

November 12, 2009

Oakland Planning Commission  
c/o City of Oakland  
Community and Economic Development Agency  
Planning Division  
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Commissioners:

The undersigned community groups from the Rockridge/Elmwood/Temescal area are submitting this joint letter to comment on the scoping for the proposed College Avenue Safeway replacement project. While each of our groups has its own separate focus and may be submitting a separate comment letter, we are submitting this comment letter to emphasize a shared concern about the environmental review of this important project.

As you are aware, the zoning for the project site is C-31. While the city's zoning ordinance is currently undergoing revision, the new proposed zoning, CN-1, would continue to maintain similar standards. C-31 emphasizes pedestrian-oriented comparison-shopping, while also allowing compatible mixed-use development such as residential development above first-floor retail shops.

The current 61,000 sq. ft. Safeway proposal, while acknowledging zoning requirements by including ground floor retail shops, is still glaringly inconsistent with the area's C-31 zoning. A massive 50,000 sq. ft. store (more than ten times the size of the average College Avenue store), with its own self-contained 175 car parking garage, does not fit with C-31's objective of providing pedestrian-oriented comparison shopping. Our groups all agree that the EIR for this project needs to include analysis of alternatives that are more appropriate for the site and consistent with its C-31 zoning. Among these should be one that provides for mixed-use development of the site, including first-floor pedestrian-oriented retail uses and upper-story residential use.

Please note that, by signing this letter, the groups listed below are not necessarily endorsing a mixed-use residential alternative, only stating that such an alternative, along with other alternatives consistent with the site's C-31 zoning, should be studied in the EIR.

Sincerely,

Friends And Neighbors of College Ave. (FANS), a coalition of neighborhood groups including:  
Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC)  
Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association (CENA)  
Concerned Neighbors of the College Avenue Safeway  
Contiguous Neighbors to the College Avenue Safeway  
Contiguous Merchants to the College Avenue Safeway  
Rockridge/Elmwood Local Architects and Planners  
Rockridge District Association  
Standing Together for Accountable Neighborhood Development (STAND)  
Urbanists for a Livable Temescal Rockridge Area (ULTRA)