



Charles St Valley Infill Housing an affordable homeownership plan



Introduction to Charles Street Valley

The area of Charles Street Valley (CSV) is approximately 42 acres in the southernmost section of the Perry South in Pittsburgh, PA. Straddling North Charles Street from Brighton Road to Wilson Avenue, CSV includes ten (10) adjoining and parallel side streets and a huge masses greenspaces. Approximately 175 households and three operating mid-sized businesses- including a city favorite, Breadworks, are located here.

CSV is split between two LMI census tracts (2614/2615), and is rich with vacant land and greenspace- more than 300 vacant parcels). Affordable homeownership is key to stabilizing this opportunity zone wherein 70% of all existing housing is subsidized rental. The key is to create affordable housing without adding more low-income housing and creating “ghetto conditions from lack of strategic and equitable investment.

Charles Street Area Council (CSAC) is the resident-led community group that was organized in the 1960’s by a group of residents who were concerned about safety and housing affordability. In 1973, CSAC was officially incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose primary focus was, and still is, to improve living conditions with the focus on people and housing.

In the 1980’s and 1990’s CSAC created a plan for new houses to be built for homeownership. CSAC partnered with the Northside Leadership Conference as Project Manager and led construction of 31 single-family dwellings in “The Valley”.

These homes represent the majority (80%) of owner-occupied structures in the community today.

In 2018, Charles Street Area Council became an affiliate of Charles Street Area Corporation, a 501c3 community development entity. Under Charles Street Area Corporation, CSV residents and stakeholders are continuing the plan for affordable homeownership. The N. Charles Street Infill Housing Project will feature 21-30 affordable single-family homes and a community space. CSAC will continue the vision to restore middle-class wealth and attract new neighbors create a healthy community in Charles Street Valley.



aerial map of Perry South



current photo of proposed housing site for Phase 1



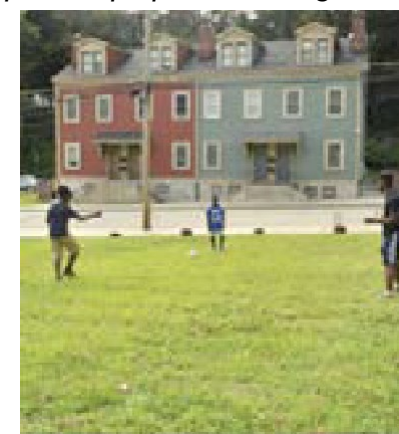
“Trayvon Martin” mural by Kyle Holbrook @ Farris & N Charles



Gateway Entrance Bright-Chuck Point Garden



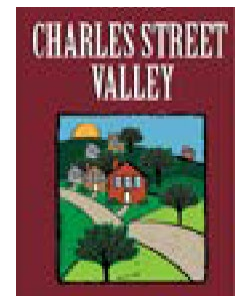
CSV CommUnity Day 2018



Children playing, vacant CSV lots



Hazel Mayo, lifelong Valley resident & neighbor Mario Patterson @ CommUnity Day 2017



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Strength of Community/ History

The North Charles Street area has a rich and cultured history. There has been a legacy of resident-led economic and community development projects that focus on family and uplift the community. The life-changing history is one of Charles Street Valley's strengths.

Before being affectionately known as Charles Street Valley, this area was known as Pleasant Valley in the 1950's. In the 1920's the area was very segregated, consisting of mostly European immigrant families living on Hamilton Place in rental row houses and mostly African-American migrants from the south living along North Charles and Strauss Streets. But still it was a community of people who knew each other.

According to a neighborhood analysis published in 1977, Pleasant Valley was approximately 2.2 miles north of downtown. It was estimated to be 120.3 acres in size, containing 0.4% of the city's land and 0.2% of its 1974 population. The voting district in the neighborhood at that time was #16, Ward 26.

Charles Street Area Council (CSAC) was started by several well-known Pleasant Valley residents including Dorothy Mae Richardson, Harriet Henderson, and Mrs. Thompkins. Dorothy Mae Richardson also started two other organizations: Neighborhood Housing Services (which later became NeighborWorks of Western Pennsylvania) and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.).

The Y.O.U. founded and operated a community recreation center that provided youth enrichment programs and a safe place for recreation in Charles Street Valley. It was utilized by hundreds of youth from all areas of the Northside.

