



# BEYOND HAPPINESS

DESIGNING FOR WELLBEING



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Office of Civic Wellbeing  
City Manager's Office,  
City of Santa Monica



Akshay Agrawal,  
User Experience Designer  
Designmatters Fellow



## **यह विजय माँ और पापा के नाम**

Dedicated to Mom and Dad

Without their sacrifices I would've never made it to ArtCenter and never have met Maggie and Danielle who encouraged me to meet Jennifer, Susannah & Garret from Designmatters and then go onto have this opportunity to serve the wonderful people at the City of Santa Monica.



# THE PLOT

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# INTRODUCTION

## The characters

Left: Santa Monica Mayor Ted Winterer facilitating the Community Timeline activity at the Pico Wellbeing Project launch Community Workshop. [June 30th, 2018, Virginia Avenue Park]



## Hi There! My name is pronounced Aksh-hey! I'm the Design Fellow!

Ever since I ended up riding the Space mountain 14 times when I first visited Disneyland when I was 15 years old, I knew I wanted to be part of a team which crafted positive experiences for others; experiences which inspired positivity & happiness and made people smile.

The Designmatters Fellowship gave me the unique opportunity to work with the Pico Wellbeing Project team at The City of Santa Monica - a team dedicated to elevating the wellbeing of the 22,081 residents of the Santa Monica Pico neighborhood. Pico is one the most economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Santa Monica and the team was determined to tackle a host of issues ranging from Community Trust, Mobility, Green Space, Affordability, Literacy, Cultural Preservation, Active Lifestyles - many of which were surfaced in the award winning Wellbeing Index.

This Fellowship served as practical field training for my education in User Experience Design (Fall 2019) from ArtCenter College of Design, Los Angeles.

My core interest lies in extensive and empathetic User Experience Research and solution creation. I'm particularly interested in leveraging deep insights from user interactions, interviews and tests to build and improve services, products and systems to help elevate everyday experiences for consumers and enterprises.

I am personally a strong proponent of for-profit social enterprises and envision leveraging my User Experience, technology and Business skills to realize a for-profit Social Enterprise of my own someday.

### **Akshay Agrawal**

2018 Designmatters Design Fellow,  
Office of Civic Wellbeing, City of Santa Monica



*Top: Me posing for a "Candid" by the Santa Monica Pier pretending to explain the vast intricacies of the world right after chowing down a McDonalds Happy meal. In My defense, the Toy was Jack Jack (the baby) from Incredibles 2.*



## "This is the value Akshay brought as a Designmatters fellow to our work in City Hall." - Lisa

The City of Santa Monica is known for being progressive and cutting edge. We like to try new things, we like to be out in front and strive to be the best.

The Office of Civic Wellbeing exemplifies this ethos - founded by Bloomberg Philanthropies after winning a national competition, The Wellbeing Index was the first in the country to move beyond traditional performance measurement and GDP to bring data on how Santa Monica's residents were really doing into the forefront of policy-making and resource allocation in City Hall.

So when we agreed to bring Akshay Agrawal into our office for a fellowship, we thought we'd be bringing someone in to simply help us visualize our existing work. Instead, we got a wake up call in the form of a design student. Akshay continually asked questions about not just how things should look, but why we were doing them at all. He came to our office with a desire to learn about the public context, and was an eager student of local government, embedding himself in our office, attending community meetings whether he spoke the language or not, and documenting our processes throughout in ways that helped us clarify our goals and course correct when we needed.

This is the value Akshay brought as a Designmatters fellow to our work in City Hall. He brought us a fresh perspective, grounded in learning, showed us how we could better serve the public when we communicated with them through thoughtful and elegant design.

**Lisa Parson**  
Project Manager,  
Office of Civic Wellbeing, City of Santa Monica



*Top: Lisa Parson outside City Hall*



## "While Akshay has left the program, the foundation that he helped create continues to support the PWP team and the community at large." - Peter

The City of Santa Monica strives to be a leader in progressive and highly inclusive public policy that addresses many of the Los Angeles region's contentious issues surrounding sustainability, affordability, equity and access. A history of successful planning and program implementation has earned the City a reputation for innovation and cutting-edge governance that places resident wellbeing at the forefront of decision-making, and which serves to support the creation of new practices and policies to improve quality of life for people of all backgrounds and economic levels, including our most vulnerable populations. Thus, in 2014, through a Bloomberg Philanthropies grant, the City began to develop a new way to evaluate the efficacy of its policies through what would ultimately be called "The Wellbeing Index." Envisioned to track and measure social, economic, and environmental indicators that contribute to individual happiness and sense of community belonging, the Wellbeing Index provided a view into the lives of Santa Monicans, and quickly became a lens through which Planners and government officials could understand "How people are doing" in Santa Monica. Informed by data as much as by personal perceptions, the Wellbeing Index soon began to play a larger role in public policy making, leading to the creation of the Pico Wellbeing Project (PWP) - a multidisciplinary neighborhood planning initiative that was launched in 2018 to address issues of gentrification and displacement in one of the City's most ethnically diverse and low income neighborhoods.

Starting with a small corps of urban planners, analysts and human services administrators, the project team evolved to integrate a wide range of participants from many disciplines, including student interns like Akshay Agrawal, who brought a unique suite of skills to challenge the mindset of the larger group and to advance the project's objectives to "do different" than government had done in the past. Leveraging Akshay's past experience in design, program development and user interface, the PWP team tasked him to consider new approaches to community engagement - both in

messaging and in practice - to help break down long-standing communication barriers and impediments to civic participation. Armed with only the criteria to "Keep It Simple, Stupid" (KISS), Akshay was deployed to develop a communications protocol to help the Pico community tell their story, and to empower them to co-create solutions with the City to tackle their neighborhood's most pressing issues. This real-life exercise challenged Akshay's academic intelligence, and tested the fanciful concepts he initially developed against the realities of working in a working-class bi-lingual environment in which the community's urgency to put food on the table and provide quality education for their children far exceeded their desire for glossy materials from City Hall. Through hard work and with the collaboration of the PWP team, Akshay help produce carefully edited materials and exercises that engaged the community in a meaningful way, and which yielded volumes of data for the team's planners to absorb and reprise into actionable outcomes for future implementation. While Akshay has left the program, the foundation that he helped create continues to support the PWP team and the community at large.

