

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

**COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT  
VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY**

PREPARED BY  
THE LAKOTA GROUP  
NOVEMBER 1, 2011

**LAKOTA**



**COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT VISUAL PREFERENCE**  
**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

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# INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT MISSION

Over the past year, the City of Rock Island has been engaged in a planning process to create a future revitalization vision for the College Hill District. As part of this process, the City commissioned The Lakota Group, a Chicago-based planning, urban design and landscape architecture firm, to help craft a Visual Preference Survey, engage stakeholders in discussions about the area and facilitate a community Open House.

The purpose of the Visual Preference Survey is to introduce concepts pertaining to community character related to the streetscape and building facades and gauge stakeholder opinions regarding aesthetics of various elements and ideas. The survey was given in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, using electronic key pad polling to create an interactive process with instantaneous results. The survey focused on the following broad design categories, with other key urban design ideas and concepts encompassed within these categories:

- Streetscape
- Transportation
- Open Space
- Branding & Identity
- Street Furniture
- Architecture (Existing and New)
- Urban Design Visualizations

All community residents, students, local leaders and business/property owners were invited to participate in the survey and Open House. Lakota and the City used multiple forms of outreach and communication, including flyers posted in storefront windows, press releases and a project website link. Over 60 people participated in the survey at the Open House on September 29 and 59 additional people completed the survey online, which was linked to the project website for a week following the Open House. The following report summarizes the results of the survey and analysis of the findings, as well as recommendations meant to guide decisions about future College Hill District improvements.

### VISUAL PREFERENCE GOALS

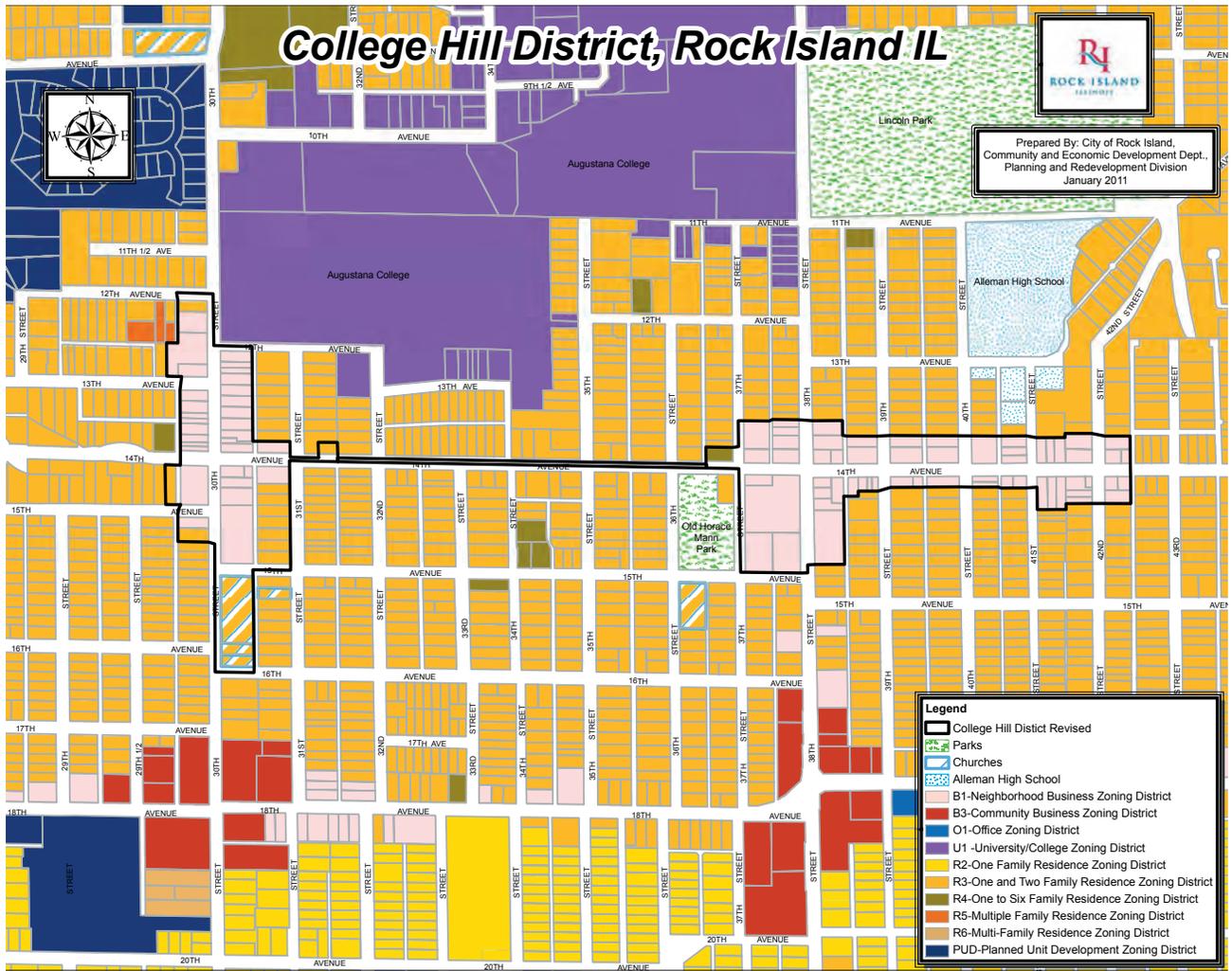
- Contribute information to the larger College Hill District Revitalization Plan.
- Identify a shared community vision for the physical appearance of the CHD.
- Assist in the development of aesthetics regulations for the District.
- Guide and help with prioritization for capital improvement programming.
- Test the community's preference for potential enhancements.
- Determine strategies for visually linking the district's two major nodes/intersections.

### COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT CONTEXT

The College Hill District (CHD) study area centers around two key commercial nodes—the 14th Avenue/38th Street intersection and the 14th Avenue/30th Street intersection—and approximately six residential blocks of 14th Avenue that link the two. The district is comprised of 90 properties and 60 businesses, mostly locally owned. The majority of these businesses are located in small commercial buildings built between 1900 and 1950. 14th Avenue has a two-lane cross-section with parallel parking on each side and is considered an arterial roadway with a range of 6,800 to 8,500 automobiles using this street per day.

The CHD draws shoppers and visitors from nearby Augustana College and surrounding residential neighborhoods, as well as attracts shoppers from greater Rock Island and the region for the unique mix of retail and services the district provides. There are a wide variety of businesses, including long-time neighborhood fixtures, such as Harris Pizza, Handy True Value Hardware and Mulkey's Diner and newer shops and restaurants, such as Cool Beanz coffee shop and La Rancherita Mexican restaurant. Overall, the offerings in this district range from a cluster of antique stores to a comic book shop to beauty and hair salons to multiple pizza and informal family dining establishments. This variety inspired the CHD's new tag line: "College Hill District. Eclectic Vibe. Neighborhood Businesses."

FIGURE 1: COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND ZONING



COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT BOUNDARY AND ZONING MAP PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF ROCK ISLAND

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Prior to facilitating the evening Open House, representatives from the Lakota Group engaged key stakeholders in discussions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the district. These informal discussions invited various user groups to provide additional input into the process by sharing their thoughts about the future of CHD, such as the types of physical improvements, new businesses, events and strategies they envision. Six separate focus groups comprised of more than 35 people total included the following participants:

- College Hill District Design Committee
- Augustana College Representatives
- City of Rock Island Economic Development, Planning and Engineering Staff
- Local Aldermen and the Mayor of Rock Island
- Property and Business Owners
- Residents and Neighborhood Organization Representatives

The following is a summary of consistent themes and individual stakeholder thoughts and responses from these sessions.

#### **District Character, Streetscape and Physical Issues**

The mix of buildings is eclectic, but the streetscape feels “old and worn out.” There is a need for something to make it more cohesive.

Stakeholders noted that future improvements should highlight the uniqueness of the district and avoid making it feel “too corporate.”

Potential streetscape elements that would improve the character include new awnings and business signs; benches and trash receptacles; custom signs that promote a “brand;” planters and landscaping; additional bike racks; new street lights with banners; pedestrian “markers;” and cobblestone or brick paved crosswalks and sidewalks.

Many feel the biggest challenge for the district from a physical standpoint is linking the east and west sides together.

Participants noted that the speed limit on 14th Avenue is too fast and does not promote walking and biking.

Notable downtowns and districts that participants discussed as having the type of character they would like to see include the Village in East Davenport, Downtown Galena; LaGrange, Illinois (outside of Chicago); Grandview Avenue in Columbus, Ohio; and LeClaire, Iowa.

The CHD is one of the City Council’s highest priority areas and has some capital improvement program money set aside for improving the district.

The strengths of the district include accessibility (30th and 14th are main thoroughfares), the eclectic mix of businesses and the long-time businesses that have a devoted customer base.

Many feel building and property owners need to invest more effort into maintaining sidewalks and facades in order to improve the overall feel and appearance.

Many participants noted that the property on southeast corner of 14th and 30th is a key redevelopment site that is currently “an eyesore.” The corner property is critical to adding an additional active use within a new building in the district.

There is the perception of a parking problem throughout the district especially on the east around Harris Pizza and La Rancherita.

#### **Promotion and Marketing**

Some of the promotions and marketing efforts that have been implemented or discussed include a website; Facebook page; discounts for Augustana students; coupon packets; farmers market; and an Octoberfest art fair.

The perception is that the district does not take advantage of its proximity to Augustana. In addition to the student population, there are a number of large events that attract visitors to the campus and area; the district has not yet capitalized on this influx of people.

Business owners noted that the Augustana student population is difficult to promote to... “the college shields them from getting coupons, flyers or emails.”

One concept that would help promote the shops and businesses is the idea of a kiosk that had a directory and/or a map of the area.

Many leaders within Augustana have invested time to help develop marketing materials, including the new CHD logo, as well as have participated in the City’s planning process and CHD organizational structure.

### **Business Mix**

Businesses that stakeholders would like to see in the district include a candy store; popcorn store, boutique clothing shops; a wider variety of food options (e.g. Buffalo Wild Wings, which draws college and high school students); bed and breakfasts/boutique hotels; and bars/pubs. “Variety is good.”

Many feel that it would benefit the district if more businesses were open on Sunday and were open longer hours during the week... “Could be a more of a night market.”

Currently, there is a distinct difference in the types of businesses on the east versus the west within the CHD. Generally, participants noted there are more vacancies on the east, as well as a “lack of character” compared to the west side.

Stakeholders noted that “people don’t know we’re here” and there is not a “sense of place” because the district has not changed. “When there is change, people notice.”

Stakeholders noted the desire to see more “localism” and “farm to fork” type restaurants as part of an overall sustainable initiative for the district.

Some business owners feel that there is a disconnect between the east and west sides of the district and are concerned about all events focusing on the 14th/30th intersection. Some discussed the option of holding events at Old Horace Mann Park.

### **General**

Stakeholders noted that the biggest weaknesses are aesthetics; lack of branding and marketing; lack of gateways into the district; little outdoor seating/dining or gathering spaces; and perception against Rock Island.

The zoning for the district is B-1, which allows a 20-foot front yard setback. Zoning will need to be changed to maintain the zero setbacks found throughout the CHD.

Stakeholders discussed building upon the design and promotion committees and Keystone Neighborhood strengths.

Some participants noted the opportunity for additional student housing in the area and the potential positive impact that would have on the CHD.



THE COLLEGE HILL DISTRICT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION DEVELOPED A LOGO MELDING THE “ECLECTIC” CHARACTER OF THE AREA WITH ITS PROXIMITY TO AUGUSTANA.





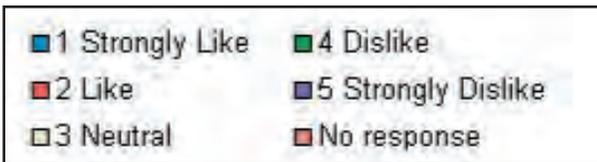
# VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

SECTION 2

## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### SURVEY PROCESS

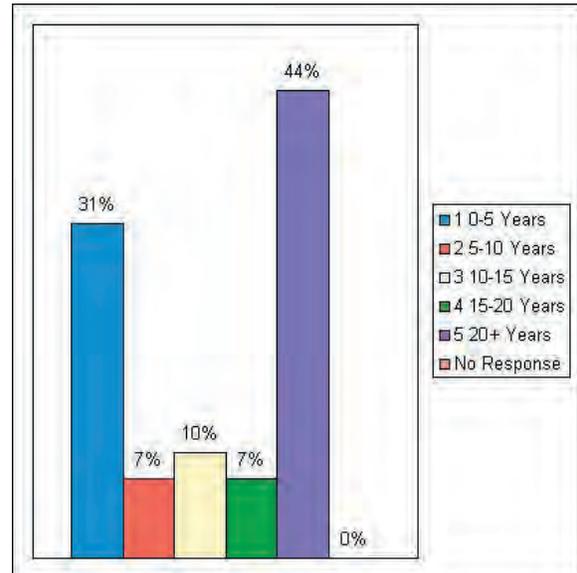
The survey was conducted in the form of a PowerPoint presentation using interactive key pads distributed to participants at the beginning of the Open House. Participants had 10 seconds per slide to place his or her vote. The following rating system was used throughout the survey to record preferences.



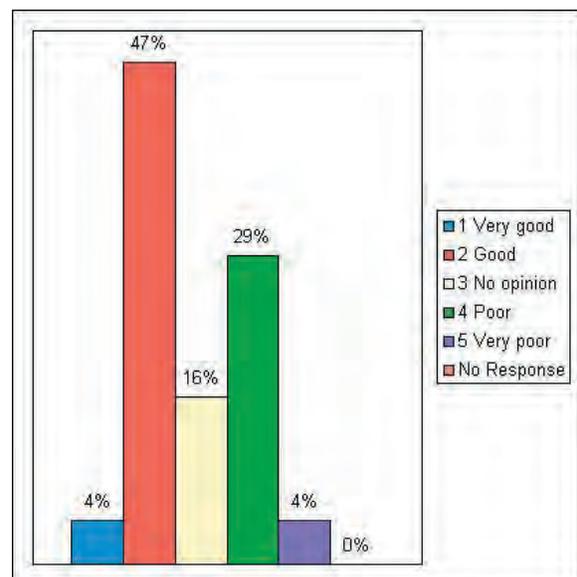
Some general questions were asked to gain understanding of who was participating in the survey, as well as initial thoughts and feelings about the College Hill District, before engaging in the visual preference categories. The survey was posted for a week on the project website to elicit additional participation. The following are the accumulated results from both the Open House and on-line survey.

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

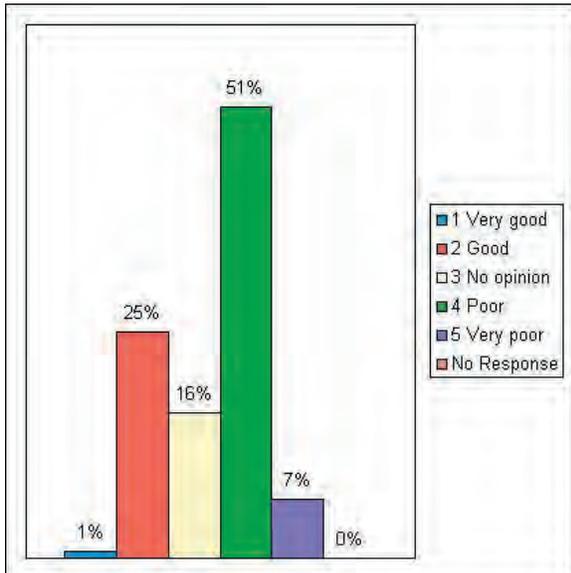
How long have you lived in Rock Island?



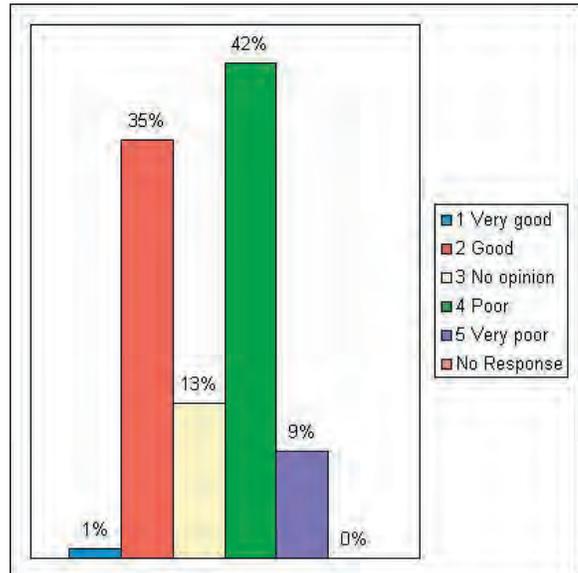
What do you think about how the existing College Hill District roadways function?



