



Reflag Toledo

July 2022

Hi, I'm Jacob Parr

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Co-founder – Sparr Games

Board Member – Toledo School for the Arts

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Vexillographer (North American Vexillological Association) 

You may already know me!



Let's talk about the Toledo Flag



A Brief History of the Toledo Flag

How Did We Get Here?



RESOLUTION

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Toledo that the flag of the City of Toledo be as follows:

A field divided into three vertical bars of equal width, each bar to be one-third of the whole; the width of the flag to be five parts of its whole length; the two outer bars to be of navy blue, the centre bar of pure white; in the middle of the centre bar a conventionalized figure of the block house of old Fort Industry, in red, surrounded by a circle of blue; the diameter of the outer edge of the circle to be 2.4 of a part, according to the design made by Robert N. Carl, which design is now on file in the office of the Clerk of Council.

The signification of the design is as follows:

The block house representing old Fort Industry, which was the first settlement of Toledo, represents security and industry and that advancement which came of the pioneer spirit. The circle surrounding it denotes unity, completeness and eternity, and giving the sense of location, represents the State of Ohio. The colors of the flag are the national colors and stand not only for the nation, but the blue for constancy, the white for purity and the red for labor, courage and brotherhood.

Be it further resolved that the device of the block house within the circle stand as the emblem of the City of Toledo and be the basis of all seals and devices representing the sovereignty of the city; with this addition, however, that where possible the date of the organization of the city, 1837, be added, and the motto of the city, Laborare est Orare.

Be it further resolved that the thanks of the city be extended to Robert N. Carl for the design which he has furnished.

Approved this 11th day of January, 1909,

Brand Whitlock
Mayor, Toledo, Ohio

ADOPTED: Jan. 11, 1909

Ambrose A. Moody
President of Council

ATTEST: John M. Babcock
Clerk of Council



Toledo Flag
1909-1994



Toledo Municipal Seal
1909-1994

The original flag flew over the city from 1909-1994. It was simpler, with a more conventionalized version of the blockhouse of Fort Industry depicted in red, rather than the city seal, which at the time was also a simplified depiction of the blockhouse.



Toledo Municipal Seal
1909-1994



Original Municipal Seal
Adopted in 1873

EMY883

RESOLUTION NO. 4-94

Modifying the design of the official seal of the City of Toledo, Ohio, and the official flag of the City of Toledo, Ohio, by adopting the design of the original seal and flag of 1873; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the City of Toledo celebrates its 157th birthday this month; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Council to adopt the original seal and flag of the City of Toledo adopted in 1873 which highlight the City's location on the Maumee River; and

WHEREAS, the original design reflects old Fort Industry, which was the first settlement of Toledo, representing security and industry and that advancement which came of the pioneer spirit and which further highlights the location on the riverbank where Swan Creek joins the Maumee River; and

WHEREAS, the design further portrays a rising sun, emblematic of the State of Ohio and bears the date of incorporation, January 7, 1838, and the Latin motto of the City, "Laborare Est Orare", which freely translates to "To labor is to pray"; and

WHEREAS, the colors of the flag are the national colors and stand not only for the nation, but the blue for consistency, the white for purity and the red for labor, courage and brotherhood; NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Toledo:

SECTION 1. The official seal of the City of Toledo, Ohio, is hereby modified by adopting the original seal of 1873 which reflects the old Fort Industry on the banks of a river with the rising sun in the background, a facsimile of which design is now on file in the office of the Clerk of Council.

SECTION 2. The official flag of the City of Toledo, Ohio, is hereby modified by substituting the original seal for the seal presently appearing on the official flag of Toledo, Ohio.

SECTION 3. That official thanks and recognition be extended to O.J. Hopkins as designer of the original seal of the City of Toledo, Ohio.

SECTION 4. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall be in force and effect from and after its passage. The reason for the emergency lies in the fact that the same is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and property, and for the further reason to celebrate the City's birthday in a timely manner.

Mayor seeks approval of 1873 seal

Toledo Mayor Carty Finkbeiner wants to replace the city seal with a design that has not been used for 84 years: a seal that shows the sun rising at Fort Industry where Swan Creek joins the Maumee River.

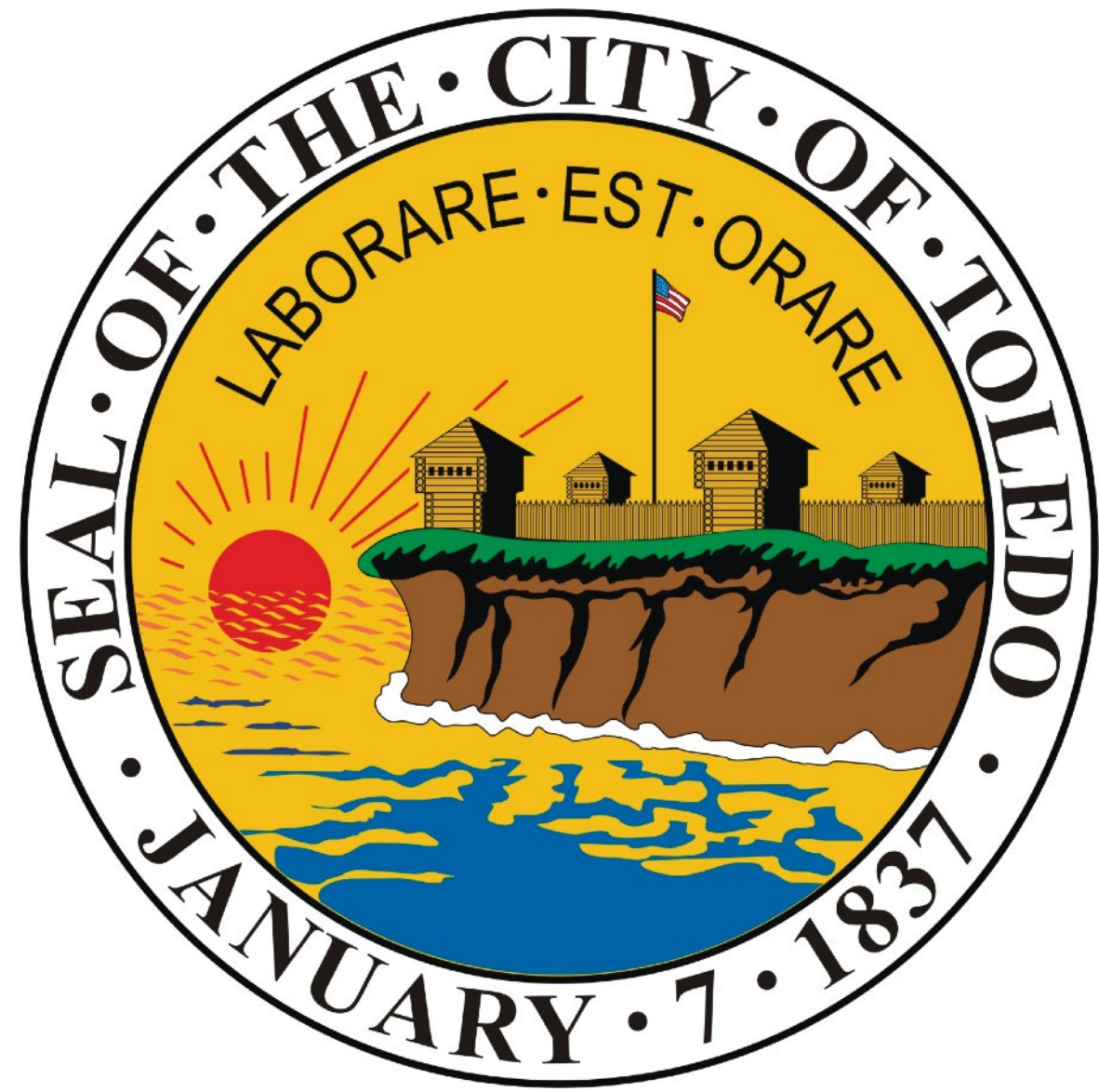
The city has not used that seal since it switched to the current design in 1909 that portrays a blockhouse of the fort, which was the first settlement of Toledo.

Mr. Finkbeiner said he hopes the return of the city seal designed in 1873 will hold symbolic meaning to Toledoans.

"With the new form of government and a new era, we asked, 'What are some of the things we could do to convey both the renaissance and pay tribute to our past?'"

"The 1873 seal shows the Maumee River, which we value so highly, and it shows the sun coming up on Fort Industry, which still is a very important part of our downtown history," the mayor said.

