

Survey of Small Businesses on the Ave



Report Back
October 6, 2017



Background & Purpose

- ❖ Purpose of this survey is to better inform the city and local community on issues affecting small businesses and non-profits in the University District.
- ❖ Survey questions were developed through a community process, informed by local businesses and non-profits, with input from the city's Office of Economic Development and City Council staff.
- ❖ Conducted anonymously by community volunteers with training and supervision by Steinbrueck Urban Strategies

Overview & Methodology

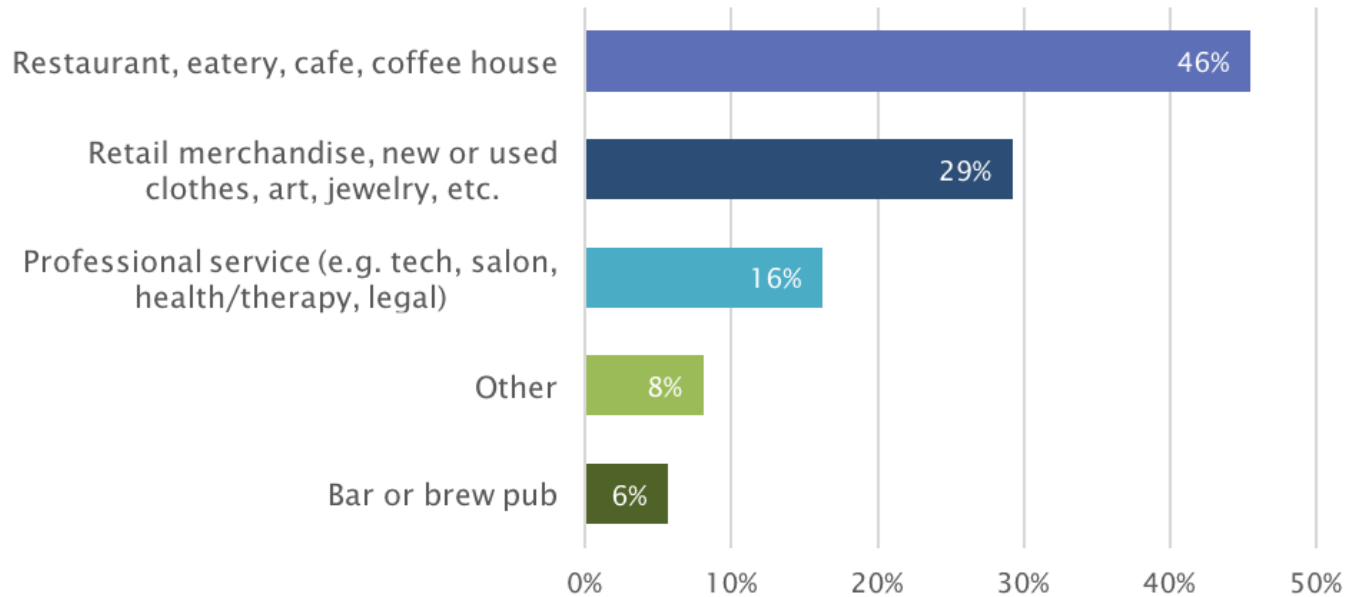
- Survey was conducted in-person between August 1-10, 2017
- 200+ small businesses were identified between 41st NE and 56th NE did not include franchises, banks, and larger businesses
- City's data base of small businesses outdated many small businesses and non-profits less visible
- 123 businesses responded
 - 90% along University Avenue
 - 10% on side streets (to alley line) from 41st NE to 56th NE