Social impact is at the center of the Wellbeing Index, and is a root cause for the creation of the Planning discipline. Borne from these humble beginnings, it is imperative that we continue to employ message-makers and visual communicators to reach our target audiences, to overcome barriers of language and economics to level the playing field for everyone in our communities. Design-minded individuals like Akshay are instrumental to this cause to "do different" than what has been done in the past, and to invite participation from all corners of society so that government is truly ecumenical, inclusive and equitable. Going forward, the PWP will continue to foster the type of positive cross-pollination that occurred during Akshay's residency with us, and to nurture the creative spirit that he imbued to all members of our team.



**Peter James**  
Principal Planner,  
Planning and Community Development, City of Santa Monica

*Top: Peter James at the Pico Improvement Organization Public Meeting, June 6, Virginia Avenue Park*



# OFFICE OF CIVIC WELLBEING

## The office with a 'Do-Different' Mandate'

The Office of Civic Wellbeing was established in 2017 under the City of Santa Monica City Manager's Office, with a mandate to "Do Different" to help elevate the Wellbeing of residents who live, play and work in Santa Monica.

The office was given a "Do Different" directive from City Council early on. Since then the Office has continuously striven to uphold that - through their unique initiatives, programming and conscious efforts to bring on unorthodox talent into their tea; including accepting a Design Fellow to their team.

The office is a result oriented and consensus driven community participation advocate and conceptualizes and runs unique initiatives to solve for the concerns surfaced through the Wellbeing Index.

**The Wellbeing Index** is the fundamental and founding work-product of the office and serves as a guide and driving factor for the office in everything they do.

*Right: Santa Monica City hall from Ken Genser square, named after the famous City Mayor Ken Genser who died in Office.*





# THE WELLBEING INDEX

## The Office's Crown Jewel

The Wellbeing Index was a pioneering effort to understand the residents who live, play or work in Santa Monica beyond just GDP, income and numbers.

The aims of the project are multi-fold

- Develop a set of wellbeing indicators
- Use an expert panel and community end-user process to review dimensions
- Develop a data analytic framework for use and translation of wellbeing information
- Work with City government and non-government staff to interpret wellbeing information
- Share findings with other cities via Bloomberg Philanthropies partnership

The Wellbeing Index surfaced interesting trends and anomalies which helped the Office zero-in on Pico as a focus area for the next 2 years and resulted in the creation of the **Pico Wellbeing Project**

The Pico Wellbeing Project is really the product of the analysis, understanding and assimilation of data from the Wellbeing Index.

### CONCEPTUALIZATION PARTNERS FOR THE WELLBEING INDEX



Photo by Matthew LeJune on Unsplash





## THE SANTA MONICA OFFICE OF CIVIC WELLBEING | THE WELLBEING INDEX

### Index Development Framework Overview



\*denotes measures likely to reflect subjective (survey) or social data

[smgov.net/wellbeing](http://smgov.net/wellbeing)

## The Index at a Glance

The Index is broken up into 5 key dimensions. Each group has its sub-dimensions and each sub-dimensions has various measures and metrics which are pulled from a variety of sources.

Source: RAND Wellbeing Index v2.0 Summary Briefing Deck





Wellbeing Index 2.0 findings presented by RAND contained Trends, Insights and anomalies which influenced the selection of Pico as the focus area.



# WHY PICO?

## Pico Strengths



Work long hours less often



Visit other neighborhoods more



Highest adult use of lifelong learning



Highest use of Expo line, bike and walking for Daily commute



33% volunteer at least once a month

## Pico Challenges



Lowest rates of healthy eating



Lowest rates of physical activity



Highest concern over rent and dissatisfaction with housing



Highest rate of economic worry



Lowest youth literacy



Lowest trust in neighbors and lowest sense of belonging





ACT TWO

# PICO WELLBEING PROJECT

Planning, Project launch, Public workshop,  
Event analysis.

*Left: Participants during the Pico Wellbeing Project Launch and Public Workshop event. June 30th 2018, Virginia Avenue park*





# MEET THE TEAM

Left to Right: Peter James (Principal Planner), Cecilia Tovar (Head Librarian), Jing Yeo (Planning Manager), Akshay Agrawal (Me), Cary Fukui (Associate Planner), Lisa Parson (Project Manager), Michael Laper (Admin Intern), Carla Fantozzi (Principal Community Services Program Supervisor), Amy Miller (Associate Planner), Julie Rusk (Chief of Civic Wellbeing)



# UNPRECEDENTED COLLABORATION

The Pico Wellbeing Project marked the beginning of an unprecedented collaboration within Santa Monica City Hall.

While the Project team was primarily comprised of the Office of Civic Wellbeing and the Planning and Community Development Office, the project would require the support and collaboration of more than a dozen other offices within City Hall.

Additionally the project would require an enormous amount of support, consensus and collaboration from the various Community-led organizations outside City Hall

I am extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to have worked directly with these great people over the course of the summer to contribute my bit to the Wellbeing of Pico residents.

