Tokyo is located in the Kanto region on the south eastern side of the main island Honshu and includes the Izu Islands and Ogasawara Islands. It is the centre of the Greater Tokyo Area, and the largest metropolitan area of Japan. Described as one of the three “command centres” for the world economy, along with New York and London, Tokyo has the largest metropolitan economy in the world. It has represented a major international finance centre since right after World War II, when many large firms moved their headquarters to Tokyo, lured by the advantage of proximity to the government.

Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Area (mq)</td>
<td>844.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Population 2010 (million)</td>
<td>13,185,502</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Density (sq m)</td>
<td>16,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of districts</td>
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Tokyo, synchronizing local and national governance
Through the system of agency-delegated functions, local governments implemented the policies of the central government. This system gave the central government in Japan the authority to require local executives to implement certain functions that they chose to delegate. In 2000, the system of agency-delegated functions was eliminated and replaced with an equal cooperation system which has substantially changed Japan’s centre-local relations.

Since the reform, TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government) and the wards have sought to identify and recommend specific changes in policies and law and gain consensus among affected parties. Services to be transferred from TMG to the ward offices include waste management, city planning, education and aspects of septic tank regulation and sewerage services. The aim of the reform is to convert the wards into “basic local public bodies.” This has subsequently changed the status of citizen participation in the city.

Constantly improving citizen participation
The first major steps toward allowing citizen participation in urban development came in the early 1990s. The collapse of the economic bubble reduced the strength of the iron triangle (bureaucracy, government, and big business) and allowed citizen groups to assert more effective influence over the Tokyo government. Another passage was the Nonprofit Organizations Law of 1998. The passage of this law created the first viable framework for citizen participation in the urban development system in Tokyo (political and economic environments have opened the political structure of the government to allow participation by the nonprofit sector). This improvement is especially important in light of the conflict between Tokyo’s traditional sense of place and Japan’s centralized legal structure. There is a continuous concern about building an adequate nonprofit sector, preventing the urban environment from being shaped by economic forces, as opposed to citizen participation.
Judging by existing examples of metropolitan subcentres and the proposals to encourage a number of satellite cities to absorb growth in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region, CITIES considers the Tokyo region to be constantly developing towards a polycentric employment structure, especially in connection with the job market. Although the Tokyo Metropolitan Area has seen enormous growth of jobs in the seven-ward core area of Tokyo (almost 1 million jobs during the last 25 years), the great majority of job growth (over 4 million jobs) has been located in suburban areas outside the 23 ward area of Tokyo. One of the main reasons for promoting the development of a polycentric urban structure is to enable shorter work travel trips and higher levels of public transit use, gradually decongesting the city.

More info
2. Junichiro Okata and Akito Murayama, Tokyo’s Urban Growth, Urban Form and Sustainability, www.springer.com