

Chapter 4: Setting the Stage for an Independent and Vibrant Life

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

Steady progress has been made toward barrier-free buildings, public facilities and public transport. MLIT has taken a step further to embrace the concept of universal design. Based on the concept, the ministry is now exploring future directions for its barrier-free policy in all aspects, including facilities and human assistance.

The ministry is also 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, 2004

○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	2,735	1,200	43.9%
Bus terminals	43	31	72.1%
Passenger ship terminals	8	6	75.0%
Airport terminals	20	1	5.0% (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	51,005	12,086	23.7%
Buses	58,404		
Low-deck buses		10,492	18.0%
Non-step buses		5,432	9.3%
Passenger ships	1,137	50	4.4%
Airplanes	473	152	32.1%

<Number of accreditations under the Accessible and Usable Building Law>

FY	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Annual total	11	120	229	320	382	366	332	232	280	367
Cumulative total	11	131	360	680	1,062	1,428	1,760	1,992	2,272	2,639

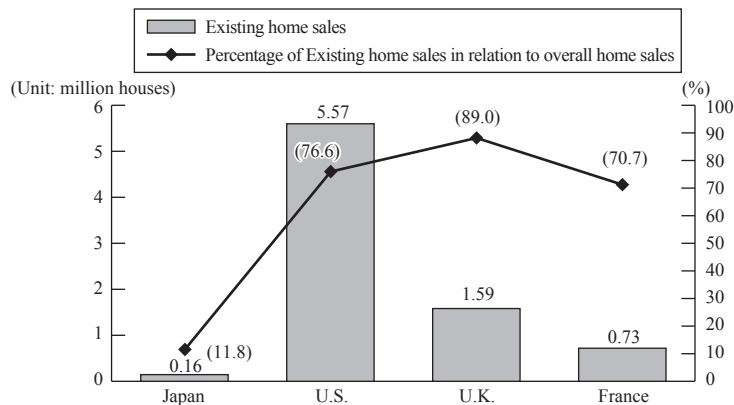
Source: MLIT

[Providing quality housing]

○Developing and utilizing quality housing stock

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

< 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 FY2003 for Japan, 2002 for the U.S. and the U.K., and 2003 for France.
 3. Existing home sales data are for 1997 for Japan, 2002 for the U.S. and the U.K., and 1999 for France.
 Resources: Japan: MLIT, *New Dwellings Started* (FY2003); Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications (MPHPT), *1998 Housing and Land Survey*
 U.S.: *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2003*
 U.K.: *Housing Statistics 2003*
 France: Compiled from the website of the Ministry for infrastructure, transport, spatial planning, tourism and the sea (<http://www.equipement.gouv.fr/>)

○ Improving the framework for administrative guidance and oversight of construction activities

MLIT is committed to improving and strengthening the framework for administrative guidance and oversight of construction activities with respect to maintaining the quality of housing and other buildings. The ministry works to secure the safety of buildings, with special emphasis on disaster preparedness of built-up areas. MLIT has taken appropriate measures to prevent accidents involving buildings and building components, especially revolving doors.

○ Promoting the supply of quality land for housing

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

○ Promoting residence in built-up areas

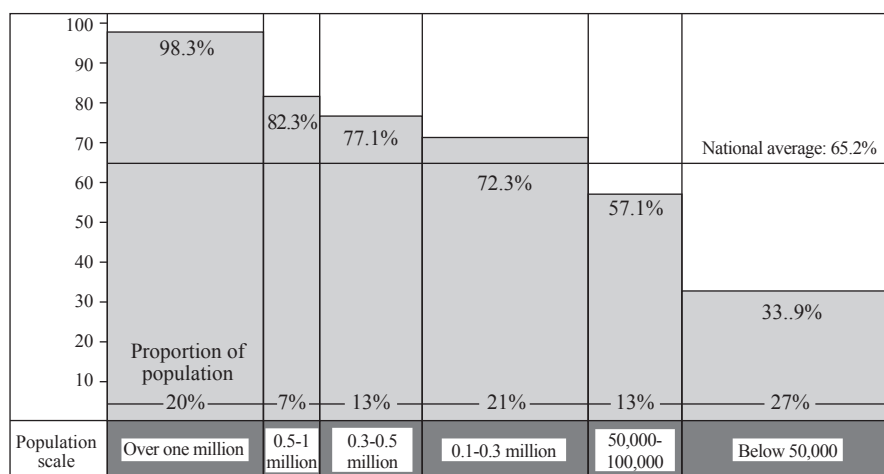
MLIT recognizes the need to transform existing urban areas into attractive areas with a highly integrated complex of various urban functions. It also recognizes the need of people in regional cities to live in built-up areas so that they can do without cars. Based on such recognition, MLIT is committed to providing quality urban housing and developing urban residential zones so that people are able to live and work in close proximity.

