## THE (OH) ATHENS EXPERIMENT

Extracting and Implementing Local Design Essence to Increase Economic Competitiveness

Kyle Ezell, AICP Associate Professor of Practice Knowlton School of Architecture City and Regional Planning Program Principal, Designing Local, Limited









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## DESIGNING LOCAL PRIDE LEGACY PROSPERITY

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DESIGNING LOCAL.COM



#### Soul of the Community

Tweet 1 Share 2 Like 5

ABOUT KNIGHT SOUL OF THE COMMUNITY

Great schools, affordable health care and safe streets all help create strong communities.

OVERALL FINDINGS

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES?

FINDINGS BY COMMUNITY Aberdeen, S.D. Akron, Ohio Biloxi, Miss. Boulder, Colo. Bradenton, Fla. Charlotte, N.C. Columbia, S.C. Columbus, Ga. Detroit, Mich. Duluth, Minn Fort Wayne, Ind. Gary, Ind. Grand Forks, N.D. Lexington, Ky. Long Beach, Calif. Macon, Ga. Miami, Fla. Milledgeville, Ga. Myrtle Reach S.C.

But is there something deeper that draws people to a city - that makes them want to put down roots and build a life?



Knight Soul of the Community (SOTC) is a three-year study conducted by Gallup of the 26 John S. and James L. Knight Foundation communities across the United States employing a fresh approach to determine the factors that attach residents to their communities and the role of community attachment in an area's economic growth and well-being. The study focuses on the emotional side of the connection between residents and their communities.

In its first year, the study compared residents' attachment level to the GDP growth in the 26 communities over the past five years. The findings showed a significant correlation between community attachment and economic growth. The second year reinforced these

#### Knight Foundation (.org)



### THE ECONOMICS OF UNIQUENESS

Investing in Historic City Cores and Cultural Heritage Assets for Sustainable Development

Guido Licciardi and Rana Amirtahmasebi, Editors



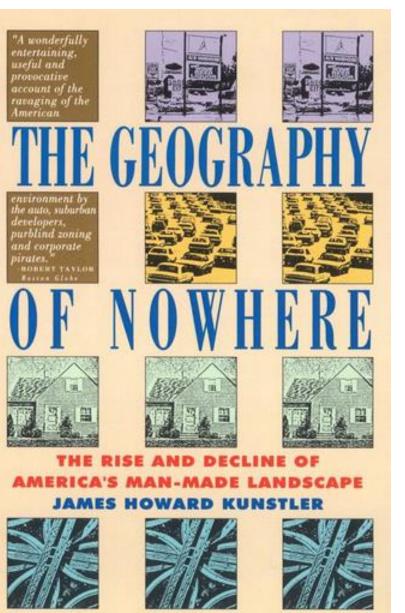


### THE ECONOMICS OF UNIQUENESS

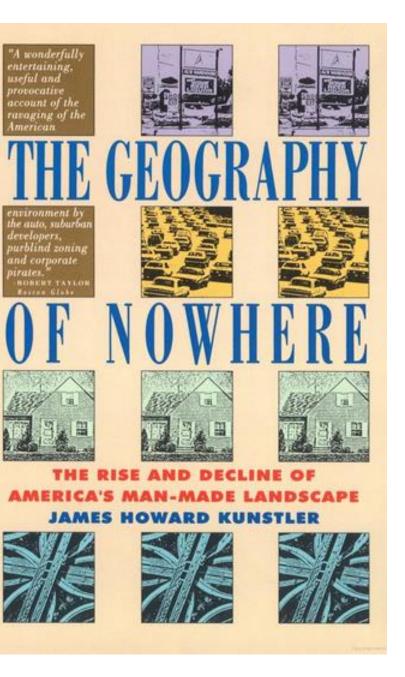
Investing in Historic City Cores and Cultural Heritage Assets for Sustainable Development

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THE WORLD BANK

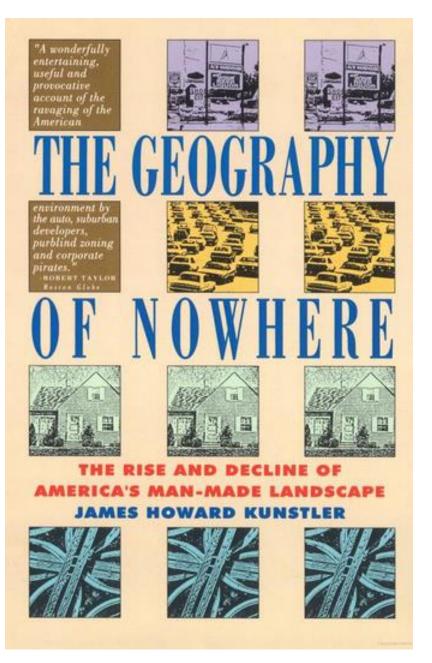


"Kyle has written an important and timely manifesto that challenges planners, designers, and place-makers of every stripe to stop confusing imitation with innovation." - Richard Florida

# DESIGNING L O C V L

**Revealing Our Truest Communities** 

### **KYLE EZELL**



"Kyle has written an important and timely manifesto that challenges planners, designers, and place-makers of every stripe to stop confusing imitation with innovation." - Richard Florida

# DESIGNING L O C V L

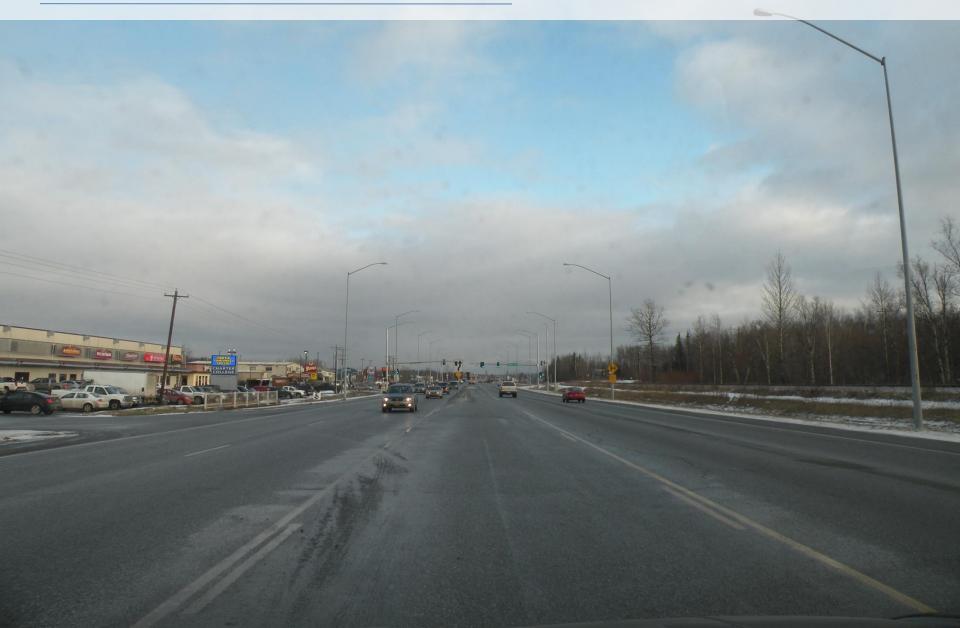
**Revealing Our Truest Communities** 

### KYLE EZELL



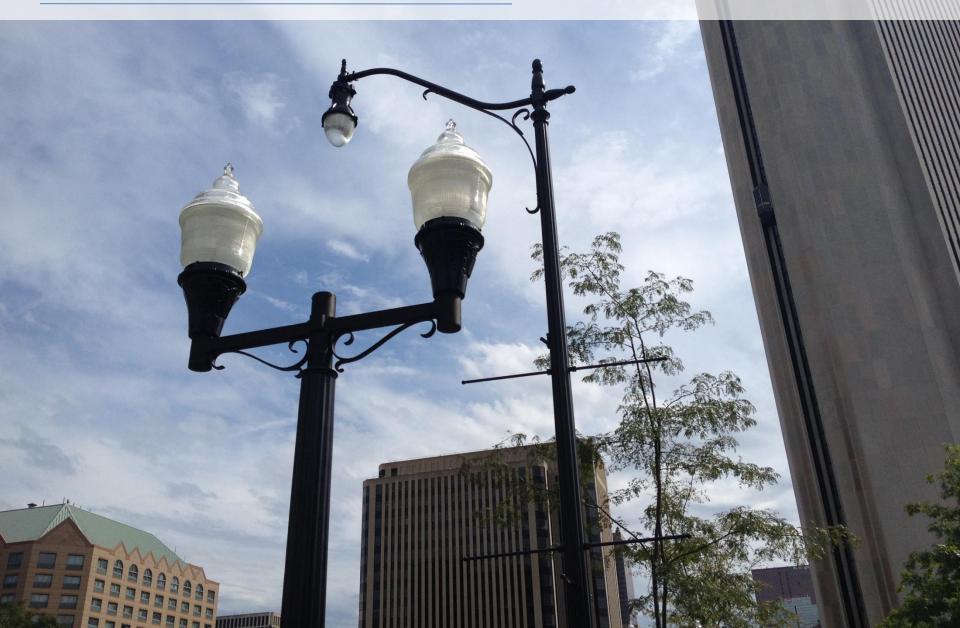


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Peet's never seen. Lents this good.

