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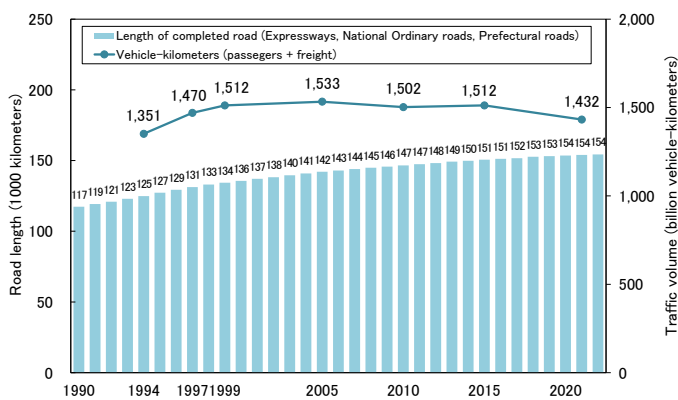
Road Network Today

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The length of our roads has been steadily increasing thanks to ongoing road improvement, yet it is still not sufficient for traffic demand. As a result, the average speed on roads remains unchanged at a lower level. A case in point: in city centers such as Tokyo and Osaka, and in DID areas, there is still chronic traffic congestion. Against this backdrop, under the “Interim Summary on the Future of the High-Standard Highway Network” compiled in October 2023 by the Subcommittee on National Trunk Roads of the Road Committee, Council for Infrastructure Development, and the “WISNET2050 Policy Collection” compiled by the Road Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism to outline specific policies for future initiatives, further efforts are being made to improve the service level of roads.

Figure 1 Changes in Traffic Volume and Road Length

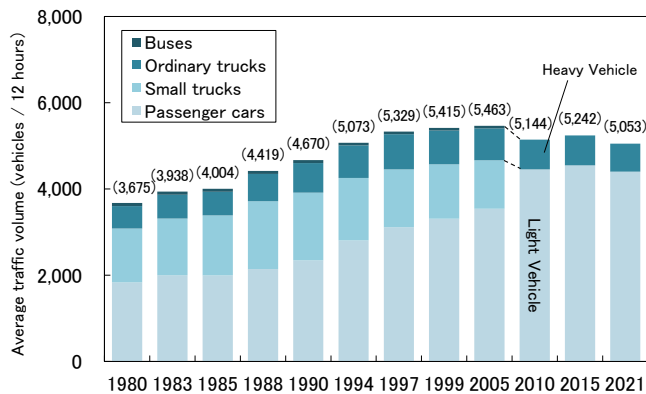
■ Traffic volume, measured in vehicle-kilometers, is on a downward trend after peaking in 2005; but the volume of light motor vehicles is on an upward trend. Road length nationwide is steadily increasing.



Source: [Road Statistics Annual Report](#) (MLIT),
[Road Traffic Census](#) (MLIT)

Figure 3 Average 12-hour Traffic Volume on Ordinary Roads in Types of Vehicles

■ The traffic volume on ordinary roads peaked at the time of the 2005 survey and has since remained almost flat or shown a declining trend, decreasing by about 9% between 2005 and 2021.

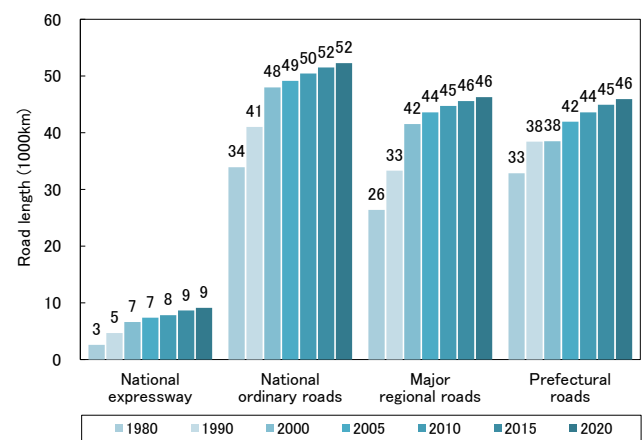


Notes: Figures in parentheses are the average traffic volume of all types of vehicles

Source: [Road Traffic Census](#) (MLIT)

