

# *Central Corridor Friendly Streets Initiative*

## **Report on Phase 1**

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## ***Table of Contents***

List of Figures and Tables . . . . .	2
Executive Summary . . . . .	3
Brief History of the Initiative . . . . .	4
Goals of the Initiative . . . . .	5
Block Parties . . . . .	5
Gallery . . . . .	6
Activities . . . . .	7
Dates and Locations . . . . .	7
Food and Treats . . . . .	8
Placemaking Artists: Partnership with Springboard for the Arts . . . . .	8
Promoting the Block Parties . . . . .	10
Block Party Data: Methods and Processes . . . . .	10
Analytic Categories and Hypotheses . . . . .	11
Block Party Findings . . . . .	12
Biggest Problems Facing Charles Avenue . . . . .	13
What Ideas do Residents Like?. . . . .	14
How Do Positive Responses Vary by Block Party? . . . . .	15
What Ideas Received the Most Negative Responses? . . . . .	16
How Do Negative Responses Vary by Block Party? . . . . .	16
What Ideas are Problematic? . . . . .	17
Open-Ended Input on Making Streets more Friendly . . . . .	18
What Ideas are New to Respondents? . . . . .	18
What Ideas Will Respondents Tell Their Neighbors About? . . . . .	19
Name Your Favorite Street, Anywhere. . . . .	20
Other Suggestions from Residents . . . . .	21
Summary and Interpretation of Findings in Relation to Hypotheses . . . . .	22
Emphasizing the Quality and Aesthetics of Community Life . . . . .	22
Next Steps: Phase 2 . . . . .	22
Appendix A: Gallery Images . . . . .	24
Appendix B: Central Corridor Friendly Streets Survey. . . . .	27

## ***List of Figures and Tables***

Figure 1: Google Map of Block Party Locations . . . . .	8
Table 1: Gallery Images by Number and Title . . . . .	6
Table 2: Gallery Images by Category . . . . .	11
Table 3: Block Party Attendance . . . . .	12
Table 4: Bicycling and Walking Data . . . . .	13
Table 5: Number of Opinions Expressed on Gallery Images . . . . .	13
Table 6: Images with Most Positive Responses by Block Party . . . . .	15
Table 7: Top Gallery Images by Survey Respondents, by Block Party . . . . .	16
Table 8: Images Receiving the Most Negative Responses by Block Party . . . . .	17
Table 9: Most Problematic Images by Survey Respondents, by Block Party . . . . .	18
Table 10: Gallery Images New to Survey Respondents, by Block Party . . . . .	19
Table 11: Gallery Images Respondents Will Tell Neighbors About, by Block Party . . . . .	20

## *Executive Summary*

This document reports on Phase 1 of the Central Corridor Friendly Streets (CCFS) Initiative, and in particular the results of a series of block parties held over the summer of 2011. The CCFS Initiative is a joint collaboration between Hamline-Midway Coalition (District 11) and Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District 7) whose purpose is to address the design and use of Edmund, Charles, and Sherburne Avenues between Aldine Street and Rice Street, with a particular focus on Charles Avenue. These streets, which are immediately north of University Avenue, will soon see significant changes in travel behavior and traffic patterns due to the construction and ensuing operation of the light rail transit (LRT) line on University Avenue.

With attention to the experience of both moving through (transportation) and being within (placemaking) our neighborhoods, the CCFS Initiative aimed to: (1) Educate residents in the project area about the wide array of tools available to communities to make streets more “friendly” (i.e. streets that are attractive, safe, and accessible for multiple modes and all users), including placemaking strategies, public art, traffic calming techniques, engineered solutions, and new public policies; (2) Learn how residents in the project area currently view and use their streets and how they would ideally like to see their streets designed and used; and (3) Promote changes in design and use of streets in the project area to make them more “friendly,” including features associated with the bicycle-pedestrian boulevard concept suggested in the City of St. Paul’s plans for Charles Avenue.

The Initiative held a series of five block parties – two in Hamline-Midway, three in Frogtown -- that presented images of ideas to residents, as well as demonstrated placemaking through block closure festivities, artistic activities, food, and music. Over 700 people attended the block parties, expressing over 1700 opinions about various infrastructure and placemaking ideas, and completing over 200 surveys.

We found that residents are concerned about the high level and speed of automotive traffic on Charles Avenue. They are also concerned about crime, violence, and threats to residential quality of community life. Residents of Frogtown expressed particular concerns about the aesthetics, quality, and reputation of their neighborhood.

Block party participants were receptive and responded positively to almost all of the infrastructure and placemaking ideas we presented, though they were generally more enthusiastic about the former. We found evidence that placemaking concepts received more support the further eastward we moved into Frogtown. Several ideas received consistently negative responses, three of which were placemaking ideas, and one of which was infrastructural (diverters). We also found two ideas – traffic circles and one-way cars/two-way bicycles -- that received both positive responses but were considered problematic ideas, reflecting potential implementation challenges.

Respondents also brought forward an entire new category of response as being critical to making streets more friendly: community life. In addition to improving infrastructure and enlivening streets with placemaking ideas, residents want more greenspace, more gardens, more block parties, more community events, more communication between neighbors and residents, and more activities for youth. The CCFS Initiative will be well-served in considering how any potential changes that we propose to the City relate to increasing community relations/connections, and in fact making it an explicit goal of equal importance to infrastructure and placemaking.

## *Brief History of the Initiative*

The Central Corridor Friendly Streets Initiative is a joint collaboration between Hamline-Midway Coalition (District 11) and Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District 7) whose primary purpose is to address the design and use of Edmund, Charles, and Sherburne Avenues between Aldine Street and Rice Street. These streets, which are immediately north of University Avenue and are home to a concentration of underrepresented and low-income residents, will soon see significant changes in travel behavior and traffic patterns due to the construction and ensuing operation of the light rail transit (LRT) line on University.

In Fall 2009, Lars Christiansen brought to the attention of the members of the Hamline-Midway Coalition's Transportation Committee (HMC-TC) the City of Saint Paul City Council's Bike Walk Central Corridor Action plan, which includes a bike boulevard on Charles Avenue from Prior Avenue to Mackubin Street as one of its key priorities (this plan was formally adopted in May, 2010). Wary of the problems that the City encountered in attempting to transform Jefferson Avenue into a bicycle boulevard, and committed to residential involvement in determining the course of neighborhood development and changes, Lars, Michael Jon Olson, and the HMC-TC began to organize a resident-based drive to transform Charles Avenue. Given that Charles Avenue spans two neighborhoods, Hamline-Midway and Frogtown, the effort would need to be two-neighborhood collaboration.

