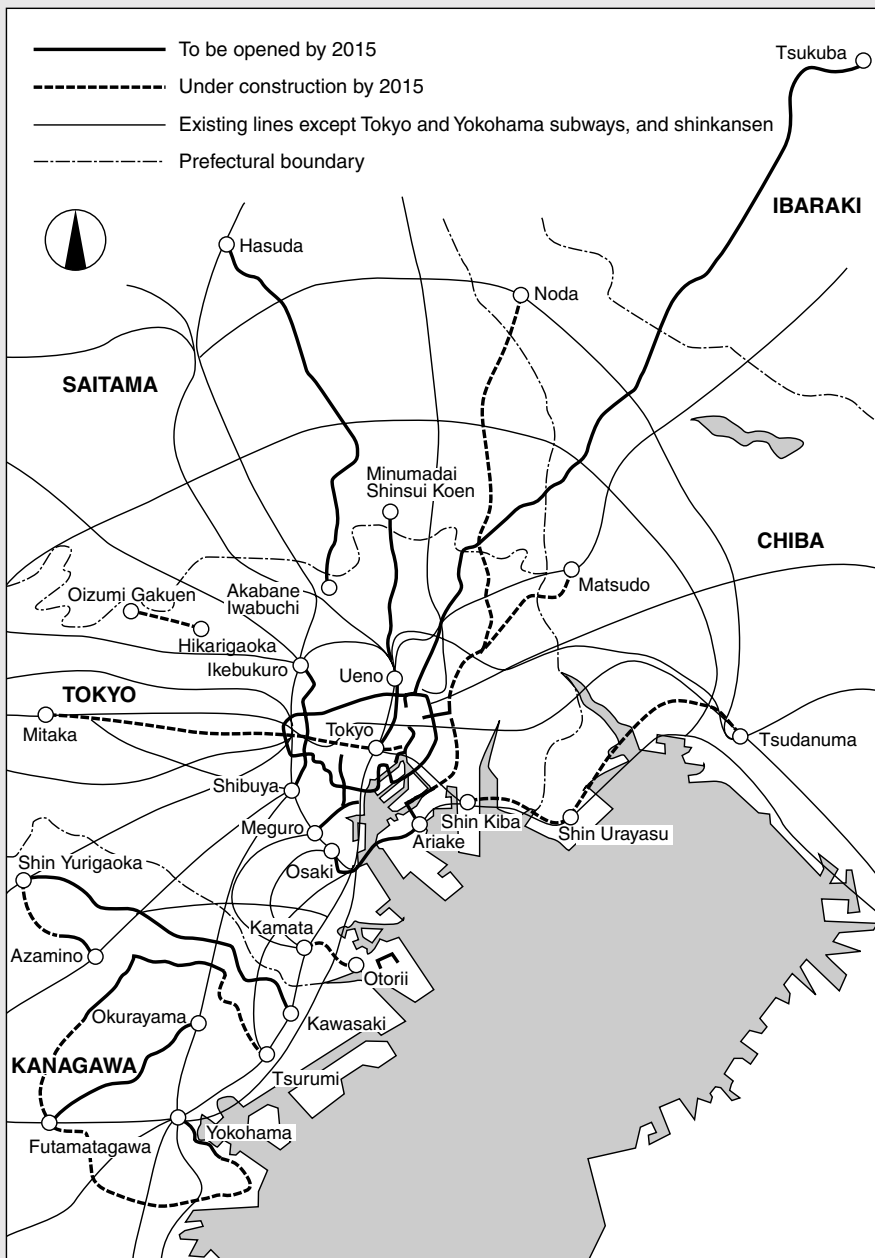


New Master Plan for Tokyo's Urban Rail Network

**New Rail Expansion Master Plan for Tokyo Metropolitan Area
(Recommended by Transport Policy Council, January 2000)**



On 27 January 2000, the Transport Policy Council (an advisory body to the Minister of Transport) submitted a report, recommending a major revision of the 1985 master plan to expand Tokyo's urban rail network.

This new master plan covers 426 km of railway sections of which 233 km are entirely new (including new lines and extension or quadrupling of existing lines), as well as sections currently under construction. The plan also includes some monorails and automated guided transit systems. Notable new sections include:

1. A new double track between JR East's Tokyo and Ueno stations enabling trains from the Tohoku, Takasaki and Joban lines to reach Tokyo Station;
2. Extension of the TRTA Yurakucho subway line to Noda (Chiba Prefecture) via Kameari on the JR East Joban Line;
3. Construction of Saitama Kosoku Railway to Hasuda (Saitama Prefecture), connecting to TRTA Namboku subway line at Akabane Iwabuchi;
4. Extension of the JR East Keiyo Line from Tokyo Station to Mitaka on the Chuo Line;
5. Construction of a new line from the Odakyu Electric Railway's Shin Yurigaoka Station to JR East Kawasaki Station to provide a mass transit system to Kawasaki for residents of north Kawasaki.

The report recommends completion of urgent sections by 2015 with construction of remaining sections to start by the same year. Passenger crowding, which is currently at an average of 183% of capacity, should be eased to 151% if all proposed sections are completed.

The total construction costs are estimated at ¥7.2 trillion with ¥4.7 trillion of this being for the 233 km of new sections. However, the number of rail passengers in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area has been decreasing in recent years as a result of the stagnant economy and the aging population. Consequently, rail operators are reluctant to make further infrastructure investments. The Council expects the government to arrange new financing, but the central and local governments are both facing serious deficits, making the whole situation much more difficult than in 1985. ■

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