Station area developments in Tokyo and what the Randstad can learn from it

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Tokyo is a clear example of a railway-oriented city. During a period of strong economic growth after World War II it was largely the railways that facilitated the development direction of Tokyo. As a result vast stretches of land around the railway lines radiating outwards from the city centre have been developed. Of course Tokyo is not unique; there are other cities in the world that use railways to guide their urban development. However, the difference is that in Tokyo this approach has been consistently applied since the late 1920s. Therefore, the development stage that Tokyo is currently in is much further than that of other cities in the world.

Tokyo’s railway system is growing in a coherent way towards a multi-polar network in which nodes seem to complement rather than compete with each other. How this network has evolved, in regards to the railway infrastructure and urban functions, and what role the government and other interested parties fulfilled could be of interest to the Randstad as here, as well as in other parts of the Netherlands, there is the ambition to develop in a more railway-oriented way.

This research is about identifying the driving forces behind station area development projects in Tokyo and their implementation, if possible, in the Randstad. In order to do this it is looked at how the planning of station area developments works in practice in Tokyo and what roles the public and private sector play in this. The description and explanation of station area developments in Tokyo provided ideas about how to improve the planning of station area development practices in the Randstad. Consequently, the applicability of these ideas was explored to find out whether they could work in the Randstad, and if so why and if not why not.