

Arvada Square-Safeway-Triangle Area Redevelopment Neighborhood Meeting, May 27, 2015

Notes taken by Nancy Young

Impressions from Neighborhood Meeting

Loftus Development presented preliminary plans for redeveloping the western portion of the site (everything west of Holland Street, including the former Safeway and the Triangle). Well over 100 citizens were present, possibly 130 or more, along with several city and Arvada Urban Renewal (AURA) officials.

Jim Loftus began the presentation by noting that this site (west of Holland) would be, in essence, Phase I in redeveloping the entire area. The plan is for this western area to be dedicated to retail. Phase II, the Arvada Square, will not be considered until next year. Phase II is expected to be primarily residential. A consultant has advised Loftus that national chain, fast-food stores would be eager to occupy this site, especially the corner of Ralston Road and Independence. There is a possibility of a beer garden being included.

In March 2015, Loftus signed an agreement with AURA for 90-days, 64 of which have passed. During this time, they are performing “due diligence” on the property. This “due diligence” will determine whether Loftus will go forward with the project and includes:

1. An environmental report on the former Safeway building, which has asbestos
2. Environmental condition of the property, focusing on the Triangle area (formerly Big-O Tires, Triangle Liquors, and Black Forest Deli)
3. Soil report to determine whether the ground provides sufficient support for the proposed buildings.

It appears that Loftus might, or might not, decide to proceed with negotiations with AURA. It depends on the results of these reports and Loftus’ assessment of the viability of the project.

Mr. Loftus noted that negotiations are ongoing with 24-Hour Fitness to occupy the former Safeway site. It appears that 24-Hour Fitness will need only 39,000 of the 54,000 square feet of the Safeway building. If the negotiations are successful, then Loftus will reconfigure the Safeway building by removing about 2,000 square feet from the front and the rest from the back.

If the negotiations with 24-Hour Fitness are not successful, it is possible that the Safeway building will be demolished and replaced with apartments having a courtyard in the center.

The discussion quickly turned to citizen questions, many of which involved the other half of the site (the Arvada Square) and the potential housing to be developed there. Jim Loftus noted that the Arvada Square site will be acquired by AURA in 2016. While he hopes to be selected for that redevelopment effort, there is no guarantee.

Among the questions and responses were:

- What kind of housing will be built at the Arvada Square? Response: most likely a mix of townhomes, condos, and rental apartments.
- Will Ralston Road be widened to accommodate traffic from this project? A streetscape determined by AURA will be installed for the sidewalks and turn lanes as needed.
- What plans are being made to preserve the historic stage route segment - the original Ralston Road that forms the Triangle? Mr. Loftus was unaware of any historic artifacts in the area.
- How tall will the residential structures be? Response: up to 4-stories is allowed.
- Will 24-Hour Fitness have a swimming pool? Response: a pool is possible. Negotiations are not complete.
- Will there be sufficient visitor parking, especially for the handicapped? Response: yes, there will be parking for visitors.
- Many concerns were expressed about the long-time businesses in the Arvada Square (like the barber shop that has been there for nearly 60 years) and whether those businesses would be invited to be a part of the new retail complex or “thrown out” of Arvada. Mr. Loftus stated that the City of Arvada had referred a few businesses to them. In general, it appeared that no particular effort was planned to retain these existing businesses.
- Will Loftus purchase the property from AURA at a steep discount? Response: Loftus will purchase the property. There was no indication of whether there would be any discount, perhaps due to the ongoing negotiations.
- Will Loftus receive any subsidies from AURA, such as a TIF (tax-increment financing diverting property tax dollars) or a PIF (public improvement fee, diverting sales tax dollars)? Response: the “deal” with AURA is yet to be negotiated.
- What is the expected life span of these buildings - will they wear out in 15-20 years so AURA can then “blight” the area again? These buildings are being designed so that they can fulfill multiple uses and endure over time. This is not Walmart.
- Do you have any studies regarding the success of high-end residential across the street from a Walmart? Response: the residential will be constructed along Ralston Creek. There is no rule that they have to face Ralston.
- Will these buildings - so close to Ralston Road - block the “peak-to-peak” views from Mt. Evans to Long’s Peak, now enjoyed by all citizens? Response: people having coffee and bagels on the rooftop patios of the fast-food restaurants will enjoy spectacular “peak-to-peak” views, especially to the south and west. Drivers probably should not be looking at the views.
- Arvada really needs a good department store. Will you include one in your project? Response: there is not enough space for a department store.