniversary of the earthquake, the civic pride message "BE KOBE," created by residents, became a symbol of this spirit. It embodies the pride of being a Kobe resident and the belief that Kobe's true appeal lies in its people.

## **(5) Anticipated Changes in the City Resulting from Past Initiatives**

### **① Internationalization of Kobe Airport**

In April 2025, the operation of international charter flights began and the number of slots for domestic flights was expanded. Around 2030, the operation of scheduled international flights is planned to commence. In addition to Kobe Port, which has regular international shipping routes, Kobe Airport will become an international airport in what can be described as a "second opening of the port." As a result, many people will visit Kobe from overseas for tourism and business, and the city's human resources and flow of information will become more closely connected with the rest of the world.

### **② Redevelopment of Downtown Sannomiya and Waterfront**

Since before World War II, urban development in Kobe has progressed primarily along railway lines and around station areas. However, following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, restoration and reconstruction were given the highest priority, and efforts to enhance the city's attractiveness through urban development remained largely on hold. Twenty years after the earthquake, with reconstruction largely completed and the city's fiscal strength restored to a level on par with top ordinance-designated cities through continuous administrative and fiscal reforms, the redevelopment of downtown Sannomiya began with the aim of transforming station-front areas into more convenient and comfortable spaces. Beginning with the opening of the Kobe Sannomiya Hankyu Building in April 2021, the new Chuo Ward Office opened in July 2022, followed by the reopening of Kobe East Park in April 2023 after its renovation. Development is also steadily progressing on projects such as the new JR Sannomiya Station building, the new bus terminal building in the Kumoidori 5-chome district, Sannomiya Cross Square, and Kobe City Hall Building No. 2. By around 2030, the Sannomiya area is

expected to undergo a dramatic transformation. At the waterfront, following the opening of the Kobe Port Museum in October 2021, the renovation of Kobe Port Tower was completed in spring 2024, and the Glion Arena Kobe opened in April 2025. Looking ahead, further transformation is planned through the development of a marina in the western Shinko Pier area, improved walkability through land reclamation at Kyobashi Boat Basin, and redevelopment of the area surrounding the Naka Pier, significantly reshaping the waterfront landscape.

### ③ Renovation of Areas around Railway Stations

In suburban areas, Kobe has been promoting the renovation of stations and station-front spaces, which serve as the “faces” of the community and shape its character and atmosphere, by effectively using existing infrastructure such as railway networks built by previous generations since before World War II. Centered on key stations that serve as hubs for their respective areas, such as Myodani Station, Seishin-chuo Station, and Tarumi Station, initiatives have been undertaken such as the renewal of station plazas, lighting improvements, and the creation of relaxing public spaces. In addition, efforts are underway to enhance the quality of urban life through the reorganization of public facilities such as ward offices and libraries, the renewal of commercial facilities, improvements to child-rearing and cultural environments, and initiatives that promote proximity between workplaces and residences. Renovation projects are planned across various parts of the city, and together with induced private investment, new “faces of the community” are expected to continue emerging one after another.

### ④ Restoration of Forests and *Satoyama* Landscapes

Kobe is characterized by the majestic Rokko mountain range rising immediately behind its coastal urban areas, while agricultural land and *satoyama* landscapes spread across the northern parts of the city. Many of Kobe’s forests were historically managed as fuelwood forests, supplying firewood and fertilizer for over a thousand years. However, as lifestyles have changed and the use of *satoyama* resources has ceased, the forests have become darker due to the growth of large and evergreen trees. As a result, a range of issues has emerged, including the stunted growth of young trees, an increase in pests and diseases, the overgrowth of bamboo groves, and the disappearance of traditional village paths. Mt. Rokko, which was once widely deforested, is now entirely covered in greenery thanks to large-scale reforestation efforts since the Meiji era. Nevertheless, in some areas, tree growth has become excessive, creating new management issues.

In response, initiatives are being advanced to pass on Kobe’s forests and *satoyama* landscapes to future generations in a healthy condition. These efforts view appropriate tree thinning, the use of forest

resources, and the regeneration of next-generation forests as part of a single, integrated cycle. Going forward, through measures such as promoting the distribution and use of locally produced Kobe timber, supporting forest owners, and developing human resources, a sustainable system for forest management and restoration is expected to be established.

## **4. Master Plan**

### **(1) Vision of the City Ten Years from Now**

#### **① “Kobe in Ten Years, Envisioned Together”**

The following vision describes the future that Kobe seeks to achieve ten years from now (2035). It was developed together with many residents and stakeholders based on the fundamental principles set forth in the Kobe City Master Plan and the unique character of Kobe.

Even amidst the ongoing population decline and changes in social structure, we will share this vision with a diverse range of stakeholders, including residents and the municipal government, and work together toward common goals to advance city development. Through these efforts, we will pass on to the next generation the city’s rich natural environment symbolized by the sea and mountains as well as our sense of pride in the city, which has grown and evolved alongside its history.

