

March 3, 2025, Newsletter

A Report on the Public Hearing for the Safeway Site on February 25, 2025

Including: “Why did the process take six years?”

















Many participants were disappointed to see several of the recommendations by the City’s advisory Urban Design Panel, local businesses and the community ignored in the rezoning review process. The responsibility is now with Council to respond to many practical ways to improve the development. [Minutes of the Urban Design Panel can be found here.](#)

At the Public Hearing on February 25, 2025, Council deferred making a decision until the Council meeting on March 11, 2025. This is a good move from Friends’ perspective. It means Council and staff will have a chance to consider the many requests made by Friends of Point Grey Village, Point Grey Business Improvement Association (BIA), and others in the community asking for improvements to the development.

Big thanks to all of you who wrote in and came out to speak to Council. In total there were 519 written submissions.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Date of Distribution	Support	Oppose	Other
February 21, 2025, up to 8 am	51 	10 	0
February 24, 2025, up to 3:30 pm	34 	35 	6 
February 25, 2025, up to 12 pm	282 	42 	4 
February 25, 2025, up to 5 pm	30 	13 	3 
February 25, 2025, after 5 pm	7 	2 	1 
TOTAL	403	102	14

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See Item 5 [Public Hearing - February 25, 2025](#) to read the submissions. We are all for citizen engagement and are happy to see the interest in this landmark development from citizens across the City. However, it would have been more helpful if those supporting the development put a few minutes thought into how it could be improved. The single criterion of more housing units is a very low “better city” bar.

[BGO](#), with global headquarters in Miami, and the City need to recognize that community building is not just providing housing supply; it must ensure residents have access to services and look for ways that such a significant development can improve the future prosperity and place-making qualities of the village.

For those who have not attended a City of Vancouver public hearing in a while, there are new procedures in place. One of the procedures is not to allow the Mayor or Councillors to ask questions of the public delegations. We assume that it is a time-saving measure but it comes at the cost of inadequate problem-solving, especially in light of the many delegations who offered suggestions to improve the development both for current residents and businesses, and future residents.

Suggestions to Improve Community Benefits for the Village

This is the largest development the village will ever see. In fact, at 571 units it is 75% larger than the total of all the residential units in the village from Discovery to Tolmie Street. If not now, with a likely population increase of up to 1000 people, when will the City invest in the future of the village?

City staff let Council know at the public hearing that the commercial part of the development (grocery store and small shops) will be levied a Development Cost Levy of

\$8.1 million. Friends and the Point Grey BIA have advocated for ways to spend these funds locally to help our ailing village, as well as spending our property tax dollars to provide for missing services.

Virtually no money has been spent on the village for decades, except for the modest expenditure on the pop-up plaza on Sasamat Street.

The skills, imagination and expertise of the architect are not in evidence in this proposal. A few changes now will pay lasting dividends to current and future residents, and local businesses.

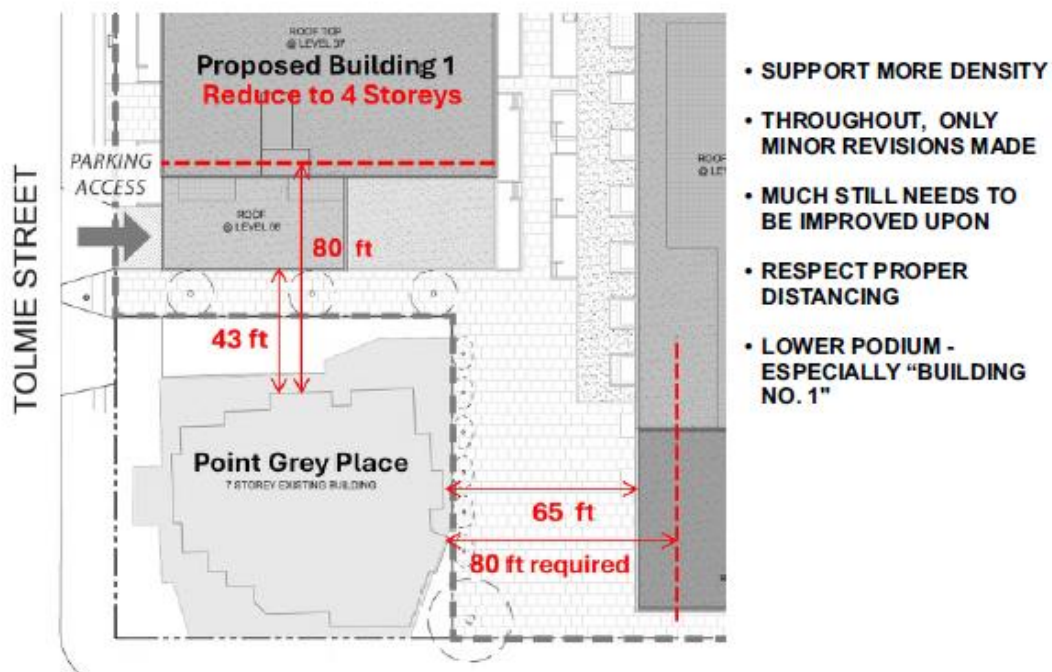
Here is our list of City actions:

- 1) **Provide a childcare:** The development will create demand for an estimated 50 more childcare places. Add that to a current shortage in Point Grey and it means parents will have to leave the neighbourhood for childcare. A quality-of-life down grade.
- 2) **Invest in the village streetscape:** Friends and the Point Grey BIA have suggested that the City provide a mid-block crosswalk in the middle of the development. This will slow traffic, improve pedestrian safety, and promote a village atmosphere. At the public hearing city staff estimated that a crosswalk would cost between \$500,000 to \$1M; the Development Cost Levy that the developer is obligated to contribute is \$8.1M.
- 3) **Create a 40 Km Pedestrian Priority Zone:** What is the downside of piloting a 40 km zone? It is in keeping with the City's Vision Zero Strategy and city and regional People First Streets.
- 4) **Look for opportunities, using city property, to increase sidewalk width** in strategic places to allow for outdoor seating space, tree planting, bike racks, etc.

Suggestions on how the Development Can be Improved:

- 5) **Ask the developer to improve the development by:**
 - Complying to MIRHPP policy that ***“Projects must consider and respect transitions to surrounding areas and homes.”*** Very little respect has been given to Point Grey Place residents, living on the south west corner of the site. The development has boxed them in and ignored long-standing City policy of an 80 ft separation between towers. Two key suggestions a) provide for an 80 ft separation between the west tower and Point Grey Place (rather than the current 65 feet b) remove 2 storeys from the building to the north of Point Grey Place to let residents see sky and get light. See diagrams below.

- **Remove open entrance to truck loading.** In such a large, dense development, it seems very anti-livability for new residents and existing businesses to allow trucks to enter through a long open driveway. We cannot think of another example like this in similar settings.
- **Improve façade of 10th Avenue** by providing more shops and providing a small plaza at or near the entrance to the grocery store.
- **Increase the amount of green space** at ground level in the development—proposed paths are too narrow and deficient. The whole development looks crowded and over-built.





A long-standing policy in the City of Vancouver and carried through to the new Broadway Plan is to maintain an 80 foot separation between towers, for privacy, light and to be able to see sky. The design shows a 65 foot separation, rather than the required 80 feet. Odd that on such a big site of over 3 acres, that this basic urban design principle is ignored. Nothing gained by overcrowding. Source: Image from BGO/MCM video on [Shape your City](#)

WHY HAS THE PROCESS TAKEN SIX YEARS?

At the meeting some Councillors asked why the process has taken six years. Here are some milestone dates that help explain the timelines:

Summer 2018: Safeway closes its doors for the last time

Summer 2019: Safeway and other shops on site demolished

November 2019: Council amends Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP) to allow BGO to apply

December 2019: BGO applies for MIRHPP program

Winter 2022: Soil remediation of site begins

May 2022: BGO holds first developer-led open houses in the community, without authorization from City staff

Summer 2023: Soil remediation completed

October 2023: Dog park and community garden installed in order for BGO to reduce its property taxes

October 2023: City Council amends MIRHPP guidelines to improve developer viability of rental projects

November 2023: City receives rezoning application from BGO

November 2023: BGO holds open house, authorized by City staff

February 2024: City holds open house, showing identical design as shown in November 2023 open house

February 2024: Urban Design Panel reviews design

June 2024: BGO submits revised design

July 2024: City posts revised design for public comment

January 2025: Rezoning referred to Council

February 2025: Public Hearing

Photos of the soil remediation works



