



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:

A NEW UNITY BEACON FOR CENTRAL CITY

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16 January 2026

Ms. Lee Modica,  
Public Art Administration  
City of Fort Lauderdale

Members of the Selection Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our letter of interest for the Central City Public Art Project at the 13th Street Roundabout. We appreciate the City's continued commitment to public art as a civic instrument that reflects community identity, shared values, and the evolving character of Fort Lauderdale's neighborhoods.

Our proposal, titled Community Connections, is conceived as a site-specific replacement for the existing artwork at the roundabout and as a meaningful continuation of its original intent. The sculpture is envisioned as a vertical, woven landmark composed of individual elements gathered into a single form. Each piece rises independently while contributing to a collective structure, expressing unity through difference and reflecting the lived experience of a diverse and interconnected community.

The roundabout setting is fundamental to the concept. Community Connections is designed as a fully 360-degree artwork, intended to be experienced in motion as pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers move around it. The subtle twist and layered arrangement of the vertical elements create a perceptual sense of movement, allowing the sculpture to reveal itself gradually from every approach. This dynamic quality reinforces the idea of connection, circulation, and shared space that defines both the site and the surrounding neighborhood.

At a civic scale, the sculpture establishes a clear and recognizable marker within the Central City district. Its height allows it to rise above the surrounding low-scale buildings, providing orientation and visibility without overwhelming the neighborhood context. At the pedestrian level, the form opens and remains visually permeable, maintaining transparency, safety, and a welcoming presence within the public realm.

Our team brings extensive experience working with municipalities, fabricators, and engineers to deliver durable, well-crafted public works that respond thoughtfully to their context. We are committed to creating an artwork that is resilient, maintainable, and appropriate for Florida's climate, while remaining expressive, contemporary, and rooted in community values.

We would be honored to further develop Community Connections for the City of Fort Lauderdale and to continue the dialogue with residents, stakeholders, and the Public Art and Placemaking Advisory Board. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to participate in this important project.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Scarpa, FAIA  
Principal, Brooks Scarpa Huber Architects



# CONCEPT PROPOSAL

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

# Community Connections

A New Unity Beacon for Central City  
Concept Description



Community Connections is a site-specific public artwork that transforms reclaimed civic materials into a powerful symbol of unity, outreach, and shared movement. Located at the heart of the NE 13th Street roundabout, the sculpture builds upon the legacy of the former Unity Beacon while reinterpreting its meaning through the language of connection—between people, neighborhoods, and the City of Fort Lauderdale.

The artwork is composed of a vertical bundle of slender aluminum elements that gently converge at the center and flare outward at both the top and bottom. This formal gesture evokes reaching arms, pathways, and lines of movement—an abstract representation of how communities come together, extend outward, and remain connected across differences. At its core, the sculpture suggests that unity is not static or singular, but dynamic and directional: something that is continually formed through interaction and exchange.

Where the original Unity Beacon served as a marker of collective aspiration, Community Connections reframes unity as an active process. The sculpture's form reflects the daily flows of the surrounding streets, sidewalks, and neighborhoods—people arriving from multiple directions, intersecting briefly, and continuing onward. The roundabout itself becomes a metaphor for shared space, and the sculpture at its center becomes a visual anchor for that movement.