## Kobe in 2035

Kobe Airport and Kobe Port serve as gateways connecting the city to the world. People, goods, and information constantly flow through them, and as diverse cultures intersect, fresh energy and new ideas take root.

In the city center, a stylish and comfortable atmosphere blends with a warm spirit of hospitality. An extensive transport network fosters encounters and exchanges between people, further enhancing the city's appeal.

In neighborhoods where daily life thrives, distinctive stations form the heart of each area, giving shape to a wide range of lifestyles. Here, refined and spacious moments unfold at an unhurried pace.

From the mountains, you can look out over rural villages, *satoyama* landscapes, and rich natural surroundings handed down from previous generations stretching out in serene beauty; at night, a world-class, breathtaking night view is illuminated in a magical glow. Facing the sea, you are welcomed by ship whistles and the ocean breeze, and enveloped in moments of quiet luxury as you encounter the history, culture, and art of a port city that nurtured jazz. The cuisine, nurtured by the bounty of nature and human care, always satisfies people's hearts.

In workplaces and places of learning, experience merges with new challenges, generating the energy and creativity needed to open paths to the future.

Throughout the city, people of different generations and backgrounds come together, supporting one another. Children's laughter and shared smiles fill the streets, and the city's warmth brings a sense of comfort and peace.

People's lives are safeguarded by a resilient foundation forged through overcoming hardships, while the thoughtful actions of each individual toward the environment cultivate a sense of security for future generations.

Likewise, a sense of pride in the city is nurtured in the hearts of those who love Kobe and is passed on powerfully to the generations to come.

## ② KGIs (Numerical Targets)

The KGIs (Key Goal Indicators) are numerical targets that represent Kobe City’s vision for the city ten years from now. By combining indicators of residents’ well-being and quality of life with economic and demographic indicators, they articulate the future that Kobe seeks to achieve. These KGIs reflect a strong commitment to realizing a sustainable city and have therefore been set at deliberately ambitious levels.

As the social and regional environment continues to change significantly, achieving these targets will require continuous efforts and creativity. However, the process of striving toward these targets will become a valuable foundation for both residents and municipal governance. Moreover, setting ambitious targets embodies the principles and aspirations underlying Kobe City’s approach to urban management and serves as a driving force for opening pathways to the future.

### [Economic Indicators]

- **Achieve a real GDP growth rate of 1% or higher (annualized).**

“GDP” represents the total value of goods and services produced within the city. A higher GDP indicates greater economic activity. “Real GDP” shows actual economic growth after excluding the effects of price fluctuations. Even as the population declines, the city aims to maintain and enhance economic vitality through measures such as the internationalization of the airport, redevelopment of the Sannomiya area, and the introduction of new technologies. Our objective is to achieve an annual growth rate of 1% or higher, in line with the national GDP growth target.

- **Maintain a regional economic circulation rate\* of 100% or higher.**

“Regional economic circulation rate” is an indicator that reflects the relationship between a city’s earning capacity and local income. It shows the extent to which wealth (money) generated within the city is spent and circulated locally. This rate increases with higher sales at local stores and more local businesses attracting employees from neighboring areas. A rate exceeding 100% indicates that the local economy is actively circulating and operating independently and stably. (A rate below 100% suggests characteristics of a commuter or bedroom town.) The city aims to revitalize Kobe’s economy and maintain and further develop a unique economic sphere in which economic activity circulates within the region.

\* Regional economic circulation rate = GDP/ Residents’ Income

### [Population Indicators]

- **Maintain the proportion of urban areas that provide daily-life services.\***

“Urban areas that provide daily-life services” refers to areas with a certain level of population concentration and a full range of essential facilities for daily living, such as hospitals, schools, and supermarkets. Even amid population decline, we aim to sustain such areas and become a city that is chosen as a place to live—one where diverse lifestyles can be realized.

\* The Densely Inhabited District (DID) classification is applied mutatis mutandis. Calculations are based on indicators independently established by Kobe City (as of FY2025).

- **Eliminate the net out-migration of people aged 22–39.**

While the city has seen a significant inflow of younger generations due to university enrollment and other factors, there is a tendency for many to move out at key life stages such as employment, marriage, and child-rearing. By promoting job opportunities, enhancing childcare support, and improving the living environment, the city aims to become a place where younger generations choose to continue living.

## [Well-Being Indicators]

- **Ensure a happiness score of 6.5 or higher and a life satisfaction score of 7.0 or higher based on the**

### **Well-Being Indicators\*** (Kobe City results as of FY2025).

“Happiness” and “life satisfaction” are indicators that reflect the extent to which residents are able to live healthy, secure, and fulfilling lives, both physically and mentally. The emphasis of these indicators is not merely on economic growth, but on the quality of life of each individual resident. Even amid population decline, we will strive to become a city where everyone can live in good health and with a sense of security.