After making presentations in late 2009 and early 2010 to Frogtown residents and the District 7 Board of Directors, Lars formed a Working Group of seven people – residents from Frogtown and Hamline-Midway, plus one representative of the City of St. Paul who attended sporadically (first engineer Paul Kuebler, then urban planner Christina Morrison and eventually sustainability coordinator Emily Erickson; their roles were limited to advisory). The goal was for this Working Group of residents to formulate a public involvement process, to learn from residents what it is they want their streets to look like, and then to eventually bring our ideas to the City in the form of a proposal.

The members of the Initiative Working Group are now Lars Christiansen (Hamline-Midway resident), Cosandra Lloyd (Frogtown resident), Steve Mitrione (Hamline-Midway resident), Michael Jon Olson (Director, Hamline-Midway Coalition), Erin Pavlica (Hamline-Midway resident), Tony Schmitz (Frogtown resident), and Emily Seru (Frogtown resident). Planners from the City of Saint Paul aided the Working Group in an advisory role, as the responsibility of planning and decision-making rested with residents.

The Working Group began discussions about how to achieve the following two goals: (1) To educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure possibilities; (2) to learn from the public what they would like to see along Charles Avenue. After initial exploratory “feelers” among friends and neighbors of the Working Group, we learned that the public was unfamiliar with the bicycle-pedestrian boulevard concept, and that that unfamiliarity contained misconceptions (i.e., that bicycle boulevards are roads with bicycle lanes). We also learned that the appeal of bicycling infrastructure, and bicycling in general, was not universal across different social groups who comprise the residents of our neighborhoods. This was not a surprise to us, but rather was a confirmation that caused us to rethink our goals. It became clear that what residents might want wouldn't necessarily be infrastructural changes designed to accommodate bicycles (in particular), and that proposed changes to Charles Avenue might actually signal among some residents another

attempt by the city to “use” our neighborhoods as corridors to serve populations that were not from those neighborhoods. These opinions were especially prominent in Frogtown.<sup>1</sup> One significant result of this initial exploration was an expansion of our goals to focus on what residents would like *qua* the residential experience, as distinct from the transport experience. In other words, we decided to focus on the experiences of *stopping* as well as *moving through*. This meant focusing on *placemaking* as much as transportation.

### *Goals of the Initiative*

With the new focus on both transportation and placemaking, we modified our goals to the following:

1. To educate residents in the project area about the wide array of tools available to communities to make streets more “friendly” (i.e. streets that are attractive, safe, and accessible for multiple modes and all users), including placemaking strategies, public art, traffic calming techniques, engineered solutions, and new public policies.
2. To learn how residents in the project area currently view and use their streets and how they would ideally like to see their streets designed and used.
3. To promote changes in design and use of streets in the project area to make them more “friendly,” including (but not limited to) features associated with the bicycle-pedestrian boulevard concept suggested in the City’s Plan along Charles Avenue from Prior Avenue to Rice Street.

### *Block Parties*

To achieve these goals, we believed it would be helpful to both the Working Group and the residents of the neighborhoods to be able to see images that captured various dimensions of placemaking and bicycle-pedestrian (complete streets) infrastructure. We wanted to get the opinions of residents about each of these categories of ideas. Thus we began with the idea of holding an event where the images would be displayed and residents could provide opinions.

The question of where to hold the event -- at a school, community center, or other location -- led to deliberations about the difficulty of mobilizing residents to attend such events. It was at that point that Working Group member Steve Mitrione came up with the idea of bringing the gallery and the event to the residents in the form of block parties. This was arguably the most important moment in the conceptual work we have done, as it led us to what became a key to the success of the project thus far: block parties.

Drawing on the appeal of block parties, and that residents typically only have one per year (National Night Out in early August), we decided to hold a series of five throughout the summer of 2011. For each event, the Initiative would partner with residents and community organizations to host block

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<sup>1</sup> Two legacies of transportation politics affecting Frogtown in specific ways stand in the way of engaging residents about the future of Charles Avenue. The first was the destruction of the Rondo neighborhood as a result of the construction of interstate highway I-94 in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The second was and is the construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail. Our working group understood that the City’s plan to transform Charles Avenue into a bicycle boulevard likely would be viewed in a similar light.

parties. Acquiring a block closure permit would allow the Initiative to close the street to automotive traffic for the evening. Residents from Charles and adjacent streets were invited to come out, enjoy food from University Avenue restaurants, share how they currently view and use their streets, and learn about tools and techniques to make streets more friendly for pedestrians, bicyclists, and residents. Importantly, what block parties would allow us to achieve was an opportunity for participants to experience placemaking and a reconceptualization of the street *directly*.<sup>2</sup>

It was at this point in the planning process that we received funding from the Central Corridor Funder's Collaborative, we hired Lily Gordon-Koven through HECUA's internship program, and collaborated with Jun-Li Wang and Alan Skamser-O'Neil from Springboard for the Arts.

## Gallery

The centerpiece of each event was a gallery of large images of “friendly” streets. See Appendix A for the complete gallery of images. Table 1 provides a listing of the images by number and title:

Table 1  
Gallery Images by Number and Title

Image #	Title
1	Artistic sign pole
2	Creative sidewalks
3	Traffic circles
4	Bump-outs
5	Painted pavement
6	Fence beautification
7	Artistic planters
8	Playful tiled walls
9	Bicycle-friendly speedbump
10	Bicycle/pedestrian friendly road paint
11	Creative street messages
12	Intersection painting
13	Murals
14	Bicycle signalizer (located curbside)
15	Bicycle and pedestrian signals
16 (two images)	Diverter
17	Public art
18	Sculpture
19	Street Sports
20	Permeable pavement
21	Drinking fountain
22	RESPECT sign
23	One-way cars, two-way bicycles

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Four and especially pages 135-140, as well as page 162, of David Engwicht's *Street Reclaiming: Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities* (1999: New Society Publisher) on the value of celebration and block parties in creating change. See John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916: Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press) on the relation of experience and education.

The Initiative defined “friendly” streets as ones that utilize placemaking, public art, traffic calming strategies, and/or purposeful design for multiple modes and users. Block party guests, including children, were asked to interact with the images, ask questions, share what they like and dislike, and make suggestions. Initiative staff answered questions, introduced people to the various elements of the gallery, and encouraged people to share their thoughts verbally, in written surveys, and using color-coded post-its placed on each image. The production of the images into a gallery was the result of the efforts and Lars, Lily, and Alan, with some images donated by Anton Jerve.

