



HARTFORD CITIZENS
FOR RESPONSIBLE
GOVERNMENT

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**PROPOSED WAL-MART LOCATION AND DESIGN THREATENS RUBICON RIVER,
SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**

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Hartford— As the Hartford Planning Commission prepares to review Wal-Mart, Inc.’s plans for a proposed Supercenter on Highway 60, major concerns remain unaddressed. The location and design of the 184,000 square foot retail store has already generated serious concerns regarding, among other environmental concerns, large quantities of polluted run-off and wetland filling that will result from the current design and location. According to Wal-Mart’s plans, the 38-acre development proposal will fill in wetland areas and discharge roughly 4,350 lbs of polluted sediment to the Rubicon River each year. With this threat in mind, Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government are turning to the Hartford Plan Commission to take all necessary steps to assure the public that Hartford will not welcome in a development that trashes our local community.

“Large retail centers have flooded surrounding areas and polluted stretches of rivers when placed in the wrong area with the wrong design.” said Marilyn Raschka, Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government member. “We have an obligation to make sure that will not happen in Hartford,” she added.

Examples of big-box development run-off pollution include Rice Lake, Wisconsin, where residents are working to address a growing mound of dirt in the Red Cedar River that stems from increased run-off from a new commercial area featuring two big-box developments (Menards and Wal-Mart). Additionally, the City of Baraboo, Wisconsin experienced multiple flooding events after the construction of a Wal-Mart Supercenter.

Recognizing this type of threat, Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government has been working with Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc, a non-profit environmental law center, to help protect Hartford from the threat of polluted run-off, wetland loss and increased air pollution. Midwest Environmental Advocates addressed concerns over the unnecessary wetland fill in a formal comment letter, submitted on behalf of Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. According to the comments, Wal-Mart ignored clear alternatives that would allow them to avoid this sensitive location and dramatically reduce the amount of polluted run-off from the site.

“Instead of using underground parking to create a smaller building that can be placed in a less sensitive area, Wal-Mart is proposing to pave over the equivalent of 25 football fields in a wetland area on the edge of the City,” said Brent Denzin, attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates. “In Monona, Wisconsin, Wal-Mart is building a larger Supercenter on half the amount of land as in Hartford, which results in less pollution running off the site into lakes and rivers. Why aren’t they doing the same in Hartford?”

The up-coming conditional use permit hearings, held by the Hartford Planning Commission, will provide the City and public the opportunity to thoroughly address these issues. Unfortunately, Hartford ordinances do not require any impact studies that would provide a non-biased look at these concerns. The lack of protective impact studies does not, however, take the issue off the table. Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government is urging City leaders to do their job and take a look at these impacts before approving these large-scale developments.

“The community wants an honest and thorough discussion of these impacts,” said Ray VonGunten, member of Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government. “The Planning Commission was set up to address these concerns before approving permits. The public cannot allow the City to rubber stamp enormous developments when clear impacts exist.”

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Fast Facts:

- DNR considers storm water run-off to be the largest remaining threat to our waters. According to DNR, storm water discharges are degrading or threatening an estimated 40 percent of the streams, 90 percent of the inland lakes, many of the Great Lakes harbors and coastal waters, many wetland areas and substantial groundwater resources in Wisconsin. (Source: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/about.htm> (last visited 6/26/06))
- Urban storm water, from parking lots like Wal-Mart, are estimated to have three times more suspended solids than is allowed from most factories. (Source: Maryland Department of the Environment Storm Water Manual, Chapter 1, Article 63: “Why Storm Water Matters.” p. 1, 2000)
- In November 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency produced a clear guide to reducing storm water from big-box developments. Measures, such as roof gardens and underground parking, have been utilized by large factories and big-box development to avoid storm water run-off. (Source: http://www.minnehahacreek.org/documents/bigbox_final_doc_000.pdf) (last visited 6/26/06)
- For more information on the Hartford Wal-Mart, visit www.hartfordcrg.org
- Midwest Environmental Advocates is the first and only non-profit environmental law center in Wisconsin, providing legal and technical support to grassroots groups that are working for clean water, clean air and clean government in the Western Great Lakes region.
- Hartford Citizens for Responsible Government is a not-for-profit group of Hartford citizens whose goal is to monitor the actions of city government and hold the decision makers accountable to their constituents.
- Midwest Environmental Advocates’ comments on Wal-Mart’s Water Quality Certification Application can be viewed in its entirety at www.hartfordcrg.org.