



あさひかわ創造都市推進協議会

Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council

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City of
Design
ASAHIKAWA

Member of the UNESCO
Creative Cities Network
since 2019

design

Design Cities Asahikawa Manifesto

1. The purpose of design is to enhance happiness.

We reaffirm that design is beneficial and contributes to happiness.
Design has to evolve with the times.

In order to keep up with the demands of a society where goods are in short supply,
and in an age of abnormal weather conditions and rapidly-developing artificial intelligence,
a completely new approach is required.

By maximizing design's capacity to discover and solve problems,
we aim to build a world that can bring happiness to everyone.

2. Achieve harmony between nature and society with the power of design.

Our existence as part of an ecosystem precedes our existence as social beings.
It is essential to awaken our five senses, take heed of nature's words,
and find ways to coexist with diverse ecosystems.
Nature is the source of our activities.

Without exception, all cities are built on the blessings of nature.
Therefore, we will strive to capitalize on the power of design
to achieve a favorable harmony between nature and society.

3. Design serves as a catalyst that bridges societal elements.

We will harness the transformative potential of design as a catalyst
to strengthen the organic relationships between politics, government, education, culture, and industry.
Design can generate creative value by bridging societal elements.
Design can reconcile diverse matters and express their essence in ways that are easy to understand.
We will use this power of connection to create a sustainable and joyful society like no other before.

4. Raise the design literacy of citizens.

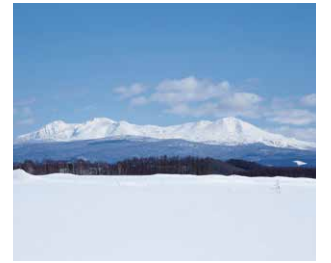
We will focus our efforts on raising the design literacy of all citizens.
At the same time, this will also strengthen the bonds between citizens living in a city of design.
In particular, we will encourage the younger generation, the leaders of the future,
to deepen their understanding of design through all types of educational opportunities.
We also strive to strengthen the network between design cities
by learning about the diverse cultures that exist in each city of design.

5. Take responsibility for a sustainable future.

As cities of design, we have a responsibility towards the future.
Each city faces its own set of challenges.
Thus, varied and diverse solutions are required to address them.
It is also essential to pass down the unique cultures that have been cultivated over time.
We seek to understand each design city's goals, strengthen our network,
and support each city in realizing its goals.

Our Vision and Slogan

Asahikawa – Creating Our Forest of Design



Mission

1. To bring about harmony between nature and society through design, creating a sustainable future.
2. To become a Creative City of Design driven by civic participation and enriched by the active contributions of the next generation.
3. To identify and address societal issues through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Design Cities Asahikawa Manifesto

(October 2024 Subnetwork Meeting in Asahikawa)

The Design Cities Asahikawa Manifesto, drafted for the UNESCO Creative Cities Subnetwork Meeting held in Asahikawa, was officially recognized at the Cities of Design meeting on October 24, 2024. The manifesto emphasizes the importance of coexistence with nature, as well as our goal to bring about a sustainable and joyful society through the power of design.

We are faced with numerous challenges, such as global warming, with no simple solutions. Many of these problems are products of humanity's pursuit of prosperity, and design is partly responsible for these issues. Therefore, we believe that design should also play a role in solving these problems.

Moving forward, an essential function of design will be to foster harmony between nature and society. To do this, we must start by understanding that nature offers valuable insights for designing a society that values not only speed and efficiency, but also flexibility and diversity. We believe in the power of design to help build a sustainable, bright, and happy future.



UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is an international organization involved in the conservation of World Heritage Sites such as Hokkaido's Shiretoko National Park. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network was established in 2004 under the leadership of Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO at the time, based on the concept of Creative Cities proposed by Charles Landry in 1995.

As of March 2025, the network comprises 350 member cities across 8 different fields: Literature, Film, Music, Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Media Arts, Gastronomy, and Architecture.

Eleven cities in Japan are part of the network, and Asahikawa is the third Japanese city to be recognized in the field of Design, following Kobe and Nagoya. As one of 49 cities worldwide designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Design, Asahikawa strives to achieve harmony between nature and society through the power of design, aiming to become a sustainable city where future generations can thrive through citizen participation. In recognition of these efforts, Asahikawa hosted the 2024 UCCN Design Subnetwork Meeting.