Figure 2 Changes in Length of Completed Roads by Road Type

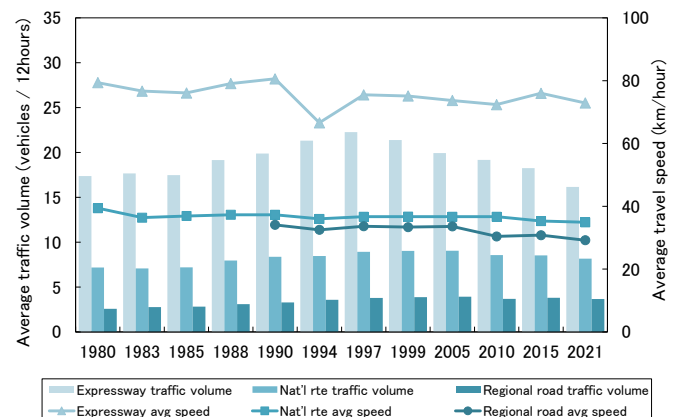
■ For all types of roads, the length of completed roads (i.e., with improvements completed) is increasing steadily.



Source: [Road Statistics Annual Report](#) (MLIT)

Figure 4 Changes in Average Traffic Volume and Average Travel Speed by Type of Road

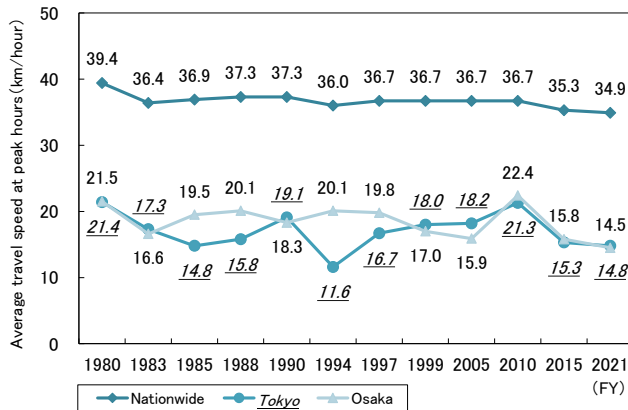
■ The average traffic volume on expressways has been on a declining trend since 1997, partly due to the impact of newly opened routes with low traffic volumes, while the average travel speed has improved. On ordinary roads, the average travel speed has remained flat or shown a declining trend for both national highways and local roads.



Source: [Road Traffic Census](#) (MLIT)

Figure 5 Average Travel Speed on National Ordinary Roads (Nationwide, Tokyo, Osaka)

■ There has been almost no changes in the nationwide average. The average travel speed in the wards of Tokyo and in Osaka City is about half of the nationwide average; there is still severe traffic congestion.



Source: [Road Statistics Annual Report](#) (MLIT)

Figure 6 Average Travel Speed on Expressways (Nationwide, Tokyo, Osaka)

■ The nationwide average has been on a slightly downward trend. Although there have been changes in the average speed in the wards of Tokyo and in Osaka City, both speed levels remain lower than the nationwide average.