Things changed in 1994. It was decided that the city would celebrate Toledo's history (157th birthday) by re-adopting the original seal from 1873.



The original seal was modernized, colored, and adopted. Then, without any further consideration, the seal was placed on the flag, as a bi-product of the decision.



Toledo Municipal Seal
Refined in 2020



Toledo Flag
**Currently Out of Date and
Ideally Situated to Reimagine**

Recently, the Toledo seal was updated, refined. Today, every city flag currently waves with the outdated seal.

The Five Principles of Flag Design

What Makes a Good Flag?

The Five Principles of Flag Design

Simplicity

Meaningful Symbolism

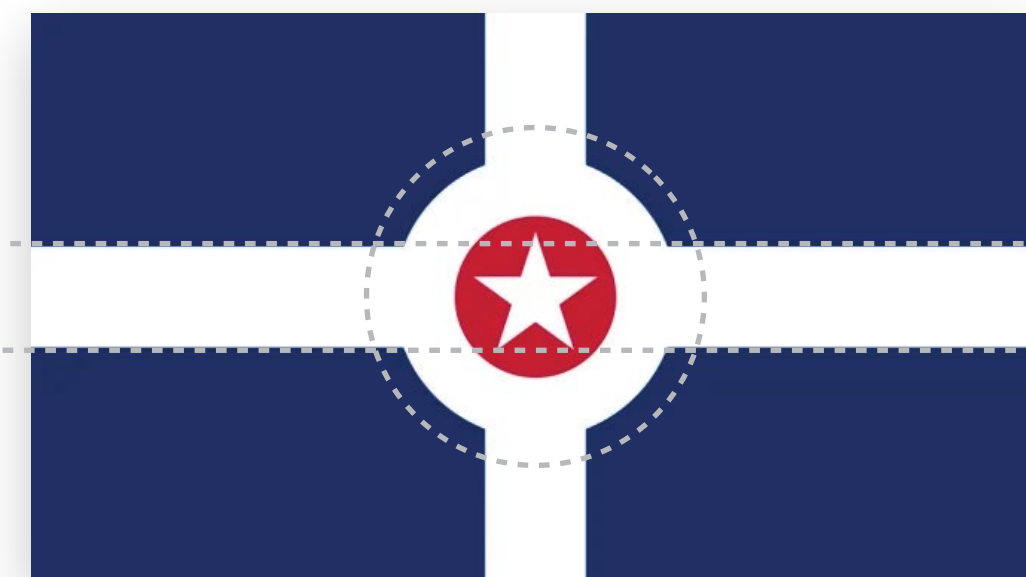
Basic Color

No Lettering/Seals

Distinction

Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction

A flag should ideally be so simple that a child could draw it from memory.



INDIANAPOLIS



CHICAGO



DENVER

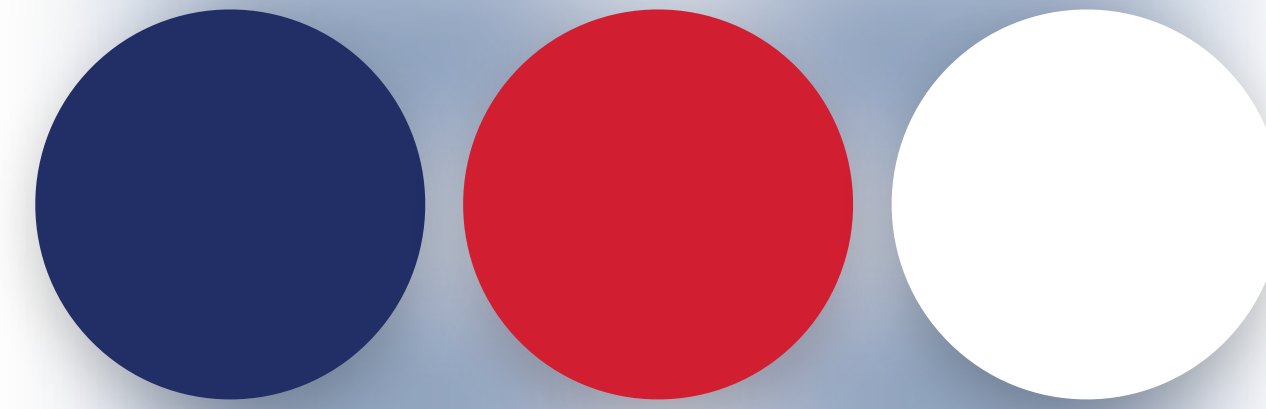
Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction

Every detail of the flag, from color to form should be carry meaning and intent, and symbolize elements from the city it represents.

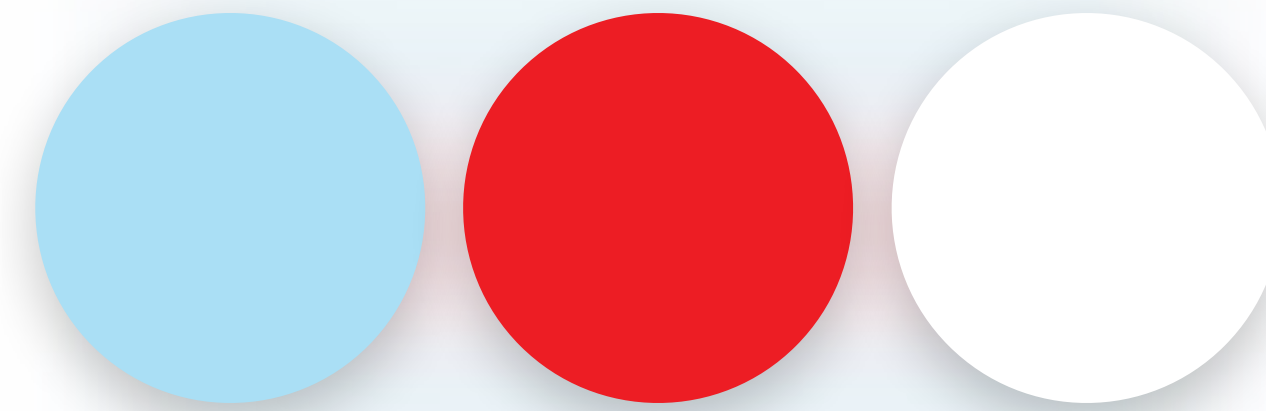


Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction

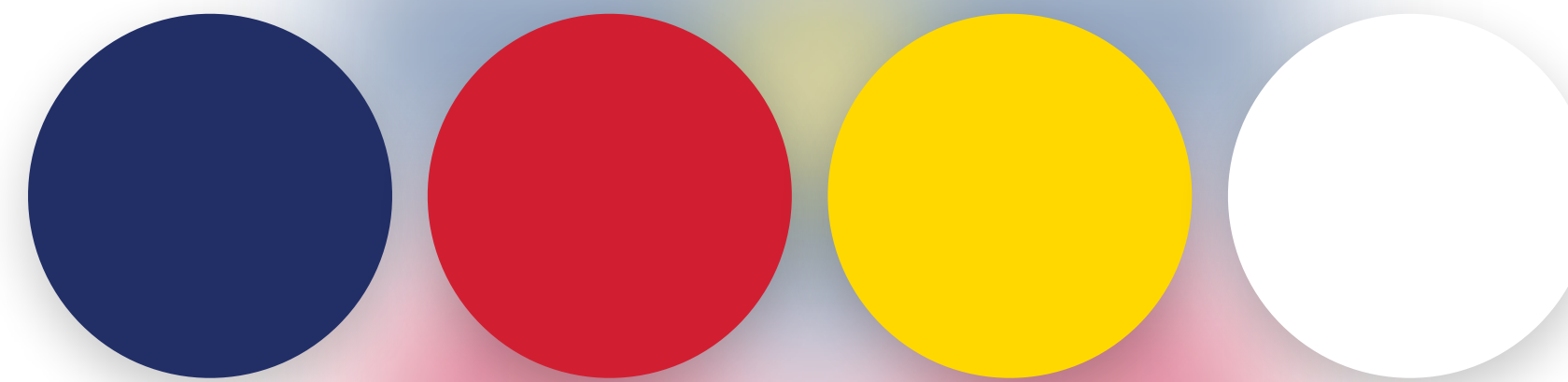
A flag should have no more than 2-3 primary colors. This aids with the first principle of simplicity, but also maintains focus and recognition.



