

Shizuoka Universal Design
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SHIZUOKA
UD
10th
ANNIVERSARY

SHIZUOKA UD 10th ANNIVERSARY

Commemorating Ten Years of Shizuoka Universal Design

March 2009 Shizuoka Prefecture

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April 1999 through March 2009

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Ten Years of Shizuoka Universal Design

Chairman, Shizuoka Universal Design Committee

Satoshi Kose

Professor, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture

I am amazed that Shizuoka's universal design initiative is already ten years old. I recollect myself taking part in the first informal discussion sessions on universal design in Shizuoka. My impression of that time is that many of the participants were really trying to figure out the difference between barrier-free design and universal design.

After that initial discussion, I did not have close contact with Shizuoka for a while. I returned to the circle again when I started my job at the Shizuoka University of Art and Culture in April 2003. I was frustrated to see that the intentions of the prefecture were not reaching as far as to change the attitude and behavior of local citizens themselves. The prefecture and some cities have used tax money to provide their residents with town-planning initiatives and public building projects that have incorporated universal design principles to good effect. However, individuals, businesses, and groups are often stymied by economic concerns, and local industries are particularly reluctant to embark on projects with no prospective economic returns. However, the general living environment will not improve unless businesses, organizations, and individuals act in line with universal design principles.

Ultimately, the motivation for universal design is not altruism, but self-interest. Japan's population is rapidly aging, and as we all get older, the inconveniences we once thought of as other people's problems will become our own. Universal design starts when planners have the foresight to review designs created for young, healthy users, and ask whether those designs will still be valid when they get older. Therefore, planners who choose to ignore universal design could one day find they have created problems for themselves.

No one would want to rely on others for help that could have been avoided. However, as people get older, their abilities gradually deteriorate. Universal design principles are the key design features to enable people to get by without being aware of their reduced capacities. These principles involve monitoring the design elements currently in place, maintaining constant vigilance to make sure that the designs have not already excluded any segment of the population, and actively making any modifications required. I will emphasize again: Universal design is not just something for others. It is something for you and me. And it is up to you to implement it.

Greetings from Governor Yoshinobu Ishikawa

Universal design is rooted in a mutual understanding and respect for the wide range of human diversity that arises from differences in characteristics such as age, gender, abilities, and language. To make Shizuoka a highly livable environment for all residents and provide residents with the freedom to enjoy active lifestyles, Shizuoka's Prefectural Government started a unified prefecture-wide approach to universal design in fiscal 1999. At the time, Shizuoka was Japan's first prefectural government to make universal design one of its basic policy objectives.

In line with our Shizuoka Universal Design 2010 Action Plan, the prefecture is working on implementing and spreading universal design concepts through several initiatives. Driven by both tangible (facilities-based) and intangible (information-based) resources, these initiatives include incorporating universal design elements into prefectural facilities, and organizing major events.

As Japan's population ages and becomes increasingly international, the use of universal design to create living environments with better accessibility for everyone is becoming even more important. Our goal is for our residents to have the highest levels of satisfaction in Japan, as inspired by our philosophy of "Fukoku Yutoku" which roughly translates as "Prosperous and Good Land," and in doing this, we have been working on integrating universal design into people's lives.

This fiscal year marks the tenth year of Shizuoka's work on universal design, and we have published this Anniversary Issue to mark this milestone. It covers the major universal design initiatives and implementation success stories of the past ten years. I hope it will inspire and inform future work on universal design by government agencies, businesses, organizations, and individual Shizuoka residents.

March 2009

Yoshinobu Ishikawa, Governor of Shizuoka

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Introduction

Shizuoka Universal Design

To make Shizuoka a highly livable environment for all residents, Shizuoka Prefecture became Japan's first prefectural government to make universal design one of its basic policy objectives. It has since embarked on a unified prefecture-wide approach to universal design. Shizuoka began this approach in 1999, when the 21st century was being called the 'century of the environment' as the 20th century drew to a close.

A concept first proposed in the 1980s by North Carolina State University Professor Ronald Mace, universal design calls for town planning and product design enabling ease of use by all users. The government of Shizuoka Prefecture has tailored this concept to local needs to create and implement Shizuoka Universal Design.

