Development of new railway lines by public-private corporations

During the bubble economy from the late 1980s, land prices in Tokyo and building construction expenses rose sharply. Work and home grew further apart, and a social phenomenon of "commuting by Shinkansen bullet train" was even born. Large administrative issues arose such as answering demands for more public transit convenience in some areas of Tokyo and building new lines to the waterfront sub-center where new developments were underway. Meanwhile, railway construction costs were also soaring because of the bubble economy, posing difficulty for private rail operators to launch construction of new lines. Against this backdrop, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government established a public-private corporation and as its major stockholder, took the initiative in building new lines.

The public-private corporation approach had many advantages: while the Tokyo government takes the position as the leader, private capital and other funding could be broadly procured, diverse talent could be secured, and talks and adjustments with stakeholders such as the road administrators could be done more efficiently. As a result, Tokyo's railway network was improved even more. Over a long period, mutual direct operations by multiple rail operators progressed in the urban rail network of the Greater Tokyo Area, and convenience is rising thanks to advancements such as the common use of smart cards.

Tosu Oedo Line
Planned under the name of Tosu Line, the section between Hikarigaoka and Nerima opened in 1991, and the entire line came into service in 2000. It is made up of a radial section connecting Hikarigaoka Station and Takanexi Station and a loop line from Tochomae Station, passing through Ueno-ohachimachi, Karas detox, Kanda, Higashi-Tokyo, and other stations of central Tokyo. With the completion of this line, almost all the railway stations within the Yamanote Line became within walking distance.

Source: Bureau of Transportation, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Yurikamome (Tokyo Waterfront New Transit Waterfront Line) This line was planned with the development of Hikarigaoka Station and Takanexi Station and a loop line from Tochomae Station, passing through Ueno-ohachimachi, Karas detox, Kanda, Higashi-Tokyo, and other stations of central Tokyo. With the completion of this line, almost all the railway stations within the Yamanote Line became within walking distance.

Source: Bureau of Transportation, Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.

Rinkai Line (Tokyo Waterfront Area Rapid Transit Rinkai Fukutoshin Line) This line was planned with the development of Hikarigaoka Station and Takanexi Station and a loop line from Tochomae Station, passing through Ueno-ohachimachi, Karas detox, Kanda, Higashi-Tokyo, and other stations of central Tokyo. With the completion of this line, almost all the railway stations within the Yamanote Line became within walking distance.

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.

Tama Monorail
With the goal of improving the public transit network in the north-south direction in the Tama area and strengthening partnerships between the cities of the area, the section between Tachikawa-Kita and Kamikitadai was opened in 1998. In 2005, the section between Tachikawa-Kita and Kamikitadai was opened for full service of the line. This line was extended from Tachikawa to Komatsukai in 2008. Access to transport services in the area was further enhanced and this also helped further human interaction among the cities of the area and development of the area.

Source: Tokyo Tama Intercity Monorail Co., Ltd.

Nippori-Toneri Liner
With the goal of enhancing transportation access to the northwestern part of the ward area which straddles Arakawa-ku and Adachi-ku, this line fully opened for service between Nippori and Minamiaiki-shinsuikoen in 2008. Access to transportation rose dramatically along the line, promoting alleviation of road congestion and revitalization of the area along the line.

Source: Bureau of Transportation, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

These initiatives significantly enhanced transportation convenience in the area and development of the area.

Changes in mutual direct operations of multiple rail operators and direct operations on lines managed by the same operator

The total length of urban railways in the Greater Tokyo Area was about 1,681km in 1970, but by 2015, this had increased to about 2,459km. During this time, the length of tracks used for mutual direct operations among multiple rail operators increased over five-fold from about 155km to 880km, and tracks used for direct operations on lines managed by the same operator increased significantly from about 5km to 27.2km. As of 2015, the total length of such tracks used for direct operations make up as much as 39 percent of the total length of urban railway tracks in the Greater Tokyo Area.

Prepared from "City View Tokyo." Bureau of Urban Development, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Map of rail lines built by public-private corporations since the 1990s

Prepared from "City View Tokyo." Bureau of Urban Development, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

New sections opened for direct operations
Direct operations already underway
Indirect operations already underway
Indirect operations scheduled ahead

Source: Bureau of Transportation, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.