

# Toolkit: Designing San Diego's Future

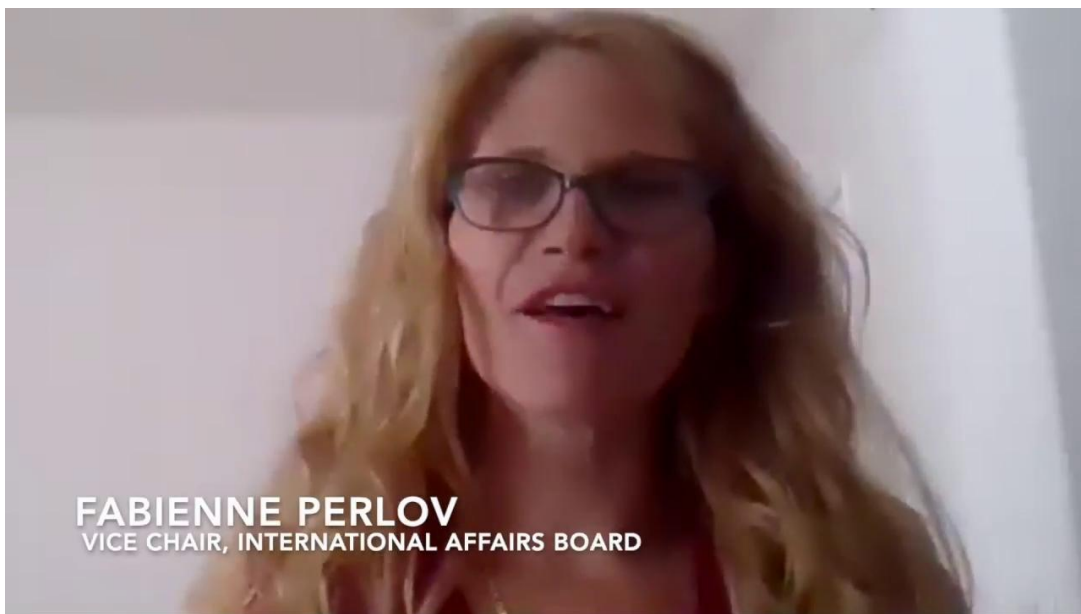
UC San Diego  
THE DESIGN LAB



DESIGN FORWARD  
ALLIANCE  Innovation  
Designed Here

## Start Here 📌

How might we harness human-centered design to radically reimagine our city's future?



*Click to play video*

Imagine a future San Diego: a city with equitable access to higher education, world-class leadership on climate action, relationships of mutual benefit with international partners, a thriving innovation economy, and a citizenry that celebrates the culture & complexity of all residents.

We believe that K-12 and higher education will play a critical role in accomplishing each of these outcomes. Together with educators, scholars, and designers from across the region, we will explore the ways in which we can harness the power of education to realize this future at [San Diego Design Week](#) as a part of the International Affairs Board's Global Vision 2030 strategic planning project.

In the pages that follow, you will find four opportunity areas that will be the focus of discussion during our [CONVERGE](#) community panel and [DEFINE & DESIGN](#) workshop.

Opportunity

Area

#1

# Environment + Education



San Diego has made strides in tackling climate change, but it can be difficult for students to be a part of those efforts. With student voices from around the world driving transformational change on issues of climate justice, it's clear they can and should play an integral role in local planning.

How can we help students identify the impact of climate change in their local communities and become advocates for sustainable development?

## *ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE*

A history of environmental racism has led to a disproportionately [higher incidence of asthma](#) in areas of San Diego like Barrio Logan, where residents are 92% more likely to be hospitalized from asthma than the average Californian and 250% more than the average American.

**How might we empower students to advocate for environmental justice in their community?**

## *TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY*

The [San Diego Forward](#) regional mobility framework proposes “5 Big Moves” to create a safe, adaptable, and socially equitable transportation ecosystem. With limited state & national funding, this \$177Bn investment will require creative funding & broad buy-in from legislators, industry & community.

**How might we engage communities to design transit solutions that best serve their needs?**

## *GREEN SPACE & PARK SPACE*

Access to [green space](#) correlates to increased physical and mental health, contributes to community building & brings important economic benefits. But in San Diego, that access is asymmetrical -- areas with the least are in regions with the highest concentration of low-income households.

**How might we support increasing access to green space in the areas that need it most?**

## *RESILIENCY*

Rising temperatures due to climate change have the potential to [severely impact](#) the quality of educations in schools. As the number of extreme heat days go up every year, minimal school days are expected to go up and outdoor physical activity will become more dangerous and limited.

**How might we better prepare our schools for the impacts of climate change going into the next few decades?**

# Economy + Education

Opportunity

Area #2

Ensuring San Diego has a robust workforce is increasingly difficult when facing a nationwide battle for talent and a soaring cost of living. To ensure the region's future competitiveness, San Diego must strengthen its education efforts to train and retain local talent.

How might we strengthen pathways to higher education and other training credentials within K-12 programs, so that all San Diego students feel prepared for and have access to the job market of San Diego's future?

## INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Research suggests that interventions as [early as 7th grade](#) are critical to driving talent, especially historically underrepresented groups, towards the STEM roles that will fuel our future economy. K-12 summer jobs are a way to elevate the local talent base and engage students in growing sectors of the STEM economy.