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Hey Downtown, the p coming your wa

280 Plaza

280 Plaza



## products on the ground

ave



## products on the ground



## products on the ground



## An industrial park designed like the one I visited in...

## We should get an artist program just like the one in Paducah, Kentucky.

# A downtown park like the one we took that trip to in...

#### Our city needs it's own....

## Our city needs it's own.... Aquarium like the one in...

# Our city needs it's own.... Aquarium like the one in... Carousel like the one in...

# Our city needs it's own.... Aquarium like the one in... Carousel like the one in... Baseball stadium a lot like...

Our city needs it's own.... Aquarium like the one in... Carousel like the one in... Baseball stadium a lot like... Jobs program just like... Our city needs it's own.... Aquarium like the one in... Carousel like the one in... **Baseball stadium a lot like**... Jobs program just like... **Riverfront similar to...** 

## Everyplace's Checklist: We have our...



Whatever 1



Whatever 2

Whatever 3

## But we still need our...



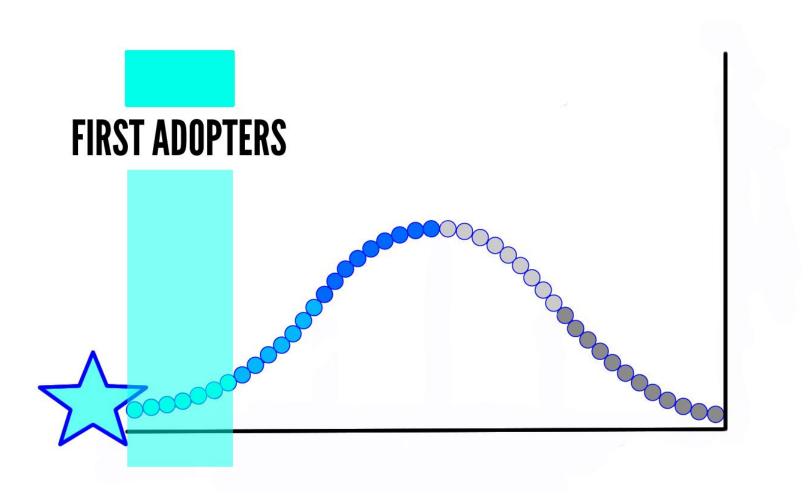
Whatever 1

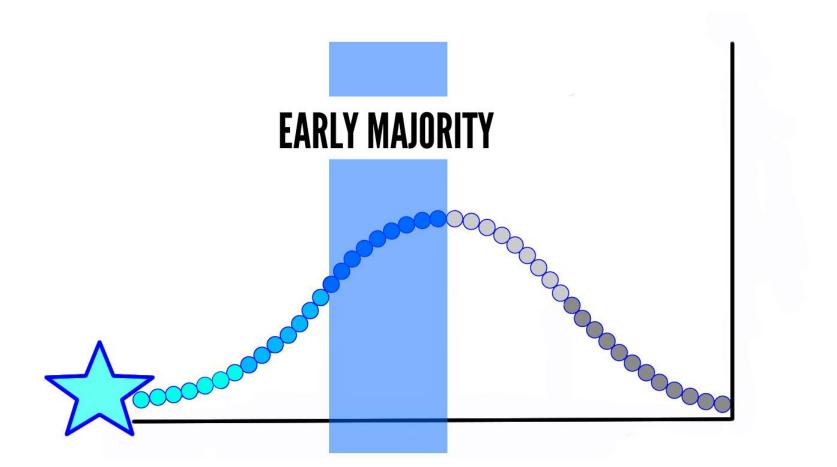


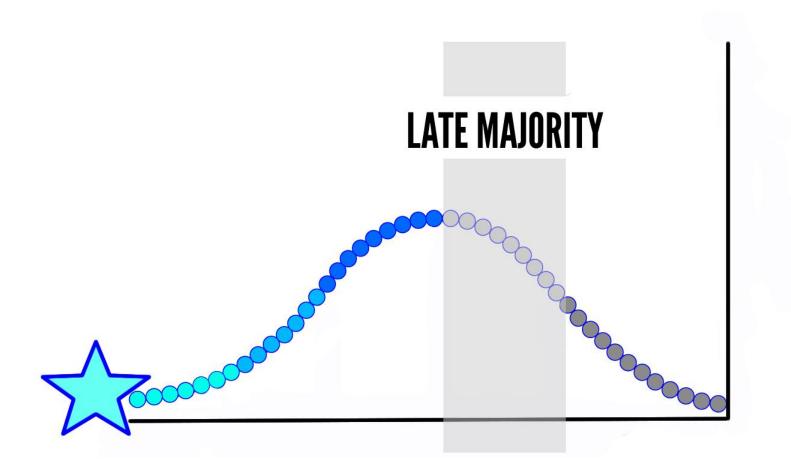
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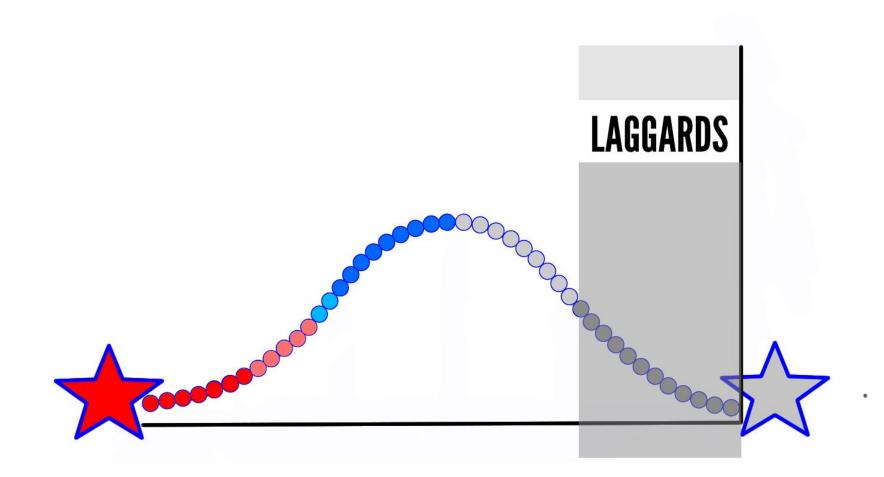
Whatever 3

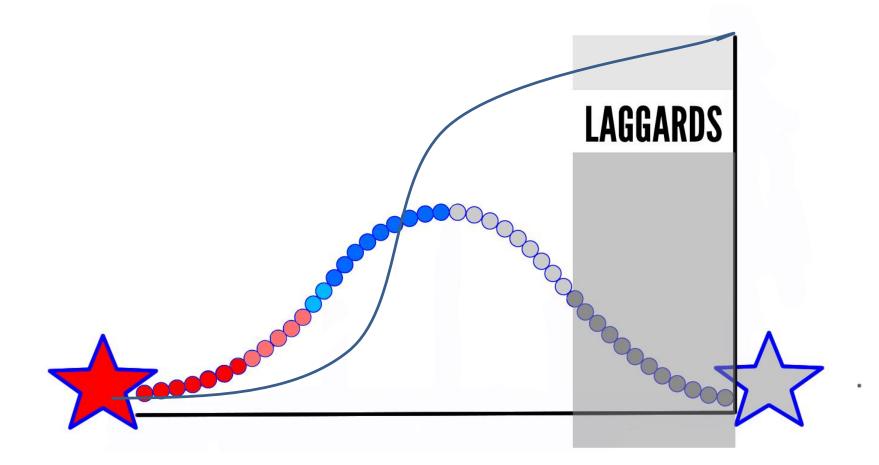












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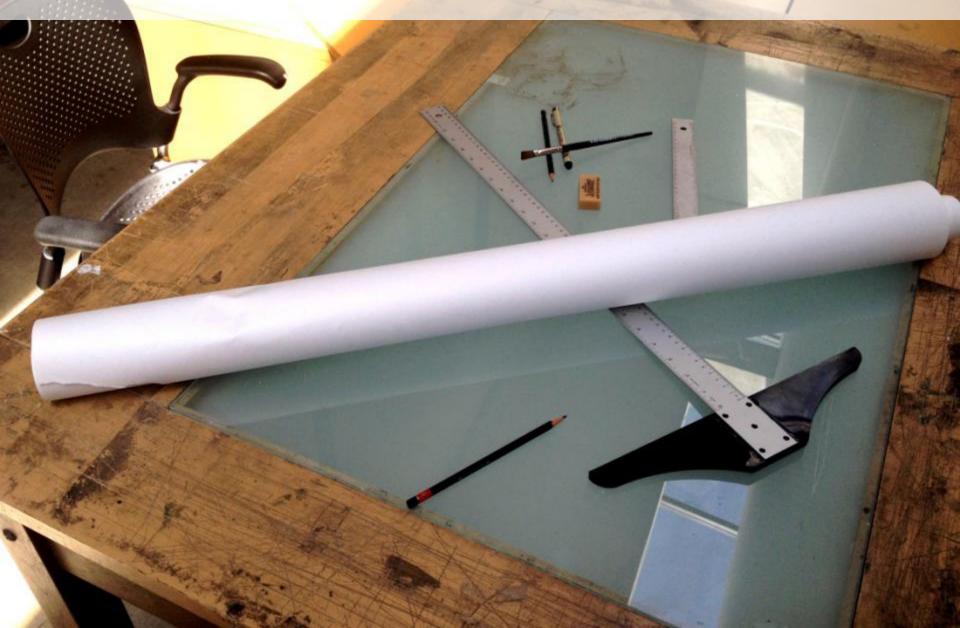




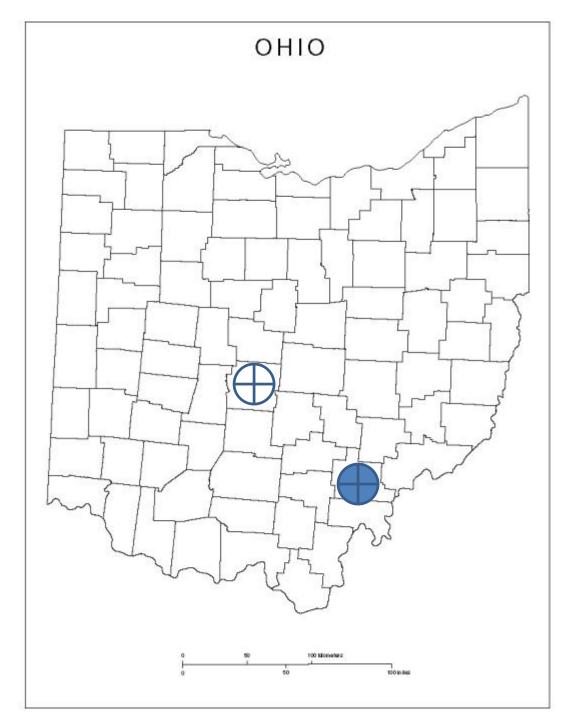


## professional inspiration

## professional inspiration



# finding a subject



#### unafraid to try new things

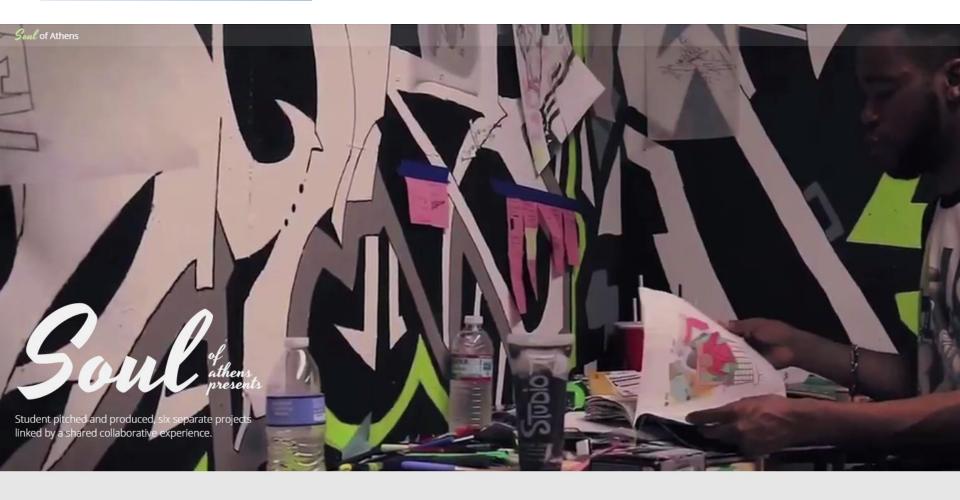
#### How Ohio voted in 2004

Percentage of votes by county in favor of the amendment banning same-sex marriage. It passed 62% to 38% statewide; only Athens County voted against it.

