

Be a Part of Public Art

**Help shape a new public art project reflecting
the stories and character of Downtown Pittsburgh,
Hill District, Oakland, and Uptown!**



Pittsburgh Regional Transit University Line Public Art Project (Concept Phase)

Project Overview

The University Line is a joint project of the City and Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) to connect Downtown Pittsburgh, Uptown, and Oakland via a new bus rapid transit line. As part of the transit line construction, the City and PRT are working with Shiftworks, The Art Supply Co., and artist Marsha Rollinger to create meaningful, site-responsive artistic enhancements along the 7.1 mile corridor.

This project is part of the City's Percent for Art program and is supported by the American Recovery Plan Act, a federal initiative supporting local recovery and resilience in the wake of COVID-19. The City's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure is leading the infrastructure project in partnership with PRT.

The target installation date for the artwork is September 2026.

About the Artist



Marsha Rollinger is a visual artist who always knew she wanted to utilize her creative imagination and artistic talents as a life-long career. After graduating from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, she worked in art departments at various companies, and her artistic journey eventually resulted in Nintendo moving her to the Seattle area. While volunteering on an arts commission there, she realized that she could pursue a new creative passion—to become a public artist.

Marsha recently returned home to the Pittsburgh area and is excited to collaborate with other artists, organizations, and the community at large to create artwork that transforms ordinary spaces into extraordinary ones for all to enjoy.

Artist Statement

"As an artist, I relish opportunities to work in various media to transform spaces, places and things through art.

Placemaking is something I strive to include in my artwork, because it creates relevant connections with the community or site. I also like to incorporate interactivity, hidden messages, or other surprises to my work when possible.

I have many years of experience with various types of art projects, but I enjoy public art projects the most because they are accessible to all and evoke a sense of joy and pride in the communities we live in."

Artist Style & Previous Work

Marsha will bring her signature style—bold, vibrant, and layered with symbolism and hidden detail—to the University Line corridor. Her work will reflect the unique character of these neighborhoods and be informed by the voices of the people who live, work, and travel through them.

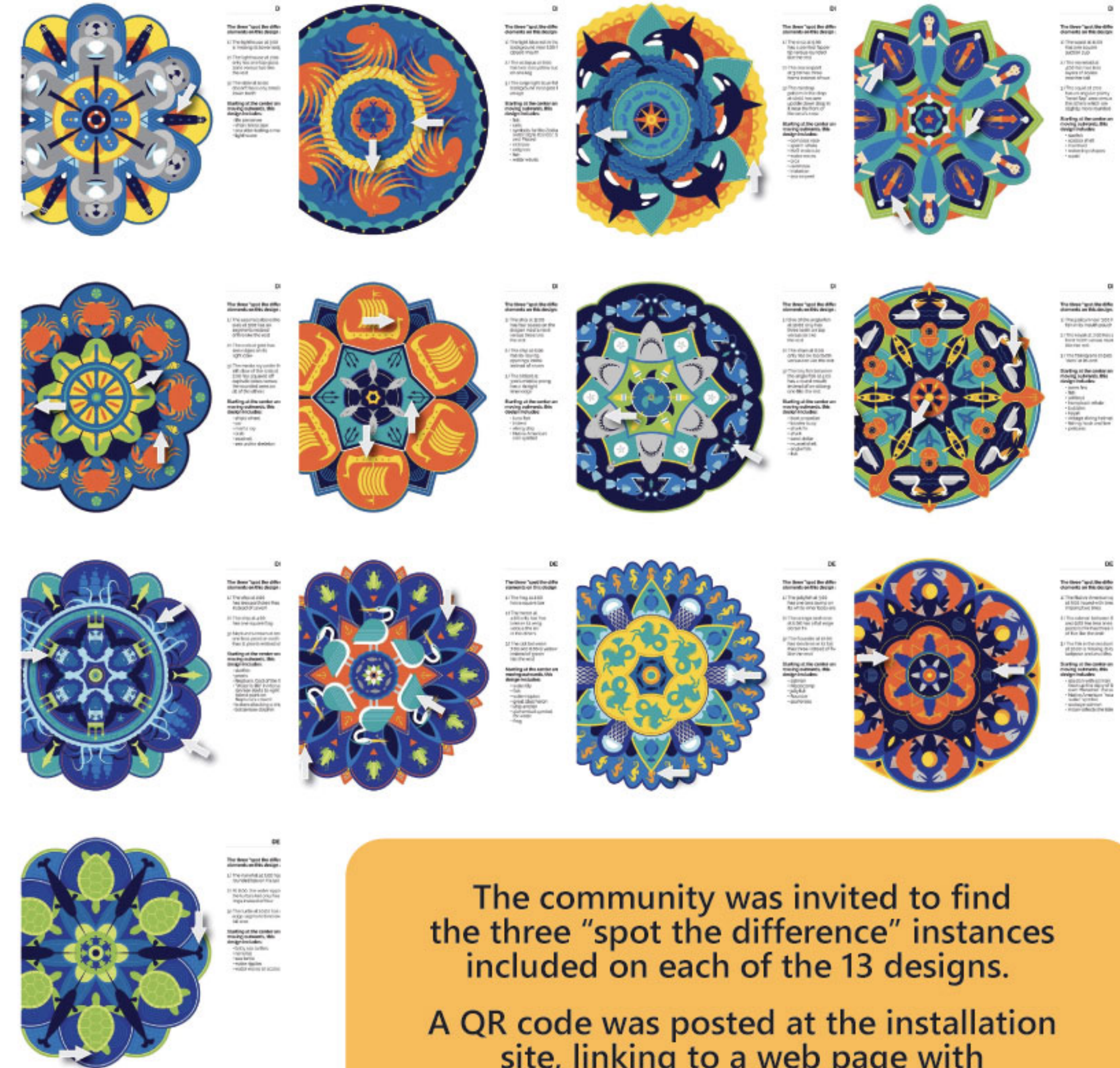


Above are some of Marsha's previous projects showing her style, storytelling, and interactivity. More in-depth info about each can be found on marsharollinger.com.

