

Folks in Golden Meadows may buy into store idea yet

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Growth

Safeway appears to be on the verge of accomplishing what King Soopers couldn't — convincing Golden Meadows residents that a neighborhood shopping center isn't such a bad idea.

That was apparent Tuesday night when more than 100 residents met with officials from Safeway and the city's planning and traffic departments at Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church to discuss the proposed Harmony Village Center.

The 17-acre shopping center site is bordered by Monte Carlo Street on the north, Wheaton Drive on the west, McMurry Av-

enue on the east and Harmony Road on the south.

Sure, the residents had the same concerns as they did a year ago, including: size of the project, proximity to Kruse Elementary School, increase in volume of traffic, noise and light pollution and the question of why another grocery store is needed when there is one a half-mile away.

But, what separated last year's heated neighborhood meeting with King Soopers officials from Tuesday's orderly forum with

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Safeway was the way the meeting was conducted.

Katy Press, the area real-estate manager for Safeway, had the project architects — Wyatt and Associates — develop three conceptual plans of the project.

The audience then had a half hour to review the plans before city planner Ted Shepard opened the meeting up to questions.

The three designs generated a lot of comment — especially the "new urbanism" design. In it, the development would eliminate the Monte Carlo Street corridor to the north. In its place would be a green belt and possibly a bike path, creating a safe corridor for children to walk to school.

Then a high-density housing project — duplexes or townhomes — would be built, providing an additional buffer between Golden

Meadows and the shopping center to the south. Monte Carlo Street would then be relocated into the interior of the shopping center.

Safeway, the 48,000-square-foot anchor tenant, would be on the southwest corner of the property, close to Harmony Road. The remainder of the center would consist of retail and pad sites with a village square in the northeast part of the project.

The other two designs are more traditional, self-contained shopping centers.

"At first, I thought it (the new urbanism design) stunk," said Golden Meadows resident Juleigh Bayda. "But, the more I looked at it, it took care of all the major issues like the bike path, and the issue of safety for kids was totally answered.

"It also has a homey atmosphere and creates more open space."

Although many residents were impressed by the three conceptual plans, some remained skeptical.

Chau Tran, another resident, was impressed with the presentation but still wonders why Safeway has to build a store there.

"I want to see the right type of stores there," Tran said. "But it's not necessary to build a grocery store. We don't oppose all businesses, but a grocery store is not the right type for here. All that it will bring is traffic and crime."

Press said suggestions and feedback from the meeting will be compiled and Safeway will try to devise a plan that will "encompass as many ideas as we can."

Although there is no timetable to come up with a complete plan, Press said Safeway would move forward to complete a preliminary plan and submit it to the city planning department soon.