### *Activities*

In addition to the gallery, the Initiative included activities at each block party to encourage residents and guests to think differently about their neighborhood and build connections between neighbors and community organizations. Guests took advantage of a resource table with information about neighborhood organizations and opportunities, ate food from University Avenue restaurants, and participated in a variety of creative projects. The Initiative partnered with Springboard for the Arts, who hired 10 local artists to create placemaking activities for adults and children. The Initiative also partnered with artist Mike Haeg by allowing us to use his Spin Art Bike, an activity for children to combine bicycling and art. The Spin Art Bike represents the Initiative’s hopes of providing activities for residents to experience their neighborhood, particularly the street, in a different, creative way. Through these experiences, the Initiative hoped to spark conversations about placemaking and how streets can be utilized for more than just motorized transit.

### *Dates and Locations*

All block parties were held Fridays from 3:30-7:30 p.m.. Charles Avenue was segmented into 5<sup>3</sup> target areas with one block party for each. Each target area included Sherburne, Charles, and Edmund Avenues as well as any north-south cross streets. The target areas and block party locations were:

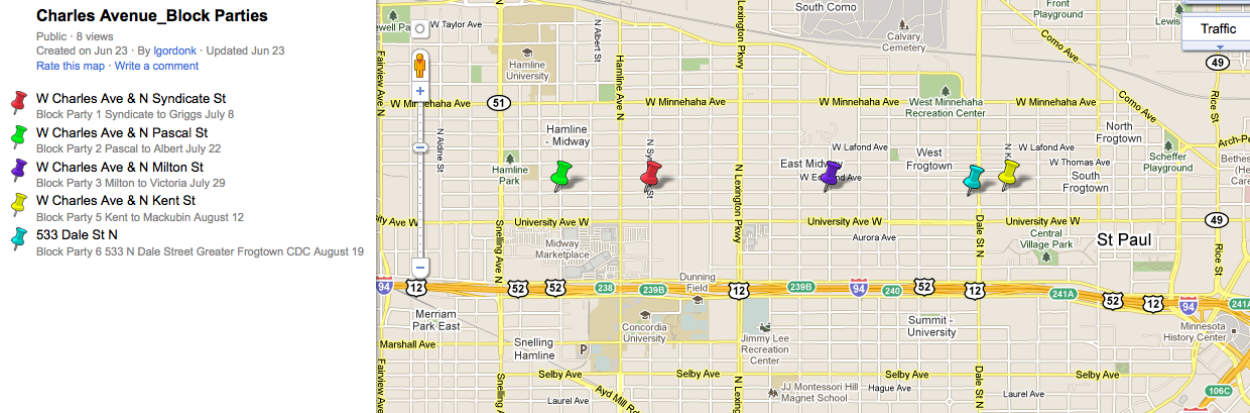
- Aldine Street to Hamline Avenue: Party held on Charles Avenue between Pascal and Albert Streets on July 22, hosted by Kimberly Galvin at 1414 Charles Avenue
- Hamline Avenue to Lexington Avenue: Party held on Charles Avenue between Syndicate and Griggs Streets on July 8, hosted by Erin Pavlica at 1226 Charles Avenue
- Lexington Avenue to Victoria Street: Party held on Charles Avenue between Milton and Victoria Streets on July 29, hosted by Emily Seru at 825 Charles Avenue and Cosandra Lloyd at 891 Charles Avenue
- Victoria Street to Dale Street: Party held at Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation (GFCDEC) (533 N Dale Street) on August 19, hosted by Karin Todd at GFCDC
- Dale Street to Western Avenue: Party held on Charles Avenue between Kent and Mackubin Streets on August 12, hosted by Jeff Kidder at 529 Mackubin Street

Block parties 1 and 2 were in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood, and block parties 3, 4, and 5 were in Frogtown. Block party 2 was our westernmost event, while block party 4 was our easternmost and block party 5 was second furthest east. Figure 1 shows the locations of each block party:

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<sup>3</sup> The Initiative originally hoped to have 6 block parties, the last target area being Western Avenue to Rice Street, but unfortunately we were unable to find a host.

Figure 1:  
Google map of locations of block parties



Each block party was hosted by a local family. The importance of our block party hosts was two-fold. We asked the hosts to secure permits for closure of the blocks, which meant attaining signatures from a majority of the residents on the block (a City requirement). This gave each block party legitimacy at the most local level. It also served as a source of volunteers to make the parties happen. Without this organizing basis for the parties, their success as genuine grassroots efforts would not have been achieved. The necessity of block party hosts cannot be understated for understanding the Initiative.

### *Food and Treats*

The Initiative prioritized ordering refreshments from University Avenue restaurants. Our purpose was to support University Avenue businesses who were already or going to be facing difficulties during the construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail. Food for the block parties came from:

- Flamingo at 490 Syndicate Street N (corner of University Avenue W and Syndicate Street)
- On's Thai Kitchen at 1630 University Avenue W
- America's Most Wanted, food truck owned by Brian White
- Mai Village at 394 University Avenue W
- Saigon Restaurant and Bakery at 704 University Avenue W
- Izzy's Ice Cream at 2034 Marshall Avenue

### *Placemaking Artists: Partnership with Springboard for the Arts*

The Initiative partnered with Springboard for the Arts, a non-profit whose mission is to cultivate a vibrant arts community by connecting artists with the skills, contacts, information and services they need to make a living and a life. Springboard staff identified 10 local artists as placemaking artists for the Friendly Streets Block Parties. These artists went through training to develop community leadership and organizing skills that helped equip them to understand and engage with their neighborhood's needs.

Following the workshops, artists designed projects in various media that demonstrate possible options for creating friendly streets. Projects were designed to encourage residents to think and act



creatively about placemaking in their neighborhood. Artists worked in groups or alone on 6 different placemaking projects. Each group presented their project at two or three block parties.

Descriptions of the placemaking projects, authored by the artists, are as follows:

#### Vacant Heart

- Artists: Conie Borchardt and Molly Balcom Raleigh
- Presented: July 22 and August 12
- *Home is where the heart is. What happens when no one's home?* Through stories, songs, and handmade flags, Vacant Heart gives voice to the losses embodied in vacant houses and the neighborhood's hopes for their futures.

