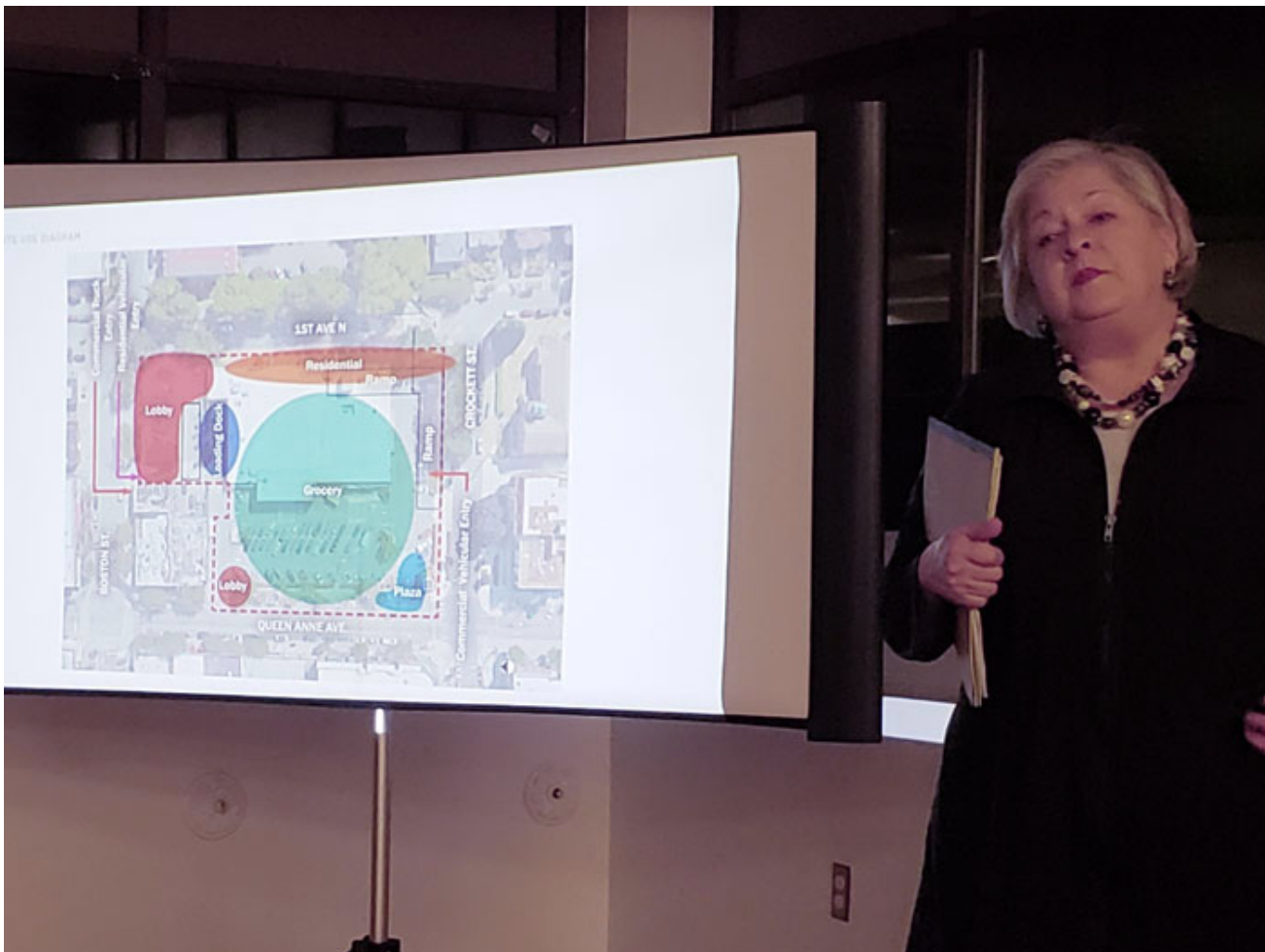


Safeway redevelopment team gathers community feedback

Queen Anne residents lament parking lot loss, worry about height



Developer Maria Barrientos and her design team gathered feedback on the latest plans for redeveloping the Queen Anne Safeway during a LURC meeting on Monday, Dec. 17.

By Brandon Macz
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Several residents called Safeway the heart of Queen Anne during a neighborhood meeting on Monday night. Like it or not, that heart is growing nearly two sizes someday, and bringing nearly 300 new residents with it.

