A SUMMARY OF YOUR

15TH AVENUE EAST

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Presented By:

environmental WORKS
Community Design Center
Board & Vellum

PART 1
Capitol Hill’s 15th Avenue East has been home to a commercial district for nearly a century, with early businesses such as grocery stores and bookshops mirroring some current uses.

Fast-forward to the present, 15th Avenue East still hops with an eclectic mix of locally owned businesses, restaurants, and retail.

In the fall of 2017, architect and Principal Jeff Pelletier of Board & Vellum Architecture and Design, approached Environmental Works Community Design Center, another firm on 15th Ave East, to discuss the impending sale of the Hilltop Service Station property at 15th and Mercer, along with other imminent changes on the street: the QFC block is slated to be the site of new development, and Kaiser Permanente is planning to carry out $400 million in improvements on its sizable lot. Jeff noted that the people who live and work on 15th have lacked a means to contribute to plans for its future. EW and Board & Vellum decided to engage the neighborhood in a conversation about community hopes and dreams for 15th.

15TH AVENUE EAST WORKSHOP
This conversation blossomed into a two-hour community event hosted by Environmental Works and Board & Vellum on April 28, 2018, at The Summit on Pike, which was attended by approximately 85 people who live or work around 15th. Staff from both firms applied the Pomegranate Method training to facilitate an inclusive, collaborative event. Environmental Work’s Shannon Carrico laid out the ground rules for a productive conversation, including reminding people to focus on how to make the inevitable changes to 15th positive, speaking short and simply, listening, respecting other people’s ideas, and focusing on the goal of the highest good.

For the initial visioning exercise, attendees considered the question “What are your best ideas for the future of 15th Avenue East?” They wrote their three best ideas on three separate notecards, which were all gathered and posted according to themes that included safety, green space, preserving small businesses, and supporting job development and thoughtful density. A collaborative discussion followed, in which facilitators strove to identify all ideas presented in order to compile them for future reference by developers, city officials, and other interested community members.

Next, Board & Vellum’s Chris Parker introduced attendees to an interactive design exercise. Street view elevations and aerial views of both sides of 15th from Denny to Mercer were posted on parallel rows of tables. Attendees used markers, tracing paper, and cutouts of items such as P Patches and benches to mark up the elevations, and convey their ideas for a better future for 15th. Neighbors’ ideas ranged from adding affordable housing above existing retail, to a farmers’ market, to underground parking. As in the visioning exercise, common themes included retaining affordable spaces for local independent retail, eyes on the street, and pedestrian friendliness.

Our hats are off to you, our neighbors, for contributing your visions for 15th’s future!
Participants are asked to mark up elevations to show their best ideas for the future of the neighborhood.

Participants group notecards of their ideas by themes.

**Emerging Themes**

Common ideas and themes from answers collected during the workshop.

- Preservation of History
- Building Unique Neighborhood Character
- Providing a Safe Environment for All
- Promoting Parks and Green Space
- Supporting Local Retail
- Maintaining Sidewalks + Streets
- Involvement in Zoning + Planning
Unique, interactive architecture, no more flat walls like QFC / Walgreens

A robust variety of independent shops, restaurants, services

Maintain street level appearance, build contemporary housing set back from the street

Cleaner + safer for everyone: lighting, widen / fix sidewalks, seating, parklets, bike lanes

IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY
A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF IDEAS WITH
AT LEAST 5 RESPONSES
A MORE IN-DEPTH CHART LOCATED ON PAGE 10

Small / unique restaurant / retail spaces, good mix of residential, affordable retail

Add trees/planters/potted plants to the Ave., consider it a requirement for developers

Preserve architectural heritage, adapt existing facades in new development
Street lighting from Volunteer Park to 15th Avenue shops