Definition

Shizuoka Universal Design is a concept that seeks to surpass the various characteristic differences among people such as age, gender, physical abilities, and language, by ensuring that Providers of resources (such as environments, buildings, facilities, products, services, systems, and education) plan and design them with all users in mind, and ensure they are as easy to use as possible by everyone.

Background

Shizuoka Prefecture decided to start working on universal design since its approach of providing resources designed for everyone makes it extremely effective in solving issues such as those below.

• Respect for human rights

Shizuoka established the Human Rights Center in 1997 to work on human rights issues. These issues do not stop at integration. They include a wide range of subjects close to home that many mistakenly feel are not applicable, such as community involvement by the disabled, friction between Japanese and non-Japanese, child abuse, and domestic violence.

• Expanding the Shizuoka Prefecture Town Planning Ordinance for Public Welfare

The Shizuoka Prefectural Government enacted the Shizuoka Prefecture Town Planning Ordinance for Public Welfare in fiscal 1996. Perhaps due to the inclusion of the term 'public welfare,' its implementation was limited to just certain government areas, and did not spread throughout all government offices.

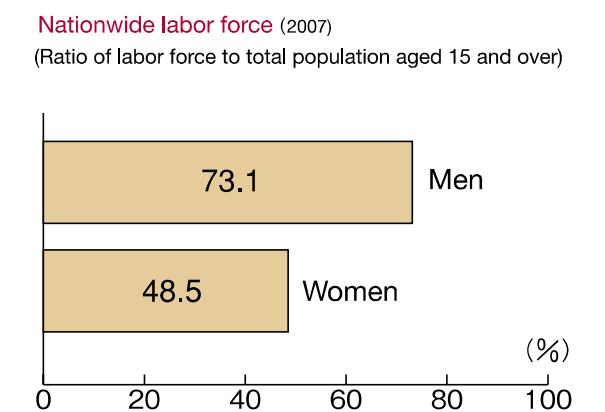
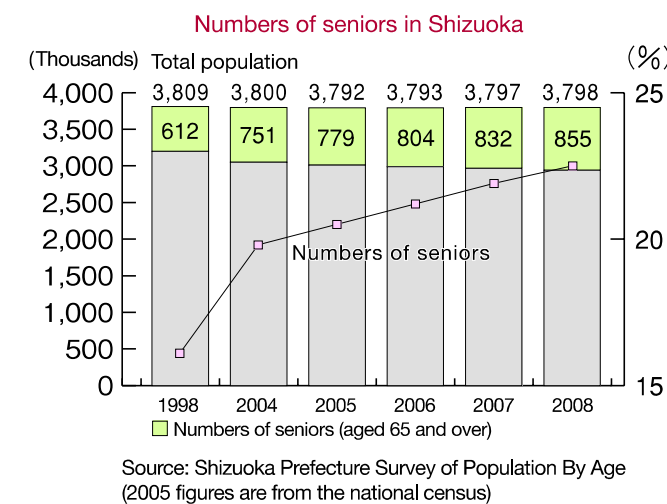


• Self-sufficiency for the disabled

Enabling the disabled to live full and satisfying lives requires environments that allow them to be self-sufficient, which requires government assistance. Some disabled people find barrier-free and other special facilities for them to be a psychological burden, since they only reinforce the psychological divide between the disabled and able-bodied. Universally accessible infrastructure is therefore required to address this concern.