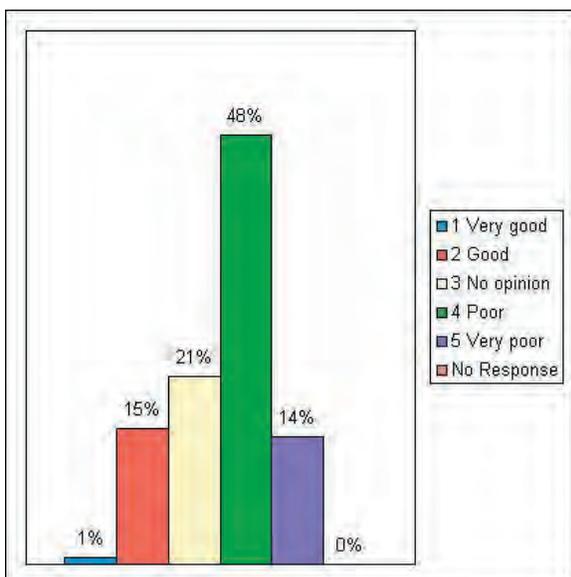
What do you think about how the existing College Hill District roadways look?



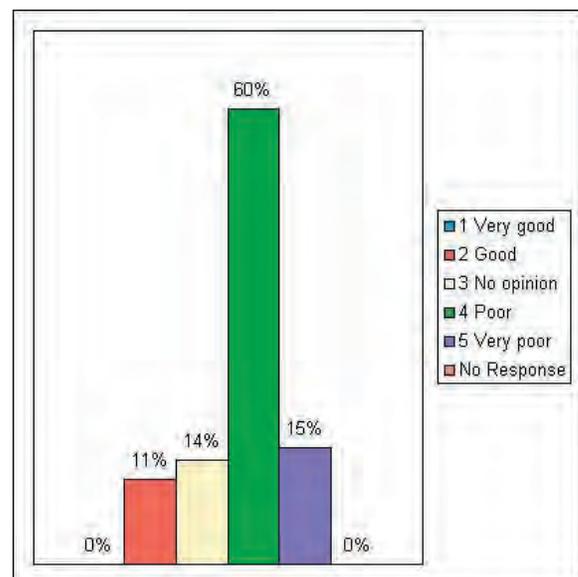
What do you think about how the existing CHD buildings look?



What do you think about how the existing CHD pedestrian and bicycle facilities function?

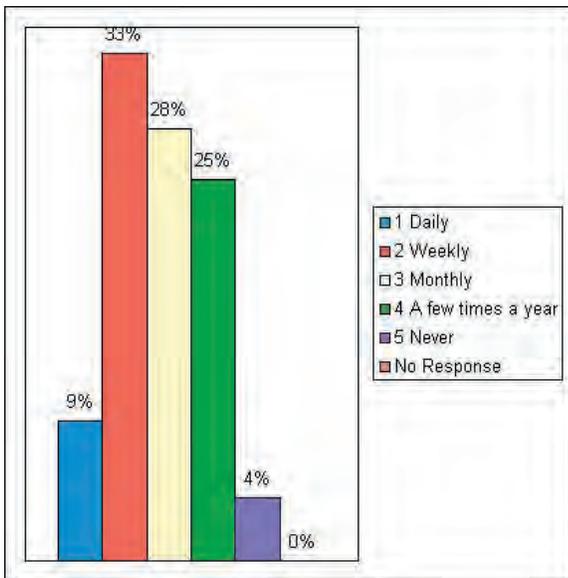


What do you think about how the existing CHD streetscapes look?

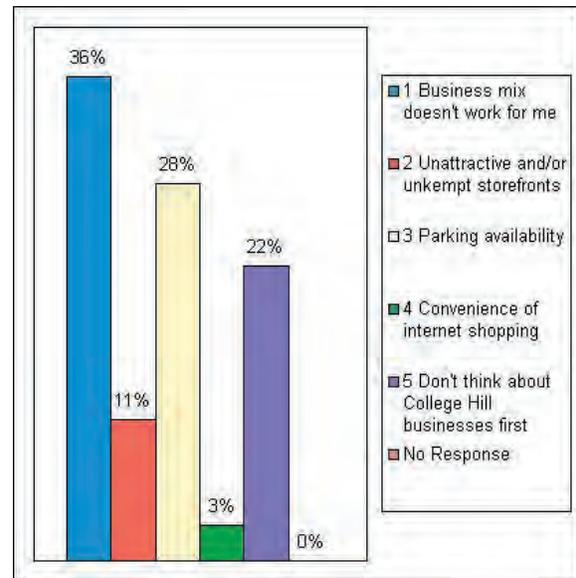


## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

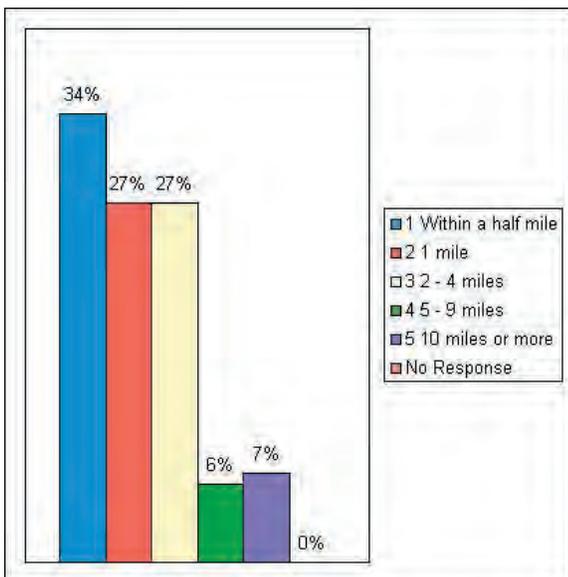
How often do you shop in the CHD? Or if you are a business owner/employee, how often do you shop at other CHD businesses?



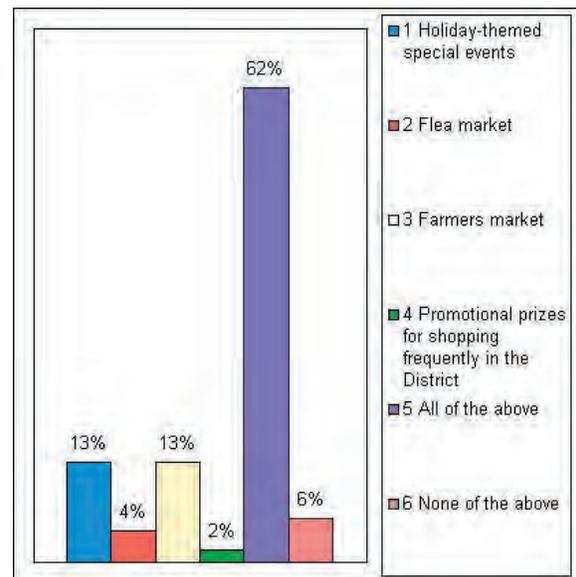
What is your biggest obstacle to shopping in the College Hill District?



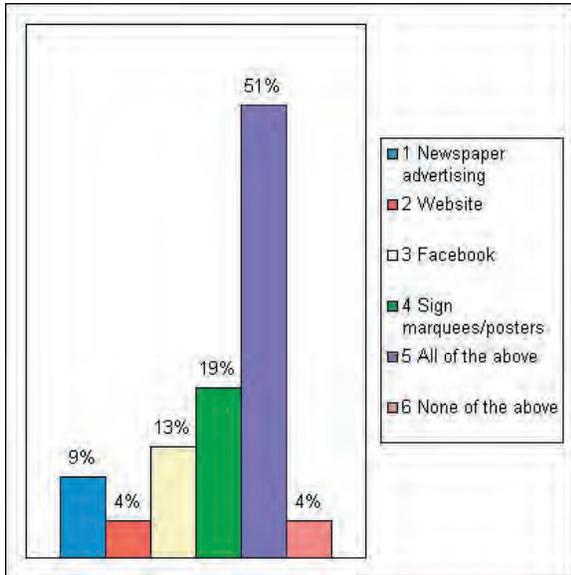
How far do you live from one of the nodes in the CHD (14th/30th or 14th/38th)?



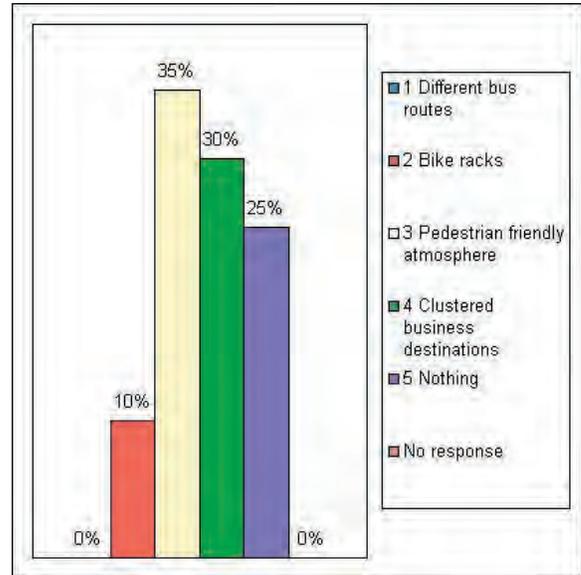
What promotional events would you attend in the CHD?



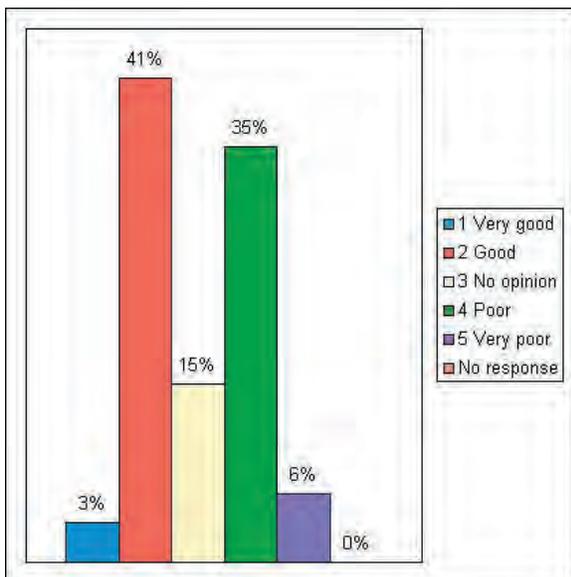
What is the best way for the College Hill District to inform you of promotional events?



The CHD has a higher walkability (according to Walk Score) compared to similar Quad Cities shopping districts. What would encourage you to walk rather than drive to the CHD?



What do you think of the current business mix in the CHD?



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### STREETSCAPE

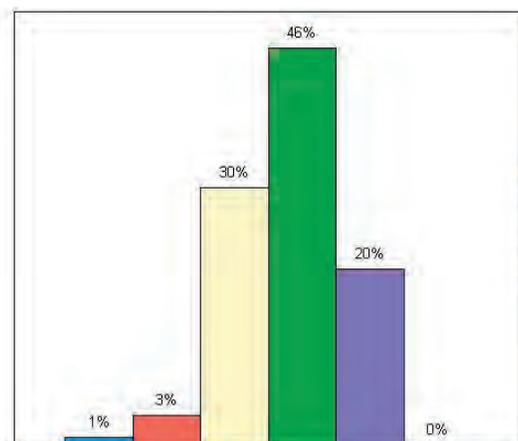
The images shown in the Streetscape category are meant to gauge stakeholders' opinions about overall district character and aesthetics, as well as safety and activity of the pedestrian environment. A range of images was chosen for the survey, including existing conditions of the College Hill District, representing a full continuum of streetscape design and character. These images show a variety of elements that form the look and feel of a streetscape including planters, paving treatments, street trees, landscaping, signage, street furniture and other elements.

### STREETSCAPE: SURVEY ANALYSIS

The top two rated images in this category were Examples 1 and 2. Combining the "Strongly Like" and "Like" categories for these elicits 97 percent and 95 percent positive responses, respectively. Examples 6 and 7 also achieved highly favorable scores, both at 90 percent in the two favorable categories combined, while also receiving little negative response.

The commonalities within these four images provide clues to the reasons for the high scores. Generally, each of these streetscapes has the following characteristics:

- Landscape variety, including trees, flowering/ornamental shrubs and perennials
- A mix of "special" paving materials, such as brick or concrete pavers, with concrete walks
- Traditional or "historic" street lights



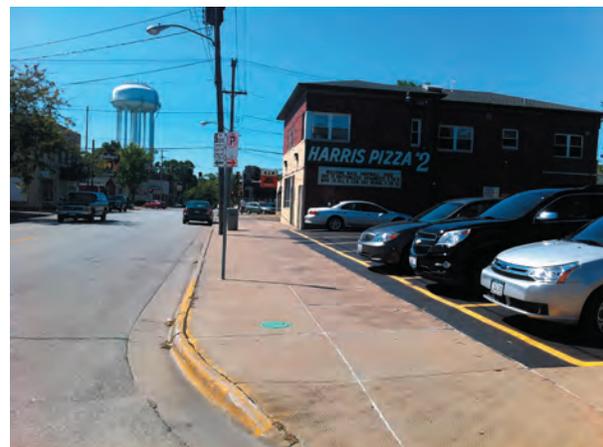
- Clearly defined and separated pedestrian areas
- Other vertical elements that provide unity and interest to the streetscape, such as moveable planters/urns, stone walls, brick piers, bollards and street signs
- Seating "pockets," (shown in 3 of the images), either as benches or seat walls

The images that did not score as high, such as Examples 4, 5 and 8 lack many of the features listed above, especially a variety of landscaping and paving materials. These images show a more simple, "scaled-back" version of streetscape character and do not convey the attention to detail and design quality that the preferred images show.

Taking cues from the visual preference results and stakeholder discussions, the College Hill District streetscapes should ultimately be cohesive environments with a rich palette of landscaping and changes in paving. The sidewalk should be clearly delineated from the street, regardless of width, and opportunities should be provided for seating/gathering throughout the district.

The following rating system was used throughout the survey to record preferences.

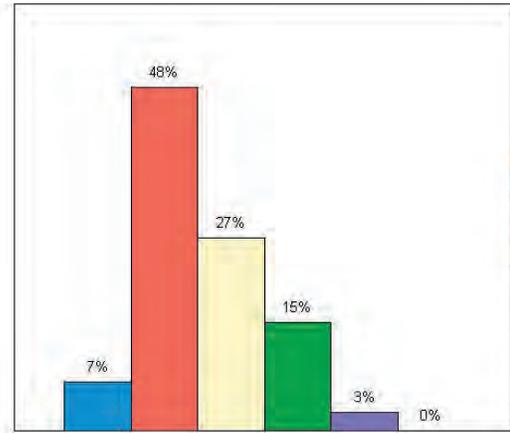
■ 1 Strongly Like	■ 4 Dislike
■ 2 Like	■ 5 Strongly Dislike
□ 3 Neutral	■ No response