Need good services for homeless that reduce burden on businesses

Maintain an clean and safe environment

Get rid of the panhandlers and the trash on the sidewalk

Discourage negative behaviors while keeping it welcoming

Clean and safe streets that are walkable for all

Maintain and increase small scale storefront and elements

Maintain the current pedestrian-oriented business zone

Make all storefronts active, no stretches of black walls

Make Uncle Ike’s change its design to match the neighborhood

More independent retail businesses

More landscape elements – trees, planters

New medical jobs and training programs to provide pathways out of poverty

No chain stores

No more buildings like Safeway that swallow an entire block

No more pot shops please

Preserve historic facades

Property management that protects quirky, local, and independent merchants

Public services for the homeless – bathrooms, laundry, clean needle program

Retail spaces sized and priced for locally owned businesses

Small retail spaces in new buildings

Small scale neighborhood

Spaces to pause on the street – window displays, benches

Thriving small businesses and living sidewalk spaces

Tie the business district to Volunteer Park

Useful and convenient shops with a range of foods

Walkable retail district

A Metro mini bus route that connects 19th to Broadway

A place that always feels safe walking home at night

A safe, clean, usable public path

Accommodate density while preserving human-scale streetscape

Additional parking space

Articulate and strengthen the many pedestrian crosswalks to slow traffic

Attractive pedestrian route

Better pedestrian and active use of sidewalks

Bike lane

Pedestrian traffic only on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights

Clean streets that feel safe, maybe a clean-up team for the drug garage

Coordinate street improvement in new development

Create a continuous awning on both sides of the street

Encourage trees, benches, bike racks, green space at the sidewalk/street

E-vehicle infrastructure

Hanging flower pots

Improve/extend pedestrian access with trees and ample sidewalks

Increased space for pedestrian traffic

Keep it clean, daily sweep, daily wash down

Keep the scale intimate

Keep the sidewalks clean and safe

Less parking, more parklets

Make it more green – trees, etc.

More lighting

More outdoor seating space

More parklets with outdoor seating

More pedestrian and bike infrastructure

More pedestrian friendly sidewalks (wider, more inviting)