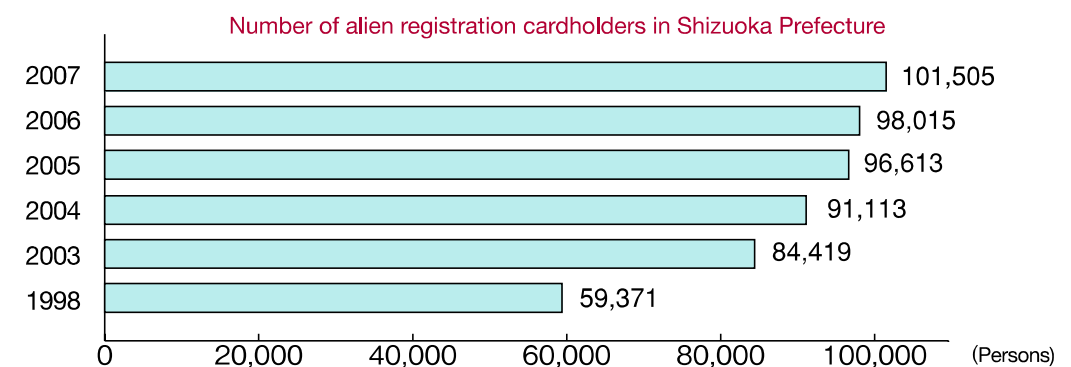
• Universal community participation

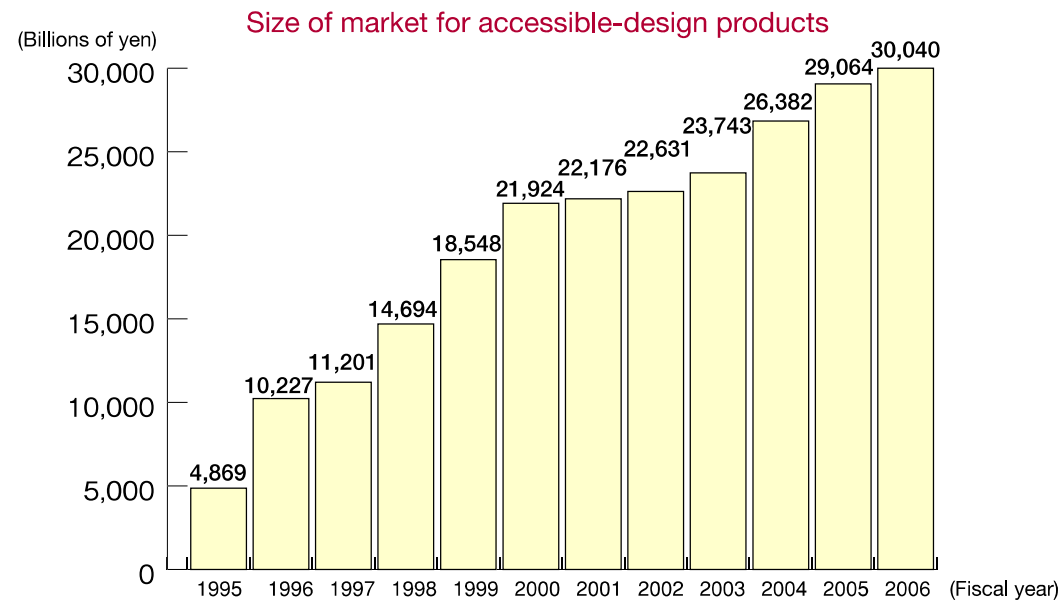
Japan's aging and increasingly changing population is creating demand for more universal participation in the community by all segments of the population regardless of age or gender—the creation of a 'Universal Design society.'



• Pioneering 21st century industries

The increasing globalization of the world's economies and Japan's aging population are creating a demand to replace the environmentally-taxing mass production, mass consumption, and mass disposal of the 20th century with sustainable economic activities. These activities will be driven by providers that can supply products and services meeting a diverse range of consumer needs. Seniors, the disabled, and non-Japanese are occupying a more important segment in markets as diverse as consumer electronics and facilities/services for retail outlets to the hotel industry. Universal design concepts are crucial for understanding the needs and physical attributes of these diverse market segments, and for addressing these needs during product development, outlet design and customer service. Universal design concepts can be used to help devise various management strategies and can inspire ways of achieving business growth.





