

# Top 10 Reasons Why Wal-Mart Is Wrong for Northcross

## 1. Increased Crime Risks

**Crime Rates Are Higher in Areas Near a Wal-Mart Than Any Other Retailer.** A national study of 551 Wal-Marts found the average rate of reported police incidents for each Wal-Mart store was 400-1000 percent higher than the average rate for the nearest Target store - and six times higher for serious and violent crime.

<http://www.austinfullcircle.org/WalmartCrimeReport.pdf>

## 2. Wal-Marts Lower Prices. Including Your Property Value.

**Wal-Marts Have Been Shown to Decrease Property Values in Surrounding Neighborhoods.** Because Wal-Mart leads to the closure of surrounding businesses (see below), the property values on those commercial strips decrease as more and more establishments remain vacant (Thomas Muller and Elizabeth Humstone, *What Happened When Wal-Mart Came to Town? A Report on Three Iowa Communities with a Statistical Analysis of Seven Iowa Counties*, For the National Trust for Historic Preservation, May, 1996, pp.7.). It has been shown that when a Wal-Mart is built close to a residential neighborhood, as is planned at Northcross, the property values of those homes are put in danger

(<http://www.sprawl-busters.com/search.php?readstory=123>) and people are more apt to move

([http://www.wneg32.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WNEG/MGArticle/NEG\\_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1031782924630&path=](http://www.wneg32.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WNEG/MGArticle/NEG_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1031782924630&path=)).

## 3. Locally-Owned Businesses Are Better.

**Locally-Owned Businesses Contribute Significantly More to Our Economic Development and Growth.** A new Wal-Mart routinely puts local competition out of business. In Oklahoma City, 30 supermarkets closed after Wal-Mart saturated the area with Supercenters. In Kirksville, Mo., a new Wal-Mart quickly put out of business four clothing stores, four grocery stores, a stationary store, a fabric store, and a lawn-and-garden center. (Sources: Business Week; How Wal-Mart is Remaking Our World, Jim Hightower; Puget Sound Business Journal.) A local 2002 study found that local merchants generate substantially greater economic impact than chain retailers. Because they spend a much larger portion of revenue on local labor, they keep their profits in the community, and they provide strong support for the local community, they are literally invested in our growth and success. (Economic Impact Analysis: A Case Study, Local Merchants v. Chain Retailers, prepared by Civic Economics, Dec. 2002; executive summary available at [http://www.ibuyaustin.com/documents/lamar\\_retail\\_analysis\\_executive.pdf](http://www.ibuyaustin.com/documents/lamar_retail_analysis_executive.pdf).) The loss of locally owned businesses (Zinger's Hardware, Terra Toys, Bernina Sewing Center, and Sandy's Shoes) could be potentially devastating to the economic vitality of our neighborhoods.

## 4. "Wal-to-Wal" Traffic And Congestion.

**A 24-Hour Wal-Mart Superstore Will Significantly Increase Traffic and Congestion on Anderson, Shoal Creek, Rockwood, Justin, and Other Neighborhood Roadways.** Most Wal-Marts are located off highways, but this Wal-Mart will be surrounded by residential neighborhoods, accessed by surface streets that were not designed to handle such an increase in traffic – from shoppers and 18-wheeler trucks making deliveries 24/7. In one study, the count of cars exiting the Hopkinsville, KY Wal-Mart showed an average of 909 cars *per hour* on a Friday evening from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. <http://www.sprawl-busters.com/search.php?readstory=529>. This increased traffic is not only inconvenient and a drain on local productivity – it can seriously increase the response time for critical emergency services. *In spite of all of this, the City of Austin did not require Lincoln Properties to study the impact of the increase in traffic to the surrounding neighborhoods as part of their site plan application.*

## 5. Noise Pollution and Light Pollution.

**A 24-Hour Wal-Mart Superstore Will Increase Noise and Light Pollution.** Around the country, neighborhoods situated near a Wal-Mart complain about excessive noise from the store's refrigeration systems and idling tractor trailers

waiting at the loading dock. There are homes in Allandale situated just 600 feet from Northcross. <http://www.sullivan-county.com/id2/wal-mart/issue1.htm>