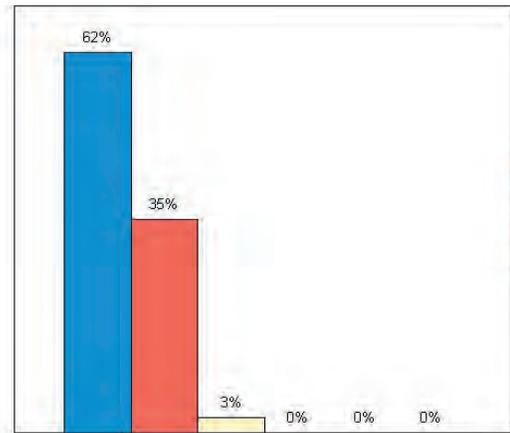
EXISTING CONDITIONS 1



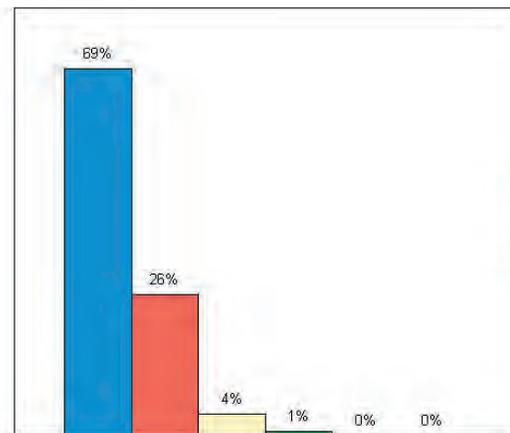
EXISTING CONDITIONS 2



EXAMPLE 1

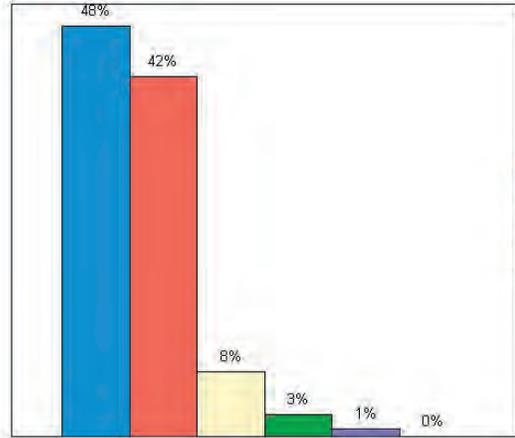


EXAMPLE 2

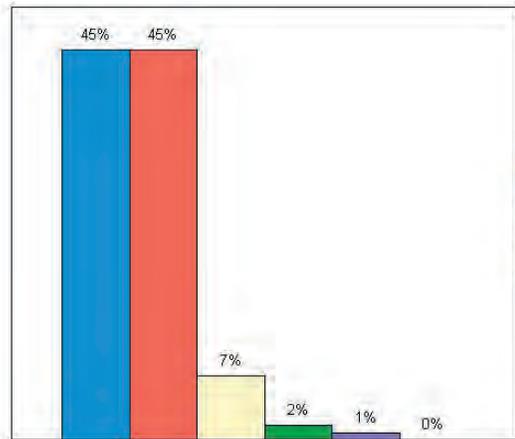




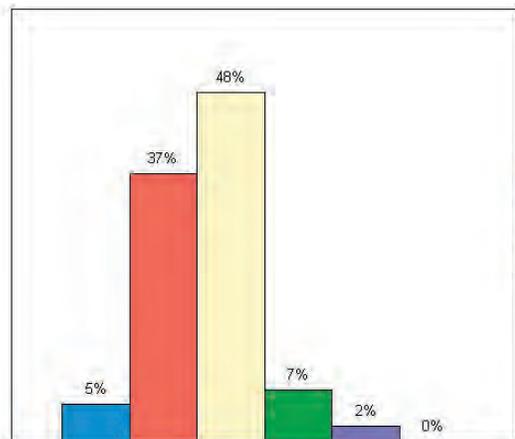
EXAMPLE 6



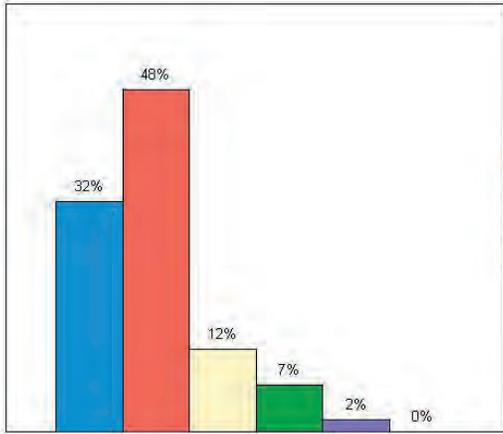
EXAMPLE 7



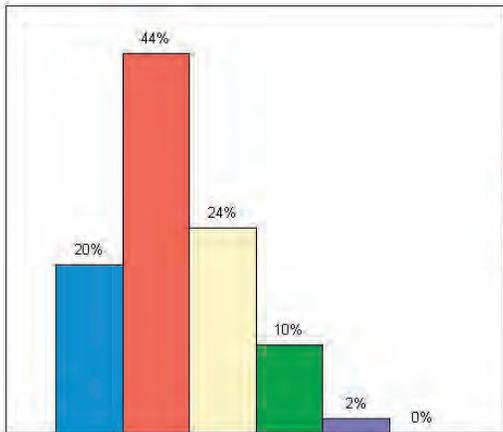
EXAMPLE 8



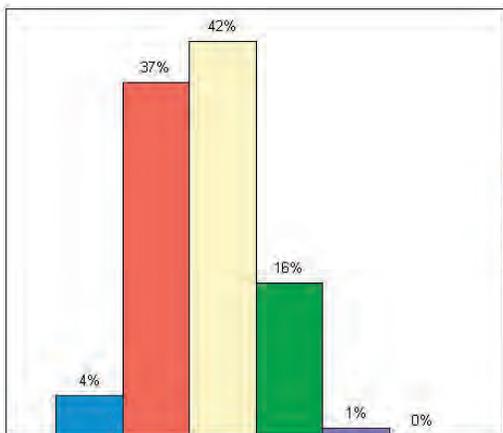
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



EXAMPLE 3



EXAMPLE 4



EXAMPLE 5

## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

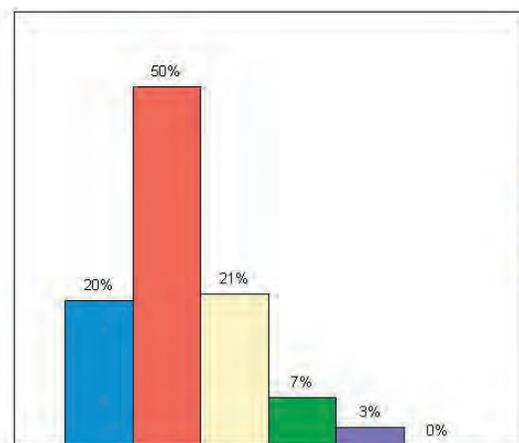
### TRANSPORTATION

The images in the Transportation category were selected to show examples of various improvements to street and parking conditions. The concept of multi-modal transportation—how cars relate to bicycles and pedestrians—was introduced to elicit thought about how the streets in the College Hill District currently function, particularly 14th Avenue. Some of the improvements or elements shown in the survey images include corner “bump-outs,” crosswalk enhancements, parking lot screening, bike lanes and bus shelters. The goals are to understand how participants feel about the safety of the streets, bicycle traffic, aesthetics of the current roadway and balance of the pedestrian versus the vehicular realms.

### TRANSPORTATION: SURVEY ANALYSIS

Within the Transportation category, there were no overwhelmingly high scores, but a number of key concepts or ideas received favorable results. Most of the combined positive scores fell within the mid-50 to mid-60 percent range, with Example 1 receiving the overall high score with 70 percent of participants rating it as “Strongly Like” or “Like.” The results for these images provide support for the following concepts to be integrated in the district:

- **Clearly defined and highly visible crosswalks.** Examples 1, 2 and 4 all show varying types of crosswalks with different widths, colors and patterns.



While they all received favorable ratings, suggesting additional delineation of crosswalks is desired, Example 1, with a relatively simple red crosshatch pattern and a white border, received a more favorable response to than the comparable images.

- **Parking lot screening.** Both examples 3 and 7 depict parking lot screening with various levels of landscape treatment and fencing. These images got very similar, but positive, results. Depending on the location and width available, a combination of these elements would improve the visual appearance of CHD streetscapes considerably.

- **Bike amenities.** Providing a bike lane or a shared bike lane (which would be more feasible) on 14th Avenue, as depicted in Example 6, received positive support in the survey and stakeholder discussions.

- **Bump-outs.** 62 percent of participants liked the small bump-out shown in Example 5. Bump-outs would not be feasible at all intersections, but this concept would create a safer pedestrian environment, while also providing opportunities for additional landscape space—the type of landscaping that received favorable results in the Streetscape category.

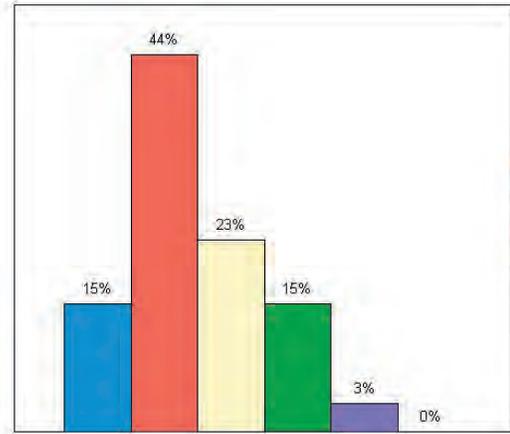
- **Bus shelter.** Both Examples 8 and 10 showed bus shelters, but Example 8 received a more favorable response, likely due to the more traditional look of the shelter. Within the proper context, such as near Old Horace Mann Park, a bus shelter should be provided on 14th Avenue.



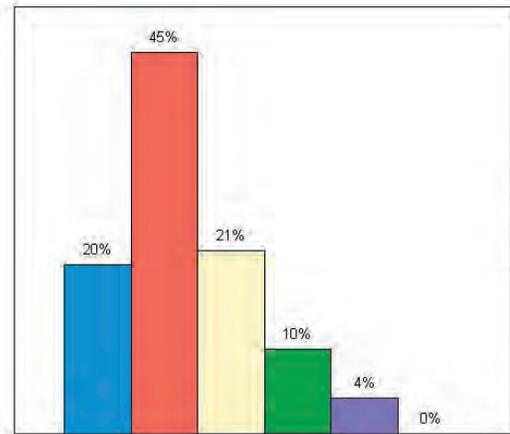
EXAMPLE 1



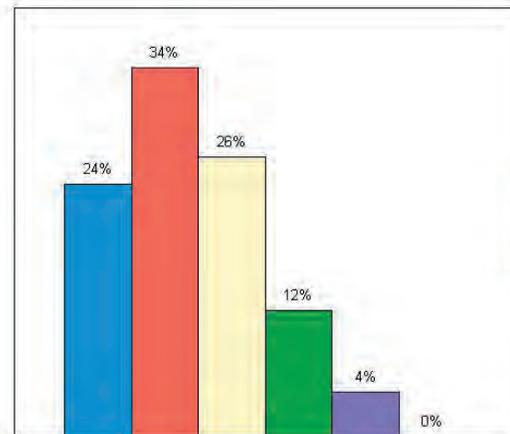
EXAMPLE 2

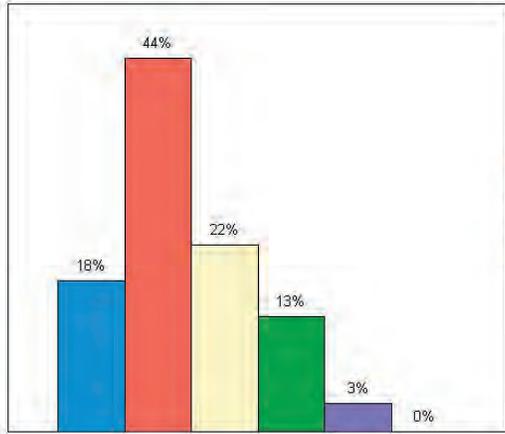


EXAMPLE 3

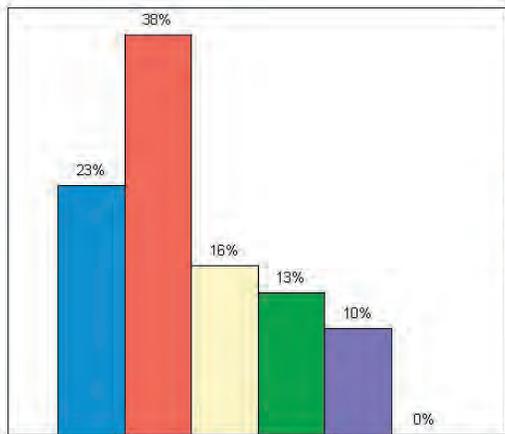


EXAMPLE 4

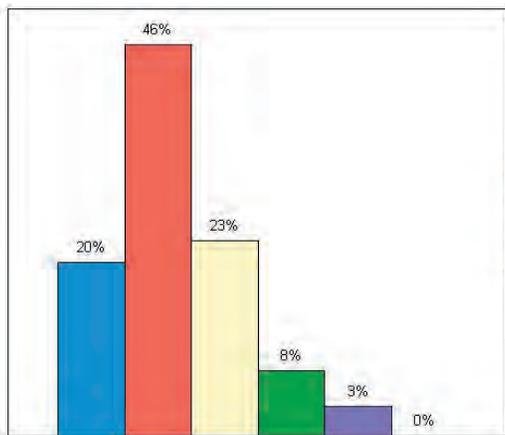




EXAMPLE 5



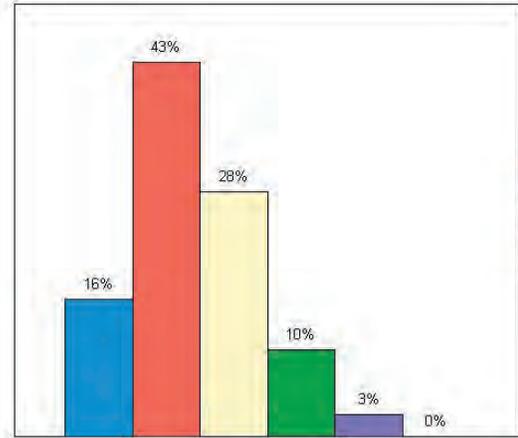
EXAMPLE 6



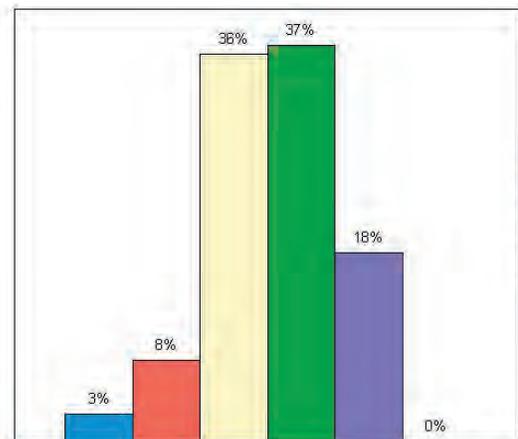
EXAMPLE 7



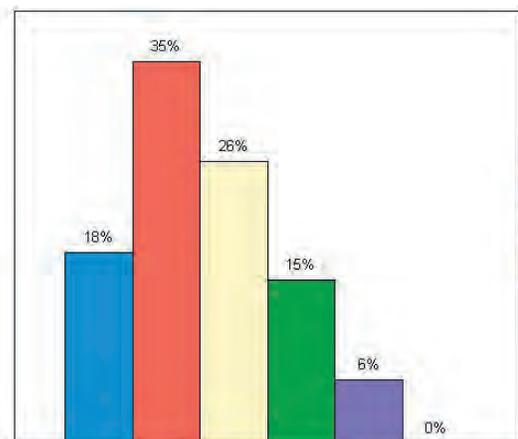
EXAMPLE 8



EXAMPLE 9



EXAMPLE 10



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### OPEN SPACE

The Open Space images focus on small public plazas and pocket parks that relate to streetscapes and buildings. The selected imagery was chosen to test how participants view public space and to invite them to critically think about and envision the College Hill District with a landmark gathering space or series of smaller spaces.

The images represent various levels of activity, from passive plazas to active, kid-oriented parks to small spaces between buildings. Inherent within the images are the concepts of landscape character, paving, public art, fountains, gathering areas and overall form, as well as other details that combine to create a successful public space.

### OPEN SPACE: SURVEY ANALYSIS

Not surprisingly, the Open Space images received highly favorable results across the board. Example 1 and Example 7 were rated the highest, garnering combined positive scores of 84 percent and 83 percent, respectively. Each received more than 50 percent in the “Strongly Like” category.

Examples 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all scored by the majority of participants in the “Strongly Like” category, ranging from 42 to 47 percent. Example 6 also had an overall combined positive score of 82 percent, but only received 31 percent in the “Strongly Like.” Example 8 was the lowest scoring image with only 59 percent positive response, 22 percent neutral and 19 percent negative.

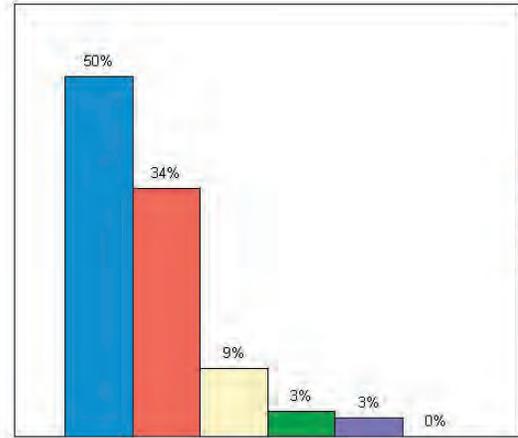
Overall, stakeholders and survey participants have noted their desire to have more public open spaces that provide the opportunity for meeting and gathering, locations for art or other focal point elements (clocks, water features, etc.), and/or event space. Within the context of the College Hill District space is limited, but the examples shown (and preferred) are all generally small spaces and often are located adjacent to streets, between buildings or next to parking lots. The CHD has a number of opportunities to provide a key plaza or series of plazas connected to the streetscape.