COUNTY PERCENTAGES More than 73% 67% - 73% 60% - 67% 50% - 60% Less than 50% STATEWIDE Against: 38% For: 62%



#### open minded



The Projects

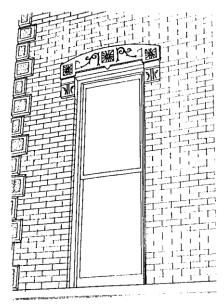
As a collection of six different projects, teams of students spent a semester producing self-generated communication ideas. From a business pitch led by an ap fiction short film, to stories from the community. Each one standing alone, they are linked by the shared student collaborative experience.

### open minded

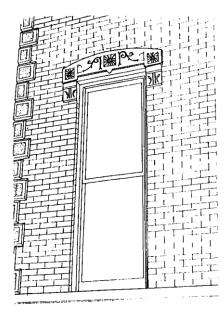
#### open minded

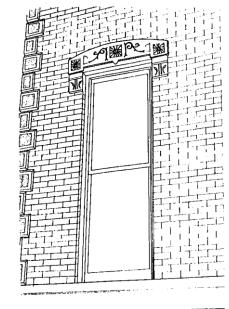


# the experiment

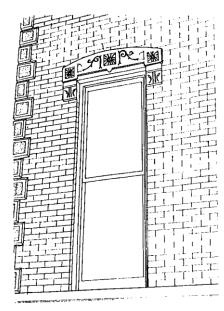


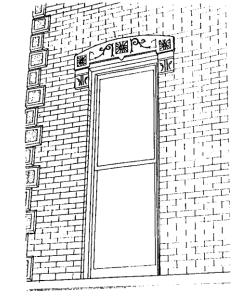




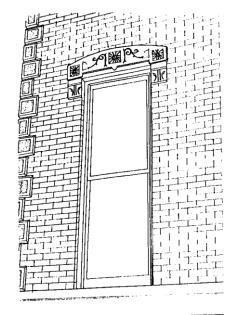




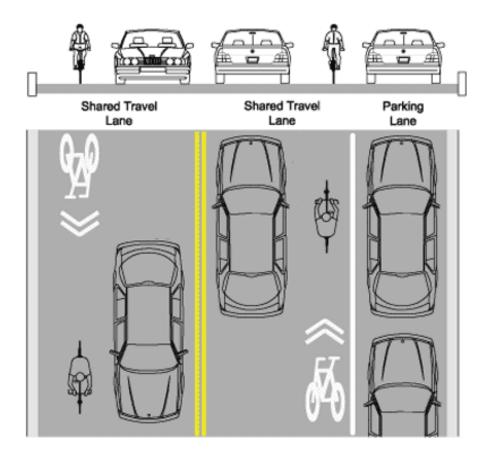


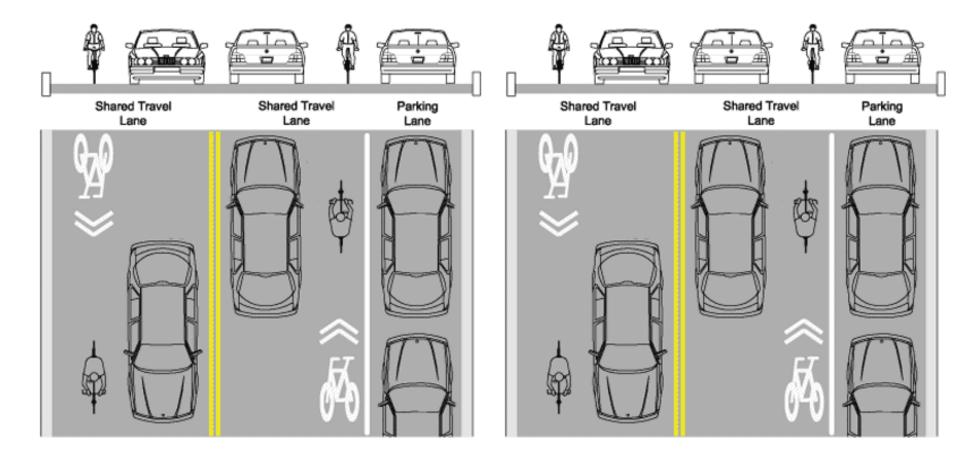


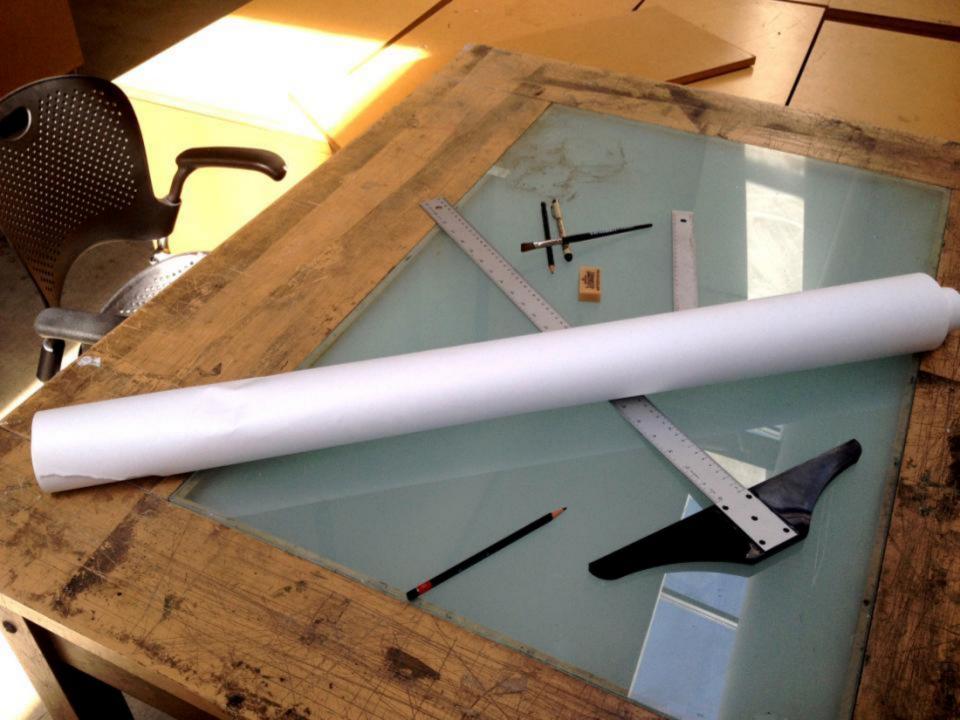














#### economic development?

To create more demand for Ohio University make parents and students fall for the community at first sight.

#### economic development?

To entice new business leaders and entrepreneurs who want to be a part of someplace interesting and special.

#### economic development?

#### To draw visitors / tourists to experience the spirit of a place that stands out from the pack.

## THE ESSENCE OF ATHENS

A Strategic Design Plan for Economic Enhancement and Community Competitiveness



Home Shop Now About Get Involved v News Wholesale Contact

Home > Passion Flowers > Official Passion Flower



#### **Official Passion Flower**

\$60.00

Size		
Small - 11	inch	

#### Add to cart

The Painted Passion Flower, the official flower of Athens, is made from recycled aluminum printing plates from our local newspaper. Every flower is hand-painted by Passion Works Studio artists and is as unique as the people who make them! Flowers come ready to hang either indoors or out. If hanging outdoors, we suggest they be protected from direct sun and weather. The medium and large flowers also work well as table centerpieces.

Like 2

Share this item: 8+1 Tweet Pinit

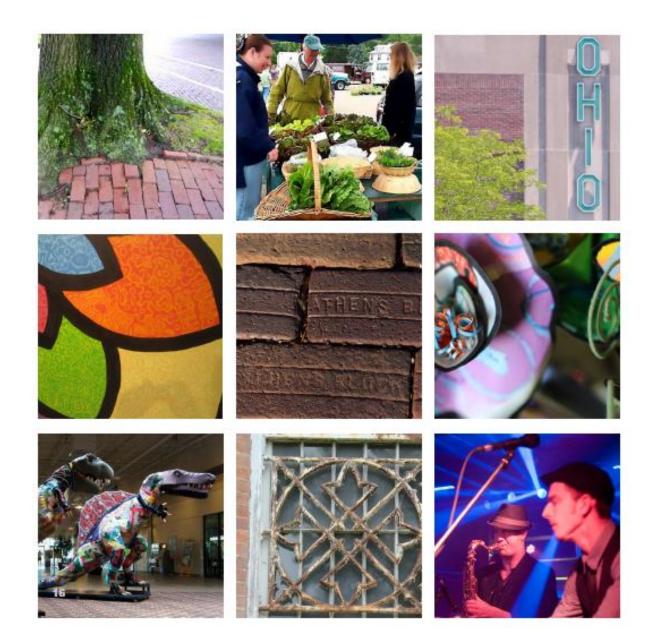
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#### EXPLAIN OUR ATHENS-SPECIFIC DESIGN INSPIRATIONS TO SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE THE DESIGN OF ATHENS

#### GOALS

EXPLAIN OUR ATHENS-SPECIFIC DESIGN INSPIRATIONS TO SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE THE DESIGN OF ATHENS

ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR "ATHENS-INSPIRED DESIGN" IN ORDER TO REINFORCE THE CULTURE OF ATHENS

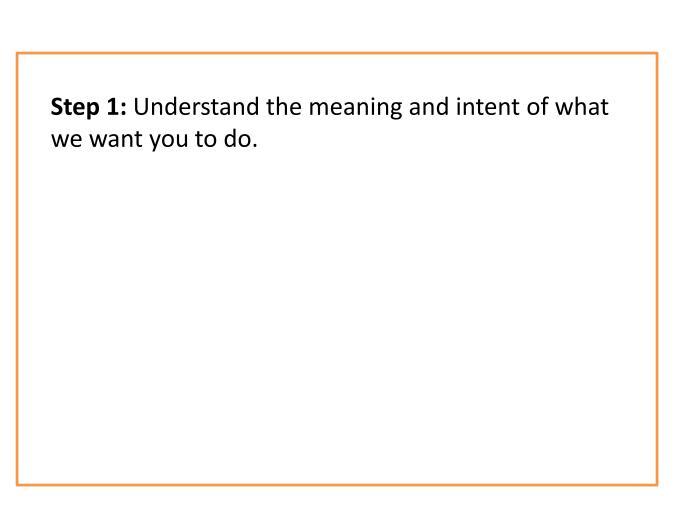


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ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR "ATHENS-INSPIRED DESIGN" IN ORDER TO REINFORCE THE CULTURE OF ATHENS

ENCOURAGE WIDESPREAD / INCREASED CELEBRATION OF "ATHENS" SO WE CAN SHARE ATHENS WITH THE WORLD.