Previous Work Featuring a Series & Interactivity

Project: *Aquatic Kaleidoscopes*

These 13 unique designs feature repeating water-related symbols, objects, animals, and mythological creatures (printed on Dibond).

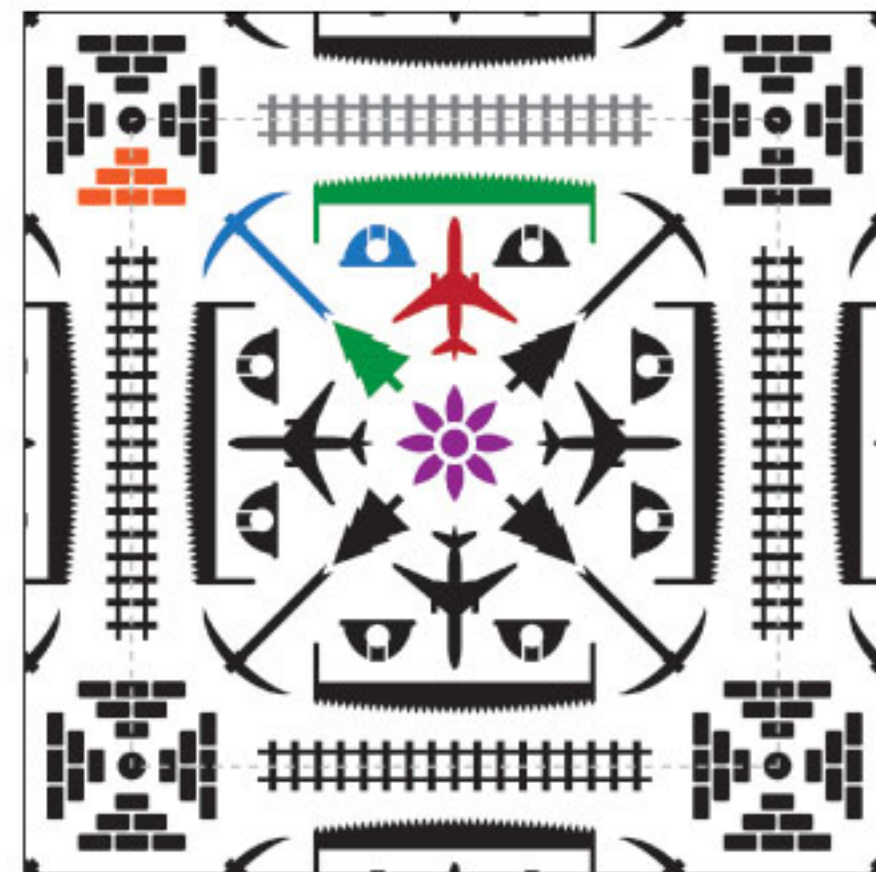
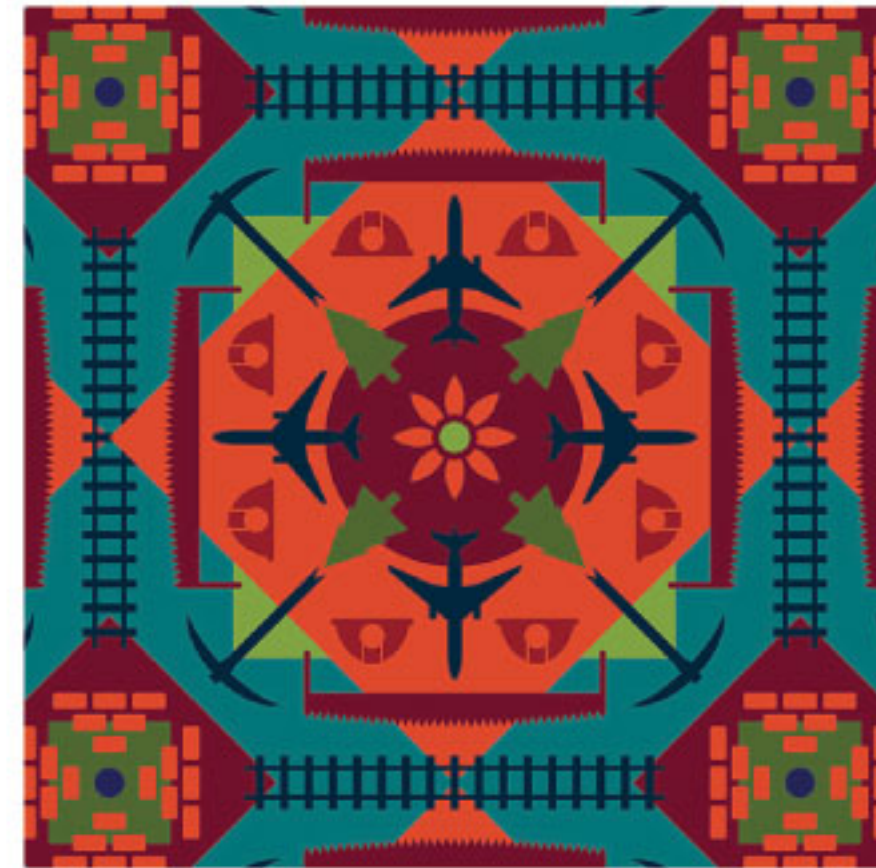


The community was invited to find the three "spot the difference" instances included on each of the 13 designs.