In the 1980-1990's, CSV neighbors were like family and there were many small and large businesses within the community, such as Munches-Lunches, and Breadworks that served much of the City.

Most notable places from the past are shown on the Points of Pride map (at right).



Points of Pride Map

Historic Map of Pleasant Valley

The YOU



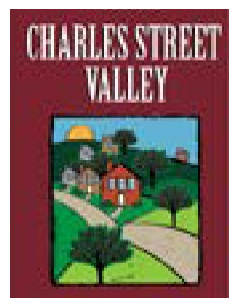
FAD Tavern in 1960, at Bizet & N Charles



The May Pole Dance in 1960's in CSV



Dorothy Mae Richardson, well-known for founding NeighborWorks



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Points of Pride

The Site

The site for Charles Street's Infill Housing contains 31 vacant parcels. These properties include approximately 52,250 square feet or 1.2 acres of contiguous land.

An additional 19,000 square feet of adjacent property has been identified for potential future development.

The site is currently zoned R1D-H, Single Family Detached Residential. In the past, single-family homes were once located here. Therefore, infrastructure is already in place for residential development, i.e. storm sewers, power, water, and streets.

The project also sits adjacent to the City-owned public recreation space, Cross and Strauss Parklet and along a public transportation corridor.

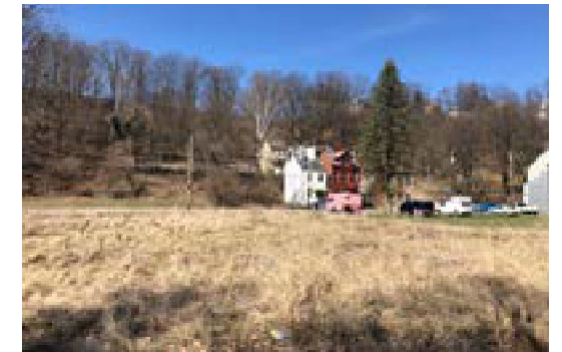
To the west and east of the proposed housing (the border of Charles Street Valley is city-designated "greenway". These vacant lots are without purpose and homes to various birds and some wildlife. Resident led greenway planning began in 2020. Working with City Planning, the residents will create a plan for the greenways to be transformed into a place to be enjoyed by nature lovers who appreciate a tranquil, natural landscape.



View from Snyder Street



View from corner of Irwin and Strauss

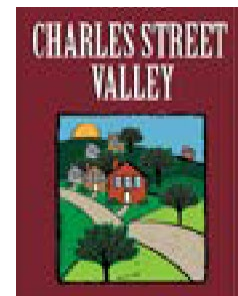


View across site from Strauss



Cross and Strauss Parklet

Existing Conditions



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Property List

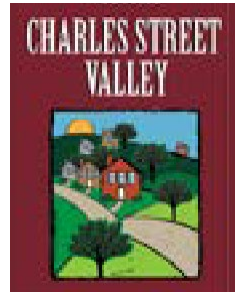
Charles Street Valley Infill Housing Lots					
Parcel ID	Address	Owner	Use	Zoning	Phase
145-M-100		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
245-M-101		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
345-M-102		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
445-M-103		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
545-M-104		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
645-M-105		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
745-M-106		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
845-M-107		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
945-M-109		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1045-M-110		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1145-M-114*	2412 N. Charles St.	City of Pittsburgh	Single Family	R1D-H	Phase I
1245-M-116		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1345-M-117		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1445-M-118		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1545-M-132		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1645-M-133		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1745-M-134		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1845-M-134-A		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
1945-M-135		URA of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2045-M-135-A		URA of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2145-M-135-B		URA of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2245-M-136		URA of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2345-M-137		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2445-M-138		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2545-M-139		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2645-M-140		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2745-M-141		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2845-M-142		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
2945-M-143		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
3045-M-145		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
3145-M-152		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
3245-M-87		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
3345-M-89		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I
3445-M-99		City of Pittsburgh	Vacant	R1D-H	Phase I

* structure needs demolished



Key:

- City-owned Properties
- Future Development (Privately-owned)



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Lot Plan

Repairing the Neighborhood Fabric

Charles Street Area Corporation has been working since 2018 to repair the fabric of the community in many ways. In order to keep the community safe, CSAC prioritizes getting to know each other and supporting all residents to be actively engaged in community development other. Current programs include:

- **DMR Heartland Homebuyer program:** a free, 12-month homebuyer certification program offered through a partnership with NeighborWorks of Western PA in 2022. It consists of: monthly informational workshops, 1-1 financial counseling with NWWPA counselors, and referrals to their support services that correspond to the homeownership path. In 11 months, the program resulted in 2 homebuyers, who purchased homes on the Northside, and 5 certified homebuyers. 1 pre-qualified buyer is currently searching for a home now.
- **Strauss & Cross Parklet Renovation:** The only formal play area in CSV, the City-owned and managed playground has not been renovated in more than 20 years. CSAC received support from participation in HUD Choice Neighborhoods for Allegheny Dwellings and a commitment from foundation, corporate and individual donors that raised \$182k for renovations. The parklet is scheduled and budgeted for renovation in 2023.
- **Greenway Planning:** CSAC is developing a plan for a greenways implementation on what used to be Harlan Ave, a now paper street set back into the hillside along the CSV southern boundary. This area, was designated greenway by City Planning without community input, and now requires working with City Planning to develop an active, usable, safe greenway that would include resident input: a trail, seating, an overlook, landscaping and maintenance plan.
- **New Infill Housing** Affordable homeownership will provide opportunities for neighbors to invest in themselves and in their community, while building equity and strengthening their futures. New housing will be single-family detached homes, arranged on narrow lots in keeping with the neighborhood fabric. The styles of housing and materials will be determined by future community engagement during the predevelopment & design phases. The layout for the units is as follows:
 - First Floor - Kitchen, Living Room, Dining Room, Powder Room (800 sf)
 - Second Floor - Three Bedrooms, Two Bathrooms (800 sf)
 - Attic - Bedroom, Office, Playroom, Storage (400 sf)
 - Total 2,000 sf plus optional garage- attic space

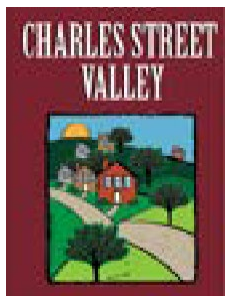


Typical Northside Houses



Examples of House Types/ Massing for Charles Street Infill Housing

Illustrative Site Plan



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Community Process

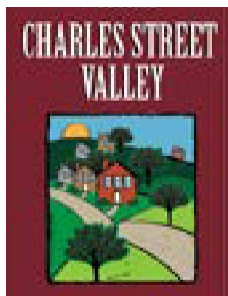
The Forbes Funds created a resident-centered community planning process that addressed economic, racial, and systemic inequities in community development that occur in underserved neighborhoods in partnership with Charles Street Area Council in 2021. It was called The Commons and provides alternative solutions to the exclusion of "low- to moderate-income" residents in the decision-making process by establishing standards for community engagement that include:

- a series of surveys, discussions, and 1-on-1 conversations with primary stakeholders and current residents
- performance criteria that ensure a significant percentage of resident input
- public review and access to summarized data and suggested improvements.