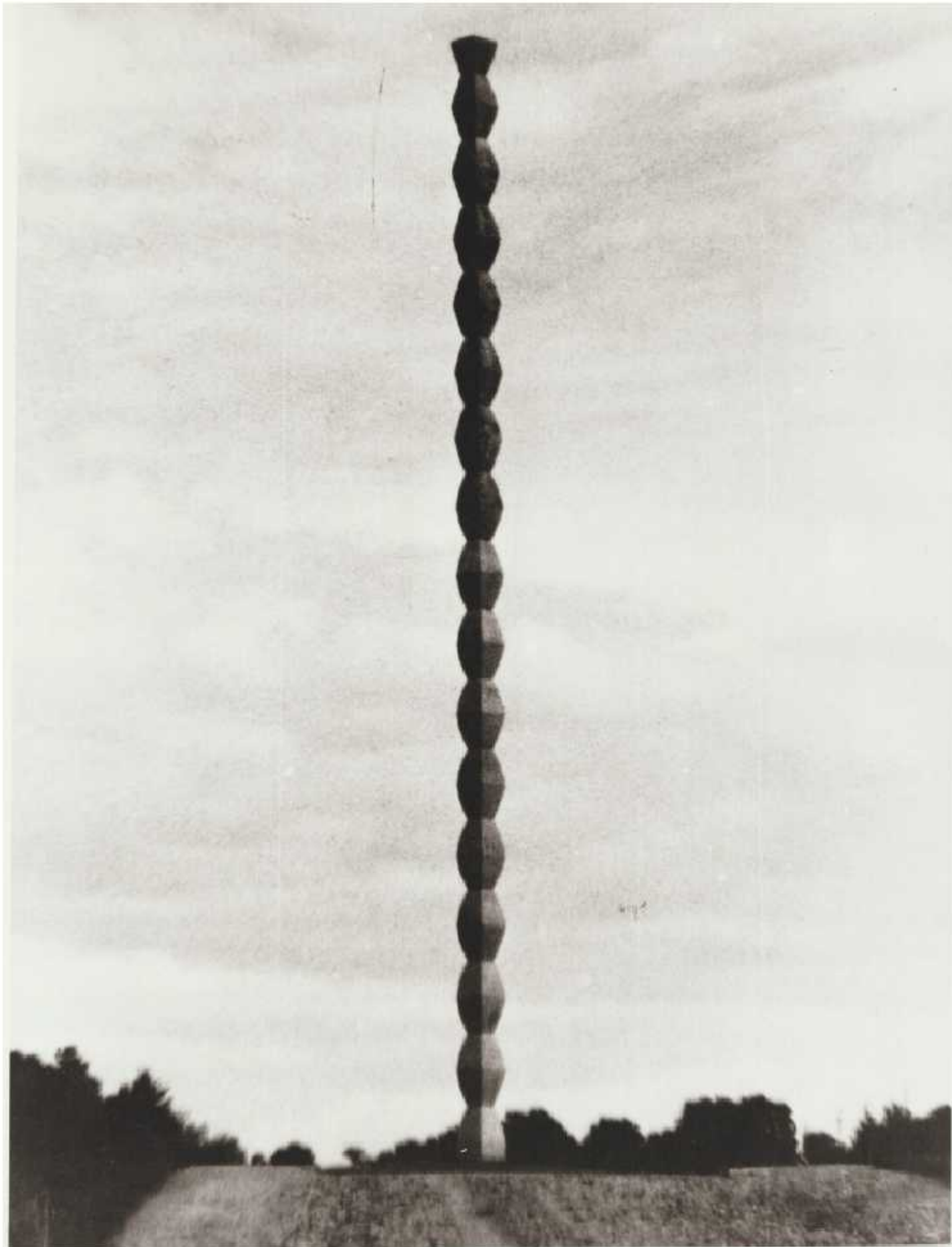
The work incorporates reclaimed municipal materials, including recycled aluminum pipe and retired civic infrastructure. These elements—once used to guide traffic, mark boundaries, and regulate movement—are reassembled into a structure that emphasizes openness and connectivity rather than division. Each individual element retains subtle variations in finish, color, and

patina, reflecting the diversity of the Central City community while contributing to a cohesive and unified whole.

Formally, Community Connections is intentionally abstract and contemporary. The repetition of vertical elements creates a strong and recognizable silhouette visible from all approaches, while the flared geometry reinforces the idea of outward engagement and inward gathering. From a distance, the sculpture reads as a bold civic beacon. At closer range, the individual components reveal their material history, inviting curiosity and personal interpretation.

Sustainability and resilience are integral to the project's conception. By repurposing durable aluminum materials, the sculpture embodies principles of reuse, adaptability, and environmental responsibility. Engineered to withstand South Florida's climate, the artwork is designed for longevity, low maintenance, and continued relevance as the neighborhood evolves.

Community Connections is ultimately about shared presence and collective strength. While composed of many individual elements, the sculpture stands as a single form—symbolizing how Central City, Middle River Terrace, and the broader Fort Lauderdale community are shaped by many paths, voices, and experiences converging in one place. Positioned at a literal and symbolic crossroads, the artwork serves as a reminder that the city is strongest when its connections are visible, celebrated, and continually renewed.

Constantin Brancusi, *The Endless Column at Tirgu-Jiu*, c.1937-8Brooks Scarpa Huber Architects, *Angle Lake*, 2017Constantin Brancusi, *Ink sketch for The Endless Column*, 1937

## Project Inspiration

Constantin Brancusi's *Endless Column* serves as a foundational touchstone for Community Connections, specifically in its pursuit of the "axis mundi"—a vertical link between the earthly and the infinite. Carved for the Târgu Jiu ensemble in Romania, Brancusi's masterpiece utilizes a repetitive, modular geometry of rhomboidal shapes that suggest a rhythmic, upward pulse; implying that the form could continue indefinitely beyond the viewer's field of vision. This project adopts that same modular spirit, utilizing a "vertical bundle" of aluminum elements to achieve a sense of monumental continuity. However, where Brancusi sought a spiritual transcendence through a single, repeating solid, Community Connections reinterprets this verticality through the lens of modern civic engagement.

