

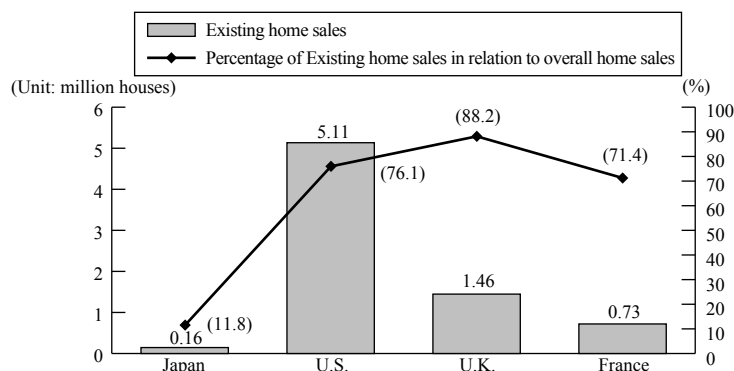
## Chapter 5: Setting the Stage for an Independent and Vibrant Life

### [Providing quality housing]

#### ○Developing and utilizing quality housing stock

To make better use of the existing housing stock, MLIT is taking a number of steps. Among them are: revitalizing the markets for existing homes, rent housing, and housing improvement; encouraging appropriate management condominiums and facilitating their rebuilding; promoting the conversion of office buildings to housing. The ministry is also providing tax and financial incentives for people to own quality houses.

**International comparison of existing home sales**



Notes: 1. Overall home sales represent the total of new housing starts and existing home sales.  
2. New housing starts data are for FY2001 for Japan, 2001 for the U.S. and the U.K., and 2002 for France.  
3. Existing home sales data are for 1997 for Japan, 2001 for the U.S. and the U.K., and 1999 for France.  
Resources: Japan: MLIT, New Dwellings Started (FY2001); Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT), 1998 Housing and Land Survey.  
U.S.: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2001  
U.K.: Housing Statistics 2002  
France: Compiled from the website of the Ministry for infrastructure, transport, spatial planning, tourism and the sea (<http://www.equipement.gouv.fr/>)

#### ○Promoting building administration

Building administration, including building confirmation, play an important role in maintaining the quality of housings and other buildings. These measures are also designed to cope with sick house issues, enhance fire preparedness at small-scale, multi-use buildings, or make the existing buildings more resistant to earthquakes and fires.

#### ○Promoting the supply of quality land for housing

MLIT is promoting the supply of quality land for housing and the use of the fixed-term leasehold.

#### ○Urban policy that enables people to live and work in close proximity

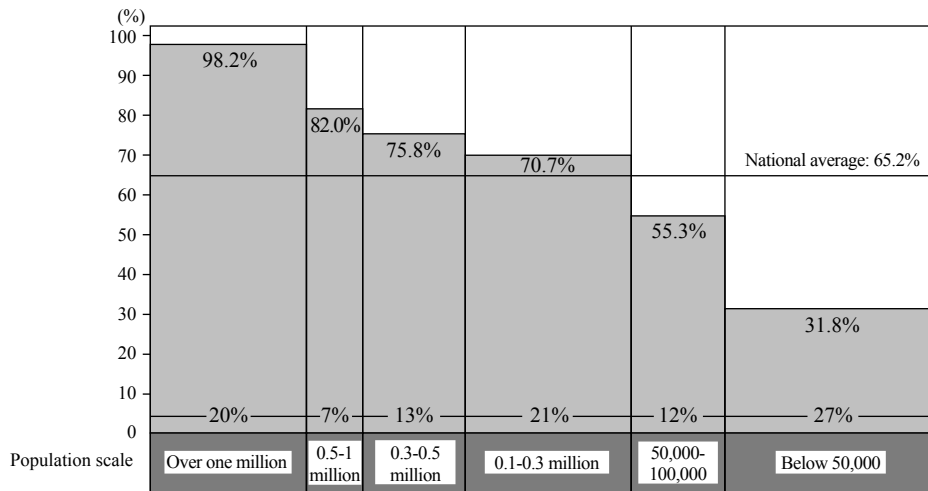
MLIT is pushing ahead with urban policy that meets various needs in the capital and the provinces. Those in the capital include the needs to transform existing urban areas into attractive areas with a highly integrated complex of various urban functions. Those in the provinces include the needs regional cities to make downtown areas more accessible for the elderly and families with small children.

### [Toward a comfortable life]

#### ○Sewerage development

There are significant gaps in sewerage coverage among regions. MLIT is working to close these gaps by encouraging sewerage development by municipalities, while ensuring overall efficiency of their efforts though such means as stepping up coordination among individual projects to develop waste water treatment facilities. The ministry is also addressing new challenges. For example, MLIT is taking steps to prevent floods in urban areas, improve combined sewer systems, and promote advance water treatment in closed water areas.

