

February 28, 2024 Newsletter

URBAN DESIGN PANEL REVIEWS THE SAFEWAY SITE PROPOSAL

The Urban Design Panel (UDP) showed little enthusiasm for the Safeway site proposal put forward by the developer BGO. At its review on February 21, 2024, members of UDP said there is much room for improvement on many aspects of community place-making and design. When asked if the developer's architect, Mark Whitehead of Musson Cattel Mackey, had any closing remarks he simply stated, "There is work to be done."

Friends of Point Grey Village were not surprised that UDP members are seeing the same problems that the community has been talking about for over two years. IF the advice of the UDP is followed, the liveability of the project for future and current residents will increase. A lively and functional streetscape will be created by getting rid of the overbearing, monotonous street wall and increasing the width of sidewalk space. The public spaces will be redesigned to become inviting places with less shading by the towers. These changes, if made, would certainly help the future prosperity of the village and create a heart to the village for young and old to enjoy.

The UDP is an independent, volunteer group of design professionals, mostly architects. Its role is to advise staff and Council. The advice will be considered by staff who decide which recommendations the developer should focus on to improve the project.

We cannot be complacent and assume the "improvements" will be made and the "work" will be done. At the Open House we learned that BGO has hired a second Public Relations company to lobby the Mayor and Councillors. It is time to be vocal. The public hearing stage will be too late.

Viewing Grace Jiang - COV's applicati... ▾

Scott Erdman - COV

Grace Jiang - COV

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Advice Sought from Panel

CITY OF VANCOUVER

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Comment on the height, massing, and density, with the following considerations:
 - Existing and evolving context;
 - Transitions to the surrounding areas;
 - Impacts on pedestrian experience along the local shopping street.
2. Comment on the placement of the towers, considering the impacts to the neighbouring buildings, the character of streetscape, and solar access to open spaces.
3. Comment on the quality of the public realm design. Please consider:
 - Contribution to a vibrant neighbourhood shopping area;
 - Provision of diverse open spaces to foster neighbourhood social connection, including size and location of the public plaza, pedestrian mews;
 - Building interface and setbacks;
 - Experience of nature.

16

Virtual meeting of the Urban Design Panel held February 21, 2024. This slide contains the questions asked by City staff of the Panel members.

There was overall support for the height and density by the Panel, recognizing the need for housing choice in the village.

Some of the main areas for improvements include:

1. **Placement of Towers Needs to be Revisited:** The placement of the density “jammed on 10th Avenue” was critiqued in light of the opportunities offered by a rare, large, deep 3 acre site. There are many better location choices for density and the impact the towers will have on the streetscape and podium open space.
2. **Make Façade less Boring:** The setback on 10th Avenue is too narrow leaving little room for outdoor seating, bike racks, public benches, etc. The “relentless” grocery store frontage should be broken up by smaller shops/cafes in front. Two apartment lobbies add to the monotony of the façade; they can be re-located.
3. **Create a Lively Inviting Plaza:** This space should be a community asset, but it is not as currently designed. Lively retail/cafes need to wrap around it; the space needs to promote activity. Some members questioned the location and size of the plaza. The mews to the north and west are much too narrow and could cause safety concerns.

4. **Increase the Number of Larger Apartments and Accessible Units:** There are too many one bedroom units and not enough larger units to accommodate, for example, a family with two children. No accessible units are shown in the plans.
5. **Create Greater Sense of Place:** UDP members said that there needs to be attention paid to the village context; the development should create a sense of place, a landmark, a meeting place, make a contribution to 10th Ave streetscape and create a lively façade.
6. **Provide more variety of Architecture design:** UDP members pointed out that the proposed development has no character, no sense of place. The “long, hulking building” is not in keeping with village scale.
7. **Improve Opportunities for experiencing nature.** There needs to be more natural experiences, more green space at ground level, less shading on 3rd floor podium space. Bee keeping is a nice idea but is not functional as presently designed; there is no elevator, no storage for equipment.

The Panel was not asked to comment on missing community facilities such as a childcare. Nor were they asked to comment on traffic management. Friends of Point Grey Village will continue to ask for a childcare given the deficit in the neighbourhood and the demand that will be created by the new units. The re-design will certainly open up good locations for a childcare.

Friends will also continue to ask for better traffic management. Funnelling all the access to the grocery store and the residential units off narrow Tolmie St. is clearly problematic. Queuing traffic will likely interfere with bus movements and create long waits to access the parking garage. A mid-block crossing on 10th will make this long block safer for pedestrians and hopefully the City will find ways to provide traffic calming measures on 10th Avenue. As always, Friends welcome discussion among the community, City staff and the developer.

CALL TO ACTION

1. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND Comments to City Staff 4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application | Shape Your City Vancouver.

The Q&A on the project is a useful resource when thinking about your comments and seeing what questions the community has about the development 4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application | Shape Your City Vancouver If you click on the “Ask a Question” tab you can read all the questions that so far have been answered by City staff.

2. PLEASE CONTINUE TO WRITE TO YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, We have heard Mayor and Council, Premier Eby and Joyce Murray MP are getting lots of mail. Keep it up and please be specific about the improvements you would like to see. Also be respectful that these are busy people.

Send emails directly to the Mayor and Councillors

ken.sim@vancouver.ca, mike.klassen@vancouver.ca, peter.meiszner@vancouver.ca,
brian.montague@vancouver.ca, sarah.kirby-yung@vancouver.ca, rebecca.bligh@vancouver.ca,
lisa.dominato@vancouver.ca, lenny.zhou@vancouver.ca, adriane.carr@vancouver.ca,
pete.fry@vancouver.ca, christine.boyle@vancouver.ca

Send a copy to Project Coordinator. scott.erdman@vancouver.ca, and Director of Planning
matt.shillito@vancouver.ca

Write to your Provincial MLA, Premier David Eby david.eby.MLA@leg.bc.ca and your Federal MP
Joyce.Murray@parl.gc.ca