

# 05 FAR zoning and the super high-rise age

The Building Standards Act was amended in 1961 and the specified block system was introduced, and in 1963, the floor-area ratio (FAR) zoning system was adopted to replace the 31-meter regulation on absolute building height. These systems and the advancements made in super high-rise construction technology took Tokyo's urban development into the new age of super high-rises. The increasingly growing need to promote high-level use of land due to Japan's economic growth at this period of time was also one of the important factors behind this super high-rise age. Construction of Japan's first super high-rise, the Kasumigaseki Building, began as early as 1963, with the building completed in 1968.

The specified block system and other such systems regulated developments by using the FAR in place of the height restrictions that were used up to then. This was in line with one of the principles of a modern city, that of increasing open space at the foot of buildings. In addition, by allowing flexibility in the FAR designation and other considerations, it aimed to actively encourage the formation of good building stock. This concept still remains one of the key methodologies taken in city planning.



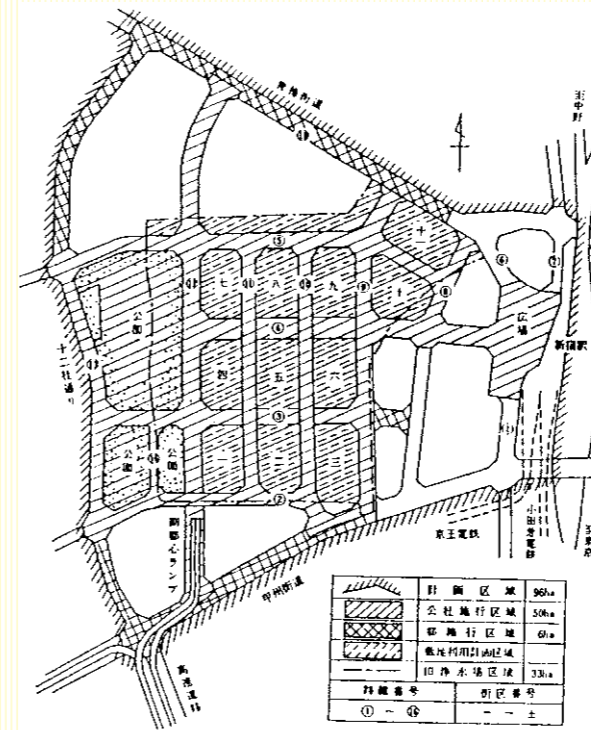
**Kasumigaseki Building** (photo taken on June 29, 1967)  
An aerial photograph of the area around the Kasumigaseki Building, soon to be completed. Especially striking are the height and size of Tokyo Tower and the Kasumigaseki Building. As can be noted by the photo, the Kasumigaseki Building was far larger in volume (about 500,000 cubic meters) than any other building, and for a long period of time, it served as a standard in describing something's volume ("can fill xx Kasumigaseki Buildings").  
Source: Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd.

## Development of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building and the Nishi-Shinjuku area.

- Under the policy of developing the Shinjuku sub-center, which was positioned in the National Capital Region Development Plan of 1958, the Shinjuku Sub-center Development Corporation was established in 1960, and advanced a plan jointly with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.
- In 1965, this district received the highest FAR designation of 1,000 percent. Following a former project to develop the western side of Shinjuku station (Nishi-Shinjuku), which was included in pre-war railway terminal development plan and was not able to be realized at that time,

the Shinjuku sub-center was a redevelopment of about 59 hectares of land, centering on the former site of the Yodobashi purification plant (about 34 hectares). This development heralded the true beginning of the super high-rise, high FAR age of urban development.

- Beginning with the Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo (height 179 meters) completed in 1971, super high-rise buildings were completed one after another, for full-scale entry into the age of super high-rise development.



**Area targeted for development, including the Yodobashi purification plant (1960)**  
Source: Hisatake Togo. *Tokyo kaizo keikaku no kiseki* (History of Tokyo's transformation plan).



**Tokyo Metropolitan Government buildings**  
The current Tokyo Metropolitan Government buildings were designed by Kenzo Tange and completed in 1990. The observation deck on the 45th floor provides a panorama view of Tokyo, the Boso peninsula and Mt. Fuji from the height of 202 meters.  
Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.



**Nishi-Shinjuku area development process**  
Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.