

An interview with incumbent Mayor Franco J. Cocanaugher at the start of his second term.

*Q: Your name comes up a lot when talking about this city. In fact, others outside of City 32 sometimes refer to it as 'Franco's City.' How do you feel about that sort of connection?*

FC: Next Mayor comes along, I'm sure it'll be that person's name that comes up, for better or worse.

*Q: Are you worried that some of what you've accomplished won't carry forward to the next administration? For example, your subway improvement project, the updating of the power grid, installation of the sunrise platforms on city buildings, or your support of the Doll System?*

FC: All those things you list are about becoming a world-class city. Cities such as Tokyo or Paris have already beat us in some ways – their power grids and production facilities were re-done from scratch, whereas a lot of what runs 32 is rooted in twentieth century technology. Sure, we've modified it, kept it running, but the basic infrastructure that powers our lights are actually very old. And, it's not going to last forever. Energy demands are only going to increase. There have been some alternate forms introduced in the last 30 years, but nothing limitless. And I'm also really proud of the housing we've built and all the innovative solutions from my city planners. Renters pay out their income on tiny rooms. If you have more than 2 bedrooms, it's a luxury. We can do better.

*Q: You've gotten almost all of the appropriations needed for these changes. And that seems to be due to public as well as private support. How did you orchestrate such a rally?*

FC: To be blunt, you have to sell them something extraordinary. No one contributes \$10 billion to a power plant without an image of the future along with it. When plants open, there is usually a prolonged period of 'revenue recovery,' as they say in the boardroom – the plant operates in the red. To an investor, that's very bad. You have to show them the city in 100 years – with residents warm and with lights on, contributing to the tax and paying their bills. A vision, if you will, of a thriving local economy,

and a respected national and international reputation. You want to be a destination city. As much as the doubling of our city's population has hurt us in the last 50 years, believe me, you don't want the reverse. People leaving 32 would be 100 times worse than people coming. But if they're coming, you want to make it worth it. You want to solve problems, not create them.

*Q: How does the Doll System fit into that 'vision of the future?'*

FC: That's a part of that vision, certainly. But for now, it's considered more of a toy. Something we're trying out. To me, it's not as important as the power grid, roads, basic services, and police protection...and all the other important hubs of the civic wheel. But the Doll System is the sexy part, if you don't mind the metaphor. To be in a city that can actually turn its daily weather from bad to good (or at the very least tolerable), that's a place you want to live. You go 50 kilometers outside the radius of Doll's invention and what do you have? A cold farmhouse, same the last 10 centuries. Why live in that cold farmhouse when you can live here?

*Q: Do you feel City 32 has handicaps it has to overcome?*

FC: Oh, I wouldn't call them handicaps. But we have no glorious beaches. We have no great tourist sites - well, we do, but none as iconic as, say, the Eiffel Tower or the Sydney Opera House. What we do have, though, is the ability to make people profitable, comfortable, and secure. And that's all anyone wants anyway, isn't it? A place to safely raise your children and make a good wage to support them.

*Q: You've always had a soft spot for the children of City 32. Your programs seem to reflect that.*

FC: I guess that's what I say when I mention a vision of the future. Certainly someone who gives a fortune for a power plant probably won't live long enough to reap all the profits. Compared with all that, the Doll System is relatively cheap to implement. But it all comes down to future generations. They will know this city as a better place than it is today. They will grow up and they will control our destinies. So let's give them the best world possible.