Generally, the elements that are part of the preferred Open Space images include:

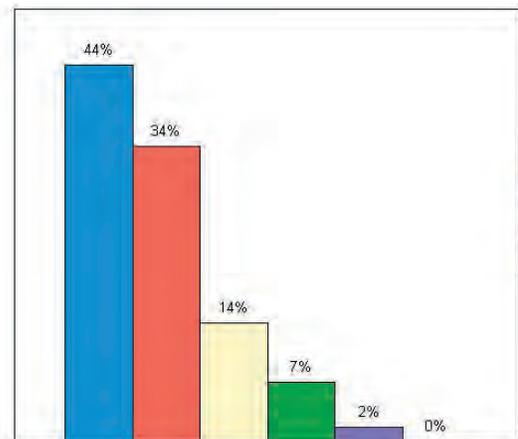
- **Landscape variety.** A variety of landscaping, such as trees, shrubs and perennials. In most cases, the planting design is simple, but interesting. This was a key factor in the highest rated streetscape images, as well.
- **Paving materials.** A range of paving materials or paving materials that differ from standard concrete. Brick pavers or other paving treatment creates visual interest, while also marking a space as unique or special.
- **Focal point elements or sculptures.** Within many of the spaces public art or fountains are prominent features. The College Hill District would benefit from engaging local artists to develop elements that may be incorporated throughout the district, in plazas, streetscapes or other venues.
- **Seating pockets or gathering spaces.** The majority of the images have some form (or multiple forms) of seating opportunities, such as benches, walls, steps or curbs.
- **Defined space.** Each of the successful plazas or open spaces has a different form. However, they all have a defined space that creates a comfortable environment.



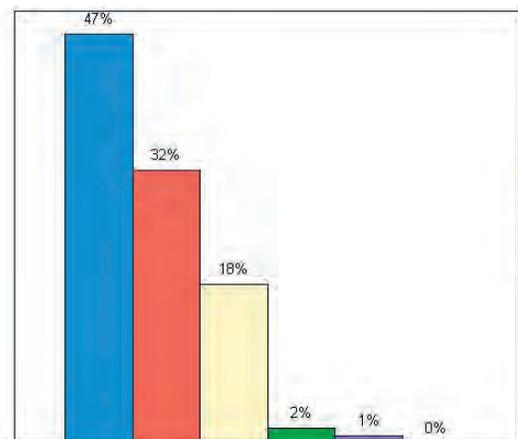
EXAMPLE 1



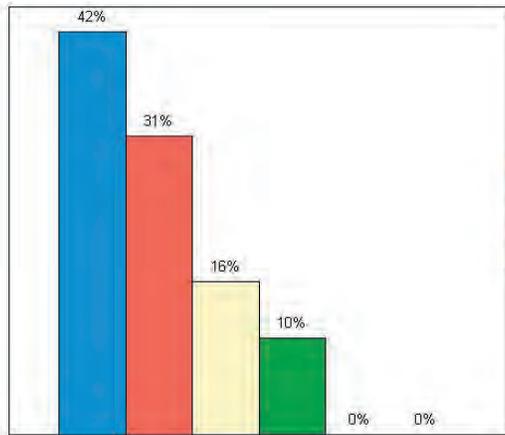
EXAMPLE 2



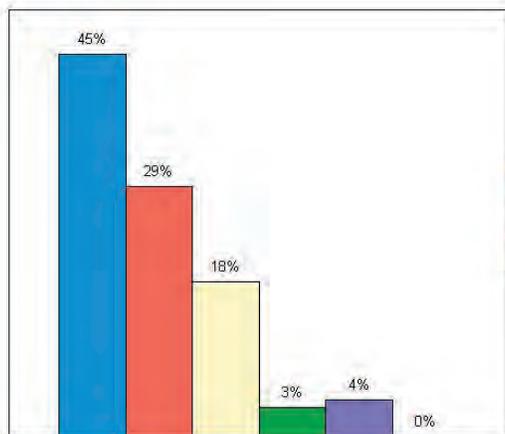
EXAMPLE 3



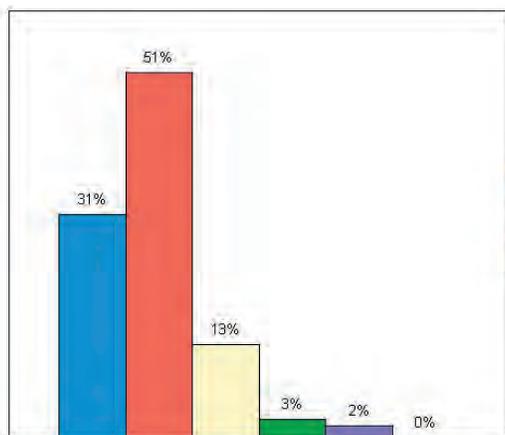
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



EXAMPLE 4



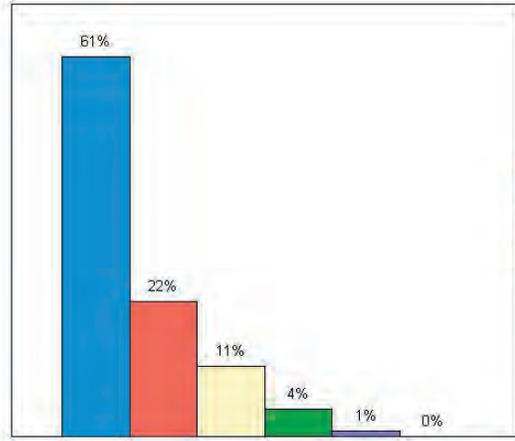
EXAMPLE 5



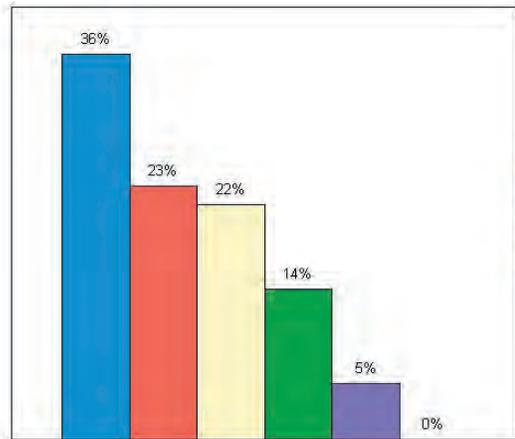
EXAMPLE 6



EXAMPLE 7



EXAMPLE 8



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### BRANDING + IDENTITY

The Branding + Identity category more specifically addresses signage, logos and elements that contribute to the creation of a “brand” for urban areas and districts. Within this category, examples of gateways, information kiosks, directional signs, street signs and banners are shown. Survey participants were expected to respond with their opinions about the shape/form, color, style, materials and overall character of the elements, while also thinking about how the College Hill District brand can be incorporated into the public realm.

### BRANDING + IDENTITY: SURVEY ANALYSIS

The Branding + Identity category provided a broad range of elements from larger gateways and piers to kiosks to smaller directional and street signs. The highest rated images within each of the sub-categories include the following:

- **Gateway Signs.** Gateway Example 3 was the highest scoring gateway, with 60 percent of participants responding positively to and only 12 percent negative. Example 3 consists of stone veneer piers with a metal arch denoting the “brand” or name of the place (in this case, a trail). These materials, as well as the form, are relatively traditional, as opposed to the more contemporary feel and materials of Gateway Examples 1 and 2, which did not score as well.

- **Kiosks.** Kiosk Example 3 received 70 percent positive responses and 14 percent negative. This example depicts a kiosk with a map of the district, which is an element that many stakeholders thought would be beneficial to getting people familiar with the College Hill District and spreading the word about businesses in the area. Additionally, the form of the sign portrays a traditional feel, while the other kiosk examples, 1 and 2, have decidedly strong design themes that are meant to complement architectural elements of landmark buildings found in their respective districts. These examples did not receive nearly the positive feedback of Example 3, with Example 1 slightly favorable and Example 2 53 percent negative responses.

- **Directional Signs.** Directional Example 1 had the highest score within the overall Branding + Identity category with 74 percent “Strongly Like” or “Like” votes, as opposed to only 10 percent negative. Like many of the other favored elements, this sign has a more traditional design. Directional Example 2 received the lowest score in the Branding + Identity category. Participants did not respond well to the simple Art Deco inspired theme and colors. Example 3 had a slightly higher positive to negative response ratio, but participants did not prefer the more modern look.

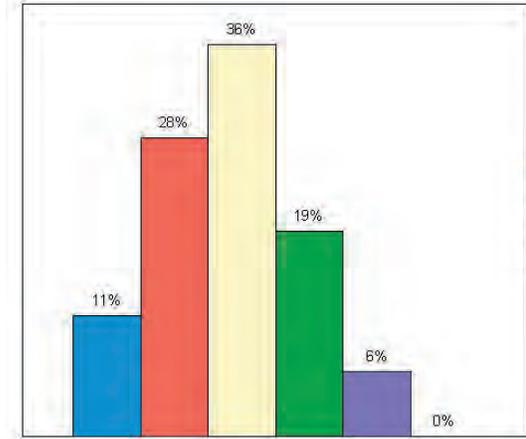
- **Street Signs.** Only two street sign images were shown in the survey, with Example 1 receiving a relatively favorable response (54 percent positive). Example 2 did not generate favorable results (only 27 percent positive and 38 percent negative). Ultimately, it is unclear whether participants felt these elements are a necessary or a “priority” component of an overall revitalization plan. As a more detailed streetscape or branding process moves forward, this should be further explored within the context of a holistic branding strategy or “family” of streetscape elements.

- **Banners.** Banner Example 2 scored 58 percent positive and 12 percent negative. This example shows a more classic metal banner with a clean, simple demarcation of the district with a stylized type face. Interestingly, feedback for Banner Example 1, which shows the College Hill District logo, was not resoundingly strong. 49 percent of participants selected “Strongly Like” or “Like” and 21 percent “Dislike” or “Strongly Dislike.” A high percentage (30 percent) were neutral.

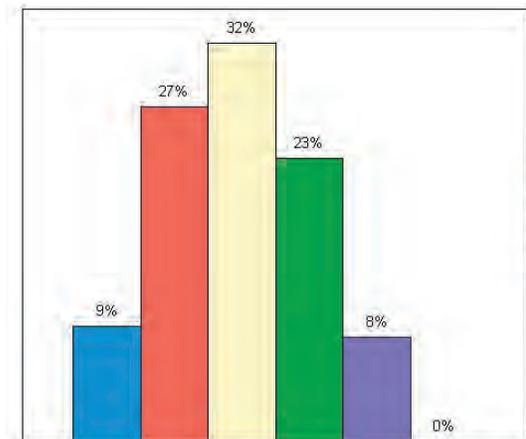
From discussions with some stakeholders, primarily Augustana students, there were some comments that this design was too much like the college’s, with the main focus on the colors of the logo. Options should be explored for the color and design of the banners if this is an element that the City and CHD organization want to incorporate throughout the district.