#### HOW TO USE

Step 1: Understand the meaning and intent of what we want you to do.
Step 2: Glean design ideas from the "SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE" section to discover and understand the Athens Design DNA.

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**Step 1:** Understand the meaning and intent of what we want you to do.

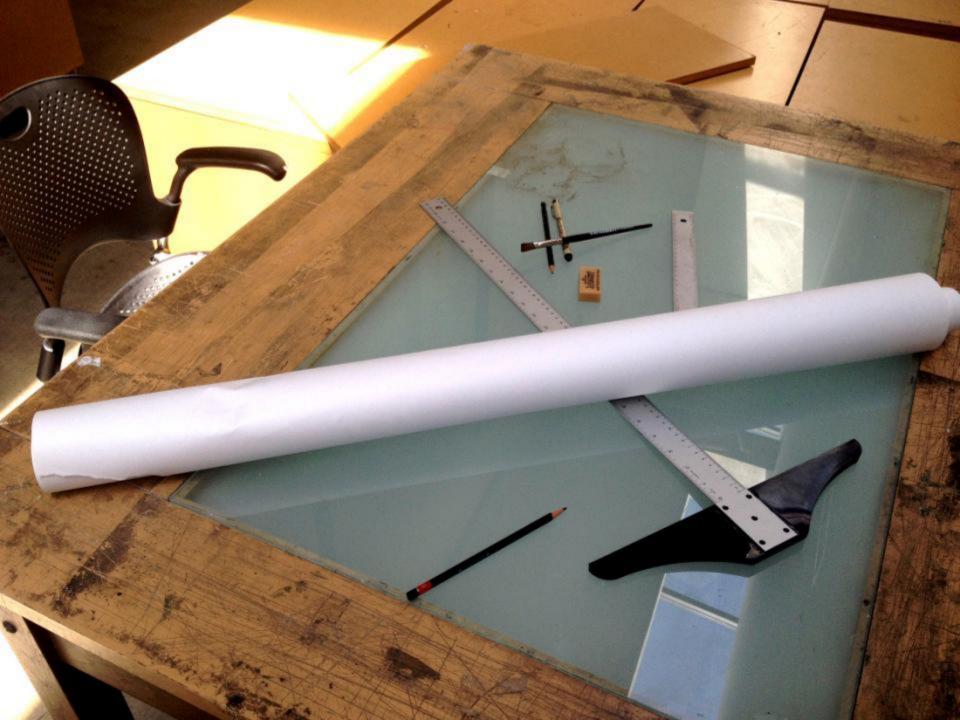
**Step 2:** Glean design ideas from the "SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE" section to discover and understand the Athens Design DNA.

**Step 3:** Learn how to take action in the REINFORCING OUR CULTURE section, have fun creating Athens-centric homes, restaurants, office buildings, and any other structures you choose to build or remodel as a result of implementing our design DNA in your projects.

### HOW TO USE

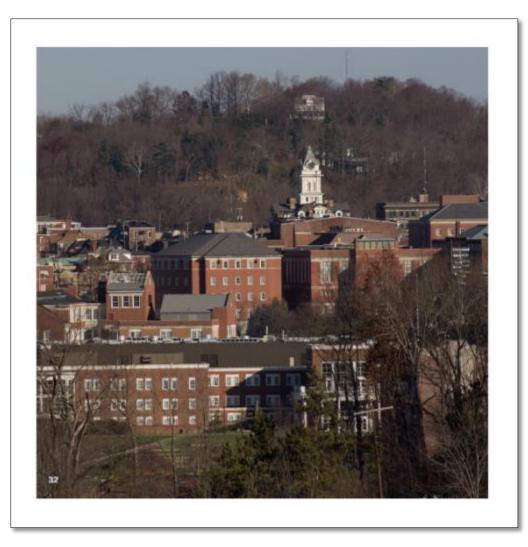
# SHOWCASE & CELEBRATE

PART 1



OUR HILLS OUR RIVER OUR NATURE OUR MUSIC OUR BRICK AND STONE OUR YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK OUR LITTLE BIGNESS OUR INVENTIVE SPIRIT OUR ACCEPTING ATTITUDES

#### ATHENS DESIGN DNA



#### **OUR HILLS**

...define our landscape and our neighborhoods. They ascend and descend, overlap and layer. They are uneven, at times they're lush, at times colorful, at times gray.



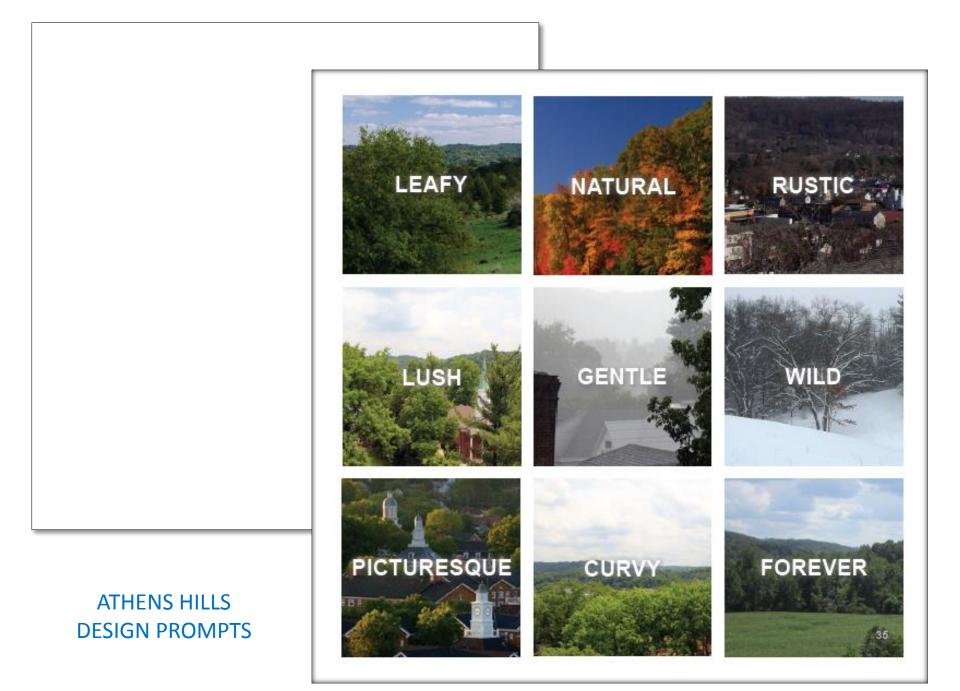
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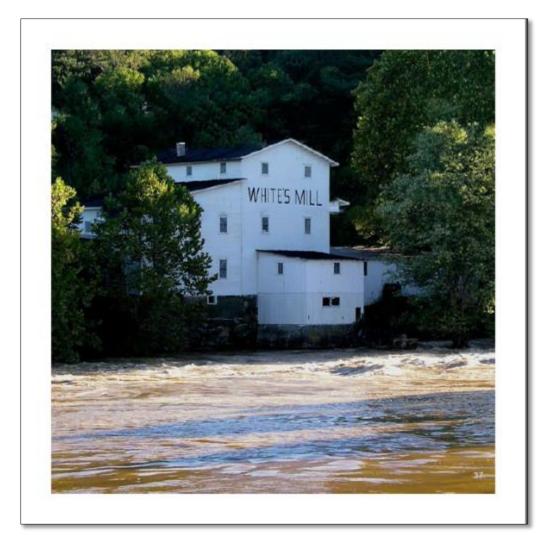


**IMAGINE IDEAS FOR:** 

HILLS SHOPPING CENTERS HILLS SIGNS HILLS COLORS HILLS HOMES HILLS RESTAURANTS

#### **OUR RIVER**

...meanders gracefully. It flows southward, cutting, with water rising and falling, ever seeking to break its bounds, providing habitat, rerouted and reengineered, both barrier and corridor, part of the city's original story.



