

**T**he bible for anyone involved in U.S. airport development is the Federal Aviation Administration's thick advisory circular, "Airport Master Plan." Whoever seeks federal funding must follow its rules in drafting the airport's master plan. The FAA's guide is full of good practical advice, but it addresses economic development and important land use planning issues only tangentially.

As we argued in "Ready for Takeoff: Developing the 21st Century Airport" (*Urban Land*, November 1992), airport development and expansion offer terrific—and varied—opportunities for profitable associated real estate and economic development, on and off site. To take advantage of these, airport authorities and local governments need to institute better planning processes.

Experiences in Japan, Denver, and Pittsburgh provide food for thought on the question of how to inject economic development and traditional land use planning issues into the airport planning process.

### **Kansai International Airport**

One illustrative effort to plan and implement an airport-centered regional economic development strategy involves a new airport to serve the Kansai region, about 300 miles southwest of Tokyo. Its promoters describe the airport facility as an intelligent, integrated urban center of the 21st century as well as a vitalizing economic focus for the region.

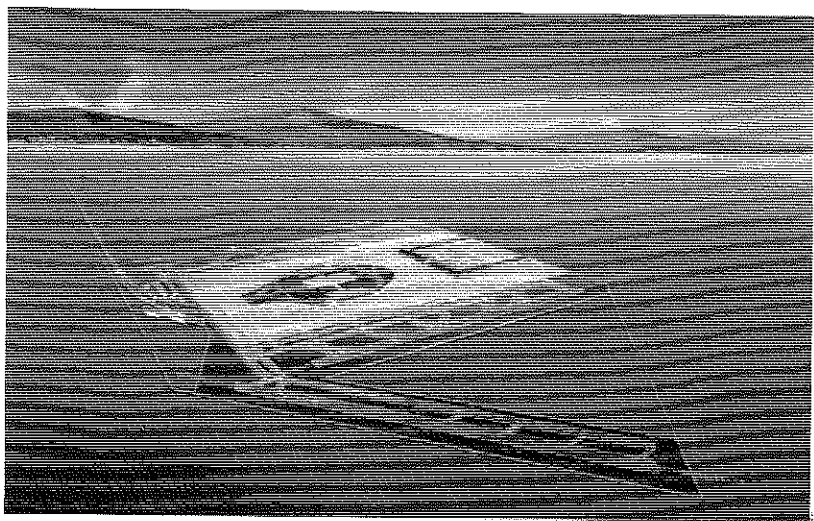
The Kansai region—Japan's second largest population and economic center—contains three major cities: Osaka, a center for industry, commerce, and finance; Kyoto, a national cultural and educational center; and Kobe, one of Asia's largest seaports. Through the creation of an airport-oriented metropolitan zone, the region is seeking to take maximum advantage of the construction of the new airport.

The project includes three elements—the Kansai International Airport, Rinku Town (a community that will be built directly adjacent to the airport), and a network of new towns in the region. The common thread is leadership by the prefectural government, which undertakes functions similar to state governments in the United States, although it is technically an arm of the Japanese central government.

Kansai International Airport is being constructed because Osaka International Airport is over capacity and New Tokyo International Airport (called Narita) is at capacity and does not operate at night due to noise considerations. Kansai will be Japan's first 24-hour airport. At buildout, it is expected to handle 31 million passengers and 1.4 million tons of cargo annually.

The new airport is expected to cost \$10 billion. Location—five kilometers offshore in Osaka Bay, on a manmade island—is a factor in this high cost. Noise and property condemnation issues were con-

**Comprehensive planning is the key to realizing maximum economic development benefits from airport development.**



# *A Better Way to Plan Airports*

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