While a deal between Albertsons Companies and Holland Partner Group fizzled, plans for the Queen Anne Safeway have stayed roughly the same.

What makes the second attempt better is that the developer and design team includes Queen Anne residents who will listen more to community feedback, said Marty Kaplan, chair for the Queen Anne Community Council Land Use Review Committee.

Kaplan said at the start of the Dec. 17 LURC meeting that Holland didn't value the input the committee and other residents provided when the developer was working on the project last year.

"That relationship did not work, and we had several different community meetings," he said.

This will be the ninth project for barrientosRyan in the Queen Anne and Uptown areas of Seattle, and includes the construction of up to 280 apartment units, with 50 at affordable housing levels. The developer is opting into the Mandatory

Affordable Housing program, with the site slated to be rezoned.

While the 50,000-square-foot urban-concept Safeway store's design is fairly well laid out, everything around it remains adaptable to community feedback, said barrientosRyan partner Maria Barrientos.

Barrientos said her team plans on coming back for another LURC meeting in either January or February, depending on where the team is regarding preliminary designs. The project is expected to take two years to obtain the required construction permits.

Leading the Dec. 17 presentation were Brian Runberg with the Runberg Architecture Group and HEWITT principal and landscape architect Kris Snider.

Runberg has lived in Queen Anne for more than 25 years, he said, and served on LURC 15 years ago. He was also involved in crafting the neighborhood's design guidelines.

"The point being all this really matters to us — details matter to us," he said.

The upzoning that will come with the citywide MHA program will allow the project to reach 75 feet.

"We don't plan to use that full capacity," Runberg said.

Barrientos said she expects the project, which will place five stories of apartment units above the 50,000-square-foot Safeway, to come in at a little more than 65 feet; it really depends on the grocery component.

The city council is expected to approve the MHA program in March, and the mayor could sign the legislation by April or May, Runberg said.

Most of the presentation centered around potential designs for a public plaza at the corner of Queen Anne Avenue and Crockett Street.

"We really believe that that is the heart of Queen Anne, or could be the heart of Queen Anne," Runberg said.

Snider, a 33-year Queen Anne resident, said the public space around Safeway needs to feel different every time someone visits, and not like a "one-trick pony."

A public plaza had been proposed at that corner in the first iteration of the project, but this one could be around 500 square feet larger, Runberg said.

Options floated by Queen Anne residents at the LURC meeting included raising the plaza above the sidewalk, having the Safeway deli and bakery spill out into the plaza, a possible indoor/outdoor fireplace, sculpted benches, moveable furniture, public art, and generous sun exposure coupled with trees for shade.

"We know how hard it is to keep green alive in urban settings," Snider said.

Many residents lamented the loss of the parking lot, with plans being to develop at least two underground levels of parking with about 350 spaces split between shoppers and residents. The customer parking entry is planned to be at Crockett Street, while residential parking access would be from Boston Street.

Resident Andy Fessel said the parking lot lets in sunlight, but removing it and erecting a 65-foot building will put the neighborhood in shadows.

"You're going to turn that into a canyon," he said.

Fessel prefers the project maintain the setback created by the parking lot.

"If you can do that much with a small corner," he said of the public plaza, "see what you can do with a whole street front."

QACC member Bob Kettle said he worries about how the development will affect the safety of the many children in the neighborhood, as well as the elderly residents at Queen Anne Manor to the east.

Queen Anne Baptist Church pastor Mindi Welton-Mitchell said there are two preschools operating out of the church at First Avenue North and Crockett Street, putting about 100 small children into the area daily. She said she worried a 65-foot development will reduce visibility for the children, and also for the church.

Because an actual design hasn't been solidified, Barrientos said, it will likely be three months before a traffic study gets

started.

If a second exit were considered for the development, that would mean comingling residential and customer parking, Barrientos said, which would mean addressing security and separation challenges.

While Kettle thinks allowing a development to reach 75 feet in that part of Queen Anne is wrong, Barrientos served on the Housing Affordability and Livability (HALA) Committee that developed the MHA concept.

"I don't think the upzone is a bad thing," she said.

Resident Dina Ringer said she didn't see much difference between what Holland had proposed and what Barrientos Ryan showed on Dec. 17, except that 280 apartment units are now being proposed instead of 250.

