

Chapter 3: Promoting Regional Revitalization and Urban Renaissance

[Initiatives toward regional revitalization and urban renaissance]

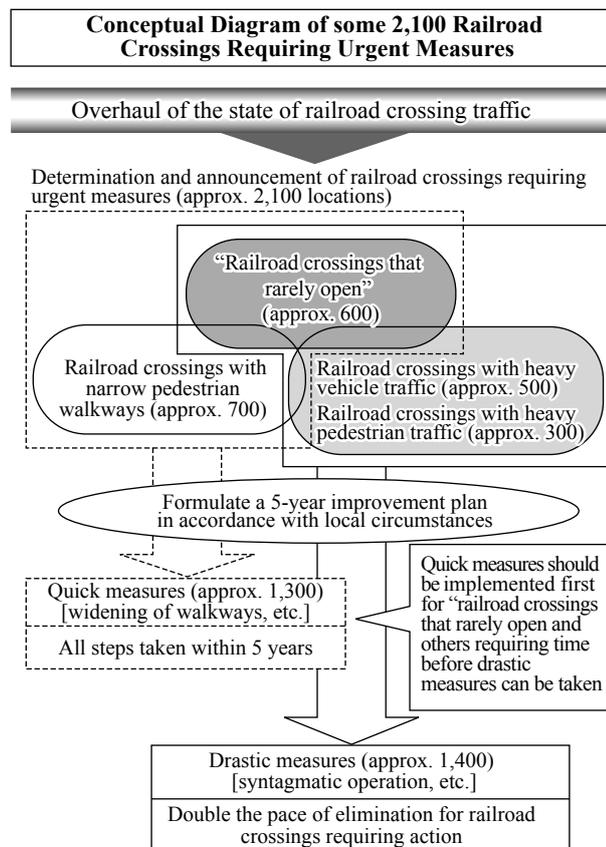
It is urgently important that the central government support autonomous and independent initiatives that take advantage of regional creativity and ingenuity to reinvigorate local areas. Laying the groundwork for mobilizing integrated measures and creating an environment where the private sector can exercise its expertise to the full hold a key to enhancing the charms and international competitiveness of cities.

In this context, MLIT is working to support the reinforcement of coordination between local authorities and the private sector, urban development taking advantage of local color, and other initiatives. The ministry is also giving its utmost efforts toward the sustainable revitalization of areas and cities based on selection and focus, in close coordination with the Headquarters for Regional Revitalization and the Urban Renaissance Headquarters in the Cabinet Office.

[Promoting policies that support regional revitalization and urban renaissance]

MLIT has already taken a number of steps to enhance the autonomy and discretion and discretionary power of local governments. For example, the ministry has created “Regional Revitalization Infrastructure Reinforcement Grants” and “Local Residence Grants,” expanded “Community Renovation Grants,” made operational improvements to the special subsidy for local road development, and established “Regional Revitalization Teams.” The ministry also encourages local governments to take advantage of the expertise and funds of the private sector.

Other physical and non-physical infrastructure development implemented or supported by MLIT includes: rejuvenating built-up areas within cities, reviewing city planning systems for the proper locations of urban functions, developing traffic nodes, eliminating highway-railroad grade crossings, revitalizing public transport that supports local life, promoting interaction between rural and urban areas, and constructing new policies for area management.

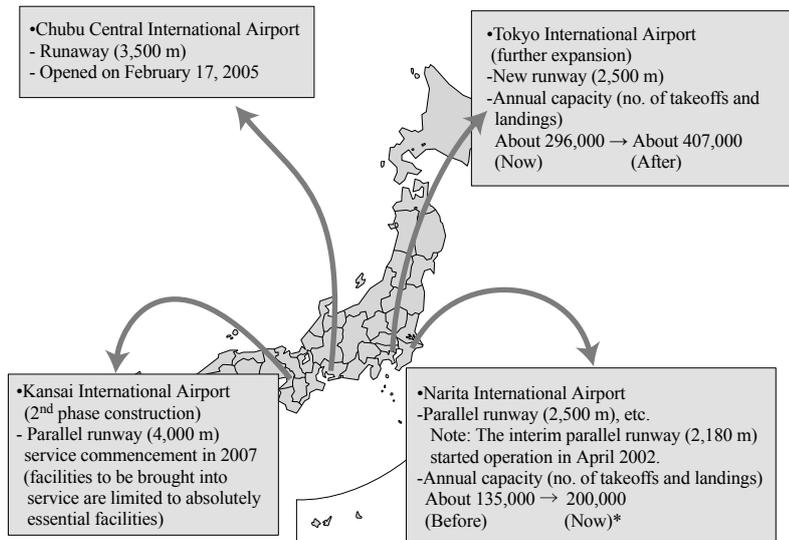


[Promoting urban renaissance projects]

