

「Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama (59) November 27<sup>th</sup> Issue」

【Presented a draft of trams join up with Okayama Station Square】

Hello. This is Mayor of Okayama, Omori.

City of Okayama announced a plan of trams join up with Okayama Station Square on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

We considered creating the simplest plane driving into with excellent access to roads, simple such as moving distance required for the transfer to be reduced from the current 180m to 40m, no longer need to cross the signal. Also as considering this, we positioned making it very useful and convenient for those who use the station such as citizens, tourists, and business-people the most important.

With these considerations, we considered technical challenges like traffic jams in surrounding area including the station intersection, and ensuring the number of operated trams and what's more, troubles might happen to the underground shopping arcade.

Under these circumstances and on the assumption that establishing plane driving into would be difficult, we narrowed down the candidates to three types with two deck drafts; pedestrian decks called “deck-shaped starlight line” and “deck circle” that connect Okayama station to the tram stop and promoting a concrete consultation with stakeholders including the electric tramway operators and Okayama prefectural police.

And this time, since we've somehow managed to organize technical issues, we compared plane driving into with two deck plans and came to an agreement that plane driving into will be the city's plan considering the cost (plane driving into is 9.9 hundred million yen and deck plans cost at least 20.6 hundred million yen) and cost-effective (the former's B/C※ is 3.00 and the latter one is 1.56).

In the future, I'd like to develop discussion with a study group and the city council and ask opinion from people including citizens and everyone involved for next fiscal year's budgeting.

While the plan of trams join up with Okayama Station Square is going on, some are concerning about the number of visitors to the station shopping district might be decreasing. So along with establishing driving into, City of Okayama would like to secure bustle-rest space and improve landscape at Okayama Station Square which is the main gateway of Okayama. Furthermore, I would like to precede consideration from the viewpoint of ensuring the pedestrian flow line in order to increase crowd around the station including station shopping district, so that we can create a space with attraction and bustle which I hope can be a symbol

of designated city Okayama.

Looking at examples of trams driving into in other cities, the number of user has approximately 1.7 times increased at Yokokawa station in Hiroshima. They also installed new routes so we cannot simply compare though. Moreover, tram users increased 20 to 30 percent at Kouchi station and Kumamoto station so I hope tram driving into will become priming of the activation of the city.

Also there is a concern about influence on bus users. In city's research, it is believed there is hardly influence on bus service due to the change of the signal control. However we will objectively consider those influences as much as possible in the future and continue to consult with everyone involved for easier bus use.

As for establishing pedestrian deck, we'd like to continue to consider as one of the choices in the future from the view point of securing safety and movement of people to the shopping district around the station.

As population is aging, importance of public transportation has been rapidly increasing. With discussion this time as a turning point, Okayama city will continue to consider about the way of transportation including life and transportation in the whole city.

※B/C stands for Benefit/Cost

This number indicates the business effect. How to calculate is divide the Benefit (Benefit/it converts shortened transfer time between railway into money) with Cost (Cost/maintenance costs and 1 30-year maintenance costs). The bigger number means the better cost-effective.