

The Hadley Commoner

A newsletter by Hadley Neighbors for Sensible Development

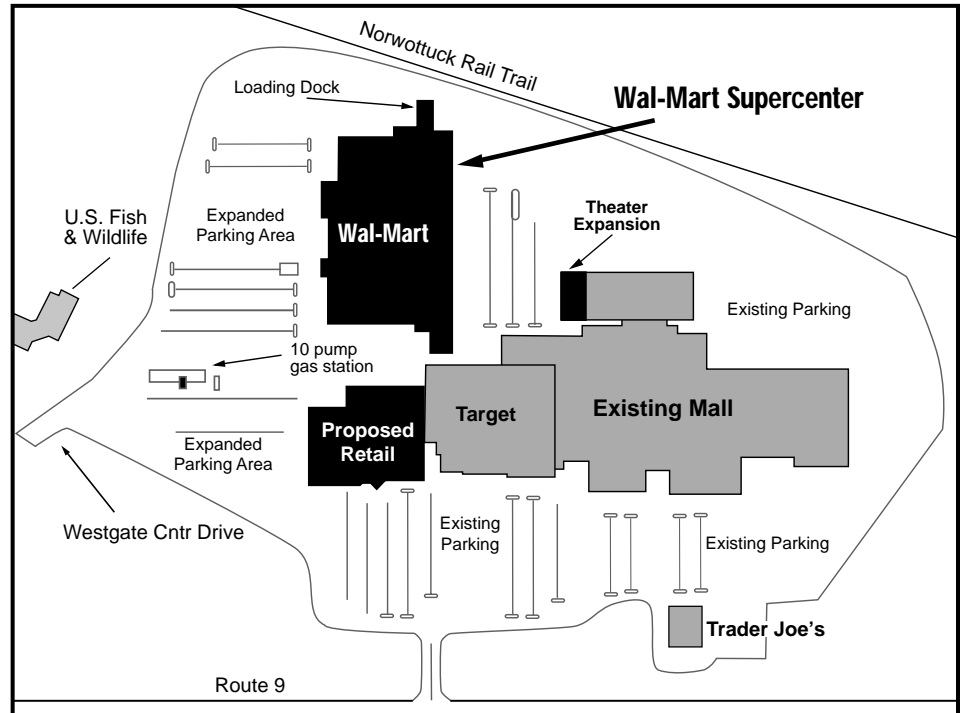
No. 1, August 2005

Wal-Mart Supercenter Proposed at Hampshire Mall

Wal-Mart is planning to build a Supercenter in Hadley. The 212,000-sq ft store would be the largest single building in town history and the third Supercenter in Massachusetts. Site plans show the store and a 1,700-car parking lot would be southeast of the Hampshire Mall along the Norwottuck Rail Trail. The Supercenter would be part of an expansion that includes more movie theaters and another 100,000-sq ft building.

Supercenters usually include a grocery store, gas station, garden center and other features. Wal-Mart's existing store is less than 2,500 ft away at the Mountain Farms Mall. Nationwide, at least 152 former Wal-Mart buildings are vacant, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Access to the Supercenter would be via Westgate Center Drive, which now ends at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Building. The road would be extended through wetlands to the new 11-acre parking lot and a Wal-Mart gas station with 10 pumps. Underground storage



Plans for the Wal-Mart Supercenter, larger than five football fields, along with other planned Hampshire Mall expansions.

tanks for gasoline would be near the headwaters area of Fish & Wildlife Brook, which feeds the pond where the Service holds its annual fishing contest. Plans show the Supercenter loading dock will be about 50 ft from the rail trail.

vide excellent habitat for birds and wildlife.

Other developers have compensated the town for impacts. In 2004, an agreement was reached under which Hadley

continues page 3

Why Care About Development in Hadley?

In the coming months, our community will make important decisions that will change what it's like to live here—**forever**. Our choices today will affect not only us, but future generations.

Development has both costs and benefits. Developers don't hesitate to tell us the benefits of their projects, but how do we learn about the costs? This newsletter takes a look at some upcoming development projects in Hadley, as well as ways citizens can make a difference. Watch for updates at www.HadleyNeighbors.org. — 🐾

"...the proposed mall expansion project will significantly worsen traffic..."

Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs, April 22, 2005

The mall expansion could impact some 52 acres, according to state environmental documents. The site is zoned commercial.

Today, much of the proposed site is active farmland or wetlands, which pro-

Hadley Planning Board
**Public Hearings
on Wal-Mart, Lowe's**
Tues., Aug. 16, 2005 at 7:30 pm
Hadley Senior Ctr, 46 Middle St.

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Lowe's Latest: Wider Intersection, Additional Driveway



A 4-lane intersection, approximately 1/2 mile west of this 5-lane intersection at Mountain Farms Mall, is planned in front of the new Lowe's on Route 9 in Hadley. Between these two intersections, Route 9 will still narrow to 2 lanes.

Plans filed for the proposed Lowe's store on Route 9 show some changes since the 2003-04 Town Meeting votes on rezoning. The new site plan, seen in May 13, 2005, environmental filings, adds a driveway directly opposite Pete's Drive In, just east of the future main entrance to Lowe's. Similar driveways at Dunkin' Donuts and Whole Foods fail to stop motorists from making unsafe left turns into oncoming traffic.