- Achieving various forms of vigorous exchanges and economic activities

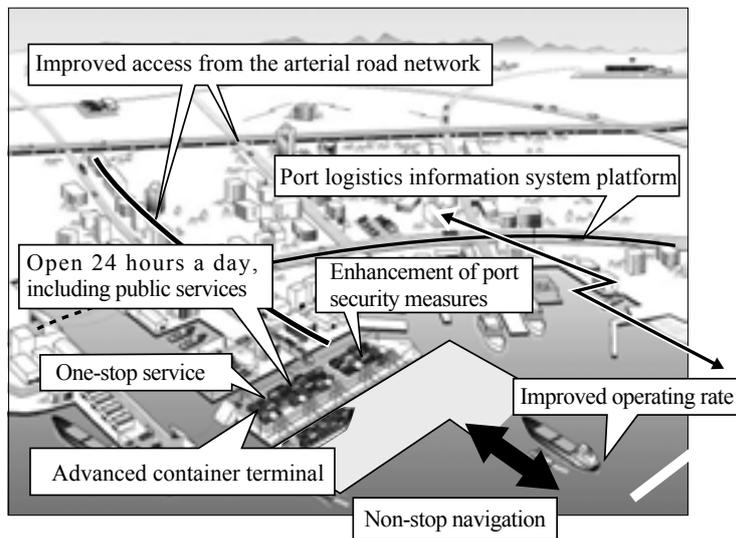
MLIT is working to reinforce the capacity for international exchange and physical distribution and develop ring road networks.

Major airport project in metropolitan areas

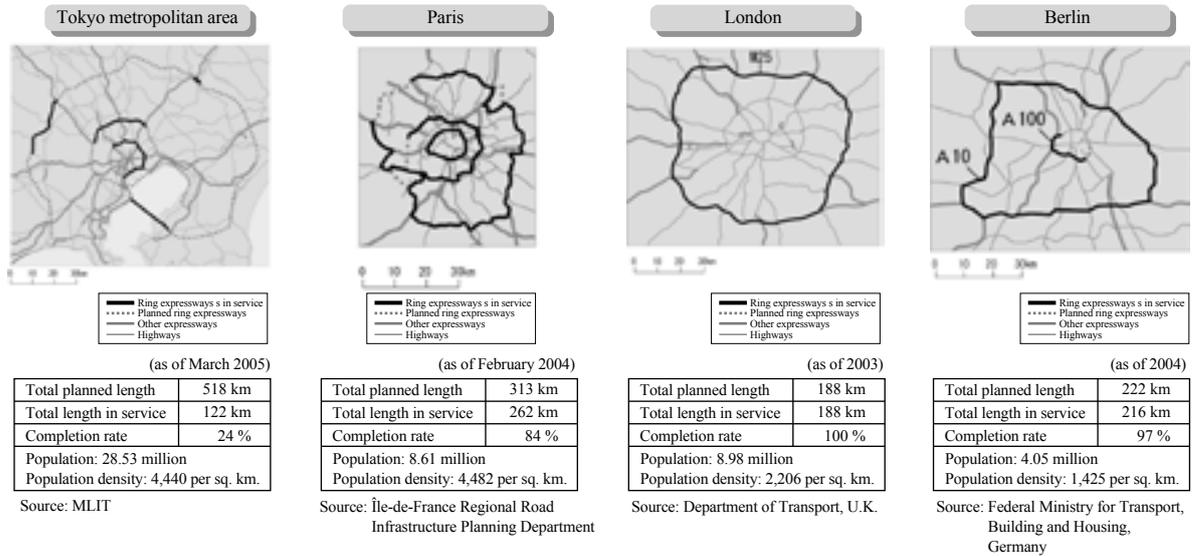


*In accordance with the recommendation of the Roundtable Conference, the airport is limited to 200,000 flights per year after the completion of the parallel runway. Further capacity expansion will require consultation with the local communities.

Enhanced capacity of an international port



International comparison of the growth of ring expressway network in metropolitan areas



Note: "Population" and "Population density" represent the figures generally within the ring expressway.

○ Making cities for safer life

MLIT aims to further develop key broad-based disaster prevention bases that serve as the center for disaster prevention activities covering many local governments. The ministry also focuses on rebuilding safe and secure cities through coordination between anticrime measures and community building initiatives.

○ Building a favorable urban environment

MLIT purses zero emissions of waste in metropolitan areas. To this end, the ministry strives to reduce, reuse and recycle waste to "close the loop" of resource circulation.

To revitalize urban environment infrastructure, MLIT implements a number of measures including: (i) conserving, regenerating or creating precious natural environments in metropolitan areas, (ii) creating green zones in waterfront areas and expanding green zones in urban areas, (iii) reviving rivers and seas.

