

This will be a welcomed and nice addition to the Proctor District and the North End of Tacoma. We look forward to its completion, plus the added quality and services that Safeway will be providing to the community. A complete remodel and make-over is being proposed by Safeway. The plans state that expansion will be 10,000 + sq. ft., for a total of 43,921; nearly all the existing store appears to be undergoing remodel including removing/replacing some exiting exterior walls and extending the building.

Safeway has requested variances from the City for the new store remodel. This is an Administrative Variance Request, and a decision will be rendered in the near future. Abutting property owners will be given Notice of the Decision. The decision can be appealed to the Hearing Examiner, and the Hearings Examiner's decision can be appealed to the Courts.

The Proctor District Association, and the North End Neighborhood Council may send a letter to the Land Use Administrator, 3rd Floor, Tacoma Municipal Building, Tacoma, WA 98402, containing the position of each organization and requesting to be a party of record and officially be notified of any actions by Land Use Administrator and/or the Hearings Examiner.

The Zoning requirements relate to the "NCX" Neighborhood Mixed Use Commercial zoning district. The **NCX zoning district intent** is:

To provide areas primarily for shopping and services at a scale that is compatible and in scale with the surrounding neighborhood. This zoning district is intended to enhance, stabilize, and preserve the unique character and scale of neighborhood centers and require, and with street amenities and direct pedestrian access to the sidewalk and street.

The "basic" variance requests by Safeway are:

1. Relief from the building modulation requirement.
2. Relief from Public Space area requirement and distance requirement
3. Relief from Transparent windows and Openings

There may be more details as a result of staff review of the Code and Land Use Administrator review.

Each part of the Variance Request(s) are discussed below:

1. Variance Relief from the building modulation requirement.

As explained by Safeway, building modulation would be difficult dues to site constraints, and reported seismic problems. If, in any places, modulations can be incorporated, this should be done. Different surface treatments, and colors can provide a sense of modulation e.g., landscaping, and architectural relief having visibly different textured material to achieve the required visual break-up. It is unclear what the "metal siding" being proposed, is. Safeway states that an "architectural element" will be surface applied to breakdown the massing and blank appearance of south wall. Again, it is unclear what this is. Façade variety is also required. What the adjacent neighborhood "sees" is important here, as well as the general appearance in the North End. Modulated roofs and parapets are also required; roof A.C. units, micro-wave dishes, and other utilities, etc. are required to be screened.

Possible Variance request: Unscreened, flat, blank walls are not allowed by the code.

2. Variance Relief from Public Space area requirement and distance requirement.

The NCX code says: *d. Public plaza. A public plaza of at least 800 square feet of gross floor area or 5 percent of gross floor area, whichever is greater. The plaza shall be located within 50 feet of and visible to the primary public entrance; and contain a minimum of a bench or other seating, tree, planter, fountain, kiosk, bike rack, or art work for each 200 square feet of gross floor area. Plaza contents may count toward other requirements when meeting criteria. Walkways do not count as plazas. Plazas shall not be used for storage. Required parking stalls may be omitted to the minimum necessary if needed to provide the plaza.*

A customer entrance is required on the Proctor Street side of the Building; it is being provided by Safeway. Also, a striped painted crosswalk and ADA ramps are being provided between the two parking lots, which is preferred over a “raised walkway” as verbally mentioned by Safeway.

The 50 ft distance requirement could pose a problem related to the store layout, and parking area. Safeway states that 1700 sq. ft. of Public Plaza is required by the code, but their intent is to provide a 1000 sq. ft. plaza area on the west side of the building along the Proctor St. frontage.

The proposed public plaza area on the west side/Proctor St. appears to provide some public area, however, in the spirit and intent of the regulations, additional items should be considered such as, some additional landscaping to minimize the hard surface on the west side which consists of a combination of public sidewalk and on-site sidewalk, and some additional decorative murals. The existing 3 street trees in the public right of way are shown to be eliminated (see tree comments below). While two planters are shown, there should be some type of additional decorative barrier or definition relative to the shown plaza area. The tables and chairs as shown appear to be rather close to the curb line. Also, it should be noted, that the perspectives drawings show trees on the west side (and others places as well) that are not reflected on the site plan. These need to be added to the site plan, and installed on the site.

Possible Variance request:

Specific street level weather protection is also required by the code. This can consist of awnings, canopies, or similar architectural features. A substantial amount of lineal distance of weather protection appears to be required; notably on the west side.

Possible Variance request:

A landscaping plan will be required if this remodel project is valued at more than 60 percent of the building value, as calculated in the Building Code.

Concerning Landscaping: it should be noted that there is mature landscaping in some areas (south side of building and other areas), and there are trees along the Adams, Proctor, and N. 24th Streets. The landscaping should not be removed, unless replaced with equal or better. Any street trees should match the species being used in the District, i.e., flowering pear (*Pyrus Calleryana* ‘Aristocrat’). The trees on Proctor St. were strategically located in relationship to the street trees on the opposite side of the street (Metropolitan Market side). Safeway representatives assisted in placement of these existing trees on Proctor.

3. Variance Relief from Transparent windows and Openings.

In lieu of the windows and opening requirements of the code, Safeway is proposing steel art panels along the façade facing Proctor St. and of Tacoma history. It is understood that the layout of the store may not be conducive to windows on the Proctor St. side of the building. Since a new pedestrian door and also the pedestrian plaza is on that side, it is felt that additional art should be placed in the vicinity of the plaza, and also on the blank wall around the corner of the building (the north/west side facing the parking lot). Art should be considered that reflects the history of the North End, and the Proctor District. This should be submitted to the North End Neighborhood Council for review and recommendation.

The NCX zoning requirements are designed especially to avoid detrimental impacts on neighborhoods. The land use code is required to be met, and when hardships are evident, variance requests can be made, but are not automatically granted. THE MITIGATIONS MENTIONED/SUGGESTED ABOVE are a normal part of the process when considering a project this size, in a neighborhood area, and specifically in regards to the NCX zoning and its stated intent as noted on the previous page.