## CITY MANAGERS OFFICE

**Rick Cole**  
City Manager

**Katie Lichtig**  
Assistant City Manager

**Anuj Gupta**  
Deputy City Manager

## OFFICE OF CIVIC WELLBEING

**Julie Rusk**  
Chief of Civic Wellbeing

**Lisa Parson**  
Project Manager

**Naomi Urabe**  
Admin Staff Assistant

**Catalina Langen**  
Community Engagement Coordinator

**Becky Edwards**  
Consultant

**Michael Loper**  
Administrative Intern

## PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Jing Yeo**  
Planning Manager

**Peter James**  
Principal Planner

**Amy Miller**  
Associate Planner

**Cary Fukui**  
Associate Planner

## SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Ana Jara**  
Youth and Family Services  
Support Coordinator

## COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

**Carla Fantozzi**  
Principal Community Services  
Program Supervisor

## SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Cecilia Tovar**  
Principal Librarian

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

**Pico Improvement Organization (PIO)**

**Pico Neighborhood Association (PNA)**

**Virginia Avenue Park Advisory Board (VAPAB)**

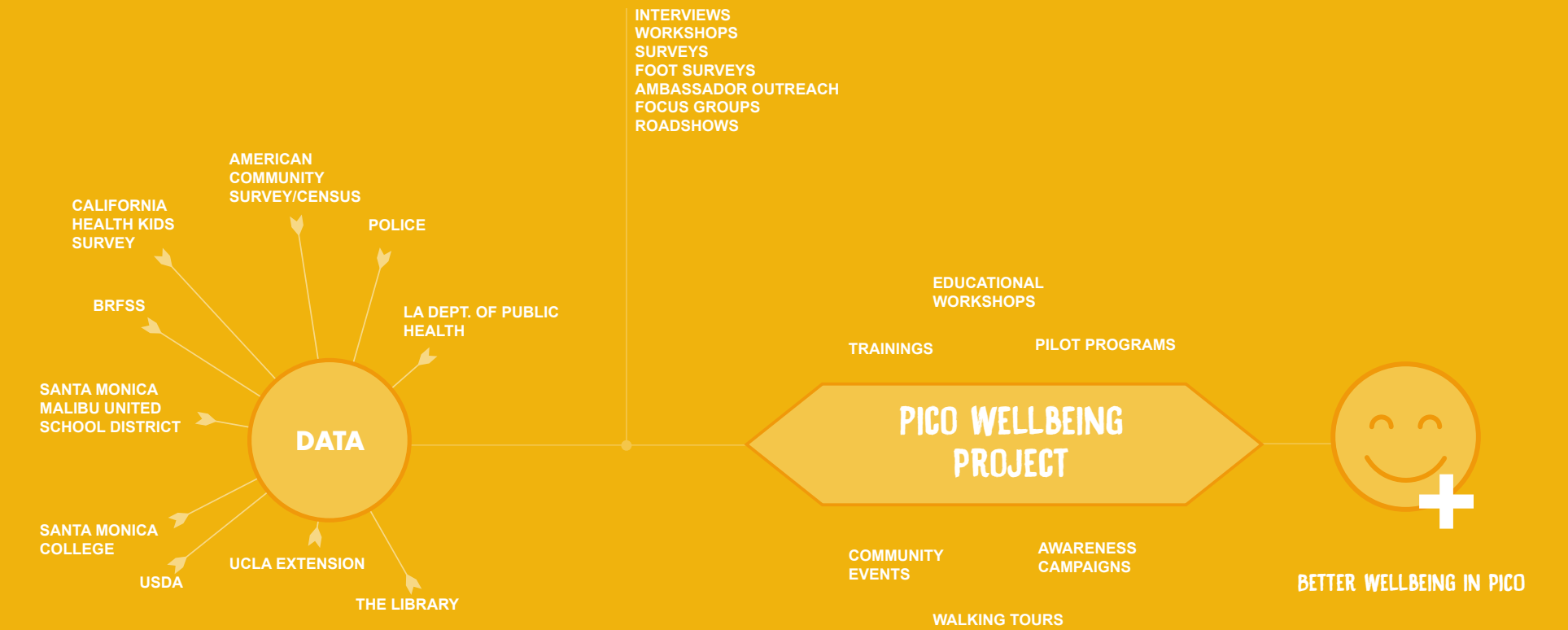
**Parent Connection Group (PCG)**

**Familias Latinas Unidas (FLU)**





# PROJECT SNAPSHOT





# MY ROLE

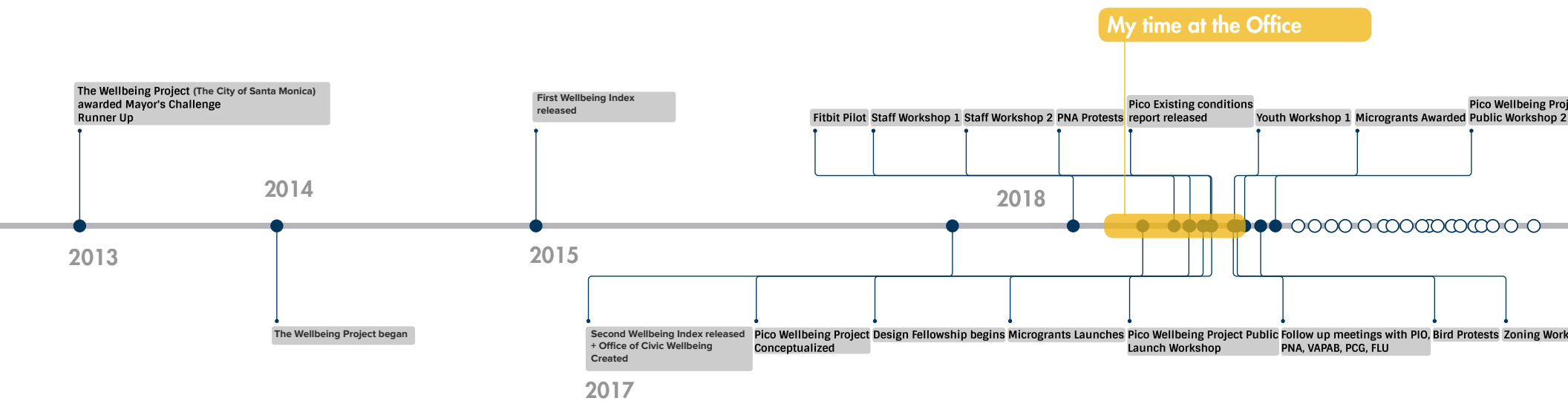
Feels good to be part of something big

While the Wellbeing Project won the award in 2013 and the office was created in 2017 the Pico Wellbeing Project kicked off only in 2018.

