

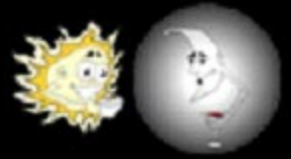
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	3
<i>Impressions</i>	
Vision - 24/7	6
<i>Issues and Opportunities</i>	
Patternbook Elements	9
Urban Designs	12
<i>Focus Area 1: Portal Area</i>	
<i>Focus Area 2: The Midsection</i>	
<i>Focus Area 3: Smallman Street</i>	
Making it Happen	24
Marketing the Strip	25
<i>Regional Entertainment District</i>	
<i>Neighborhood Festivals</i>	
Creative Places: Three Initiatives	27
<i>Brew House Case Study</i>	
<i>Creative Classrooms</i>	
<i>Turning Empty Space into Cool Space</i>	
Targeting Gropus for Economic Success	30
<i>People Matter</i>	
<i>Immigrants and the Pittsburgh Experience</i>	
And the Survey Says...	33
Where Do We Go From Here?	36
<i>Community Master Plan</i>	
<i>Business Improvement District</i>	
Take It From Us: A Model for Other Cities	37
Appendix	39



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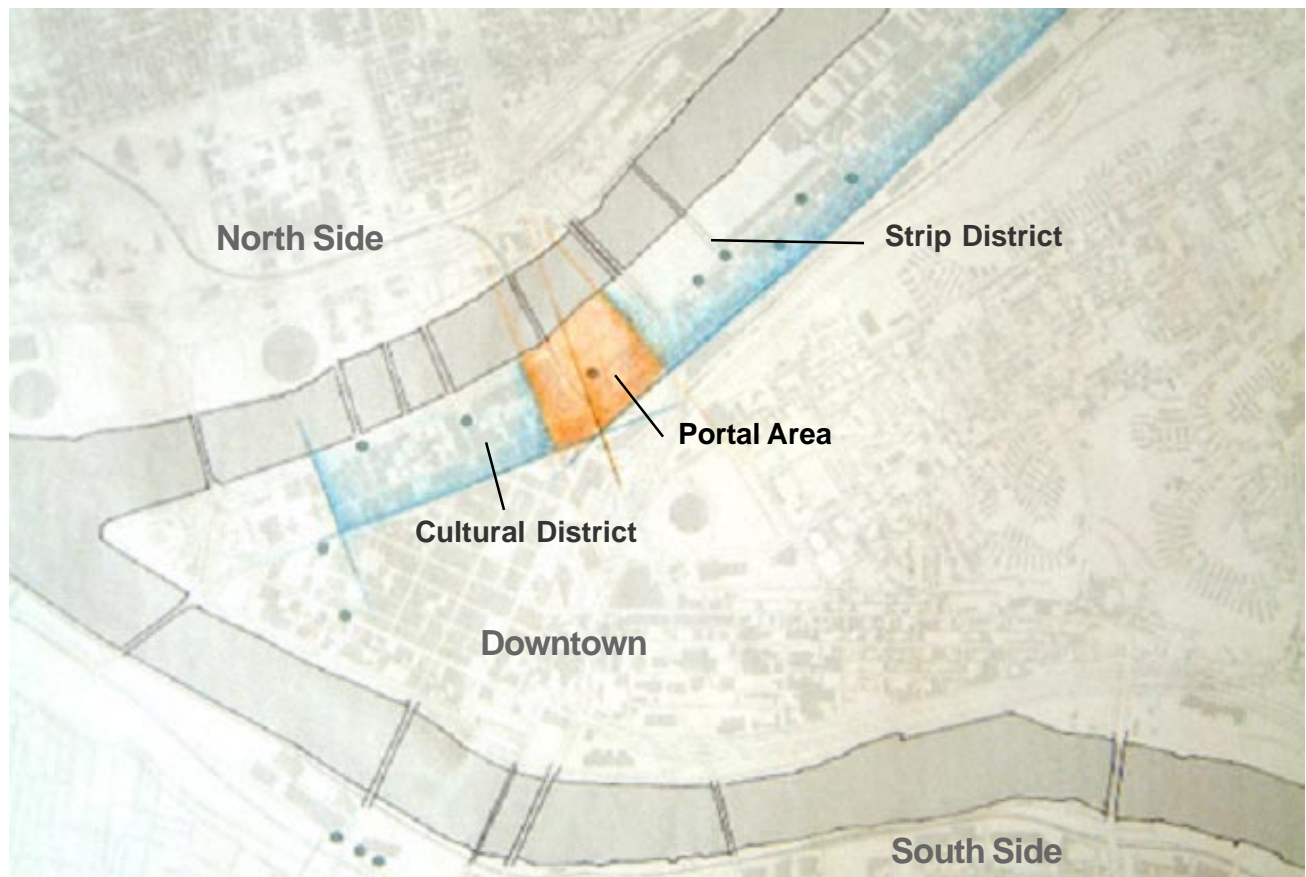
## INTRODUCTION