**Sewerage coverage in municipalities of different population scales  
(as of the end of 2002)**



Source: MLIT

○Urban park development

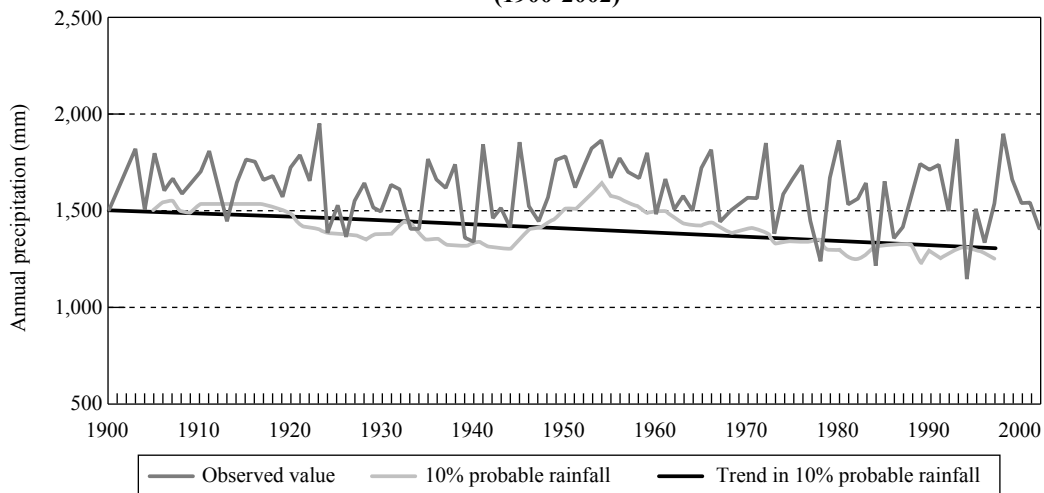
Urban parks constitute a basis for meeting diverse needs of the people, including an affluent living environment and fulfilling recreation activities. MLIT promotes urban park development so that such parks will also serve as a catalyst for many objectives, including: the community development that accommodates a falling birthrate and a graying population; the conservation or even creation of favorable natural environments; and tourism development and exchange and partnership among municipalities and other local entities that build on their own characters.

○Stable supply of water resources

Climate and geographical conditions of Japan are rather unfavorable for stable use of water resources, therefore many regions of the country often suffer water shortages. In recent years, there is a growing tendency that serious rainfall shortages are more likely.

In response, MLIT is redoubling its efforts to ensure stable use of water from both the supply and demand sides. Efforts at the supply side include the construction of water resources development facilities and better use of the existing facilities. Those at the demand side include the promotion of recycling and reuse of water.

**Long-term changes in annual precipitation in Japan  
(1900-2002)**



Notes: 1. The observed value represents the arithmetic mean of values observed at 51 points across the country.  
 2. The 10% probable rainfall is a value that has been statistically calculated so that there is a 10% probability that the actual rainfall will be the same or less than that value.  
 The 10% probable rainfall represents the value calculated based on the trend in the 11-year moving average (based on the regression line) on the assumption that the annual rainfall shows a normal distribution minus  $1.28\sigma$  ( $\sigma$ : standard deviation) as the probability that it will not exceed 90% on the normal distribution.

Source: MLIT

○Promoting road development that puts pedestrians and cyclists first

MLIT puts pedestrians and cyclists before drivers, particularly in community roads, so that such roads serve as a safe and quality living space.