#### **OUR RIVER**

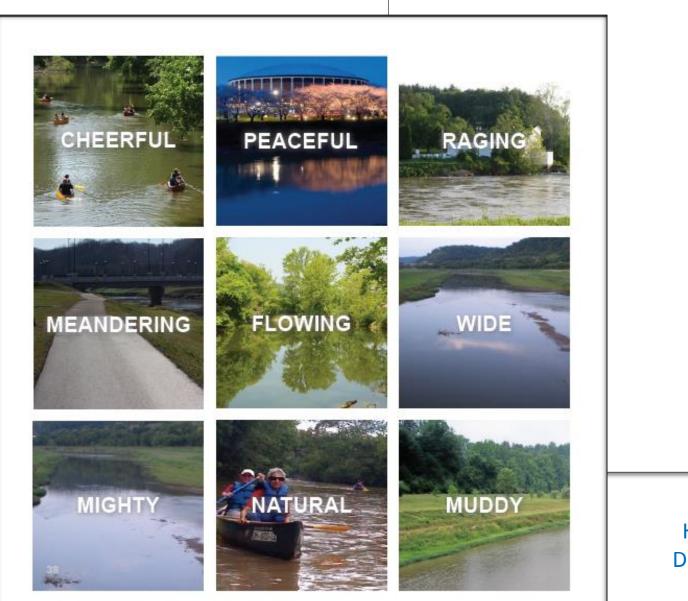
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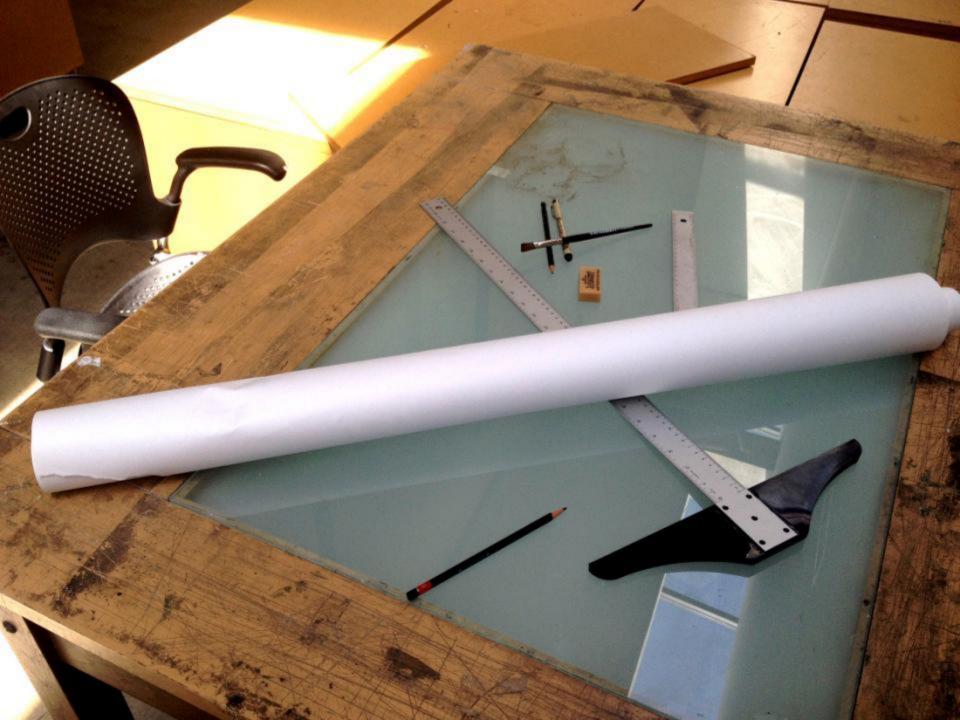
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#### HOCKING RIVER DESIGN PROMPTS



1. Requires big creativity

- 1. Requires big creativity
- 2. More fun because it was inspired by the community

- 1. Requires big creativity
- 2. More fun because it was inspired by the community
- 3. Exclusively Athens results



#### **OUR NATURE**

... is lush. It's diverse in size, color, and form. It ever attempts to reclaim and repopulate, always defying the grid. It's also seasonally variable, edible/nourishing and delicious.



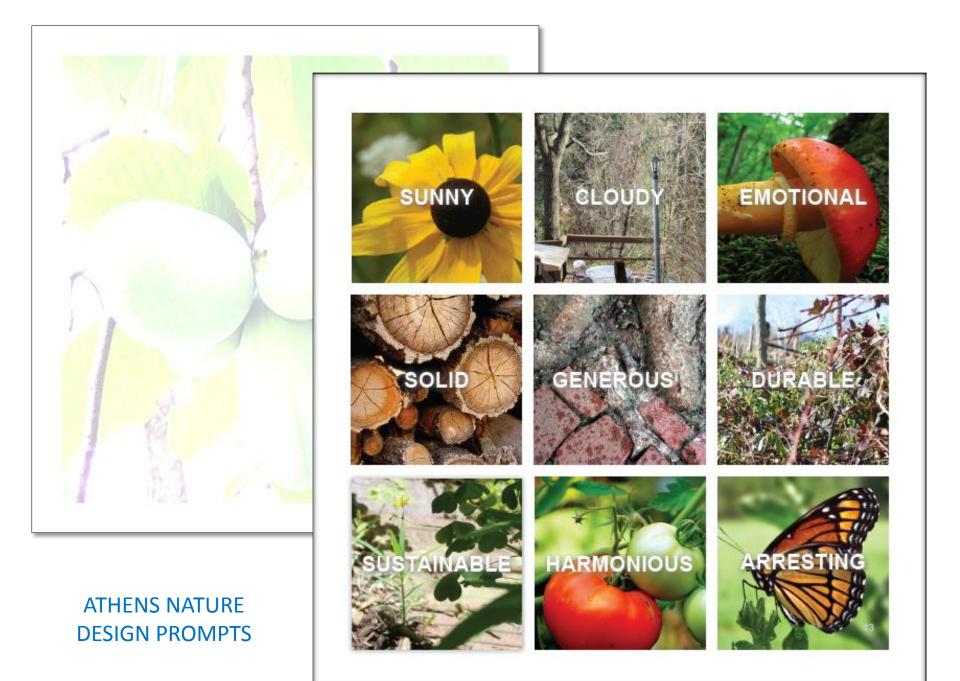
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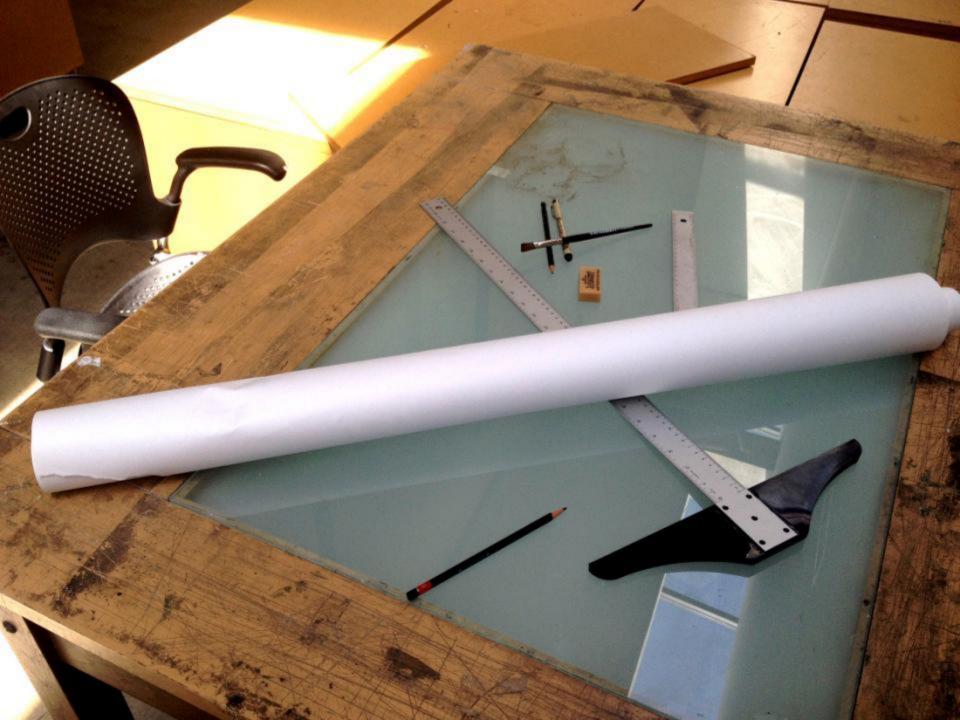
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## **OUR MUSIC**

honors its Appalachian origins, but it's infused with the ongoing immigration of outside influences in a variety of forms—big band, garage band, orchestra, bluegrass, street musicians, bars and coffee shops, festivals, and other expressions.



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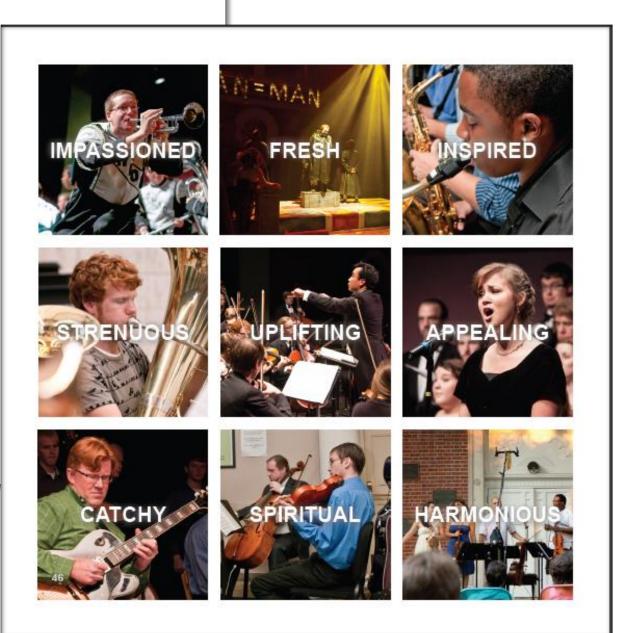
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#### ATHENS MUSIC DESIGN PROMPTS





# OUR BRICK AND STONE

...are a part of who we are. These two natural materials define much of our built environment that has been fashioned from the earth; our brick and stone warps with the movement of nature, reflecting the patina of time and culture.



# OUR BRICK AND STONE

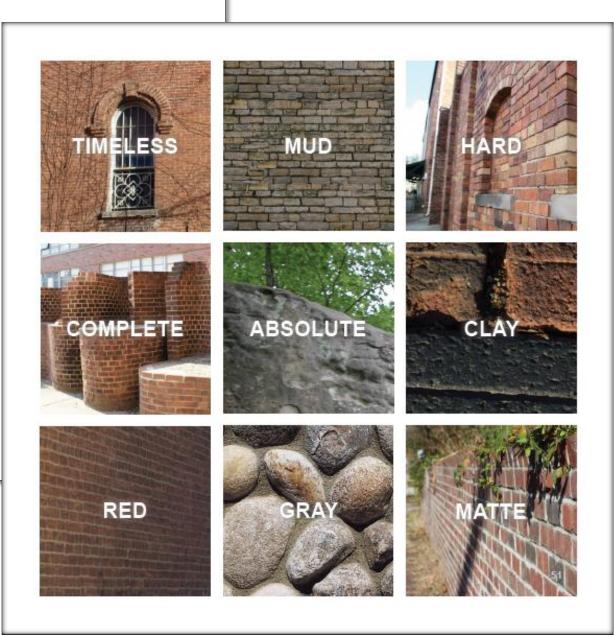
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### OUR YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK

...keeps us playful, whimsical, hopeful, enthusiastic, boisterous, testing boundaries, ever seeking a purpose.