(The figures represent average levels of happiness and related perceptions based on the values of residents in each city, and are not intended to be used to rank or directly compare cities.)

\*Source: Smart City Institute Japan, “Liveable Well-Being City Indicator

## **(2) Directions for Achieving the Vision of the City**

### **[Basic Stance]**

Over the next decade, population decline is expected to accelerate, not only in Kobe but also in cities across Japan, including Tokyo. Taking a calm and objective view of this trend, we will adopt **a basic stance of prioritizing the city's future sustainability** from a long-term perspective, rather than focusing on short-term effects. By advancing initiatives in the following three directions, we will nurture a sense of pride in the city and pass it on to the next generation.

### **Direction I: Two ports connecting to the world – Toward a “new-era international city”**

Since ancient times, Kobe has developed as a city shaped by exchanges with foreign countries, embracing diverse cultures and traditions. With the internationalization of its airport, Kobe's connections with both domestic and overseas destinations will be further strengthened. By welcoming diverse talent, technologies, and cultures and integrating them with Kobe's unique strengths, we will enhance the appeal of our people, city, and industries. While preserving and nurturing our identity as “a beautiful port city surrounded by the mountains and sea,” we will strive for sustainable growth as a city open to the world.

We will promote exchanges among diverse cultures and people, foster and attract individuals who can thrive on the global stage, and accelerate the cycle in which they spread their wings to the world while carrying with them a strong connection to Kobe.

In addition to the city's scenic beauty created by the harmony of sea and mountains, as well as its rich natural and cultural assets, we will leverage the synergistic effects of redevelopment in the city center and waterfront areas to further strengthen Kobe's appeal both domestically and internationally.

Furthermore, by connecting diverse talent and companies from Japan and abroad with local universities, businesses, and government beyond organizational boundaries, we will create innovation. Through this, we will accelerate the development of existing industries, such as manufacturing, ports and harbor services, agriculture and fisheries, food, tourism, and medical and bio-related fields, which sustain our independent economic sphere, while also fostering new growth industries. Even amid the ongoing concentration of functions in Tokyo, we will lead economic growth in the Kansai region and, in turn, contribute to the growth of Japan as a whole.

Through these strengthened functions, we will enhance Kobe's international presence and enrich the lives of its residents as a new-era international city.

**Direction II: Integration of distinctive and diverse communities – Toward a city where the everyday and the extraordinary continuously intersect**

Kobe's uniquely attractive cityscape, shaped by its geographical characteristics and history, as well as its rich natural environment, are defining features of the city. Even as population decline progresses nationwide, we will preserve and further refine these valuable assets built by previous generations, ensuring that future generations can enjoy fulfilling lifestyles. In doing so, we will continue to protect and nurture "a city with many sides to explore."

In the city center, we will promote the concentration of commercial facilities and business functions while ensuring harmony with residential functions. We will create spaces that attract visitors from Japan and abroad, offering experiences that stimulate the five senses through shopping, art, dining, and more. At the same time, we will enhance the city's business environment.

In established urban areas and new towns, we will focus on railway stations as the face of the community, and advance initiatives such as renovating daily convenience facilities and promoting proximity between workplaces and residences. We will also draw on the traditional neighborhood culture rooted in local shopping streets to enhance both the city's appeal and quality of life.

Moreover, while preserving the abundant natural assets that Kobe takes pride in, including its sea, mountains, and rural and *satoyama* areas, we will promote interaction between these areas and urban districts, thereby strengthening the city's appeal as a place in harmony with nature.

By maintaining and enhancing the public transportation network that connects these diverse neighborhoods, we will create an urban space where everyday life and extraordinary experiences intersect. In doing so, we aim to increase residents' satisfaction, foster a city where people wish to live for generations, and become a city cherished and chosen by people in Japan and around the world.

**Direction III: Bonds forged and strengthened together – Toward a city where happiness is lasting and shared**

A spirit of enterprise and innovation cultivated throughout Kobe's history and the enduring bonds formed through shared trials and disasters have been passed down to its people and communities. Even in this era of uncertainty and rapid change, we will continue to preserve and nurture a city full of warmth and human connection by ensuring that people support one another and continue to take on new challenges together.

We aim to create a city where diverse individuals and organizations, including children who will shape Kobe's future, can connect and support one another within the community, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, or nationality. Our goal is to foster an environment where everyone can live with peace of mind, freely pursue their dreams, and take center stage in their own lives.

We will also enhance child-rearing and educational environments, promote health and welfare, and ensure safe and comfortable living conditions. Through these efforts, we will nurture the well-being of every individual and create an environment in which everyone can live with peace of mind, good health, and a sense of security.

Furthermore, by proactively embracing new technologies and advanced innovations, we will contribute to the global environment and strengthen disaster resilience that will lead the next generation, thereby realizing a more prosperous and higher quality of life.

By sharing these initiatives with the world, we strive to be a city that contributes both domestically and internationally, never forgetting our lasting gratitude for the immense support we received following the earthquake.