[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 through 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 promote advanced wastewater treatment in closed water areas, prevent floods in urban areas, and improve combined sewer systems.

<Sewerage coverage in municipalities of different population scales (as of the end of FY2003)>



Source: MLIT

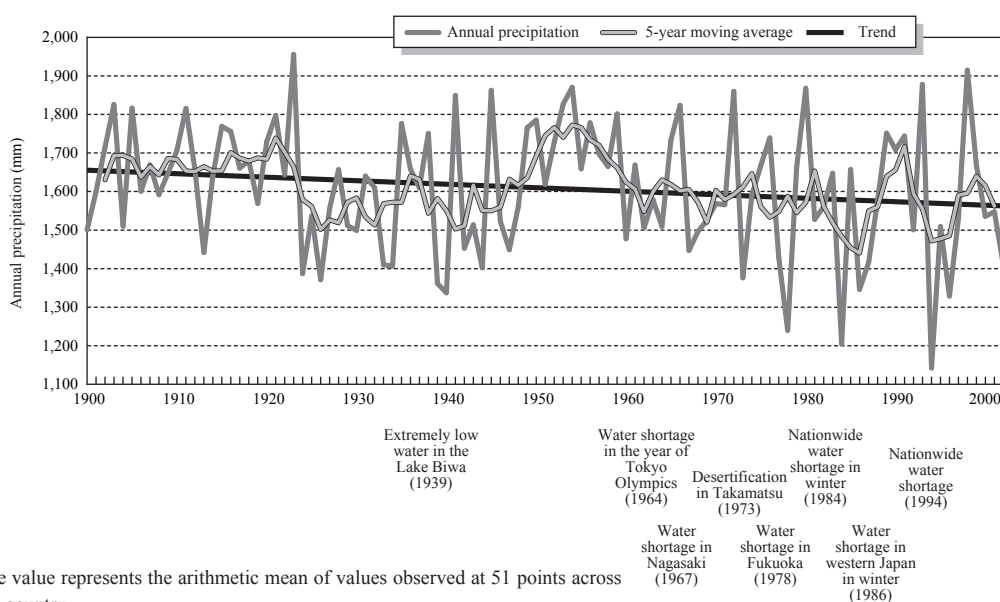
○Urban park development

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

<Long-term changes in annual precipitation in Japan (1900-2003)>



- Notes: 1. The value represents the arithmetic mean of values observed at 51 points across the country.
 2. Trend is based on the regression line.
 3. Observation points for each year may be less than 51 due to missing observation.

Source: Data presented by Japan Meteorological Agency

- 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.

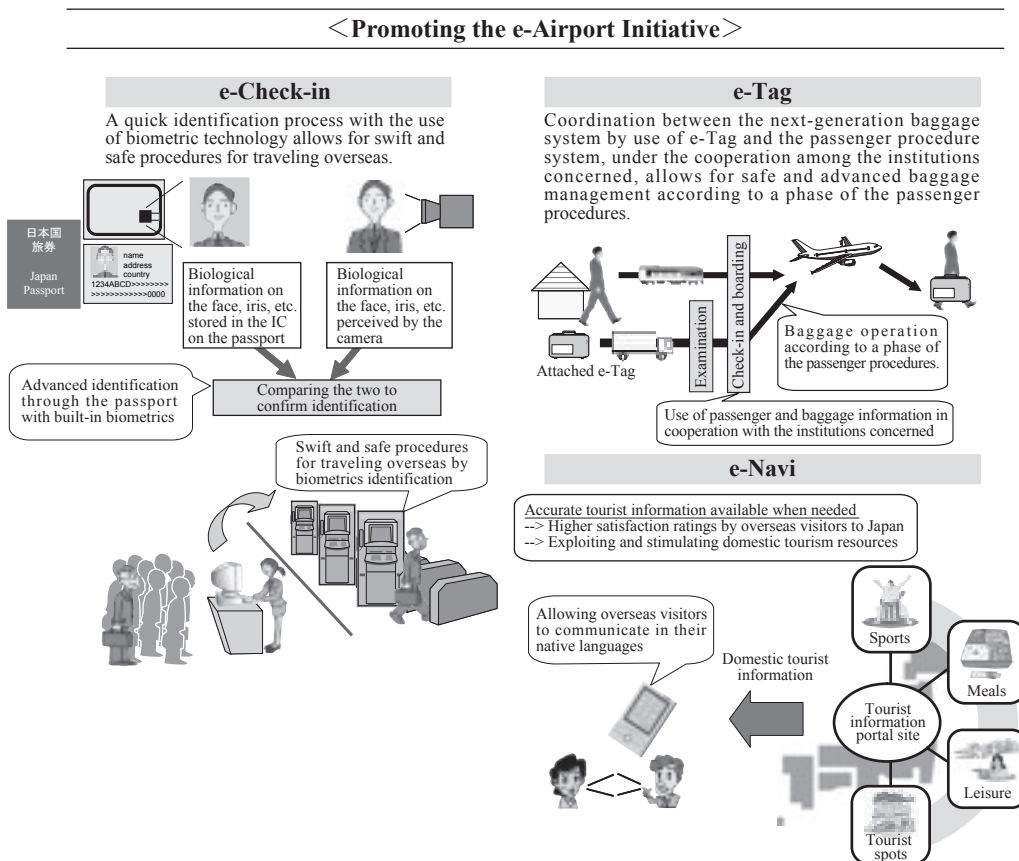
[Improving convenience in daily life]

