

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 01/24/2024)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: Percent for Art: University Line	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Department of City Planning Hill District Consensus Group Hill District Collaborative Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh Hill CDC Marsha Rollinger
Parcel Number(s):	
ZDR Application Number:	
Meeting Location: Zoom	
Date: 2026/02/17	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00pm	
Applicant:	Approx. Number of Attendees:
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Public Art and Civic Design	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

The artist, Marsha Rollinger, shared with us a project overview for public art to go along the University Line. This project is a partnership between the City and PRT.

The City created an online survey, and Rollinger created outreach materials (physical and virtual) to gather feedback from the community. Project flyers were posted at businesses and on buses. Rollinger emphasized community input surrounding what people want to see along the University Line: “colorful, whimsical, interactive, quirky, delightful, engaging, bright, bold, interesting, fun, meaningful, unique”.

The project will be a series of 20 unique bird artworks that tell the stories of University Line communities. Rollinger emphasizes the symbolic meanings of different birds. The project will act as a bird watching scavenger hunt connecting different neighborhoods. The entire set of art will be visually cohesive and thoughtfully located along the route. There will be a QR code where people can learn about the project. There will be a small heart on every design to denote love for community.

Art forms will vary throughout the route, which will begin Downtown with 6 pieces, then Uptown with 8 pieces, and in Oakland with 6. Concepts include light pole artwork, utility boxes, and ground sculptures. Rollinger gave a “tour” of the art throughout the route. She explained the art form, symbology of each bird, and location. Each unique bird represents a certain idea, with details of this on the project’s engagement website. The light pole art will be located in the Hill District, with the bird image including music symbols representing the Hill’s music history.

PittsBirds.com was secured for ten years, the duration of the project, and will redirect to a City of Pittsburgh page to teach the public all the stories the birds have to share. The artwork will become part of the collection of the City of Pittsburgh.

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>You just mentioned something about sports and what came to my mind was Fifth Avenue High School, I think it was in the early 70s. The last year before they closed, the basketball team won the state championship, and that was a big deal for a lot of the residents in the Hill who were on that team. So, I don't know if you can fit basketballs in there instead of baseballs, or in addition to the baseball.</p>	<p>I can add it with the other basketball things for sure.</p>
<p>The other thing was, I know it was hard maybe to incorporate, but and it's not necessarily viewed as a positive for Uptown, but gambling and racketeering was, you know, we were ground zero for that industry, which was just ubiquitous in the Hill for immigrants and African Americans that didn't have access to the financial resources. The numbers games were just a way of surviving. And it was people at all socioeconomic levels, from the mayor on down. Fifth Avenue is where Rolling Rock Beer was first distributed, which is another thing. I don't know how you incorporate that, but a beer bottle, maybe.</p> <p>Oh, good. The gambling was big, and even though people might not see it as positive, it was our history. But anyway, there's just so much and I understand you can't include it all.</p>	<p>I do have one on the Cardinal has a beer bottle for rock. The fun part of this whole project is just talking with community, and there's so, so many stories. And yeah, it's impossible to include all of it, but if there's certain things that are super important, I can try to figure out.</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>How tall are the pieces that are on the ground?</p>	<p>I think they're under they're 40 inches and under, so they're not huge so that kids can stand next to them. The light pole art is 36 inches within a 36 inch square.</p>
<p>I'm curious about the ADA aspect of it. We do have a fairly large population of people who are blind or visually impaired. How would you keep people from walking into them?</p>	<p>We're talking about that. Because of requirements, they'll be elevated up so that if you're visually impaired, your cane would hit it before you would run into any part of the sculpture.</p>
<p>And you said there's a lifespan of 10 years. What are the symptoms of wear and tear?</p>	<p>The 10 years was for the utility box wraps, and I've actually seen them last longer. When you're asked for a lifespan of a product, they have their ideal. What might happen is a little bit of sun bleaching, so the colors will slightly change. The powder coating on the sculptures and the light poles could last indefinitely, because they're metal and powder coating lasts a very long time.</p>
<p>The baseball guys from Schenley. Was it on the Uptown slide, or did you mean for that to be the Hill District?</p> <p>Fifth Avenue at that time was definitely open and they definitely had like Sam Clancy, Warney Macklin and Puffy. They had their superstars. You have Maurice Lucas. There was one that you did miss, Jeffrey Matthews. They were definitely Schenley. A lot of them came from Francis Street, Summers, Chauncey, that area. So, it does kind of make a difference when you're doing a location. Of course, all of them got along. But when you think about the Hill and who went to Schenley or who went the Fifth, if you lived on Summers, it was like an invisible line. So that part of the Hill District went to Fifth and then the other part went to Schenley.</p> <p>Yeah, because you don't want to put the wrong information out there, right? And like I said, really it was all one Hill. It wasn't a town. It was just a Hill, right? It's more just to make that distinction. We didn't have different locations all split up, but now that we're there, it's just better to make it be correct.</p>	<p>Uptown. The route really runs along 5th, so a lot of these have both Hill and Uptown things on them combined. There's no completely separate pieces that appear up in the hill anywhere. Since we were talking about the sports thing a minute ago, a lot of the sports folks from the Hill District are on the same one as folks from Uptown, if that makes sense.</p> <p>A lot of things are combined. What we can do is on the website when we put the information about each of the birds on the website, we could clearly show we can divide the information up. These descriptions were basically so I could explain the design, but we can add to the information and change it on the website. I'm probably going to have to follow up with you to get some of these names again. As I go through the process, I'll reach out to you, and whoever else would like me to reach out to them to just confirm names and who is from where, and then we can make sure that we state it correctly on the website. Would that work for you?</p> <p>I will definitely follow up with folks. That was the tricky part, since this route runs through what was the hill. It's intertwined, so... figuring out how to split things that weren't necessarily split. It's been a little bit of a challenge for me, because everybody has stories of things that overlapped before it was separate neighborhoods.</p>

Other Notes

Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh received feedback from community members, in support of the PFA University Line project. Artist presented project to Hill CDC in early February 2026, and they endorsed the project.

Planner completing report: AJ Herzog