**[Improving convenience in daily life]**

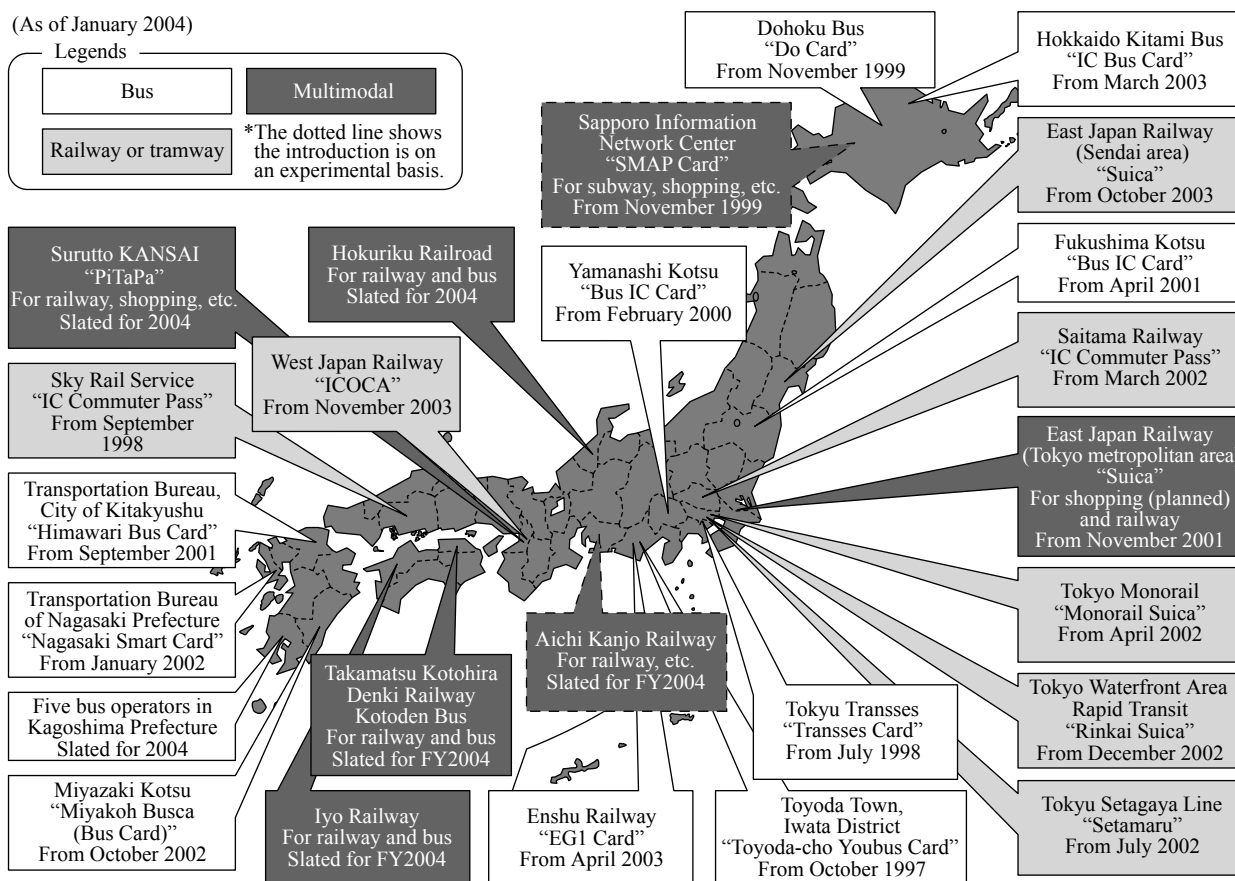
MLIT is committed to improving convenience in daily life. To that end, the ministry is taking a wide range of measures. Among them are: promotion of transport demand management; drafting of the “public transport stimulation program” to improve public transport service; development of urban railway networks, including urban monorails and automated guideway transits; improvement of bus service; promotion of off-peak commuting; and improvement of public transport service from the perspective of women.

**[Promoting IT revolution]**

○Taking advantage of IT in public transport

For better service for public transport users, MLIT is promoting the introduction of IC card systems, moving forward with the “e-Airport” Initiative, offering digital public transport information, and developing an on-demand transport system.

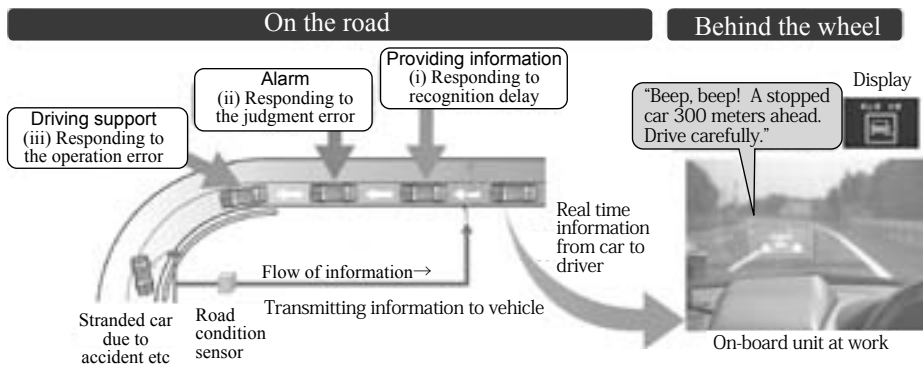
**Introduction of IC cards to public transport (as of January 2004)**