Overview & Methodology



Profile of Respondents

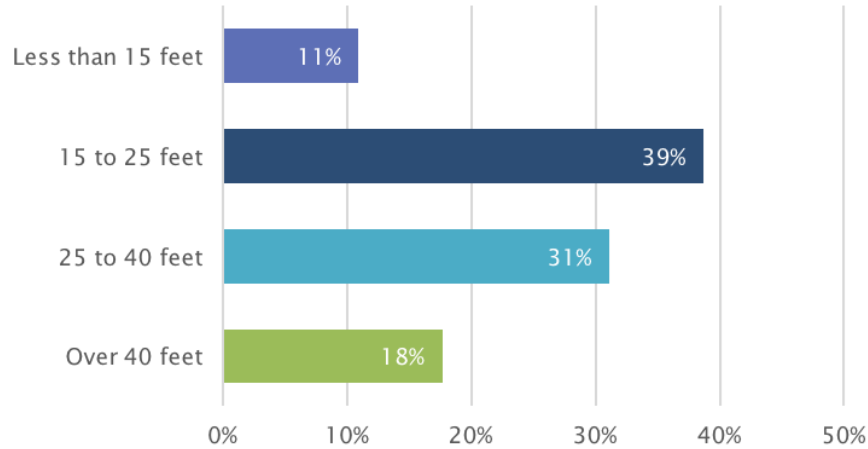
How would you describe your primary business?



85%
of businesses
are run by an
**owner-
operator**

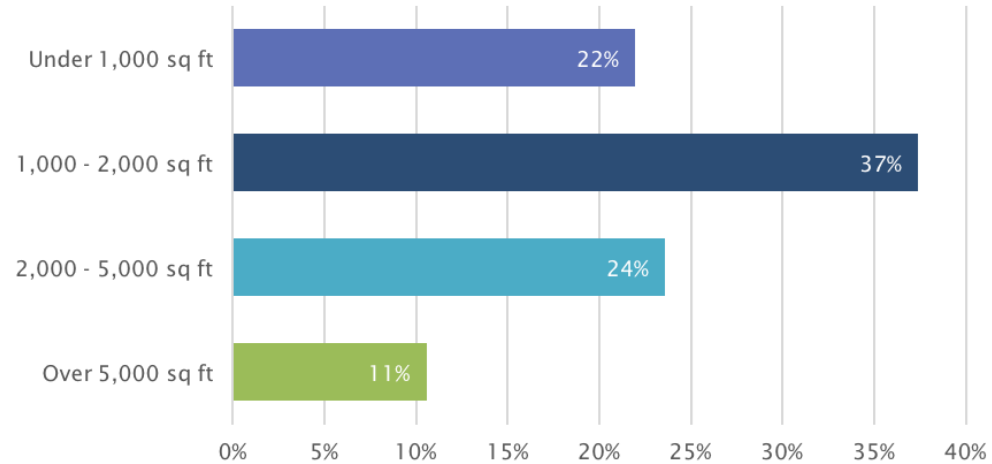
Profile of Respondents

Business storefront width



50 % less than 25 ft. storefront

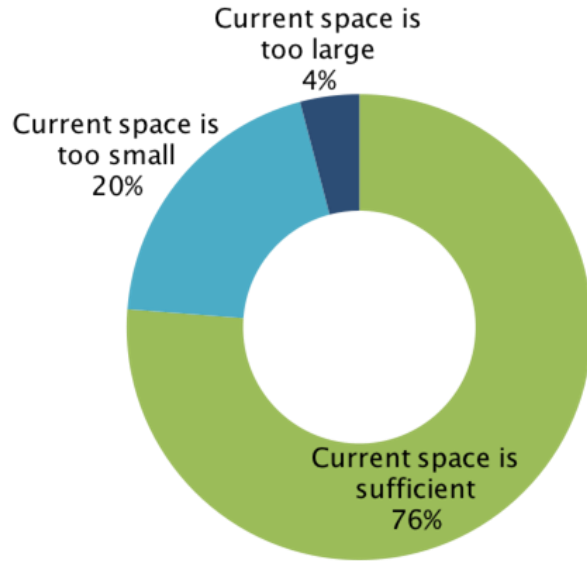
About how much space does your business occupy?



59% under 2000 sf. Floor area

Profile of Respondents

How would you characterize your current space needs?