A QR code was posted at the installation site, linking to a web page with the online puzzle key (shown above)

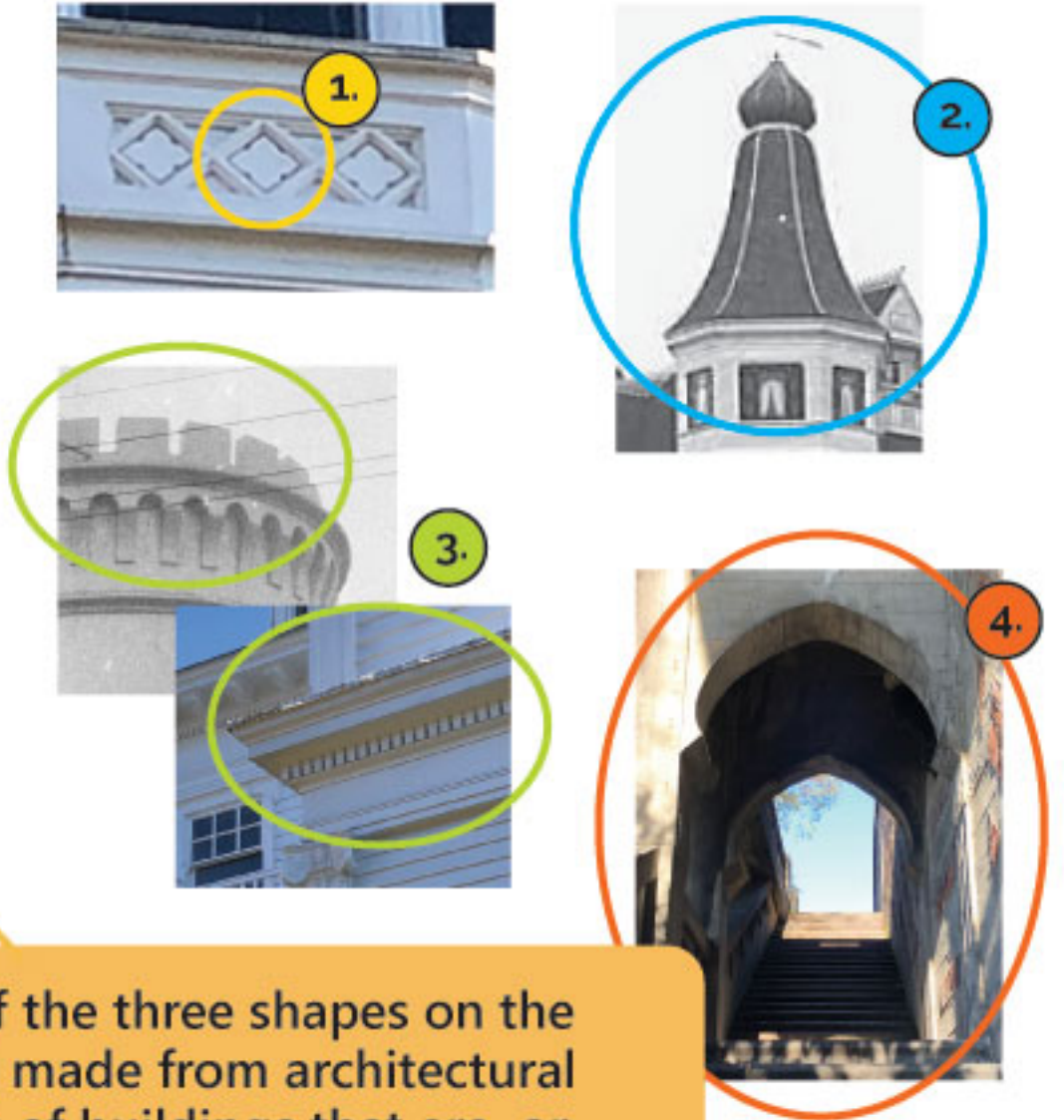
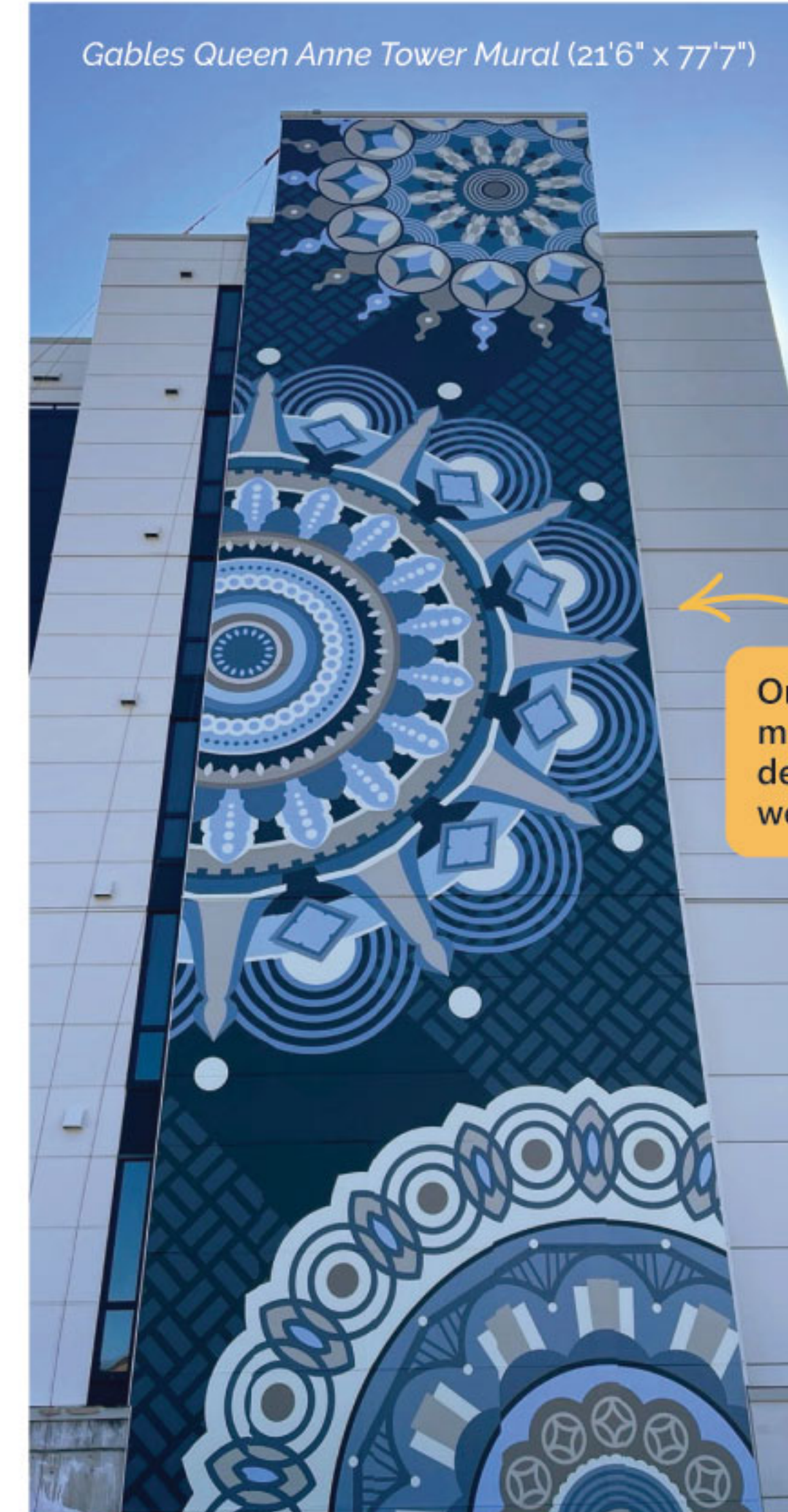
Previous Work With Community Specific Icons