## **6. Less Local Employment Opportunities and Lower Overall Wages.**

**Wal-Mart Will Decrease Local Employment Opportunities and Overall Wages.** Because Wal-Mart uses a lower employee ratio than many stores, it replaces only two-thirds of the retail jobs lost when it puts local stores out of business. And because Wal-Mart has defined full-time work as 28 to 34 hours per week, these new jobs nearly always mean a drop in income for store workers. *In 2003, the average full-time Wal-Mart employee made about \$14,000.* Less than half of all Wal-Mart employees have health care coverage (as compared to more than two-thirds coverage for workers nationally). (Sources: Business Week; How Wal-Mart Is Remaking Our World, Jim Hightower; San Francisco Chronicle; Wal-Mart: An Example of Why Workers Remain Uninsured and Underinsured, AFL-CIO, October 2003.)

## **7. Wal-Mart's Corporate Ethics Are Unethical**

**Wal-Mart's Corporate Ethics Are Not Compatible with Our Neighborhood Values.** Wal-Mart is the biggest private employer, yet its labor practices are among the worst. Cases against Wal-Mart for forcing employees to work off the clock without pay are pending in 25 states. Nearly 1 million women filed the largest class action suit ever against the corporation, charging discrimination in pay levels and promotions. Nationally, Wal-Mart has sparked more lawsuits for disability discrimination than any other corporation, and in Maine alone, it has been cited for *1,400 violations of child labor laws*. The corporation also faces federal racketeering charges for repeated use of illegal aliens on cleaning crews. (Sources: Business Week; How Wal-Mart Is Remaking Our World, Jim Hightower.) Also see [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/12/AR2006101201608.html?nav=rss\\_business](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/12/AR2006101201608.html?nav=rss_business)

## **8. Wal-Mart's Environmental Track Record Is Bad.**

**Shoal Creek Runs Behind Many Residential Homes, and Wal-Mart's Track Record for Environmental Compliance Presents A Substantial Risk for Contamination.** Wal-Mart's history of violation of water protection laws includes violation of state petroleum storage tank laws, Clean Water Act violations stemming from excessive storm water runoff from its construction sites, selling refrigerants that contain ozone-depleting substances and many others. (<http://www.uwsa.edu/tfunds/walmart1204.htm>)

## **9. Wal-Mart Subtracts From Austin's Sales Tax Base.**

**Wal-Mart Will Not Add to the City's Sales Tax Base.** A recent study found that for every gain in sales by Wal-Mart Supercenters, there was a corresponding loss in sales for local businesses. In fact, general merchandise sales decreased nearly annually after the opening of the first Supercenter in any area. Sales tax revenues don't increase when Wal-Mart opens a new store; they just shift from existing stores. The city pays for more infrastructure and services to support the Supercenter, yet its sales tax revenues remain flat. (Source: The Economic Impact of Wal-Mart Supercenters on Existing Businesses in Mississippi, Mississippi State University Extension Service.)

## **10. Wal-Mart Outnumbers Everyone.**

**Wal-Mart Already Outnumbers Other Retailers in Austin by More Than 2-to-1.** The current Austin area phone book lists 10 Wal-Marts plus four Sam's (owned by Wal-Mart); with two more Supercenters now approved, the total number of Wal-Mart-owned stores will soon be 16. Its nearest competitor, Target, lists only six stores, followed by six Weiners, three K-marts and other chains such as JCPenney, Sears, World Market, Bed, Bath & Beyond and Old Navy. *Wal-Mart already dominates Austin's retail landscape* with more than twice as many stores as its nearest competitor. Its proposal to add 11 more Supercenters to Austin stands to skew the balance even further. As Wal-Mart continues to put competitors out of business and the range of choices shrink, what is the ultimate benefit to the Austin consumer?