

Safeway on King Street Community Meeting

Thursday, October 6, 2011

7:00pm to 9:00pm

City Hall, Sister Cities Room 1101

Attendees

Applicant: Duncan Blair, Land Clark Mendelson and Blair
Avis Black, Safeway Inc.
Craig Muckle, Safeway, Inc.
Ed Mensh, Safeway Inc.
Kristina Dello, Safeway Inc.
Lee Quill, Cunningham Quill Architects
Julie Pelletier, Cunningham Quill Architects
Daniel P. Moyer, CPH Engineers
Jennifer Langoski, CPH Engineers
Jeff Satfield, CPH Engineers
Kevin Campion, Campion Landscape Architecture
Daniel B. VanPelt, Gorove/Slade

City Staff: Gwen Wright, Planning and Zoning
Pat Escher, Planning and Zoning
Colleen Willger, Planning and Zoning
Garry Meus, Planning and Zoning
Abi Lerner, Transportation and Environmental Services
Ravi Raut, Transportation and Environmental Services
Bob Garbacz, Transportation and Environmental Services

Citizens: There were 23 citizens who signed the attendance sheet.

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, and Brief Overview by City Staff
- Update on King Street/Braddock Road Project
- Updated Presentation of Proposal given by Applicant
- Question and Answer Session
- Recap and Next Steps by City Staff
- Conclusion

Notes

Welcome, Introductions, and Brief Overview by City Staff

Ms. Pat Escher, Principal Planner with the Department of Planning and Zoning, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and applicants. Ms. Escher introduced the applicant team and provided a brief overview of the status of the proposal.

Update on King Street/Braddock Road Project

Mr. Abi Lerner, Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services, presented an update on the King Street/Braddock Road study and recommendations. Mr. Lerner explained that the study was conducted a couple years ago and was finalized in 2010. The findings and recommendations are currently being examined by City staff. The study is available online at the City's website (<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/BKQReportApril2010.pdf>).

Recommended improvements in the study included the King Street, Braddock Road, and Quaker Lane intersection. City staff reached out to property owners and the community to discuss the recommendations. Based on that outreach, staff decided to revisit several of the recommendations:

- The transit station
- Full closure of the service road (exploring other options such as partial closure and/or limitations on egress)
- Turn lanes on King Street and Braddock Road
 - Congestion at intersection created by traffic volume and close spacing between the streets, which limits queuing.
 - Pedestrian safety issues

Transportation and Environmental Services will have one or two additional, open, public meetings for further input and discussion.

After Mr. Lerner's brief update, he opened a short discussion, which included the following questions and answers:

- Q) Why weren't business owners at the previously held community meetings?
A) The business owners and all other stakeholders were invited to the community meetings and will continue to be part of the outreach program.
- Q) Who are the other stakeholders?
A) Sunoco Gas Station, Safeway, SunTrust Bank, and the Bradlee Shopping Center
- Q) Why weren't the citizens invited to the stakeholder/property owners meetings?
A) All stakeholders, business owners and citizens, will be part of the outreach, which is still ongoing.

- Q) Is the plan for the intersection improvements approved?
A) There is not an approved plan for the intersection. A study was conducted and recommendations were provided as part of that study.
- Q) Fairlington Glen took action on the implementation of the study recommendations by trimming trees. The neighborhood also lost several trees due to recent storms. Will the neighborhood also be included in future outreach and implementation strategies?
A) Yes, the neighborhood will be included in the community outreach.
- Q) Can the study be posted online?
A) The study is already posted online and the recommendations can be posted as well.
- Q) Community residents have previously requested information. Why haven't they received responses?
A) In an effort to be comprehensive and accurate, answers are still being researched.
- Q) Is there a timeline or target date for conclusion of the recommendations?
A) Yes, the reinvestigation of the recommendations is anticipated to be completed in three to five months.

Updated Presentation of Proposal given by Applicant

Mr. Duncan Blair opened the Safeway presentation by introducing the project team. Mr. Blair provided a brief overview of the history of the Safeway store at the King Street location.

Mr. Lee Quill presented the proposal and explained the site planning and building design concepts through the following:

- Building Design and Precedence
- Urban Design Concept
- Pedestrian Traffic and Access
- Landscape Design and proposed Plaza Space
- Community gathering space concept, and
- Safeway store architectural details.

Mr. Quill explained Safeway's desire for environmental sustainability and how that desire impacted many components of the proposal. The Safeway store is designed for the site and not a corporate prototype. Mr. Quill provided information and pictures of existing Safeway "Life Style Centers" in the region.