It was preceeded by other groundbreaking initiatives and the release of two Wellbeing Indexes and Findings publications. I joined the office from May to August for a project that is scheduled for at least 18 months.

I am privileged to have been part of the initial stages of the Pico Wellbeing Project and am satisfied and proud of my contributions to the project in its initial and formative stage.

I am equally excited about its future potential and path.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## PUBLIC COMMUNITY MEETINGS

I was thrown into the deep end of the project when I was invited to attend the 5 key community group public meetings:

Parent Connection Group (PCG), Pico Neighbourhood Association (PNA), Familias Latinas Unidas (FLU), Virginia Avenue Park Advisory Board (VAPAB) and the Pico Improvement Organization (PIO)

These community organizations hold cultural and historical importance and are hubs for different groups of people to converge.

It was heartwarming to see citizens and residents voice their unfiltered, uncensored opinion to the team and how they hoped that this project would be different from the other city projects in terms of speed, inclusion, scope, deliverables, expectations and transparency

Someone could be from the Communications Department but should be ready to hear about the new Rent Control law and how its unfair of the city to implement that and be expected to give an educated response to the grievance.

When people see a City Employee, they see them as representatives of all aspects of the city.

*Right: Ola, a member of the Parent Connection Group voices her concerns regarding the Pico Wellbeing Project*







**Parent Connection Group (PCG)**  
A parent-based community group focused on programming around children. The group works tirelessly to bring different cultures to the forefront.



**Pico Improvement Organization (PIO)**  
A business-district association comprised of all business owners along Pico Boulevard with an aim to improve economic and business conditions. Their projects involve facade improvements, street revamps, business-legislation advocacy, among others.



**Pico Neighborhood Association (PNA)**  
The organization is comprised of representatives from the Pico neighborhood area. PNA believes zoning is a solution to the issues surfaced in the Wellbeing Index.



**Virginia Avenue Park Advisory Board (VAPAB)**  
VAPAB is an independent advisory body to the Parks and Recreation Commission and is concerned with programming, community development and advancement of the Virginia Avenue Park - a central cultural hub in the Pico Neighborhood.



# THE PUBLIC LAUNCH EVENT

June 30th, 2018, Virginia Avenue Park

The culmination of all the research, planning and brainstorming was the big launch event on June 30th. The event was the result of thousands of human-hours of planning.

The event was designed to cater to all ages, ethnicities, origins, political affiliations and even dietary and food packaging preferences.

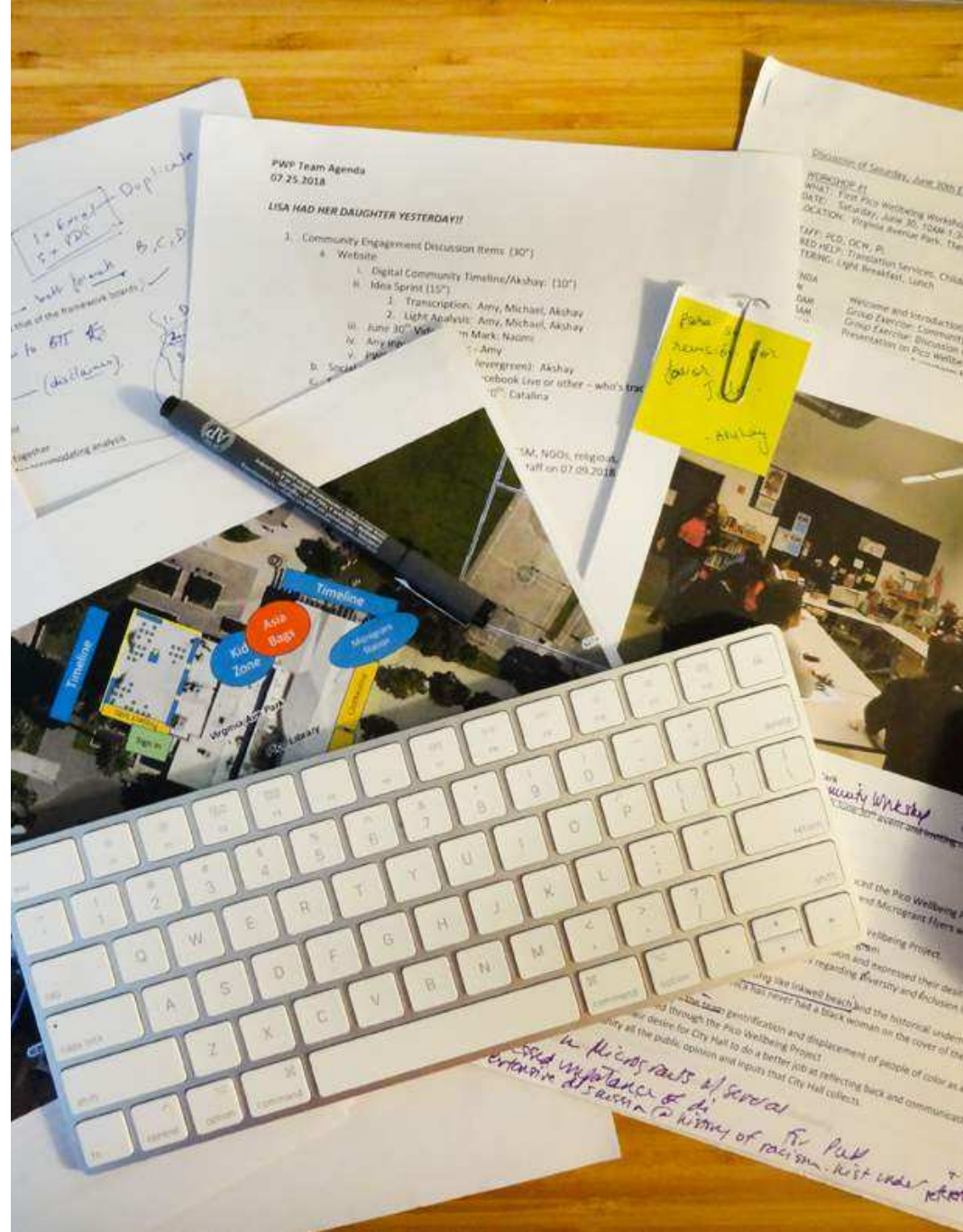
The event was to communicate that the Pico Wellbeing Project was kicking off. The goal was to solicit the participants' opinions, reactions and most importantly, aspirations and ideas for the Pico Neighborhood area.