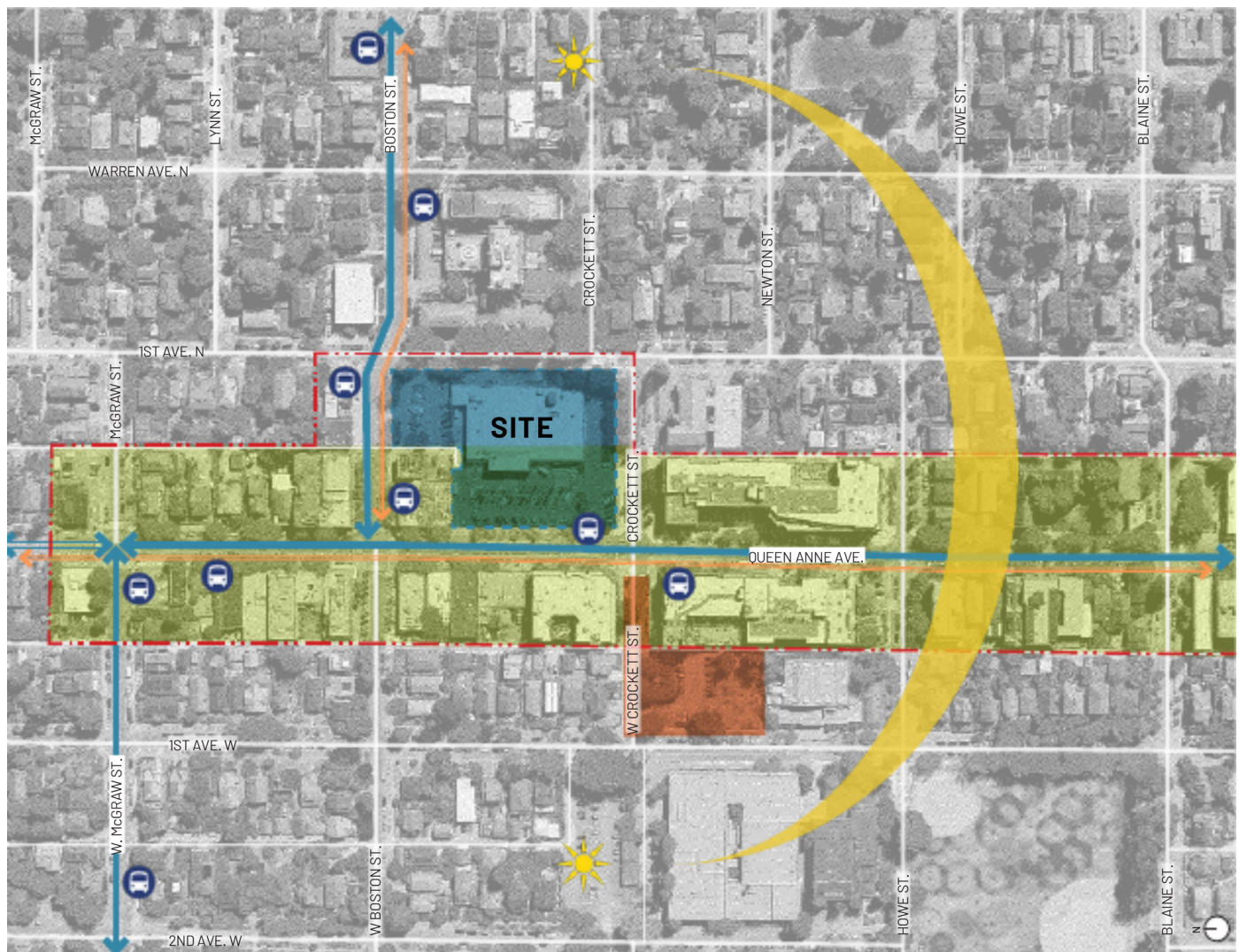
"I don't really approve of that," Ringer said.

Mark Ostrow with Queen Anne Greenways was the only resident at the LURC meeting to unequivocally support both the removal of the parking lot and the housing portion of the project, which he said is much needed in the neighborhood.

Making the Safeway store smaller is non-negotiable for Albertsons Companies, Barrientos said, and it's up to the design team to make the project as attractive and interactive as possible within that footprint.

"Our job is to make it really work for all of us in the neighborhood," she said.

[Safeway-QA Preliminary Conc...](#) by on Scribd



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