Aesthetics and LPA’s

Integrating Aesthetics into Local Projects

Ed Kagel, PE - Director of Transportation, EMH&T

Ohio Department of Transportation
Why Aesthetics Are Important To Local Communities:

- Community “brand/presence”
- Civic and social elements
- Pride and ownership
- Economic development
Balancing aesthetics with design, construction, and maintenance costs:

- What are the goals of the project?
- How much budget is available for the improvements?
- What elements provide the desired results at the least cost?
- Once the improvements are in place, who maintains the enhancements?

Simple design elements can enhance a project - without extensive costs:

- Formliner (Appendix B-2)
- Stamped concrete
- Plantings
- Ornamental Lighting Fixtures

Design Challenges:

- Scope, client expectation, and costs to deliver
Planning Phase Considerations: Goals, Schedule, Costs:

- Each project is different and is unique to each owner
- Projects benefit from open communication with the client and stakeholders to fully vet realistic and cost effective solutions
- The best outcome to the project and community is not losing sight of the goal, while keeping expectations tempered to available funding
- Appendix A - Forms and Checklists
  - Aesthetic Strategy Checklist (A1)
  - Aesthetic Funding Assessment Form (A2)
  - Aesthetic Design Checklist (A3)
- Designer Guidance -> Stakeholder Concurrence -> Project Success
Goals:

- Sit down with the client and brainstorm ideas to identify the “goals” of the project
- Get to know the community, the project setting, and start to envision how concepts can be developed (Strategy Checklist -> A1)

- Often, architects, artists, or other graphic design professionals are involved in the project
- Early and frequent communication are critical to a project’s success
- With the goals identified, how do these “ideas” align with the schedule?
Schedule:

- Understand how the schedule aligns with the “added features”
- Environmental Clearance -> Do the features affect the timeline for CE approval?
  - Footprint changed -> Commitment to historical significance affected
  - Public Involvement -> Do additional public meetings need to be considered?
    - Strategy Checklist -> A1
- ROW -> Do the added features affect existing ROW?
  - Planting beds, structural features, plazas
    - Strategy Checklist -> A3
- Utilities -> Do the additional elements affect utilities?
  - Overhead or underground obstructions, drainage, BMP’s
    - Strategy Checklist -> A3
Costs:

- Probably the most important question - “How much is this going to cost?”
  - As the designer, this is often difficult to determine
  - Many elements affect the final costs: material, location, schedule, etc.
  - Work with industry suppliers, contractors, and peers to vet realistic costs with concepts - often throughout the process
  - Many times, similar projects have been built throughout the State (or region) and can provide valuable insight into “affordability”
  - Strategy Checklist -> A3

Aesthetic Design Guidelines
Aesthetics at ODOT
Aesthetic Design Guidelines
Aesthetics at ODOT

Vision to Reality:

- During the planning phase, being organized and establish well documented workflows
  - This will significantly ease the transition from concept to reality
- Ensure the aesthetic features are “accepted” by the client prior to beginning design
- Understand and vet the added features with applicable design criteria and guidelines before beginning final design
  - Sight distance, clear zone, drainage, etc
- With a well-planned “concept” final design, delivery, and client expectations are readily achieved
Questions?

Contact:
Ed Kagel, PE
Evans, Mechwart, Hambleton & Tilton (EMH&T)
(614) 775-4600
ekagel@emht.com