

**Rockridge Safeway
Stakeholder Meeting #2 – Meeting Notes
September 22, 2008**

Notations as of September 25, by Concerned Neighbors

This “tracked changes” draft is being copied to all other Stakeholders who’s email addresses Concerned Neighbors has.

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Overall Objective – “Working toward a collaborative solution”

- Collect and incorporate the ideas and suggestions generated by this group and create a plan everyone can embrace/support

Today’s Objective -

- Share individual perspectives and feel heard

- Discuss size of current site and proposed site – offer/explore ideas and suggestions

Stakeholders:

RCPC, represented by Stu Flashman
Concerned Neighbors, represented by Susan Shaw
Contiguous Neighbors, represented by Patricia Maloney
Contiguous Merchants, represented by alternate Jerry VerBrugge
RDA, represented by Sarah Wilson
CENA, represented by alternate Becky O’Malley
Safeway, represented by Todd Paradis

2 **individuals:**

Ito Ripsteen, independents – an independent Berkeley building owner, ~~(Ito Ripsteen)~~ and Fred Hertz, an independent Oakland neighbor who is an attorney ~~(Fred Hertz)~~

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Scheduled Agenda

Section I. Introduction/Context

- Welcome, introduction, agenda review
- Review overall project objective and today’s objectives
- Review of Meeting principles/groundrules
- What we heard from you – Review open items from Meeting #1
 - Stakeholder membership – criteria from Safeway
 - Safeway’s list of essential elements
 - Address & Discuss requests made – e.g. Cabrillo & Grand Ave plans

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Section II. Stakeholder Committee Dialogue

- Define collaborative discovery process and decision-making process
- Group discussion on size of current site and proposed site
 - Todd – context, plans and information for group
 - Concerns regarding size are reviewed and additional concerns are captured on charts
 - Stakeholder group brainstorms suggestions of what they could do with the site
 - Identification of next steps regarding size
- If time permits, group discussion on the design of the current and proposed site.

Section III. Close of Stakeholder Committee Session

- Identify high-level agenda items for the next meeting, what do we need to cover?
- What additional resources are needed, if any?
- Participant Homework: What personal commitment will you make to ensure this process is a success?
- Other Next Steps

Section IV. Open Public Comment Period

- Members from the community are invited to speak

Parking Lot

- Address and discuss requests made – e.g. Cabrillo and Grand Ave plans – Safeway was concerned about this request coming from one stakeholder, but heard from the stakeholders that all requests should be taken in and addressed regardless of who makes the request or how many people make the request. The plans will be available at the next meeting.

Ground Rules

- Remain Open
- Share comments equitably (with regard to time)
- Support each other
- Listen to understand
- Ensure quality of conversation
- Stay focused and present
- Respect time and process
- Don't speak unless called on
- Respect/hold to public comment period of time

Stakeholder Membership Criteria (as established by Safeway)

1. Expertise
 2. Resident or Property owner
 3. Represent community (either collective or individual)
 4. Expressed desire to participate in dialogue
 5. Community interest
- Questions/Concerns regarding stakeholder membership and criteria outlined?

Stu (RCPC) – Almost everyone in the room can meet these criteria. Why is someone at the table if they are only representing themselves? We are all individuals so that doesn't make sense. Expertise is valuable but doesn't entitle someone to sit at the table and vote.

Becky (CENA, alternate for Dean) – Setting up this process is risky in the first place, considering that there is a political purpose of this group. Talking about size before design/function doesn't make sense. We should talk about both size and function simultaneously. The function of the site should be as a satellite store, not a large regional store.

Ito (Property Owner) – Is not an advocate for Safeway. Felt a bit thrown under the bus during the last meeting. Wants to participate in these discussions. Doesn't believe that the number of people you are speaking for should matter.

Patricia (Contiguous Neighbors) – Doesn't understand why Safeway selected individuals when there are representatives speaking for many people. We are representing a variety of perspectives.

Fred (Individual, Rockridge resident 30 years) – Thinks he Can represent many different points of view. It would be good to have people who don't represent others at the table. Can help bring consensus to this process using his mediation approach and experience.

Susan (*Concerned Neighbors*) – (*In response to Fred's comment*) Believes that the six representatives of groups at the table are the voice of the people of this community. We already have facilitators to help us with the process. Todd needs to clarify the comment he made at the last meeting that there would be no vote taking, so why are we here?

Jerry (Contiguous Merchants – alternate for John Chalik) – It's important that merchants are represented at this table, and John and I are here to represent them (*on behalf of Contiguous Merchants*). Any individual that Safeway appointed as a Stakeholder representative should not have the same voting weight as those Stakeholders representing groups. The groups elected their respective representatives, not Safeway. Advisors can help advise, but should not vote.