- Kobe (Design/2008)
- Nagoya (Design/2008)
- Kanazawa (Crafts & Folk Art/2009)
- Sapporo (Media Arts/2013)
- Hamamatsu (Music/2014)
- Tsuruoka (Gastronomy/2014)
- Tambasasayama (Crafts & Folk Art/2015)
- Yamagata (Film/2017)
- Asahikawa (Design/2019)
- Usuki (Gastronomy/2021)
- Okayama (Literature/2023)

Engaging with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

UCCN Annual Conference

Creative cities from around the globe come together to report on activities from the past year, share success stories and challenges, as well as set future directions and define upcoming projects. This conference serves as a platform for fostering collaboration and co-creation among cities.

UCCN Cities of Design Meeting

Cities from the field of Design gather to discuss the latest trends, challenges, and best practices, with the goal of enhancing the overall value of the network through various efforts, such as initiating projects that address the needs of each city.

UCCN Cities of Design Meeting in Asahikawa

(October 21~24, 2024)

Participants: 48 delegates from 23 cities across 21 countries

Following an opening address by Hirosuke Imazu, the Mayor of Asahikawa City, a congratulatory message was delivered by Denise Bax, Chief of Communication in UNESCO's Culture Sector. During the meetings, each city shared success stories and discussed the potential of design in working groups focused on Business, Education, Policy, and Social Design. On the final day, the Cities of Design Asahikawa Manifesto was officially recognized.



Living

Design for Everyday Life

Life and Design in Asahikawa

We aim to promote well-being in an era of declining birthrates and an aging population, re-imagining life in harmony with nature through the lens of design.

By leveraging our region's strengths,

we strive to create a sustainable and joyful way of life unique to Asahikawa.

Kids Design

To cultivate creativity and originality in the children who will shape the future of our city, three types of digital books have been developed as educational materials. University students and local creators collaborate to deliver outreach classes at local elementary and junior high schools, as well as lead inquiry-based learning workshops at high schools.

Machinaka Campus (Downtown Campus)

Held at Heiwa-dori Shopping Street, this educational event brings together high school, technical college, and university students, along with civic organizations, to encourage greater interest in design, community-building, and the SDGs. It aims to cultivate the talents of the next generation who will shape the future of the region.

Design × Creative Seminar

Seminars are held for local residents and businesses to promote the broader use and implementation of design thinking. Through lectures and hands-on workshops, these sessions aim to deepen participants' understanding of design, foster greater interest, and enhance the overall design capabilities of the community.



Creating

Creating an environment
that fosters creativity

Platforms that support creative output and collaboration

We support artists and creators and host workshops and labs
where residents and businesses work together to generate new value.

We also offer hands-on support for the creation of works
and the development of products that utilize local resources, as well as for design-driven management.

Enhancing Asahikawa's Local Products and Urban Appeal through Design

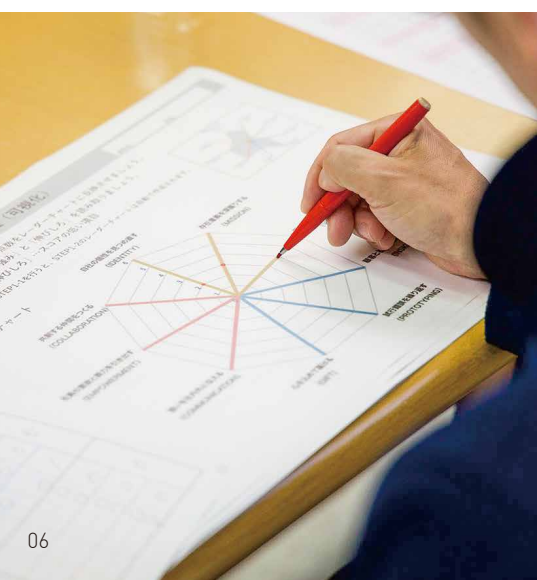
Design is employed to enhance the appeal
of Asahikawa's signature agricultural
and industrial products, sharing their
value with a wider audience. By drawing
on the region's rich natural environment
and collaborating with creator networks
both domestically and abroad, we
work toward urban design that reflects
Asahikawa's unique identity.

Design Management Hands-on Support Starter Kit

To enhance business capabilities
through design in a changing era, we
created the Design Management Starter
Kit (Asahikawa Edition), which serves
as a common language for companies,
organizations, and individuals to
understand and apply design thinking.

Asahikawa Design Producer Development Program

To cultivate talent capable of addressing
local challenges, the Asahikawa Design
Producer (ADP) Development Program
was carried out from 2020 to 2022.
These design producers lead our City
of Design initiatives, enhancing the
region's appeal and supporting its
sustainable development.



Connecting

Interaction between people,
creations, and the intangible.

Design that connects people, society, and nature

Design connects all kinds of physical creations and intangible elements.

