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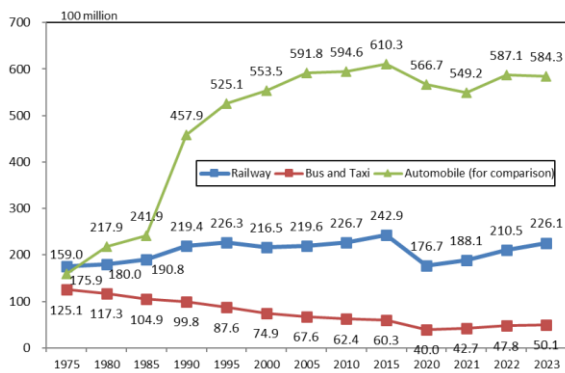
Public Transport Today

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In 2023, demand for public transport progressed to recover from the decline caused by the spread of COVID-19. Use of railways, express buses, and aircrafts increased from the previous year, but has not yet reached pre-COVID levels. In the three major metropolitan areas, the share of railways is increasing. Railway congestion rates have been declining compared to pre-COVID levels. While the bus business remains unprofitable, its income and expenditure situation is improving. The number of community buses and demand-responsive transportation services is on the rise. Meanwhile, the number of accident fatalities has continued to decline, and public transportation safety is being maintained. Furthermore, the number of rail line closures has been decreasing in recent years.

Figure 1 The Number of Passengers, By Mode

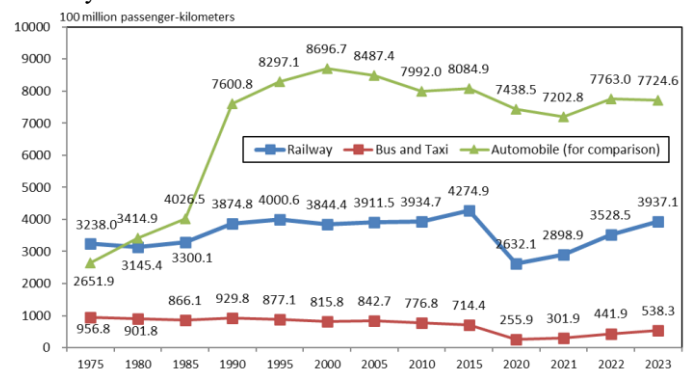
■ In FY 2023, automobile has started to decline.



Source: [Annual Statistical Report on Motor Vehicle Transport](#), [Annual Statistics Report on Railway Transport](#)

Figure 2 Railway and Bus Passenger Kilometers

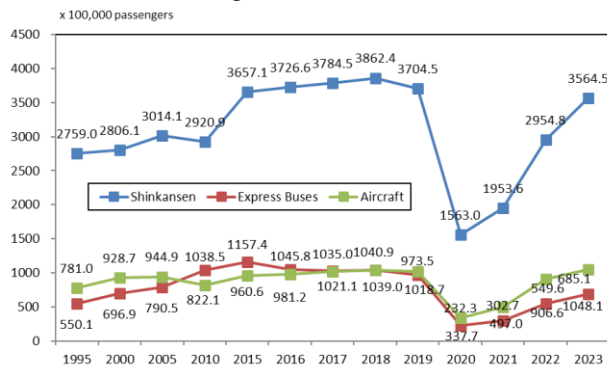
■ Public transport use has been recovering steadily since last year.



Source: [Annual Statistical Report on Motor Vehicle Transport](#), [Annual Statistics Report on Railway Transport](#)

Figure 3 The Number of Intercity Passengers, by Mode

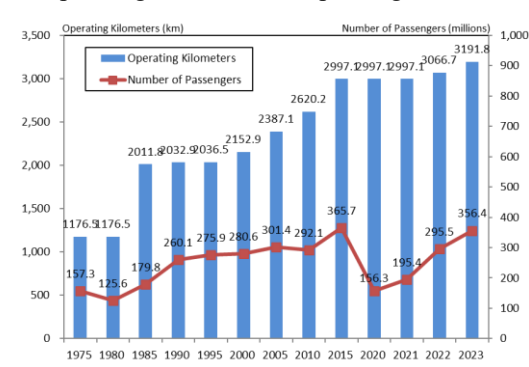
■ The use of Shinkansen, aircrafts and express buses has been recovering since 2020.