INDIANAPOLIS



CHICAGO



DENVER

Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction

Lettering/seals are not reliably legible on a flag that is constantly in motion, double-sided, and ideally viewed from a distance. Rely instead of the principle of meaningful symbolism to convey the cities identity.



INDIANAPOLIS



CHICAGO



DENVER

Simplicity
 Meaningful Symbolism
 Basic Color
 No Lettering/Seals
Distinction

The best city flags in the U.S. follow these principles, but are unique enough to be picked from a line-up. They are particular to the people they represent.



Toledo Flag vs. The Five Principles

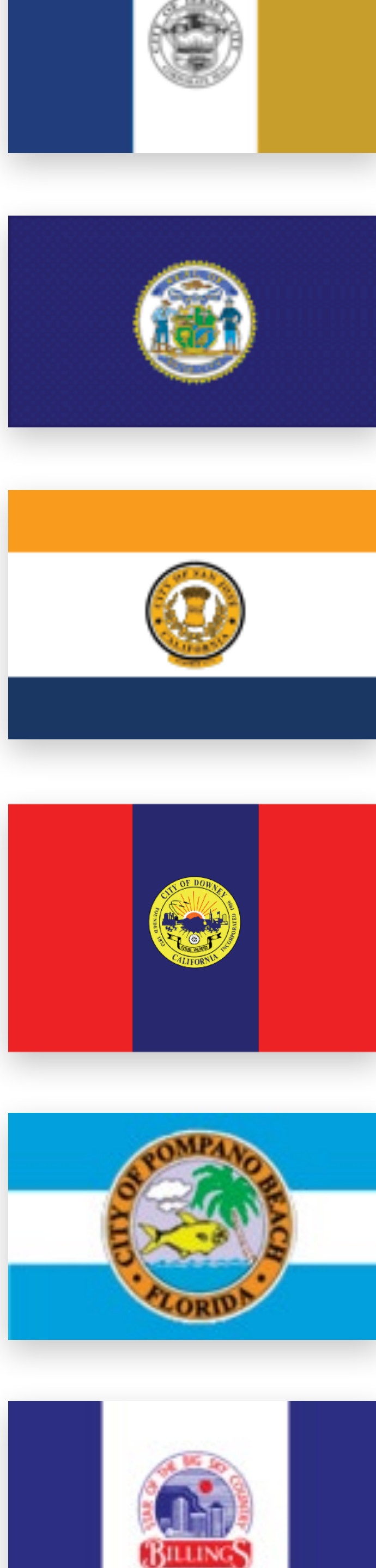
~~Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction~~

Today, the Toledo flag does not follow the principles of flag design. This is due to the municipal seal at the center of the flag.



~~Simplicity
Meaningful Symbolism
Basic Color
No Lettering/Seals
Distinction~~

But Toledo is not alone in this issue. From Los Angeles to New York, U.S. cities have defaulted to utilizing their seal on their flag for decades. Toledo has the opportunity to do better.



