

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 02/20/2026)

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

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: University Line Public Art (Oakland)	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):
Parcel Number(s): N/A	Oakland Business Improvement District (OBID)
Application Number: PACD-2025-00017	Oakland Planning & Development Corporation (OPDC)
Meeting Location: Zoom (Virtual)	Oakcliffe Community Organization
Date: February 9, 2026	Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA)
Meeting Start Time: 5:30 pm	Area stakeholders/residents
Applicant: City of Pittsburgh – Marsha Rollinger (Artist)	City Planning staff
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): PACD (Public Art & Civic Design) Commission review	Approx. Number of Attendees: 13

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 project entails public art installations along the University Line bus rapid transit connecting Downtown, Uptown, and Oakland. It is a joint effort between the City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT). The presentation was given by Marsha Rollinger, the artist working with Shift Works, to design and create the proposed art along the entire corridor. The project is part of the city's Percent for Art program. We're targeting installation of the artwork by September 2026.

About the artist, Marsha Rollinger: I grew up in the area and attended the Art Institute. I was later hired by Nintendo and moved to Seattle, but I recently returned home in 2024. I'm excited to be back and working on public art projects. Placemaking is something I strive to include in my artwork because it's specific to the community. I have years of experience in graphic design and illustration, but I love public art the most because it's something everyone can enjoy. It invokes a sense of joy and pride in the communities we live in. The artist shared a few visual examples of her previous work, showcasing her bold and graphic style.

Extensive community engagement has taken place during the development of this project. I've connected with each neighborhood involved in the project and created materials to generate interest and engage the public. The city also created an Engage page, and I shared the link in the chat. Community input was gathered through surveys and in-person outreach. Words that came up repeatedly included: colorful, whimsical, interactive, quirky, delightful, engaging, bright, bold, interesting, fun, meaningful, and unique.

Based on this input, I developed a concept called "Pittsbirds"—a series of up to 20 unique, colorful, graphic bird artworks. These birds will act as messengers, telling the stories local neighborhoods want to share. Birds were chosen because they are diverse, colorful, and symbolic. They also represent storytelling and connection in many cultures.

Each bird design incorporates community-inspired icons and will include a QR code linking to a webpage (pittsburghs.com) where people can learn more about the stories behind the artwork. The series will function as a bird-watching scavenger hunt, encouraging people to find and learn about all the birds along the route.

Designs represent Oakland’s academic heritage, featuring an owl for wisdom, Carnegie Mellon’s thistle, shamrocks for Carlow University, and a panther track for Pitt. Another design for Downtown incorporates Point State Park, bridges, and the skyline inside a heron, symbolizing patience and renewal. One design inspired by the Hill District features jazz elements like saxophones and piano keys.

The artwork will include three types: light pole pieces, utility box wraps, and ground sculptures. The series will alternate artwork types along the route for variety—sculptures, pole art, and utility box wraps—distributed across Downtown, Uptown, and Oakland. Colors will act as subtle wayfinding, shifting from cool tones in Downtown to warm tones in Uptown and back to cool in Oakland.

Materials will include quarter-inch aluminum for sculptures and pole art, laser-cut and powder-coated in solid colors. Utility box wraps will use 3M material with anti-graffiti laminate. All installations will meet ADA compliance and safety standards.

In conclusion, this meaningful, educational, and interactive public art series will engage both bus commuters and pedestrians. It will serve as a scavenger hunt, inviting the public to discover all the birds and learn the stories behind them. Community input directly informed each design, making this a truly collaborative project.

Discussion

Topic / Issue	Recap
Historical and Cultural Representation	<p><u>Comment/Concern Raised:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to include persons of historical significance (e.g. Dr. Thomas Starzl (first liver transplant) alongside Dr. Jonas Salk) • Request to represent Panther Hollow and its Italian immigrant heritage. • Desire to show residential character of the neighborhoods in Oakland (e.g. row houses). <p><u>Who raised it:</u> A couple of residents</p> <p><u>Applicant Response:</u> Acknowledged and noted</p>
Artistry and Design	<p><u>Comment/Concern Raised:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General appreciation and compliments were offered for the overall look and artistic elements, as well as the thoughtful incorporation of community input. • Question about whether all birds are native species; suggestion to make them 100% native if possible. • Clarification on terminology for Carnegie Museum’s T-Rex artifact <p><u>Who raised it:</u> Carnegie Museums; general audience</p> <p><u>Applicant Response:</u> Applicant noted that all but one or two bird species are native</p>

Topic / Issue	Recap
Accessibility	<p><u>Comment/Concern Raised:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about height of pole-mounted artwork to avoid hazards for visually impaired pedestrians. • Discussion of ADA and PennDOT guidelines; recommendation to consult accessibility experts. • Confirmation that QR codes and URLs will be included on artwork for storytelling and educational content. • Suggestion to include audio descriptions for people with low vision, accessible via QR codes or other means. <p><u>Who raised it:</u> OTMA; accessibility advocates</p> <p><u>Applicant Response:</u> Applicant is working with DOMI to address accessibility considerations, and they will look into the possibility of audio options. Also, there is the possibility to include posters at bus stations for additional context.</p>
Maintenance and Durability	<p><u>Comment/Concern Raised:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about long-term maintenance, and potential threats, such as vandalism, damage from traffic crashes, and fading due to sunlight. • Discussion of city responsibility for upkeep over time. <p><u>Who raised it:</u> OBID</p> <p><u>Applicant Response:</u> Applicant noted the use of powder coating for durability and anti-graffiti wraps for utility boxes.</p>
Integration with Other Infrastructure	<p><u>Comment/Concern Raised:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the proximity of public art to pedestrian wayfinding signage and ensuring designs complement, and do not impede, existing systems. • Confirmation that public art is mean to be visible from the bus line stations. <p><u>Who raised it:</u> OTMA</p> <p><u>Applicant Response:</u> Artist clarified that color-based “wayfinding” is subtle and not intended to compete with official wayfinding or other street signage</p>

Link to Video Recording: [video1614056185.mp4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=video1614056185)

Planner completing report: Christian Umbach, Senior Planner