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Todd (Safeway) – Our goal is to glean perspectives from the community. It's important that the individuals are at the table based on their expertise. Nobody at the table detracts from our overall objective. This is not a voting process. There will not be a plan for the project created from this process that would be submitted to City hall.

Facilitator – The objective is a collaborative solution based on consensus and dialogue.

Sara (RDA) – Let's focus on the issues. It's not going to come down to a vote.

Becky – Lets try not to take votes in this process. Votes equal decision making; no votes equal discussion.

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Facilitator – does the group agree to not voting?

Stu – Consensus means everyone agrees and if Fred (or anyone else) does not agree, then he is blocking the process.

Facilitator – let's hold on that until my associate describes the process.

Patricia (Contiguous Neighbors) – There should be differentiation in the meeting minutes with those people who represent themselves as opposed to those representing groups. Perhaps an asterisk placed by their comments, so anyone reading the minutes will know when the independents share their point of view.

Fred – states he does not intend to vote. He has no power. He can be completely ignored. If people do not want him at the table, he would be happy to leave.

Susan – questions Fred’s architectural credentials, stating there are plenty of real architects in the community who have offered their expertise.

Becky – Fred shares office space with Safeway’s lawyers.

Fred – there are 15 lawyers in their suite – he has no financial interest.

Facilitator – we will table this for now.

Jerry – will there be a vote? Why are we here? Where will the vote go?

Stu – let’s see what their process is all about.

Facilitator – hold that thought and we will explain the process.

Essential Elements from Safeway were reviewed (as requested from the first meeting) –

These were referred to in the prior meeting and the minutes as Safeway’s non-negotiables.

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Defined as the brand signage, interior appearance, and perimeter departments typically found in Bay Area Safeway stores believed to be vital to branding, which leads to long term success. Perimeter departments include Deli, Bakery, Pharmacy, Meat, Produce, and Floral.

While changes to Essential Elements is almost never approved by senior management, Safeway is open to hearing and participating in discussion and suggestions on these areas and communicating changes which the stakeholders agree are of major significance.

Open Dialogue Process:

Since the overall objective entailed creating a plan everyone can embrace/support, a group process suggestion was made regarding consensus decision-making and reaching unanimity. The process was outlined by the facilitator and the group discussed the purpose of these meetings. Stakeholders stated that the purpose of the group is not to reach consensus and there will be not voting, so why utilize such a process.

The stakeholders stated that the purpose of the meetings was to have open dialogue and sharing perspectives in order to influence the decisions that Safeway needs to make in regards to this store. Therefore, no formal decision-making process is necessary in this process. The agreement is to hold open discussion and dialogue sessions regarding all the concerns that have been raised by the community.

Facilitator – reviewed the “voting/decision making” process

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1. The decision making process will be through “consensus”. Consensus will be attained unanimously. A unanimous vote means everyone must agree. Everyone has “veto” power. This is different from “majority voting” where there is always someone who feels left out.

2. After discussion, someone will call for closure and suggests a motion or resolution should be put on the table.

3. Someone seconds the motion. No veto shows unanimous agreement.

4. With the motion on the table, a vote is taken using “gradients of agreement”. This is on a gradient of 1 to 5.

1 = endorsement of the motion

2 = agreement with reservation

3 = mixed feelings, but willing to move forward

4 = can live with it, don’t want to block the group from moving forward

5 = veto/NO

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5. Any vote but a “5” means, “lets’ move forward”, that it is a “unanimous YES decision. One “5” vote means “back to the drawing board”.

Fred – If we don’t have consensus, it will go to the Planning Commission with opposition so why not accept that, get a sense of the room, and don’t delude ourselves that a vote means something.

Susan – if we took a vote, then Safeway would know what we really want. Fears that Safeway would cherry pick from the ideas expressed and that the design would be based on only what Safeway wants to hear. If Safeway is not bound by a vote, then why are we here?

Stu – Safeway doesn’t need to accept anything we say, but would proceed at their own considerable risk as far as the political process is concerned. Safeway’s best interest is to find something that the community will support. He is concerned with the process stalling based on one “veto”, and the pressure any one person would feel if voting a “veto”.

Ito – we can meet separately to resolve this voting/consensus issue. Let’s start talking about issues.

Todd – I recognize that we need some consensus. We will have the Architects keep coming back to this group with plans that will remedy or address the groups issues. If we end up with something that is not workable for Safeway, that will be unfortunate. Lets get into what the real issues are.