Community Connections utilizes a bundle of aluminum elements to form a recognizable silhouette. This repetition acts as a visual pulse, mirroring the daily movement of traffic and pedestrians while transforming industrial materials into a poetic reflection of urban life. The work reinterprets Brancusi's concept of expansion by challenging the physical limits of the form. The *Endless Column* is famous for its lack of a traditional base or capital, suggesting it is a fragment of a structure stretching infinitely into the sky. Community Connections translates this metaphysical idea into a social one: the flared geometry reaching outward at the top and bottom echoes that "endless" quality. It symbolizes a dynamic system constantly extending its reach.

This project mirrors Brancusi's mastery of material transformation, elevating raw components to the level of the sublime. By repurposing retired municipal infrastructure into a sophisticated beacon, the sculpture performs a feat of "civic alchemy." It shifts the dialogue from spiritual infinity to social sustainability, reinforcing the belief that community connections—much like the recycled aluminum—can be reclaimed, renewed, and perpetually evolved.

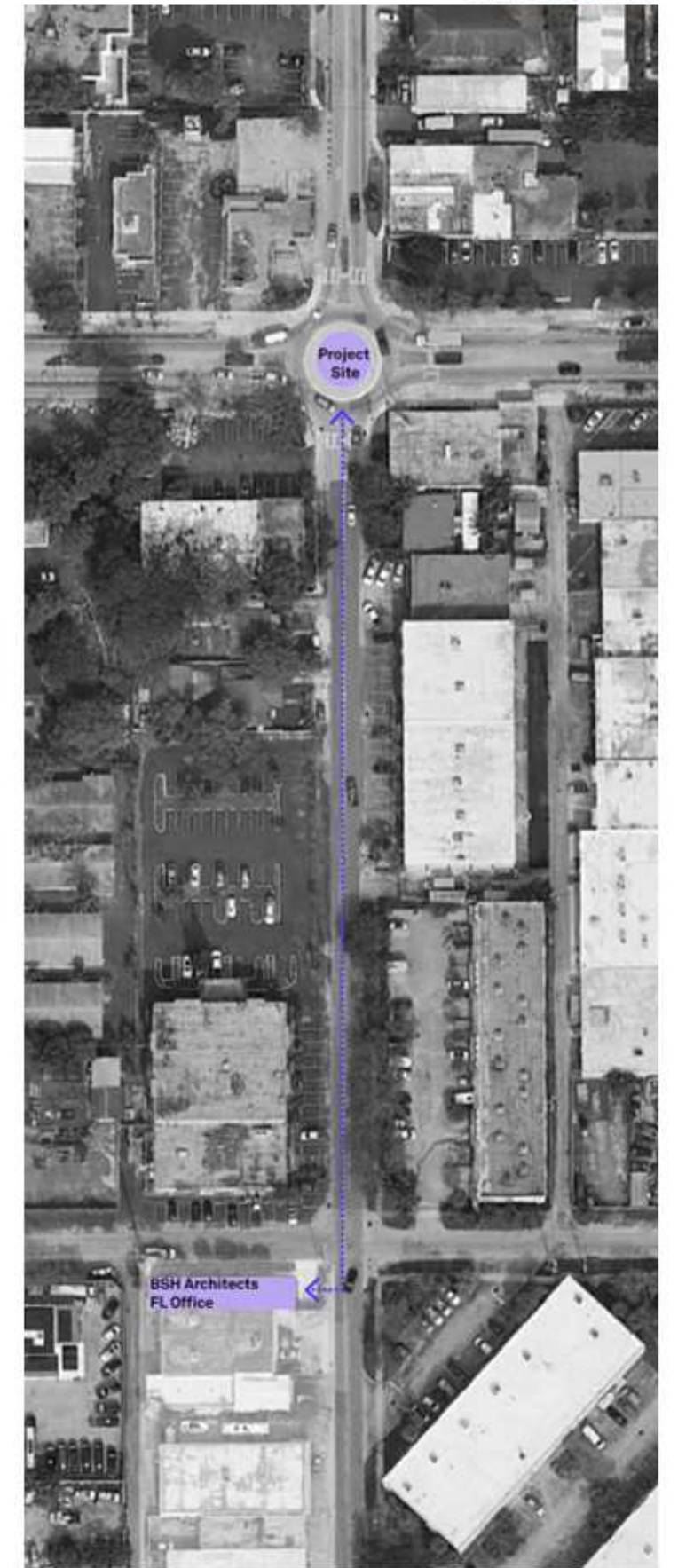


## Context & Proximity

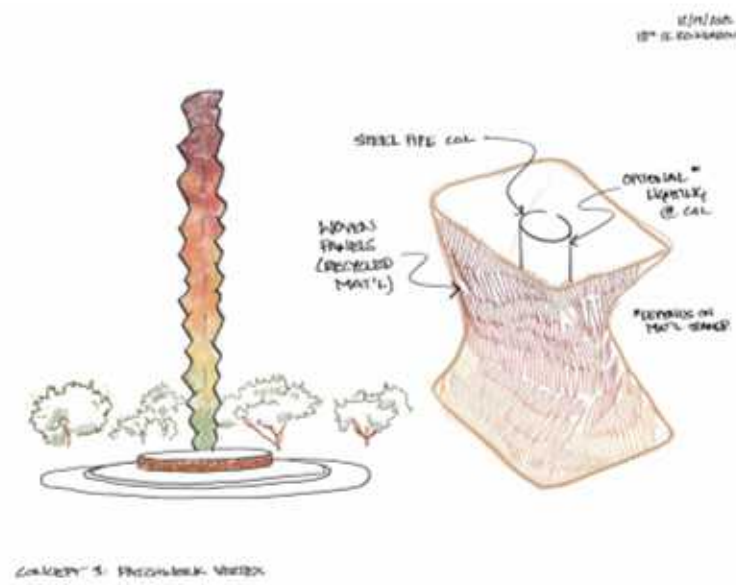
Community Connections is a site-specific public artwork. Located at the heart of the NE 13th Street roundabout in Fort Lauderdale, Community Connections is composed of a vertical bundle of slender aluminum elements that converge at the center and flare outward, the sculpture evokes reaching arms and lines of movement. This formal gesture serves as an abstract representation of how communities come together and remain connected across differences. Embodying this spirit of collaboration, local residents and volunteers gathered to hand-paint the individual tubes, transforming the fabrication process into a shared act of creation. Reinterpreting the legacy of the former Unity Beacon, the artwork reframes unity as an active, dynamic process rather than a static state, acting as a visual anchor for the daily flows of the surrounding neighborhoods.



The project's significance is further illustrated through two key spatial narratives. The first highlights the sculpture's role as a social nexus, where multiple routes from Central City and Middle River Terrace converge radially at the roundabout, weaving the community together at a literal crossroads. The second narrative emphasizes the design team's intimate relationship with the site, noting that the sculpture is situated just a three-minute walk from the BSH Architects Fort Lauderdale office. This proximity highlights the sculpture as a neighborly contribution to the civic fabric, born from a deep commitment to the firm's own local "backyard."