This project began with the idea of making Pittsburgh a city with a diverse, dynamic nightlife. This idea was built upon Erica Coslor's research on Carnegie Mellon University students' nightlife preferences and Elizabeth Currid's research on diversity. We chose the Strip District as the natural area for improving nightlife in the city and the project grew from there. With the addition of our two architecture students, our group offers a mixture of architecture, urban design and economic development expertise. As such, we feel that the best way to invigorate the Strip District is through a mixture of creative urban design, public policy and economic development measures.

The crucial step in moving this project forward was meeting with the community group Neighbors in the Strip, who's mission statement is to promote economic development opportunities while preserving the personality, integrity and character of the Strip. Our common goals make this working relationship particularly beneficial.

After choosing the Strip District as the focus for nightlife in the city, we began to collect our impressions of the area. This involved several trips to the area, photographing areas of interest, both good and bad.

*The Strip District in Context of the Area*





## IMPRESSIONS

From the perspective of entertainment, the Strip District has an ideal location for diverse activities: it is close to downtown, adjoins the established Cultural District, and is just across the river from the North Shore stadium area. Within these three areas lie a wide variety of entertainment options— theater, music, sports, bars, galleries, and shopping.



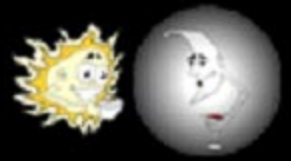
*Club Scene.*

The area draws many people at night to its various bars, clubs and restaurants. Crowds of people bar-hop and meet each other on the streets. The after dark atmosphere is boisterous and festive, although somewhat dampened in the cold winter months. It is this atmosphere of energy and entertainment that we wanted to enhance in the area.

But while many people mention nightlife when they are asked about the Strip District, it is important to realize that the daytime uses are just as much a part of its character. The coffee we drank at La Prima Espresso, the specialty food stores we visited for interviews, the flower sellers and the Saturday market are all integral parts of the fabric of this neighborhood.



*Dj Inspector 901.*



The key to the Strip District is its diversity, in both people and activities. We were impressed by the character of this area, because some members of our group had visited mostly during the night and others had visited mostly during the daytime. We realized that all of these activities happening around the clock create a greater gestalt. There is a flurry of activity and color during the daytime, remnants of which contribute to our impressions of the area in the nighttime.



*St. Stanislaus Kostka Church and Rectory*



*Whooley's Produce Warehouse*



*18th Street Vendors*



## VISION: **24/7** A DIVERSE, UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOOD

The various nightclubs, produce sellers, costume stores, restaurants and ethnic food stores are all important in creating the general gestalt of the Strip District. The feeling of the neighborhood is greater than just the sum of its parts. For this reason, improving the area is a complicated matter. While we want to encourage new uses and new residents, we do not want to push out the very elements that give this area its unique character.

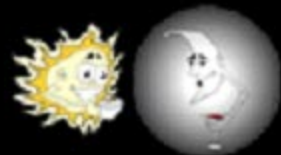
So the idea of 24/7 was born. We feel that marketing the area as the neighborhood that is “always awake, always on the go” is an ideal way to accommodate the existing uses of the area while at the same time bringing in a critical mass of new users and residents. The availability of diverse services and activities around the clock will be a draw for the area, particularly for students, artists, knowledge workers, and other people who work non-traditional hours.

Artists, students and high tech workers are alike in their long and odd hours. This makes living in a neighborhood that accommodates this lifestyle a benefit to their work. This is essentially the idea of on-demand entertainment and services that are easy to access due to their proximity and their late open-hours. An area with strong nightlife, such as the Strip District, is the perfect place to encourage a variety of nighttime activities, not just bars and clubs, but also coffeeshops, laundromats, restaurants, internet cafes and the like.

