

A SUMMARY OF YOUR

# 15TH AVENUE EAST

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Presented By :

environmental **WORKS**  
Community Design Center

Board & Vellum

PART 1

## LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF 15TH AVENUE EAST, SEATTLE

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!



Over 100 people attended the April 28th community workshop



Jeff Pelletier of Board & Vellum introduces the audience to the days activity



Participants group notecards of their ideas by themes



Participants are asked to mark up elevations to show their best ideas for the future of the neighborhood

## 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**

**11 Responses**

Unique, interactive architecture, no more flat walls like QFC / Walgreens

**7 Responses**

A robust variety of independent shops, restaurants, services

**5 Responses**

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

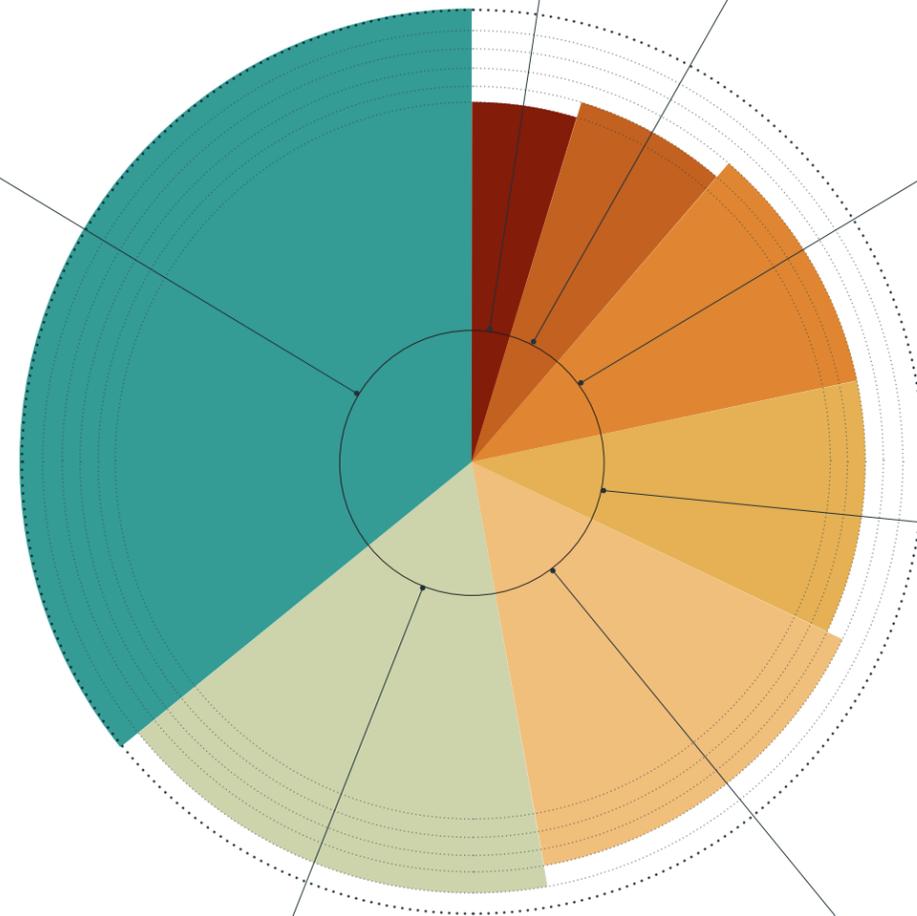
**38 Responses**

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



**18 Responses**

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

**16 Responses**

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

**11 Responses**

Preserve architectural heritage, adapt existng facades in new development

# 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, incentivize 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 1940s 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 awnings 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

### 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

### PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

- A walkable neighborhood with plenty of green space
- Crate 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
- 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 sidewalk walls) 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 an area 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

- Maintain and increase small scale storefront and elements
- Maintain the current pedestrian-oriented business zone
- Make all storefronts active, no stretches of blank 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

### SIDEWALKS AND STREETS

- 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 garbage
- 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/widen 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
- Sensitivity 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 Kaiser building
- Wider sidewalks and no curb cuts for vehicle egress

### 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 models of 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)