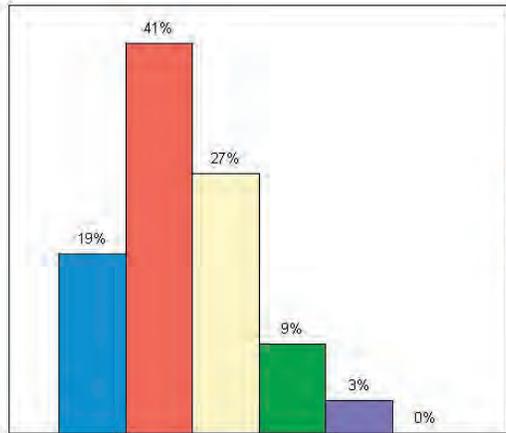
GATEWAY EXAMPLE 1



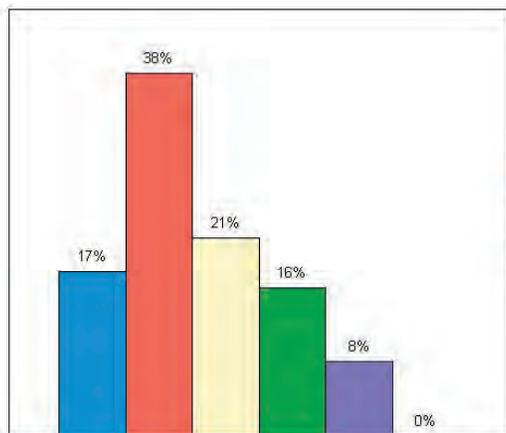
GATEWAY EXAMPLE 2



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



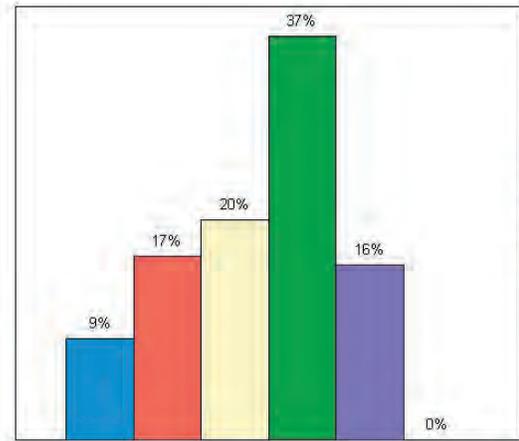
GATEWAY EXAMPLE 3



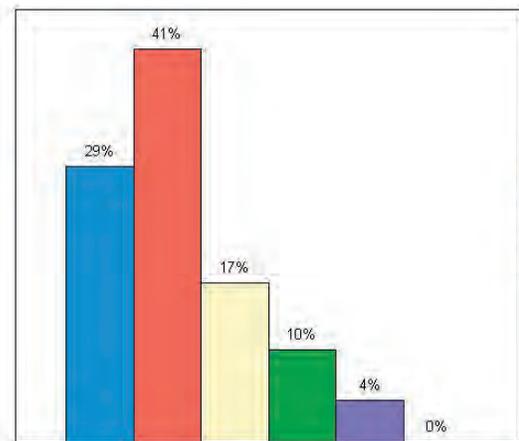
KIOSK EXAMPLE 1



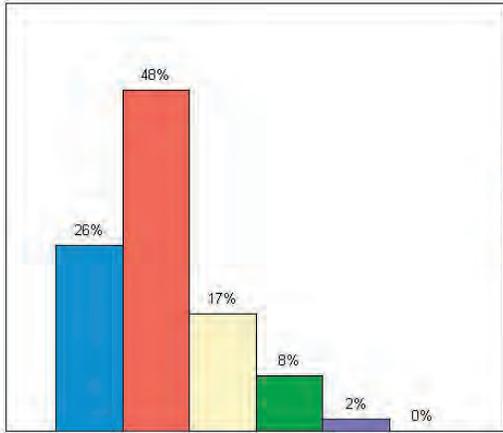
KIOSK EXAMPLE 2



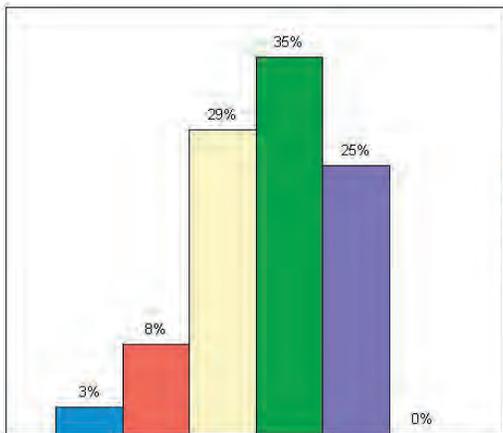
KIOSK EXAMPLE 3



SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



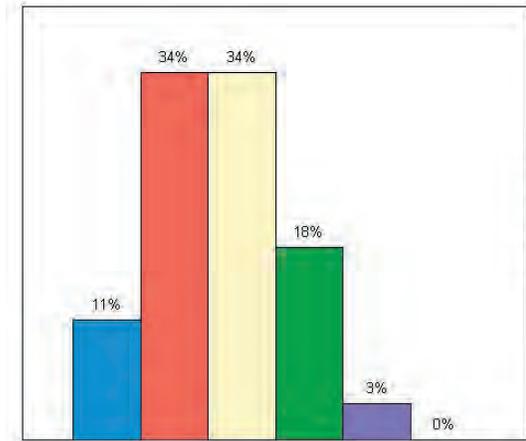
DIRECTIONAL EXAMPLE 1



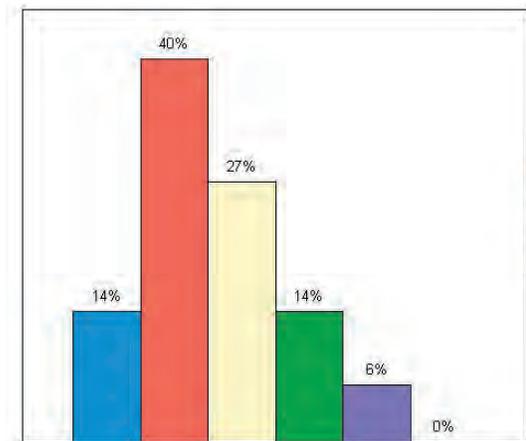
DIRECTIONAL EXAMPLE 2



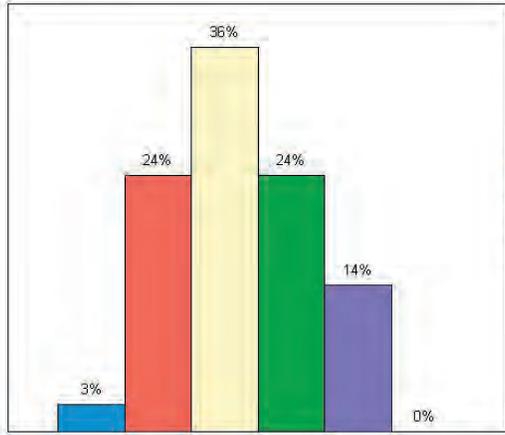
DIRECTIONAL EXAMPLE 3



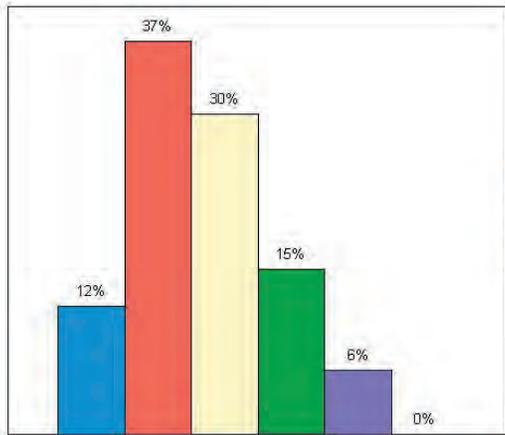
STREET SIGN EXAMPLE 1



SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



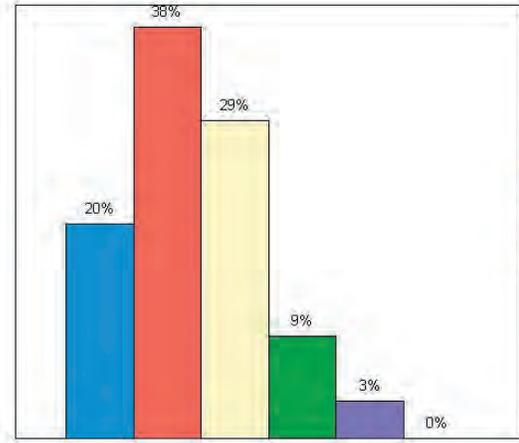
STREET SIGN EXAMPLE 2



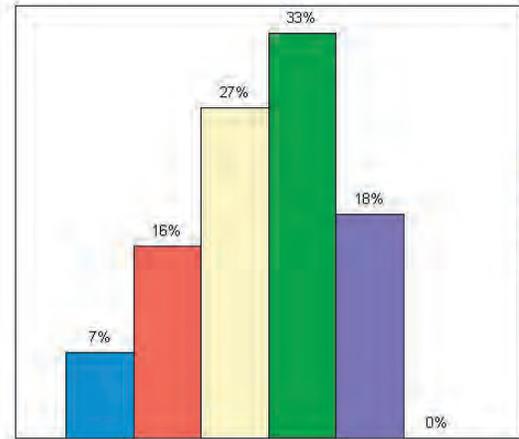
BANNER EXAMPLE 1



BANNER EXAMPLE 2



BANNER EXAMPLE 3



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### STREET FURNITURE

The Street Furniture category more specifically focuses on the elements that form a streetscape, such as lights, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles and planters. These elements come in a broad range of forms and styles and can vary from the very traditional to modern to funky to playful. The purpose of this exercise is to narrow the spectrum of choices by eliminating the outliers and analyzing the commonalities among the preferred images or elements. Ultimately, a more thorough process should be undertaken to establish a specific family of street furniture/elements to be installed within the College Hill District.

### STREET FURNITURE: SURVEY ANALYSIS

The following are the results for the individual sub-categories of the Street Furniture group:

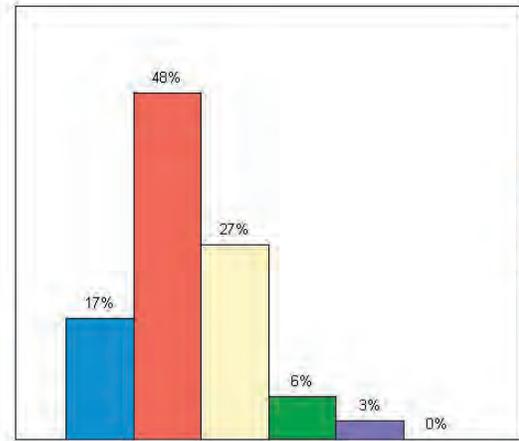
- **Street Lights.** Street Light Example 1 received easily the highest combination of positive responses in this group with 65 percent “Strongly Like” or “Like” scores. The style of this light is common throughout many downtown historic districts and traditional commercial streets. On the other end of the spectrum, Street Light Example 2 received 51 percent negative responses and only 29 percent positive. This example exemplifies a very modern approach to lighting design. Example 4 received the second most positive feedback and is a more contemporary take on a classic light style. Ultimately, when selecting a new light, the choices should fall within the range of Examples 1 and 4.
- **Benches.** Bench Examples 1 and 3 received very similar results, with 67 and 66 percent positive responses, respectively. Most likely, participants reacted to the designs for their colors (black and silver), which work well with a wide range of elements, as well as their forms and durable materials. These examples have flexibility to complement nearly all other styles and types of streetscape characters.

The “funky” choice (Example 2) and the “modern” choice (Example 4) had more negative scores than positive. Again, bench options within the streetscape design process should begin with an exploration of similar styles as the Examples 1 and 3.

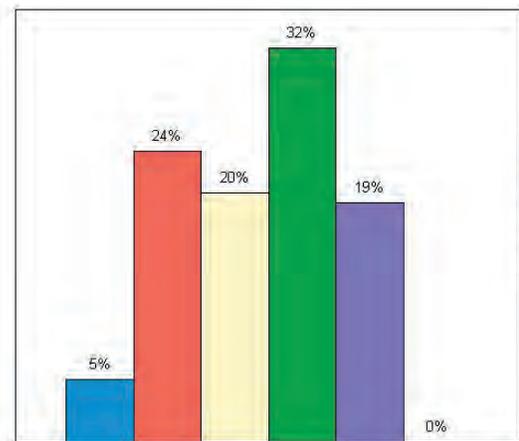
- **Bike Racks.** The Bike Rack examples that were preferred were Example 4 (59 percent positive/17 percent negative) and Example 3 (51 percent positive/33 percent negative). These examples differ greatly and, therefore, the City and CHD organization should explore additional options. It should also be noted that it may not be necessary for all bike racks within the district to be the same; it is common for commercial areas and corridors to have a variety of bike rack styles, depending on location.
- **Trash Receptacles.** Trash Receptacle Example 3 and Example 2 received 70 percent and 66 percent positive response, respectively. As with the benches, participants probably reacted well to the black color and simple forms of these examples. They would basically “match” and look well in any streetscape.
- **Planters.** Both Planter examples received favorable response, with over 60 percent reacting positively. Ultimately, stakeholders noted that they would like to see planters and urns as part of the streetscape and feel these are the types of elements that can be installed in the short-term. It is suggested that a more extensive selection process be conducted prior to choosing a definitive planter style.



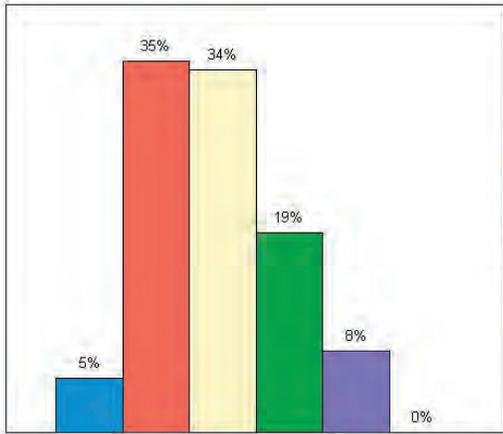
STREET LIGHT EXAMPLE 1



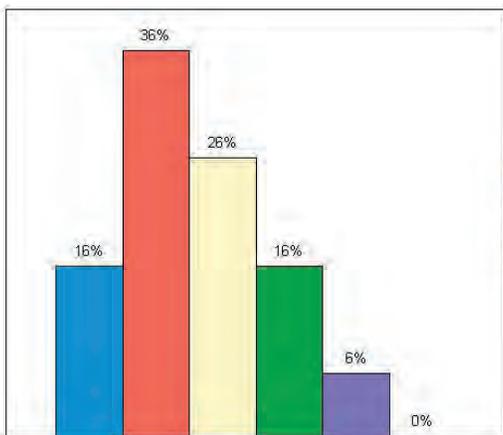
STREET LIGHT EXAMPLE 2



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



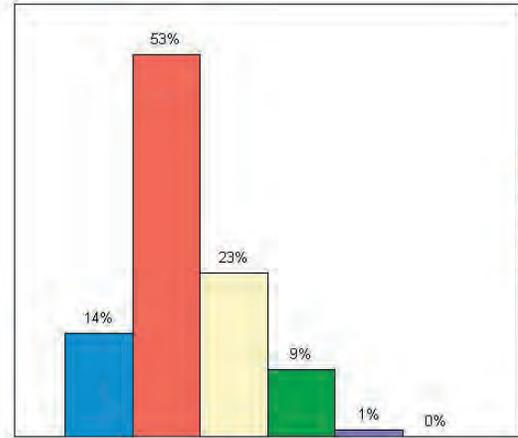
STREET LIGHT EXAMPLE 3



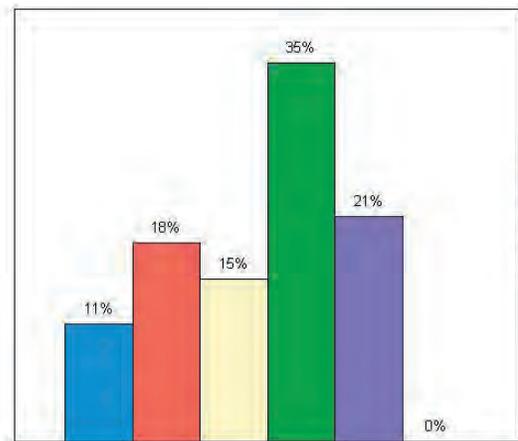
STREET LIGHT EXAMPLE 4



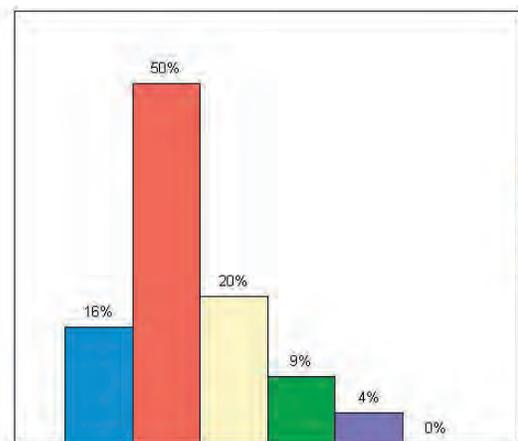
BENCH EXAMPLE 1



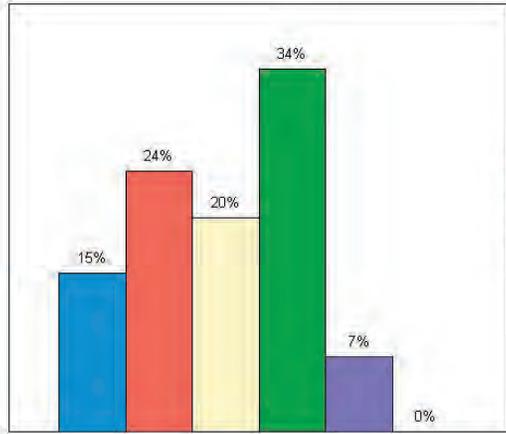
BENCH EXAMPLE 2



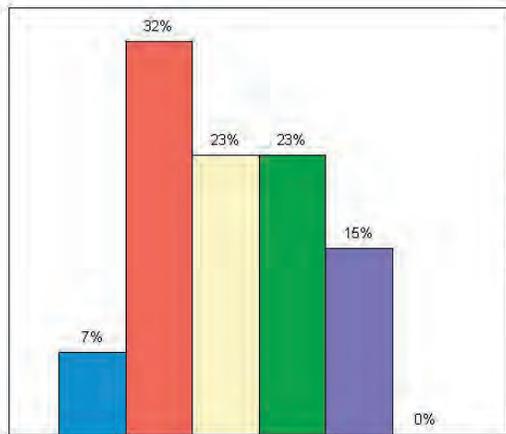
BENCH EXAMPLE 3



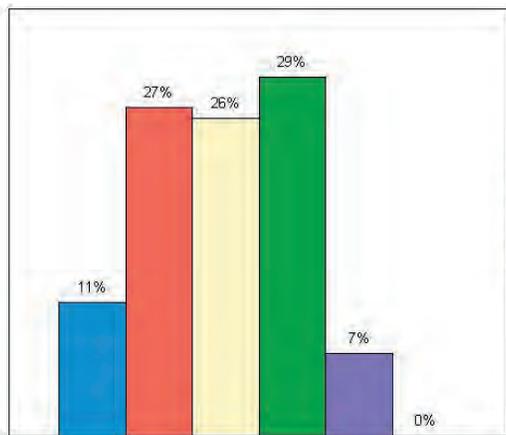
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