More trees

Multi-model complete street with bike lanes

New apartments to have parking and not a ugly boxes

No cars

No cars, pedestrian zone

Parklets in street parking spots

Redesign Safeway

Repair the sidewalks to make it easier to walk in the rain

Same level street/sidewalk

Sensibility to the height of new construction at the street

Sidewalk art similar to bronze dance steps on Broadway

Speed Limit 20

Street features that help give a distinct identity to the street

There is too much blank wall space

Trash, recycling, and compost receptacles

Widen sidewalks

Widen sidewalks

Widen sidewalks

Widen sidewalks and require landscaping on new development

Widen sidewalks with plazas similar to Kasser building

Wider sidewalks and no curb cuts for vehicle egress

PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

A walkable neighborhood with plenty of green space

Create and enhance rich canopy, green stormwater infrastructure

Keep small businesses thriving

Lots of open sky and single-story (2-story max) buildings

Make planting of trees required on parking strips

More trees

Remove parking on one side of the street, add bike lane/trees, widen sidewalk

Retain residential zoning outside of the business district

Space for a pocket park

Tree lined street

Trees

Trees, habitat so the coming density is livable

Widen sidewalks, add trees

RETAIL AND BUSINESS

A live/work district with a variety of types of residents close by

A mix of retail and residential

A robust variety of shops, restaurants, services

Active community – small business and residents support one another

Active street life (no sidewalks) along the length of the business district

Better integrate the strip south of Safeway so that commercial district thrives

Close 15th to cars

Close the two pot shops

Collection of local businesses serving needs and desires of the neighborhood

Community feel with local shops

Continued mix of amenities – retail, restaurant, services

Encourage shops to engage the street more, i.e. Safeway has no engagement

Extend neighborhood commercial and density north to Galer Street

Farmers market 3 times a week

Having/maintaining a grocery store

Incentivize small businesses

Increase density

Increase transparency into retail uses

Keep 15th a mix of small businesses and buildings

Keep 15th with small, local, sustainable businesses

Keep a functional mix of retail

Keep a mix of businesses that support surrounding residences

Keep community oriented businesses

Keep small retail spaces available

Keep small, local businesses

SAFETY

Clean and safe streets that are walkable for all

Discourage negative behaviors while keeping it welcoming

Get rid of the panhandlers and the trash on the sidewalk

Maintain an clean and safe environment

Need good services for homeless that reduce burden on businesses

Safe consumption spaces and needle exchange

Street lighting from Volunteer Park to 15th Avenue shops

INDEX

ALL IDEAS LISTED VERBATIM AND ALPHABETICALLY WITHIN THEMES

HISTORIC

Adapt and reuse existing buildings

Celebrating LGBTQ and Native American history in the character of the street

Designate area as historical district

Encourage preservation, incentive to keeping old buildings rather than demo

Establish organization that can speak as a group

Incentive program like Pike/Pine to preserve facades

Maintenance of historical buildings

Nominate as many buildings as possible for historic preservation review

Preservation of inviting, older building facades

Preserve architectural heritage with landmark status for buildings built pre-1920

Retain as much of the 1940’s character as possible

Safer pedestrian access

Sensitive transitions to adjacent residential use

BUILDING CHARACTER

Add trees/planters to the avenue

Affordable housing for all ranges of income

Complete community with a strong sense of place

Different and unique designs, everything looks the same

Eliminate long stretches of blank walls like QFC/Safeway by adding storefronts

Glass earnings required for new development for walking in the rain

Invite fun activities to the neighborhood, e.g. block parties, performances

Maintain the personality of the current architecture in new development

More architectural character

More interactive architecture, no more flat walls like QFC and Walgreens

No cold facades, eclectic design and incorporate elements of character

No plastic facades

Nothing over 4 stories

Promote affordability

Small/unique restaurant and retail spaces

Strict limit on the height of buildings

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ZONING / PLANNING

4-story limit on new development

Accommodate change, respect the past, think of people

Allow taller buildings and smaller units

Balance height with high and low development

 Chop off corner of Safeway site, connect John St. and Thomas St., and

enlarge the park

Clean, safe, accessible

Create modern development rather than linear development

Density and economic diversity – housing for all

Incentivize developers to reserve portions of new housing for people displaced

from the old

Increase building setbacks as buildings get up-zoned

Increased upper level setback for new construction to preserve light

Keep core blocks intact

Keep human scale buildings

Maintain the current street level appearance, build more contemporary housing

set back

Make 15th a pedestrian walkway

No chain stores, only local stores

Preserve stock of public and private parking lots

Sustainable and equitable development

Tall buildings (housing) with setbacks for lots of daylight

Turn Key Bank and lot into a mixed-use 4-level

Up-zone to seven stories and encourage denser development

Variety of housing and building types (smaller is better)
Adapt existing facades in new development
Unique and interactive, no more flat walls like QFC / Walgreens

Add trees/planters/potted plants to the Ave., consider it a requirement for developers

Small / unique restaurant / retail spaces, good mix of residential, affordable retail

Cleaner + Safer for everyone: lighting, widen / fix sidewalks, seating, parklets, bike lanes

Incentive program like Pike/Pine to preserve facades
Glass awnings for new development for rainy days
Affordable housing for all ranges of income
Building height limit of 2-stories
A distinct identity, e.g. art like bronze dance steps on Broadway
No more pot shops please

Invite fun activities, e.g. block parties, performances
More architectural character
Services for homeless: safe consumption/needle exchange, bathroom
Extend commercial and residential density

Building height limit of 4-stories
Close 15th to cars, pedestrian access only

Maintain street level appearance, build contemporary housing set back from the street

A distinct identity, e.g. art like bronze dance steps on Broadway
No more pot shops please

A robust variety of independent shops, restaurants, services

IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY
A DETAILED GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF IDEAS WITH MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE

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NEXT STEPS
KEEP ENGAGED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

• Share this summary with your neighbors that couldn’t make it to the meeting.
• Check out the new Capitol Hill guidelines draft - full version coming in the next few months.
• Be active in the Capitol Hill community. Be on the look out for meetings about new development in your neighborhood.
• Stay up to date with news happening in the neighborhood by reading the Capitol Hill Seattle Blog.
• Check out this resource from the City of Seattle that describes the community engagement outreach efforts for new development.
• Be on the lookout for part 2 of this summary, where we dive into your suggestions of how the streetscape of 15th Ave. East can look!