**How might we increase youth engagement in summer jobs and internships?**

## LEARNING GAPS

In San Diego County, nearly 12% of youth are characterized as [Opportunity Youth](#) (OY) -- those with limited work experience, many in poverty, without family support, at high risk of being involved in criminal activities, who experience substantially diminished opportunities over their lifetimes.

**How can we ensure OY receive the resources required to secure a better future?**

## CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

COVID-19 shutdowns have laid bare the critical role access to childcare plays in fueling our economy. But [66% of local families](#) with young kids live in areas where regular care is not available. Without a well-resourced, equitable child care system fully re-opening our economy or recovering from this will not be possible.

**How might we ensure all families have equitable access to child care?**

## GRAD RETENTION & HIGHER ED

Young, energetic college graduates form the lifeblood of a city and replenish the workforce with talent. However, San Diego [performs worse](#) than other cities of comparable size in retaining its college graduates.

**How might we prevent brain drain, creating a path for grads to build a life & career locally?**

## Opportunity

Area #3

# Culture + Education

The foreign-born population in San Diego represents 27.1% of the city's total, but the skills, cultural knowledge, and homeland connections of international students, immigrant, and refugee communities are often underutilized and absent from the stories of our city amplified most.

How might we expand opportunities (in K-12, higher education, and beyond) to strengthen cultural integration and elevate stories—past, present, and future—of San Diego's diverse population?

### *INCLUSIVE HISTORY*

Initiatives like the [1619 Project Curriculum](#) challenge us to understand U.S. history through the lens of alternative framings of our country's origins, addressing issues of systemic racial and social injustices.

**How might we cultivate new lenses to understand San Diego's history by amplifying stories of racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities and first generation Americans?**

### *PUBLIC ART*

Public art can act as a [catalyst](#) for community generation or regeneration but in San Diego, many historically underserved communities have [little or no publicly funded art at all](#). A recent city initiative has designated \$1.25MM for arts relief programs, including public art.

**How might we ensure historically underrepresented artists & communities are beneficiaries of public art programs?**

### *CULTURAL TOURISM*

Cultural tourists typically [spend more and stay longer](#) than other U.S. travelers. While San Diego has long depended on the appeal of our beaches to drive valuable tourist dollars, recent designations of [cultural districts like Barrio Logan](#) have driven investment in and attention to diverse cultural assets.

**How might tourism dollars be channeled to fortify and protect local socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic diversity?**

### *COMMUNITY SPACES*

Group-based creative activities have been shown to improve [health and wellness](#) outcomes in children. Local orgs like [ARTS](#) harness creativity to support kids & communities through civic participation, community development & inclusive growth.

**How might we amplify and grow the work of creative community spaces to transform the lives of young people and communities?**

## Opportunity Area #4

# Global Engagement + Education

COVID-19, a virus with global impact, has made clear the interconnectedness of our cities and countries. There is much we could have learned and adopted -- social distancing and face coverings -- to prevent the spread of the virus had we been more globally aware.

How might cross-border relationships between schools and students help us better understand the interconnectedness of communities near and far?

### *CURRICULUM*

Leading local universities have [built innovation programming](#) to amplify and support the exchange of ideas between global collegiate changemakers, hosting summits and providing funding to support ideas that can drive sustainable change.

**How might we build upon collegiate programming to expose K-12 students to global perspectives and experiences?**

### *US-MEXICO BORDER*

Local [social enterprises like 4Walls](#) center bi-national strategies to create jobs, increase quality of life, and re-imagine neighborhoods in historically underserved border communities. Their projects transform waste from the Tijuana River into homes, parks and educational opportunities.

**How might we expand & amplify cross border collaborations of mutual benefit by connecting cross-border students?**

### *EXCHANGE PROGRAMS*

Local social ventures like [Mutiny Labs](#) lead cultural immersion trips for entrepreneurs in countries like Cuba to explore innovation through regional lenses like scarcity, geopolitics, and informal economies that have enabled them to develop expertise the US lacks.

**How might we replicate immersive learning experiences for K-12 students with partner districts in other countries?**

### *WORK VISAS*

San Diego's businesses, [98% of which are small and employ 59% of the workforce](#), depend on the frictionless movement of people and ideas across borders, including the recruitment of top global talent. But with legislative uncertainties putting visas in the balance, San Diego's competitiveness is at risk.

**How might San Diego encourage and support small/medium-sized companies in providing work visas for international students?**

# From Human-centered to Community-driven design

Traditionally, design practitioners have functioned as outsiders who set a project scope for helping a specific community, and those inside the community are consulted along the way. Community-driven design takes the opposite approach; community members with insider knowledge (and other unique resources to offer) set a shared agenda for their own community, and those outside the community are consulted along the way (e.g., to provide a specific form of design expertise). [\[READ MORE\]](#)

*What is Human-centered Design?*



*Click to play video*

*Why is community engagement critical?*



*Click to play video*

The **UC San Diego Design Lab** deploys human-centered design to address complex socio-technical systems. The Design Lab advances human-centered design via research, education, and community engagement.

The **Design Forward Alliance** (DFA) is an outgrowth of the UC San Diego Design Lab's vision to build a design-driven economy in San Diego, serving as a catalyst to unify, expand & guide the regional innovation community. DFA promotes, connects, and advocates for the business and social value of Human-centered Design (HCD) as a catalyst for economic development and design-driven innovation.

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