

Additional comments received as of 5 pm on September 4, 2012
For the Charles Avenue Project – RES PH 12-211

Lara Christley, 794 Blair Avenue (Ward 1)

I have been following the Charles Avenue bike redo for over a year and a half now. I am very proud that St. Paul has this opportunity and am excited to see and experience the changes to Charles Avenue once implemented. It has come to my attention, and perhaps it is gossip, that Richard Purcell, the owner of a funeral home at Charles and Snelling, has been making enough noise to derail the project. I am writing to you to express my sincere concerns that one person can stall or derail a process that has involved hundreds of people, that has involved the community from the very beginning and that will benefit everyone who uses that intersection.

I first heard about the noise Purcell is making at the Unify University parade on August 18th. I then read this Minnpost article that highlights his position:

"And there are objections to be heard. Richard Purcell, owner of the nearly century-old Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home on Snelling and Charles, says that he's not at all opposed to turning the street into a bike boulevard. But he worries that restricting left turns from Snelling into Charles will keep those who attend services and visitations from easy access to his parking lot.

"We serve people who are in crisis; a lot of them are elderly, and their sense of navigation is not as quick," he says.

Purcell worries that they'll have trouble figuring out how to get where they're going. He's asked the city to consider jogging the boulevard up a block or two to cross Snelling at a street where there already is a median and lights. "It wouldn't make a big difference to the overall plan," he says."

My opinion is that that intersection is for everyone to use. It is not solely there for the benefit of his funeral home or any business at that intersection. I certainly believe that it is much easier for a car to "jog up the boulevard" a block or two than for a person on foot or on a bike. Taking into consideration the difficulty of left turn lanes anywhere on Snelling close to University, I feel that any restriction that is felt by removing the left turn lanes will be more than offset by the increased safety of all people moving through that intersection.

Unfortunately, I can not make it to the community meeting on September 5th. I hope this email counts as my voice being heard in this discussion.

Jean Schroepfer, 271 Summit Avenue (Ward 1)

Proponents claim that "the proposed design will make Charles Avenue a safer and more attractive street for those walking, biking, driving and living along it." This promise notably omits any mention of detrimental effect on those working or otherwise doing business on it, especially those located on major intersections. Please be sure to satisfy as well the needs of those businesses in your plans.

Philip Schwartz, 1822 LaSalle Avenue, Apt. 31 (Minneapolis)

I fully support any changes to make Charles Ave a better place to bike and live, while understanding the costs to car accessibility there are.

[follow-up email]

I bike through St. Paul occasionally, and Charles Ave would be a great option for me.

Paul Nelson, 1678 Van Buren (Ward 4)

I am writing to express my support for the Charles Avenue Friendly Streets Initiative project. I am supportive of all of the proposed project elements for the street including all traffic circles, all bum-pouts, all speed bumps (if any), and all medians across Snelling, Lexington, Dale, and Rice, and everything else. I am very supportive of the complete project.

I think this project will provide many benefits to everyone including residents who live on the street, the businesses on University by providing more access to more people, and will benefit the business in the regions of the major street crossings Snelling, Lexington, Dale, and Rice, by greater recognition and visibility of those businesses by more people (non-motorized) crossing the street.

I am supportive of the median on Snelling Avenue and Charles as an essential element of the project (halfway between University and Thomas.) and a safe facility for crossing for bike/walk and handicapped mobility. I think this will benefit everyone a great deal, including the businesses at the street crossings. Thank you.

Andy Singer, Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition

While not a substitute for bicycle access to University Avenue itself, the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition supports the the proposed Charles Avenue Bikeway. I'm hoping we can turn out some people for the City Council public hearing on Wednesday night.

The only caveat I have/notice is that Toole Design Group, the designer of the Charles Bikeway has not been at any of the Snelling Avenue community design meetings hosted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (and ALTA-SEH). Some of the proposals for treatments to the Charles/Snelling Avenue intersection need to be amended or coordinated with MnDOT and the Snelling study in the event that this study recommends putting bike lanes on Snelling itself. The city should also consider treatments like "HAWK" (High intensity pedestrian/bike Activated Walk) signals at Snelling which would enable them to not restrict turning motions and thus avoid some of the political opposition to the project.

