



Close the Loophole: Big Box / Supercenter Community Process

**Austin City Council
December 14, 2006**

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How We Got Here

A long deliberative process, with many opportunities for input and amendments:

- ✓ Two-year community process
 - ✓ Broad public endorsement
 - ✓ City review: 14 months, unanimous approval
 - ✓ Planning Commission: unanimous approval
- City Council: December 14, 2006 vote

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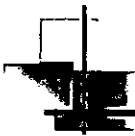
Supercenter Community Process: Simple and Clear

For 100,000 sq. ft big box / supercenter, the ordinance

1. Ensures a public hearing
2. Expands the public notice range to include all registered neighborhood associations within one mile of the project
3. Requires a Conditional Use Permit

ONE PUBLIC HEARING, ONE-MILE NOTICE, WITH A
CLEAR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT PROCESS

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Close the Supercenter Loophole

Under current code, a 24-hour 250,000 square-foot supercenter with zoning and over 20 acres of paved parking, can be legally built ***without any public process*** under the same zoning rules as a 2,000 square-foot mom-and-pop store.

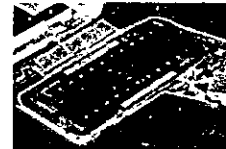
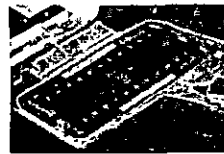
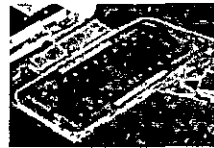
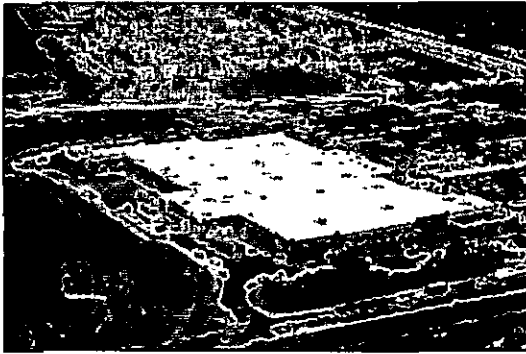
	<u>Traditional Store</u>	<u>Supercenters</u>
Size:	2000 sq. ft.	200,000 sq. ft+
Impacts:	<i>minimal</i>	<i>traffic, crime, more</i>
Notice:	300 ft.	300 ft.
Hearing:	None	None

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Supercenter size = Super impacts

The city code loophole doesn't account for supercenters with buildings as large as four football fields.



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Notice for Supercenter Projects is Inadequate

Example: Northcross Mall site

Supercenter impact area: 1.5 mile radius

Approximate area: 7.0 sq mi.

Current notice requirement: 300 feet.

Approximate area: 0.07 sq mi.

The supercenter would affect an area **100 times** bigger than the current notice requirement.

Proposed ordinance notice requirement: 1 mile

Approximate area: 3.1 sq mi.

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Impacts of superstore development

Size does matter: Hard facts about economic impacts

Big Boxes do not increase sales taxes. Retail activity is a result, not a cause of growth.

Big Box = Bigger costs to cities:

- More traffic
- Increased public safety costs
- Increased street and road maintenance costs
- Increased water and sewer infrastructure
- Higher social costs for low wage, uninsured employees

Big Box national chains keep less money in Austin.

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Supercenters Produce More Traffic

City of Austin 2004 traffic study:

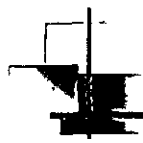
Shopping malls produce 27.6 trips (VTD*) per 1,000 sq. ft.

Big boxes produce 43.6 trips (VTD*) per 1,000 sq. ft.

Big boxes produce **58%** more traffic than shopping malls of comparable size.

*VTD - vehicle trips per day

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Supercenters Attract More Crime

City of Austin 2004 study:

Shopping malls attract 0.42 crimes per 1,000 sq ft.

Big boxes attract 0.82 crimes per 1,000 sq ft.

Big boxes attract about **twice** as much crime as shopping malls of comparable size.

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Supercenters Return Less to the Local Economy

Chicago 2004 study:

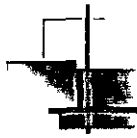
Compared ten groups of local retailers to comparable national chains.

Local: \$100 spent → \$68 in local economic activity.

Chains: \$100 spent → \$43 in local economic activity.

National chains return **37%** fewer dollars to the local economy than local businesses.

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Leading Cities are Forcefully Addressing Supercenter Impacts

- **Capping Store Size**, basically bans, are in place or proposed in 23 US cities including Madison, Wi.
- **Formula Business Restrictions** are in place or proposed in 18 U.S. cities including San Francisco and Chicago.
- **Economic/Community Impact Reviews** are in place or proposed in at least 10 U S cities including Los Angeles and the States of California, New Jersey and Vermont

Austin's Proposed Supercenter Community Process:
Reasonable and Fair

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Process Opponent's Red Herrings



Popularity Contest - Conditional Use Permits set a common standard for all businesses.



Elitist - Nothing elitist about wanting to have a voice in major projects that will affect your home and livelihood.

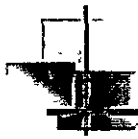


Too Many Hearings - If zoning is in place, there are no hearing or public process are required now, only city staff approval.



Drive Out Big Boxes - Austin has dozens of big box stores identical to others across region. Business follows rooftops - customers and income are here.

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Widespread Support for a Supercenter Community Process

- ✓ Austin Independent Business Alliance (325 businesses representing over 6,000 employees)
- ✓ Austin Neighborhoods Council
- ✓ Austin Central Labor Council
- ✓ American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) 1624
- ✓ The Austin Area Human Services Association (65 member organizations)
- ✓ Liveable City
- ✓ Over 100 individual community leaders

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Close the Loophole: Pass the Supercenter Community Process

- Close the code loophole creating community conflict.
- Balance the interests of residents, local business, and commercial developers for the common good.
- Create the opportunity for dialogue to improve community design, planning, and neighborhoods.
- Protect Austin's unique brand and our future economic potential.

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