BENCH EXAMPLE 4



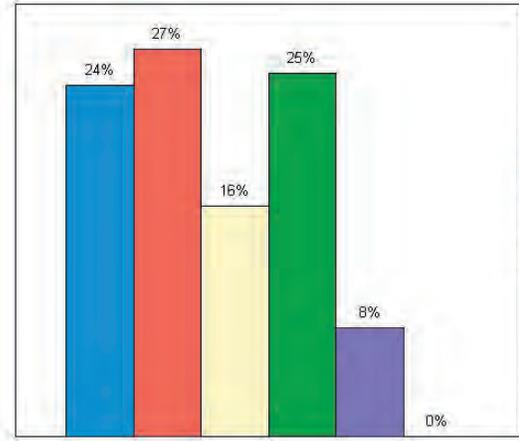
BIKE RACK EXAMPLE 1



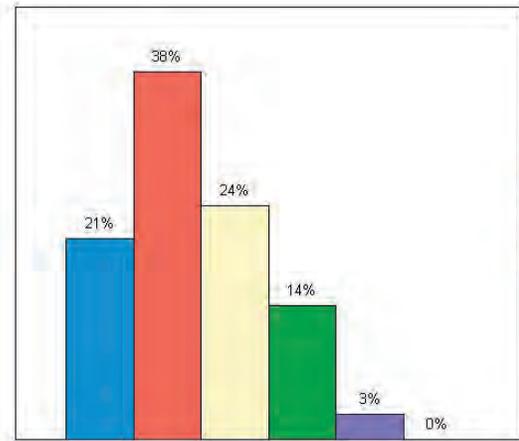
BIKE RACK EXAMPLE 2



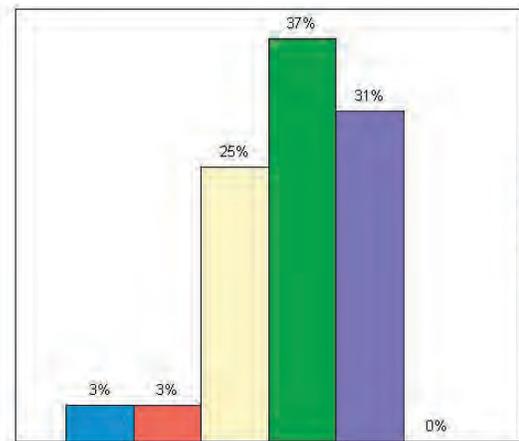
BIKE RACK EXAMPLE 3



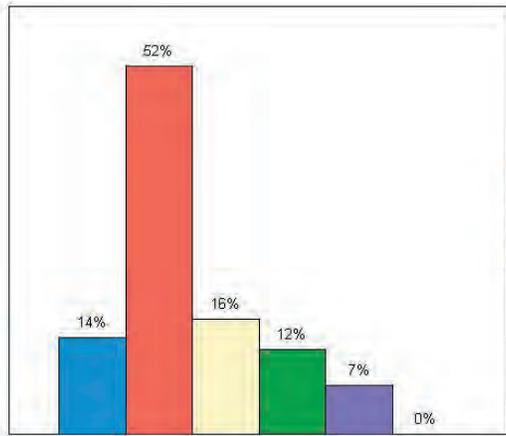
BIKE RACK EXAMPLE 4



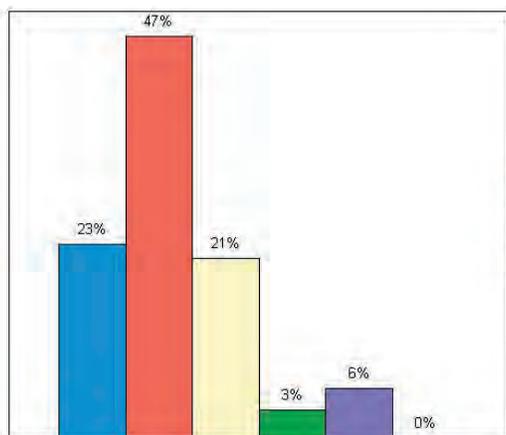
TRASH RECEPTACLE EXAMPLE 1



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



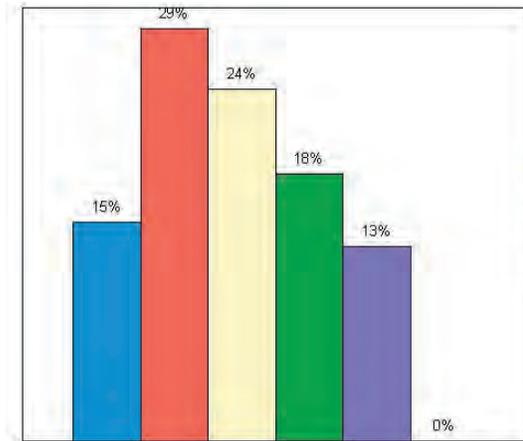
TRASH RECEPTACLE EXAMPLE 2



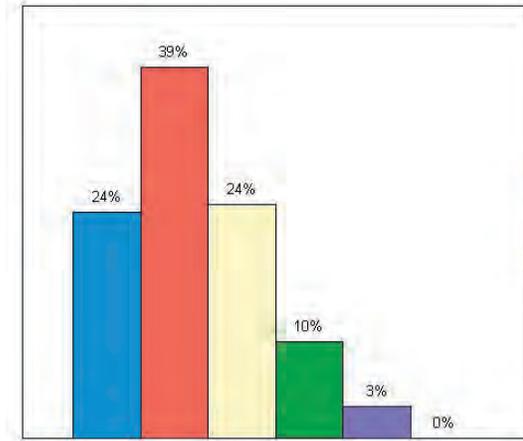
TRASH RECEPTACLE EXAMPLE 3



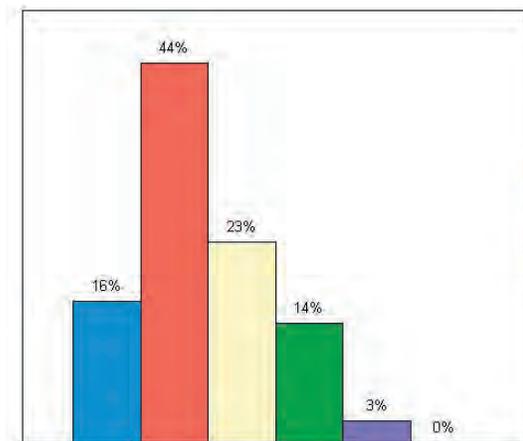
TRASH RECEPTACLE EXAMPLE 4



PLANTER EXAMPLE 1



PLANTER EXAMPLE 2



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### ARCHITECTURE

The Architecture category is broken down into two sub-categories: Existing Building Enhancements and New Development. The Existing Building Enhancements images focus on facade improvements, storefront window displays, signage, awnings, color and lighting to show how these elements, either individually or combined, affect a building's appearance. The New Development images depict a range of smaller scale 1 to 3-story commercial/mixed-use buildings. The continuum of building materials, setbacks, height, bulk and architectural style all play a role in the perception and rating of each image. This exercise was meant to generate thought about how each participant views potential future new development or redevelopment, although the College Hill District currently has few opportunities for new buildings.

#### ARCHITECTURE: SURVEY ANALYSIS

- **Existing Building Enhancements.** The highest scoring examples within the Existing Building Enhancement sub-category were Examples 2 (78 percent combined “Strongly Like” and “Like”) and 1 (76 percent), respectively. Example 2 shows a building with a simple storefront design and enhanced facade with a striking color scheme. The facade does not have awnings and no signage is visible. Participants noted the large, clear windows, color scheme and clean, effective simplicity of the building as strong points. Example 1 depicts a entryway/window display for a business within a traditional commercial district. Participants likely reacted to the wide entrance with flanking planters, navy and white colors on the knee wall and columns and organized, well-designed display windows.

Other examples that received high scores include Examples 6 and 7, which both scored at 72 percent positive and Example 4 at 71 percent. Example 6 shows a very simple facade/storefront makeover, which

included cleaning the bricks, opening the boarded up windows, adding an awning and subtle signage. Stakeholders noted the how small actions combined to make a vacant “eyesore” into an attractive building. In Example 7, they noted the gooseneck lighting and new awning as desirable elements for a storefront.

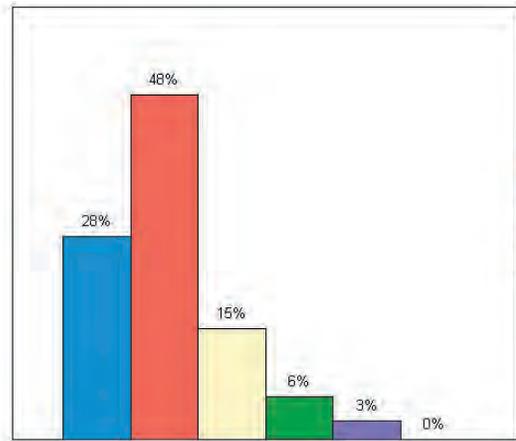
Notably, the elements that were preferred, such as gooseneck lighting, awnings, storefront colors and displays, are generally elements of traditional commercial storefronts. Example 5, which shows a more contemporary awning and “funky” design received one of the lowest scores in this category (30 percent negative responses). Stakeholders often referred to the College Hill District as “eclectic,” but the survey results generally show that classic and traditional elements and buildings are preferred.

- **New Development.** Within the New Development sub-category, Examples 1 and 3 received the highest scores by far. Example 1 had a combined positive score of 78 percent. The example depicts a 3-story brick building with a pitched roof, awnings, sign bands and outdoor seating. The building also has prominent windows, a corner entry and zero setback. Example 3 received 77 percent positive feedback. Participants noted the small scale, brick facade, interesting display windows and zero setback as key elements to their perceptions.

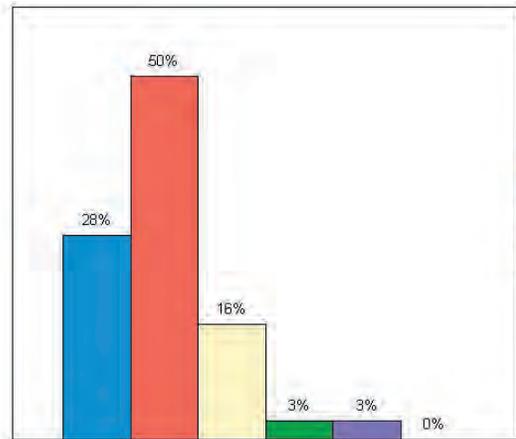
Overall, the common elements within the images that received the highest scores include brick as the primary facade material, zero setbacks, traditional awnings and sign bands and large, well-defined commercial spaces.



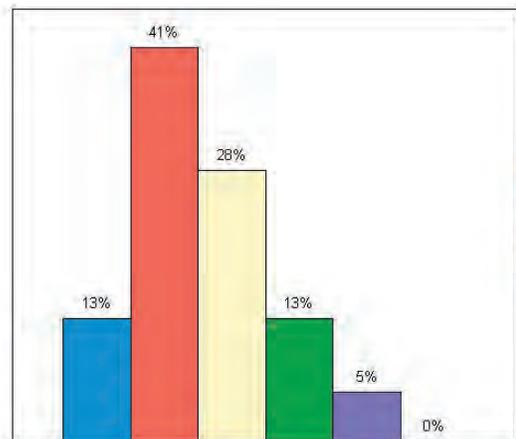
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 1



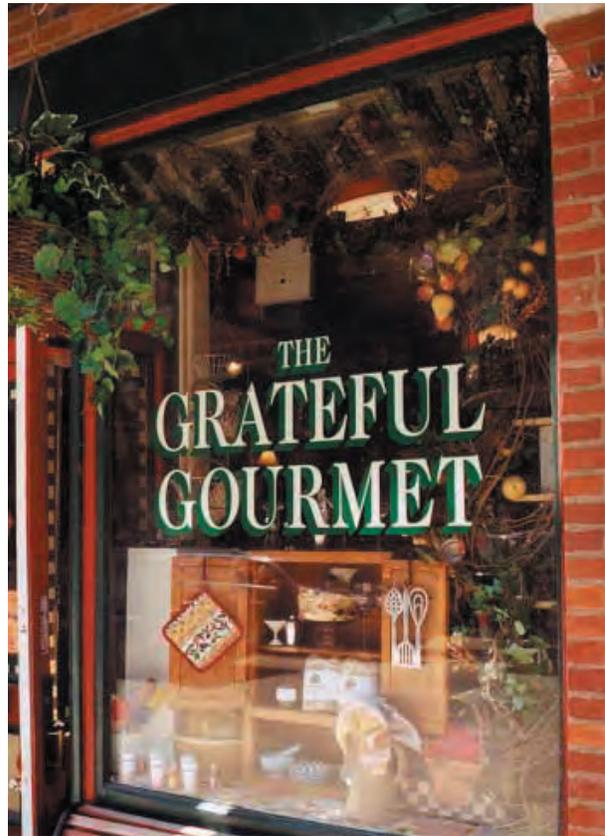
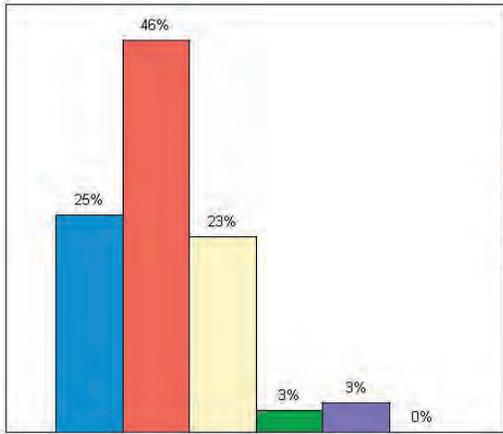
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 2



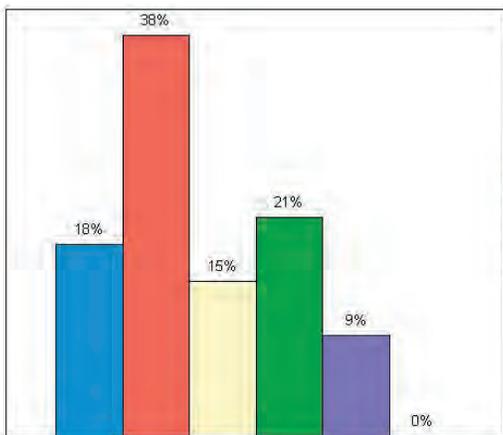
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 3



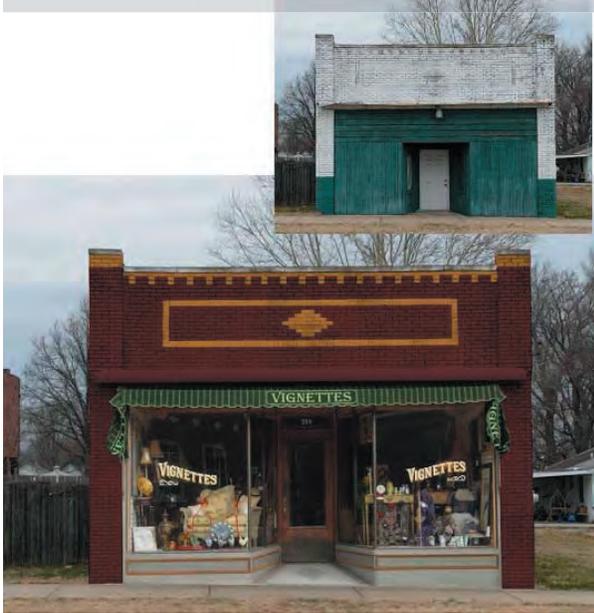
SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



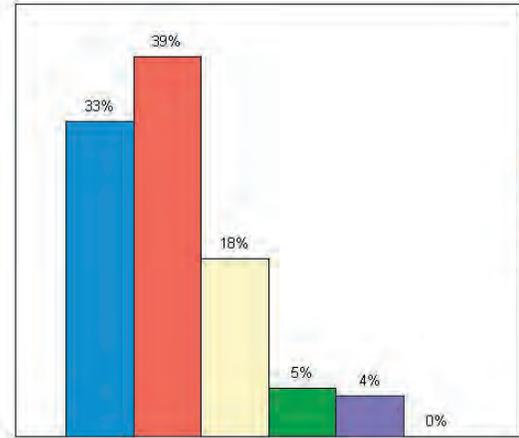
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 4



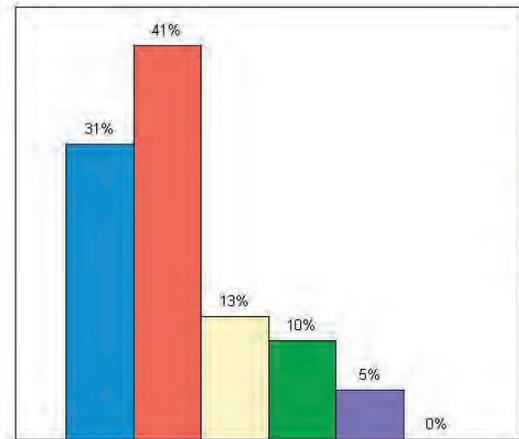
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 5



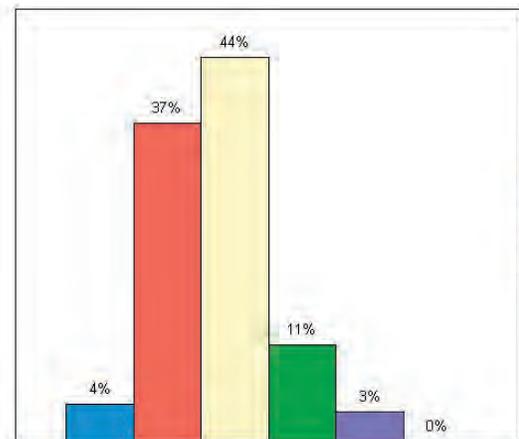
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 6



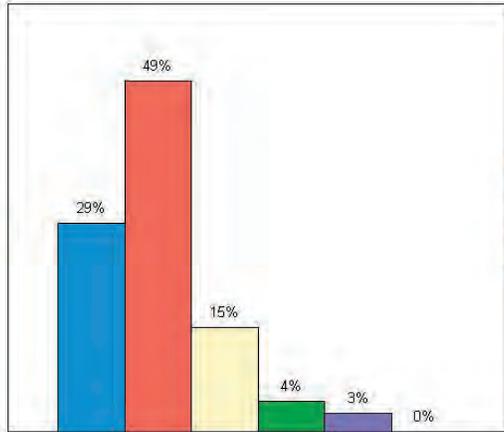
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 7



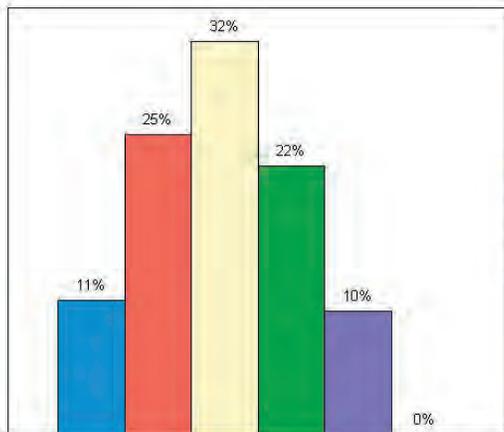
EXISTING BUILDING ENHANCEMENT EXAMPLE 8



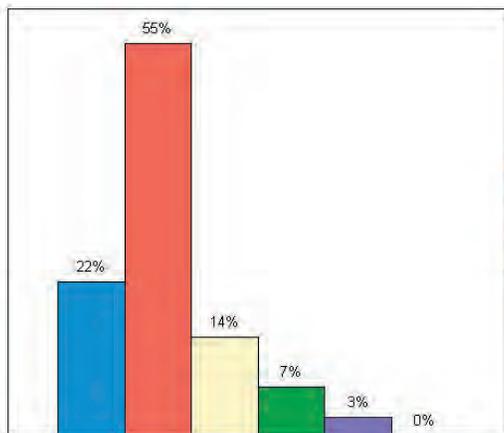
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 1



