

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, February 10, 2017

Print Replica Date: Monday, February 6, 2017

Article Title: U District upzone proposal divides business owners there

Section: NW Monday, B1

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Students will examine creating an upzone on The Ave and surrounding neighborhood
- ✓ Discuss pros and cons of growth and how that impacts small business owners in the area

CCSS Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.b

Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

Social Studies EALR 1: Civics

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

Social Studies EALR 3: Geography

Understands the cultural universals of place, time, family life, economics, communication, arts, recreation, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, government, and education.

- Analyzes and evaluates the social and political factors affecting cultural interactions.

Social Studies EALR 4: History

- Analyzes the motives and interests behind an interpretation of a recent event.

Social Studies EALR 5: Social Studies

- Analyzes consequences of positions on an issue or event.
- Analyzes the short-term and long-term implications of decisions affecting the global community.

Vocabulary

Look up the definition of ***eclectic***. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

“Eclectic small businesses are the neighborhood's heart and soul.”

Pre-Reading Questions

- Have you been to The Ave? What is the vibe of the area? Will growth change this? Why or why not?
- What are your favorite parts about it? What are your least favorite parts?
- Emotions run high when change happens? What might the small business owners be feeling knowing the city wants to create upzones, or higher buildings in their area?

Comprehension Questions

1. What is the Ave? Where is it located in Seattle?
2. But the owner of Big Time Brewery is anxious about Seattle's plans for the scruffy shopping and dining strip? What are his concerns? What is an upzone?
3. McLaughlin says he and more than 50 other business owners are asking the council to postpone a vote until when?
4. What is this group of small business owners on The Ave most worried about?
5. Proponents insist the upzone wouldn't wipe away the U District's weirdness or shutter the restaurants on The Ave that are run by whom?
6. How high would some of the maximum heights of new buildings soar to on nearby streets? What about along The Ave?
7. Dave LaClergue, a planner with the city, says redevelopment on The Ave is likely with or without an upzone. The upzone would, at least, require developers to do what?
8. The council members weighing the upzone say they want to address such concerns. Last month, they discussed amending the proposed upzone to help who?
9. What are the amendments that have been created?
10. Councilmember Rob Johnson, who chairs the land-use committee and represents the U District, wants to move ahead with the changes. But in an interview this week, Johnson said he now believes the council should cut what?
11. McLaughlin and other owners have hired former Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck to carry out a comprehensive survey of what? What will Steinbrueck be focusing his research on?
12. Kristine Scott, who runs the U District's ROOTS Young Adult Shelter, has noticed a division between property owners and renters, even among nonprofits, she says. What is the YMCA supporting? What is she fearful of for her own youth program?

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts

"The U District may be a little rundown, but we have amazing businesses here," McLaughlin said. "Eclectic small businesses are the neighborhood's heart and soul."

- Do you agree that eclectic small business are the neighborhood's heart and soul? Why or why not?

The modest bump would threaten small businesses less than existing challenges, says Lois Ko, who owns Sweet Alchemy Ice Creamery. Rent hikes are a problem across Seattle. Owners should be seeking more help, not blocking growth, she says.

"I don't think the upzone is the battle that we should be fighting," said Ko, who hopes the change would bring more people to the U District to live, work and eat ice cream.

"More people living and working in the area would mean more foot traffic for us," she said. "Right now, most of our customers are students. During the summer and winter breaks, we sit idle. It would be amazing to have more people here throughout the year."

- Do you agree with Ko? Do you think creating an upzone would bring more people to the U District to live, work and visit her shop to eat more ice cream? What are your thoughts?
- It seems as though the businesses along The Ave are seasonal, and have steady customers while UW is in session. How can they attract more customers during their "down" time?
- Do you think an upzone would create higher rents for these small businesses? Why or why not?

McLaughlin is dubious. Many U District business owners have leases obligating them to cover their landlords' property taxes, which the upzone would boost, he says. Some owners have month-to-month leases or leases with escape clauses for landlords who sell or tear down their buildings for redevelopment, McLaughlin says. "There could be rapid turnover," he said. "These businesses are ripe for the taking."

- What does **dubious** mean? Can you tell, using the context clues from the rest of the paragraph? Make an educated guess and then look up the definition. Were you close?

Kate Barr, who manages Scarecrow Video on Roosevelt Avenue Northeast, says the city should already have done what the businesses are now paying Steinbrueck to do.

"How can we make decisions when we don't have the proper data?" Barr said.

Though Scarecrow is located outside the upzone area, Barr fears rent hikes and construction activity associated with the changes could affect the movie-rental Mecca.

Development shouldn't come at the expense of legacy businesses, she says.

"We're not standing on the shore trying to hold back the tide of change, but we want a sustainable path forward," Barr said.

- Do you agree or disagree with Barr's concerns? Why or why not?
- How can the city make decisions without having the proper data?
- "Development shouldn't come at the expense of legacy businesses." What do you think Barr means by this?

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