Once Mr. Quill finished his presentation, the meeting was opened for a question and answer session regarding the Safeway proposal.

Question and Answer Session

- Q) What is the number of trips that will be generated with the new store?
A) 54 new trips in the AM and 161 new trips at the peak PM hours with 166 new trips on Saturday at the peak hours.
- Q) Are there more stores proposed for this campus?
A) A small retail building is proposed and included in the trip forecasts.
- Q) What's the loss of parking spaces?
A) There is a net gain of approximately 30 parking spaces.
- Q) Is a parking reduction being requested?
A) Yes. A parking reduction is being requested, however staff supports the request. Safeway is comfortable with the number of parking spaces being proposed as well. The impervious area on the site will be reduced as a result and the overall City goal is to encourage transit. Safeway is anticipating many store patrons to bus to the store and take a cab home or bike to the store and ride the bus home.
- Q) What will the small building contain?
A) The small building is envisioned to have retail or a restaurant. We know that the building cannot be a Laundromat, pawn shop, day care center, etc. These stipulations will be part of staff recommendations that will go before Planning Commission and City Council.
- Q) How many parking spaces does the small building have?
A) The parking is shared with the Safeway store and will be a compatible use.
- Q) IS there a demand for another drycleaner and why is Safeway trying to take business from existing local businesses?
A) Safeway is trying to provide a convenient service. Because of their expanded hours patrons can combine trips. The drycleaners at Safeway is drop-off only. For more attentive service, people will continue to use local drycleaners.
- Q) The building seems to stick out because of existing buildings in the area being brick. Is that because of the sustainable materials being used?
A) Brick is being used on the building in addition to others. The project team thought this redevelopment was an opportunity to be different and not try to look like an historic building due to the context of the neighborhood. A desire for natural light into the building creates a need for glass. By raising the roof slightly, a prow is made which expands the glass surface on the south of the building.
- Q) How wide are the public sidewalks?
A) The pedestrian spaces, including streetscape, are approximately 18 feet wide on King Street and 10 to 11 feet along Braddock Road. The sidewalks themselves have an unobstructed pathway of approximately 10 feet on King Street and 6 feet on Braddock Road.

- Q) Where are delivery trucks going?
A) They travel west on Braddock and turn at Bradlee.
- Q) How many semi-trucks are there proposed per day or week?
A) About two to three per day, and about 20 per week, which is similar to how the store deliveries operate today.
- Q) Can trucks back into the loading area and cause cars to queue?
A) There are two loading bays and a trash area near the rear of the building. The trash pick-up can be scheduled to avoid any potential conflicts. The trucks will have very little interaction with cars because of the location of the docks and the turning movements of the trucks.
- Q) Will the dock block the doctor's office next door?
A) The dock will block the doctor's office but will not block any egress to that building. The connection was an agreement for a walkway; however the agreement has been terminated. Visitors to the office will be able to use the building's main entrance on the other side of the building.
- Q) What's the timeline for Safeway's participation in the traffic improvements at this location?
A) As part of the proposal, staff and the applicant are working on finalizing agreements within the next week or so in order to have recommendations to Planning Commission and City Council in November.
- Q) People use the service drive as a cut-through to avoid the intersection.
A) The design of the project will help in defining both the pedestrian and vehicular traffic on-site and avoid unnecessary traffic to the Safeway site.
- Q) Will there be another left turn lane on King Street?
A) There will be no left turn on King Street.
- Q) Is there any consideration for integrating public art at this stage?
A) There are a couple opportunities for public art throughout the site and perhaps on the building.

Comment:

A citizen stated that they were surprised at the project scale and would like to add trees to their property to screen. The citizen supports the relocation of the loading dock. The citizen also likes the architecture. The citizen also thinks the process has been compressed for the project.

- Q) It sounds like the proposal could be precedent setting. How will the City handle other proffered rezonings?

- A) City Council adopted rezoning criteria that delineate whether a proposed rezoning can proceed with or without a master plan study. If the neighborhood or type of area is impacted or significantly changed, then a master plan study would need to be conducted. For instance, if Bradlee Shopping Center submitted an application with a proffered rezoning, the City would consider that application as a reason to conduct a master plan study of the entire Fairlington/Bradlee small area of the city.

Recap and Next Steps by City Staff

The meeting concluded with staff and the applicant explaining that additional public input is welcome with the continuing review of the proposal. Attendees were also reminded of the upcoming Planning Commission and City Council hearings in November, where they are welcome to testify and offer their opinions on the proposal.

The meeting concluded at 9:30pm.