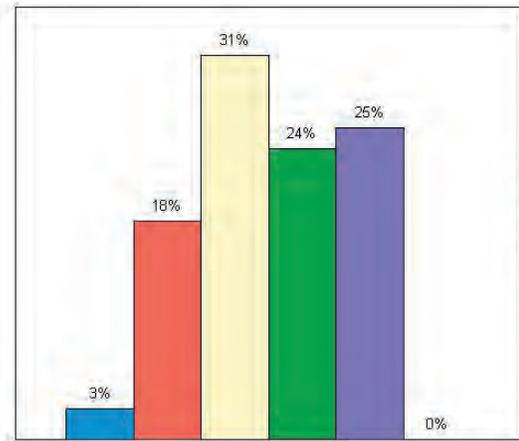
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 2



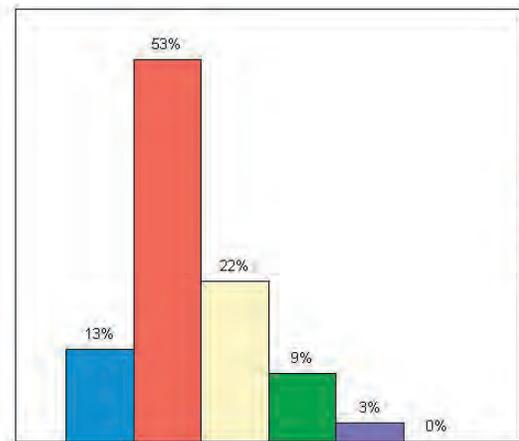
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 3



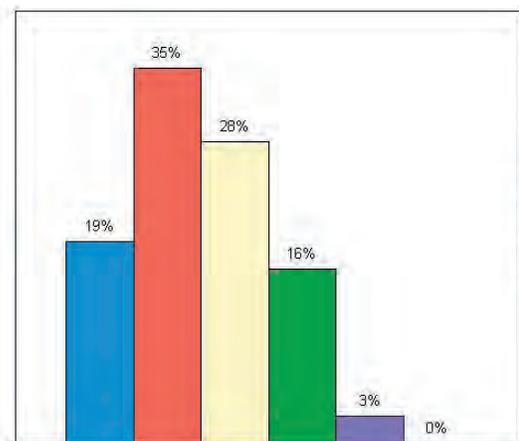
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 4



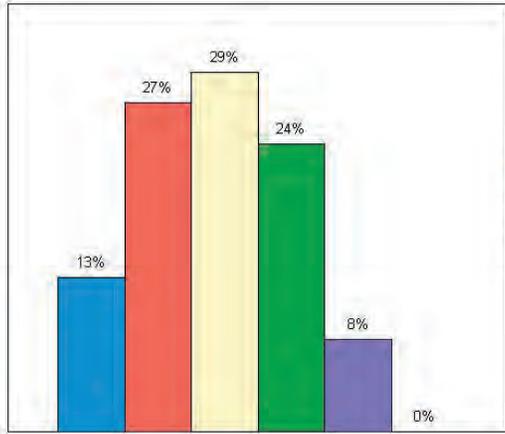
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 5



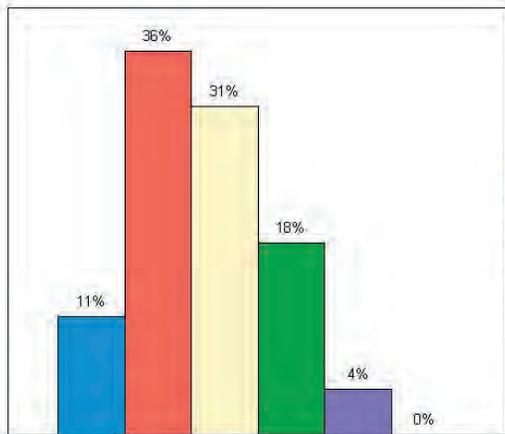
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 6



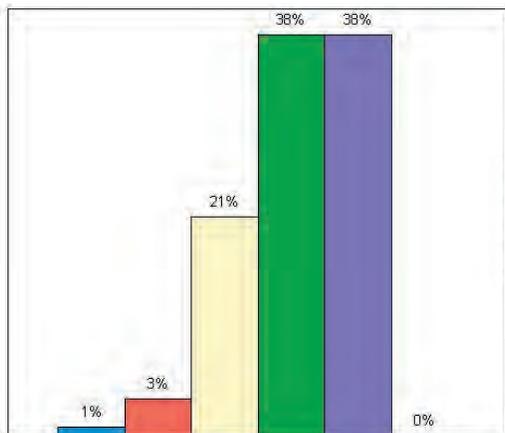
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 7



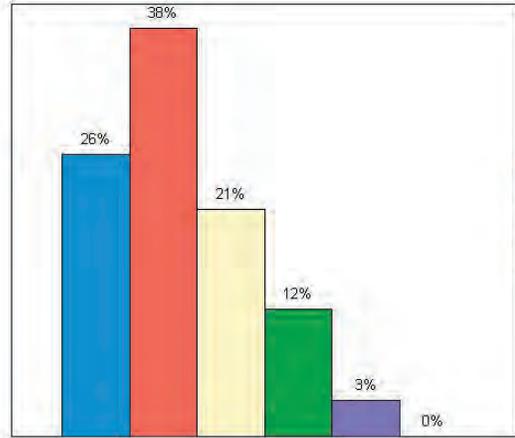
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 8



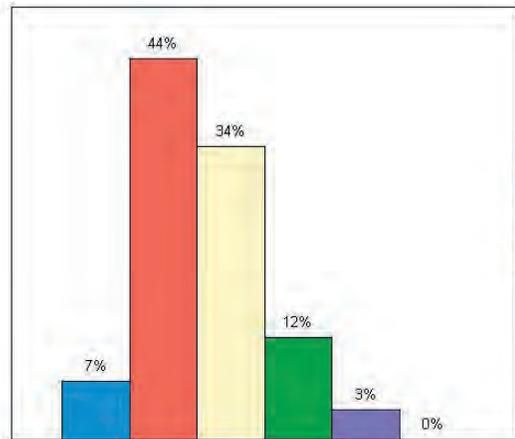
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 9



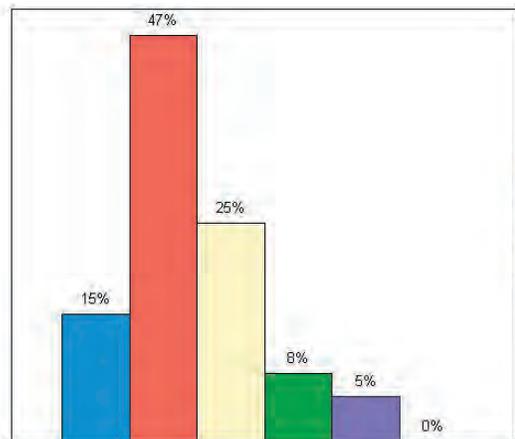
NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 10



NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 11



NEW DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE 12



## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

### VISUALIZATIONS

As part of the exercise, a series of “visualizations” were created to show potential improvements to the College Hill District. These focused on streetscape/intersection improvements, parking lot and landscaping enhancements and facade and storefront display modifications, as well as a potential “green alley” linkage to Augustana College.

Both the existing conditions, or “before” image, and the visualization, or “after” image, were shown for each location to understand the baseline perception of the district versus a future scenario. In each case, multiple enhancements were shown within a single image to help participants envision the overall character that could be created when improvements are combined. In some cases, two or three visualizations of the same area show a building progression of enhancements with added layers or options.

### VISUALIZATIONS: SURVEY ANALYSIS

• **Visualization 1.** The first visualization focuses on a view of the 14th Avenue/30th Street intersection looking southeast. Example 1 shows the existing conditions of the intersection and received 85 percent negative response and only 1 percent positive response. Intersection Improvements Example 1 depicts a modified image with new “ladder” style painted crosswalks, moveable planters on the sidewalks, hanging baskets, new street signs, street lights with banners, benches and street trees. This image dramatically changed the scores with 47 percent of participants rating it “Strongly Like” or “Like,” 40 percent “Neutral” and only 14 percent “Strongly Dislike” or “Dislike.”

Intersection Improvements Example 2 received an even higher score with 61 percent positive response and 21 percent negative response. New elements in this image show brick paver crosswalks, bollards at the corner and the College Hill District logo painted in the intersection.

Stakeholders reacted positively to the pedestrian enhancements in both improvement examples, but preferred the brick crosswalks and corner treatments overall. The concept of painting the district logo in the intersection was discussed as an interesting way to create a “gateway” and brand for the area.

• **Visualization 2.** The second visualization shows a view of the sidewalk on the north side of 14th Avenue, looking west toward 41st Street. The existing streetscape conditions image received the lowest score in the visual preference survey, with 96 percent of participants responding negatively. Streetscape Improvement Example 1 shows a new concrete sidewalk, moveable planters and some benches. This image received 22 percent positive, 44 percent neutral and 35 percent negative scores.

The next iteration in this series, Streetscape Improvement Example 2, shows the streetscape with the overhead wires and utility poles removed and adds street trees, new pedestrian lights with CHD banners, defined on-street parking and a shared bike lane to the street. This image also depicts a storefront facade improvement for the building in the foreground. This image received the highest score in the Visualization category with 92 percent positive results and only 3 percent negative.

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Streetscape Improvement Example 3 builds further upon the second example with paver banding on the sidewalk and a bump-out at 41st Street that defines the parking and adds outdoor cafe space. This image also received a very high positive score (82 percent) and only 7 percent negative. Participants noted the benefit of removing the overhead wires with an emphasis on adding trees, lights and benches throughout the district.

- **Visualization 3.** The third visualization focuses on the north-south alley located east of 30th Street behind Cool Beanz coffee shop. The alley terminates at the new sports fields on Augustana’s campus and was noted as a primary connection point between the College and the district. The Existing Alley Conditions image received an 89 percent negative response rate in the survey.

The “Green Alley” Improvement Example envisions the alley as a public space that is used as a link to Augustana, as well as a potential space for future activity and gathering. The image depicts permeable pavers throughout the alley, bike lanes on each side, new lighting with banners, directional signage to and from campus, trash enclosures and pockets of native plantings that could serve as bioswales for stormwater management. This image rated very high in the survey, with 72 percent positive responses and only 10 percent negative.

Open House participants, including multiple Augustana students, felt this concept would be a great way to connect to campus and provide opportunities to highlight new ideas in sustainable, “green” technologies, methods or materials. Some other participants expressed a concern for potential lost parking.

- **Visualization 4.** The fourth visualization image shows the intersection of 14th Avenue/30th Street looking southeast toward Happy Joes. The existing conditions image rated poorly with 67 percent negative response and 4 percent positive.

The first visualization, Parking Lot Improvement Example 1, shows an ornamental metal fence and landscaping screening the parking lot, a corner “gateway” plaza with pavers and ornamental trees, new street trees and lights and outdoor seating at Happy Joes. This image received 52 percent combined positive results, 35 percent neutral and 12 percent negative.

Parking Lot Improvement example 2 shows the same view and enhancements previously depicted, but adds a gateway pier or sculpture at the corner. The scores for this image were not as good as the previous image with 47 percent positive responses, 35 neutral and 19 percent negative.

Generally, it appears that participants reacted well to screening the parking lot, but may have been unclear about what the image was showing. In addition, the sculpture or gateway element did not appear to be well-received. The survey cannot definitively conclude that respondents did not like the idea of a gateway or the particular gateway that is shown in the image. Stakeholders noted their desire to see some form of gateway or brand created at the key intersections, suggesting that this concept should be further explored.

It should also be noted that the existing conditions image was taken before Happy Joes replaced their sign and painted their facade. In interviews, stakeholders indicated what a big impact those small updates made. The look could be further enhanced through landscaping and parking lot screening, as shown in these visualizations.

## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS

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• **Visualization 5.** The final existing conditions image shows a portion of 38th Street looking west toward the side of Autozone. In the foreground is an asphalt parking lot leading to a narrow sidewalk condition. Overall, the image depicts an area of the district that has a lot of paving and very little landscaping. This image received only 5 percent positive results and 66 percent negative scores, making it one of the least desirable shown in the survey.

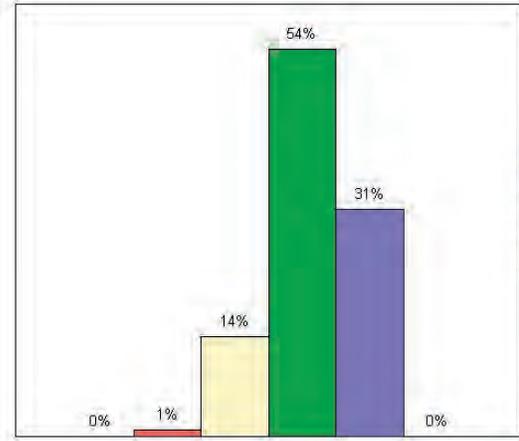
The Landscape Improvement Example depicts a number of enhancements to the area, both within the right-of-way and private property. These include landscaping and screening of the parking lot in the foreground, new streetscape treatments on 38th Street (lights, planters, trees, benches, trash receptacles) and simple landscaping along the blank wall at Autozone, such as ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials.

This image represents one of the highest shifts in perception in the Visualization portion of the survey. Participants rated this as 85 percent positive and only 4 percent negative. Overall, they reacted to the increase in green space and landscaping, parking lot improvements and simple streetscape enhancements that essentially creates a desirable character in an area that currently has little.

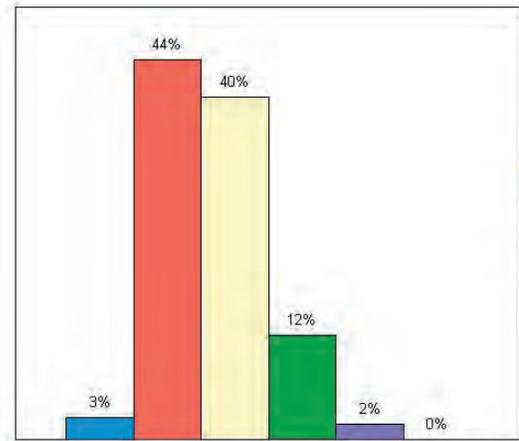
**Overall.** These visualizations help build understanding that a few small streetscape improvements would have a large impact on perception. Additional enhancements or a higher level streetscape may not create much additional benefit. From discussions following the visual preference survey, it was apparent that participants are savvy to the cost of maintenance that comes with a high end streetscape and recognize that some basic upgrades to infrastructure along with a few high-quality streetscape amenities may benefit the district more in the long term.