Source: [Annual Statistical Report on Railway Transport](#), [White Paper on Transport Policy 2025](#), [Annual Statistical Report on Air Transport](#)

Figure 4 Operating Kilometers and Number of Passengers of Shinkansen

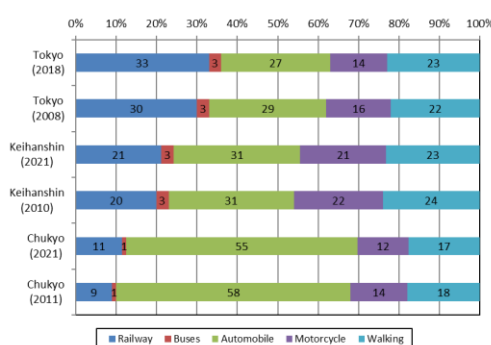
■ Operating kilometers and passenger numbers have increased.



Source: Before 1985: [Railways 2008: the Numbers](#). After 1990: [Annual Statistical Report on Railway Transport](#)

Figure 5 Modal Share in the Three Metropolitan Areas

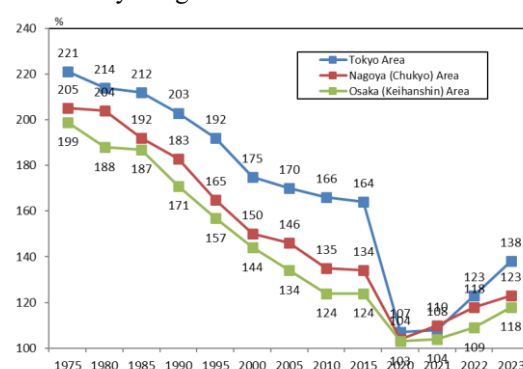
■ In each area, the use of railway has increased and automobile has decreased.



Source: [Urban Area Person Trip Survey Results in Tokyo, Osaka \(Keihanshin\), Nagoya \(Chukyo\) Area](#)

Figure 6 Railway Congestion Rates in the Three Metropolitan Areas

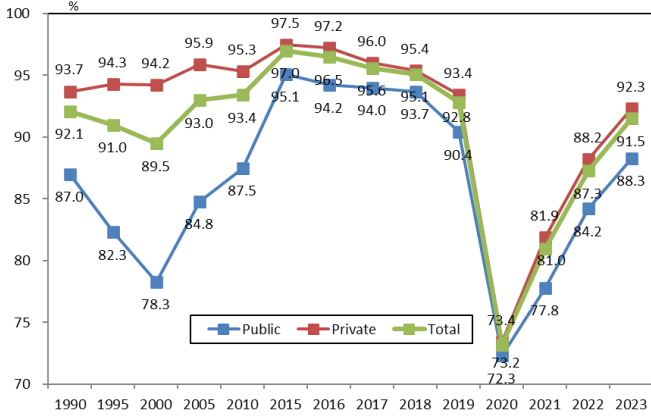
■ Railway congestion rates have increased since 2020.



Source: [Railways 2024: the Numbers](#)

Figure 7 Bus Industry Incomes vs. Expenditures

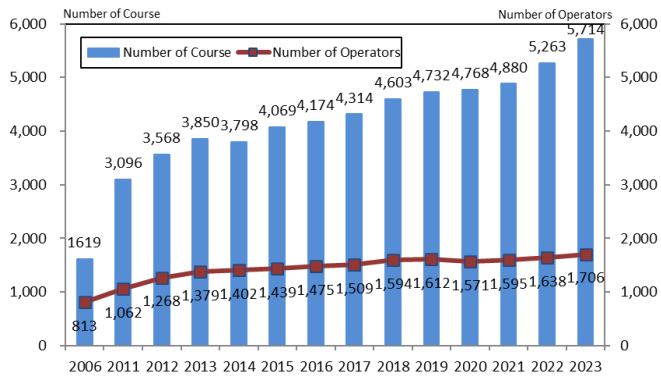
■ In the past 20 years, the balance ratio overall has never exceeded 100. It deteriorated significantly in 2020, but it has since recovered. [Balance ratio = (current income / current expenditure) × 100]



Source: [Bus Industry Income and Expenditures](#)

