

TRANSPORT POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE: 2020

Preface

Automobile and road transport have advanced rapidly in the last half century in Japan and contributed greatly to the advancements of our socio-economic system. Our lifestyles and the economy have been enjoying the benefits brought about by the mobility provided by automobiles in all aspects of our society. But, at the same time, over-reliance on automobile has caused serious social and environmental problems such as traffic accidents, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and social disparity. Recently, the Center started research on how our cities and transport should be in response to repeated natural disasters and pandemics.

Faced with these challenges, we are reaching a major turning point for a matured and secured transport society with major technological innovations in automobile and road traffic including EV/FCV and a connected and autonomous vehicle or a fully connected ecosystem created by advanced ICT, ITS, etc. These innovations in the next generation vehicle systems will be most beneficial to us as they will provide much safer/secured, less polluting and user friendly mobility for all when Japanese society faces depopulation and rapid aging, and it needs to solve many existing problems and to move towards a more equitable, inclusive, healthy and efficient transport system that support a vibrant and sustainable society.

The Japan Research Center for Transport Policy was founded in 1971 as a private non-profit organization involving transport academics and practitioners active in universities, research organizations and private industry. Since then, the Center has been carrying out interdisciplinary research focused on road transport and proposing transport policies that will contribute to the beneficial development of Japanese society, and the Center was officially certified as a public-interest incorporated association in 2010.

Every year since the year 2000, with the full support of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, we have published a booklet in Japanese, “Research on Automobiles and Transport – Environment and Policy” annually, which introduce the general trends in policy and research concerning automobiles and road traffic in Japan, with basic statistics. This is a translation of the major parts of the 2020 booklet with additional introduction for overseas readers who are interested in the transport policy of Japan. We hope that this booklet will be useful in understanding Japanese experiences.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, which has given us its full support, and to all who have given their valuable time in writing or editing articles, or who have provided important data for inclusion in the booklet.

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