The Lowe's plans also show Route 9 widened to four lanes at the main entrance, with two through-travel lanes, one right turn lane for westbound traffic and one eastbound left turn lane. This intersection will have a new traffic signal and an entrance to the Hadley Garden Center.

The road widening may require reconstruction of the tunnel for the Norwottuck Rail Trail, which passes under Route 9 just west of the project site. The rail trail is a state park owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Lengthening the tunnel could require closing this portion of the trail during construction.

The plans show a 138,000-sq ft store set back on 13 acres outside the original 500-ft business zone. The store includes a garden center and a loading dock on the west side, which is exposed to a residential neighborhood. Representatives of the developer, Paradigm Development of Colden, New York, met with residents during the rezoning process and agreed to build a berm, plant trees and provide landscaping to reduce noise and light from the store, but none of these measures are shown on plans.

What you can do. Get a copy of the site plan from Town Hall or see www.HadleyNeighbors.org. Go to the Planning Board hearings on August 16 and September 20 and give your opinion. Watch the hearings on TV-5. Write a letter to the Board at 100 Middle Street, Hadley, MA, 01035, so they know where you stand. — 🐱

Home Depot Wants Bigger Sign than Law Allows

It's been a year since the Planning Board approved the Home Depot "Hadley Corner" project at Route 9 and North Maple Street. But not much has happened, as developers have struggled to secure permits and are now seeking a larger sign than town bylaws allow.

The project includes a 143,000-sq ft Home Depot store and restaurant and up to eight more as-yet unnamed retailers totaling 180,000 sq ft "Hadley Corner" will be about the same size as the Mountain Farms Mall directly across the street.

In July, Home Depot developers went to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to request a bigger sign than the 64 sq ft allowed by law. The new sign bylaw, passed by a large majority at Town Meeting in October 2004, affirmed this limit on signs along Route 9. Home Depot developers told the ZBA they need a sign many times larger so that it is "proportional" to the Home Depot store. The ZBA continued the hearing to August 10 so that more citizens will have the chance to give their views.

What you can do. Let the ZBA know what you think. The ZBA meets Wednesday, August 10, and as necessary, so call the Town Clerk's office at 584-1590 to find out when the next meeting will be held. Tune in to TV-5 for live broadcasts. — 🐱

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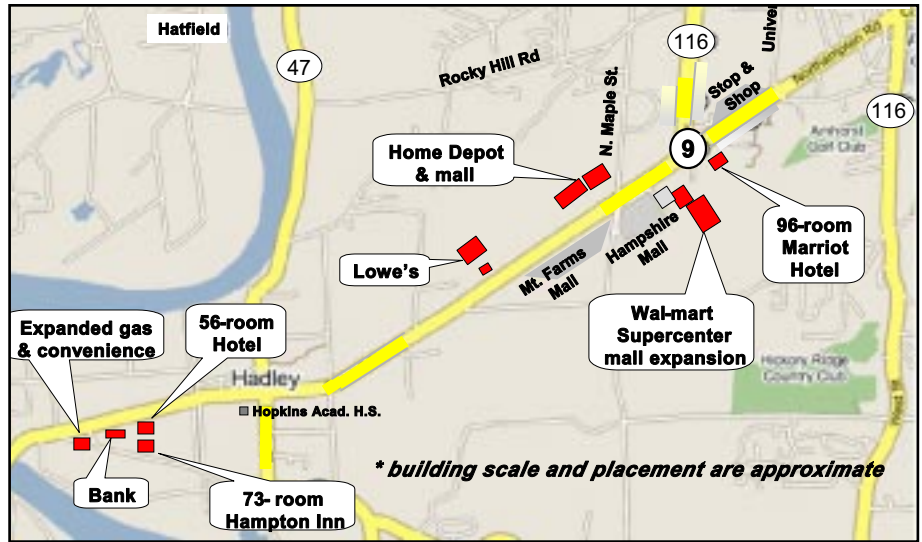
Write us at the address above or send email to info@hadleyneighbors.org
Let us know if you want to be added or removed from our mailing list.

— Jade Barker & David Elvin
on behalf of Hadley Neighbors

Hadley's Long Range Plan

The Long Range Planning Committee has released the final draft of Hadley's Long Range Plan. More than 50 residents turned out for a presentation about the plan at the Senior Center on June 24. The plan includes proposals to insure that new development benefits Hadley, including transfer of development rights (TDR) to help protect farmland and open space; a cap on the size of large retail stores; and making the town center at Route 9 and Middle Street safer and more pedestrian friendly. Residents will have a chance to discuss and vote on the plan at the fall Town Meeting. The plan is a package of recommendations—nothing in it is binding.

What you can do. Get a copy of the Long Range Plan at Town Hall or Goodwin Library. Contact the Select Board at 586-0221 and volunteer to help the Implementation Committee. Attend fall Town Meeting in October to discuss and vote for the plan. And bring your neighbors!— 🐾



But Wait, There's More...