A New Toledo Flag

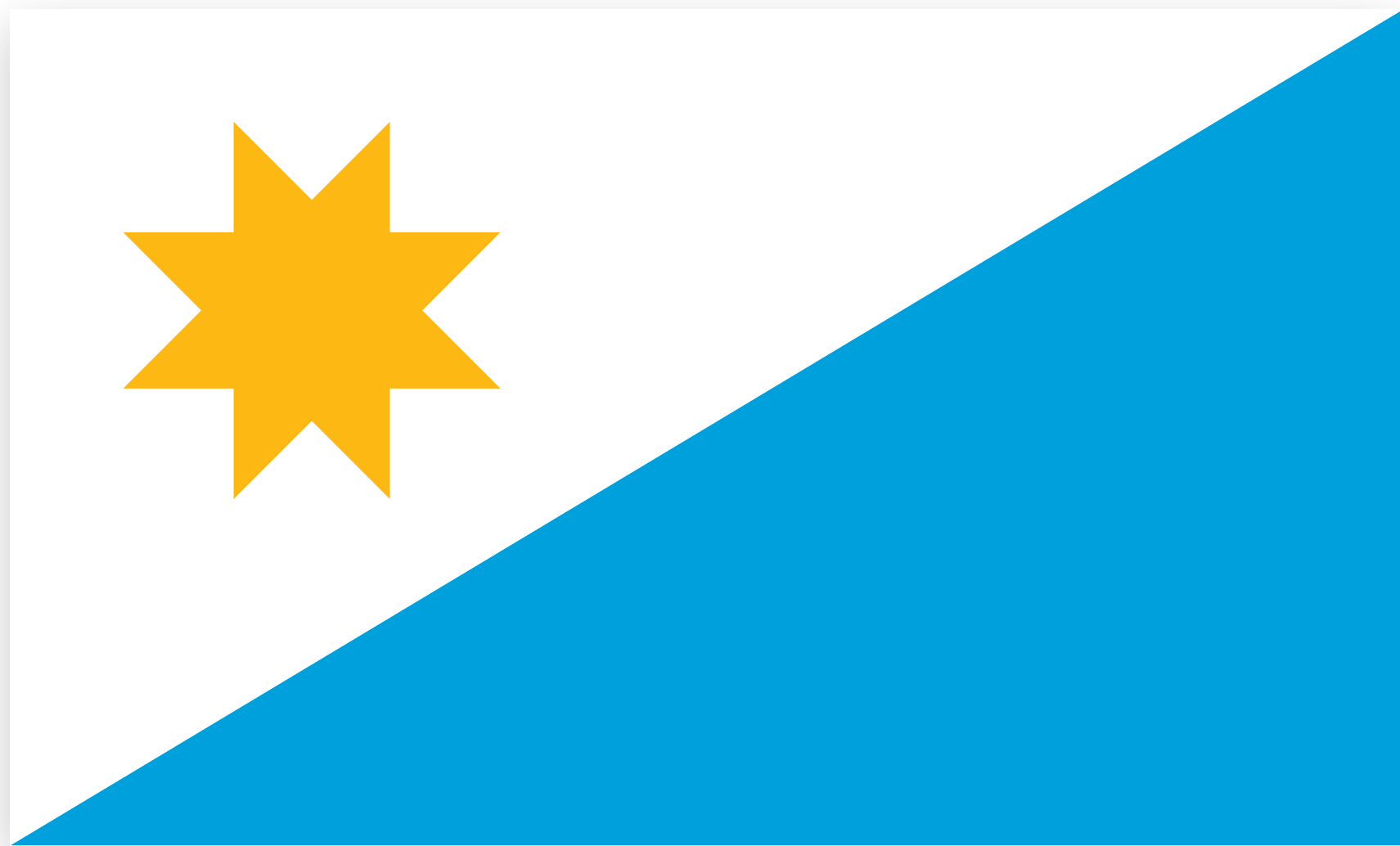
Something to Rally Behind

Telling Our Story

Toledo: Industry, Built on the Maumee



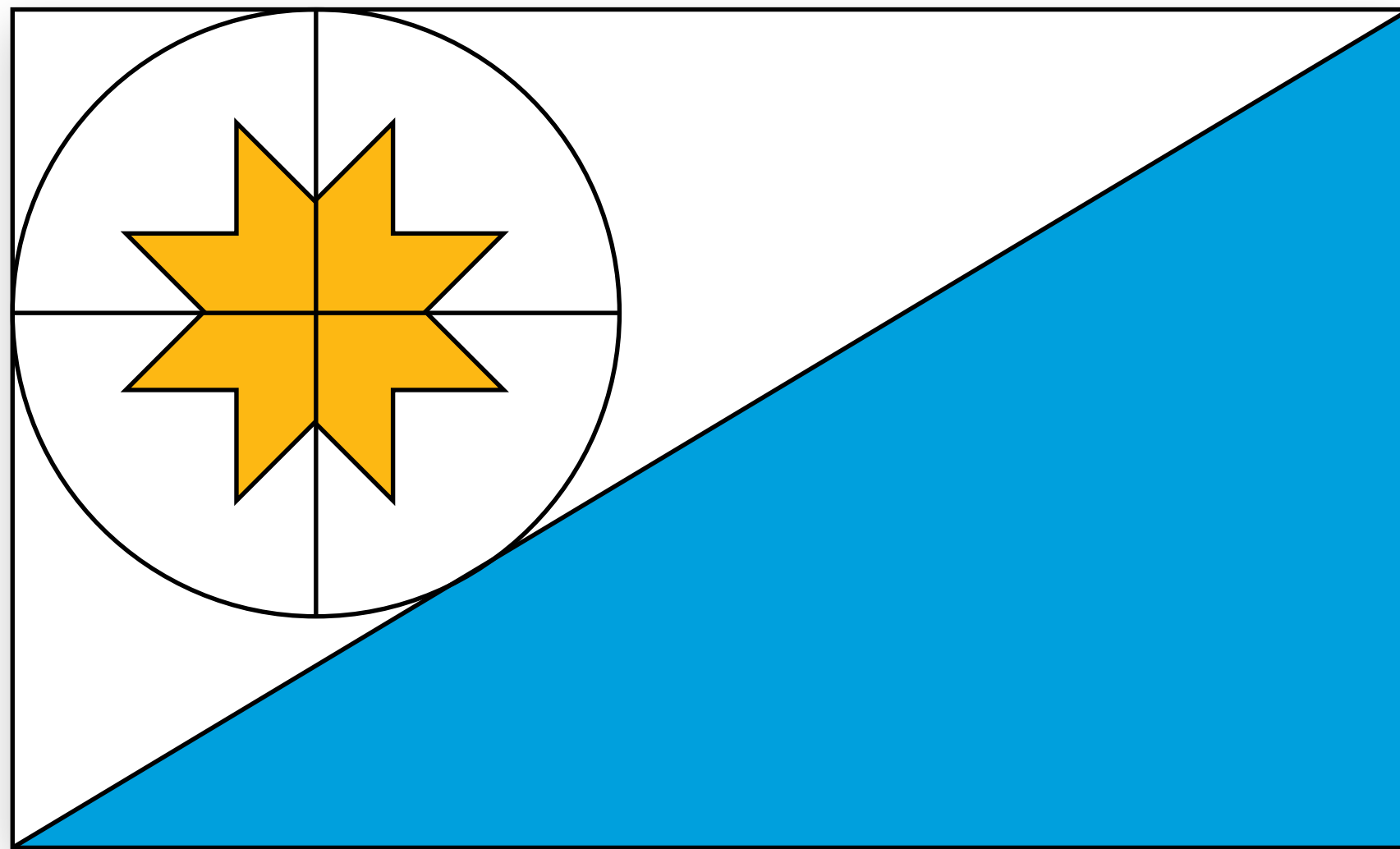




The New Toledo City Flag

The flag is divided diagonally from the lower-hoist side corner to the upper fly-side corner. The upper triangular field is white and the lower triangular field is bright blue. An eight-pointed solid golden-yellow star is positioned on the hoist side of the upper triangular field.

Principle 01
Simplicity

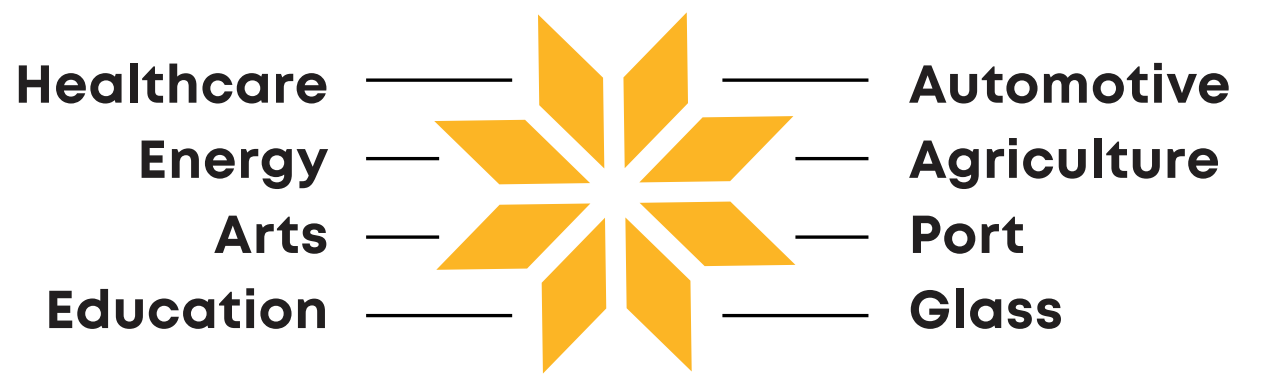


REMINGTON SPENCER

The Toledo City flag is geometrically simple, precise and measured. It is simple enough to where a child can draw it from memory.

The Spark of Industry

The Spark of Industry exemplifies the hard work and pioneering spirit of the people of Toledo. Each of the eight points represents a facet of industry that has shaped the City of Toledo.



Northwest Ohio

The Spark of Industry is positioned in the northwestern corner of the flag, depicting Toledo's home in Northwest Ohio.

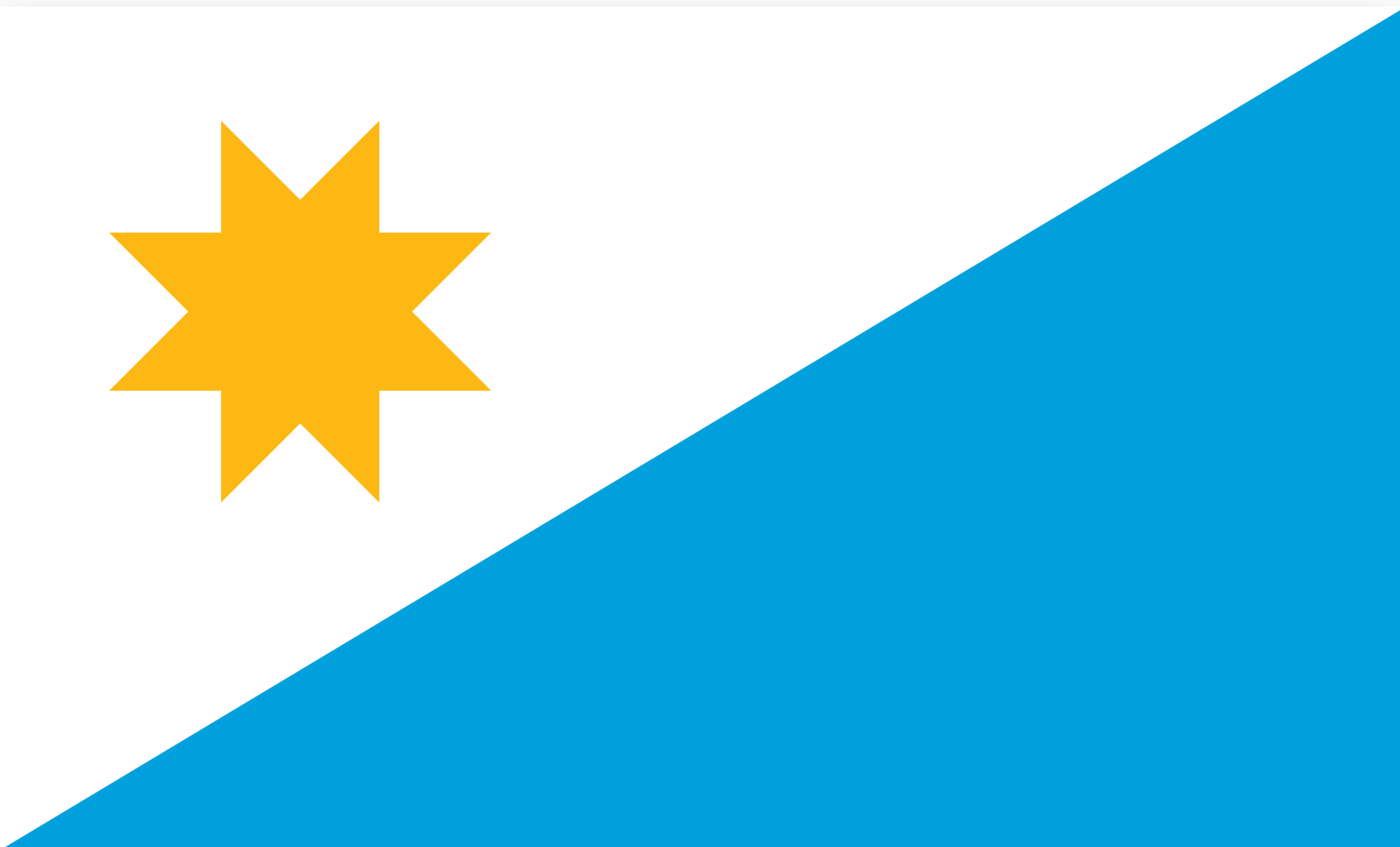
Port City

The diagonally divided fields allude to a maritime signal flag, symbolizing Toledo's place in the Great Lakes region.