One of the most important aspects of the event was to show the participants the unique nature of the project and the innovative approach to the challenges that Pico faces.

We needed to cater to all residents, political representatives and City Hall staff at the same time. We wanted to ensure equal value and engagement for everyone.

Another consideration which we had to account for was childcare and children's activities.

By the end we had conceptualized and planned an event which catered to all possible audiences likely to attend, had 'human-factored' all activities, created opportunities for fully-engaged participants as well as fringe participants, had pre-empted any child-care problems and created a comfortable, safe and open forum for the City to have a two-way discussion with citizens about the changes that are to come and to hear what changes the people would like to see.





# LANGUAGE EQUITY AND JUSTICE

## A positive and unusual yet intentional consideration that should be more universal

The ethnic composition of the Pico neighborhood posed a unique challenge for us; What language should the entire event be in? English or Spanish? The correct answer was both.

Although it was an unexpected and unbudgeted high-expenditure addition to the event, the decision to have the event live-translated between both languages was a testament to our commitment to Diversity & Inclusion.

The presentation and workshop scripts were equal parts Spanish and English and established that we did not consider English to be the 'Primary language'. We considered both languages to be equal.

The emphasis on language justice and equity was incorporated into the event very early on - right from when we started planning the event and I was making the marketing and communication material.

Everything was either made twice - once in English and Spanish - or had to have in-line translation. There were extensive discussions about the order of languages, the equality in visual weight of the information because the Spanish version might run longer, or how one language can't be lighter/darker than the other.

" I remember 11 of us discussing how to differentiate one language from the other while clearly communicating that there are two languages on the poster, for a good 30 minutes - that's 5 human hours! But soon I realized that to me, putting English first seemed natural, but wasn't the best idea. Language justice and diversity & inclusion are things we don't think organically but they're very important to someone out there and it's our job to think about that person. "

- Akshay

*Right, clockwise from top left: An AntenaLA translator live translates the English presentation to Spanish and vice versa as needed. An event attendee using the translation headset. Attendees receiving a translation headset.*





## PICO WELLBEING PROJECT

**REFLECT. CONNECT. ACT!**


**PENSAR. CONECTAR. ¡ACTUAR!**

Please join your friends, neighbors and local businesses in launching the Pico Wellbeing Project, a new approach to improving community wellbeing through action. Find out about the unique strategy and help identify your neighborhoods' most pressing issues.

- Share your experiences living/working in Pico
- Learn about the City's commitment to supporting your quality of life
- Help brainstorm solutions that are long-lasting, real and designed by you!

*Únase a sus amigos, vecinos y empresas locales en el lanzamiento del Proyecto Pico Wellbeing, un nuevo enfoque para mejorar el bienestar de la comunidad a través de la acción de los residentes. Aprenda sobre esta estrategia y ayúdenos identificar los problemas más urgentes del vecindario.*

- Comparta su experiencia viviendo / trabajando en Pico
- Aprenda sobre el compromiso de la ciudad para apoyar su calidad de vida
- ¡Ayude a generar soluciones que sean duraderas, reales y diseñadas para usted!

 Free childcare. Event in English & Spanish / Guardería gratis. Evento en Inglés y Español

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS/  
ADAPTACIONES CON LA DISCAPACIDAD**  
(310) 458-8341

**TRANSPORTATION/  
TRANSPORTE**  
Bike, Walk, Carpool, Take the bus!  
Vaya en bicicleta, a pie, carpool o autobús

**bigbluebus**  
41 16 7 R7



**VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK,  
(2200 VIRGINIA AVENUE)  
THELMA TERRY ROOM &  
THE ANNEX**

**PICO** is unique and so are its residents. This project needs your input and participation to preserve and empower your neighborhood.

*El barrio de Pico es único y también lo son sus residentes. Este proyecto necesita su aporte y participación para preservar y empoderar al vecindario.*

**RSVP!**  
**PICOWELLBEING.SMGOV.NET**



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**TRANSPORTE**  
Bike, Walk, Carpool, Take the bus!

**Free childcare.**  
Event in English & Spanish



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**ADAPTACIONES CON LA DISCAPACIDAD**  
(310) 458-8341

**TRANSPORTE**  
Vaya en bicicleta, a pie, carpool o autobús

**Guardería gratis.**  
Evento en Inglés y Español

**Pico Wellbeing Workshop Follow-Up Survey**

We appreciate your feedback regarding our June 30, 2018 workshop.

How well do you understand the Pico Wellbeing Project after attending the workshop?

1 2 3 4 5  
Not Well ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very Well

Please explain your response.

Your answer

How likely are you to participate in future Pico Wellbeing Project community events?

1 2 3 4 5  
Not Likely ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very Likely

What topics from the workshop are you most interested in going forward?

