

Future City Lab: Design Your Own Gallery

Imagine that you are a local museum curator who has been asked to create a new exhibition about your community. This gallery should show some of the challenges your community faces while also highlighting the things that make your community special. The questions below are designed to help you identify those challenges and attributes in preparation for designing a gallery that could tell your community's story.

Part One: Identifying and Discussing Community Challenges

*Every community faces challenges, but not every community's challenges are the same. For this section, think carefully about five different themes: housing, the economy, the environment, transportation, and people in your neighborhood. What challenges does your community face? Each theme has a prompt with some follow-up questions; these are designed to get you thinking, and you don't have to answer all of them. Talk about your ideas in small groups. Choose **one** to highlight and put your responses on the provided handout. If you have more ideas, feel free to write on a separate sheet of paper.*

1.) Housing: Does your community have any challenges with housing?

- Can people in your community easily afford places to live?
- Are there lots of different types of housing that fit various lifestyles and budgets?
- Are neighborhoods that have more resources spread evenly throughout the fabric of your community?
- Are neighborhoods with fewer resources in the center or the outskirts of your community?

2.) Making a Living: Does your community have any economic challenges?

- Are there enough jobs for everyone at various skill and age levels?
- Can people make enough money to save for retirement?
- Do most people in your area only work for one industry?
- Can people afford everyday expenses like food, rent, and clothing?

3.) Living with Nature: Is your community in balance with the environment?

- Is your community affected by natural events like flooding or major storms? If so, is it taking any steps to protect itself?
- Are any industries in your area known to pollute the air or water?
- Are there enough places for people to play and enjoy the outdoors safely?

- Are there any important local species of plants or animals that are in decline, or that have already been driven from your area?

4.) Getting Around: Are there any problems getting people to where they want to go?

- Does your community make sure the elderly or people with disabilities can easily find transportation?
- Does car traffic create traffic jams at certain places and at certain times of the day?
- Is there public transit, and if so, is it effective and used widely? Does it connect important parts of the community?
- Are roads, rails, and other infrastructure in good shape and repair?

5.) Living Together: Do people in your community respect each other and share ideas?

- Is your community racially, economically, linguistically, or religiously diverse?
- Do people feel like politicians and other public servants are helping to improve the community?
- Is the community willing to try new approaches to solve problems?

Part Two: Identifying Community Attributes

*On the handout, list **five things that are special or unique about your community**. These should be positive things that make your community a good place to live. They can be a landmark, a community program, a local celebration, or a special type of food.*

Part Three: Proposing Solutions

*Once you've identified at least one challenge in each theme (housing, economy, environment, transportation, and people), brainstorm possible solutions for each on your own. **What steps could be taken to address them?** Who would need to pitch in to make these solutions happen? Write possible solutions below your challenges.*