Becky - We will not be coming to decisions, we are simply expressing our opinion. Safeway is going to do what they want to do. This is a CHAT ONLY.

Stakeholder Dialogue regarding size:

- Fred - Square footage is a misleading concept – there is a difference between square footage and bulk.
- Todd – each site has different possibilities. He wants the groups input - to draw lines up on the site plan before discussing size.
- Susan - How do you define Lifestyle store?
- Todd -- Safeway stated that it's about what the store "feels" like – the lighting, the colors, finish materials, smaller or larger departments, what the employees wear, etc. They all look alike – you will not mistake you are in a Safeway lifestyle store.
- Susan - There are several lifestyle stores in the Bay Area – that are 28,000 feet and under – size does not have to be huge. Cabrillo, Fruitvale, Grand Avenue – some don't have a pharmacy or bakery. You can have a lifestyle store with all the added goodies that can be smaller.
- Todd – Cataline has a 6,000 sq ft store – that's as big as the lot is. If the Bakery is really problematic for the Stakeholders, he could go back to Corporate and suggest that it is not included. It is near and dear to Safeway, but not non-negotiable.
- Patricia - The proposed 76,000 square foot plan could fit 51 houses of approximately 1500 square feet inside of it.
- Patricia – what size project would alleviate Contiguous Neighbors ongoing problems and concerns with the last design and not increase traffic? How does the Safeway proposal impact current problems? There are problems that are unmanageable that we are dealing with right now – what will a new larger store do to existing problems? How will a larger store impact traffic patterns? How will a larger store impact what already needs to be addressed and changed, e.g. trash compactor, trucks idling, loading dock and parking?
- Todd – there is not a magic size. Size doesn't dictate the location of the loading dock or trash enclosure.
- Stu - We need to talk about function first prior to discussion on size. What's appropriate for this neighborhood? It doesn't have to be as large as the Rockridge Center store. It doesn't need all the "essential" departments in this location.
- Todd - What about site planning?
- Stu - What is the purpose of this store?
- Todd - Safeway does not look at this store as a satellite store to 51st and Broadway. It is viewed as its own store with full-service departments. Safeway is looking at the cash "dollar leakage" in this market area.

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- Fred -What if parking, trash, loading docks and refrigeration were all moved indoors – would this address the current problems?
- Fred -Can we change the concept of the store, and make it more intimate? The current store is suburban and large on the interior with very wide aisles. Could we make it more like an intimate market? Washington DC, San Francisco, and other urban centers have these more intimate models. We do not want a big store. What about underground parking?
- Becky - We need to remember the relationship of size to all other elements. We need to discuss what the neighborhood wants functionally. We need to scale this back, because it's too big. Want's "lot coverage" that is pleasant and attractive for the neighborhood.
- Patricia -These issues go beyond noisy and unpleasant – these are health and safety issues.
- Patricia -Each time we are presented with plans, they don't change. The main entrance on Claremont and other areas are not enclosed.
- Sarah -Concerned about the front side of the store facing ~~side of~~ College Avenue. The scale is not conducive to what people find attractive on College. The scale needs to be modified.
- Ito - What about the "perceived size"? Are there ways to have this not be so imposing on College? It needs to be scaled back. It's a crappy store now, and want a better store but not a monster on College. Why can't it echo the size and texture of the stores across the street, including the set-backs.
- Jerry - This store has to fit this neighborhood. Two stories will feel too big. It needs to fit into the neighborhood so we can feel good about it. It will help all of us if it works with what is there.
- Stu - Design it smaller than you intend it to be-- A smaller store will give you more flexibility in where you locate the problematic areas of the neighbors concerns. Satisfy concerns first.
- Fred -Consider the height and bulk of other buildings in that area. Cuppa' Tea height is a good model - norm for the area. Make the building enclosed- enclose and cover everything. Do not exceed the height. Would this address size concerns? Consider urban stores that have parking, trash, and loading enclosed and underground.
- Todd – questioned parking being covered.
- Fred – this is a city, not the suburbs. Buildings go out to the perimeter. Entrance at the street, not mid-way.
- Becky - The set-backs are still an issue.

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- Becky - How many people are you going to serve? How many trips will shoppers make each day? This is the reason people want a satellite size store.
- Susan - Larger size will bring in many more people and therefore we fear that a larger store will increase traffic.
- Todd - Is it traffic or is it scale?
- All - It's a combination.
- Todd - We want to sell more product. Where do we place traffic on the agenda?
- Becky - Take all these factors into account. We need to consider all of these factors as they are intertwined. All those here want a smaller store than proposed.
- Fred - everything comes from size, from the size of the project.
- Note; this line is not on the tape recording of the meeting as being expressed at this point in the meeting. (We need a smaller architectural program. We need less happening on the site.)
- Stu - Can you clarify leakage issue?
- Todd - Safeway stated that 2.3 million dollars is not being spent in the Rockridge trade area. It's spent outside the area and does not include restaurant business.