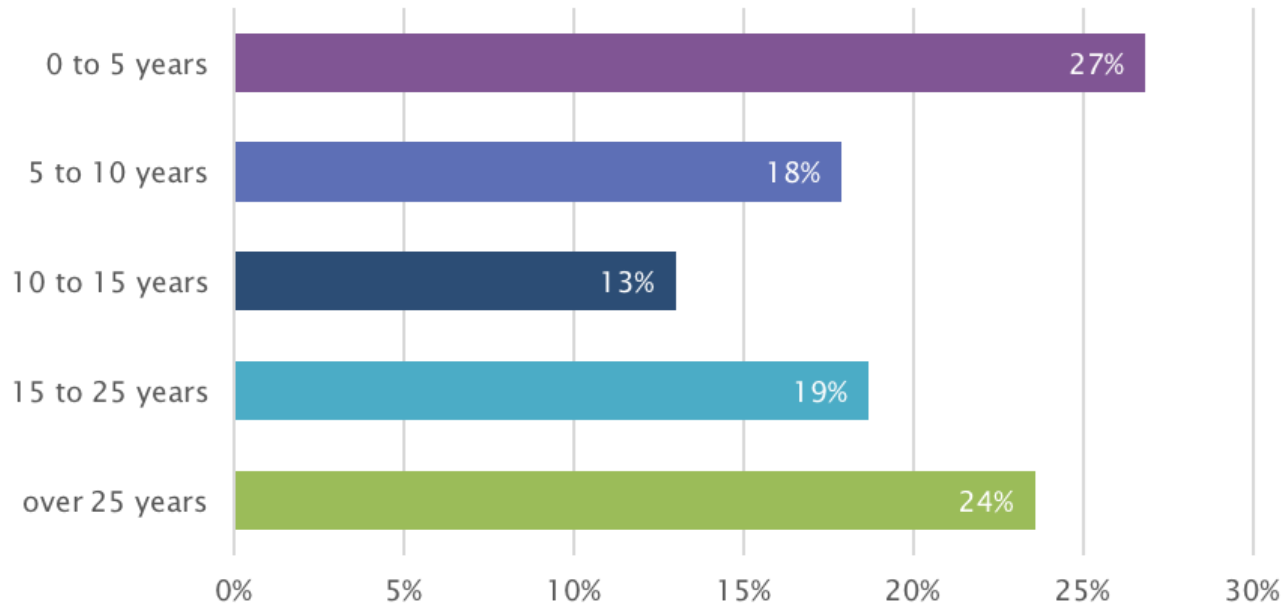


90%
of businesses
rent their
commercial
space

15%
are on a
month-to-
month lease

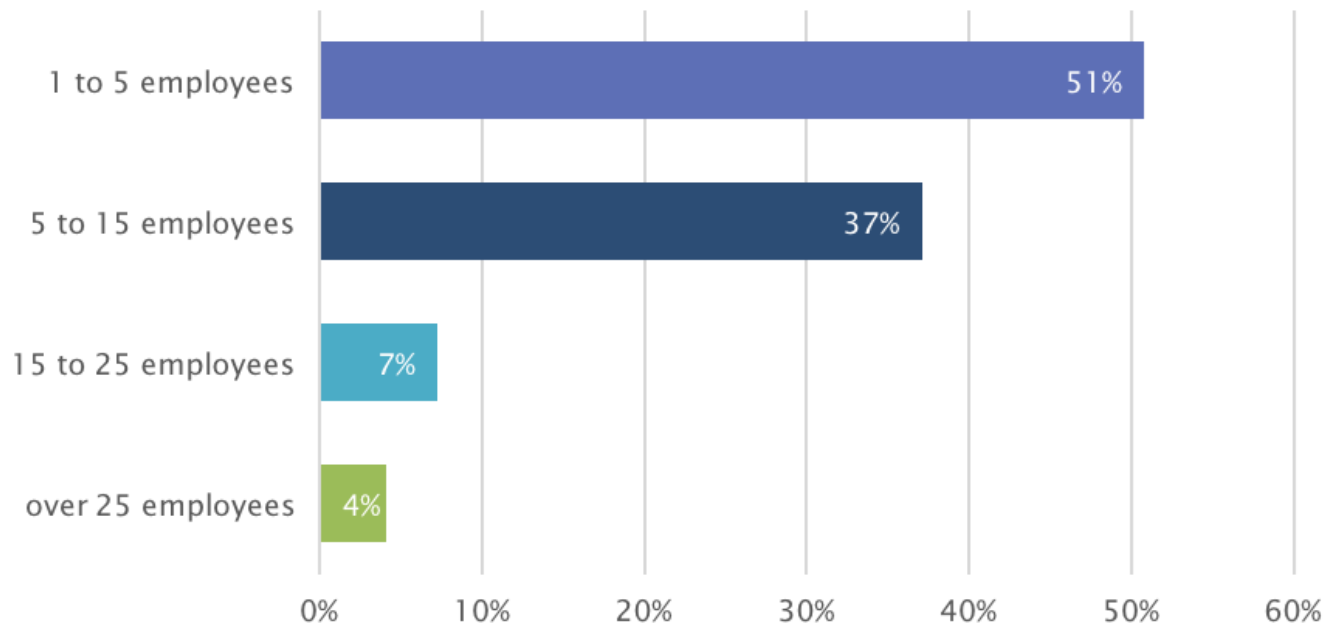
Profile of Respondents

How many years have you been in business at this location in the U District?



Profile of Respondents

