

December 2023 Newsletter

CALL TO ACTION

1. **SHOP** Some retail merchants are reporting that sales during this holiday season have been very slow. Please shop in the village—the merchants really need the community support.
2. **COMMENT ON THE SAFEWAY SITE PROPOSAL** You now have the opportunity for the first time to provide your comments to City of Vancouver staff. Numbers matter—please follow the link below.

Update on the Safeway site

The City received the completed rezoning application from BentallGreenOak (BGO) on November 14, 2023. On December 6, the City posted the application on its website asking for public comment. [4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application | Shape Your City Vancouver](#).

4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application



We were surprised to see that no changes were made to the proposal from what was shown on June 27, 2023 at the West Point Grey Baptist Church. The developer's stated purpose of that community consultation was not just to determine if we were for or against the proposal but also to put forward our suggestions on how to improve the project.

BentallGreenOak collected 182 comments from those that filled in feedback forms. Here is BGO's tabulation of responses for areas of concern, in the cases where the concern was mentioned at least 5 times. (There were plenty of other good suggestions that were not mentioned at least 5 times.)

Bentall GreenOak tabulated the key Areas of Concern where more than 5 comments were received:

- **42 respondents** expressed concern about the proposed height;
- **19 respondents** expressed concern about the need for more community amenities;
- **19 respondents** expressed concern about traffic and parking;
- **15 respondents** expressed concern about the proposed massing and design;
- **7 respondents** expressed concern that the proposed project could be larger;
- **7 respondents** expressed concern about the proposed public space;

However, BGO has chosen not to respond to these issues. Friends asked City of Vancouver staff for a meeting to explain the process going forward and for guidance on how the community voice will be heard. On December 14, City staff kindly came out to the WPG library for a meeting, preceded by a walk around the village and Safeway site. The main purpose of the meeting was for City staff to see firsthand the site, the lack of retail vitality on 10th, and a presentation on concerns and suggestions we have heard from the community.

City staff explained that they had only received the completed application a month ago so had not yet had a chance to review it in any detail. However, they had reviewed the previous application (May 2022) and had come up with significant suggestions on the massing of the buildings.

We asked staff about all the other issues that need to be addressed such as the need for community amenities, including a child care, a central plaza and a permanent home for the library. We also asked about the traffic and parking, the position of the towers and density and why the height had increased compared to the May 2022 proposal.

We were told that project financing is critical in being able to come up with workable community solutions. Under the program that BGO had first designed its project, called the Medium Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP), the City asked the developer to provide 20% of the housing units at below-market. This contribution was asked for instead of providing all the amenities and good urban design you would expect on the only large site in the heart of the village.

In October 2023, Council approved the **'Below-Market Rental Housing Program Optimization'**. This changed the rules of setting the MIRHPP rents in below-market units based on a 20% discount to city-wide average rents based on CMHC Rental Market Report, instead of rents based on static incomes. This is a significant change for the financial equation, requiring much less subsidy from the developer. The Federal government also announced that rental projects would be exempt from the GST, resulting in several millions of dollars savings for the developer. These new revenue streams need to be evaluated alongside cost increases in labour and construction.

City staff said that they would need to work with BGO and the City Real Estate Department to redo the financial analysis. Once the financial analysis is completed, then it is possible to talk about re-design and hopefully include community amenities such as a child care, re-visiting the height and density, and looking at improvements in traffic and street design.

If the new financing formula does not give the needed financial solutions for the developer, then the City and/or Province will need to figure out how to ensure the development responds to the need for complete communities and provide a design that enhances the village, and does not detract from it.

What then is Friends of Point Grey Village's recommendation? We recommend that once again you provide comments on the City site even though it is the same design we all saw in June. This time comments will go to City staff rather than the developer. [Numbers matter so please take a few minutes to voice your comments.](#)

(Check out our website for suggestions on ideas for improvements [Friends of Point Grey Village](#))

Go to this site to make your comments [4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application | Shape Your City Vancouver](#). Also send your comments to Jean Baird at jeanbaird@shaw.ca so we can keep track of community ideas.

City staff told us that there will be a City-led open house in the community in the coming months. Let's hope what we are shown is a product of the new financial analysis and the community-building possibilities that it opens up for the future of Point Grey Village.