Figure 9 Number of Demand-Based Shared Taxi Services

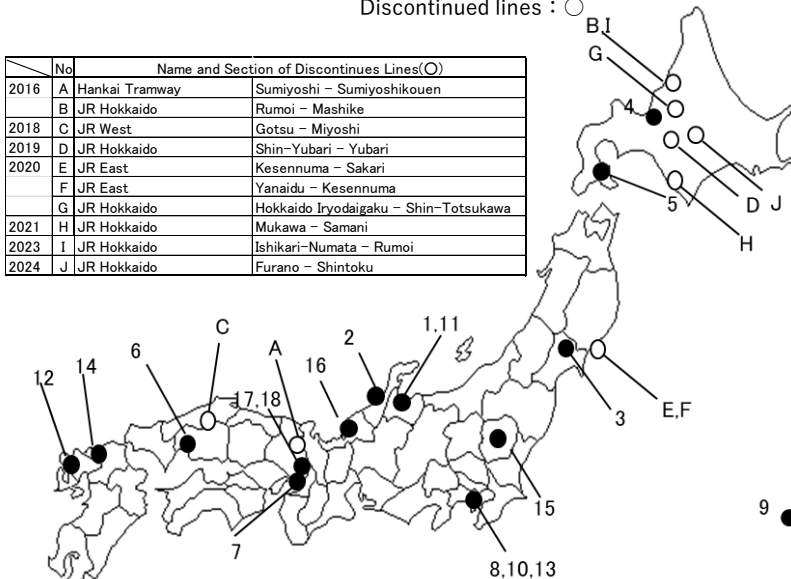
■ In recent years, the number of local governments introducing demand-based shared taxis has been increasing. The total number of routes nationwide is 5,714, more than three times the number of all cities, towns, and villages.



Source: [White Paper on Transport Policy 2025](#)

Figure 11 Newly Established / Discontinued Railway Lines

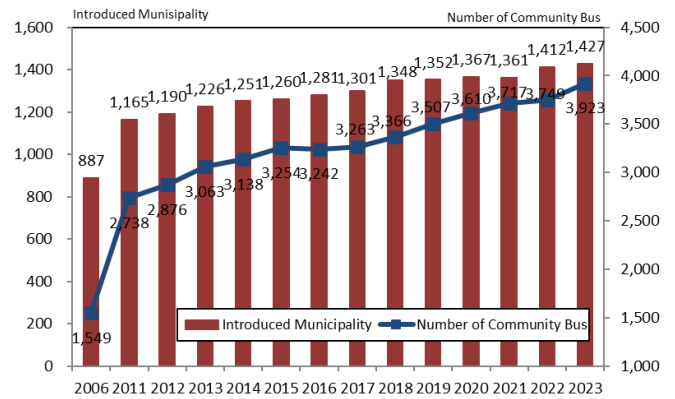
Examples between 2010 and 2020 Newly-established lines : ●
Discontinued lines : ○



Source: Author's Investigation

Figure 8 The Number of Municipalities Introduced Community Bus

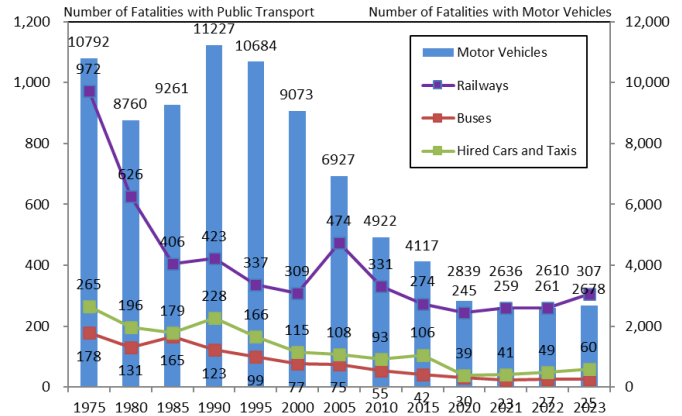
■ Mainly in the areas where bus operators withdrew, community bus routes are continuing to increase.



Source: [White Paper on Transport Policy 2025](#)

Figure 10 The Number of Traffic Fatalities with Public Transport

■ The number of fatalities with buses, hired cars, and taxis continues to decrease. Compared to the number of traffic fatalities with motor vehicles (2678 in FY 2023), public transport safety is outstanding.



Source: (Railway and Automobile): [White Paper on Traffic Safety in Japan](#), (Bus, Hired Car and Taxi): [Statistics on Traffic Accidents of Motor Vehicles for Business Use](#)

■ There are many newly established lines in the Hokuriku region. There are many examples of service closures in Hokkaido and Tohoku. In 2017 JR West revived a line that had been abolished. In 2020, JR East lines were officially closed, but BRT lines were already in operation as substitutes.