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Suggestions for Next Meeting Agenda:

- Continue with open discussion on all dimensions
- Zoning discussion - have city expert available to present information and answer questions

Public Comments:

- Misdiagnosing the problem at the site. Its not just about size and square footage. Has problems with ambiance.
- The neighborhood Will not support a large store.
- Finds it Offensive that two independents are at the table with equal voice.
- How many customers will transfer business from the Broadway Safeway to this store? Trader Joes in Emeryville lost business to their new College Ave store when it opened.
- The larger store will hurt smaller stores on College Avenue.
- Composition of board members – The two individuals should not be here.

- Carcinogens are big concern. Three neighbors have died from cancer. Concerned about the larger store becoming a destination for more cars.
- At the first community meeting the general public talked about keeping this neighborhood pedestrian and walkable. Don't use the Grand Ave. as a model. It doesn't have good urban design.
- The building is an offensive design, specifically due to the stucco, plastic look. The building is suburban and doesn't fit in.
- There is wonderful light in the mornings near the current site, although Safeway doesn't care for some of the trees. A higher structure will impact the light and feeling you have when enjoying a cup of coffee.
- This is a pedestrian community. Let's not forget that this community will have a vote when it comes to permits.
- The size is a huge issue. We need to consider set-backs. We can bring in some analysis – use computerized tools and look at how the views will be blocked or not. It's a simple process. We need to start with evidence. This would only cost a couple thousand dollars.
- Question the market research that was conducted. There was no survey to residents. In Menlo Park they renovated a big [Safeway](#) store without talking to people [and people hate it](#).
- Do not feel I have to give into a large corporation [that wants to do a cookie cutter store](#). Other companies will [gladly](#) come in and serve us. This is a PR charade. First thing you decide [when starting a development project program](#) is size – we want a 25,000 square foot [marketmarket which Safeway is grandfathered in for](#). We'll fight like crazy [to keep the scale as it is now](#).
- Like the new design proposal. It encourages me to ride my bike and shop. It brings "life" and is inviting. The present store is uninviting.
- If you don't like our needs, then leave. Another company will come in and service us. Come up with a design that is urban and acceptable. [We are urban Oakland, not suburban Pleasanton](#).
- We can't design a building by committee. There's plenty of time for the neighborhood to react to this. This group needs to forget about strict representation and tap into creativity and many ideas. You are not making decisions. Don't let facilitation force you into a mold. Allow Todd to take ideas back to corporate. The questions of size cannot be isolated. The feelings about the use of the corner can be addressed at another time. The facilitation cannot force the group into a model. You are a representational group not a governing body. You're here to generate ideas.
- You cannot "stuff an elephant into a bathtub". Look at the FAQ's on the website. It's not true that shoppers who come to Safeway will also shop at the other retailers.
- AC transit representative concerned about traffic impact. Will delay buses, specifically the busy #51 bus, on this corridor.

- Everyone think about how to solve the problem vs. being confrontational. Can you do that? Size is important and symbolic. Think about a process and where we want to go.
- Consider the size you really want via symbolic or real consensus to solve neighbors' problems.

Stakeholder discussion continued:

Susan – We made a request last week for some plans and it was included on the agenda. It hasn't been discussed and that had to do with the size issue and we want to know why we were not allowed to see and discuss these plans for the Cabrillo and Grand Ave stores.

Todd – I want these types of decisions to not happen behind the scenes by individual Stakeholders making a request. I'm happy to bring site plans if the group says that's what we all want. I was reluctant to bring other site plans because if I bring a store that is 27,000 sq ft I don't think – if it's on an "L" shaped lot – not a helpful place to start. We have to do it as a group. If we have Stakeholders between now and the next meeting making requests and the other Stakeholders have no idea that seems like it will be very fruitless to me.

Fred – the request is for everybodies information and benefit.

Becky – lets vote if we want to see the site plans next time.

Stu – suggested all requests are copied to all other Stakeholders.

Todd – want to limit the information that some Stakeholders want to be open for discussion.

Correction: Susan's request was for the store's floor plans – the interior layouts showing all aisles, fixture placement, storage areas etc – not just the site plans. She requested the plans for the Cabrillo and 7th Ave store in SF, the Fruitvale Ave store and the Grand Ave store in Oakland. It would also be helpful to see the plans for the South Shore Alameda store.

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