Principle 02

Meaningful Symbolism



The Maumee River

The diagonal shared between the upper triangular field and the lower triangular field represents our greatest natural asset, the Maumee River, as it flows through the City of Toledo and into Lake Erie. The diagonal follows a positive, upward direction, illustrating Toledo's forward momentum.

Color Palette

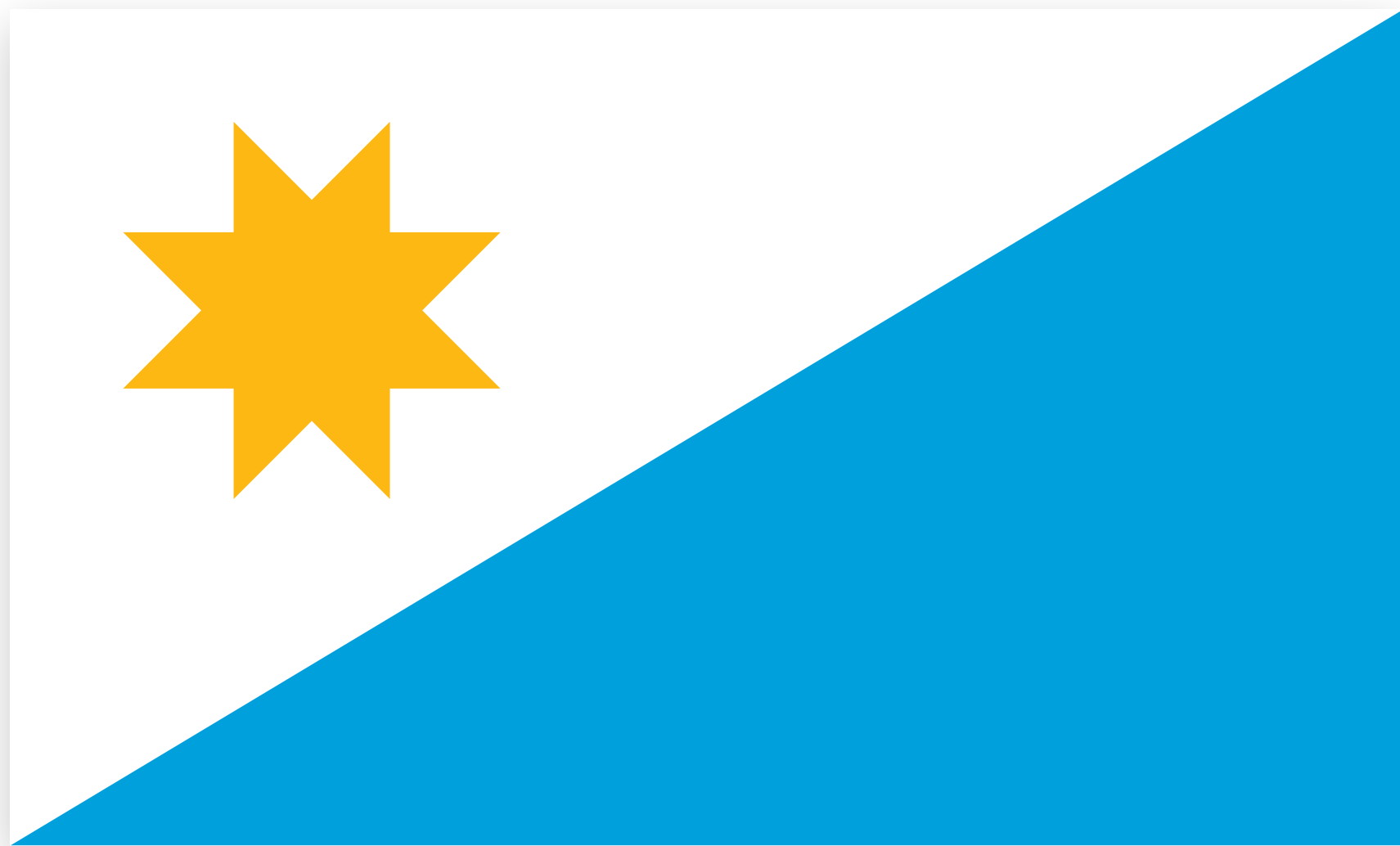
The colors of the Toledo flag are specifically selected to represent the region as a whole.

- Golden Yellow**
Golden-yellow represents the glow of hot glass and Toledo's reputation as the Glass Capital of the World.
- White**
White represents Toledo's limitless ambitions and opportunities.
- Bright Blue**
Bright Blue represents Toledo's precious water resources, vibrancy, and optimism.