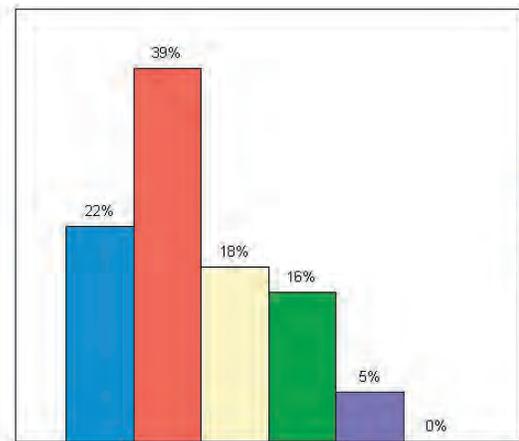
EXISTING CONDITIONS EXAMPLE 1



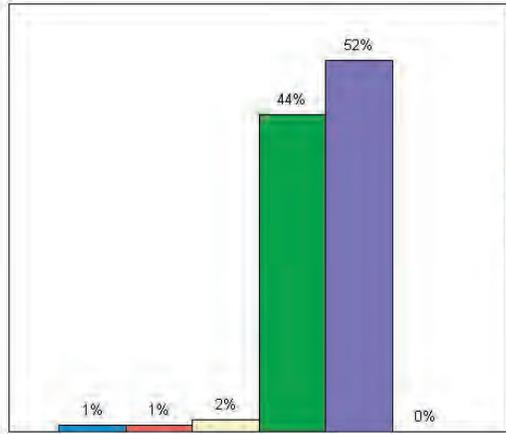
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS EXAMPLE 1



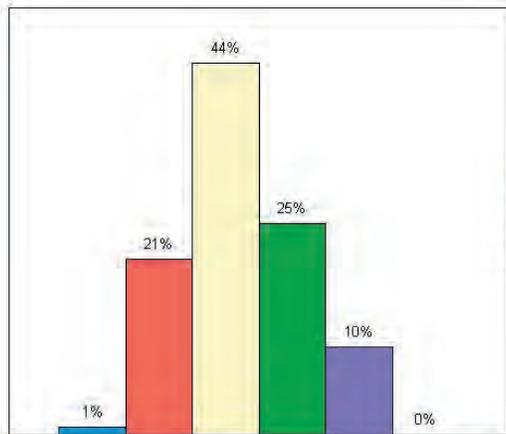
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS EXAMPLE 2



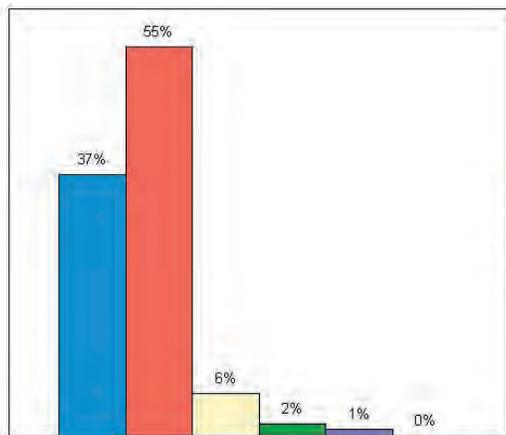
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



EXISTING STREETScape CONDITIONS



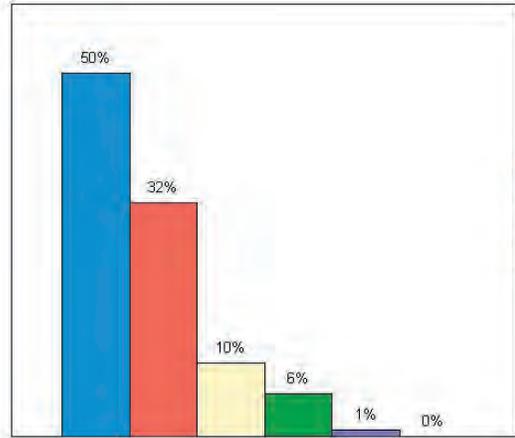
STREETScape IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE 1



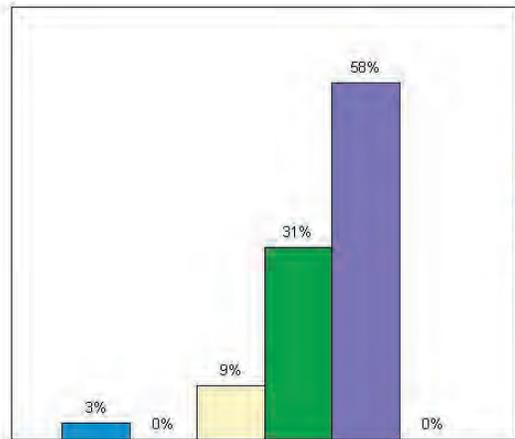
STREETScape IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE 2



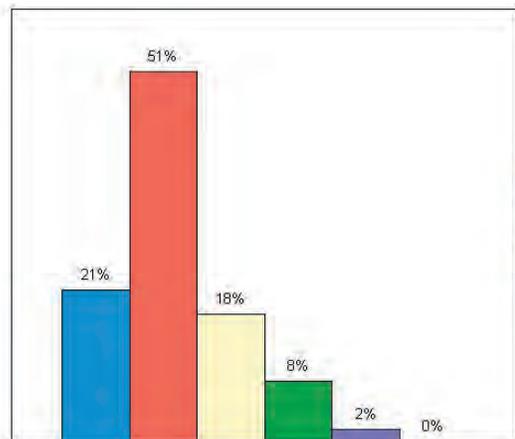
STREETScape IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE 3



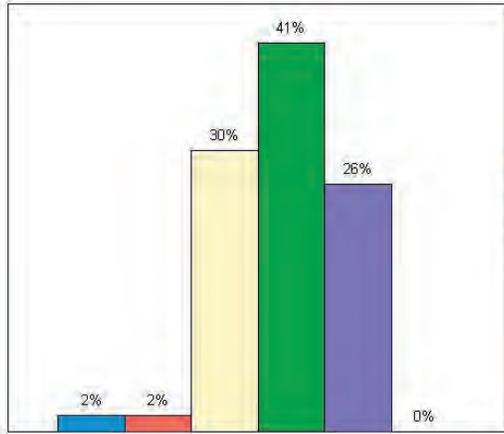
EXISTING ALLEY CONDITIONS



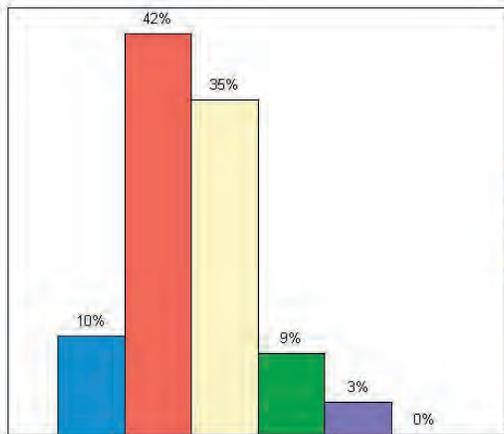
"GREEN" ALLEY IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE



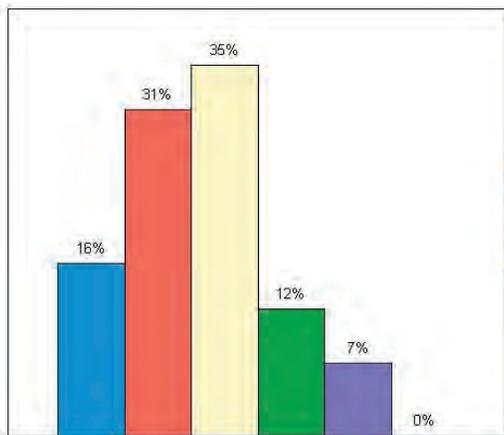
## SECTION 2: VISUAL PREFERENCE RESULTS



EXISTING INTERSECTION|PARKING EXAMPLE



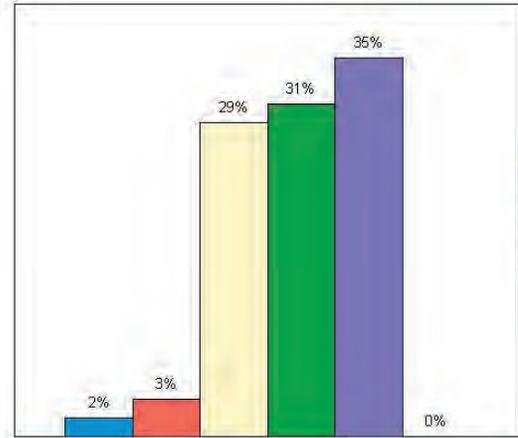
PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE 1



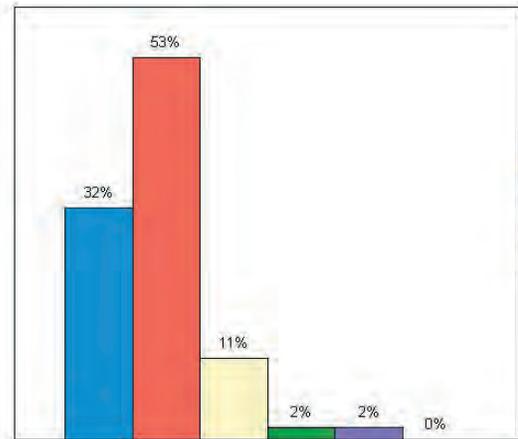
PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE 2



EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS EXAMPLE



LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE







# RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 3

## SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### OVERVIEW

There are a number of both short-term and long-range strategies and recommendations for improving and revitalizing the College Hill District streetscapes and buildings. The following recommendations describe a comprehensive approach to enhancing the district, while also highlighting actions or elements that may be acted upon relatively quickly.

### STREETSCAPE

**Detailed Streetscape Plan.** As a long-term strategy, a more detailed streetscape plan should be developed. This includes engaging the College Hill District organization in a planning and design process to provide specific direction regarding paving materials, lighting, tree and landscaping locations and species, street furniture and signage. The following are recommendations to consider within a detailed streetscape plan:

- Consider adding new street trees in tree grates for all CHD sidewalks that are 11 feet or wider. Trees should be spaced 25 to 30 feet apart and be appropriate species for urban environments. A minimum of 5 feet of clear sidewalk space should be provided throughout the district. Consult with the City Forester for types of species for the varying conditions throughout the district. Careful consideration needs to be given in regard to the relationship of trees to overhead wires and building signage and display window locations.

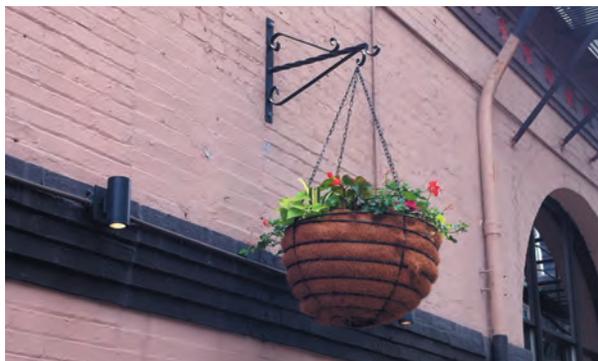
- Develop a banner design based on the new College Hill District logo to be applied to existing light poles in the area. In the long-term, if new lights are installed within the district, these can be reused. Consider having local businesses sponsor the banners, which allows them to promote the name of their business, while helping fund the banner program.

- Conduct an additional process to select a “family” of streetscape elements and furniture. The visual preference survey narrowed the choices of benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and moveable planters/urns, but additional discussion should take place to reach a consensus on the specific elements to install.



- Consider installing hanging baskets or planters on light poles and/or buildings, as well as window boxes in storefronts to provide additional locations for annual flowers or seasonal color display. Hanging baskets may provide a better opportunity to introduce plant material in locations where street trees are not appropriate.

- A logo has already been developed for the district, but needs to be used to promote and create an identity



for the area. The logo can be modified to be used as banners, stickers to be applied to storefront windows, design elements in street and wayfinding signs or kiosks, small plaques, bronze sidewalk “inlays” or markers as part of the streetscape design and/or painted in the intersections of 14th Avenue with 30th and 38th Streets.

- Create a family of wayfinding and signage elements to be installed as part of a future streetscape enhancement project. This family may include gateways, wayfinding signs, kiosks and street signs.

- Consider developing a gateway plaza/pocket park space on the southwest corners of 30th Street/14th Avenue and 38th Street/14th Avenue. These intersections are the main vehicular entrance points for the district and provide opportunities to create gateways into College Hill. These plaza spaces would require coordination and cooperation with both Happy Joe’s and Autozone since a portion of these parcels would be improved in addition to the rights-of-way.



Potential plaza design elements could include College Hill District gateway elements/signs, special paving, benches or other seating opportunities, lighting and landscaping.

- Consider burying power lines and other above grade utilities. Currently, the overhead wires and poles detract from the appearance of the area, take up valuable sidewalk space and make it difficult to plant street trees in the right-of-way.

- Continue discussions with business and building owners that have parking lots about adding screening and both perimeter and internal parking lot landscaping. Perimeter fencing and landscaping defines the pedestrian realm and increases the amount of permeable surface, which improves storm water drainage.

## SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

**Linking the two main nodes.** One key to creating a more cohesive district will be to link the two main intersections with a unified streetscape along 14th Avenue, including the predominantly residential portion of the corridor. One existing obstacle is the presence of overhead wires and electrical poles in the right-of-way. In the short term, strategies will need to work with the existing conditions and focus on “smaller scale” elements that may include many of the elements previously discussed, such as:

- New College Hill District banners on existing light poles
- Moveable planters at regular intervals or concentrated at the intersections
- Signage elements, such as custom wayfinding signs or street signs
- Removal of existing trees that are in poor condition and/or have been “topped,” and therefore do not positively contribute to the appearance of the area
- Temporary art/sculpture installments

Within the long range streetscape plan, when/if the overhead wires and electrical poles are removed, additional unifying elements may include:

- New pedestrian and roadway lighting
- Street trees in the parkway (shade trees)
- New concrete sidewalks with College Hill District “bronze inlays” in the pavement at regular intervals. These can be singular art pieces or be linked together to tell a story.
- Brick or concrete pavers at the intersections
- Curb bump outs at the intersections, where feasible
- Bike racks, benches and street furniture (in appropriate locations)





**Green Alley.** The “green alley” concept was well received at the community Open House by neighborhood residents, students and business owners. Most stakeholders recognized the potential to improve the connection to Augustana, provide safe bicycle and pedestrian routes, enhance aesthetics, provide a sustainable environment and educational opportunity and create a truly unique public space. The area around the 14th Avenue/30th Street intersection currently has momentum created by active business owners and the new sports field. The green alley provides an opportunity to capitalize on that momentum, extend the impact of the district and activate the rears and sides of key buildings within the district.

The green alley concept could consist of permeable paving (either pavers, asphalt or concrete), bioswales with native plantings, parking lot screening, consolidated trash enclosures/screening, wayfinding/signage, lighting, banners and public art. In the long term, beyond physical alley enhancements, there are additional opportunities for activating the alley with small shops and storefronts at the rear property lines, plaza spaces and outdoor seating and events or markets.

Creating and fostering unique spaces and events will reinforce College Hill District’s “eclectic” brand and the green alley concept provides an ideal opportunity to build upon that.

## SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short-Term Streetscape Elements

The following are elements or items that can be installed in the short-term without reconstructing the entire street:

- Banners
- Street furniture
- Moveable planters
- Street signs
- Kiosks with maps, business directory or historic information
- Window boxes on buildings
- Hanging baskets or planters on lights and/or buildings
- Public Art, sculptures, murals (both permanent and temporary)

### TRANSPORTATION

Conduct additional coordination with City engineers to determine the feasibility of adding bike lanes or “sharrows” (shared bike/vehicular lanes) on 14th Avenue. Many stakeholders noted the desire to accommodate bicycles.

Add a bus shelter in the block between 36th and 37th Streets at Old Horace Mann Park. Consider customizing the bus shelter design with a College Hill District theme, as well as incorporating the shelter into a small plaza to link it to the park.



Provide more visible and defined pedestrian crosswalks throughout the district. Crosswalks should be high contrast to increase awareness of pedestrians.

Provide better definition of on-street parallel parking areas with striping or using a paving material that differs from the travel lanes. Defining the travel lanes versus parking areas decreases vehicular speeds, while also assisting motorists in understanding where they are allowed to park on the street.

Consider providing curb “bump-outs” where feasible. Bump-outs increase sidewalk space, define on-street parking areas and decrease crossing distances for pedestrians. Engage in discussions with City engineers to develop a plan for potential bump out locations.



## ARCHITECTURE|BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Promote the City's façade improvement program to all College Hill District building owners. Some owners will need additional education regarding the services provided and benefits of the program.

Consider providing design assistance or an educational program for building owners including assistance with storefront displays, façade improvements and graphic design of logos and signs.

Consider developing facade improvement ideas for a series of adjacent buildings to help generate interest and participation among other business/building owners (see Model Block concept, next page).



## SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**Model Block.** Consider developing a “model block” within the district, preferably at or near a key intersection such as the 14th Avenue/30th Street. The model block would combine improvements for adjacent building facades with streetscape enhancements for the frontages of those buildings. The idea would be to concentrate enhancements in one block to show how the College Hill District could look, while at the same time creating an immediate, noticeable impact.

The building improvements could include (depending on the location and specific buildings) new signage and awnings, façade cleaning and maintenance, new storefront windows and doors,

well-designed storefront displays, new lighting and other commercial storefront enhancements. The streetscape improvements could include installing street furniture, such as benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and moveable planters, as well as new College Hill District banners.

Concentrating improvements on adjacent buildings would allow a local architect to assess and develop simple designs for multiple buildings at once. The model block would also provide a relatively simple way to show quick results, gain momentum and generate interest from other building owners and stakeholders in the area.



**Immediate and High Impact.** Focus efforts and funding on items that will have an immediate and high impact, such as: banners, moveable planters, hanging baskets (on street lights and buildings), crosswalk improvements, bike lane and parallel parking definition and branding elements.

**Increased Activity.** Promote outdoor cafes to restaurant owners in the district. Develop design standards for minimum clear pedestrian space requirements and definition of the café space with fencing and planters.

**Explore Funding Options.** Research and create a list of potential funding sources and grants that can be applied to various priority action items and revitalization strategies. Local, state and Federal funding is often available for streetscape, signage and transportation projects.

**Local Flavor.** Tap into the local creative talent by commissioning or purchasing public art and sculptures for key locations. There may also be opportunities for murals, temporary installations as part of a “14th Avenue Art Walk” or “Green Alley Art Walk” and/or contests for various design elements (seasonal banners, bus stop/shelter art, etc.).



