

April 14, 2025

## Point Grey Safeway Site Post-Mortem Makes National News - “crude and clumsy.”

The Globe & Mail ran a three-quarter-page article in its national edition March 28, 2025 titled, [\*\*“Residents’ group despairs as Point Grey Village plan moves forward”\*\*](#) by Kerry Gold. [A PDF of the article can be found here.](#)

Council can find some answers to poor ABC election results in this article.

Among the many quotes in the article from residents and from urban experts, Michael Geller, developer and property consultant, said he too opposed the design, calling it ‘crude and clumsy.’ He is hopeful that BGO and staff will do some “fine tuning during the development permit stage”. He stated that “It’s a question of making it feel like it continues the tradition of a village”.

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## Residents’ group despairs as Point Grey Village plan moves forward

Locals had high hopes when they gave city staff a tour but in the end, they say their issues weren’t addressed

**KERRY GOLD**  
**OPINION**  
VANCOUVER

For residents of Point Grey Village, the defeat is real. The beleaguered community on the west side of Vancouver has witnessed the emptying out of its West 10th Avenue high street, exacerbated by the loss in 2018 of a Safeway grocery store. The “village” is pretty much deserted. As one former shop owner put it: “You could walk naked down that street and nobody would notice.” And so, the arrival of a new de-

cent of floor area is for moderate-income households. But the policy also stated that “neighbourhood context is an important consideration.” The push for increased population in neighbourhoods, including the 500-block Broadway Plan, is coming at the expense of urban design, say critics of the current process. Ms. DeMarco notes that there are 21,000 units in the pipeline for the Broadway Plan and 90 per cent are rental. She wonders how the city intends to deliver community amenities for those buildings. Mr. Ducote calls the Broadway Plan “a horror show,” that fails to do community planning. As for the Safeway site, he’s worked on other large grocery store sites and he understands how they’re key to a neighbourhood. “I was delighted to learn they weren’t opposed to development,” said Mr. Ducote, who worked for cities for more than 25 years, including the City of Vancouver. “It wasn’t a NIMBY group. If it were a NIMBY group, I think

This rendering shows the development plan for Point Grey Village in Vancouver by BentallGreenOak and architects MCM. BENTALLGREENOAK



## Election Results—An Opportunity for a Better Future?

Yes, the line-ups were incredibly frustrating and unnecessary. It was galling to hear the City Manager, Paul Mochrie, apologize for giving bad advice to Council on the resources needed to run a by-election. The City Manager is not elected and the blame has to be put squarely on our elected representatives for this and every other decision they make. Staff advises, council decides. Why were no changes in resources made after the long lineups at the first advance poll?

The other main take-away was that ABC did poorly. The Mayor said that voters have sent his party a message and they now have to do a “deep dive”. Councillor Dominato said that the party has to do better, has to re-build trust, and improve the way it engages with community members. Here are some of the Mayor’s and Dominato’s comments:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6716164>

### Come “Deep Dive” in Point Grey

Friends of Point Grey Village, as constructive community builders, have a few suggestions for both existing and new council members.

- 1) **Improve community engagement processes.** As a volunteer group, we never had the opportunity to have any meaningful discussions with staff about what the community wanted to achieve and why.

One good example was our request to build a mid-block crosswalk connecting the new development to the south side, given the long length of Point Grey blocks. These crosswalks are a feature of the newer Safeway developments in Marpole and Arbutus Village. This relatively minor upgrade would improve pedestrian safety and convenience (a key City policy) and contribute to village place-making.

The crosswalk request did not even appear in the Council report outlining feedback from the public. At the public hearing when Councillor Dominato asked staff about the feasibility of the crosswalk, the answer from staff was that there was “no desire line.” That means not enough pedestrian traffic to merit a crosswalk. That simple, erroneous answer was good enough for Dominato not to pursue further questioning on behalf of the community. Of course, at this time there is not much pedestrian traffic with an empty site but there will be 1,000 people living on the new development and a major supermarket.



*By Lori Brown. Artist conception of development and connection to south side of 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, helping to improve pedestrian safety and create a village atmosphere.*

*Friends and the Point Grey BIA will continue to pursue the crosswalk as a community action that the City can take, independent of the developer.*

- 2) **Councillors need to be better prepared for decisions:** The questions from Councillors demonstrated that they had not listened to the community, were not very familiar with the development proposal, and did not have a clear idea of what actions they could take to improve the development. They clung to a few sound bites provided by the developer, claiming for example, that the public plaza was made larger, when in fact it was increased by about the size of a picnic table. (The most important solution to improve the public realm was to move the plaza to the centre of the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue façade, but this suggestion was never even considered as an option by staff and the developer.)
- 3) **We need more truth and transparency in staff reports:** Staff reports help the public and Councillors in decision-making. If important facts are left out, staff are not doing their job as public servants looking after public interests. Many important facts were left out of the reports—such as the tower separation between Point Grey Place (corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Tolmie) and the proposed tower to its east, violating long-standing City guidelines on tower spacing,

Another important example – what did the council report say about childcare, a big issue? The report lists the current childcare facilities with no comments on availability of places, or expected demand generated by the new development. The new development is 571

units. 37 % or 211 units, will be 2 or 3 bedrooms suitable for families. These units could generate demand for over 50 places if one out of four of these units have a child of childcare age. The current childcare crisis is going to be magnified, information City Council and citizens should have received from the staff report.

We need staff to put more effort into advancing public interests rather than allowing developer interests to rule the day.

- 4) **Time to re-visit policies that are not working:** The 20% below market policy being applied to such a large, pivotal site in the village was a mistake. The decision to convert this site to a below market rental pilot project was done without any public consultation. The opportunity costs of this short-sighted decision are many – poor public realm, poor urban design and no respect for village scale/character, inability to provide true affordable housing, such as co-op housing, no development cost levies for missing community facilities such as childcare, a crosswalk, etc.

UBC professor, Tom Davidoff said a recent policy push by the B.C. government and many cities including the City of Vancouver, which hands developers density bonuses in exchange for their vow to set aside a small portion of their tower developments for so-called affordable rental units, is ‘stupid’—[Vancouver Sun, March 18, 2025](#)

Let’s hope that City staff do indeed insist that the developer, [BGO](#), makes improvements at the development permit stage.

## From Readers

After our last newsletter where we promoted the Easter Egg Hunt at Aloe Beara we received an email noting that everything in the shop is made in Canada, and most of it is made in B.C. Now more than ever it’s important to SHOP LOCAL.

[https://www.instagram.com/aloebeara\\_clay/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/aloebeara_clay/?hl=en)

## Easter in the Village



### How it works:

- **Community members** pick up a colouring book from any participating local business.
  - They **choose and colour** any page they like.
  - They **post their masterpiece** to Instagram or Facebook using the hashtag **#PointGreyVillage** and include their **age group** in the caption.

One **winner per age group** will be selected and announced on **April 24th**