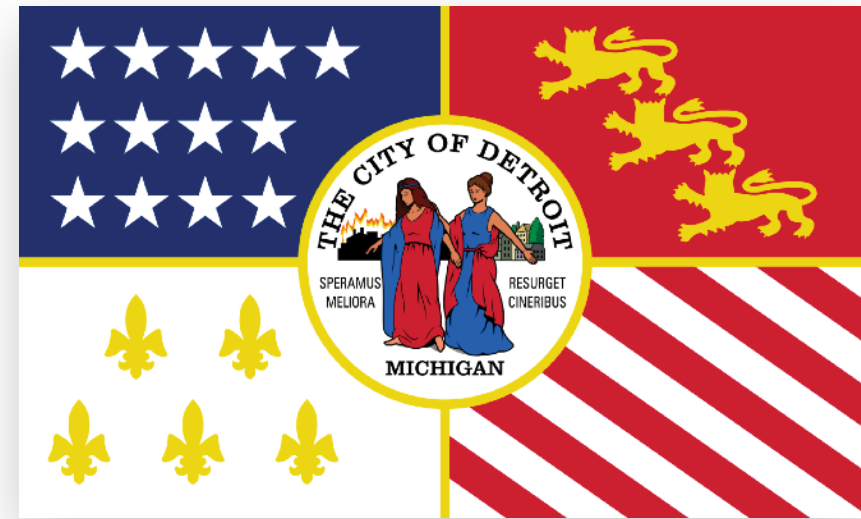
Principle 03
Basic Color



Principle 04
No Lettering / Seals



Principle 05
Distinction



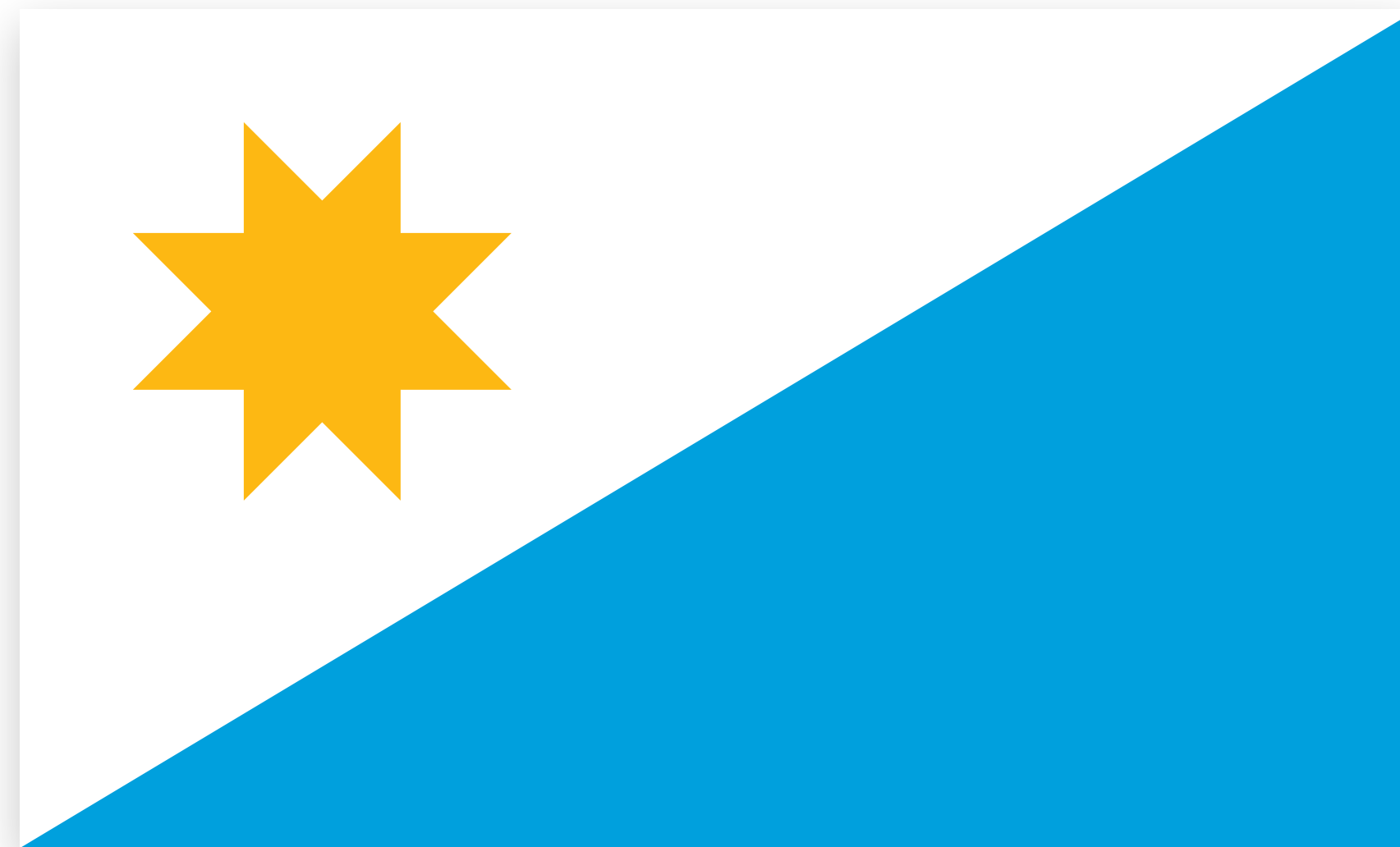
DETROIT



CLEVELAND



COLUMBUS



DAYTON - NEW FLAG (2021)



CINCINNATI



PITTSBURGH

Principle 05
Distinction

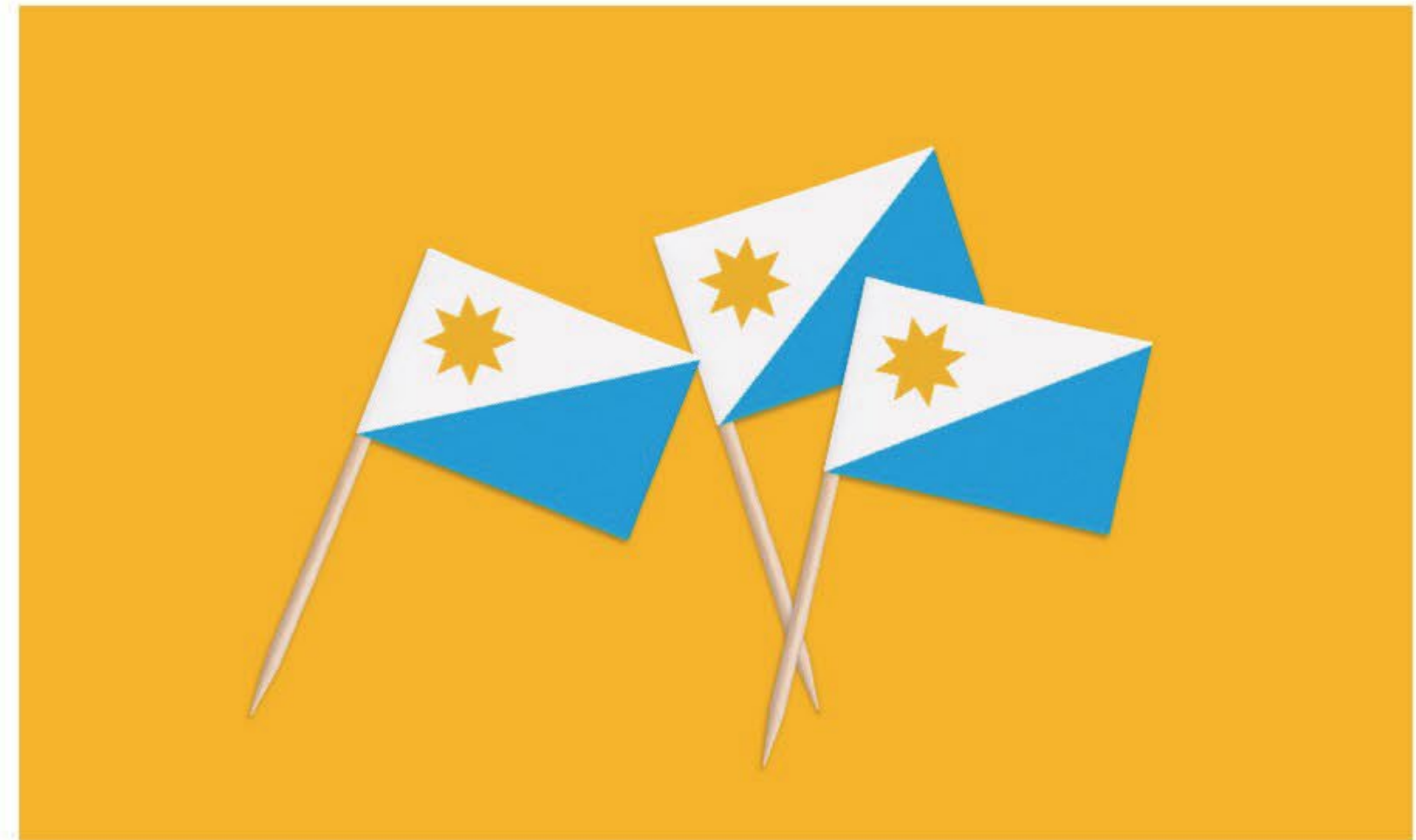
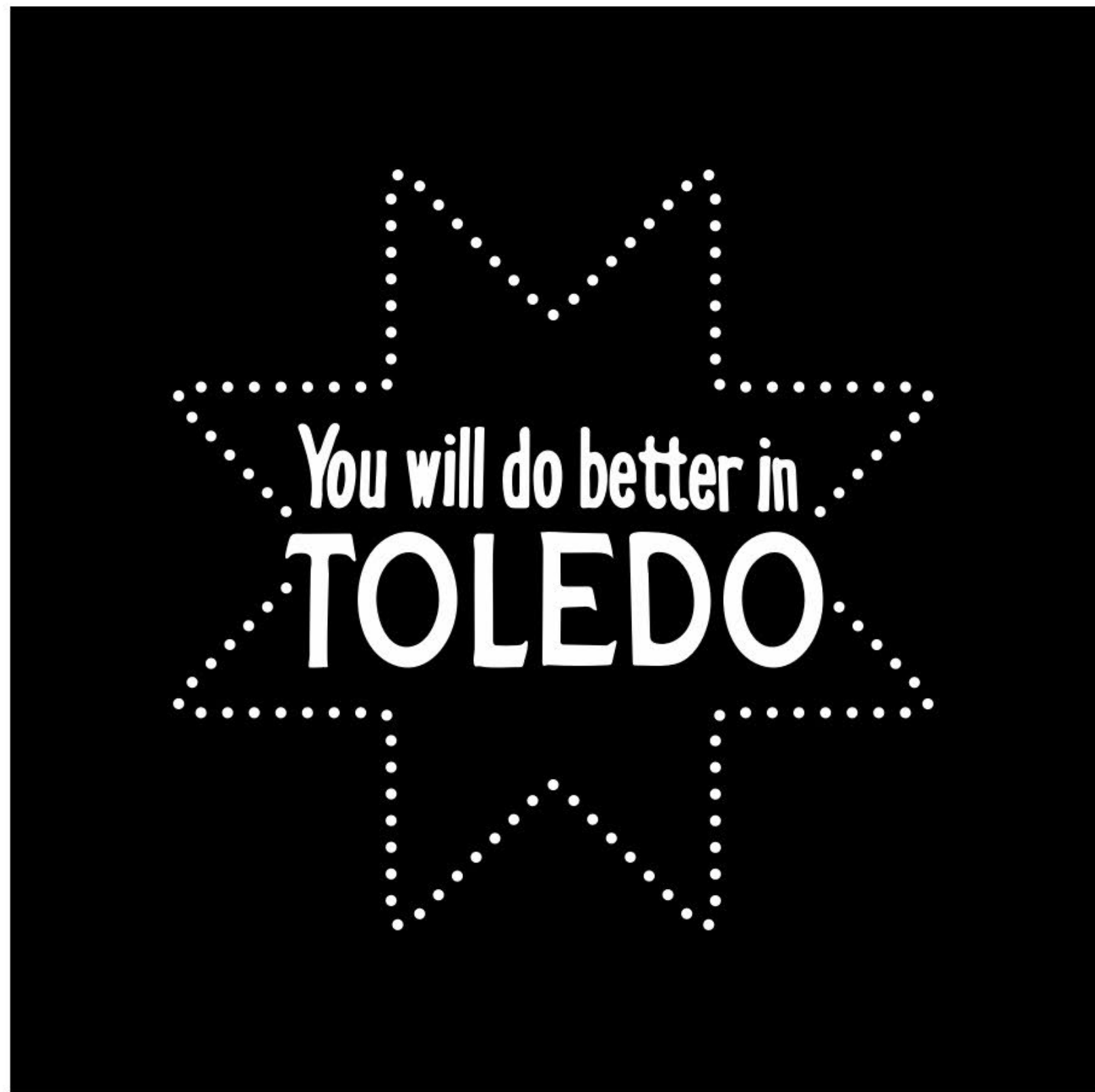


