

Closing the Gaps

September 2006

Thanks to an energized Moscow community and a City Council with the strength to say “NO” to a bad development proposal, Wal-Mart was shut down in their attempt to build a SuperCenter in town. But we’re not totally in the clear, yet.

There are two other possibilities for siting a SuperCenter close to Moscow. One is in the county immediately outside the city limits called the Area of City Impact. The other is across the state line along the Pullman Highway.

Area of City Impact:

Background: The Latah County Commissioners will be deciding whether to adopt recent city land use ordinances for the Area of City Impact. These ordinances include Moscow’s Large Retail Establishment Ordinance commonly known as the Big Box Ordinance. The Big Box ordinance goes to the commissioners with a recommendation for passage from the Latah Planning Commission. No date has been set for the commissioner’s decision, but it is expected to be heard towards the end of September or early October.

Issue: Latah County zoning laws currently allow all sizes of retail establishments in a commercial zone as a right of use. There is no public hearing required or ability to impose conditions on the development to control the impacts of traffic, noise, light, water use, etc. Retail establishments are conditionally allowed in an industrial zone, but there are no guidelines in the county zoning code spelling out what conditions should be addressed by an applicant. The City’s Large Retail Establishment Ordinance makes big box stores a conditional use and provides a list of conditions to be assessed and a design manual to make big boxes fit Moscow a bit better than the cookie cutter stores most big box retailers build.

Action: Contact the Latah County Commissioners and express your strong support for adopting the Large Retail Establishment Ordinance for Moscow’s Area of City Impact.

Latah County Commissioners
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Jack Nelson: jnelson@latah.id.us
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Tom Stroschein: toms@moscow.com

Pullman/Moscow Corridor:

Background: The Hawkins Companies of Boise have started the application process to build a 200-acre big box development just across the state line by Airport Road. Water supply is likely the biggest stumbling block to the proposal. Lowe’s Home Center is the only declared occupant at this time, but there is plenty of room for a SuperCenter there as well.

Action: Subscribe to the NoSuperWalmart Alert list for more information as their application moves through the Whitman County process.