#### Playmagination Space

- Artists: Jennifer Johnson, Talia Galowitch, and Robyn Hendrix
- Presented: July 8, July 29, and August 19
- *Does your imagination need a space to roam free?* Come explore the imaginative space, using art and play for all ages. Come one, come all to the Playmagination Space! Block party guests are invited to help the artists decorate the Playmagination Space by making watercolor paintings and mobile sculptures and responding to optional questions about what you think and feel about your street and neighborhood. Guests' creations will be hung on clotheslines during the party to brighten up the play space. Neighbors will be invited into the Playmagination Space to participate in improvisational theatre experience that will include sound, movement, and role-play. Guests are welcome to take their creations with them as they leave the party as a keepsake. Hope you'll come paint and play with us!

#### Full of Hope

- Artists: Annabella Miller Sardellis and Shakun Maheshwari
- Presented: August 12 and August 19
- *Did you ever think you'd make a bowl from a magazine? Today's your chance!* Get to know your neighbors and share in the experience together while creating a work of art to take home! Come make a bowl from recycled magazines. Tear or cut strips of magazines; using an existing bowl as a mold, use glue to adhere the magazine pages—creating a beautiful recycled work of art.

#### Ring Toss Bench!

- Artist: Bridget Beck
- Presented: July 8 and July 29
- *Hammer, drill, grind, and paint your way to a fun place to sit and play!* Create colorful sculptural 'sitting spots' made of metal and wood and put them in your front yard or boulevard. If you are between the ages of 7 and 95 and have limited to no building experience- this is the project for you. Take interactive artwork to a new level as you 'do-it-yourself' and build a place to relax or share a ring toss with a neighbor.

#### I Wish, I Will

- Artist: Amelia Brown
- Presented: August 12 and August 19
- *What are your wishes? What can you do to make your wishes come true?* Share your wishes and what you can do to make them a reality through the I Wish, I Will project. There will be stickers and yard signs with the words "I wish... I will..." and plenty of space for you to write in your thoughts. Create a sticker to wear during the block party to get to know your neighbors.

Create a yard sign to bring home with you. You can even have your photo taken with your completed stickers and yard signs to capture the moment! Share your wishes and take steps to create the community you wish for!

#### Neighborhood Flags

- Artist: Rudy Arnold
- Presented: July 22 and August 12
- *Come out and make cool neighborhood flags!* They can be put in your yard, on your bike, or anywhere you want to show others what really gets you interested about your neighborhood. We will be painting a variety of designs on small flags. Individuals will be able to choose a design and then paint it on the flag of their choice. After letting it dry for a few minutes the flag can be taken home to show others your pride for living in Hamline-Midway or Frogtown neighborhoods.

#### *Promoting the Block Parties*

In order to promote the block parties, we relied on host families, CCFS Working Group members (especially Lily and Michael Jon), and Springboard for the Arts artists and volunteers to flyer the neighborhood and post announcements in local newspapers and on a local e-Democracy list serve. Emily Seru created and kept current our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/111624418915790/>) as another method for getting the word out.

#### *Block Party Data: Methods and Processes*<sup>4</sup>

We employed four data collection methods at each block party: Registration information, surveys, opinions expressed about gallery images, and field observations. Lars, Lily, and Michael Jon -- in consultation with other CCFS Working Group members -- created the survey (see Appendix B). Interacting with the gallery meant asking residents to post sticky (post-it) notes of different colors indicating opinions about the ideas represented in the images. Field observations included half-hourly counts, gallery conversation field notes, and general participant observation.

Guests were directed to a sign-in table where they were asked to register with their name, address, contact information, and interest in volunteering for future block parties. The registration information was compiled into Hamline-Midway Coalition's database, as guests may be invited to participate in focus groups or future work of the Initiative.

Guests were asked to complete a written survey about their experience living in the neighborhood and their opinions about the images presented in the gallery. Guests were also given the opportunity to contribute their own ideas and voice concerns about street design ideas and placemaking tools. Survey responses were collected and responses tallied to illustrate patterns and preferences across block parties.

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<sup>4</sup> Note on the limitations of the data: Because we relied on those who attended the events to provide data, our sampling was non-probabilistic relative to the population of the target areas and the larger neighborhoods. Our data is, consequently, suggestive of the opinions of the neighborhoods. Nevertheless, we take it seriously as suggestive data and stand behind the validity and reliability of our measures.

While guests looked at images in the “gallery,” they used color-coded post-it notes to illustrate preferences and concerns. Cups full of green, yellow, and pink post-its were available and guests could use as many or as few as they wanted. Green post-its corresponded to positive feelings, yellow to mixed emotions, and pink to negative feelings. The post-its were counted at the end of each event and removed prior to the next event.

Often participants would interact at the gallery as they placed post-its on images and completed their surveys. These interactions were usually between participants/residents, but would sometimes also be with the primary “gallery helpers,” Lars or Steve. While the surveys allowed for more detailed responses, post-it responses were immediately visible to participants, letting residents see what their neighbors were thinking which prompted conversations. Lars took field notes on conversations that he had with residents, and conversations that he overheard between residents.

### *Analytic Categories and Hypotheses*

Because our goals led us to emphasize transportation and placemaking, our gallery reflected these two broad categories. See Table 2:

Table 2:  
Gallery Images by Category

Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure Images	Placemaking/Art Images
3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23 (n=10)	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21 (n=13)

A little less than half of the images are bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure ideas, and more than half were placemaking/art images. Of course, a close inspection of our images reveal that our infrastructure concepts have aesthetic and placemaking effects, and placemaking concepts can act as infrastructure. As an example, painted intersections are often promoted as accomplishing both.<sup>5</sup> However, for the purposes of understanding what kind of emphasis of interest residents expressed in their opinions about the images, the two categories seemed reasonable in terms of reflecting concepts that were about movement (infrastructure) and stopping (placemaking). Arguably, the former has non-residents as well as residents as its assumed user groups, while the latter speak more to residents. Would we find differences between block parties in terms of an emphasis on movement versus stopping?

*Hypothesis 1: Infrastructure concepts would be more popular than placemaking ideas because of the latter's unconventional treatment of streets.*

One hypothesis is that due to the long-established view of streets as being solely for the purposes and function of movement, and in particular the movement of automotive vehicles, there would be general resistance to placemaking ideas by virtue of them being more unfamiliar.

