

Niseko Wakes Up, Nixes Foreign Housing Project on Safety Concerns

世界的なスキーリゾートとして知られる北海道ニセコ。その一角で、外国人労働者向けの大規模住宅計画が持ち上がりましたが、町の委員会は「治安悪化の懸念」を理由に全会一致で否決しました。観光の発展にともない外国人の滞在者は増えており、住宅需要も高まっています。地域の安全と住まいの確保、あなたならどちらを優先しますか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Hokkaido's Niseko region is renowned as one of the world's top ski resorts. In Kutchan Town, one of Niseko's neighborhoods, a proposal to build apartment complexes primarily for foreign workers was brought forward. The town's agricultural committee, however, unanimously rejected the plan, citing concerns over public safety. Such denials are rare for development projects.

Still, Niseko's population swells dramatically in winter, and the housing shortage is already severe. As a result, the fate of future development in the area is being closely watched.

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JAPAN Forward

1. Article

The proposal called for building 32-33-story apartment blocks on roughly 2.7 hectares (6.7 acres) of farmland, about 700 meters southeast of JR Kutchan Station. This housing was intended for foreign resort workers, with about 1,200 residents expected. That is equivalent to nearly 10% of the town's population. Designated as Type 3 agricultural land (located in urban or rapidly urbanizing areas, generally permissible for non-agricultural conversion), the site required a conversion application, which the developer submitted to the town's agricultural committee in July 2025.

According to the town, the project met all the technical conditions for farmland conversion, including feasibility and [minimal](#) impact on surrounding farmland. Even so, nearby residents submitted a [petition](#) with 262 signatures and a written request citing concerns over public safety. The written request stated, "For the sake of residents' well-being, we ask that you avoid rushing into development and instead make a careful decision that values consensus."

At its regular meeting on July 31, the committee reviewed the plan and took residents' concerns into account. It then voted to submit a recommendation opposing the farmland conversion to the Hokkaido governor, who holds final authority over the decision. Sources say a decision on whether to approve or reject the project is expected sometime after October 2025.

Nisade Services, a Kutchan-based real estate firm owned by a Singaporean investment company, was behind the project. The housing was intended primarily for foreign workers employed at ski resorts and related lodgings about five kilometers away. In addition, the project envisioned including restaurants and bars.

When asked about the project, Kunihiro Kondo, a senior project manager at the company, said he was taken aback. "This was completely unexpected." He noted that resident briefing sessions had been held in December 2024 and again in May 2025 to explain the project. However, while "there were certainly voices expressing concern about public safety, I never imagined the committee would reject it unanimously," he said.

Initially, the project had been slated to break ground in September 2025. In fact, contracts were already signed with construction firms. But without approval, it now risks being scrapped entirely. Kondo stressed the urgency of the issue, explaining that, "In the winter high season, securing housing for resort workers is the biggest challenge. With the shortage already overwhelming, how will this be resolved? I hope people can look at the reality calmly, not just emotionally."

Kutchan Town, with a population of about 17,000, now has nearly 20% foreign residents. Over the past year, the foreign population grew by 833, the largest increase of any town or village in Japan.

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1. Article

At the same time, land prices have soared, and rents have followed suit. Rents for some 2LDK apartments have reached ¥250,000 JPY (\$1,700 USD) a month, on par with Tokyo. Yet demand remains so high that, as Kondo put it, "whenever a [vacancy](#) opens up, it's filled immediately."

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **unanimously** 全会一致で

The city council unanimously approved the construction of a new public park.

2. **shortage** 不足、欠乏

Last winter, there was an oil shortage, and the cost of heating went up.

3. **minimal** 最小限の、ごくわずかな

The damage from the typhoon was minimal, and we made only a few minor repairs.

4. **petition** 嘆願書、請願書

Thousands of people signed a petition to stop the building of a dam on the river.

