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## squirrel hill voices

*The Visions for the Future Issue was conceived by neighborhood resident and contributing writer Christine Hucko as a forum for community members to voice opinions and share ideas about Squirrel Hill's future. Christine's idea was to create a space where contributors could imagine the neighborhood in the next five to ten years, either by putting forth immediately practicable ideas, or by taking a more idealistic angle with ideas that may seem unrealistic at present, but could inspire discussion. Squirrel Hill Magazine would like to thank Christine for her creative contributions!*

*Here's Christine's idea:*

### Walking (and Gliding) into the Future

I would love to see the business district in Squirrel Hill develop into a cleaner, greener, even more dynamic version of its current self. As it stands, buses and cars crowd Murray and Forbes, throwing noise and air pollution into Squirrel Hill's prime gathering spot. Residents are fortunate to have a gathering spot in Murray and Forbes, but what they still lack is a place in the business district that feels like it truly belongs to them.

Enter the pedestrian zone. Imagine if we could create a pedestrian-friendly space in the heart of Squirrel Hill, one set aside exclusively for pedestrians, or for pedestrians and clean public transport vehicles, such as light rail. Remove motorized vehicles from the equation, and a number of things change as a result: the air becomes cleaner and quieter, inviting people to linger; restaurants add outdoor seating areas; musicians play on the corner; neighbors commune on benches. In short, these kinds of areas foster community and change the dynamic of a business district for the better.

If you happened to walk down Forbes Avenue between Murray and Shady last July ahead of the Vintage Grand Prix when the road was briefly closed to thru traffic, then you got a taste of the kind of atmosphere that emerges when the presence



*Snow falls on pedestrian-friendly Church Street in Burlington, VT. Photo by Adna Karabegovic*

of cars is reduced. At the heart of my vision for the neighborhood's future is a desire to make residents' lives even better, and I think the creation of a pedestrian-friendly zone somewhere in the business district would have this effect. 🍁