Project: *Downtown Renton Gateway Sign*



All icons in the pattern represent industries that helped shape Renton, WA into the city it is today: Coal mining, logging, brick making, airplanes, flowers, and nurseries

Project: *Gables Queen Anne Tower Mural*



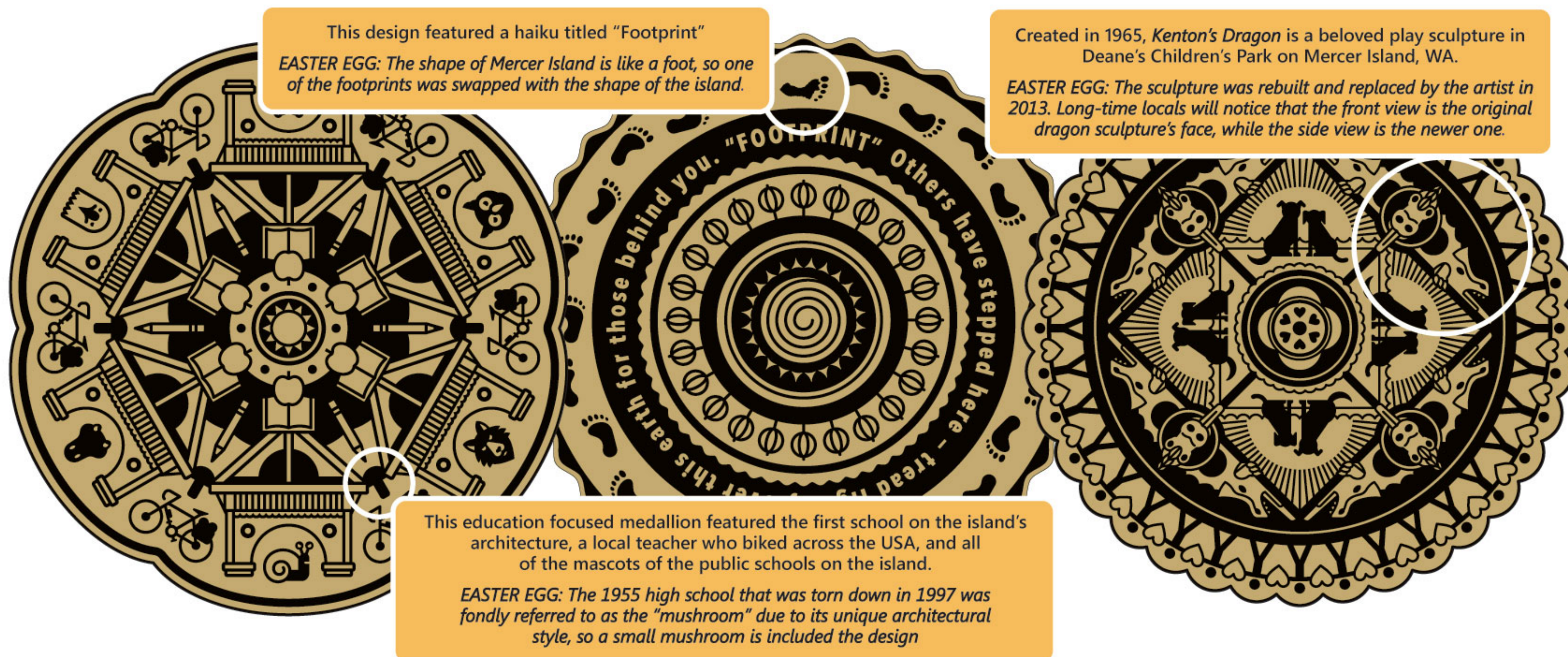
One of the three shapes on the mural, made from architectural details of buildings that are, or were, located in the neighborhood