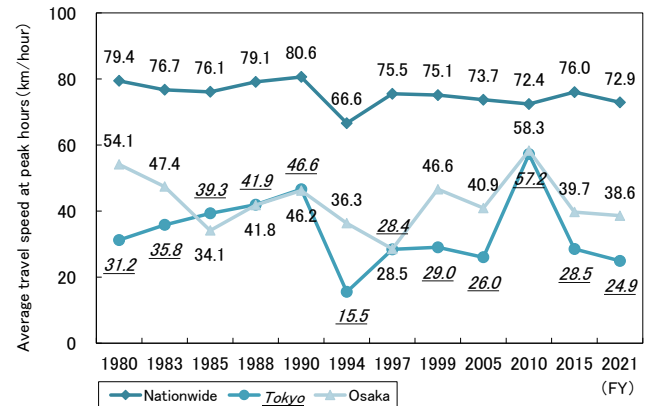
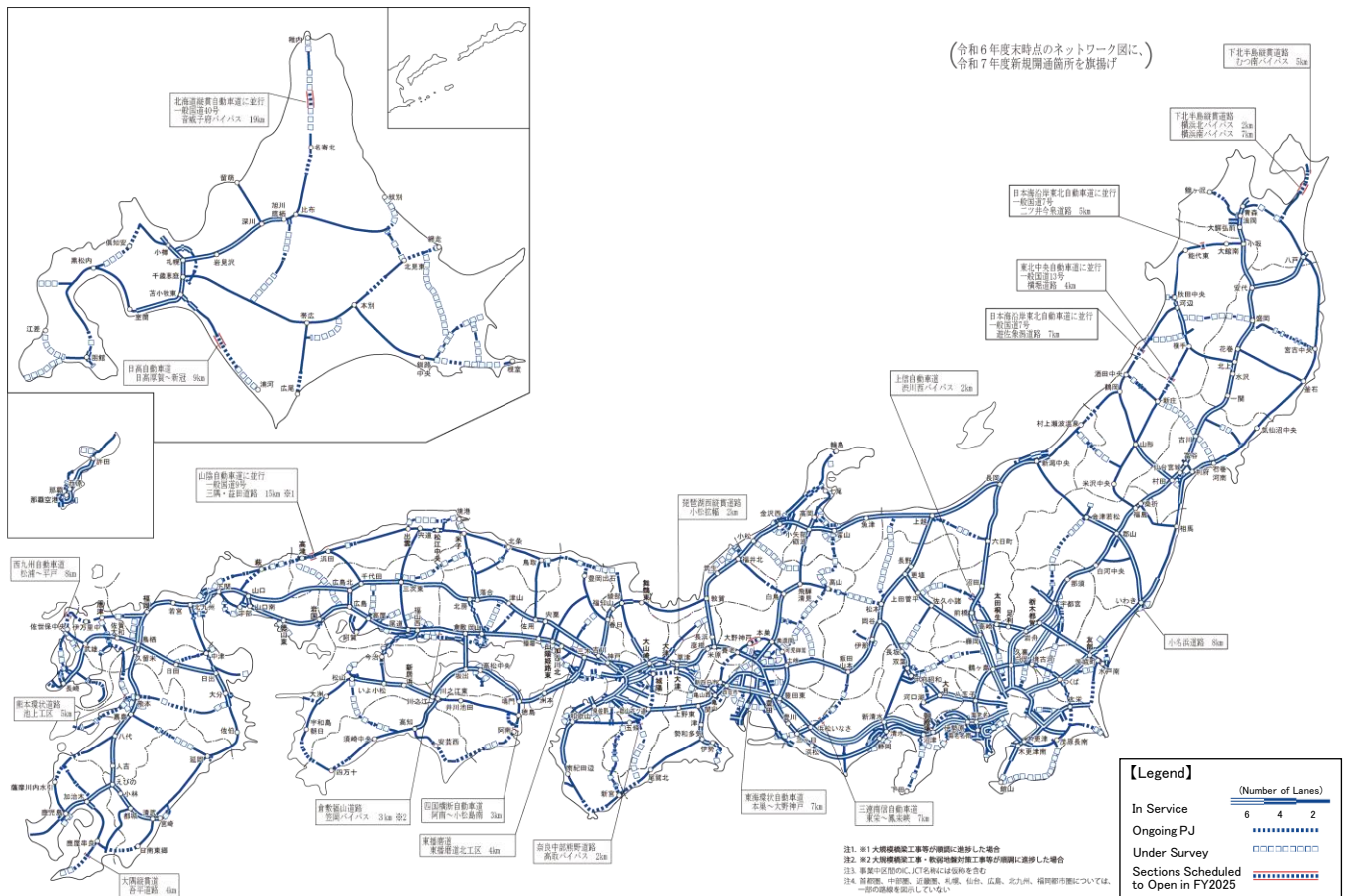


Figure 7 Development Status of the Disaster-Resilient National Trunk Road Network (High-Standard Highway)

■ The development of trunk roads has been steadily promoted since the “First Five-Year Road Improvement Plan” in 1954, up to the present day. For example, with the opening of the Tokyo Outer Ring Road section between Misato-Minami IC and Takaya JCT in June 2018, about 60% of the entire route was connected, resulting in a roughly 30% reduction in lost time due to congestion on the Metropolitan Expressway inside the Central Circular Route. On the other hand, there are still areas nationwide where the expressway and other trunk road networks are not yet connected, so efforts are being made to promote their development in a planned manner. Furthermore, under the “Interim Summary on the Future of the High-Standard Highway Network” (2023) and the “WISNET2050 Policy Collection” efforts are being advanced.



Source: [White Paper on Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism FY2025](#)(MLIT)