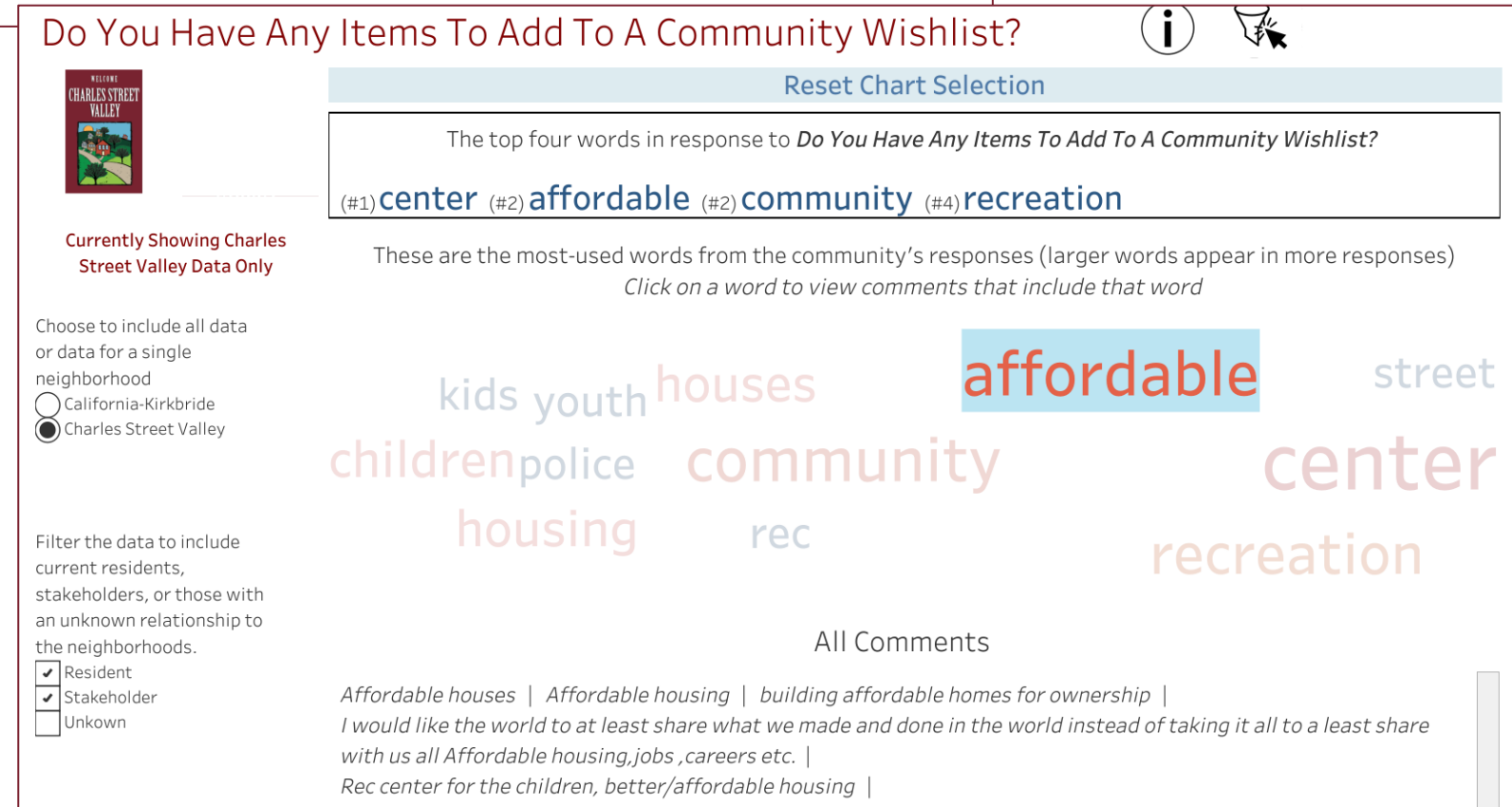
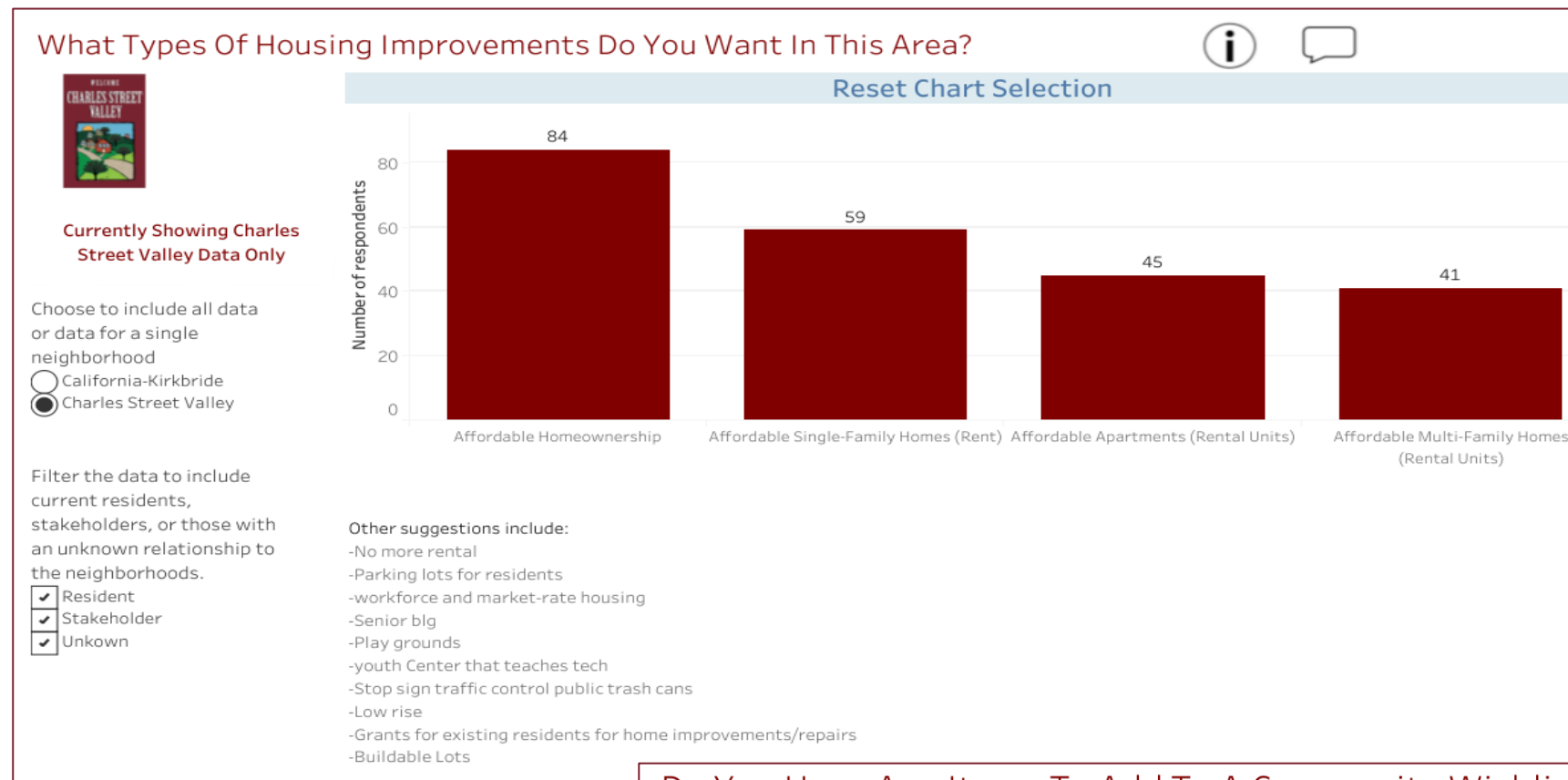
This intentional approach to community engagement has resulted in an opportunity for everyone in Charles Street Valley to identify and prioritize possible improvements. Results from Round 1, which completed in 2021, can be found on The Commons Dashboard: tabsoft.co/3K9mE4k. Round 2, completed in July 2022, provided a deeper insight into the types of housing, commercial development and recreational and vacant lot improvements that residents want to see in Charles Street.

