

1

LECIP receives the contract for the "Community Growth Multi-Use Card Service", a contactless smart card for transportation in the cities of Yokosuka, Miura and Hayama in Kanagawa Prefecture

A multi-faceted smart card system that unifies transactions with the city government, the usage of public transportation, retail shops and the bank

LECIP Corporation, until recently named Sanyo Electric Works Ltd., of Gifu Prefecture has delivered the on-board-bus equipment and in-facility equipment contracted for in the "Community Growth Multi-Use Card Service System," a multi-purpose contactless smart card system that the three towns of Yokosuka, Miura and Hayama, of Kanagawa Prefecture, have implemented. This followed the verification of the performance of the system, which has a category designation of 'B', with a service called the YRP-IT Passport Service System.

The cities' efforts became part of a system verification program that is one of the constituents of research into the scenario of wide adoption of smart card systems within an IT-structured city* conducted by the New Media Development Association, a group that takes on studies consigned to it by Japan's industry and trade ministry.



In the current arrangement, the town of Yokosuka serves as the operational hub, and the system performs the following functions that aim to serve the area residents:

1. Citizens' interface with city government:

- Reception service for applications to and participation in events;
- Streamlined Allowance for Dependents: the service handles new applications for qualification, and applications for changes in qualifications for receipt of subsidies;
- Pre-school Assist Service: Facilitate the functioning of pre-school care centers: tracking of attendance and non-attendance of children, and the relaying to parents/guardians the conditions within the facilities

* This program, named "Research into the Adoption of the Smart Card in an IT-Structured City," is undertaken by the ministry of industry and trade in order to encourage the development of IT nationwide, to further have adopted in multiple municipalities an information system based on smart cards, and to measure and verify its results over a broad range.

2. Facilitation of retail payments:

- In-store payments made possible with "My Cash," a debit-card system that works in conjunction with personal bank account balances in an off-line mode. Instead of consumers needing to withdraw cash from their accounts to shop, they store money value in the cards ahead of time, and are able to shop cashless at participating merchants.

3. Electronic payment for transportation fare:

- The IT Passport Service: In the "YRP-IT Passport System," by using cards issued by the town of Yokosuka, riders "recharge" their cards ahead of time with fare value, and use it for cashless fare payment on buses. Currently, the Kurihama station of the Keihan Express Line is using the system for fare payment on the 65 buses of the YRP line that it operates. In this installation, the system consists of three subsystems: bus ticketing, route operation management, and follow-up support.

4. Other:

- System planners are aiming to coordinate with regional merchants to create a mileage point service for users.

Among this system's special characteristics are that it supports a number of city government functions, and the fact that it has been extended beyond applications in government and transportation, to include area retail stores, giving wide usage to a single card. This is a singular and unusual state of advancement for smart cards within Japan as a whole, and its results are being watched by many throughout Japan.

The system's development has been carried out by a consortium of enterprises, the central coordinating role of which has been played by NTT Communications. LECIP has handled the transportation elements of the system with full charge of the IT Passport Service, and carried out the development and production of the on-board bus equipment, equipment used at the card sales points, and the follow-up support system. Since smart cards are recharged and used many times over, their environmental impact is low. The system went into effect on February 1, 2002, and currently about 3,000 cards have been issued. At the completion of the verification testing, it was decided to continue the transportation phase of the system.

LECIP is planning to reutilize the results from the verification tests in order to develop a more compact and elemental system that can be proposed to towns and cities nationwide for their governmental and transportation functions.

2

LECIP receives the contract for the “Multi-Suginami Card”, a common point card used among multiple retail stores, and public transportation payments in Tokyo’s Suginami retail district

The country’s largest scale retail district point card and its compound contactless smart card system

The LECIP Corporation of Gifu Prefecture, formerly named Sanyo Electric Works Ltd., in its aim to contribute to regional vitalization and in support of Tokyo’s Suginami district, received the contract for, and delivered, the onboard-bus equipment and in-facility equipment for the “Multi-Suginami Card,” that is, a multi-use contactless smart card, type B, the administration of which is being managed by its central league member, the Suginami Card Consortium.



With the launch of the system, the region qualified for and received the support of two bodies, one in the form of a subsidy from the New Media Development Program, an association that conducts studies consigned to it by the ministry of industry and trade and which is awarded to efforts that explore and verify systems that contribute to the IT infrastructure, the second from the Tokyo Retail District Vitalization Support Program.

The system, in seeking the enhancement of rider and user convenience as well as the vitalization of the area, uses a multi-purpose card both for fare payment on “Sugimaru” buses that serve the same district along a north-south route, and also for use in the area shops as a point card, with points added each time it is used for payment in shops and in restaurants, which can be redeemed for selected goods and for admission to area events. The Sugimaru fleet consists of 5 buses that connect two rail stations: the Asagaya station out of which runs Japan Railway’s central urban line, and the Hamadayama station on Keioh Railways’ Inokashira line. The buses are operated by Keioh Bus on consignment from the Suginami district, and the smart card is equipped with a commuter pass function.

NEC has played the central role in the consortium that has developed the card, while LECIP handled the transportation portion of the card’s function connected with the Sugimaru bus, and also the development and production of the onboard-bus equipment, the administrative facility terminals, and the follow-up support system. The cards are recharged ahead of time with fare value in increments of 2,000 yen, up to 10,000 yen, while the endless reuse of the same card minimizes their environmental impact.

The unique characteristics of this card system include the fact that a retail district council plays the role of the hub of the member consortium in the system's operation, and the fact that the country's largest league of stores, about 400 shops, is participating. These member shops are located in the area that the Sugimaru bus serves, so a synergistic effect between retail activity and the convenience of bus ridership is hoped for; these pioneering aspects of the project are receiving wide attention.

The system's operation began on March 26, 2002, but with the popularity of the cards, around 10,000 of them have already been issued and show promise of vigorous commercial strength.

The system was ratified for continuation upon the completion of the verification and testing phase, for the retail store point system and fare payment on the Sugimaru bus line.

LECIP is in the process of distilling out the points where glitches appeared in the system, from both the administrative and consumer points of view, findings that were one of the objectives of the verification and testing stage, and incorporate them into improvements in order to be able to develop systems of still greater convenience for utilization by municipalities and transportation lines nationwide.