

06 Development around terminal stations

In the early Showa era, transportation providers, such as streetcars, subways, buses, the national railways, and private railways, competed for customers and terminal stations suffered from extreme congestion. For that reason, it became clear that plans for station plazas and the roads that connect to them were needed.

In 1932, a station square at Ueno Station was completed. City planning decisions on plans for station squares and other facilities at Shinjuku Station were made in 1934, followed by Shibuya, Ikebukuro, and Otsuka stations in 1936. City planning decisions on station squares were also made for Komagome, Sugamo, Mejiro, Meguro, Gotanda, Oimachi, and Kamata stations in 1939.

However, work had only started at Shinjuku by the end of World War II in 1945. Other projects had to be postponed until land readjustment of areas in front of major stations was carried out through postwar reconstruction.



Ueno Station From the collection of the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library.

In 1932, operations commenced at the second-generation Ueno Station building. Taking advantage of the area's terrain, the station was built on two levels with gates for departing and arriving passengers on separate levels. A passageway connecting the area below the elevated tracks to the subway and a road that connects up with the underground level of the station were also created.



Outside of Ueno Station (circa 1947)
Ueno Station Square about 20 years having passed since subway services were launched at the station.
Source: Tokyo Metro Museum.



Shinjuku Station in the early Showa era
Source: Makoto Ikuta.



Area around Shinjuku Station in the early Showa era
Source: Makoto Ikuta.

Development of Shinjuku Station

An increasing number of people were relocating from the *shitamachi* (low city) of eastern Tokyo, which suffered extensive damage in the Great Kanto Earthquake, to western Tokyo where the development of residential land was advancing. Due to changes in the movement of such people, the number of users of Shinjuku Station grew. Starting around the time the third-generation station building was completed in 1925 where the east exit of the present day station is located, the area in front of the station became increasingly built up. Entering the Showa era, the area around Shinjuku Station further developed. Shinjuku Station is now Japan's busiest station, handling the most passengers a day of any station in the country. And, the area around the east exit has developed into a major shopping district.



Shibuya Station at the time service started (1927)
Source: Tokyu Corporation.



Dogenzaka (1930)
Source: Jun Naruse.

Shibuya matures as an up-and-coming city subcenter

With the start of service by Tokyo-Yokohama Electric Railway Company (now Tokyu Toyoko Line) and Tokyo Rapid Railway Co. (now the Tokyo Metro Ginza Line) in the early Showa era, people came to Shibuya Station from all directions. In 1934, the Kanto region's first department store directly operated by a private railway company, Toyoko Department Store, made its debut. Additionally, Radial Road No. 22 (Roppongi-dori Avenue), which runs east-west, was constructed, and Ring Road No. 5 (Meiji-dori Avenue) was extended southward. After the war, the station square plans drawn up prior to the war were revived and developed to achieve further evolution.



Musashino Railway Ikebukuro Station ticket gate in the prewar Showa era
Source: Makoto Ikuta.



Meiji-dori Avenue stretches from north to south from the Ikebukuro Station east exit (1931)
Source: Jun Naruse.

Ikebukuro Station Square

Station squares not much different from those that exist today were planned for the east and west exits in the 1936 city planning decision concerning station squares at Ikebukuro Station. The creation of a terminal for private railways and department stores, as well as the development of Meiji-dori Avenue, also advanced to gradually form the foundation for growth as a large terminal station on par with Shinjuku and Shibuya stations.