How many people does your business employ on a full and/or part-time basis?

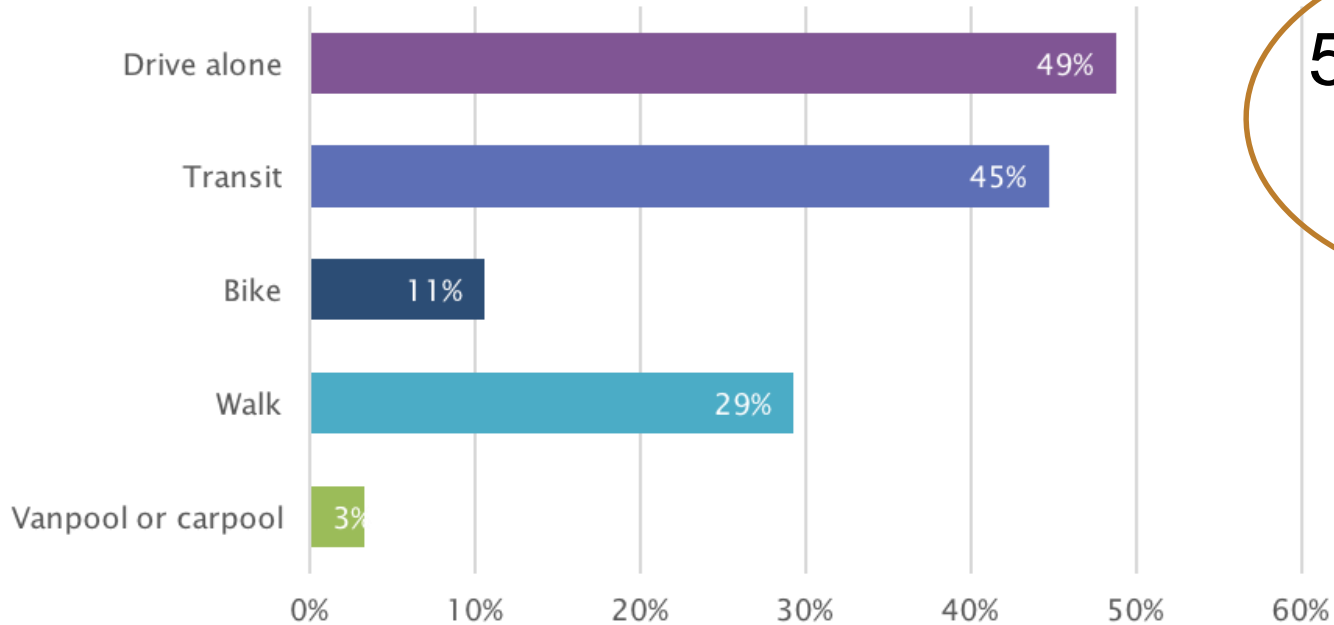


65%
of respondents
identified as
**women or
minority owned
businesses**

70%
of businesses
have **minority
and/or
immigrant
employees**

Profile of Respondents

How do the majority of your employees get to work?