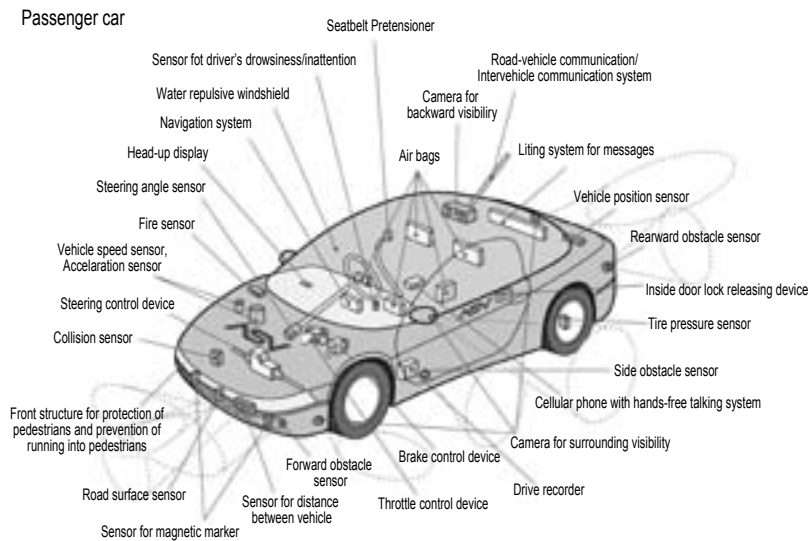
○Promoting ITS

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are designed to link humans, roads and vehicles using the state-of-the-art information and communications technology. Among such systems MLIT is promoting are the electronic toll collection system (ETC) and the vehicle information communications system (VICS). The ministry is also promoting ITS in road transport. In addition, MLIT is promoting the development of ITS technologies, including the driving support system, advanced safety vehicles, and electronic license plates.

**A conceptual rendering of the driving support system (collision avoidance process)**



**Advanced safety vehicle**



○Realization of “Digital Japan”

MLIT is actively promoting the digitization and provision of geographic information, advancing new projects utilizing GIS and the development of “Digital Japan” website.

○Realization of Electronic Government

As part of the initiative to realize an electronic government, MLIT is promoting on-line administrative procedures and electronic bidding and contract procedures.

○Optical fiber networks

As well as developing networks of multipurpose ducts for optical fibers for public facility management and leasing vacant spaces in the ducts to the private sector, MLIT also allows the sector to have access to the optical fibers, which will not be used for a while, for supervising rivers and roads.

**[Coping with a falling birth rate and a graying population]**

MLIT is committed to improving accessibility public transport (i.e., removing all kinds of barriers standing in the way of social life of elderly people, disabled people, and so forth) to ensure that all the people, including the elderly and the disabled, can lead a comfortable life. MLIT also improves the accessibility of the living environment as a whole. In addition, the ministry is pursuing a living environment where parents can raise their children and the elderly can live their golden age free from care. MLIT is also promoting transport services that accommodate a graying population.

**Percentage of barrier-free facilities in public transport**

As of March 31, 2003

○ Passenger facilities (with daily average total of users being 5,000 or more)

	No. of facilities in total	No. of facilities that meet transport accessibility improvement standard	Percentage
Railway/tramway stations	2,739	1,068	39.0%
Bus terminals	45	32	71.1%
Passenger ship terminals	9	5	55.6%
Airport terminals	22	4	18.2%
			(100%)

Notes: 1. Transport accessibility improvement standard are defined in the Transport accessibility improvement Law article 4 (in relation to the width of passageways, slopes, escalators, elevators, etc.)

2. By the end of March 2001, all the airport terminals have installed elevators, escalators and slopes accessible to the disabled.

○ Vehicles, etc.

	No. of vehicles, etc.	No. of vehicles that meet transport accessibility improvement standard	Percentage
Railway/tramway cars	51,136	9,922	19.4%
Buses	58,424		
Low-deck buses		8,095	13.9%
Non-step buses		3,835	6.6%
Passenger ships	1,116	23	2.1%
Airplanes	465	114	24.5%

**Numbers of accreditations under the Accessible and Usable Building Law**

FY	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Annual total	11	120	229	320	382	366	332	232	280
Cumulative total	11	131	360	680	1,062	1,428	1,760	1,992	2,272

Source: MLIT

**[Promoting recreation activities]**

To promote recreation activities, MLIT is promoting, among others, the development of state-managed parks that meet the needs that a single local government cannot satisfy. Other measures the ministry is taking in this field include: promoting the use of and optimizing small crafts in an integrated way; coping with growing numbers of boats moored without permission or those sunk and disused; developing marinas as part of efforts to improve the environment conducive to using pleasure boats; and promoting sky leisure.