

ULI SAN DIEGO TIJUANA

# SUSTAINABILITY & URBAN RESILIENCE FORUM

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



San Diego/  
Tijuana





# WHAT IS SURF?

SURF (Sustainability & Urban Resilience Forum) is a collaborative of designers, developers, planners, policy-makers, investors, and analysts unified through their passion for climate-positive design.

As the newest Local Product Council at ULI San Diego-Tijuana, SURF aims to share best practices and scalable solutions for reducing emissions and advancing climate change adaptation strategies. In doing so, SURF will help frame development as a catalyst for advancing the implementation of the climate mitigation and climate resilience in the San Diego-Tijuana region.

## **ANDREW SCHLESINGER**

SURF CO-CHAIR  
DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY,  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
EDGELAND

## **JULIA CHASE**

SURF CO-CHAIR  
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## JANUARY

### SURF “Board” Meeting

Our first SURF meetup of the new year was a chance to get to know the new members and discuss focus areas for programming in 2025. We dove into interest areas, emerging projects, and set SURF goals for the year.



## FEBRUARY

### Pacific Center Tour

SURF toured the Pacific Center, designed by Gensler and owned and managed by Sterling Bay. This tour showcased best practices in sustainable design which led to this project being featured in the ULI Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability’s Developers Guide to Embodied Carbon.

Innovations explored with the project’s Head of Construction included low-carbon concrete, mass timber, building electrification, recycled steel, and other innovations.



# MARCH

## SDGE Emergency Operations Center and Climate Resilience Hub

SDG&E hosted a tour of their Emergency Operations Center and Climate Resilience Hub. Guided by their emergency preparedness and climate resilience team, SURFers learned about the various technologies SDG&E deploys for wildfire preparedness and response, including drones, helicopters, goats, and an advanced camera network. Yes, including goats!



# APRIL

## WILLDAN - Building Decarbonization

WILLDAN presented to SURF on the California Energy Design Assistance Program (CEDA). CEDA helps design teams better understand their decarbonization options and which measures (mechanical, lighting, envelope, etc.) will provide the best return on investment.



# MAY

## Design, Build, and Insurance Updates After the Wildfires

This event was inspired by the publication of ULI Los Angeles [Project Recovery](#) that outlines strategies for rebuilding Los Angeles after the wildfires. [SURF](#) brought together leaders in design / build, insurance, and fire protection to share the latest updates in fire resilience for SoCal and San Diego. The panel discussed evolving changes in the insurance market, building wildfire resilient homes, cost effective resilient design features, and scalable solutions.





## AUGUST

### LEED V5: Updates You Need to Know for Project Success

A first of its kind event, hosted by USGBC-CA and San Diego Community Power, this event highlighted why project teams and organizations choose LEED v5, its value in meeting project goals, and how it enhances building performance and market competitiveness. The panel explored how LEED v5 pencils for projects in tight markets and creative strategies for applying LEED v5 to more projects.

## SEPTEMBER

### ULI SURF Happy Hour with Surfrider Foundation's Climate Action Team

ULI SURF hosted a happy hour with updates from SURF members on the [California-Nevada Technical Assistance Leadership Exchange](#), a partnership with the City of San Diego, ULI SURF members, and other technical experts to explore sustainable and resilient building materials for middle housing.

SURFer Zack Zeilman leads Surfrider Foundation's Climate Action Team and presented on the work Surfrider is leading around clean water, sea level rise, and shoreline resilience actions.





## OCTOBER

### Green Financing - How to Make Your Project Pencil (In Partnership with USD)

Paris Mo and Elizabeth Arsenault led the charge to create this event with the [USD MSRE Program](#). As our market continues to experience uncertainties and projects get put on hold, we heard from experts on CPACE and other green financing options that can help projects reduce their interest rates and save money.

## NOVEMBER

### Towards Zero Waste

SURFers toured the City of San Diego's Miramar Greenery and learned about the City's zero waste programs and organics recycling programs. The tour included visiting compost facilities, learning about compost based products, and exploring opportunities for collaboration with urban planning.





# DECEMBER

## **SURF RECAP AND WAVES ON THE HORIZON**

This event recaps 2025 SURF events and takes a look ahead to the next wave. SURF Co-Chair Julia Chase presented on the City of San Diego’s latest climate adaptation initiatives and how re-envisioning cities as carbon sinks can align mitigation, resilience and biodiversity goals.





# DIVE DEEPER

Interested in joining ULI SURF?  
Scan the QR code or visit the link below to submit  
your application today!



[sandiego-tijuana.uli.org/get-involved/u-s-product-councils/surf-product-council](https://sandiego-tijuana.uli.org/get-involved/u-s-product-councils/surf-product-council)