5. **vacancy** 空室、欠員

The vacancy rate at the hotel is about 50% during the rest of the year.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why are guest workers in such high demand in Niseko?
2. What efforts were made to explain the project to the residents?
3. How has demand for housing affected costs in Kutchan?
4. What specific “safety concerns” do you think the residents are worried about?
5. Do you think it was right to reject approval for the housing project?

4. ニセコ「外国人住宅街」計画にNO 北海道倶知安町で異例の否決 理由は治安悪化の懸念

世界屈指のスキーリゾートで知られる北海道ニセコ地域の一角、倶知安町で主に外国人労働者向けの集合住宅の建設計画が持ち上がり、町の行政委員会が全会一致で否決した。町によると、治安悪化への懸念が最大の理由で、開発計画が否決されるのは異例。ただ、ニセコでは冬季に人口が急増し、住宅不足も深刻になっており、今後の成り行きに注目が集まる。

計画によると、JR倶知安駅の南東約700メートルの市街地にある約2・7ヘクタールの農地に、リゾートで働く外国人従業員らが住む2〜3階建ての共同住宅30棟を建設。想定される居住者数は町の人口の1割近い1200人程度を見込む。開発予定地は市街地に近い場所にある「第3種農地」で、事業者は今年7月、農地からの転用を町の農業委員会に申請した。

町によると、今回の計画は周辺農地への影響や実現可能性など転用の条件をいずれも満たしていたが、近隣住民らが治安悪化への懸念などを理由に262人分の署名や要望書を町と農業委員会に提出。要望書には「住民の幸福という本質に立ち返り、拙速な開発ではなく、慎重で合意形成を重視した判断をしていただきたい」との記述もあった。

委員会は7月31日の定例総会で今回の計画について議論し、住民らの要望も踏まえ、農地転用に反対する意見書を許認可権限を持つ北海道知事に送付することを議決した。関係者によると、許可、不許可の最終判断は10月以降になる見通し。

開発を計画しているのは、シンガポールの投資会社が保有する同町の不動産会社「ニセード・サービスズ」。同社によれば、建設予定地から約5キロ離れたリゾートエリアに集積するスキー場や宿泊施設で働く外国人労働者が主な入居者と想定し、レストランやバーなども入る計画があるという。

住宅確保「現実見て」の声も

同社シニアプロジェクトマネジャーの近藤邦裕さんは「想定外の事態」と驚く。近藤さんによれば、昨年12月と今年5月に住民説明会を開き、開発計画への理解を求めたが、「住民からは治安悪化を懸念する声が少なからずあった。とはいえ、委員会の採決で全会一致の否決になるとは思ってもみなかった」という。