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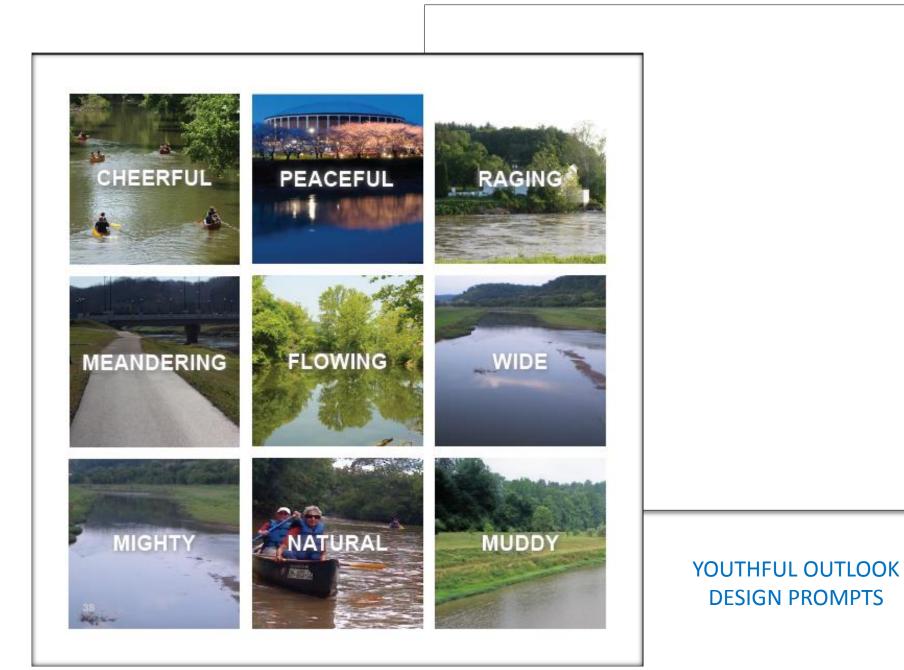
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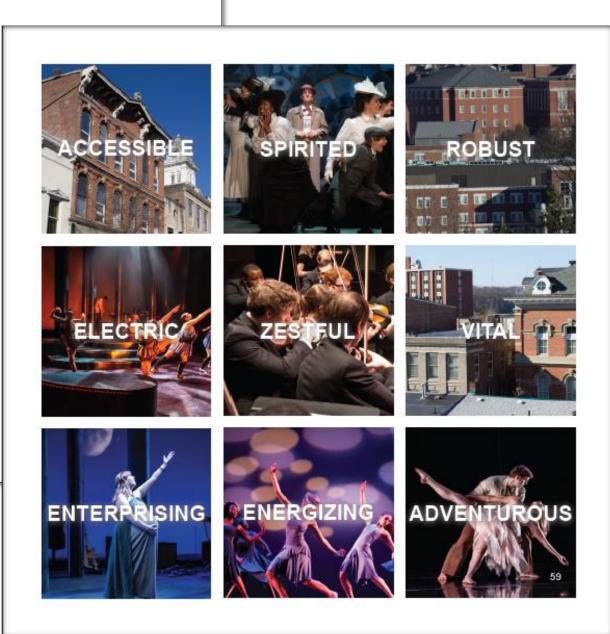




#### OUR LITTLE BIGNESS

... makes our little town feel like it's much bigger even though it is intimate and interconnected. A dynamic energy can be felt here that is more passionate than ambitious.

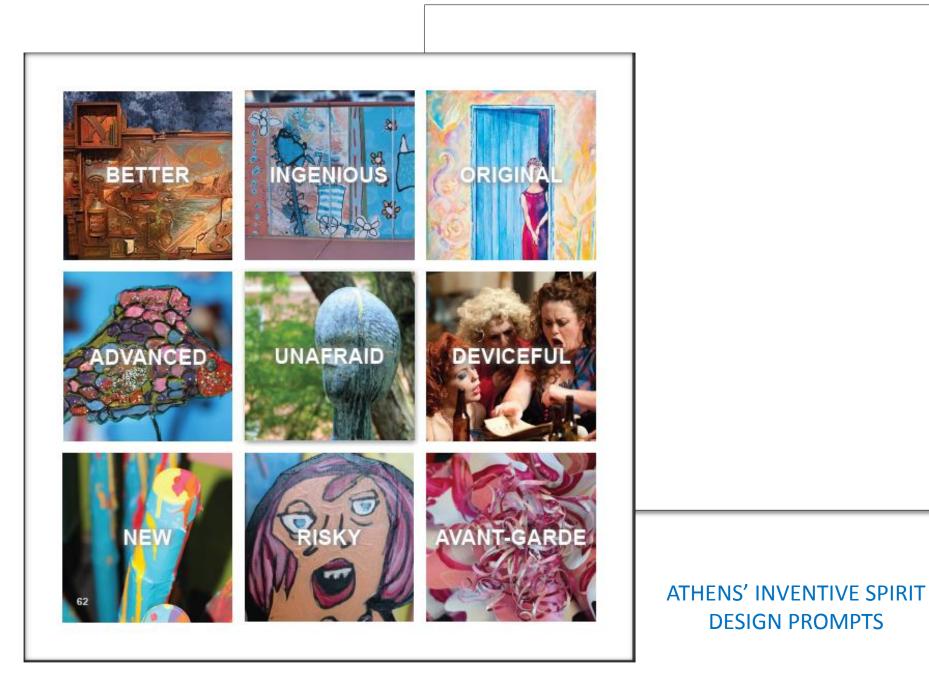




### OUR INVENTIVE SPIRIT

...shows in our originality, intellectual curiosity, and in our artistic, creative ingenuity.





### OUR ACCEPTING ATTITUDES

...make it easy to welcome diverse opinions and lifestyles, building on strengths. They also make our community accessible to all as we nurture ideas.





ACCEPTING ATTITUDES DESIGN PROMPTS

AT	Ή	Ε	N	S
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...EXPRESSIVE.

NATURAL.

SPONTANEOUS.



#### ATHENS HOMES

...has no specific style of architecture (we're too loose and creative to allow such things to happen), existing homes improved on in Athens should honor the Athens DNA and the Athens color palette.



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#### ATHENS DEVELOPMENT

...propose and build structures that stray from the usual prototype designs widely found in every other community.



## PART 2

# REINFORCING ATHENS

#### WORLD FAMOUS COURT STREET

Untold couples started their lives on Court Street, our most important and famous street for courting.



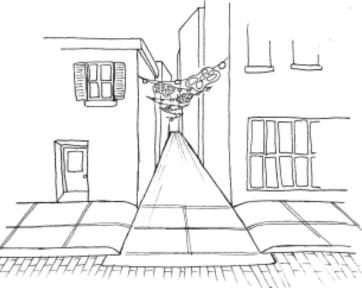








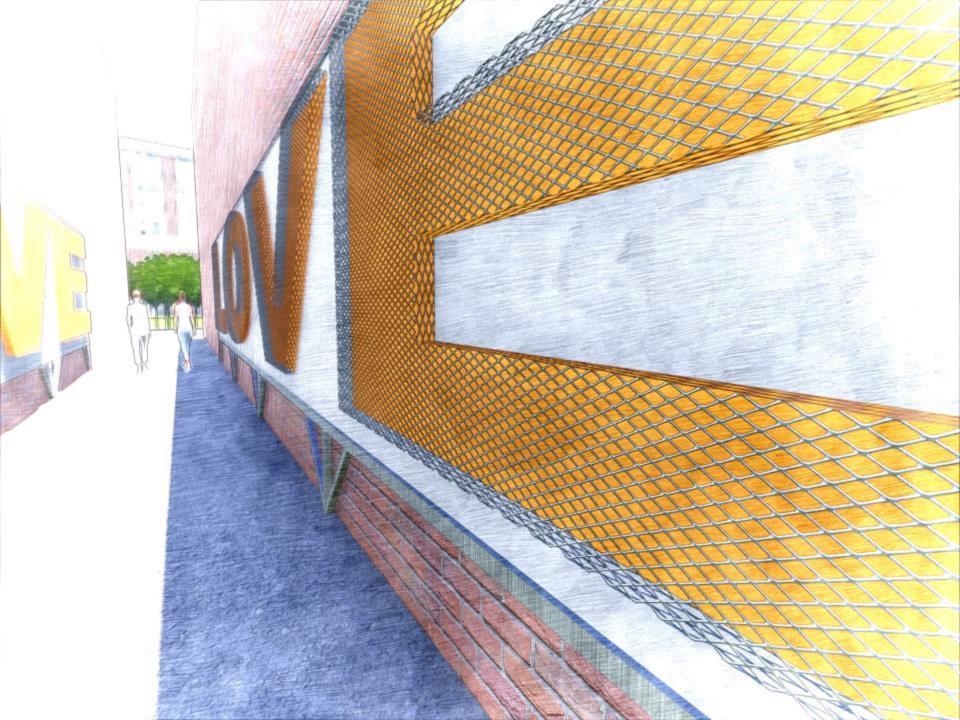










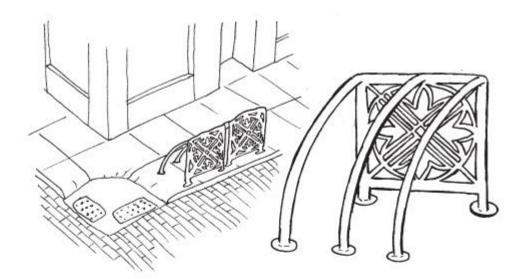


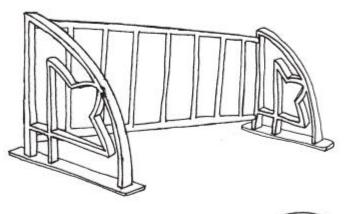
#### ATHENS BIKE RACKS

Athens deserves to have equally inspired bicycle infrastructure for us to park our cycles.