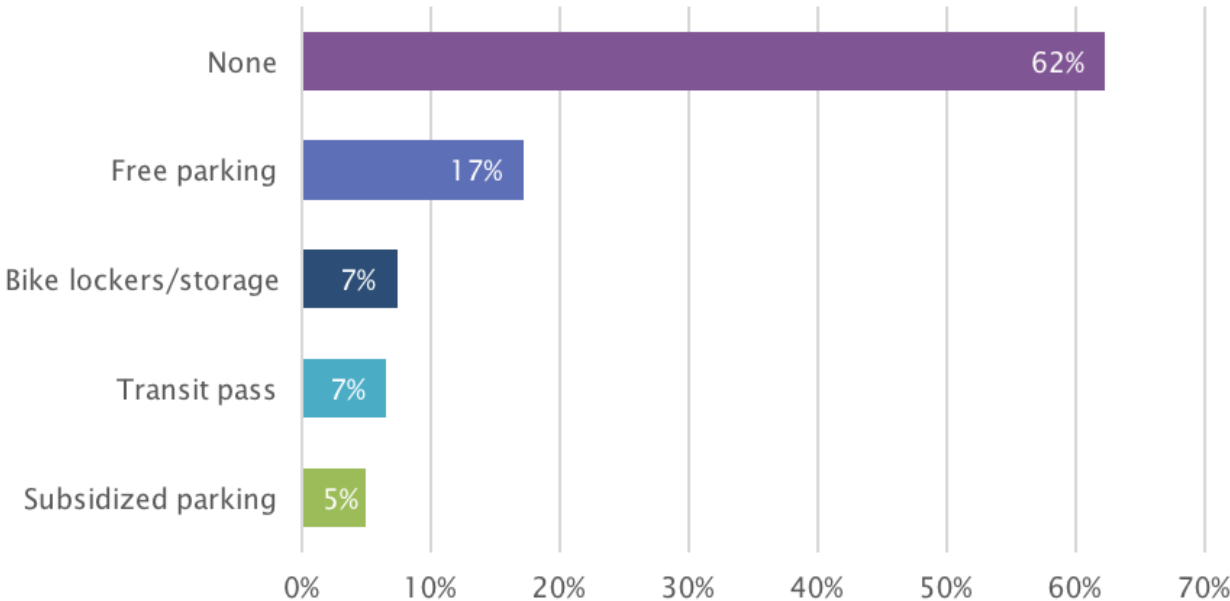


51% use travel to work alternatives

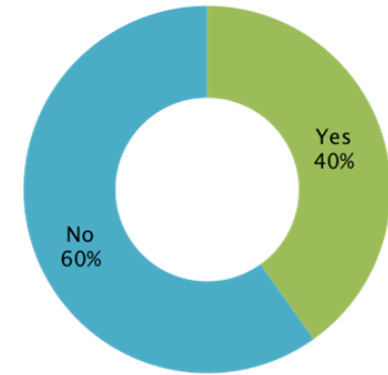
Note: some responded to multiple options

Profile of Respondents

Do you offer any kind of transportation benefit to your employees?



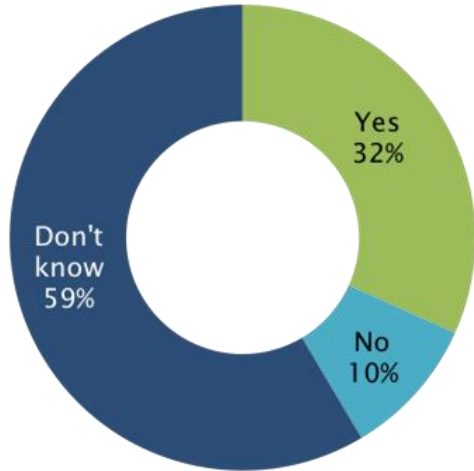
Are you aware of the reduced transit fare program, ORCA LIFT?