Previous Work Featuring a Series With Community Specific Icons & Easter Eggs

Project: *Mercer Island Medallions*

This project is a series of 12 unique cast bronze paving inlays created with community input. A QR code will be posted at the installation site linking to a city webpage explaining what is included in each of the designs.



University Line Public Art Project Location: Route Map



The 7.1 mile University Line route runs through Downtown, Uptown, and Oakland. It has 24 bus stations, as shown above.

Project Background

Since being selected, artist Marsha Rollinger has been connecting with the Downtown Pittsburgh, Hill District, Oakland, and Uptown neighborhood organizations and individuals through virtual and in-person meetings.

The City of Pittsburgh has created an online project page with a survey for public input related to the project, and Marsha has designed cohesively branded flyers, business cards, social media images, a slideshow for the project webpage, and physical intake forms for in-person interviews to support the outreach effort and bring awareness to the project.



Project Outreach Materials

Flyers



Interior Bus Cards



Business Cards

City Project Page Slides



Community Input

Community input collected in person and through the online City project page survey had many similar comments and suggestions related to what types of artworks the public would like to see along the University Line route. The following words came up several times:

- Colorful
- Whimsical
- Interactive
- Bright
- Bold
- Interesting
- Quirky
- Delightful
- Engaging
- Fun
- Meaningful
- Unique

The overall concept developed and the theme chosen for the series of artworks is based on these words.

Project Proposal: *PittsBirds*

A series of up to 20 *unique*, graphic, colorful bird artworks will be created that will be the “messengers” that tell the stories that the University Line communities want to have heard.

Why birds?

Throughout history, birds have been a source of fascination and inspiration. Like our communities, birds are diverse, having an amazing variety of colors, shapes, sizes, and songs. They can be described by many of the same words collected from the community during outreach: colorful, interesting, quirky, delightful, etc.



All photos by Judi Carvell

In many cultures, birds were also seen as storytellers and messengers. For this project they will “tell the stories” most important to the neighborhoods along the route.

Individual types of birds have symbolic meanings as well, which lends itself to having certain birds tell a specific story, such as an owl, which symbolizes wisdom, telling the story of academia in the Oakland neighborhood.

Bird watching is one of the fastest-growing hobbies in the United States, and it’s an activity that influences how people connect with the world around them.

This series of bird artworks will act as a bird watching scavenger hunt, challenging the public to find and learn about all of the birds along the route, connecting them to the neighborhoods in which they are found.

As the concept artwork on the following pages will show, Marsha will create graphic icons based on community input and then arrange them inside the series of unique bird shapes.

The entire set of artworks will be visually cohesive and thoughtfully located along the route in each neighborhood.

A QR code linking to a web page about the University Line *PittsBirds* project will be placed on or near the works so the community can learn about the story each individual bird has to share, creating an educational experience.

Pittsburgh currently has many famous birds of its own, including The Pittsburgh Penguins, the Pirate Parrot, X the Owl from Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, and the Peregrine falcons that nest on the Cathedral of Learning. Marsha is hoping these *PittsBirds* she'll be creating will be loved by all as well.

Artwork Series: In Situ



The artwork series will consist of powder coated laser-cut metal light pole art and ground sculptures, along with printed wrap designs applied to existing metal utility boxes.

Design Concept: Light Pole Art

COMMUNITY INPUT:

“Hill District had a lively, amazing jazz scene back in the day. That deserves to be a feature in the art.”



A small heart will be on every design, denoting love for community. **Can you find it?**

36"h x 33.8"w



This design concept includes a saxophonist, piano keys, drumsticks, a trumpet, music notes, and music staff lines

A singing songbird symbolizes music

Light Pole Art: In Situ



Each *PittsBird* will be designed to be interesting from the perspective of a commuter riding the bus, and will include smaller details for pedestrians that view the art up close.

Design Concept: Sculpture

COMMUNITY INPUT:

“Oakland is all about students and academia to me. There’s great colleges and so much knowledge residing in that neighborhood.”