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<sup>5</sup> Another caveat is that several of the infrastructure ideas included aesthetic elements (conventionally understood), such as the image of a bumpout (# 4) which was landscaped. By contrast, the image we showed of a diverter (#16) was not landscaped and had less aesthetic emphasis.

*Hypothesis 2: As we move eastward into Frogtown, there would be more interest in placemaking and less interest in bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure.*

Given the initial feedback we received from residents, we believed that there would be more support for bicycling infrastructure in Hamline-Midway than in Frogtown. We believed that in Frogtown there might be more resistance to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure due to those changes being read as continuations of the legacy of non-neighborhood governing entities making transportation-based infrastructural changes to the neighborhood (see footnote 1 above), and thus we would expect more receptivity to placemaking ideas.

### *Block Party Findings*

Between July 8 and August 19 over 700 people attended one or more Friendly Streets Block Parties. See Table 3:

Table 3:  
Block Party Attendance

Block Party	Estimated Attendance <sup>6</sup>
Block Party 1: July 8	140
Block Party 2: July 22	133
Block Party 3: July 29	225
Block Party 4: August 12	104
Block Party 5: August 19	101
TOTAL	703

The Initiative collected 203 surveys from the five block parties, altering the survey after the first party to include questions about gender, age, and whether or not children play in the street. From the 139 responses from parties 2-5, 79 identified as female and 59 as male. The median age of those who took the survey ranged from respondents born in 1968 (Block Party 4) to 1983 (Block Party 5), with the median being those born in 1975 (Block Parties 2 and 3).

110 survey respondents (54%) were from Charles Avenue (categories 1 and 2), 26 (13%) were from neighboring Sherburne or Edmund Avenues (categories 3 and 4), and 64 (32%) were from other streets (categories 5 and 6).

Our survey asked respondents if they used Charles for bicycling and walking. The majority at all block parties do. However, we found that as we move eastward, the percentage of survey respondents indicating that they ride bicycle or walk decreases. This is shown in Table 4:

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<sup>6</sup> Estimated attendance was calculated using half-hourly counts, and accounted for hosts, volunteers, and staff.

Table 4:  
Percentage of Survey Respondents who Bicycle and Walk on Charles Avenue, by Block Party

Block Party	% who bicycle on Charles Avenue	% who walk on Charles Avenue
1	72	85
2	67	81
3	64	91
4	58	79
5	61	56

The opportunity to provide direct opinions about various ideas represented in our gallery of images was a central feature of the block parties. We had no expectations about how many opinions people would express about the images. The 502 opinions expressed during the first block party (an average of 21 opinions per image) set the bar. Over the five events we had over 1700 opinions expressed about the images. See Table 5:

Table 5:  
Number of Opinions Expressed on Gallery Images

Block Party	Post-its
1	502
2	375
3	460
4	222
5	184
TOTAL	1743

***Biggest problems facing Charles Avenue:***

Guests were asked what the biggest problems facing Charles Avenue are. The top two responses were **‘automobiles drive too fast down the street’** and **‘I’m expecting automobile traffic to increase with the coming of the light rail.’** These two responses commanded a majority of survey opinions. **‘Too much automobile traffic’** and **‘Charles doesn’t seem safe for children who live nearby’** consistently represent a second-tier of residential concerns about Charles Avenue. Other responses -- ‘there are no problems with Charles Avenue- it’s fine the way it is’ and ‘not enough on-street parking’ -- received the fewest responses. These response patterns were identical at the level of individual block parties.

We also asked respondents open-ended questions about “other” problems associated with Charles. At almost all block parties, respondents used this question as an opportunity to reiterate their concerns about automotive traffic and motorists driving too fast on Charles. But other answers to this question were concerns about **crime** (drugs, prostitution), **violence** (including gun), **noise**, and **garbage**. Responses from block parties 4 and 5 express concern about **the quality of community life** in Frogtown. For example, responses from block party 4 emphasized the high number of foreclosures and vacancies, and that the street “lacks character” and “community ‘feel’.”

The responses in Frogtown suggest a desire to define or redefine the image and reputation of Frogtown, whereas no such concerns were expressed at the Hamline-Midway block parties in response to this question.

### ***What ideas do residents like?***

With few exceptions, residents at all block parties were positively inclined to all of the ideas represented in the gallery images, reflecting a generally positive orientation to both the infrastructure and placemaking. The majority of post-its were green for almost all ideas. Even those ideas that received the most negative responses sometimes received positive responses, and hence were interpreted as polarizing ideas.

The three images with the highest total number of green post-its were, in this order, **#20 (permeable pavement)**, **#12 (intersection painting)**, and **#2 (creative sidewalks)**. When we asked survey respondents to identify which ideas were their favorites, the following received the highest percentage of positive responses *and* fewest ambivalent and negative responses (in this order): **#23 (1-way cars, 2-way bicycles)**, **#20 (permeable pavement)**, **#9 (bicycle-friendly speedbumps)**, **#3 (traffic circles)**, **#10 (bike/ped boulevard road paint)**, and **#12 (intersection painting)**.

Thus, the following seven ideas have the most support:

#20



#12



#23



#2



#9



#3



#10



***How do these positive responses vary by block party?***

Our post-it data shows that as we move eastward into Frogtown, there is a greater interest in placemaking concepts:

Table 6:  
Images with Most Positive Responses by Block Party

Block Party	Images receiving the most positive responses (presence of green, lack of yellow and pink post-its)	Infrastructure (I) or Placemaking (P) concept?
1	#23 (1-way car, 2-way bikes) #18 (sculpture) #14 (bicycle signalizer) #20 (permeable pavement) #12 (intersection paving)	I P I I P
2	#20 (permeable pavement) #10 (bike-ped boulevard road paint) #1 (artistic sign pole)	I P I
3	#14 (bicycle signalizer) #22 (respect sign) #20 (permeable pavement) #2 (creative sidewalks)	I I I P
4	#11 (creative street messages) #18 (sculpture) #22 (respect sign), #2 (creative sidewalks)	P P I P
5	#23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #18 (sculpture) #5 (painted pavement) #12 (intersection paving) #13 (murals)	I P P P P

At block parties 1, 2, and 3, most of the positive responses are a mix of the both infrastructure and placemaking ideas. But in block parties 4 and 5 almost all are placemaking.