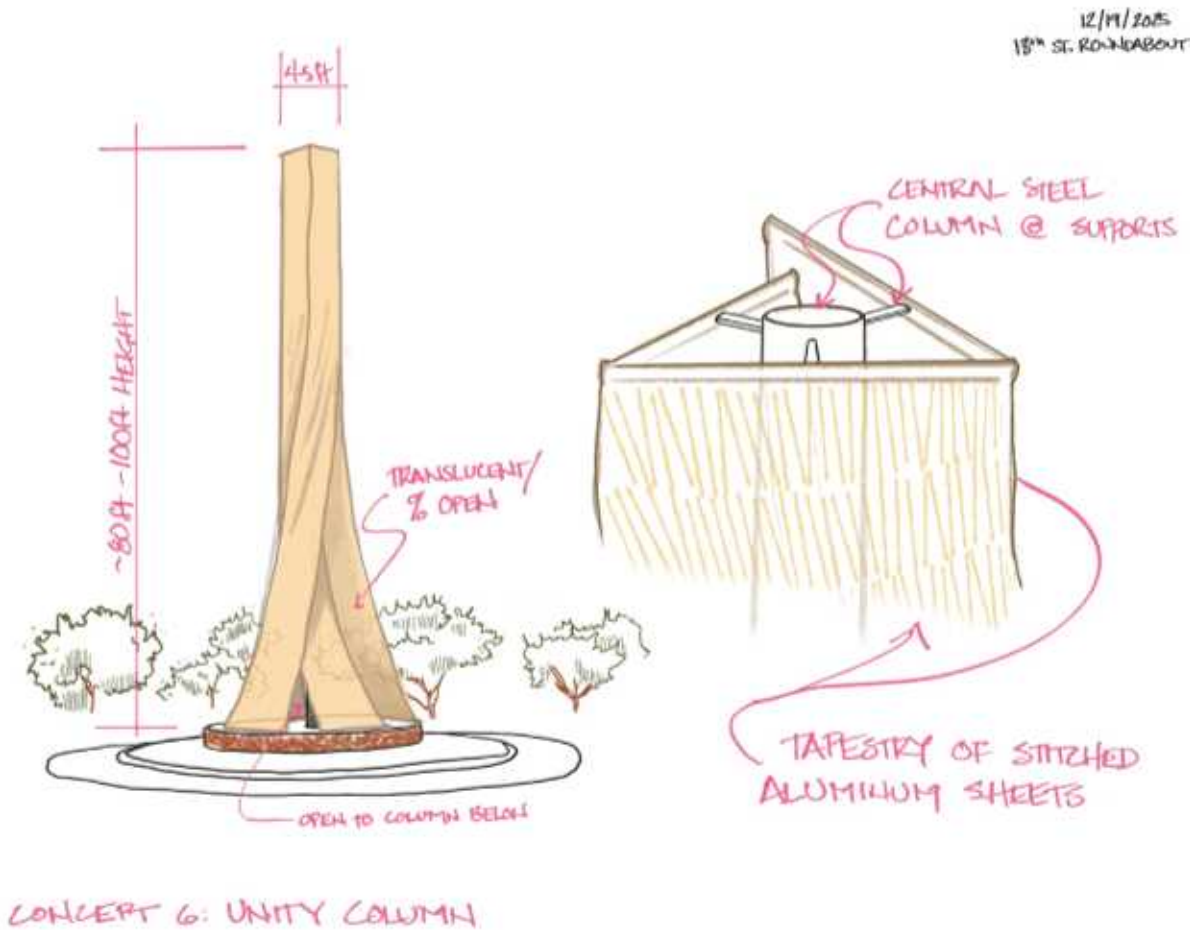


# ITERATIVE DESIGN PROCESS



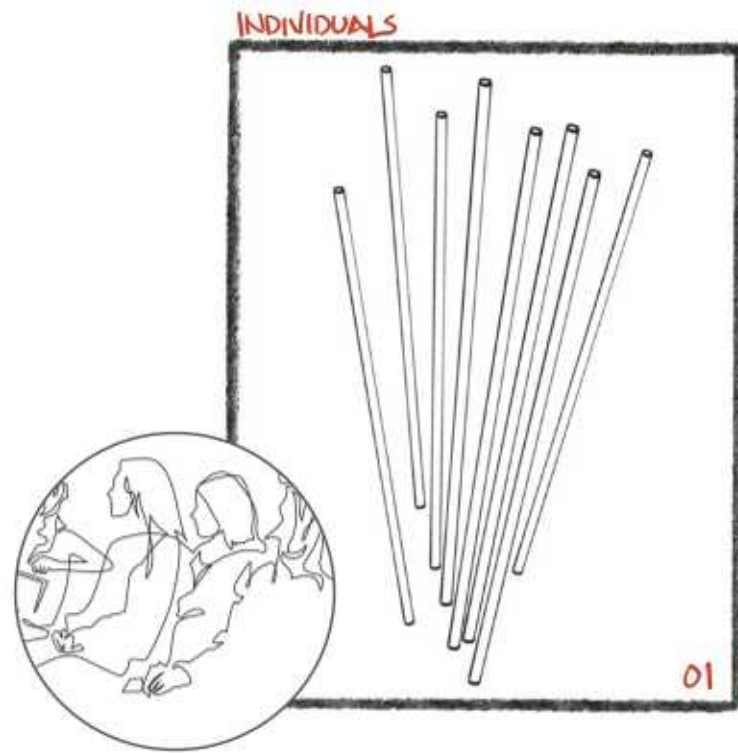
The design presented here is the result of an extensive and rigorous iterative process. Numerous formal, material, and conceptual directions were explored in response to the site, the roundabout condition, and the community's aspirations for an iconic yet appropriate landmark. Early studies tested variations in height, density, transparency, color, and structural logic, as well as different approaches to how the sculpture might meet the ground, engage the pedestrian, and perform visually from all directions.

Throughout this process, particular attention was given to movement, perception, and durability. Concepts ranged from tightly bundled vertical forms to more open, flared geometries; from solid massing to porous assemblies; and from singular surfaces to layered systems that reveal depth through overlap. Each iteration was evaluated for its ability to balance civic presence with neighborhood scale, symbolic clarity with abstraction, and expressive form with long-term resilience.