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出典：ニセコ「外国人住宅街」計画にNO 北海道倶知安町で異例の否決 理由は治安悪化の懸念
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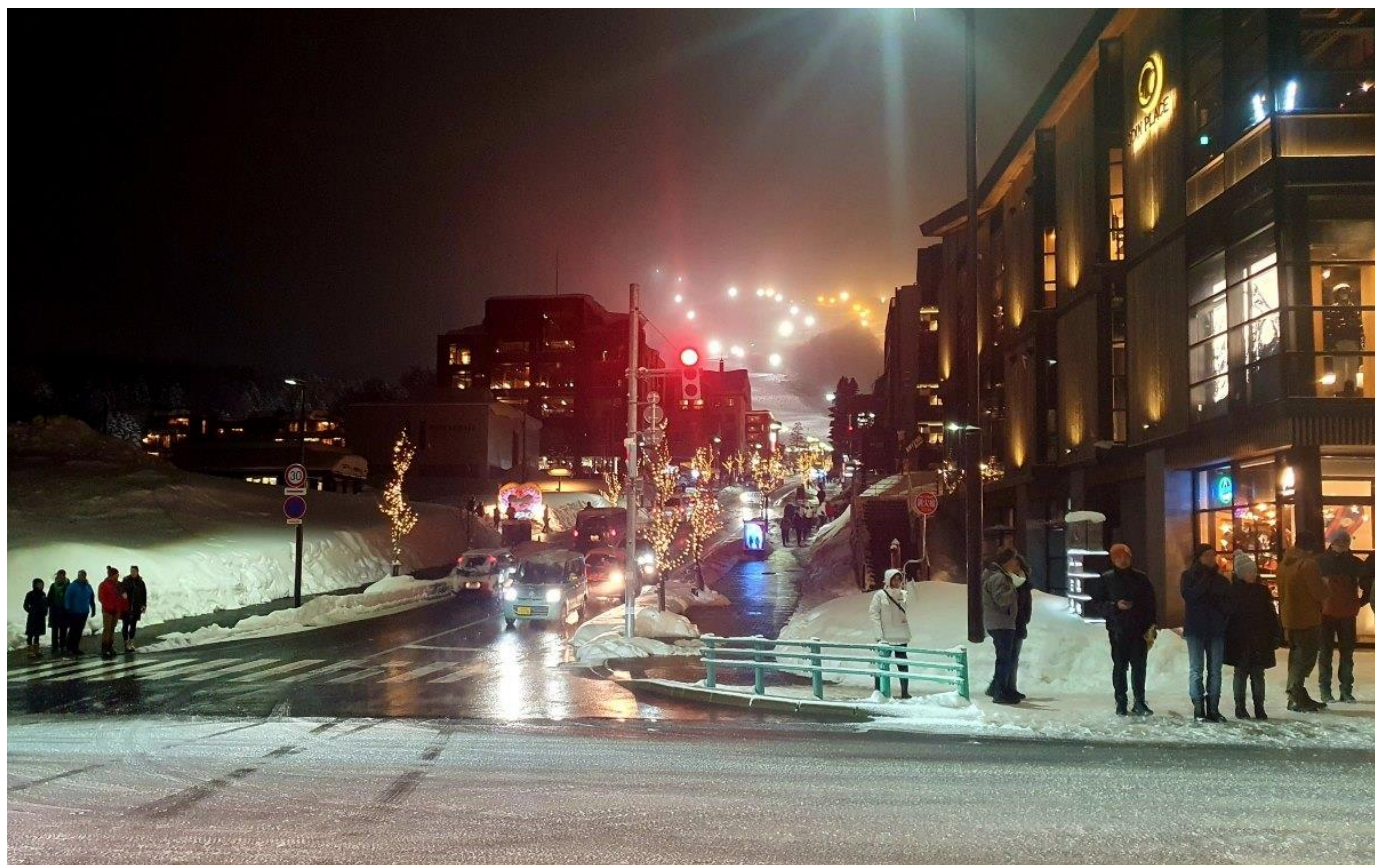
4.

ニセコ「外国人住宅街」計画にNO 北海道倶知安町で異例の否決 理由は治安悪化の懸念

計画では9月ごろの着工を目指し、建設会社とも契約を交わしていたが、仮に認可が下りなければ、計画が白紙となる可能性もある。近藤さんは「ハイシーズンとなる冬季はリゾートエリアで働く人の住宅確保が何より難しい。ただでさえ、圧倒的に不足している現状をどう解消するのか。感情論ではなく、現実を冷静に見つめてほしい」と訴える。

約1万7000人が暮らす倶知安町は、人口の約2割を外国人が占める。昨年よりも833人増え、外国人の増加数は全国の町村で最多となった。一方で地価が高騰し、賃貸物件の相場も2LDK25万円と「東京並み」に上昇したケースも珍しくない。それでも空室が出れば、「すぐに空きが埋まる状況だ」（近藤さん）という。

ニセコエリアでは近年、外国人との共生を巡るトラブルが後を絶たない。倶知安町でも「蝦夷富士」で知られる羊蹄山の麓にある森林が無許可で伐採されたトラブルが表面化した。中国と関わりのある事業者の存在も指摘されており、波紋が広がっている。



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