Survey data at the level of block party confirm the overall pattern of greater positive interest in bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure ideas, but not an increasing emphasis in placemaking as we move further east into Frogtown. See Table 7:

Table 7:  
Top Gallery Images by Survey Respondents, by Block Party

Block Party	Gallery images considered “top 3” by respondents	Infrastructure (I) or Placemaking (P) concept?
1	#20 (permeable pavement) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #10 (bike/ped boulevard road paint)	I I I I I
2	#20 (permeable pavement) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #10 (bike/ped boulevard road paint) #16 (diverters) #12 (intersection painting)	I I I I P
3	#20 (permeable pavement) #4 (bumpouts) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump)	I I I I
4	#12 (intersection painting) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes)	P I I I
5	#23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #10 (bike/ped boulevard road paint) #13 (murals)	I I P

***What ideas received the most negative responses?***

Pink post-its represented negative feelings about an image. The three images with the highest total pink post-its were **#19 (street sports)**, **#8 (playful tiled walls)**, and **#16 (diverter)**. **#6 (fence beautification)** also received many negative responses.

***How did these negative responses vary by Block Party?***

The pattern by block party matches the overall pattern, that when negative opinions were expressed about images, they were almost always of placemaking ideas. The consistent exception to this was #16 (diverters). See Table 8:



Table 8:  
Images Receiving the Most Negative Responses by Block Party

Block Party	Images receiving the most negative post-it responses (low green, high pink, yellow)	Infrastructure (I) or Placemaking (P) concept?
1	#8 (playful tiled walls) #6 (fence beautification) #16 (diverter) #19 (street sports) #3 (traffic circles) #17 (public art)	P P I P I P
2	#8 (playful tiled walls) #6 (fence beautification) #11 (creative street messages) #22 (respect sign)	P P P I
3	#6 (fence beautification) #8 (playful tiled walls) #19 (street sports) #16 (diverter) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes)	P P P I I
4	#16 (diverter) #1 (artistic sign pole) #8 (playful tiled walls)	I P P
5	#21 (drinking fountain) #17 (public art) #6 (fence beautification)	P P P

In sum, the following four ideas received the least support:

#19



#8



#16(a and b)



#6



### ***What ideas are problematic?***

This question was worded intentionally to capture opinions about concepts that respondents may support but find difficult to implement, or that simply do not support for a variety of reasons. In other words, “problem” here could be interpreted as something to address/solve, or something to avoid. Responses to ‘What ideas did you encounter today that you think would be a problem, and why?’ resulted in three images standing out, **#19 (street sports)**, **#23 (1-way cars, 2-way bicycles)**, and **#3 (traffic circles)**. The former sparked many conversations about safety of children, late night noise and attention from non-residents, and was the single-most negative idea encountered at

the block parties. The latter two are among residents' favorite ideas, suggesting that implementation would be the challenge. Respondents were concerned, for example, about snow removal around traffic circles.

Table 9:  
Most Problematic Images by Survey Respondents, by Block Party

Block Party	Gallery image considered problematic by survey respondents
1	#3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #16 (diverters) #19 (street sports)
2	#4 (bumpouts) #19 (street sports) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes)
3	#19 (street sports) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes)
4	#19 (street sports) #22 (respect sign) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #4 (bumpouts)
5	#19 (street sports)

### ***Open-ended input on making streets more friendly***

Question 6 was an open-ended question which asked respondents for other ideas about how to make streets more friendly for residents. These responses can be categorized as infrastructure, placemaking, and community.

In terms of infrastructure, residents suggested **more signage** of various kinds, **better street lighting**, exploring the possibility of **making parts of Charles one-way**, and **speed bumps** among other ideas. For placemaking, the overwhelming emphasis was on **gardens and greenspaces**, while **various artistic ideas** (sculptures, murals, music) were also suggested. For community, there was a strong emphasis on **more block parties**, **more community events**, **more communication** between neighbors and residents, and **more activities for youth**. It is crucial to note that without any prompting, respondents brought forward an entire new category of response as being critical to making streets more friendly: **community**. The CCFS Initiative will be well-served in considering how any potential changes that we propose to the City relate to increasing community relations/connections, and in fact making it an explicit goal of equal importance to infrastructure and placemaking.

### ***What gallery image ideas were new to respondents?***

Since one of the goals of the CCFS was to educate community members about the wide range of ways to imagine street usage, we wanted an immediate measure of our gallery's impact on participant's thinking. To get at this, we asked which images were new to respondents. In order, **#19 (street sports)**, **#23 (two-way bicycles/one-way cars)**, **#11 (creative street messages)**, **#2 (creative sidewalks)**, **#9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump)**, and **#1 (artistic sign pole)** were new to respondents. Table 10 provides this data by block party:

Table 10:  
Gallery Image Ideas that were New to Survey Respondents, by Block Party

Block Party	New Ideas	Infrastructure (I) or Placemaking (P) concept?
1	#19 (street sports) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #8 (playful tiled walls) #2 (creative sidewalks) #11 (creative street messages) #1 (artistic sign pole) #14 (bicycle signalizer)	P I P P P P I
2	#19(street sports) #1 (artistic sign pole) #20 (permeable pavement) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #8 (playful tiled walls) #11 (creative street messages)	P P I I P P
3	#1 (artistic sign pole) #2 (creative sidewalks) #19 (street sports) #20 (permeable pavement) #22 (respect sign) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #11 (creative street messages) #5 (painted pavement) #6 (fence beautification)	P P P I I I P P P
4	#2 (creative sidewalks) #21 (drinking fountain) #22 (respect sign) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #11 (creative street messages) #19 (street sports)	P P I I I P P
5	#16 (diverter) #6 (fence beautification) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #15 (bike and ped signals) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes)	I P I I I

The overall pattern that placemaking ideas were more unfamiliar to respondents in four of the five block parties, the fifth being an exception. This confirmed the assumption in hypothesis 1.