A small heart will be on every design, denoting love for community. **Can you find it?**

38.75"h
x
25"w



An owl
symbolizes
wisdom



TOP OF CARNEGIE MELLON THISTLE



CARLOW UNIVERSITY
SHAMROCK



FORBES FIELD
HOME PLATE IN
PITT'S POSVAR HALL



PANTHER TRACK

Sidewalk Sculpture: In Situ



Community input mentioned including a possibility of interacting with sculptures for a photo opportunity.

Design Concept: Utility Box Wrap

COMMUNITY INPUT:

“Any story of Downtown needs to include Point State Park, the bridges, rivers, and skyline.”



A small heart will be on every design, denoting love for community. **Can you find it?**

67"h



24.3"w

30.3"w



The background pattern contains a "Golden Triangle" surrounded by a shape of Fort Pitt

This concept design includes bridges, the skyline, the rivers, Point State Park, Fort Duquesne, and hypocycloids from the Steelmark, which are now synonymous with Pittsburgh

A heron is a water bird and symbolizes renewal, evolution, and patience

Utility Box Wrap: In Situ



A bird design and a custom pattern will be created for each box. Designs then repeat on opposite sides.

Project Proposal: Materials & Prelim Color Palette

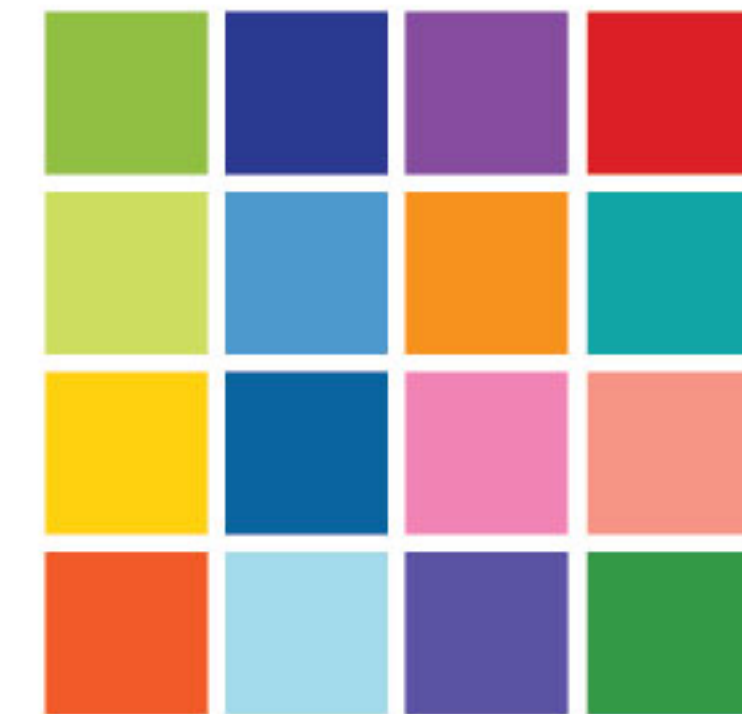


POWDER COATED
LASER CUT ALUMINUM



PRINTED UTILITY
BOX WRAP MATERIAL

**OVERALL COLOR PALETTE
WILL BE BRIGHT AND BOLD
(some examples, below)**



SCULPTURE COLORS:

Colors for the sculptures will be chosen from the fabricator's available powder coating color options, and will contrast the locations where the artwork will appear

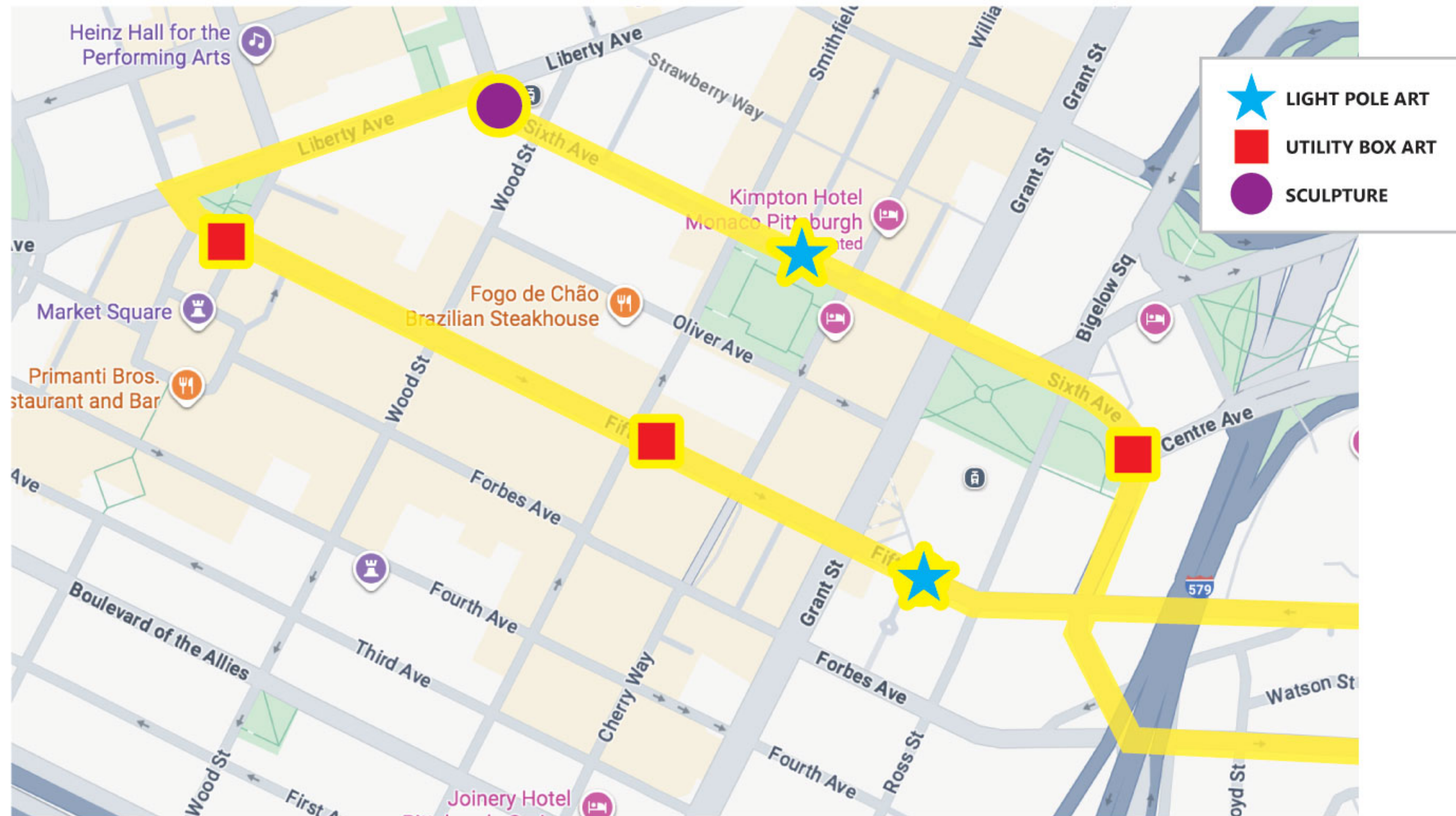
UTILITY BOX WRAP COLORS:

Colors for the utility box art will be chosen to contrast with the locations where the artwork will appear, and will be cohesive with the colors available for the sculptures

Project Proposal: Quantities & General Locations

This series of up to 20 *unique* bird artworks will alternate throughout the route, in type and in location, ensuring interest from each side of the bus and various other viewpoints.

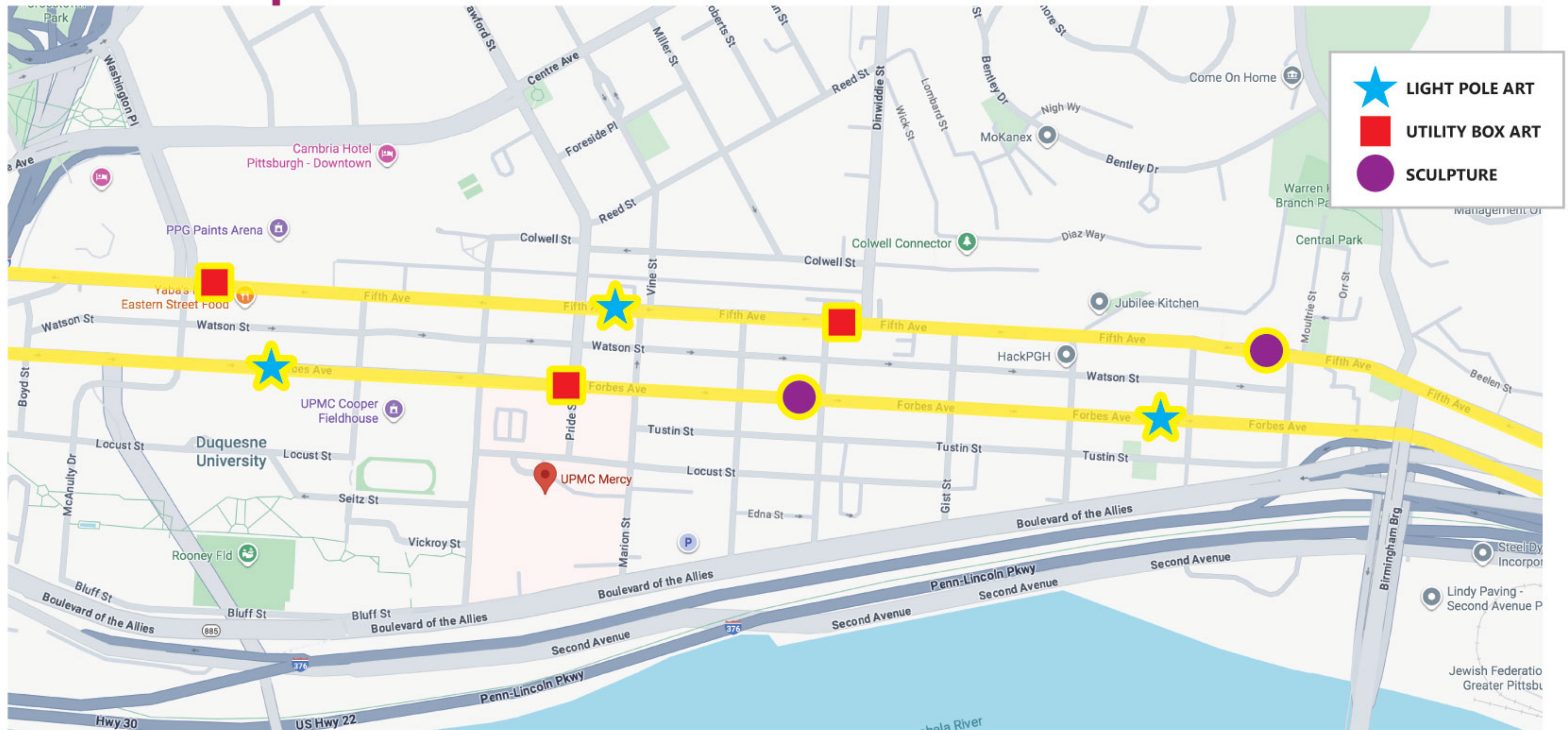
Downtown Route: 6 Pieces



TYPE OF ARTWORK & LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE NOT FINAL!