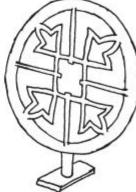






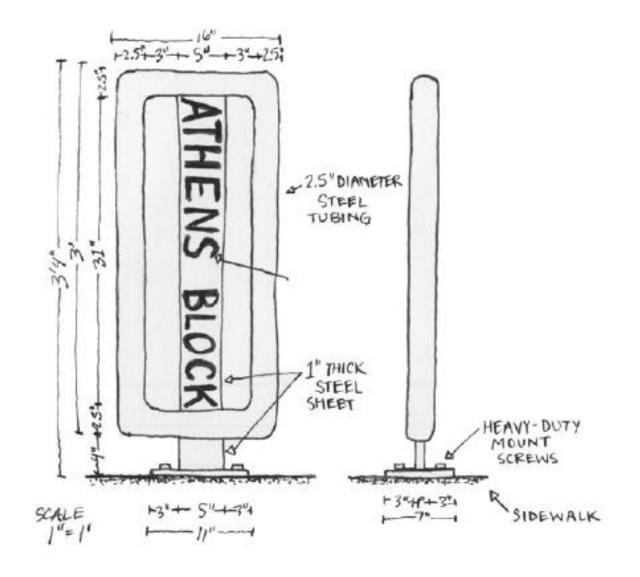


















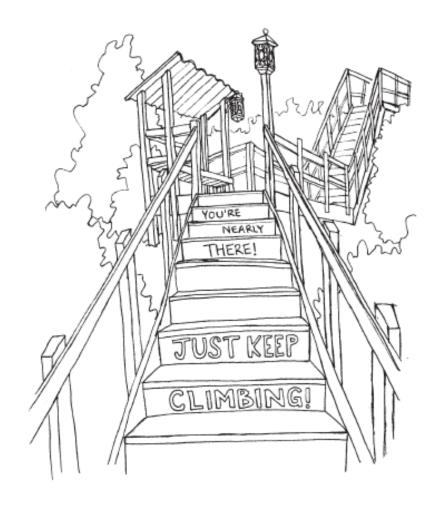


## ATHENS STAIR-WAYS

We have a unique opportunity to turn our current (and future) stairways into infrastructure we can love.









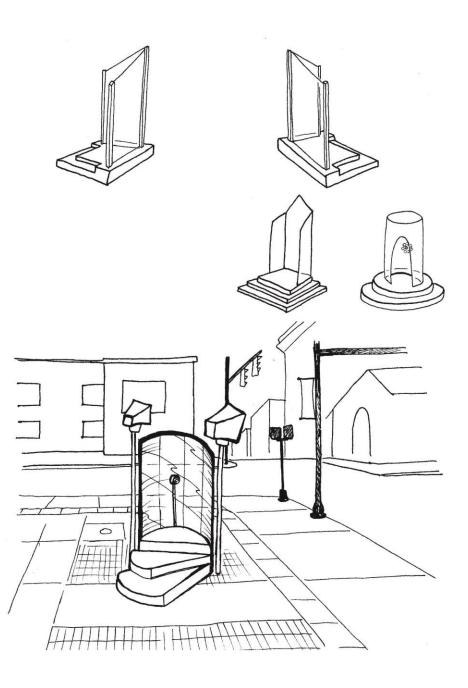


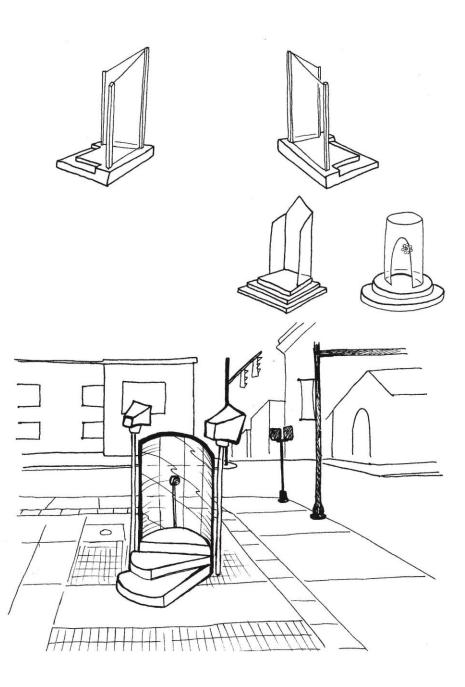


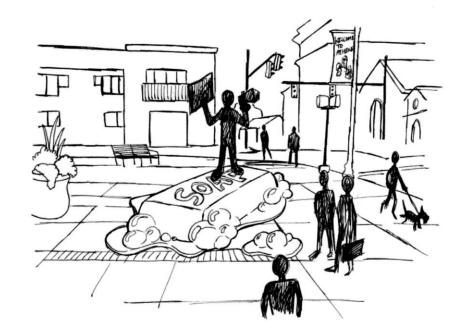
## ATHENS PROTEST SPACE

We love and appreciate free speech because each opinion has merit. We are open to new ideas and new ways of thinking about the world and we believe we can achieve change by speaking out.

