

January 19, 2025

Dear Mayor, Council and City Staff:

**Re: Agenda for January 21, 2025 4545-4575 West 10th Avenue (Safeway site in Point Grey) Referral Report, Item 10**

Over the past three years, [Friends of Point Grey Village](#) (FPGV) and our community have dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours to this important project on the old Safeway site. We recognized that a well-designed development on this 3-acre site, occupying one third of the entire commercial area of the village, could make a tremendous contribution to the enduring prosperity and livability of Point Grey Village.

There is no doubt that the replacement of the grocery store and the 1000+ new residents occupying hundreds of new units will be a significant boost to our ailing village and will provide much-needed housing supply. We also recognized that good urban design, inviting public spaces and much needed community facilities would supercharge the potential benefits from such a rare development opportunity.

It was clear from the beginning of the project that the community really cares about the future of our village; interest in the development proposal has remained high. Friends of Point Grey Village has over 600 people on our mailing list and it grows every time we issue a new newsletter. As shown in the Public Consultation Summary, 735 people attended the open houses and 1,301 engaged in the Shape your City online Q&A (Appendix F, Page 1). The Q&A spans 12 long pages and is worth a look to read the many great suggestions from the community to improve the project. [4545 W 10th Ave rezoning application | Shape Your City Vancouver](#)

Many of us participated in Vancouver Plan, endorsed by Council in 2022, which clearly articulated the vision for healthy, prosperous neighbourhood centres and “People First Streets”. Friends, the community and the Point Grey Business Improvement Association were looking forward to having the Vancouver Plan vision become a reality in our neighbourhood centre.

Sadly, the proposed development took a wrong turn very early on when the City and the developer decided the site should be used for a MIRHPP (Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program). The City revised the MIRHPP parameters in order for this large development site to be eligible. This proved to be a misguided policy direction, not recognizing the importance of the large site to the future of the village and not understanding the need to have community facilities accompany large increases in density.

That is past history and we realize we have to accept defeat and move forward with practical suggestions to improve the development. We cannot help mentioning that it is not

a winning strategy for Council to leave their electorate feeling defeated, especially when the community put so much effort into caring for the future of our village.

We have reviewed the conditions of approval contained in Appendix B. We support these measures and will review the development permit application carefully to ensure compliance.

**In addition to the conditions of approval contained in Appendix B, we request that Council add these following 6 items as conditions of approval.**

### **Streetscape Improvements**

We are disappointed that during this entire project the community was not able to engage City staff in the implementation of People First ideas to improve the streetscape. We were told by Vancouver Plan staff that significant new developments could offer the opportunity to implement at least some of these measures. We were then told that City initiatives are not possible because of the inability to collect Community Amenity Contributions from the developer.

The last expenditure made on streetscape improvements in the village was the bus bulges installed over 20 years ago. Within the last few years a pop-up plaza was installed at minimum expense. The residents and businesses of Point Grey pay million of dollars in property taxes annually and we expect some of these funds to be spent locally.

#### **1. Widen 10th Ave sidewalk**

We note that the width of the sidewalk has not changed from the last proposal and remains at 19 feet, except for a few minor locations of deeper setbacks. All of the existing 10th Avenue village frontages in the other blocks are too narrow to accommodate safe, functional public space as well as room for outdoor café/restaurant seating, tree planting, public seating, bike racks and the display of retail goods.

This is the village's opportunity to enhance the public realm by having wider sidewalks at this location. We ask that the sidewalks be increased from 19 feet to at least 22 feet for significant sections of the frontage. City property can be used by removing some parking spaces to achieve this width.

The wider sidewalk will also help make up the deficit in green space on the site through perhaps double rows of tree planting and other landscaping.

#### **2. Create a mid-block crossing**

This 4500 block of West 10<sup>th</sup> is over 200 metres long which is 50 metres longer than typical city blocks, as a result of the old Point Grey subdivision pattern. A mid-block crosswalk is an example of a "People First" street improvement which would help create an attractive streetscape and address safety and excessive speed problems. There would be no

significant impact on bus travel time. They are a very common street feature in European cities designed to enhance pedestrian safety and priority.



*An urban designer's impression of what a crosswalk could look like connecting the Safeway development to the south side of the street. The sketch imagines a lively, safe, human-scale streetscape as outlined in Vancouver Plan.*

### **3. Pilot a 40 km zone in Point Grey Village**

Progressive cities around the world are recognizing the safety and economic benefits of reduced speed limits. A 40 km speed limit should extend throughout the commercial area and possibly two blocks east to include the elementary school located on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

We notice that the developer is obligated to contribute over \$1 million in public art. A useful piece of public art at both ends of the village would be an attractive “Welcome to Point Grey Village” sign which also indicates the 40 km speed limit. These are found all over Europe.

## **Create significant improvements to place-making and livability**

### **4. Plaza design and location**

The size, location, ownership and banality of the plaza has received much criticism from the Urban Design Panel and the community. It is stuck at the west end for the developer's convenience without consideration of how to make a lively and dynamic public space and streetscape. The plaza as designed also appears to be a loading dock for Point Grey Place businesses. We suggest that the plaza be moved to a central location, which is now possible because the towers have been moved back. The shape and entrance of the supermarket can be re-configured to accommodate a central plaza.

The large Canadian supermarket chains also have a responsibility to show how creative size and design of the space can contribute to community place-making. A central plaza would be the heart of the village, a place for people to gather.

### **5. Create a lively street frontage**

The proposed Safeway development on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue adopts an idea suggested by many residents, businesses and the Urban Design Panel for the Point Grey development. The same architect has designed both Safeway sites. The frontage should contain a number of smaller shops, cafes, restaurants with the grocery store tucked in behind. This will create a much more interesting street front and allow businesses to make use of the wide sidewalks for cafes, restaurants, goods display, etc.

### **6. Enhance safety and livability for future residents**

It is most unusual in a dense urban setting to have an open ramp for truck and car access, as is proposed, leading to Sasamat Street. This creates much noise and pollution as sound bounces around the walls of the ramp and buildings. Trucks will idle here at all hours waiting for a delivery berth. We ask that the ramp from Sasamat Street to the parking garage and load bays be enclosed. This will avoid constant complaints to the City from residents and improve livability. Nothing gained by cheap design.

Friends of Point Grey Village request the developer and the City not to squander this opportunity to make these valuable improvements and help contribute to the future prosperity and livability of the village.

Jean Baird

Chair of [Friends of Point Grey Village](#)