Through various events, we provide hubs where people gather,
as well as spaces where diverse physical creations are showcased and ideas are exchanged.

Design serves as a catalyst that integrates daily life, industry, education, and government.

Asahikawa Design Week

A design event that brings together a wide range of local industries—such as furniture, crafts, architecture, machinery and metalwork, food, and tourism—as well as organizations, local residents, and educational institutions. Set against the rich natural environment of northern Hokkaido, the event showcases design that is unique to the region and shares the appeal of Asahikawa's design with attendees from all over Japan and around the world.

Design Gallery

A hub for engaging with design, learning, and networking. In addition to being a venue for exhibitions and events, it features coworking and meeting spaces, providing opportunities for local designers to showcase their work and collaborate, sparking creative encounters and innovation.

Asahikawa Design Center

Originally established as a showroom for Asahikawa furniture, the Design Center now serves as a hub that promotes design beyond the furniture industry. In response to the recent growing emphasis on sustainability, we strive toward environmentally conscious manufacturing practices that use locally sourced Hokkaido timber.



Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council
Major Initiatives (April 2024 — March 2025)

Living

Machinaka Campus 2024
(Downtown Campus 2024)

On June 22 and 23, 32 groups set up a total of 55 booths along Heiwa-dori Shopping Street, featuring exhibitions, presentations, and hands-on activities.

▶ Number of participants: Approximately 69,000 people

Outreach Classes at Elementary and Junior High Schools

Kids Design Outreach Classes were held in the form of workshops where students learned about design from speakers Rui Hosoya and Soufu Honda.

▶ Number of elementary and junior high schools involved: 2
▶ Number of participants: 76

Keio University SFC (Shonan Fujisawa Campus)
Collaboration Project

In collaboration with the Yoshii Student Research Team at Keio University SFC, Asahikawa City University's Sugimura Student Research Team developed a workshop tool for inquiry-based learning, and a workshop utilizing this tool was held for high school students.

▶ Number of high schools involved: 2
▶ Total Number of participants: 98

Imagining and Creating the Future of Asahikawa

Motivated by their desire to actively help shape a better future, two high school students from Asahikawa organized and led this workshop.

▶ Facilitators
Toji Itaya – Asahikawa Meisei High School
Aki Ogyu – Asahikawa Kita High School
▶ Number of Participants: 13

Presentation on Local Governance ×
Design Anthropology

Introduced initiatives such as the design system being implemented in Asahikawa City.

Design × Creative Seminars

① From WOOD DESIGN to Social Formation

Speakers:
• Takekazu Inoue, Expert at the Center for the Strategy of Emergence at the Japan Research Institute (JRI)
• Koichi Wakasugi, Director of the Social Creative Research Institute and Professor at Musashino Art University (MAU)
Number of participants: 54

② Asahikawa: City, Future, and Design
— Sou Fujimoto and Michele de Lucchi Discuss Forests and Architecture
Speakers:
Architects Sou Fujimoto and Michele De Lucchi (Online)
Number of participants: 210

③ WOODS & DESIGN Asahikawa 2024
“ISSUE-IDEA-DESIGN in the Context of Japan's Forests”
A talk session discussing the realization of sustainable societies and local industries in coexistence with nature.
Coordinator: Seiichi Saito, Head of Panoramatiks
Speakers: 7 forestry professionals from Hokkaido and beyond
Number of Participants: 105

④ Salone del Mobile Milano 2024
Speakers:
Architect and Spatial Designer Nobuyuki Narigasawa and Opera Singer Yasuo Asaki
Number of Participants: 200

⑤ Asahikawa's Future and Potential from a Global Perspective
Speakers: Architects Sou Fujimoto and Michele De Lucchi
Number of Participants: 145

⑥ Design's Role in Shaping the Future
Speakers:
• Shunsuke Ishikawa, Asahikawa CDP (Chief Design Producer)
• Seiichi Saito, Head of Panoramatiks
Number of Participants: 107

⑦ Asahikawa Food Meeting
Speaker:
Mitsugu Nakatogawa, Representative Director of the Natural & Mineral Food Products External Advisor Association
Talk Session:
Mitsugu Nakatogawa
Mitsunori Ozaki, Representative of Design Studio Ozaki
Number of Participants: 92

⑧ Shaping Asahikawa's Future Together
Speakers:
SRE Holdings Corporation CT Business Preparation Office, Hirofumi Sasaki and Toshimasa Fukui
Number of Participants: 11

⑨ Rediscovering Our Regional Charms:
Designing Systems to Foster Connections Among Individuals and Between People and the Region
Speaker: Yuma Harada, Representative of UMA/design farm
Number of Participants: 57