Note: some responded to multiple options

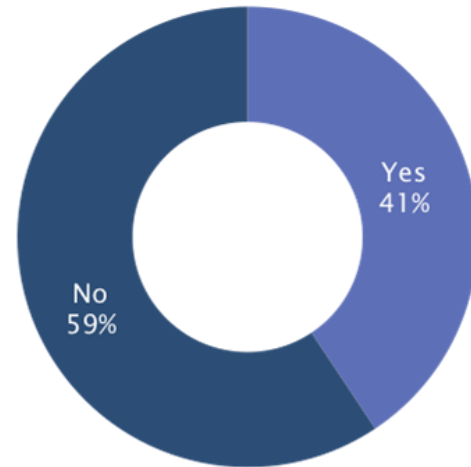
Profile of Respondents

Are you a Business Improvement Area (BIA) ratepayer?



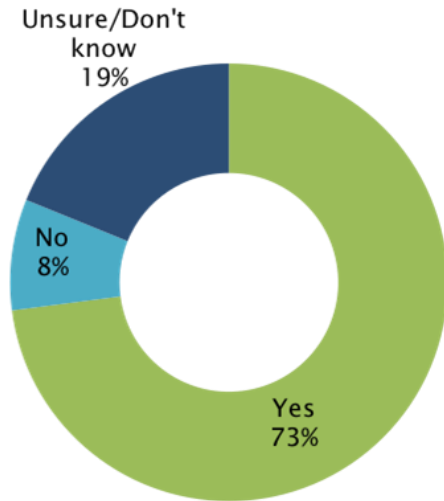
Are you aware of the City's business support programs for small businesses?

53%
Expressed interest
in learning more
about City
programs to
support small
businesses

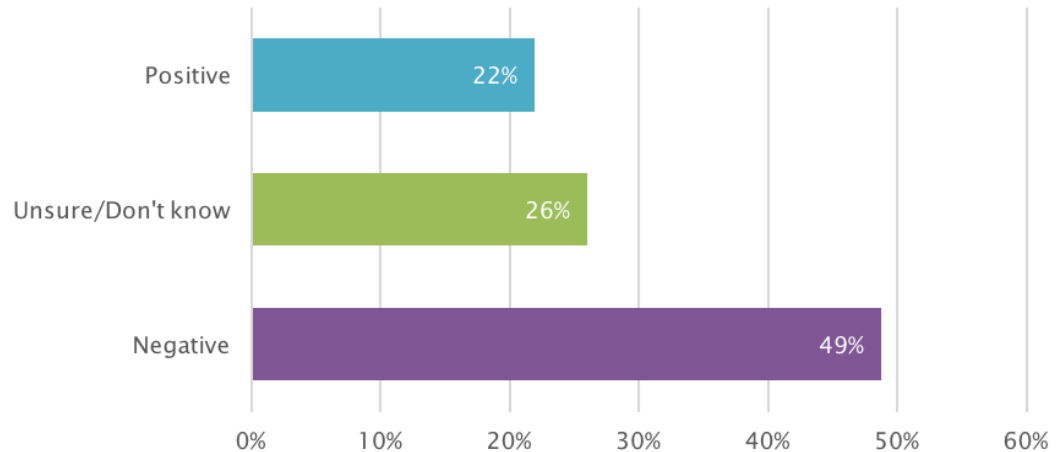


The Future of the Ave

If located on the Ave, do you envision your business will likely remain there in 10 years?



If the property where your business is located were to be up-zoned, would it have a positive or negative effect on your business?



Commonly-cited neighborhood issues

- Street homelessness
- Crime/theft/drug use
- Dirty streets and alleys
- High operating costs
- Traffic/parking
- Looking forward to light rail service
- Support for increased foot patrols
- ADA accessibility
- Lack of political responsiveness to small business challenges
- Need for affordable housing

The Future of the Ave - Rezoning

Top Concerns:

- Higher rent
- Street homelessness
- Dwindling parking supply
- Crime/theft/drug use
- Loss of neighborhood character
- Fear of displacement due to redevelopment
- Rising taxes
- Not enough customers
- Construction disruptions
- High operating costs
- Traffic/transit service/ADA accessibility

Top Opportunities:

- Increased foot traffic/ customers
- Looking forward to light rail
- Area will be cleaned up
- Additional housing options
- Increased property values

The Future of the Ave - Rezoning

“What would be needed for your business to remain in the U-District?”