***What gallery image ideas will respondents tell their neighbors about?***

Another way in which we were trying to achieve our goal of educating residents about the wide range of possibilities of streets was to ask respondents which ideas they will tell their neighbors about. To ask the question, we hoped, would serve as a potential prompt. Responses to the question also served the purpose of giving the Initiative a sense of what ideas seemed to resonate – positively, negatively, or otherwise – with residents. When asked which images people would be most likely to talk to their neighbors about, **#20 (permeable pavement), #23 (two-way**

**bicycles/one-way streets**), and **#9 (bicycle-friendly speedbumps)** received the highest number of responses. It is noteworthy that these are also among the most popular ideas about which respondents had positive opinions. Yet, it is also interesting that **#19 (street sports)** received a very high number of responses, illustrating that residents were interested in discussing further both the images they liked and those they did not. Table 11 presents this data by Block Party:

Table 11:  
Gallery Image Ideas that Respondents Will Tell Neighbors About, by Block Party

Block Party	Will tell my neighbors about
1	#20 (permeable pavement) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #11 (creative street messages) #19 (street sports)
2	#20 (permeable pavement) #23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #16 (diverter)
3	#12 (intersection paving) #20 (permeable pavement) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #1 (artistic sign pole) #21 (drinking fountain) #2 (creative sidewalks)
4	#9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump) #2 (creative sidewalks) #3 (traffic circles/mini-roundabouts) #21 (drinking fountain) #20 (permeable pavement) #22 (respect sign) #6 (fence beautification) #5 (painted pavement) #7 (artistic planters)
5	#23 (1-way cars, 2-way bikes) #4 (bumpouts) #14 (bicycle signalizer) #9 (bicycle-friendly speedbump)

### ***Name your favorite street, anywhere***

The survey also asked about guests' favorite street in the Twin Cities or elsewhere. We asked this question because we wanted a better idea of the collective imagination of residents in terms of their reference points and the variability of appealing design elements. While responses varied greatly, there were two major patterns: First, the vast majority of favorite streets were within the Twin Cities, with Summit Avenue receiving the greatest number of mentions. There were also a great deal of responses naming streets in Frogtown and Hamline-Midway, reflecting a local pride. Grand Avenue, River Road, and Milwaukee Avenue all received multiple mentions. Very few responses referred to places outside of the Twin Cities, but they include State Street in Madison, pedestrian plazas in Copenhagen, and an alley near Pike Place in Seattle.

Second, common across many responses was a preference for natural beauty, mixes of people and different modes of transportation, interesting stores and architecture, and amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists. A number of responses also wrote about their own street or neighborhood and emphasized the importance of connections to a place and their neighbors. These latter findings are similar to the “other ideas to make streets more friendly” responses, which emphasized the need for changes in infrastructure, an emphasis on gardens and green spaces, and improving community life.

### ***Other suggestions from residents***

As a closing to the survey, we asked respondents for any last thoughts or ideas, including ideas that might be best represented in the form of a drawing. The overwhelming majority of responses were written (rather than drawn). One person suggested that they be allowed to tap the maple trees along Charles to make maple syrup (as part of a larger urban gardening notion). Another suggested ways to help change the aesthetic and identity of Frogtown:

*I'd like to see different frog designs on every street corner. We could make them all colors to represent our great community* (Block Party 4 respondent).

This comment is related to another respondent's idea, expressed as a response to question 6 on “other ideas to make streets more friendly”:

*Dinkytown has a theme- U of MN! There are colors of dark-red and yellow everywhere, decorations, U of MN's characters, etc. Dinkytown looks organized and has an atmosphere of 'hard-working' students. Today's images of Frogtown are 'thrifty' 'bad area' 'ghetto' a lot of bad stuff. But we can make it better. We can make Frogtown an 'eco-conscious residential area' the theme is 'froggy' 'forests' and 'environmentally friendly' the color is GREEN* (Block Party 5 respondent).

A couple of others expressed the need to know the costs of various potential changes. Another respondent expressed concerns about maintenance of various infrastructure and placemaking ideas, as well as vandalism of public art and gardens. A couple of respondents expressed that painting a bike lane on Charles will not necessarily accomplish the goal of creating a friendlier street (this is notable because of the common confusion between the concepts of bike lanes and bicycle/pedestrian boulevards). Finally, one person suggested that we not call diverters “diverters,” but instead “pedestrian refuge islands.” This is an excellent suggestion as it calls attention to the positive intentions of the concept for pedestrian users, as opposed to solely emphasizing their restrictiveness to motorists.

## *Summary and Interpretation of Findings in Relation to Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1: Infrastructure concepts would be more popular than placemaking ideas because of the latter's unconventional treatment of streets.*

We turned out to be correct that, *as a general pattern*, infrastructure concepts received more favorable response than placemaking ideas, though we should note that *almost all* ideas received more support than opposition. Nevertheless, the “top choices” among residents were most often infrastructure ideas (this was evident in both the positive responses to infrastructure, and negative responses to placemaking). However, we also found that the preferences of residents did vary by block party, which leads us to our second hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 2: As we move eastward into Frogtown, there would be more interest in placemaking and less interest in bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure.*

Our data partially confirmed this expectation. Our post-it findings confirm the hypothesis, while the survey data does not.

Residents are receptive to both infrastructural and placemaking changes along Charles Avenue, but are more enthusiastic about the former. Yet, as we move further east into Frogtown, residents expressed concern about recovering or redefining the aesthetics of their neighborhood. Our fourth block party, the further east, had many foreclosure properties and there was a palpable sense of vacancy on the block. It fits, then, that residents would be concerned about reviving the street. This is evident in the open-ended comments about problems related to Charles Avenue, comments on how to improve Charles, and in other suggestions offered by survey respondents.

## *Emphasizing the Quality and Aesthetics of Community Life*

When we gave respondents an opportunity to identify problems on Charles Avenue and to make suggestions about how to improve Charles, they brought up issues related to the quality and aesthetics community life. Respondents want more block parties, more communication, more opportunities to forge ties, and more events for youth. They also want more greenspace, particularly in the form of gardens of all types, better street infrastructure (lighting), and ways to respond to crime and violence. Whatever changes the CCFS Initiative proposes to the City must include an emphasis on how those changes relate to the quality and aesthetics of community life.

## *Next Steps: Phase 2*

The CCFS Initiative has three major goals it has set for the year 2012. First, to bring in other persons and organizations to collaborate with us on this project, including political representatives and organizations with an interest in the future of our neighborhoods and the City. In essence, we are now seeking to develop widespread support for improving Charles Avenue for residents, for all road users, and to increase enthusiasm about the project in the hopes that we will have many champions for the changes we propose.

Second, we will disseminate Phase 1 findings (this report) to all of the organizations and persons listed in the acknowledgements, as well as Toole Design Group who has recently contracted with Transit for Livable Communities to develop a 30% plan set for the redesign of Charles Avenue. We believe that the data we have gathered and analyzed here will help guide the planning and promotion of the CCFS Initiative in the coming year.