⑩ Putting Design into Words:
Toward a Future where Everyone can Learn and Apply Design
Speaker: Yumi Inaba, Design Educator
Number of Participants: 74

⑪ Generative AI and Urban Development:
Exploring the Future Potential of Technology-Driven Co-Creation
Speaker:
Tomoyasu Hirano, Managing Director of Itoshima Corporation
Number of Participants: 34

Creating

Asahikawa Design Producer (ADP) Dispatch Project

▶ ADPs were dispatched to small and medium-sized enterprises to provide collaborative guidance for the implementation of design management. (7 cases)
▶ Organized a round-table consultation session (1 session)
▶ Dispatched as a facilitator for staff training (2 sessions)
▶ Dispatched as a speaker for a local organization (1 session)

Design Management Compass Handbook

Held a design management introduction workshop in collaboration with Hokkaido Design Lab. (7 businesses)



Design × Facilitator Training Workshop

Experience the possibilities that come with Design Thinking!
Speaker:
Shuhei Kato, Meisei University Design Faculty Part-time Lecturer
Number of participants: 12

Design Management Starter Kit — Asahikawa Edition

To help businesses, organizations, and individuals understand and apply design thinking and design management, we compiled essential information into a starter kit that serves as a common language for all users.
Produced by: Asahikawa Regional Creativity and Design Bureau



Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council
Major Initiatives (April 2024 — March 2025)

Connecting

- Networking with UNESCO Creative Cities
- ▶ Participated in the 16th UCCN Annual Conference in Braga, Portugal
 - ▶ Hosted the UCCN Subnetwork Annual Meeting in Asahikawa, welcoming 48 delegates from 23 Cities of Design across 21 countries. The Design Cities Manifesto Asahikawa was also officially recognized at this meeting.
 - ▶ Participated in 16 online meetings as part of preparations to host the Subnetwork Meeting in Asahikawa.
 - ▶ Participated in the Online Subnetwork Meeting hosted by Whanganui.
 - ▶ Attended the UCCN CCNJ (Creative Cities Network Japan) Domestic Network Meeting in Tamborasayama City.
 - ▶ Held the conference “Correspondence” as part of the UNESCO Cities of Design Promotion Committee, attracting 66 participants.
 - ▶ Mayor of Asahikawa visited City of Design Seoul to share insights on each city’s activities and exchange ideas for collaboration.
 - ▶ Participated in discussions for the Dubai Library Project
 - ▶ Participated online in a forum hosted by Creative City Brasilia

- Asahikawa Design Week 2024
- Held from June 15 to 23 under the theme “Life with”, the 2024 edition featured a new event, the “Asaichi” morning marché, as well as the triennial International Furniture Design Competition Asahikawa. Nearly 40 events took place throughout the city and neighboring towns during Design Week.
- ▶ Number of attendees: Over 160,000

- Utilizing the Design Gallery
- Workshops and talk events were held at this design hub, creating opportunities for interaction with local creators.
- ▶ Number of events: 130
 - ▶ Number of attendees: 6,765 people

- Collaborating with Local Vitalization Cooperators
- In charge of event management and other activities utilizing the design hub:
- ▶ Kaoru Ueda, from November 2023
 - ▶ Reiko Koyama, from March 2025

ASAHIKAWA1000 Project

A website where 1000 creators from various industries in Asahikawa and neighboring towns can be nominated and registered, putting faces to the vibrant creative community in Asahikawa.

Produced by:
SANA DESIGN,
Asahikawa Regional Creative Design Bureau



(1) Membership and Activities

The Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council is looking for new members to join us in shaping the future of Asahikawa through design. Our activities include holding seminars and events such as Machinaka Campus (Downtown Campus), promoting and raising awareness of design thinking, and organizing collaborative projects with students and local residents.

Anyone is welcome to participate—individuals, businesses, and organizations alike. Let’s work together to cultivate our city through the power of design! We invite you to sign up using the membership form below.

▶ Membership Form



▶ Find out more about the Council's activities



(2) Shaping the Future Through the Power of Design

- In collaboration with the Municipality of Asahikawa and with support from the Design Promotion Fund, the Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council is advancing a range of projects aimed at shaping the region’s future through design. To help sustain these ongoing efforts, we sincerely ask for your support and contributions.
- ▶ Designated Asahikawa Hometown Tax Payment Website
- <https://www.asahikawa-furusato.com/>



(3) Stay Updated on Instagram

- We regularly share updates on events, seminars, and design-related activities. Follow us to see what’s happening in Asahikawa right now!
- ▶ Asahikawa Creative City Promotion Council Official Instagram
- @design_asahikawa