Source: Accessible Design Foundation of Japan Survey Report on Accessible-Design Product Market Size for Fiscal 2006

Popularizing and implementing universal design

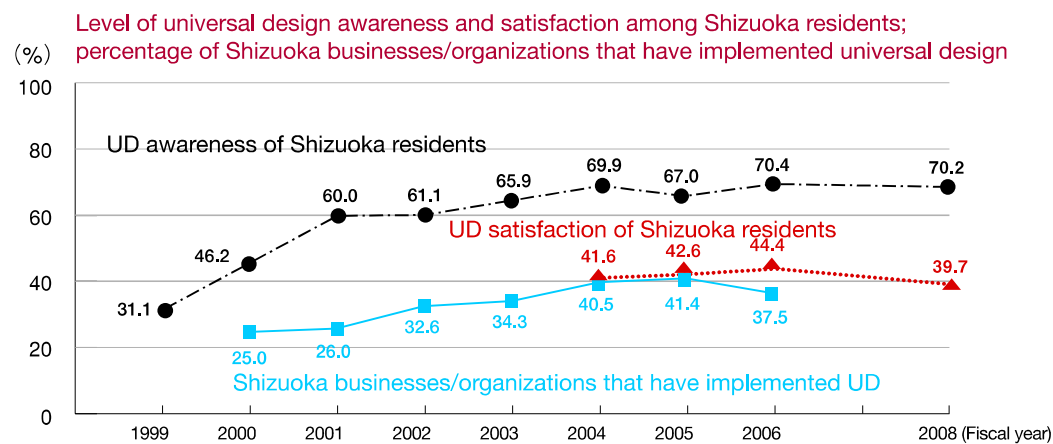
Under our Universal Design Action Plan, all Shizuoka Prefectural Government Offices are promoting comprehensive and effective universal design measures. A survey carried out in fiscal 1999 found universal design had a 31.1% awareness level among Shizuoka residents. This figure had risen to 70.2% by fiscal 2008. By fiscal 2006, 37.5% of businesses had implemented universal design, up from 25.0% in fiscal 2000. These successes have been made possible by ten years of prefectural activities to popularize universal design, incorporate it into prefectural facilities and implement it at major events. Other major contributions to promoting universal design have come from the enactment of the Barrier-Free New Law (which calls for the use of universal design in transportation facilities and town planning), and companies have been inspired by Japan's aging population to provide universal design products and services.

Baby boomers nearing retirement are seeking different lifestyles, and a new demographic of seniors who want to remain active in the community is growing in number and increasingly calling for universal design infrastructure. The opening of Mt. Fuji Shizuoka Airport will also create demand for a variety of multilingual services.

To address these demographic changes and needs, the prefectural government is promoting universal design to make Shizuoka a highly livable environment that enables all residents to engage in free, active lifestyles.

Shizuoka Universal Design

Information on Shizuoka Universal Design work being carried out by All Shizuoka Government Offices. Shizuoka started Japan's first universal design initiatives in 1999.



Organizations promoting universal design

Universal Design Office

To promote universal design throughout all areas of the Shizuoka Prefectural Government, the Universal Design Office was established within the Department of Planning in fiscal 1999. The Universal Design Office began working on managing the progress of universal design throughout all prefectural government offices, and on spreading and promoting the principles of universal design.

There was initially some internal discussion about which department would contain the Universal Design Office. Since the new office was to be charged with implementing universal design in all areas of government, it was ultimately placed in the Department of Strategic Planning, which is in charge of putting together comprehensive policy measures for the prefecture. It was subsequently transferred to the Department of Civic and Cultural Affairs (in fiscal 2004), then transferred again to the Department of Community Affairs due to reorganization in fiscal 2007. It is currently still located in the Department of Community Affairs.

Shizuoka Universal Design Headquarters

The Shizuoka Universal Design Headquarters was created to work on universal design initiatives throughout all Shizuoka Prefectural Government Offices. It is headed by the governor, as director of Shizuoka Universal Design Headquarters with the Director of the Prefectural Police Department, the Superintendent of the Board of Education, and the directors of each department as the other representatives. The Shizuoka Universal Design Headquarters manages the progress of the Action Plan, sets the policies to promote each fiscal year, sets the cross-departmental topics to work on, and reports on the major projects of each department.