At the end, Charles Street Valley will have a "blueprint" for a process that collects salient suggestions around future development from people who have historically been disengaged in the such processes. Charles Street Area Council endeavors to invest in improvements that have the most utility and add the greatest value to the community overall. Selected pages from the Blueprint are shown here and serve as examples of data and the things that are important to the community.

Our Charles Street Valley Community Blueprint Dashboard and survey results can be found [here](#) due to The Forbes Funds support.



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Blueprint and Community Input

Future Development

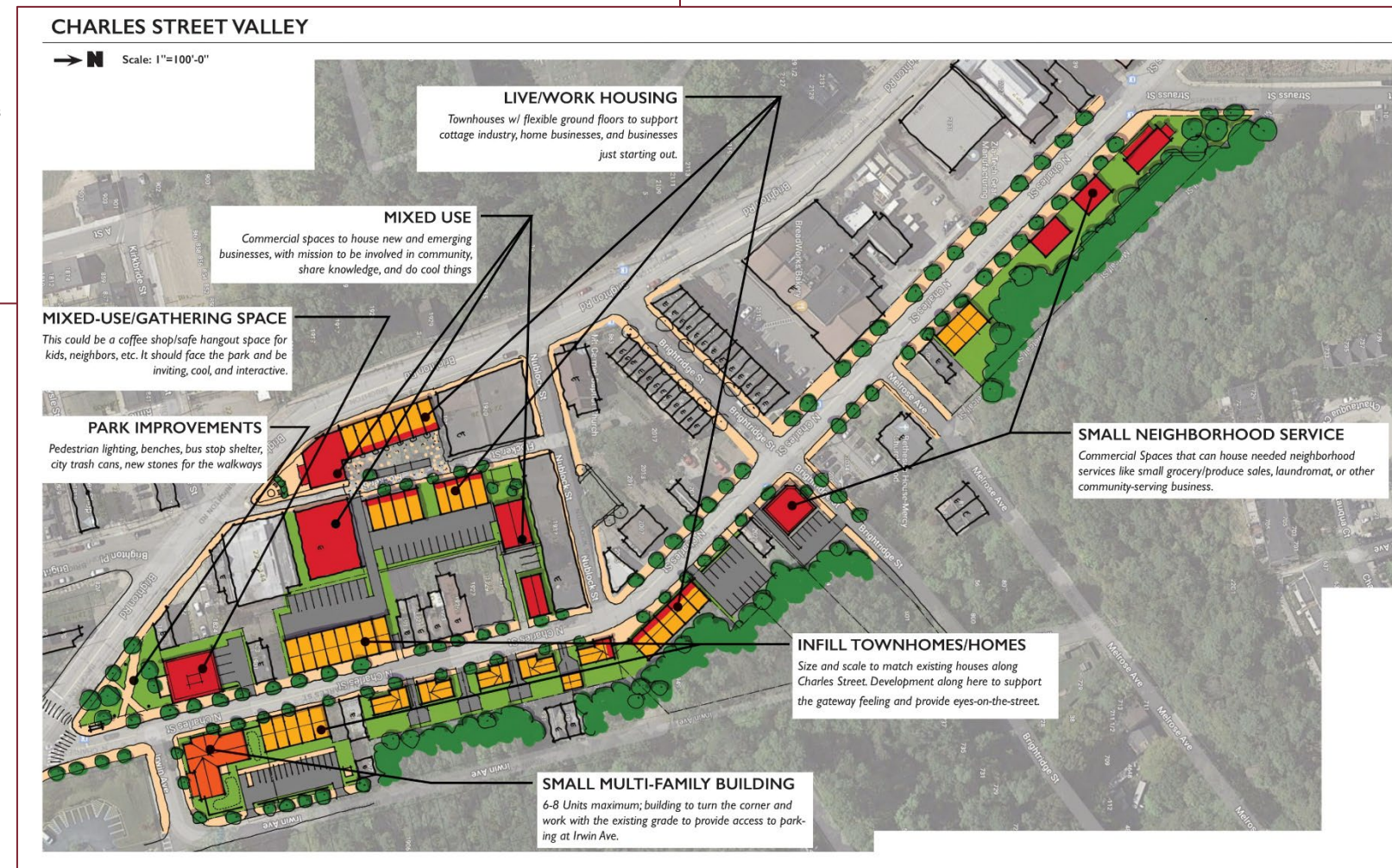
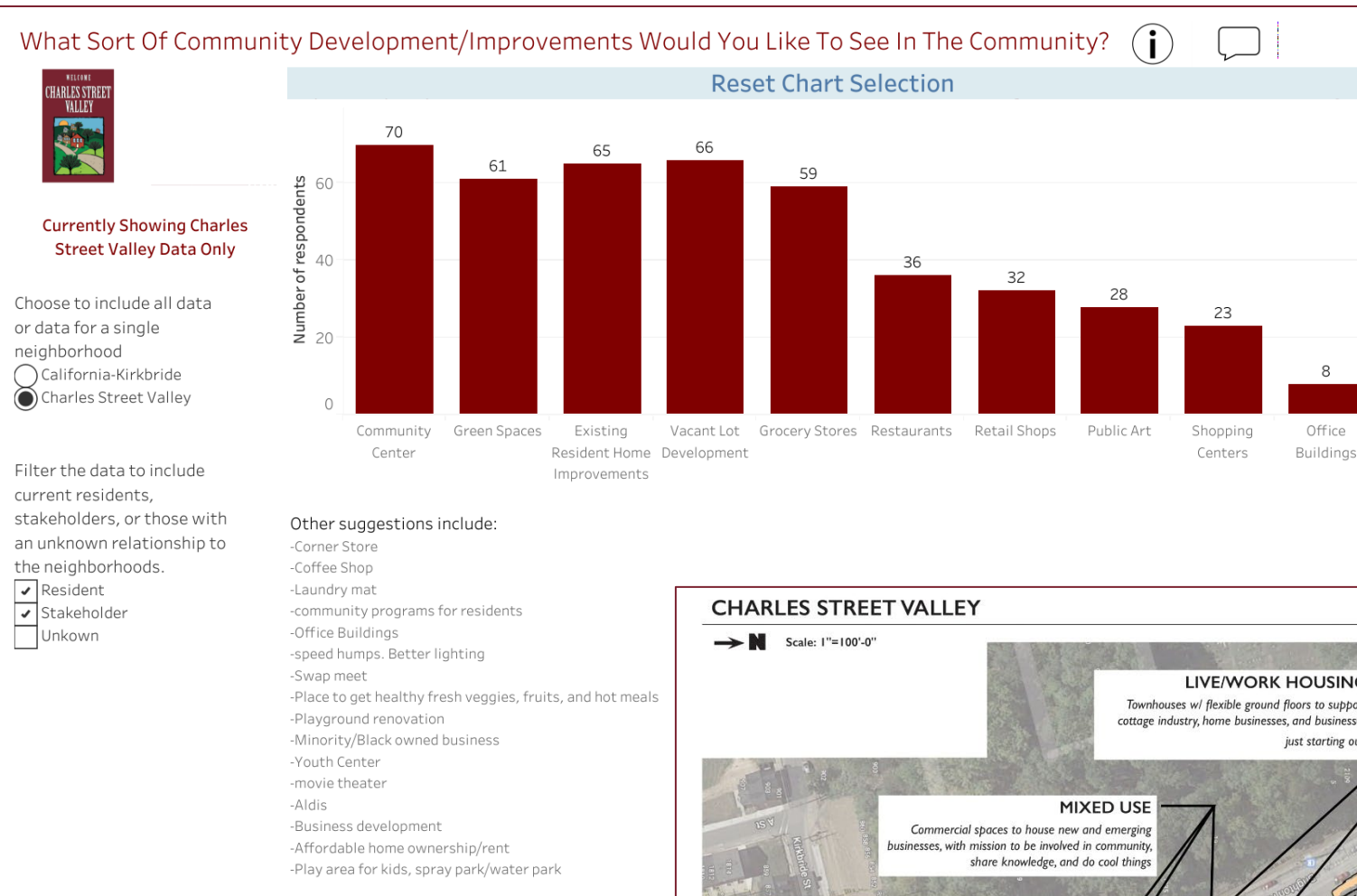
Future development in Charles Street Valley is imperative to achieve the goal of a stabilized housing market with a more diverse composition of unit types and small businesses that serve new residents. Mixed-use development models have proven to be effective here in the past. There were many more commercial spaces and affordable homes along the N. Charles Street corridor until they were demolished in the 1990's because of neglect and perpetual disinvestment as some residents aged and others moved away.

