

# CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

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Assembly Budget Committee  
Subcommittee No. 3 on  
Resources

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a06>

July 26, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Pam Stafford, Mayor  
Rohnert Park City Council  
130 Avram Avenue  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Dear Mayor Stafford and Councilmembers:

I am writing regarding the proposed Wal-Mart expansion project application that the Rohnert Park Planning Commission unanimously denied on April 22, 2010. I understand Wal-Mart has appealed this decision to the city council. I am writing to express my view that the Planning Commission acted appropriately and to urge the Council to carefully consider the many factors suggesting that the appeal should be denied.

Healthy sustainable development depends on proactive regional city and county planning, and with the recent voter approval of the Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit (SMART), transit-oriented development should take place around the 14 planned SMART stations. The proposed 170,000 square-foot Wal-Mart supercenter, which would be located one-quarter of a mile away from the nearest SMART station, would be a step in the wrong direction for the following reasons:

- The project is inconsistent with recommendations by the Association for Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transit Authority for transit-oriented development that encourages the creation of good jobs and densely-built affordable housing—along the 101 corridor and near the fourteen SMART train stations in Marin and Sonoma.
- Vehicle miles driven per customer will increase because a supercenter draws shoppers from a greater distance than a discount store. In order to comply with AB 32, all nine cities, including Rohnert Park and the County of Sonoma, have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2015—a laudable goal. Approval of the supercenter will create more car trips, and thus greater greenhouse gas emissions, at a time when local governments are working to address the climate crisis and to meet the goals in AB 32.

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- The economic analysis prepared by Dr. Robert Eyer, Chairman of the Economics Department and Director of the Center for Regional Economic Analysis at Sonoma State University, raises serious questions about the economic impacts of the project, including threats to locally-owned grocery stores and many local businesses that need our support in these tough economic times, as well as the prospect of job quality decline as hourly wages drop, local businesses close, and workers shift to the supercenter for employment.
- The Rohnert Park General Plan Goal LU-7, to “encourage new neighborhood commercial facilities to be located to maximize accessibility to all residential areas,” is good public policy and should be followed. The proposed project seems incompatible with this goal.

I greatly respect and appreciate your work to meet the needs of the Rohnert Park community—economically and environmentally. Toward that end, I trust that you will consider not only the points raised above, but also the many objections to this project from important labor, environmental and local business organizations as well as many individuals in Rohnert Park that are opposed to the project. This project has the potential for significant adverse impacts to communities throughout southern and central Sonoma County. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



**JARED HUFFMAN**  
Assemblymember, 6<sup>th</sup> District