### 38 Responses

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

### 2 Responses

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

### 3 Responses

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

### 4 Responses

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

### 5 Responses

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

### 7 Responses

A robust variety of independent shops, restaurants, services

## IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

A DETAILED GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF IDEAS WITH MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE

### 11 Responses

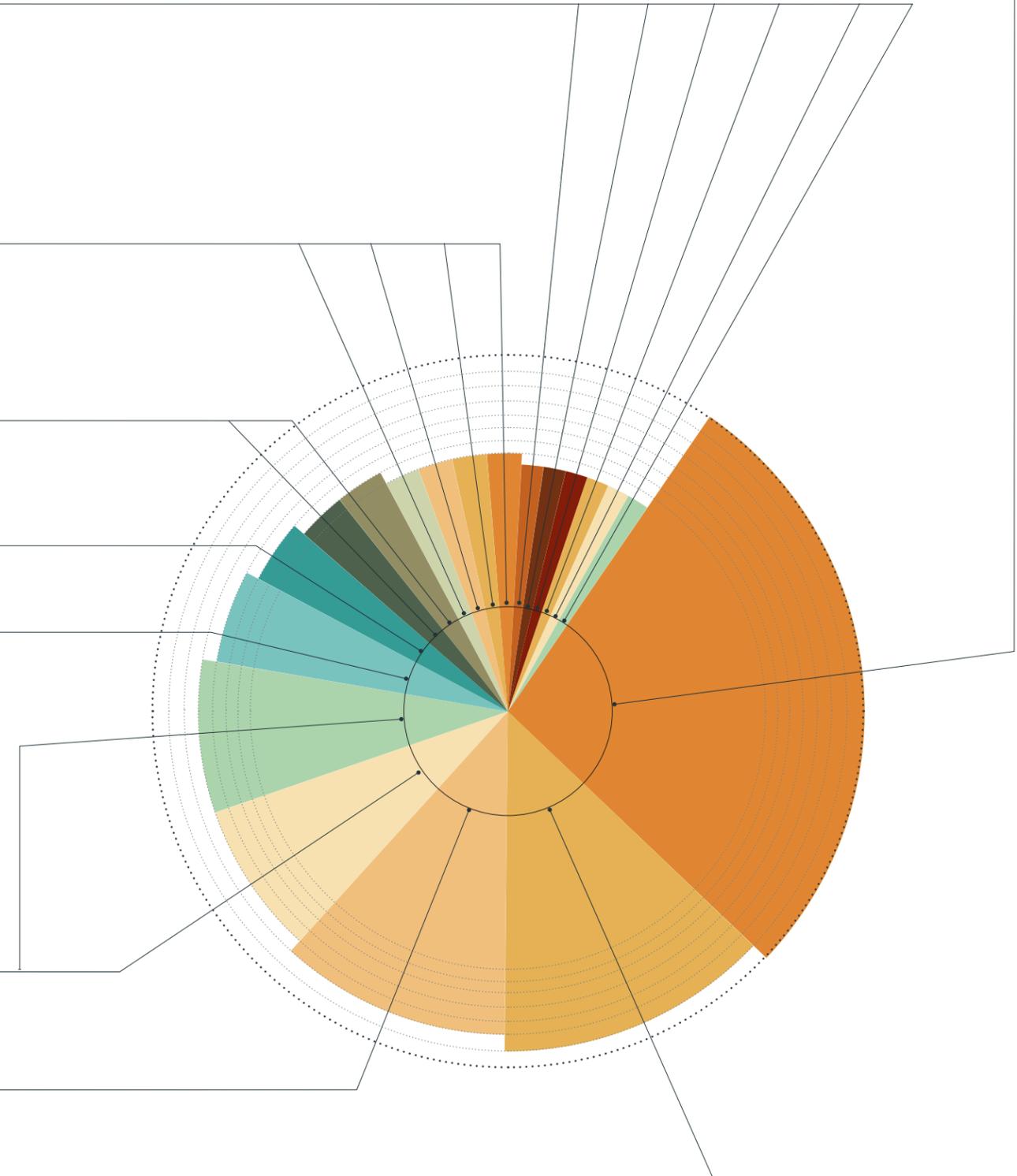
Adapt existing facades in new development  
Unique and interactive, no more flat walls like QFC / Walgreens

### 16 Responses

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

### 18 Responses

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



# 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!