Finally, as our planning and promotion can now become more specific and focused, and based on the apparent demand and enthusiasm that residents expressed for more community events, the Working Group has decided to hold another series of block parties over the Summer of 2012 in order to generate more residential input and support for changes along the Avenue. Further, some of our community outreach and organizing efforts will involve Toole Design Group, who bring expertise, comparative data, and a neutral outsider perspective that will help us and neighborhood residents in our deliberations.

## APPENDIX A

### Gallery Images

#1 Artistic sign/pole



#2 Creative sidewalks



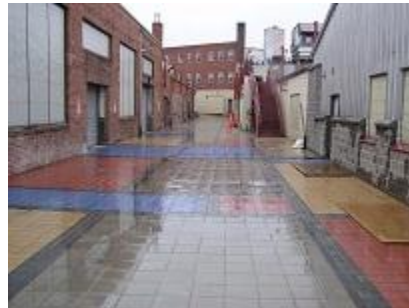
#3 Traffic circles (mini-roundabouts)



#4 Bumpouts



#5 Painted pavement



#6 Fence beautification



#7 Artistic planters



#8 Playful tiled walls





#9 Bike-friendly speedbump



#10 Bike/ped blvd paint



#11 Creative street messages



#12 Intersection painting



#13 Murals



#14 Bicycle signalizer (located curbside)



#15 Bicycle and pedestrian signals



#16(a and b) Diverter



#17 Public art



#18 Sculpture



#19 Street sports



#20 Permeable pavement



#21 Drinking fountain



#22 RESPECT sign



#23 One-way cars, two-way bicycles



*APPENDIX B*  
*Central Corridor Friendly Streets Survey*

## ***Central Corridor Friendly Streets Survey***

We need your opinion!

The answers that you provide on this survey will be used to guide future planning efforts for the redesign of Charles Avenue, should funding become available for such a project.

If you complete this survey and include your name and residential address, you will be entered into a drawing for a prize that will be announced after the last Friendly Streets Block Party in late August. The winner will be notified by mail.

The name provided on this survey will only be used for contact purposes in the event that you are the winner of the drawing.

The address provided on this survey will only be used for contact purposes and to make general observations about responses (e.g. responses of Charles Avenue residents vs. responses of non-Charles Avenue residents).

This survey should take between 5 - 10 minutes to complete.

THANK YOU!

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your residential address: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you or members of your household **ride bike** on Charles Avenue? (circle one)

(a) Yes

(b) No

If Yes, for what purposes (circle all that apply):

- commuting
- recreation
- errands
- other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you or members of your household **walk** along Charles Avenue? (circle one)

(a) Yes

(b) No

If Yes, for what purposes (circle all that apply):

- commuting
- recreation/pleasure
- errands
- other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do children on your block **play in the street**?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If Yes, what do you think about that?

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4. What are the **biggest problems facing Charles Avenue**? (circle all that apply)

- (a) There are no problems with Charles Avenue – it's fine the way it is
- (b) Too much automobile traffic
- (c) I'm expecting automobile traffic to increase with the coming of light rail
- (d) Automobiles drive too fast down the street
- (e) Charles doesn't seem safe for children who live nearby

- (f) Not enough on-street parking
- (g) Other (please specify):

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5. Which three (3) ideas for improving Charles that you saw today (refer to image #) did you **like the best**, and why?

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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6. What **other ideas** do you have for making Charles Avenue more friendly (ideas that you didn't see today)?

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7. What ideas did you encounter today that you **think would be a problem**, and why?

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8. What images were **new ideas** that you **haven't seen before**? (check all that apply)

- ☐ None were new to me; I've seen them all before.

- ☐ All were new to me; I've never seen any of them before.
- ☐ Artistic signs/poles (#1)
- ☐ Creative sidewalks (dominoes) (#2)
- ☐ Traffic circles (small roundabouts) (#3)
- ☐ Bumpouts (reduces pedestrian crossing distance) (#4)
- ☐ Colorful painted pavement (#5)
- ☐ Fence beautification (#6)
- ☐ Art on planters (#7)
- ☐ Playful tiled walls (#8)
- ☐ Bicycle-friendly speedbump (#9)
- ☐ Bicycle/pedestrian-friendly boulevard roadpaint (#10)
- ☐ Creative street messages (smoking image) (#11)
- ☐ Intersection painting (#12)
- ☐ Murals (#13)
- ☐ Bicycle signalizer (located curbside) (#14)
- ☐ Bicycle and pedestrian signals (for difficult crossings) (#15)
- ☐ Diverters (for difficult crossings) (#16)
- ☐ Public art (#17)
- ☐ Sculpture (#18)
- ☐ Street sports (#19)
- ☐ Permeable pavement (for absorbing rainwater) (#20)
- ☐ Drinking fountains (#21)
- ☐ Respect sign (sharing the road) (#22)
- ☐ Streets that are one-way for cars, two-way for bicycles (#23)

9. What ideas did you see today that you would **tell your neighbors or friends** about?  
(check all that apply)

- ☐ None.
- ☐ Artistic signs/poles (#1)
- ☐ Creative sidewalks (dominoes) (#2)
- ☐ Traffic circles (small roundabouts) (#3)
- ☐ Bumpouts (reduces pedestrian crossing distance) (#4)
- ☐ Colorful painted pavement (#5)
- ☐ Fence beautification (#6)
- ☐ Art on planters (#7)
- ☐ Playful tiled walls (#8)
- ☐ Bicycle-friendly speedbump (#9)
- ☐ Bicycle/pedestrian-friendly boulevard roadpaint (#10)
- ☐ Creative street messages (smoking image) (#11)
- ☐ Intersection painting (#12)
- ☐ Murals (#13)
- ☐ Bicycle signalizer (located curbside) (#14)
- ☐ Bicycle and pedestrian signals (for difficult crossings) (#15)
- ☐ Diverters (for difficult crossings) (#16)

- ☐ Public art (#17)
- ☐ Sculpture (#18)
- ☐ Street sports (#19)
- ☐ Permeable pavement (for absorbing rainwater) (#20)
- ☐ Drinking fountains (#21)
- ☐ Respect sign (sharing the road) (#22)
- ☐ Streets that are one-way for cars, two-way for bicycles (#23)

10. What is your favorite street in St. Paul, Minneapolis, or anywhere else? What do you like about it?

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11. How do you think that the Central Corridor Light Rail will impact Sherburne, Charles, or Edmund (these particular streets)?

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12. Anything else you would like to share? Or, use this space to draw ideas for your street! [Space provided in survey given at block parties.]

**THANK YOU for taking this survey!** Please return it to the "Completed Surveys" box.