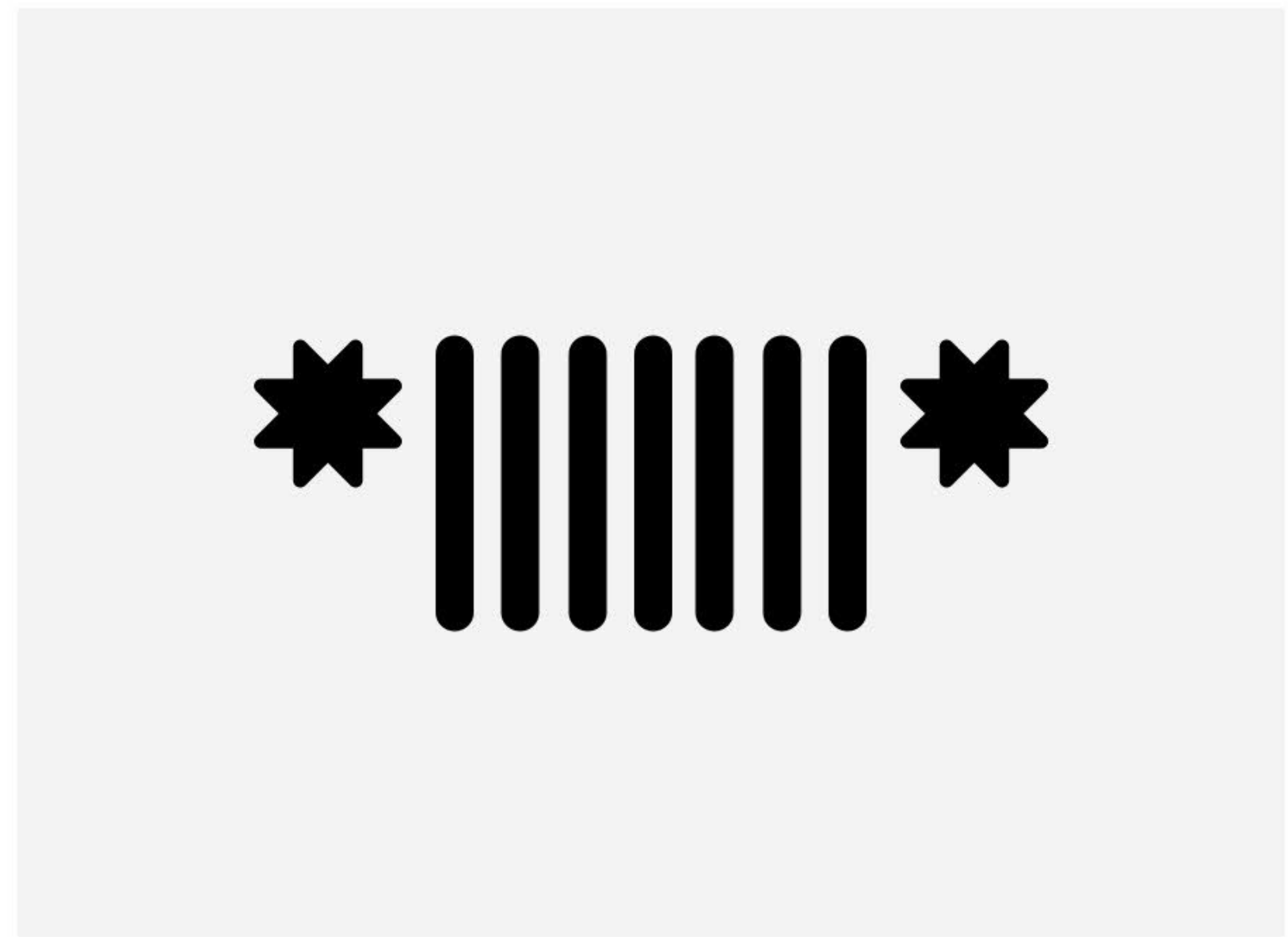
Among some of the best designed flags in the U.S. the Toledo City Flag stands up, and stands out.