The types of people that we hope to attract to the area will be as diverse as the current mix of uses in the Strip District. Just as the neighborhood has diverse uses, so we hope that it will eventually have a diverse set of residents in order to create a dynamic, yet self-sustaining neighborhood. We are particularly concerned with bringing in artists, musicians, designers and other bohemians, as well



*Creative Graffiti Adorns the Armstrong Cork Building*



as minority groups. We feel that the private market will be able to take care of the upscale market, but it is these minority and marginalized groups who can round out the neighborhood to create a dynamic feeling of diversity in the area.

We feel that the Strip District can be a neighborhood of particular interest to these various groups because of the diverse mix of activities and the easy access to late night entertainment and services. It will also be attractive as more of these creative and diverse individuals come together in closer proximity, which means a greater possibility for stimulating interpersonal interaction. It also means that the area becomes attractive to others, as a unique destination in the city for creativity and entertainment. It is a complicated circle to create such an area, but those very contradictions are what make the area dynamic and attractive.

#### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are both issues and opportunities involved in this project. The good news is that there are several forces that are putting greater focus on Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, like the Strip District. The construction of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in the Cultural District is just such an opportunity. The city would like convention center visitors to leave with the best possible impression of the city, so improving this area is one way to do just that. There are ongoing revitalization efforts Downtown and in the Cultural District, with loft conversions and facade improvements.

Another key concern for the city is how to keep young people in the region. Although there are ongoing debates about the actual number of young people leaving or staying, it is generally agreed that



*Bringing People into the Strip District.*



*Creative Types Enjoy Nightlife.*



the city would like to retain the high talent workers who would be able to choose a job in another city if they did not feel that the Pittsburgh region was meeting their needs.

Nightlife, a key aspect of the Strip District, is one of the things that the city can encourage young people to stay in the area. In Coslor's prior survey of Carnegie Mellon Students, a full 88% indicated that a good nightlife positively affects how they feel about a city and a full 62% felt that Pittsburgh did not have a good nightlife.\*

Nightlife is just one of many amenities that young people look for in a city, but it is indicative of the lifestyle choices that people make in our geographically mobile new economy. The Strip District, with diversity, dynamism and amenities, can be a place for these people to find lifestyle choices, entertainment and an area where they feel accepted.

### Project Goals

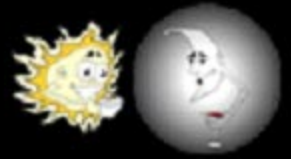
- Diversity
- "Urban" Lifestyle
- "Young" and Creative People
- Self-Sustaining Neighborhood
- Maintaining the Essential Character of the Strip District

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\* Full nightlife report is available from *Neighbors in the Strip* or from Erica Coslor ([ecoslor@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ecoslor@andrew.cmu.edu)).

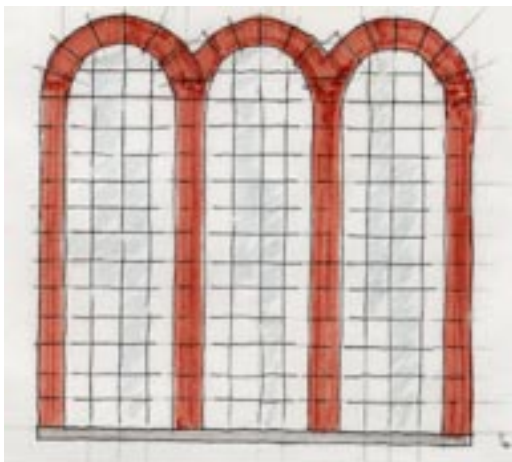


*Young People Want Nightlife!*



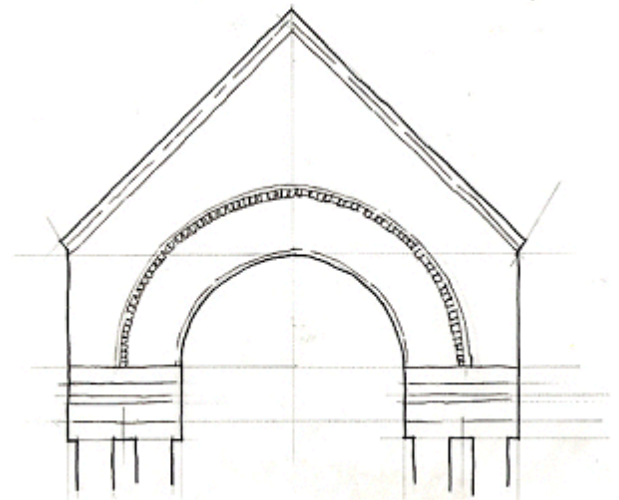
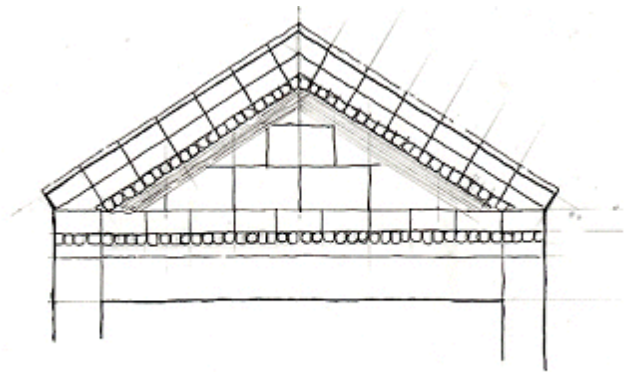
## PATTERNBOOK ELEMENTS IN THE STRIP