☐ Community (Community Groups, Local Culture, Homelessness, Decision Making, Crime)

**Encuesta del taller de Bienestar de Pico**

Apreciamos sus comentarios sobre nuestro taller del 30 de junio de 2018.

Después de asistir al taller, ¿qué tan bien entiende Ud. el Proyecto de Bienestar de Pico?

1 2 3 4 5  
No bien ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Muy bien

Explique su respuesta aquí:

Your answer

¿Qué tan dispuesto está Ud. para participar en eventos comunitarios del Proyecto de Bienestar de Pico en el futuro?

1 2 3 4 5  
No probable ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Muy probable

¿Cuáles temas del taller le interesa en el futuro?

☐ La Comunidad (grupos comunitarios, cultura local, la falta de vivienda, la toma de decisiones, el crimen)

Top: An in-line translated flier. Right Top: One poster for each of the two languages. Right Bottom: Even the follow up survey was created in both languages.



# THE COMMUNITY TIMELINE

## Straddling sensitive topics

Pico has been the location of many positive and negative events in history. One of the many goals of the Pico Wellbeing Project and the launch event was to not brush that past under the rug. The goal was to acknowledge the past and the cultural history of Pico and keep that in mind when designing for the neighborhood.

At the same time, we wanted to capture the people's aspirations and dreams for Pico's Future.

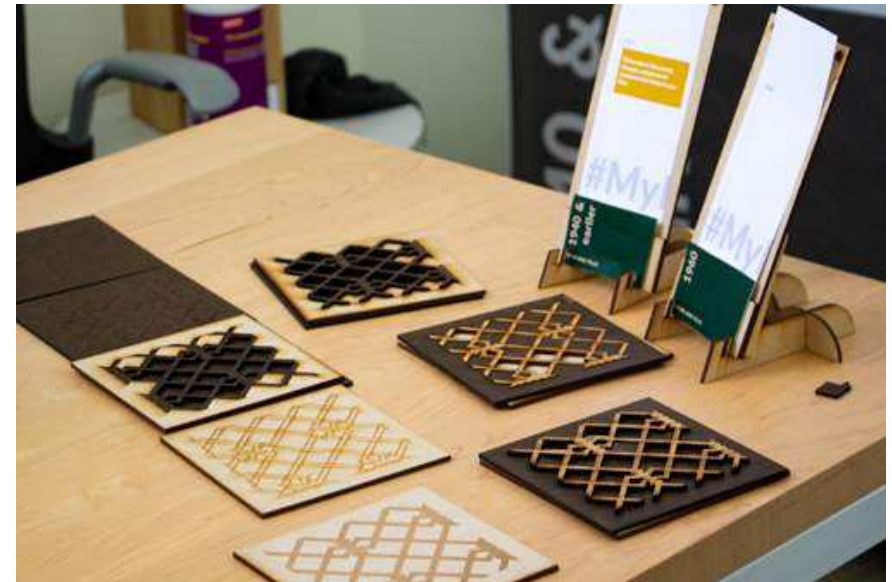
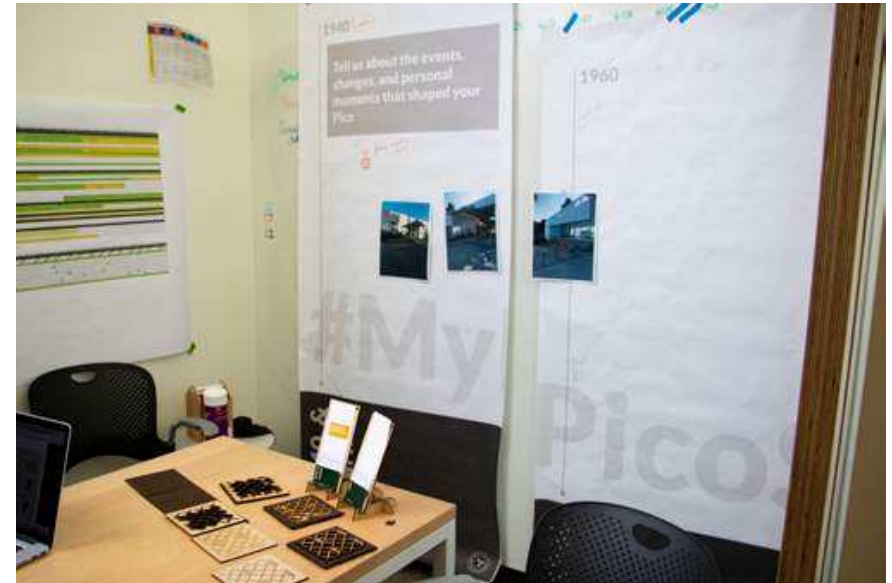
A timeline was the natural winner.

I mocked up some aesthetic, conceptual and framework concepts taking into account the sensitive nature of the subject, social media share-ability, preservation beyond event, exhibit-ability, re-usability and specific language.

However during one of the event-site visits, we came across some graffiti boards at the Teen support center and they were the inevitable choice for the Community Timeline; The boards and graffiti had been created by Pico residents, as a representation of the culture and past of Pico.

The community timeline was an hour long activity facilitated by the Mayor and we were heart-warmed by the participants enthusiasm, honesty and sense of ownership of Pico. We were happy with the results!

*Right: Some initial concepts for the content, build and flow of the Community Timeline*





Admitted as  
Compassion Games  
More

annex in Pico  
Compassion Games  
More diversidad en los  
que son que todos

Free program  
Compassion Games  
SDG - climate  
+ green  
+ green

Causes people  
Building Bridges  
Compassion Games  
Compassion Games.org

2020  
Doctors/teachers show how  
of edible landscapes & used for  
mobile app that people can co  
to exercise/walk together  
like Smiles.com  
Adult education modeled after  
San Diego adult school  
which has hundreds of programs  
Education opportunities that  
allow children & adults  
to THRIVE in tangible  
ways.  
#SDG is  
a SM 'hotline' for people in need  
to call & get connected to resources  
site: https://smiles.com only  
2020: Access to food, food security, equity, and  
education is a challenge for all  
and we need to work together to  
solve it. Let's start with the basics  
and build from there. Let's start  
with the basics and build from there.  
Make Santa Monica Boulevard  
a green corridor with trees &  
gardens & walking.