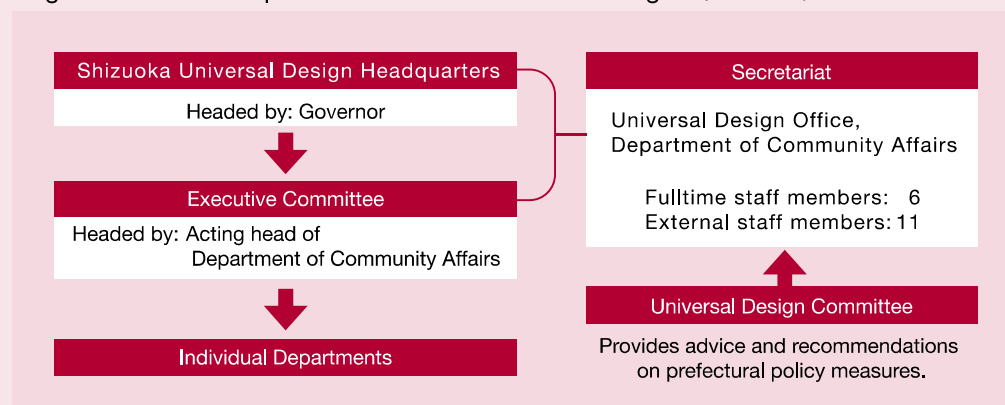


Headquarters Conference

The first Headquarters Conference was held in April 1999 and resolved the following items:

- Make universal design a basic prefectural policy objective.
- Since there are no past examples of attempts by local governments at broad-based universal design implementation, initiatives will be self-directed, and devised and implemented rapidly and concurrently.
- All departmental work will be re-evaluated from the perspective of universal design. Required policy measures and projects will be incorporated into the Universal Design Action Plan.

Organization used to promote Shizuoka Universal Design (FY 2008)



Support systems for verification and evaluation

A committee of academic and real-world experts

Along with creating organizations for promoting universal design, the prefectural government started the Shizuoka Universal Design Discussion Group in fiscal 1999. Comprised of academic and real-world experts, the group discussed and made recommendations on ideals for the 'universal design society,' concrete policy measures, and the role of government, residents, and businesses in the steady implementation of universal design.

In fiscal 2000, the Shizuoka Universal Design Specialist Committee was established as the group's successor. Its members gave advice and recommendations on policy measures to comply with the Action Plan, organized conferences for the people of the prefecture and its business, judged Idea Contest entries, and assessed commissioned research. The committee played a major role in determining the direction of early-stage universal design measures and in promoting the spread of universal design.

When the universal design awareness of Shizuoka residents reached over 60% in fiscal 2003, the committee was reorganized into the Shizuoka Universal Design Committee. In fiscal 2005, the committee started operating as an outside organization, providing the perspectives of specialists to assess and verify how well measures and projects specified in the New Action Plan are being implemented.



Contributor article

Reflections of a Shizuoka Universal Design Committee member

Yoshihiko Kawauchi

Toyo University Professor and former Shizuoka Universal Design Committee member

Government plays a large role in universal design (UD) in Japan, and since the start of the UD movement in this country, Shizuoka Prefecture has always been a nationwide frontrunner. Along with raising UD awareness among Shizuoka residents, the prefectural government has continually made efforts to show its true colors through several projects. Decisive initiatives such as the April 1999 opening of Mt. Fuji Children's World started from a very early stage. The fact that the national government didn't release Minna no Tame no Kōen Zukuri* until July 1999 shows how advanced Shizuoka has been.

I was particularly impressed with the efforts I saw while judging the Universal Design Idea Awards. In addition, the 10th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled People (TRANSED 2004) held in Hamamatsu in 2004 offered participating hotels an opportunity to learn more about the guest reception training and room configuration.

While there are now UD initiatives throughout Japan, I hope to see Shizuoka continue trying to reach new heights of UD implementation, drawing on the strengths of its broad range of personnel and experience.

*Minna no Tame no Kōen Zukuri: Universal Design Shuhō ni Yoru Sekkei Shishin ('Creating Parks for Everyone: Design Guidelines Driven by Universal Design Methods'), Parks and Open Space Section of the City Bureau of the Ministry of Construction (general editor); Parks and Open Space Association of Japan (editor/publisher).