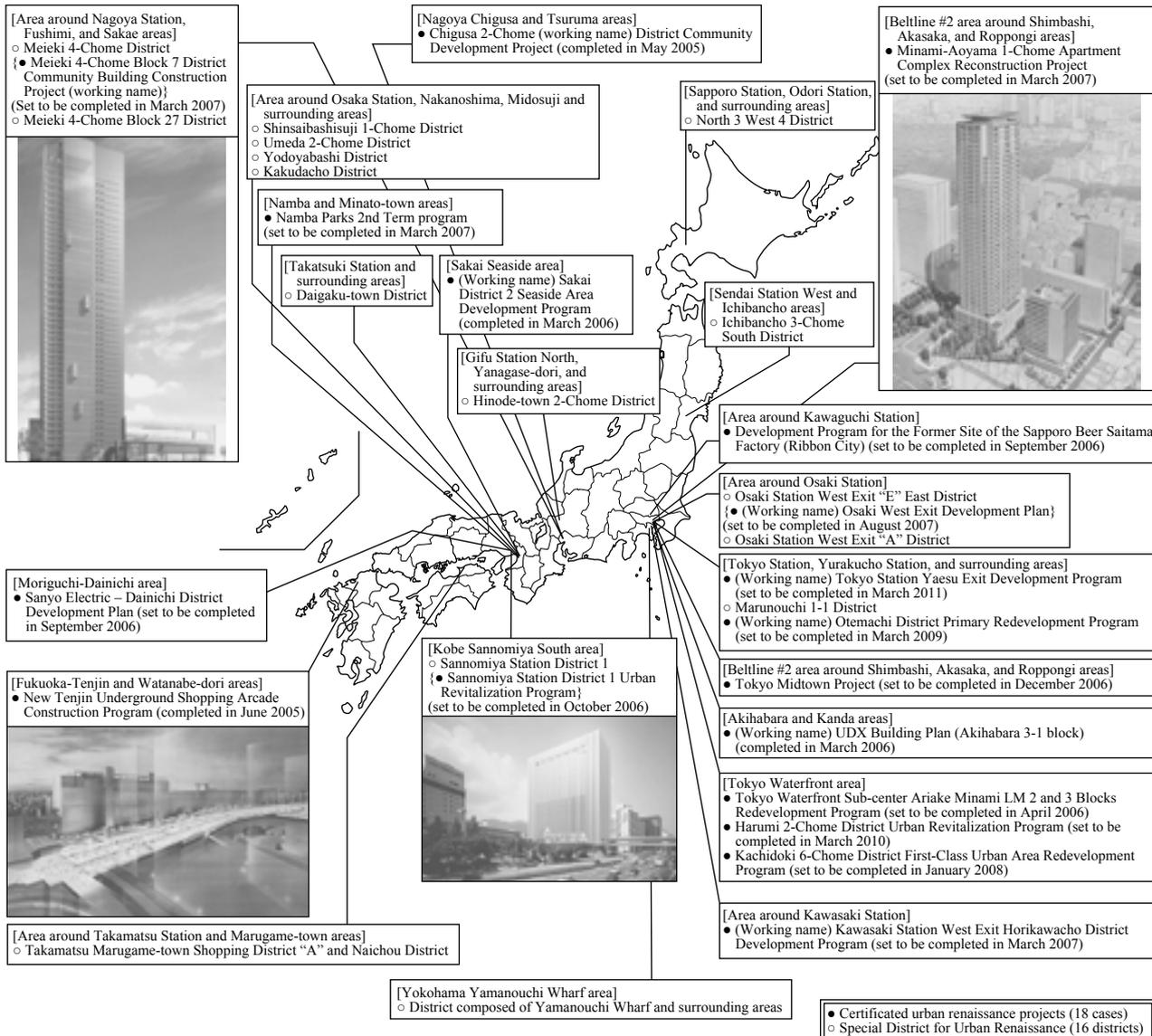
Furthermore, MLIT supports efforts to restore Lake Biwa and the Yodo River.

○ Promoting urban development initiatives by the private sector

A total of 64 areas (as of the end of December 2005) have been designated as "the Prompt Development Area for Urban Renaissance" under "the Special Measures Act for Urban Renaissance." In these areas, various urban development initiatives by the private sector are under way. Initiatives include: the planned joint development of office buildings and residences in the Beltline #2 area around Shimbashi, Akasaka, and Roppongi areas; the creation of multipurpose compound facilities and the development of open spaces in the Namba and Minato-town districts; and the enrichment of commerce and service functions in the Fukuoka-Tenjin and Watanabe-dori areas.

Local governments make "city planning decisions" for "the Special District for Urban Renaissance", which establish new flexible city plans free from regulations applied to existing land use zones. MLIT approves private urban renaissance projects, to which financial support and preferential tax treatment are available.

Private Urban Renaissance projects in “the Prompt Development Area for Urban Renaissance”



○ Flexible budget allocations to promote urban renaissance

Flexible budget allocations, including the “urban renaissance project promotion budget” are available in the middle of the fiscal year. This measure is designed to facilitate effective project implementation by various government offices.