San Diego and  
which has health  
Education opportunities that  
allow children & adults  
to THRIVE in tangible  
ways.

connect  
More social enterprise  
opportunities for  
low income / minority  
But in San Diego  
businesses...

Plastic Ban implemented.  
More awareness of how consumption  
environmental & social injustice  
Causes people to immigrate to this co

Strong Black + Latino communities



Clockwise from Top Left: Participants put up the same comment in multiple places to express the importance of some issues to them. Top Right: Some comments on the Timeline. Bottom: The entire Community Timeline after the activity ended.



## Creating a collaborative ideation framework for a crowd

We acknowledged and understood the power of the user interviews and user interactions to gain humane insights to solve these challenges but was also aware of the challenge involved in matching the scale of these user interviews to the previous data collection effort.

We had to ensure that the participants felt like they had a good grasp on the subject matter and that they could feel comfortable voicing their unfiltered opinions with complete strangers.

## OPORTUNIDAD ECONÓMICA / ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

**Ingresos, asequibilidad, seguridad financiera, negocios, empleos, oportunidades de crecimiento**  
Income, affordability, financial security, businesses, jobs, growth opportunities

[illegible]





The Mayor of Santa Monica, Ted Winterer, facilitating and leading the discussion after the shared activity of creating the Community Timeline. Notice the translation headset he's wearing?





Jing (City Planning) fields comments from attendees about the ideas put up on the idea boards during the launch event. The newly appointed Police Chief looks on.





# ANALYZING THE INPUTS

Left: One of the 5 IdeaSprint boards from the community launch event. We did a total of 3 events where this activity was used.



# INPUT ANALYSIS

Finding trends, insights and anomalies

I had initially thought that the handwriting legibility would be the hardest part of the input analysis but I was proven wrong.

The task of analyzing the community inputs, comments, ideas and obstacles was delegated to a group of three, including myself.

Very soon, differences in mental models, perceptions, expectations and interpretations surfaced and we realized that we will have to take a more scientific and design thinking approach to everything.

My time with the office had ended before we could complete the analysis - I am very curious to see the end-result of the analysis and am excited for it.

Working on this analysis taught me a great deal about categorization, abstraction, interpretation, homogeneous versus heterogeneous labeling and most importantly the significance of the singular ideas versus the power of quantity of similar ideas.

1,400

Post-its

6

Dimensions

180,000

sq. inch of paper

300

Voting dots

36

Sub-dimensions

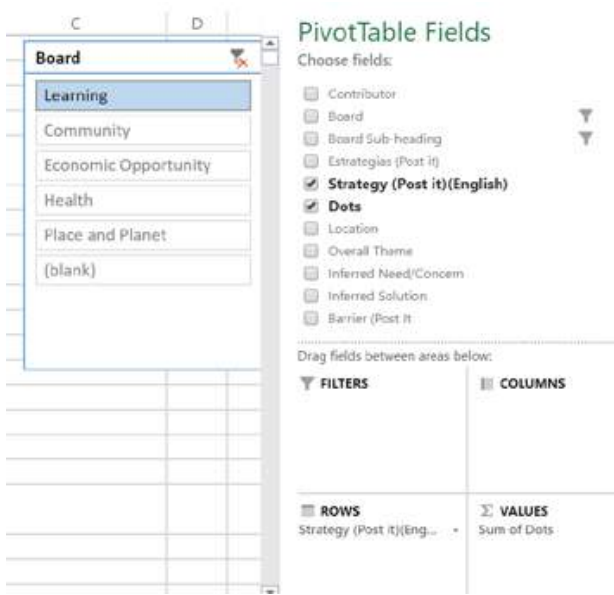
3

Events

3

Audience-groups

Location	Total Pieces of Inputs	Audience	Sum of Total Inputs	Topic	Sum of Total Inputs
Biking & Walking	64	Youth	47	Community Character	311
Transit	34	Businesses	36	Economic Consideration	174
Lighting	15	People of Color	33	Literacy	161
Community Gardens	15	Parents	32	Mobility	143
Side/Crosswalk/Street	14	Homeless	25	Housing	126
houses	12	Children	22	Health	125
Rideshare/E-scooters	12	Landlords	18	Public Space	96
Parking	12	Adults	17	Governance	81
Streets	12	Community Groups	14	Environment and Planet	70
Speeding	10	Neighbors	13	?	53
Jobs	10	Disabled/Elderly	6	Crime	31
Crosswalk	8	Tenants	5	Grand Total	1371
Sidewalk	7	Grand Total	268		
Incubation/Business Support	5				
Food	3				
Block Party		Location	Sum of Total Inputs		
Fairs		(blank)	1195		
Financial incentive		Library	47		
Grand Total	238	VAP	46		
		Santa Monica College	45		
		Pico Blvd	27		
		Samohi	4		
		Ishihara	3		
		City Yards	2		
		Gandara Park	2		
		Grand Total	1371		





## MY TIME IN NUMBERS

**14**

Weeks

**98**

days

**320**

gigabytes of work

**620**

working hours

**104**

coffees

**1998**

files

**980,000**

walking steps

**784**

floors climbed

**25**

collaborators





# THIS ALSO HAPPENED

*Left: One of the two protests I witnessed during my time at City Hall.*





Top: Residents protest the border family incarceration to get Santa Monica City to intervene.



This picture was clicked by Rick Cole from atop City Hall. I asked him, "How does such a display of public opinion change public policy?" Rick indicated that the committee's decision would be final and the people have a right to voice their opinion. A week later, Bird was given a license despite being the one of the least favored operators according to the Shared Mobility Committee.

