

JRTR

Japan Railway & Transport Review

Feature

Making Best Use of Spaces in Railway Facilities

- Use and Area Management of Railway Under-Viaduct Spaces and Underground Spaces near Stations
- Deployments in JR East Under-Viaduct Spaces and Ekinaka Commercial Spaces
- Development in Tokyo Metro Stations

Railway and Inbound Tourism

- Nankai Electric Railway Services Targeting Inbound Visitors
- Overview of Tobu Railway Service Efforts for Inbound Visitors

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Clockwise from left: JR East 2k540 AKI-OKA
ARTISAN facility (JR East), Commercial facility
under Chuo Line viaduct (Takayuki Kishii),
'nonomichi' promenade (JR East), Marché de
Metro in Echika Omotesando (Tokyo Metro),
Exterior of mAAch ecute (JR East), and ecute
Omiya (JR East)

Quantitative and Qualitative Development of In-Station Commercial Business

Business at JR companies in areas other than railway operations started to surge after the privatization of Japanese National Railways in 1987, following the lead of major private railways who had a head start. The greatest asset supporting such business is railway property, and that is used to the greatest extent possible. Stations are undergoing a transformation from places where people ride trains to places where people gather. The goal is to make what were once places where people went solely for using trains be places they go to even when not riding trains. And that attempt is seeing some degree of success. Railway companies stimulate each other and together roll out diverse business. Stations and their surrounding facilities are being redeveloped into something quite different than their previous forms. While this may appear to be nothing but good, taking a close look reveals hidden problems. On the surface, we see beautifully laid out *ekinaka* in-station commercial spaces with new shops ringing with the voices of shopkeepers calling to customers. But taking a couple steps back and looking closely at this common sight reveals that almost all the stations have similar shops. When a new *ekinaka* facility opens, most of the shops are the same as in others.

This means two things: First of all, newer, more diverse product line-ups are needed. And this applies to services as well. The composition of shops in stations has been based on a preconception of what sort of people come to stations. While that is based to a certain extent on analysis, a way of thinking that better incorporates the needs of the market is needed. The preconceptions that people coming to stations do not purchase products with a high unit cost and that items other than daily goods do not sell actually end up making stations uninteresting places. Secondly, stations need to be made to be places people want to go to and gather at even without spending money. Jazz—live, of course—playing in the station space could make people stop and enjoy listening for a while. Street performances too could be provided at stations. If stations can be made to be places that can be enjoyed even without spending money, this could result in a synergetic effect for various *ekinaka* businesses as well. Quantitative high-level use of railway property is expanding, but qualitative change where the content of business evolves as well is still something for the future.

This marks the 69th issue of JRTR, which was first published in March 1994. Since that time, there have been major changes in the conditions under which we have published, such as the publishing environment, target audience, and the increasingly predominant Internet. We have therefore decided to suspend publication for the time being so we can take a better look at the direction JRTR should go in the future. We wish to express our thanks to all who have supported the publication of JRTR: our readership that has followed our publication over the years, writers who have submitted articles, and others.

K. Kogure

※This and previous issues of JRTR will continue to be
available for viewing on the East Japan Railway Culture
Foundation website: <http://www.ejrcf.or.jp/jrtr/index.html>

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