Dana DeMaster, 1642 Blair (Ward 4)

By an overwhelming number, Hamline-Midway neighborhood residents want safer streets with less traffic and greater opportunity to walk or bike to neighborhood destinations, including local businesses. The Charles Avenue Bike Boulevard has truly been an open, transparent process with the participation of Hamline-Midway stakeholders. Thousands of residents have offered comments and hundreds of people attended six block events last summer to provide input on the design of Charles Avenue project. In addition, the City has held public meetings and made project plans available at several locations (including their website) over a period of more than four years.

In the August 2012 Hamline-Midway Monitor, Mr. Purcell, owner of Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home, suggests that making our streets more inviting and safer will be bad for businesses, specifically his. Even before LRT construction the area around Snelling and University has not only been blighted by high vacancies, but is also unpleasant and often dangerous to access by bike, on foot, or in a car. What could be worse for business than an area that is dangerous, ugly, and half vacant? Shouldn't he and area businesses be more concerned that Snelling and I94 was rated the second most dangerous intersection in the state by the Department of Transportation? Do business patrons enjoy sitting in stopped traffic on Snelling Avenue? No evidence, nationally or locally, has linked the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects with business closure and, in fact, such infrastructure has often been associated with a stronger business community. The canard that bikes are bad for business is tired and cannot bear to be trotted out again. By definition, people who bike or walk support local businesses.

As a mother who bikes with children, I want safe streets and easy access to University Avenue businesses. Biking on Minnehaha Avenue (eight blocks north of University Avenue) does not get me close to my favorite restaurants or shopping destinations. Removing design elements that promote less auto traffic waters down a strong and neighborhood-supported plan. Suggesting that pedestrians should walk four blocks out of their way while someone in a car cannot drive around the block is ridiculous. As a car owner and driver, I want less traffic. More people on foot, on bike, or on public transit makes my driving experience better, too.

Grace Grianger, 1482 Edmund (Ward 4)

My name is Grace Grinager and I live at 1482 Edmund Avenue, Saint Paul. I recently wrote an article for the TC Daily Planet about the Charles Avenue Re-Design because I am also a reporter and was interested in learning more about the plan.

The article can be viewed here: <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/news/2012/08/30/charles-avenue-re-design-proposal-grassroots-initiative-partners-city-saint-paul>

I regularly drive, walk, and bike around Charles Ave. In particular, I cross Snelling near Charles everyday on foot en route to a bus to work. I strongly support the entire proposal, and feel that adding pedestrian medians would be crucial. I understand the owners of the funeral home and drum shop when they say that it will be an inconvenience to their customers, but I believe that the City/MNDot could put signs directing southbound traffic to turn early at Thomas to access

these businesses. to solve the problem I see all kinds of crazy driving (mostly u-turns) at that intersection (Snelling and Charles). I also see a lot of road rage, and traffic jams in PM rush hour. Adding a pedestrian median would greatly improve safety for all involved.

Amber Dallman, 1328 Sargent (Ward 3)

I missed the open statement period for Open St. Paul, but would like to submit a few comments to you about the Charles Avenue bicycle boulevard project.

As a ward 3 resident, I watched the public process unfold for the Jefferson Bike Boulevard. To their credit, the grassroots effort for the Charles Ave project has taken many lessons learned from the Jefferson project. The proposal is a much safer project for people who choose to walk, bike, or even drive.

Take my quick tangent of a story: yesterday my husband and I were riding on Jefferson between Hamline and the river. He shouted to me (as he barely slowed down for a 4-way stop with our 20-month son in the trailer behind him): "what makes this better for bikes anyway?" And, beyond the signage (including sharrows) and parked cars narrowing the street there's not much. I might risk saying the 4-way stops calm traffic less than traffic circles would, and make it hard for people - motorists and bicycles - to follow the rules. This further creates animosity between people who choose one mode over the other.

There are elements in the Charles project that cause agitation between the modes. Particularly the use of pedestrian refuges, which is not unsimilar from elements eliminated in the Jefferson project. I ask the councilmembers to consider the following: Is driving a right or a privilege? Is biking a right or a privilege? Is walking a right or a privilege?

I would respond that driving is clearly a privilege - for those that can afford to drive and are old enough and able-bodied enough to hold a license. Many people in our community walk or bike because they have no other choice. They should not be treated like second class citizens in a transportation system that caters to people in cars first.