Our newsletter is only four pages – hardly room to describe all the new development announced for Hadley. Though not all are large enough to require state environmental review, these projects will put new demands on our police, fire, water, sewer and other town services, as well as cause increased traffic on side streets. Call Town Hall at 584-1590 to find out when these projects will come before the Planning Board, or check www.HadleyNeighbors.org.

Wal-Mart, continued from page 1

will receive \$410,000 to “minimize the impact” of the 20-acre Lowe’s development further west on Route 9.

Neither Wal-Mart nor the Hampshire Mall owner, the Pyramid Companies of Syracuse, New York, have offered any compensation for the loss of farmland and open space. Public pressure could change this.

In other U.S. communities where Supercenters have opened, an average of two existing grocery stores have closed, according to a 2003 study by the economic forecasting firm Retail Forward, Inc. The loss of existing grocery jobs and the likely closure of the existing Wal-Mart at Mountain Farms Mall suggest that there will be no net employment gain from the Supercenter. Wal-Mart’s average U.S. wage is \$9.68 per hour, according to the company’s website. This is among the lowest in retail. In contrast, Costco’s average wage is \$17 per hour, according to *The New York Times*.

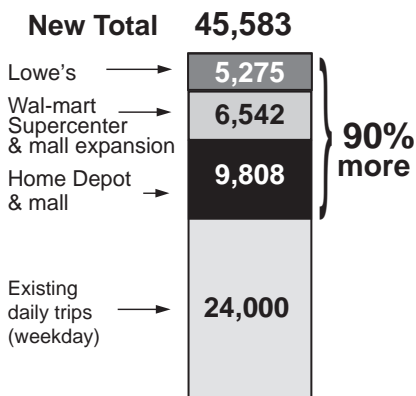
Much of the tax revenue from the Supercenter would likely go to increased costs for municipal services. Home Depot has acknowledged the increased burden their project will place on town services and agreed to fund a firefighter position.

What you can do. Go to the Planning Board hearings on August 16 and September 6 and let the Board know how you feel about the Wal-Mart Supercenter project. If you can’t attend, watch live on TV-5. Write the Planning Board at Hadley Town Hall, 100 Middle Street, Hadley MA 01035 or email to: planning@hadleyma.org. To learn more, get a free copy of the developer’s environmental notification form by contacting Steve Savaria at Fuss & O’Neill at (413) 450-0445 x4434 or ssavaria@fando.com.

Stuck in Traffic

We can expect more traffic and worse air quality in coming years. Here are the latest forecasts from environmental filings for the largest Route 9 projects.

Vehicle Trips per Day Rt 9 at Maple Street



Calendar

Wed., Aug. 10, 7:00 pm:

Zoning Board of Appeals, Home Depot sign hearing, Town Hall

Tues., Aug. 16, 7:30 pm:

Planning Board Hearings on Wal-Mart and Lowe's, Hadley Senior Center

Tues., Sept. 6, 7:30 pm:

Wal-Mart Super Center Hearing, Hopkins Academy

Tues., Sept. 20, 7:30 pm:

Lowe's Hearing, Hopkins Academy

Oct. 4 & 18, 7:30 pm:

Public hearings continue

Topics and dates subject to change

Site plans available at Town Hall during normal business hours, or see

www.HadleyNeighbors.org

Tune in to TV-5 for live and repeat coverage of these meetings.

Know Your Neighbors



**Eastern
Spadefoot
Toad**

Environmental regulators say the Wal-Mart Supercenter project "lies in close proximity to rare habitat for the Spotted Turtle and the Eastern Spadefoot Toad."



Spotted Turtle

About Hadley Neighbors for Sensible Development

We are residents of Hadley who support community growth and development that are compatible with Hadley's character, farming and natural resources. We believe that getting more residents involved in the democratic processes of Hadley is necessary to maintain and improve the quality of life in our town.

For more information, or to offer your support, see our website at www.HadleyNeighbors.org, email info@hadleyneighbors.org or write us at P O Box 202, Hadley, MA 01035.

This newsletter is brought to you with the assistance of the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund.— 🐸

Sources for the information in this newsletter include: Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for Hampshire Mall Expansion, EOEA#13478, March 23, 2005; MA Secretary of Environmental Affairs Certificate on ENF for EOEA#13478, April 22, 2005; Hampshire Mall expansion site plans filed May 2005; "What Happened When Wal-Mart Came to Town?" National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1996; Wal-Mart, Inc. website, www.walmartfacts.com; Final Environmental Impact Statement for Home Depot "Hadley Corner" EOEA#13055; *The New York Times*, July 24, 2005; ENF for Lowe's of Hadley, EOEA#13539, May 13, 2005; Lowe's site plan filed May 2005; MA Secretary of Environmental Affairs Certificate on ENF for EOEA#13539, June 2005; Home Depot presentation to Hadley Zoning Board of Appeals, July 2005; *Wall Street Journal*, Sept 15, 2004; "Wal-Mart Food: Big and Getting Bigger," Retail Forward, Inc., Sept. 3, 2003.

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P O Box 202
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INSIDE:

What's up with Route 9?

What you can do