

Rail Symposium 2024

Value Creation for a Sustainable Society (4/11/2024)



Rail is gaining renewed attention globally, with it being valued in Europe for its environmental benefits and expanding in Asia to address challenges tied to economic growth.

In both Japan and the United States, rail is at a pivotal turning point. Japan is moving forward with major initiatives such as the Chuo Shinkansen project using Superconducting Maglev technology, as well as large-scale urban redevelopment. Meanwhile, the U.S. is directing substantial investments into rail through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

This symposium discussed the value rail brings, by connecting cities, enhancing urban quality, and improving resilience. The discussions addressed several key themes, including the following:

- Public transportation plays a vital role in supporting cities and regions—this is a shared value in both Japan and the United States. Rail development strengthens regional economies, improves user convenience, and brings broad economic benefits.
- Railways are essential social infrastructure for commuting to work and school, while also contributing to local growth and job creation. Investments enhance safety and improve networks.
- Rail is a highly effective means of addressing challenges such as achieving decarbonization, maintaining urban functions, and fostering economic growth in mature economies.
- Japan has accumulated deep expertise in the rail sector, from high-speed Maglev technology to transit-oriented development (TOD). As Japan and the United States face shared challenges such as maintaining urban functions and achieving decarbonization, bilateral collaboration between Japan and the United States in the railway sector is increasingly important.
- High-speed rail can transform mobility, revitalize communities, and help address environmental issues. Early leadership by the public sector is essential, along with raising awareness of its benefits.
- Finally, advancing transit-centered city planning requires collaboration with local stakeholders. Given increasing damage from extreme weather, joint investment by rail operators and local governments is crucial.