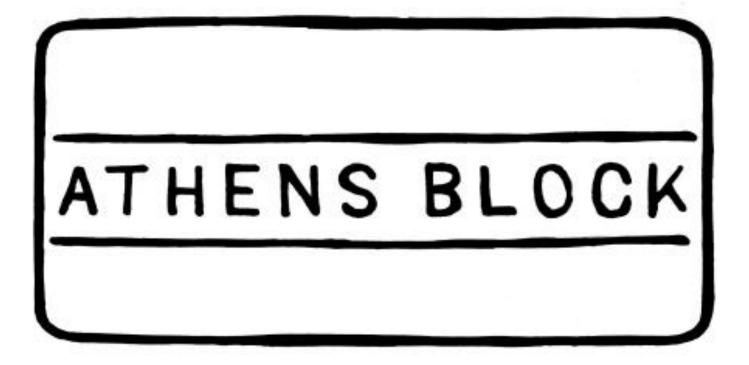




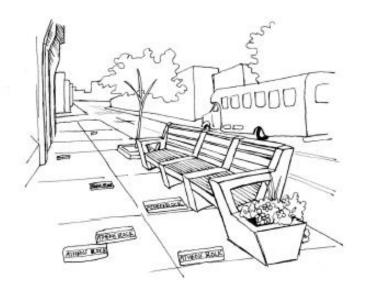








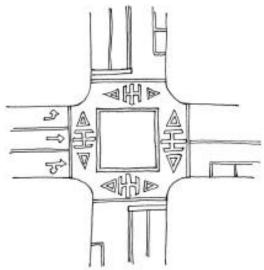


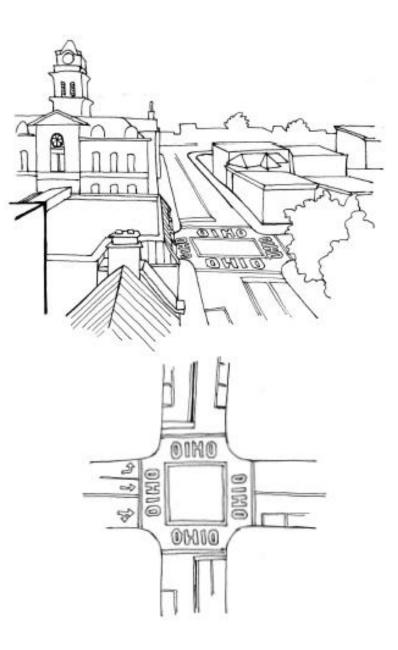








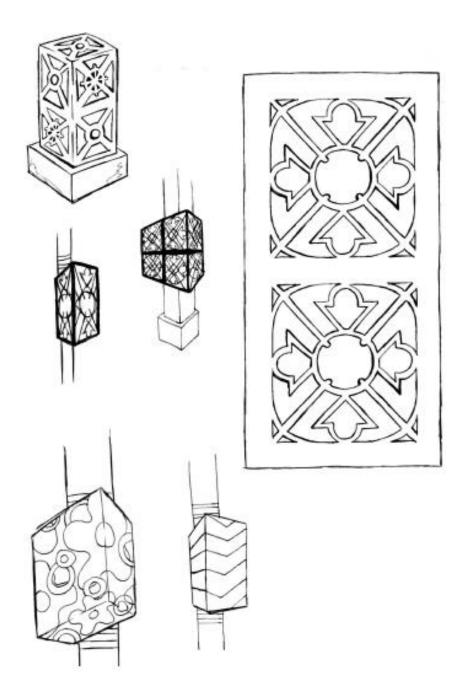


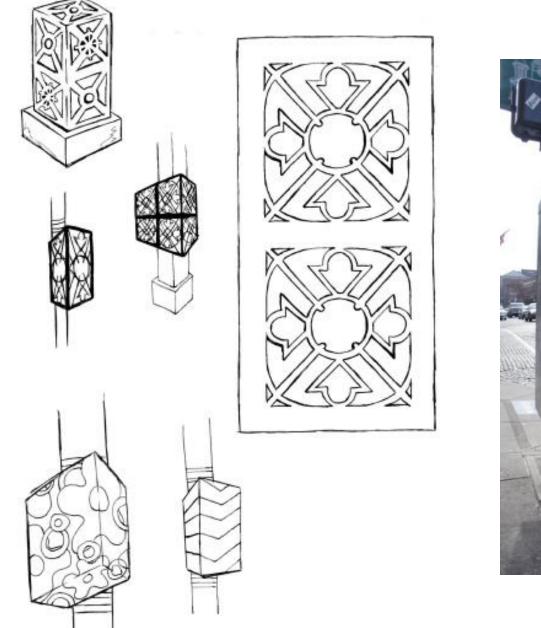




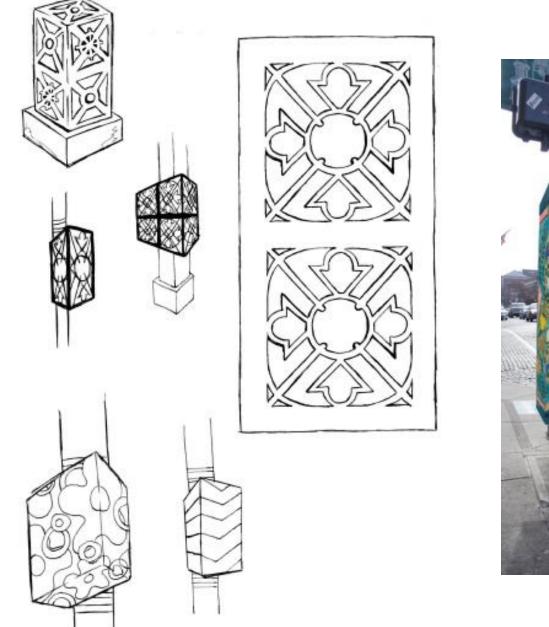




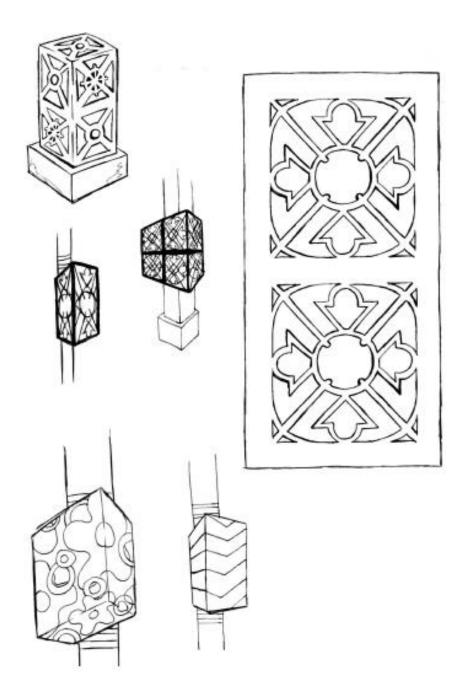


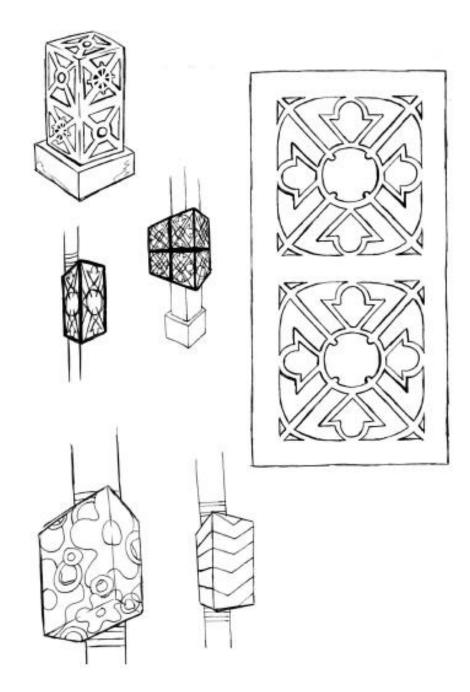




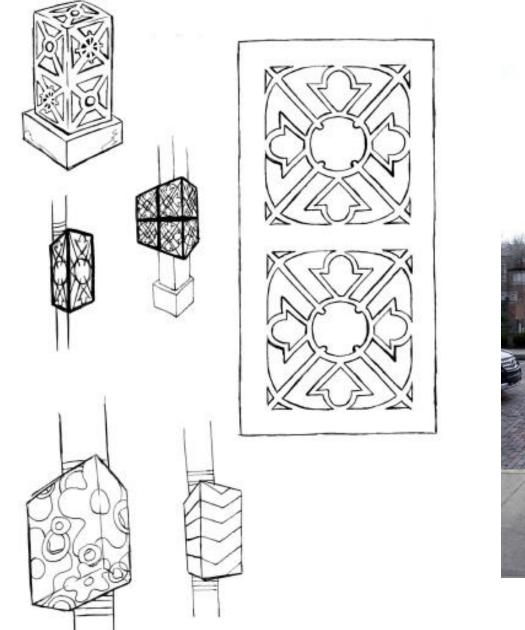




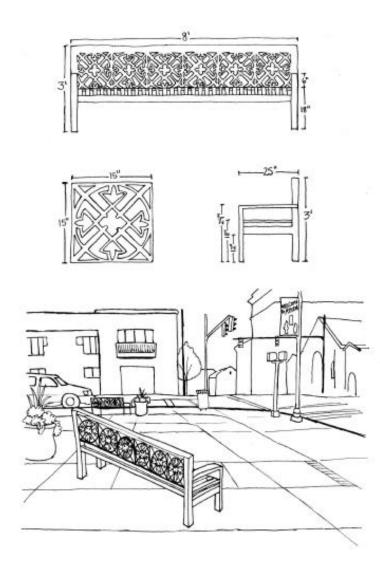


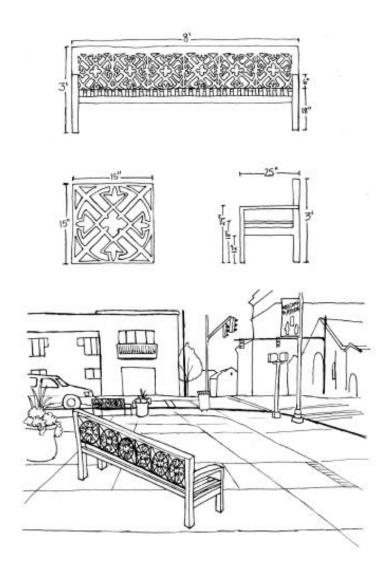


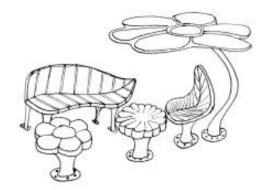




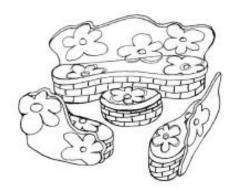


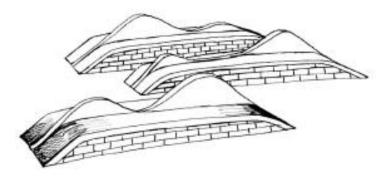


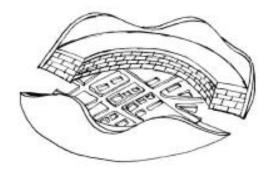


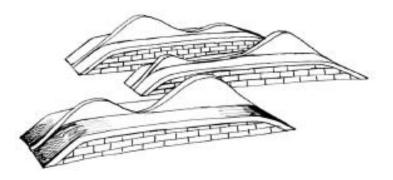




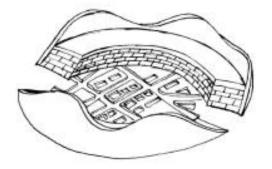


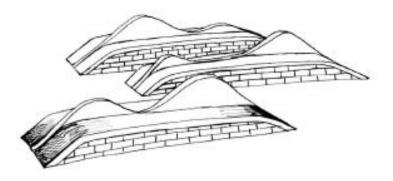


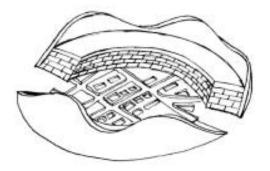


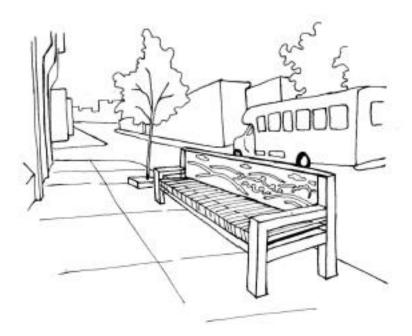


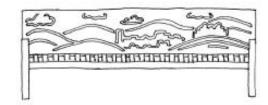


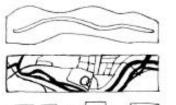




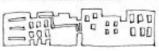










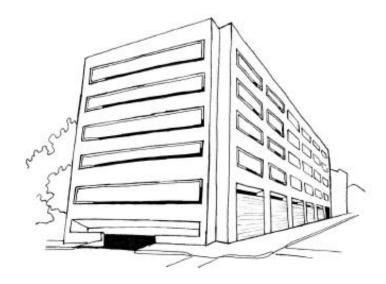




















## PART 3

## SHARE WITH THE WORLD



EXPLAIN EXPECTATIONS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS, LEADERS, THE STAFF OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, ATHENS COUNTY, AND OHIO UNIVERSITY.

EXPLAIN EXPECTATIONS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS, LEADERS, THE STAFF OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, ATHENS COUNTY, AND OHIO UNIVERSITY.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANT ROLE TO THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL ARTS COMMISSION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION.

EXPLAIN EXPECTATIONS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS, LEADERS, THE STAFF OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, ATHENS COUNTY, AND OHIO UNIVERSITY.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANT ROLE TO THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL ARTS COMMISSION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION.

TIE THE INFRASTRUCTURE IDEAS TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BUDGET.

EXPLAIN EXPECTATIONS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS, LEADERS, THE STAFF OF THE CITY OF ATHENS, ATHENS COUNTY, AND OHIO UNIVERSITY.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANT ROLE TO THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL ARTS COMMISSION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION.

TIE THE INFRASTRUCTURE IDEAS TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BUDGET.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY.

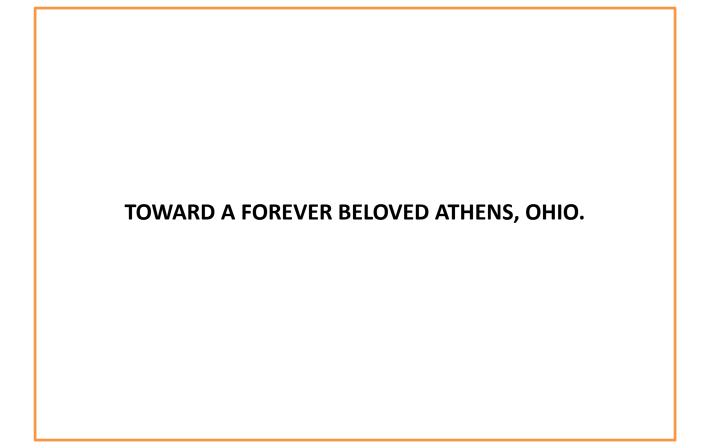


CITIZENS, INCLUDING OHIO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, SHOULD BE INVITED TO HELP IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN.

SCHOOL CHILDREN (THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY) SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BECOME INVOLVED WITH IMPLEMENTATION. CITIZENS, INCLUDING OHIO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, SHOULD BE INVITED TO HELP IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN.

SCHOOL CHILDREN (THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY) SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BECOME INVOLVED WITH IMPLEMENTATION.

WE SHOULD BRAG. WE TELL PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT, WHY, AND HOW WE ARE DOING ALL OF THIS.



## DESIGNING LOCAL PRIDE LEGACY PROSPERITY

DESIGNINGLOC KYLALEZOML, AICP, PRINCIPAL