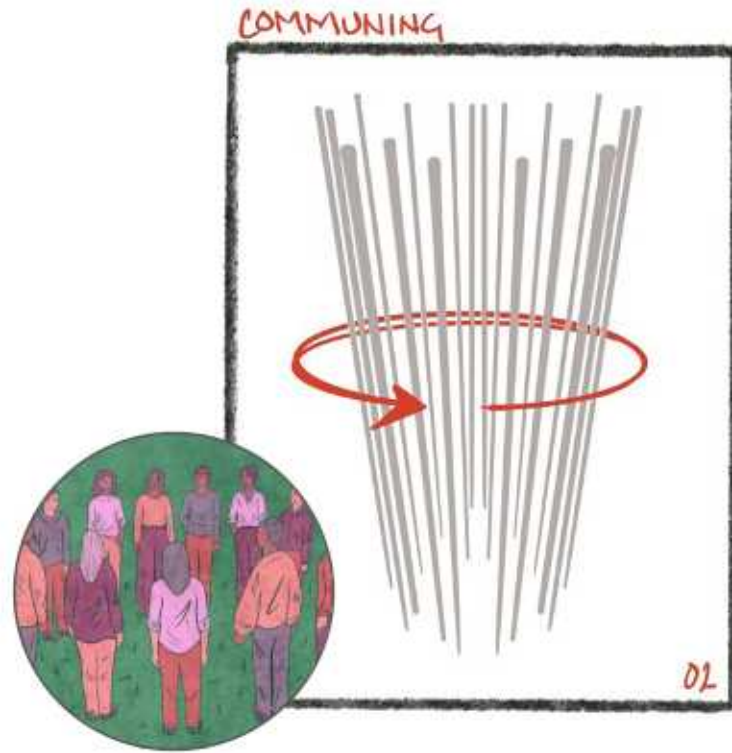


CONCEPT 6: UNITY COLUMN

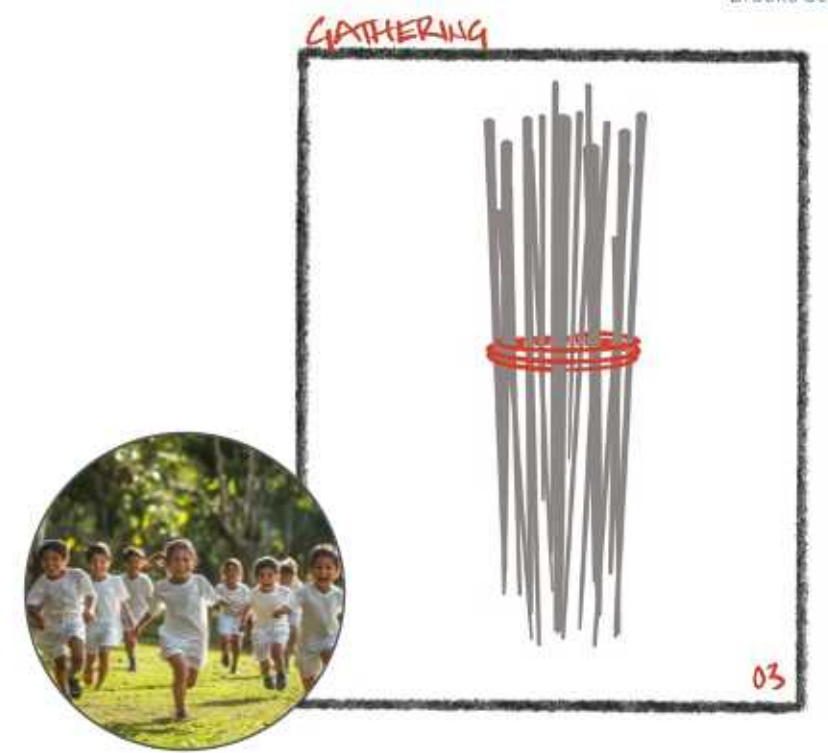




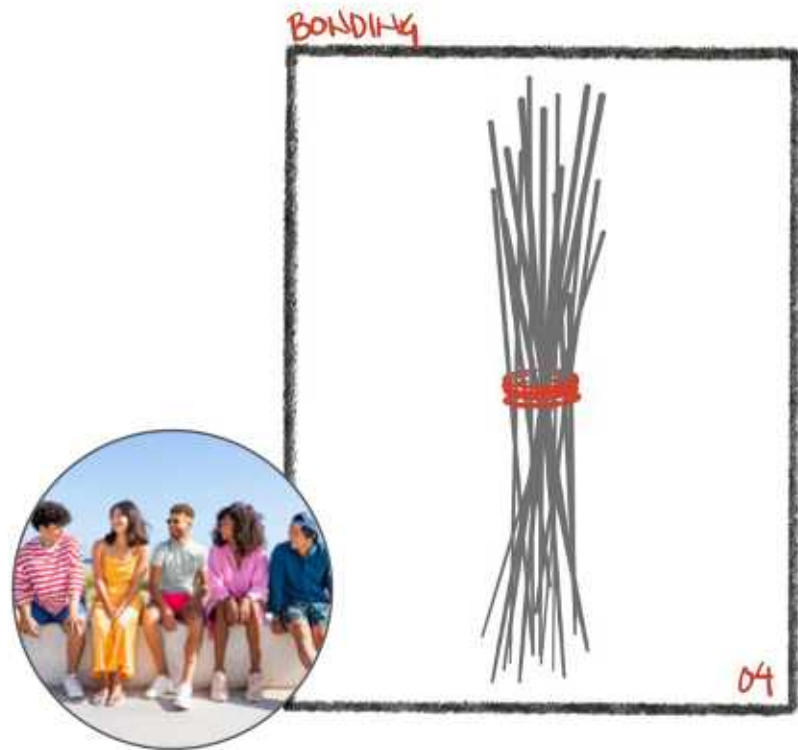
The process begins with separate, slender aluminum pipes. Each element stands alone, representing the diverse paths, voices, and neighborhoods of Fort Lauderdale before they intersect.