The Strip District has many positive attributes to draw upon for urban design purposes. Perhaps one of the most crucial is the wonderful architecture of buildings in the area, with their patternbook details. These buildings can be renovated to be used again or converted for new uses, while retaining the spirit of its previous use.



*Combining Windows for Increased Light.*

*Decorative Brickwork frames windows.*



*Arches and Triangles for Entryways and Windows.*



## INDUSTRIAL FEELING



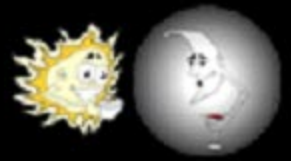
*Armstrong Cork Building.*



*Factory Details from Brew House Building.*



The industrial, factory feeling of the Strip District is integral to its character. This is a use that continues today. To honor this history, our plan used the various architectural details to inform our designs for both old and new buildings. Illustrating some of these elements shows the process of how the designs came about. The urban designs in the following section integrate old and new uses and buildings.



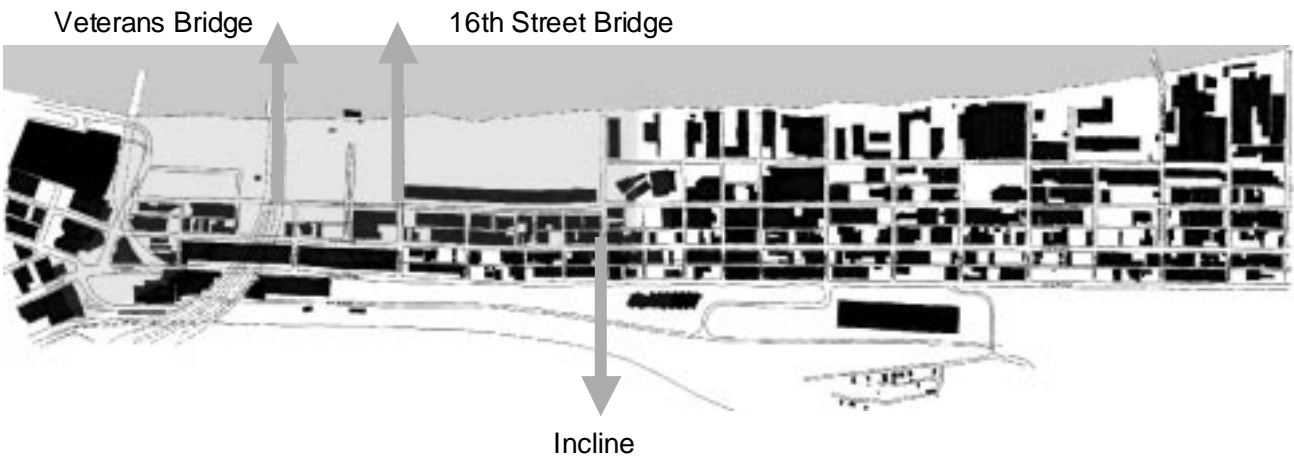
*The Pennsylvania.*



*Wholey's Cold Storage Building.*



*Armstrong Cork Entryway.*



*Strip District Project Area with Connections to North Side and Hill District.*

## URBAN DESIGNS

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We have divided the Strip District into three areas of focus, the first one adjoining the Cultural District and moving north from there. Although many neighborhoods create a comprehensive plan for the entire area, we felt that we needed to concentrate on a few areas in order to go into greater detail. We chose these sections leading from the Cultural District to the heart of the Strip District because these are the key entrypoints into the Strip from Downtown and create a pathway of interest to bring people into the center of the neighborhood.