- Increased customers/foot traffic
- Protection from redevelopment
- Affordable rent
- More/cheaper parking
- Cleaner, more controlled streets
- Lower sales tax
- Better transportation access
- More marketing
- More mental health/social services in the neighborhood

Findings & Recommendations

- Large majority of businesses are women and minority-owned, operated
- Business frontages are small in size, floor area
- Most are tenants, vulnerable, fear over rent increases, termination and displacement
- Many perceive the upzone negatively

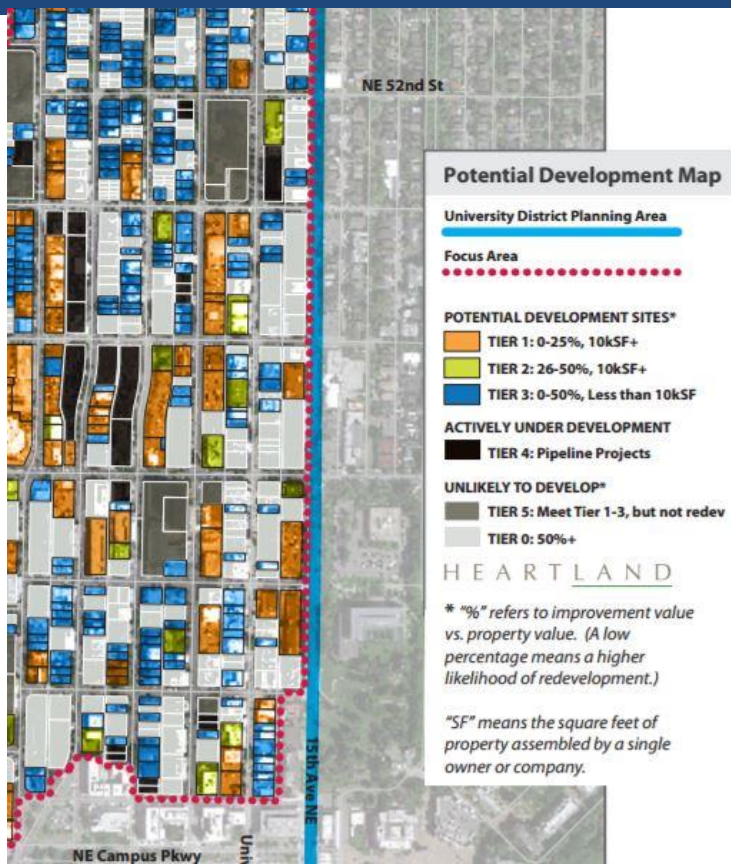
Other common concerns:

- loss of accessible parking for customers, employees, deliveries,
- Change in character of the Ave, pedestrian scale, etc.
- Loss of affordable rental housing
- City's outreach directly to small businesses has been weak
- BID perceived as not inclusive or representative of small businesses

Summary & Recommendations

- ❑ **Strengthen zoning Development Standards and Design Review** Guidelines to support small businesses prior to any future rezone of the Ave
- ❑ **Employ best practice anti-displacement measures for small businesses**, i.e. commercial rent stabilization, assistance and incentives for owners to rent to original tenant even after redevelopment at an affordable rents
- ❑ **Update the city's inventory of eligible Historic Landmark buildings on the Ave**, and initiate nominations, and bank TDRs for future transactions
- ❑ **Update city's data base of U-District small businesses** and improve city outreach including ESL businesses
- ❑ **Map the number of small businesses on the Ave** located in buildings likely to be redeveloped under upzone -
- ❑ Provide more flexible ways for small businesses to give input to the BID
- ❑ Ramp up social service outreach, to address street homelessness

Summary & Recommendations



U-District Redevelopment Sites

-Source City of Seattle

Summary & Recommendations



*Comments
& Questions*

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Thank you!