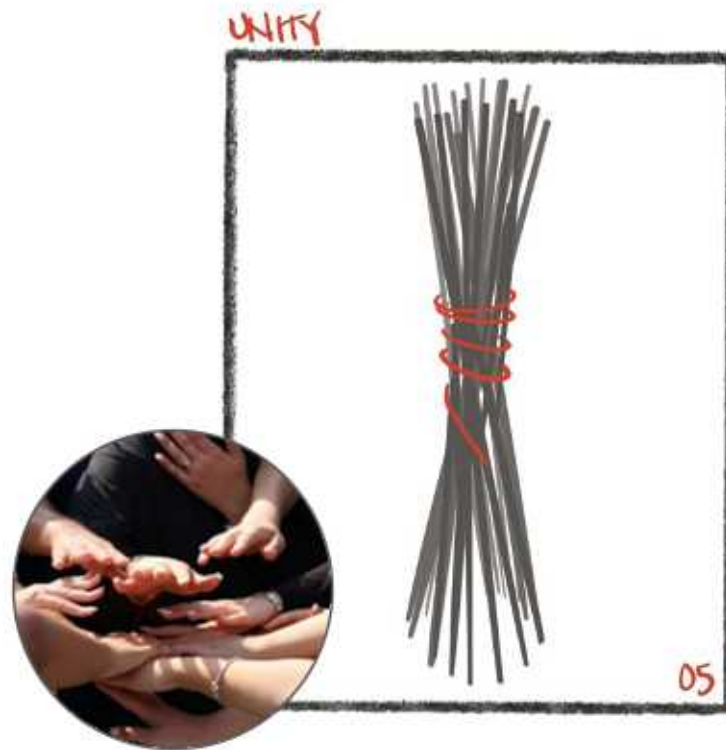
A dynamic red arrow indicates movement and intentionality. The individual elements begin to gravitate toward a common center, reflecting the daily flow of people from surrounding streets and neighborhoods toward a shared space.



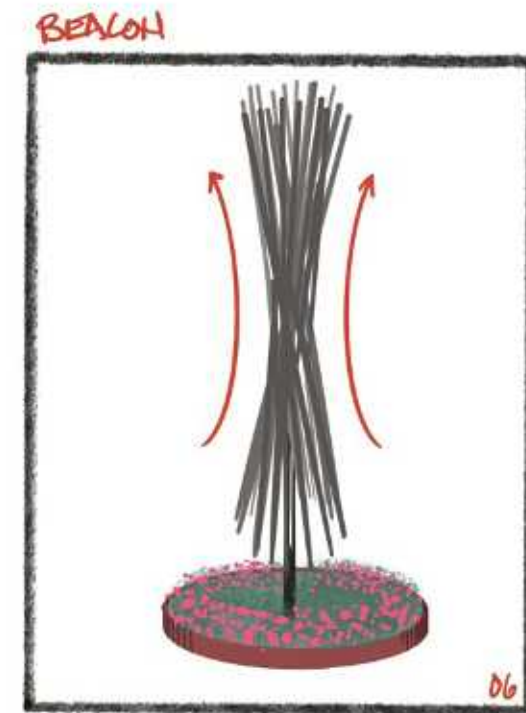
The elements are brought into a loose vertical bundle. This stage represents the initial intersection of people at the crossroads—a moment of meeting and the beginning of collective presence.



The central connection tightens. The formal gesture of the sculpture begins to take shape, showing the "dynamic and directional" nature of unity as the components start to support one another.