Along with promoting Traffic Demand Management (TDM), MLIT addresses public transport improvement by formulating Public Transport Stimulation Total Program. It also reviews smoother public transport as a part of national transport development measures based on the concept of universal design. Furthermore, MLIT aims at achieving more comfortable and safety public transport through developing urban railway networks, urban monorails/ automated guideway transits, and light rail transit (LRT) systems as well as improving bus availability.

[Promoting IT revolution]

- Taking advantage of IT in public transport

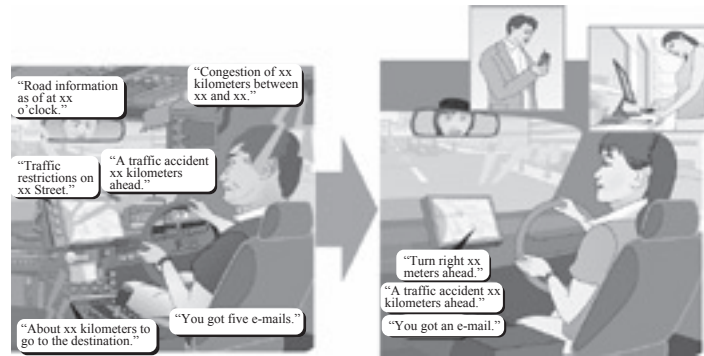
With the goal of better service for public transport users, MLIT is moving forward with the “e-Airport” initiative and offering public transport information using digital TV.



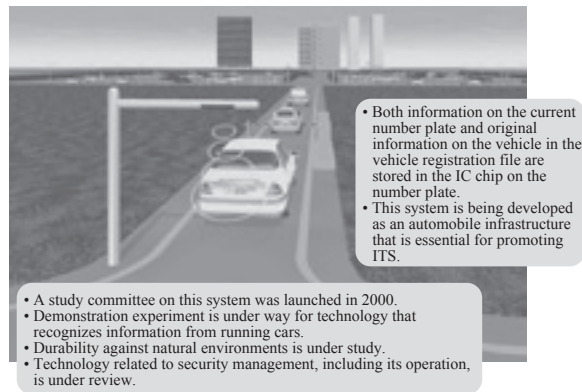
- Promoting ITS

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are designed to link humans, roads and vehicles using the state-of-the-art information and communication technology. Among such systems MLIT is promoting the Electronic Toll Collection System (ETC), the Vehicle Information and Communication System (VICS), and ITS in road transport. The ministry is also promoting the further development of ITS service, including the driving support system, Advanced Safety Vehicles (ASV) and electronic license plates called “smart plates”.

< Conceptual Image of ITS Onboard Unit >



< SMART PLATE >



○Realization of "Digital Japan"

MILT is actively promoting the digitization and provision of geographic information as well as promoting GIS itself and high quality services utilizing GIS.

○Realization of Electronic Government

MILT 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.

[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 pleasure boats in an integrated way; supporting the development of marinas; promoting marine recreation by coping with growing numbers of boats moored without permission or those sunk and disused; and promoting sky leisure.

< Alps Azumino National Government Park
(opened in July 2004) >