Placement indicates rhythm and frequency of how art is intended along the route.

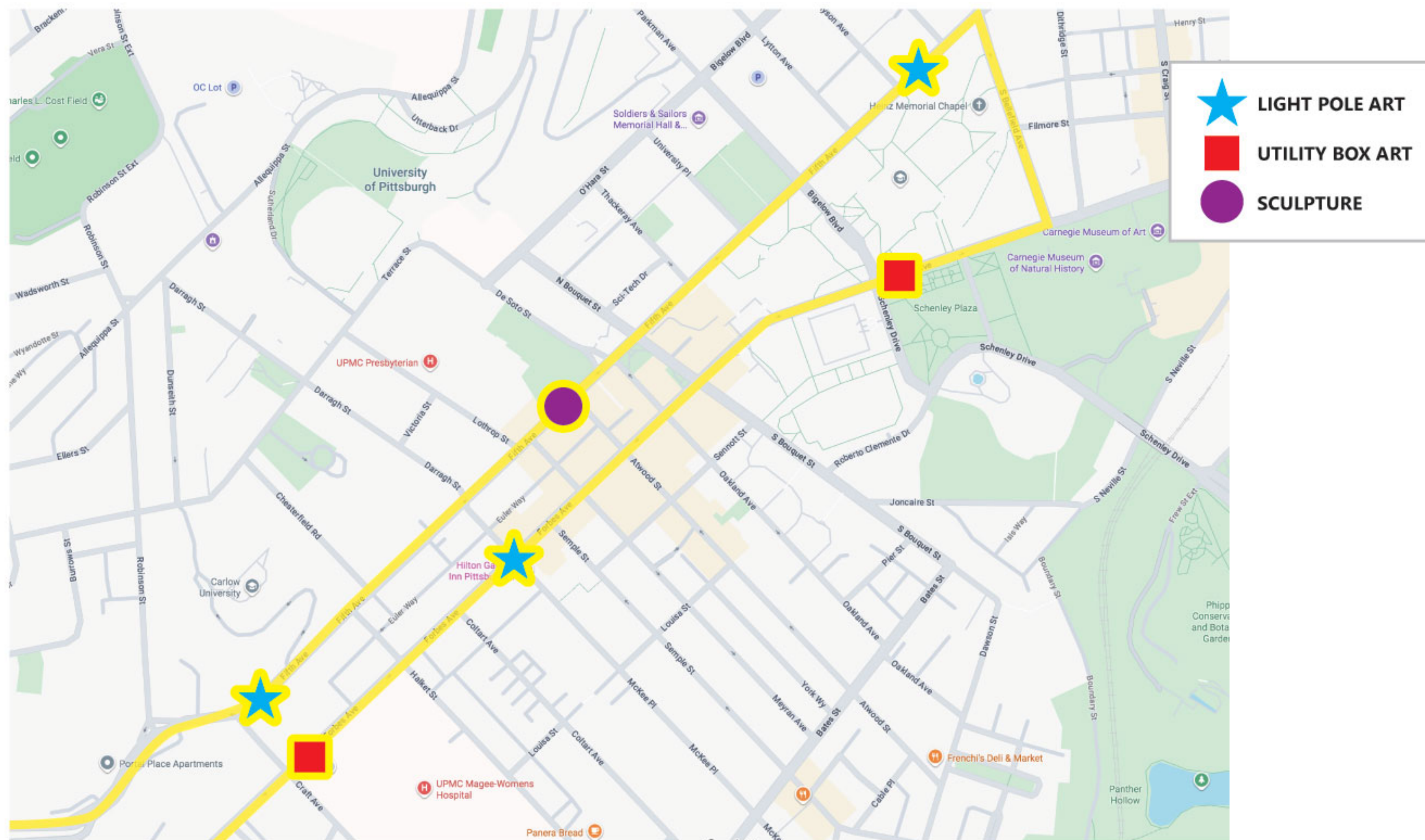
Uptown Route: 8 Pieces



TYPE OF ARTWORK & LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE NOT FINAL!

Placement indicates rhythm and frequency of how art is intended along the route.

Oakland Route: 6 Pieces



TYPE OF ARTWORK & LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE NOT FINAL!

Placement indicates rhythm and frequency of how art is intended along the route.

Conclusion

This meaningful, educational, and interactive public art series will engage both bus commuters and pedestrians.

Public outreach will be ongoing throughout the entire artwork development process to ensure community input informs each of the designs.

The series of unique artwork is flexible enough to work with the ongoing University Line construction.

Marsha will be working directly with the City to determine appropriate final locations for the artwork.

Scan the QR code to take the survey

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/phad-projects/percent-art-university-line>



SHIFT
WORKS

Link also available at marsharollinger.com