

【An Ideal Balance Between Vibrancy and Livability】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

Aeon Mall Okayama, grandly opened in 2014, brought enormous impact to the center of Okayama City and it attracts approximately 20 million customers per year. Being in an excellent location close to the station, it continues bringing vibrancy to the peripheral areas.

On the other hand, on Shiyakusho-suji Avenue, which runs from the city hall to the north up to Aeon Mall Okayama (approximately 750m), traffic jams are getting serious. Especially, during peak hours such as weekends, the year-end and New Year holidays, heavy traffic jams often occur starting from the mall to even further than Daiku Intersection in front of the city hall.

In a car society like Okayama, traffic jams happening everywhere in the city are a major problem. Above all, we identified traffic jams at the intersection near Aeon Mall (Shimoishii Icchome Intersection) to be the biggest impact to citizens. Therefore, we decided to address this issue as soon as possible with particular priority.

Specific issues and measures are as follows;

(1) Under the current state, only 6 or 7 cars can go through per green light when they try to turn left northward to the bridge which connects Shiyakusho-suji Avenue and the west exit of Okayama Station.

With a newly built lane for left turn, it is expected to increase more time for left turn

and should allow about 20 cars to go through there.

(2)Cars stay on the crosswalk between Aeon Mall and Kencho-dori Street.

By relocating the crosswalk and traffic lights, such dangerous situation will be improved so pedestrians and bicycles can cross safely.

*For more details, please refer to; <http://www.city.okayama.jp/contents/000313247.pdf>

In the examination which we started since the end of last year, we proceeded trilateral discussions smoothly, immediately sharing issues with the Okayama Prefectural Police and being provided with a site free of charge by Aeon Mall Okayama. Although our initial plan was to make it in time for the year-end and New Year holidays, instead, the construction start will be in the beginning of 2018 and the completion will be by the end of March.

I am pretty certain that this intersection improvement work should have a profound effect on easing traffic jams on Shiyakusyo-suji Avenue and on improving safety of traffic, as well as measures to be taken by each of the three parties against the congestion in that area around the year-end and New Year holidays.

I will continue to take measure against traffic jams to develop a city where vibrancy and livability are compatible with each other.