My family only has one car that is primarily only used to visit family...in Wisconsin. This means we choose to bike, walk and bus to meet most of our daily needs. We do this for a variety of reasons - it saves us money (and that allows us to live in our neighborhood), it is good for our health (we both promote the benefits of regular physical activity in our professions, and walking and biking to destinations is a more sustainable way to get regular exercise), and it is sustainable.

The proposed Charles project increases safety for all users - people on bikes, on foot, or behind the wheel. This includes the implementation of traffic circles at quieter cross streets and pedestrian refuges at main arterials. I support the project in its entirety and ask that the council do the same. Support it for the increased safety benefits to people in our community. I ask that you support all of the traffic-calming elements - most importantly the pedestrian refuges - of the project that increase safety for all users and treat people who walk or bike as people who have a right to a safe and accessible transportation system.

Kathleen Abel, Ward 1

The project needs to be revised.

Even as a bicycle commuter, I don't see the need for this expensive project. Certainly the presence of light rail on University makes no difference, as I was already avoiding University in favor of Thomas or Minnehaha. I have lived and plan to live again on Charles near Grotto and have not had concerns about heavy traffic there. Let's save the taxpayers some money and forget this idea.

Mark Brauer, Ward 7

The project looks promising, but I still have some ideas to make it better.

Charles from Park to Aldine is relatively flat and has good pavement. It is good for biking. The proposed median treatments at Snelling, Lexington and Dale along with altered traffic control along the way should make biking safer and easier. But west of Aldine I would likely use University to connect to Transfer Rd and then continue on Charles to UofM Transitway. The proposed route north to Thomas is longer and would be much slower because of turns and cross streets.

Benita Warns, Ward 4

The project needs to be revised.

It is wrong to erect barriers to car traffic rather than everyone sharing the roads that we all pay for with our taxes. Where is the data that shows that there is much more traffic on Charles than on the nearby residential streets, and where is the data that shows that Charles has a much bigger problem with speeding than other similar nearby streets? There isn't any. My street has just as much traffic, and probably more, than many portions of Charles. If you block off Charles so people can't turn onto it from either Snelling, Hamline, or Lexington, then those vehicles will end up on the adjacent streets. Is it fair to make them suffer more motor vehicle traffic so people on Charles can have upwards of a quarter million dollars spent to make their street pretty? I have no problem with improved landscaping, bicycle route signs, and even bumpouts, but I oppose any plans to install diverters (also called pedestrian refuge islands) and traffic circles on Charles. We should spend our precious tax dollars on something of more importance to bicyclists and pedestrians, and that is crossing the Snelling bridges over Pierce Butler, Energy Park Drive, and the railroad tracks.

Eric Saathoff, Ward 6

The project needs to be revised.

Please, please, please change bike lanes so that they are between the parked cars and the curb. This actually gives bike riders a physical protection from the moving car traffic. The cost is no greater since it is still simply a matter of paint. In addition, it may provide the city with additional revenue from drivers who are not compliant.

Michele Anderson, Ward 3

This looks wonderful! Minneapolis and Saint Paul together can be the best biking city in the United States. Not only will this encourage people to move here but it will create another safe transportation route for riders. Please complete this project!

Attachments:

- Rev. John F. Anderson, Central Baptist, Ward 4
- Weissner Inc, Ward 3 and Ward 2 locations

August 30, 2012

To: Christina Morrison, Senior Planner
25 West Fourth Street
St. Paul, MN

RE: Charles Avenue Clarification

I have read with interest the plans and rationale for crossing Snelling Avenue and Charles Street for the proposed bicycle route.

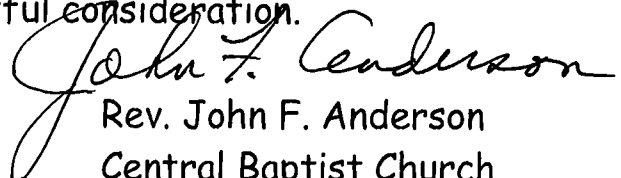
The Charles Street plan sounds like a winner, except for the plans to cross Snelling Avenue.

Why not make your plan a WIN-WIN situation by: re-routing at Asbury to Thomas Avenue where there is a traffic light? That would answer the safety reservations raised by many concerned citizens, and eliminate the proposed new medians that would hurt the business of Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home, Ellis Drum Shop and others.

This modification would be safer, cheaper, and beneficial to all concerned.