Currently, a 5 year- 5 phase plan for mixed-use and live-work housing is in process of being implemented in the southernmost part of The Valley along Flocker Way and Nublock St near the Charles Street Valley gateway. Private developers embarking upon this project are mindful of the existing community needs and the housing market and are likely to continue the nonprofit-private relationship to help create affordable housing.

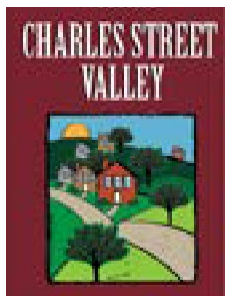
Gentrification in Charles Street Valley is an unfortunate but avoidable possibility due to the significantly increasing cost in nearby Central Northside, just .5 miles east of our proposed development. Avoiding displacement of current Charles Street Valley homeowners- who have lived in their homes on average 20+ years, and some for more than 60 years- is a motivating factor for continuing to build affordable housing units.

With support from local government, foundations and affordable housing advocates, Charles Street Valley's homeownership plan will create more than 100 units of affordable and market rate housing in Charles Street Valley for people who want to live within a walkable distance, less than 2 miles, from downtown Pittsburgh.

Contact csac@csacpa.org or call 412.808.6301 for more information on Charles Street Area infill housing development plans.



Neighborhood Development Concept



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