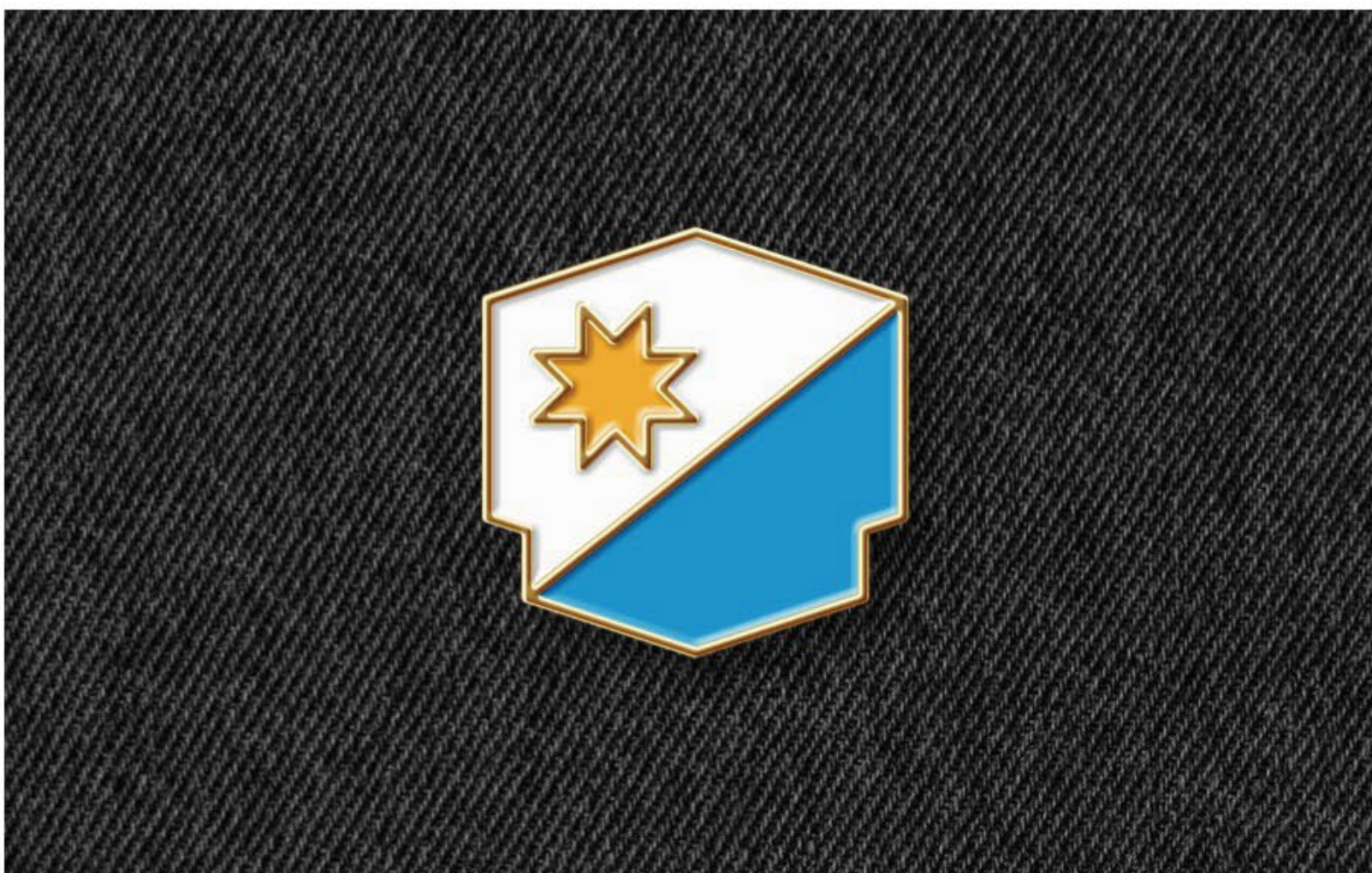
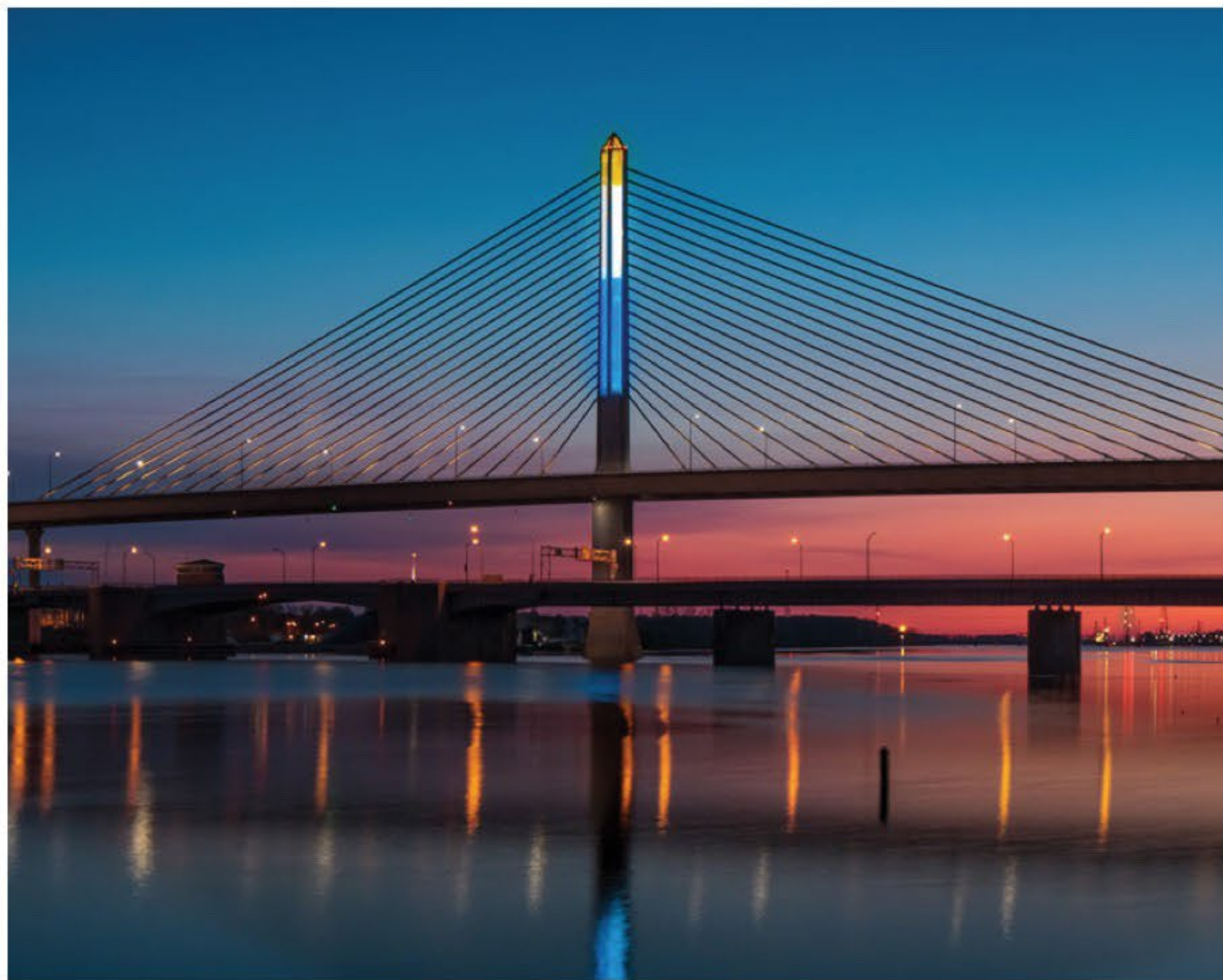
Community Adoption

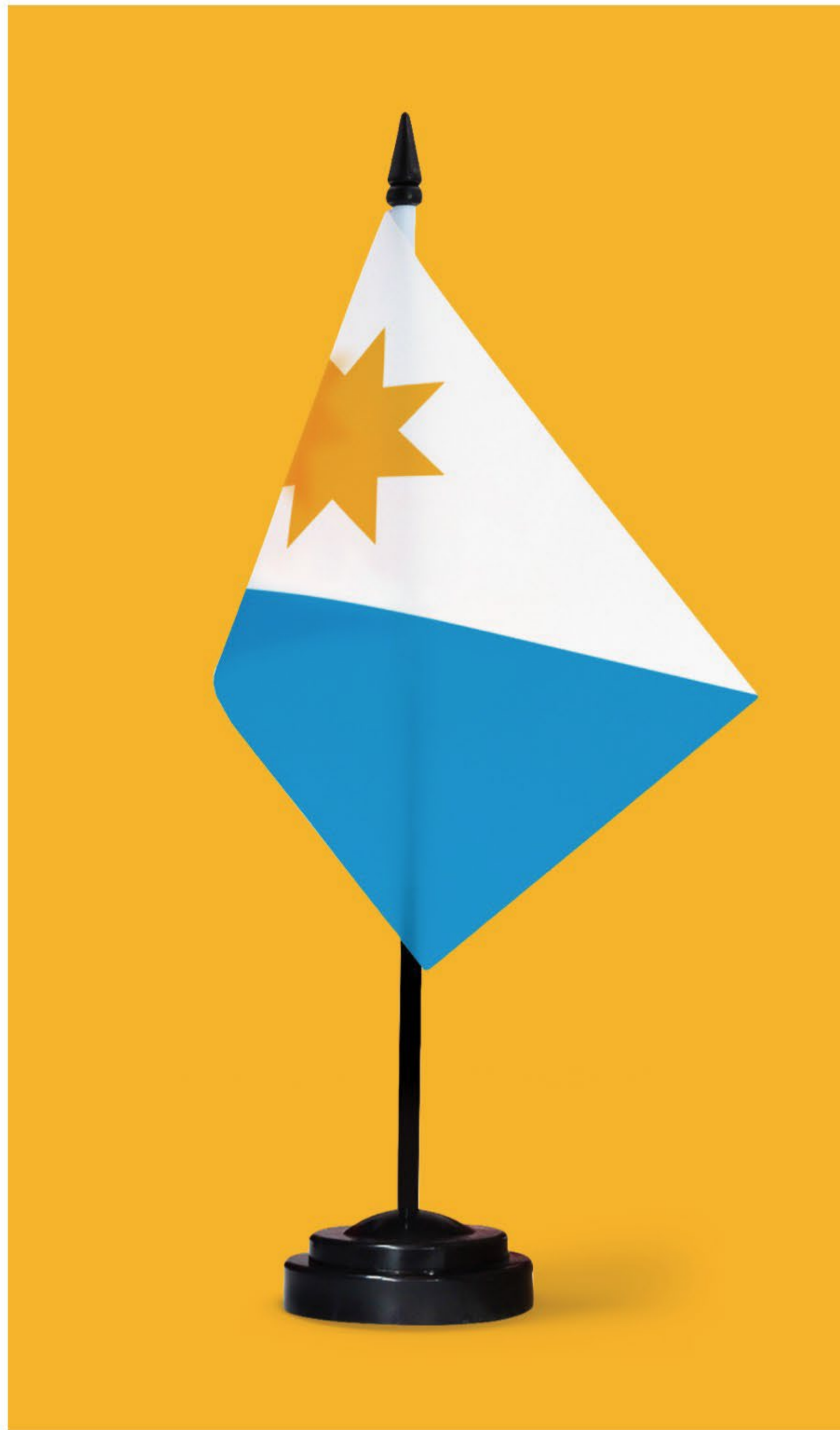
















Summary

The City of Toledo has incredible progress in recent years. This redesign of the Toledo flag will help to continue that moment, engage the community, and further build local pride.

Thank You