Best of all it would make the entire project a WIN-WIN situation.

Thank you for giving this your thoughtful consideration.


Rev. John F. Anderson
Central Baptist Church
420 Roy Street North
St. Paul, MN 55104

August 30, 2012

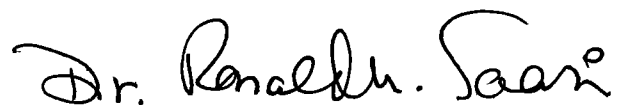
To: Christina Morrison, Senior Planner
25 West Fourth Street
St. Paul, MN

Subject: Charles Avenue Clarification

I have two concerns about the proposal and the rationale about closing Charles Avenue to a left hand turn. My first concern is for the viability of a business in the Midway. Forcing a long term business out of the area does not serve the interests of the Midway. I assume we want to invigorate business in the Midway. If you have a conversation with the owner of the Funeral Home you will know that he questions the impact of the closure on his business and the long term viability to this location for his business.

Forcing businesses out may win a battle and lose a war. Second as a regular driver in the Midway, I question the feasibility of any foot traffic or bike traffic crossing anywhere but at a signaled crossing. I would never take my car across Snelling Avenue at an uncontrolled intersection, much less foot traffic or bike traffic. It seems to me we should consider other alternatives to the suggested approach.

Thank you for your consideration!



Dr. Ronald W. Saari
Central Baptist Church
420 Roy Street North
St. Paul, MN 55104

STOP THE CLOSURE OF SNELLING AVENUE TURN LANES AT CHARLES

PETITION TO:

Print Name	Signature	Full Address	Date	Comments
46 James Hobbs	<i>[Signature]</i>	683 Taylor	8/4	SAY NO
47 Cullen Barker	<i>[Signature]</i>	1034 Dayton	8/4	NO
48 John F. Anderson	<i>[Signature]</i>	1585 Cohansey St	8/21	not in light at times No to closure
49 Michele D. Hedberg	<i>[Signature]</i>	763 Fry St	8/22	No
50 Timothy Horn	<i>[Signature]</i>	1396 Frontier Ave	8/22	—
51 Sharyn Olson	<i>[Signature]</i>	1996 Kingston Lake Dr.	8/22	No to closure
52 Del J. Lee	<i>[Signature]</i>	401 Fry 55104	8/22	No!
53 Gladys Langelott	<i>[Signature]</i>	1031 Carpenter Ave W.	8/22	No to closure
54 Clare Basso	<i>[Signature]</i>	1525 Asbury St.	8/22	No to closure
55 John Lucka	<i>[Signature]</i>	382 Pierce St	8/22	NO
56 Kim Saggi	<i>[Signature]</i>	1823 Jefferson Ave.	8/26	No to closure
57 Howard Haataja	<i>[Signature]</i>	1578 Carroll Ave	8/27	KEEP LANE OPEN
58 Shawna Horn	<i>[Signature]</i>	388 Roy St W	8/28	No to closure
59 Jenni Hansen	<i>[Signature]</i>	400 Roy St N.	8/28	No to closure
60				

640 South Smith Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55107
Tel: 651-222-6123
Fax: 651-222-0490

WIESSNER INC.

250 South Hamline
St. Paul, MN 55105
Phone: 651-698-0771
Fax: 651-698-0604

August 30, 2012

Dear Mayor Coleman,

I have been reading and hearing about the proposed bike path going down Charles Avenue from Park St. on the east to Aldine on the West.

I see no problem with the plan, if this is clearly what the neighborhoods want (and I emphasize that this is multiple neighborhoods). However, when you get to Snelling Avenue near University, this is arguably the busiest traffic area in the city. It is an important artery for commerce and certainly needs no more congestion or confusion. The bike trail, if built, should stop at least one block east of Snelling and go to a street that has a stop light across Snelling. There are already enough medians and islands on Snelling.

We have to make sure we take care of our businesses in this town. Too many have closed or left. One block of businesses on Snelling pays as much taxes as 20 blocks of homes on Charles. We have to leave access open to the businesses on Snelling at all costs.

The light rail obviously will change the landscape on University Ave. We may not know the effects for several years. That, coupled with the arguments and problems over on Jefferson, leads me to believe we should act slowly and not create another mess.

Sincerely,

Glenn Wiessner

Cc: St. Paul City Council members



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