Electric scooter companies Bird and Lime outside City Hall protesting their disqualification to operate in Santa Monica in favor of Lyft and other operators.





## ACT FOUR

# EXTRAS

### Other things I did during my time

A sizable portion of my responsibilities were to handle the office's visual communication needs for the Microgrants Program and the Pico Wellbeing Project. I had to match the style of the previous designer, contextualize it, update it and modernize it.



**TRANSPORTATION**  
Bike, Walk, Carpool





## The Microgrants Launch Web page

The office was also concurrently working on a Microgrants program that awarded \$500 to compelling, enticing and qualified ideas from Santa Monica residents.

This webpage replaced the previous page which was just an email sign up form.

We had to account for web-accessibility standards, legibility, legacy devices (there were quite a few in our demographic) among other things.

The page was designed in house by myself and then handed-off to a development firm. The page underwent some aesthetic dilution during development.

The page was later updated with the details of the eight Microgrant winners!





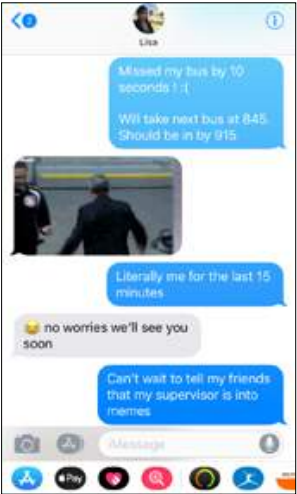
*"Who labeled the Label Maker with a Label labelled 'Label Maker'? Where is Akshay?"*

# OUTTAKES

Behind the Scenes and the lighter moments



DISCLAIMER: The Artifacts happened, the quotations may or may not have happened.



Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, "Do you even lift Akshay?" my supervisor!



\*Puts googly eyes on the pen stand\*  
"Guys, meet Monica"  
Everyone: "You're fired."



The City Manager's Office Interns after the biweekly CMO Lunch meeting.



City Hall interns after the farewell lunch at the Santa Monica Institute.





UNTIL NEXT TIME



# CREDITS



In January 2017, the Office of Civic Wellbeing was created by the City Manager to refine the measurement of community wellbeing, cultivate partnerships and action within our community, create models of civic engagement, share tools and become part of the growing network of local government innovators across the country and the world.

[www.smgov.net](http://www.smgov.net)  
[www.wellbeing.smgov.net](http://www.wellbeing.smgov.net)

## CITY MANAGERS OFFICE

**Rick Cole**  
City Manager

**Katie Lichtig**  
Assistant City Manager

**Anuj Gupta**  
Deputy City Manager

## OFFICE OF CIVIC WELLBEING

**Julie Rusk**  
Chief of Civic Wellbeing

**Lisa Parson**  
Project Manager

**Naomi Urabe**  
Admin Staff Assistant

**Becky Edwards**  
Consultant

**Catalina Langen**  
Community Engagement Coordinator

**Michael Loper**  
Administrative Intern

## PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Jing Yeo**  
Planning Manager

**Peter James**  
Principal Planner

**Amy Miller**  
Associate Planner

**Cary Fukui**  
Associate Planner

## SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Ana Jara**  
Youth and Family Services Support Coordinator

## SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Cecilia Tovar**  
Principal Librarian

## COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

**Carla Fantozzi**  
Principal Community Services Program Supervisor

Creation of The Wellbeing Index was made possible with Grant funding from



Designmatters enables undergraduate students to master a toolkit of design skills and strategies to navigate the complex dynamics of working with communities and designing for social impact.

The Designmatters Fellowship Program embeds top ArtCenter students in host organizations for one full 14-week academic term to work on high-level projects and explore the mission, model and meaning of the host organization's work.

[www.designmattersatartcenter.org](http://www.designmattersatartcenter.org)  
[www.artcenter.edu/interaction](http://www.artcenter.edu/interaction)

## DESIGNMATTERS

**Jennifer May**  
Executive Director

**Garet Scullin**  
Senior Coordinator

**Susannah Ramshaw**  
Associate Director

## INTERACTION DESIGN

**Maggie Hendrie**  
Department Chair

**Danielle Ferrer**  
Dept. Coordinator

## Mollie Ruskin



Mollie served as a mentor to me during my time at City Hall and helped me navigate the complexities of the unique work environment, advocating for the user and for the role and capabilities of a designer.

Mollie Ruskin is an independent designer with roots in activism and social justice movements. She is a designer of many stripes—her design work ranges from deep qualitative user research to creative direction and visual design to UX, product and service design.

In 2017, Mollie led an effort to map the human and technological systems involved in Congressional constituent correspondence for the Open Gov Foundation. She works with organizations such as Color of Change, Democracy Works and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

A founding member of the United States Digital Service in the Obama White House, Mollie has a rich background in civic tech and design, with the aim of improving government's ability to deliver human-centered services for the American people. She previously served as a Presidential Innovation Fellow at the Department of Veteran's Affairs. In these roles, she led a myriad human-centered design endeavors — including an effort to understand Veterans' experiences with the VA, an effort to redesign how low-income Americans apply and enroll in public assistance programs, and the development of a first-ever U.S. Web Design System.

Mollie serves on the board of the Alliance for Youth Action, a national network of organizations building political power of young people in the U.S and is a co-founder of Design Gigs for Good, a job board for designers looking to put their skills to work for world betterment.

<http://tu-design.org/>



*This book was designed by Akshay  
Agrawal using the fonts DK Black  
Bamboo, Proxima Nova and Futura*

*Photography by Akshay Agrawal*

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For more information, visit:  
[www.designmattersatartcenter.org](http://www.designmattersatartcenter.org)  
[www.thisisakshay.com](http://www.thisisakshay.com)