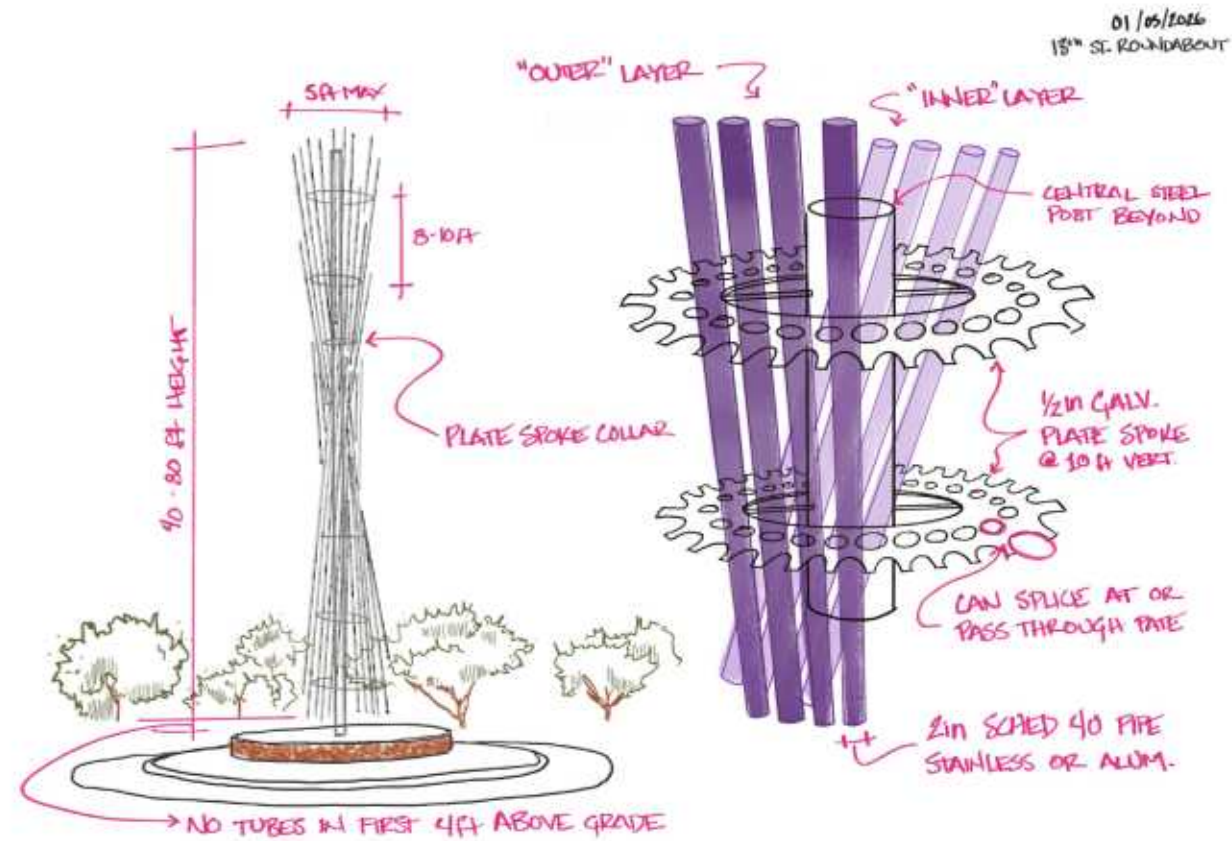


The bundle achieves its final sculptural form—converging at the center and flaring at the top and bottom. This silhouette symbolizes the strength found in connection, where many individual parts create a singular, resilient whole.



Surrounded by landscaping, it acts as a visual anchor and a "powerful symbol of outreach," with upward arrows emphasizing its role as a monumental civic landmark.





### CONCEPT 4: MIKADO (PICKUP STICKS)

Color plays an essential role in the experience of the work. A gradient of purple and cool-toned hues wraps the sculpture and shifts subtly as one moves around it. This chromatic variation reinforces the individuality of each element while strengthening the collective reading of the form. The palette references creativity, dignity, and transformation, qualities that resonate with both the cultural richness of Fort Lauderdale and the aspirations expressed by the Central City community.

The final proposal, Community Connections, emerged as the most compelling synthesis of these investigations. It reflects a distillation rather than a reduction; a form that is legible, dynamic, and rooted in collective meaning, while remaining structurally efficient and materially disciplined. The design represents a considered conclusion to a broad field of exploration, shaped by site conditions, community input, and the practical realities of fabrication, installation, and maintenance.



ASSEMBLY

Community Connections is organized around a central galvanized steel column anchored to an auger-cast pile foundation, providing structural stability and resistance to wind and environmental loads. Laser-cut steel plates and gussets are welded to the column at calibrated intervals, forming a series of attachment rings that support the sculpture's inner and outer layers. Slender tubes are arranged in staggered, double-layered assemblies, allowing the form to twist and open while maintaining structural clarity and redundancy. The tube elements are fastened to the steel framework, enabling efficient fabrication, transport, and installation. Integrated uplighting within the existing planter illuminates the sculpture from the base upward, reinforcing its verticality and ensuring visibility day and night. All materials and connections are selected for sustainability, durability, corrosion resistance, and long-term maintainability in South Florida's climate.

