

Our Community First Continues Opposition To Wal-Mart Supercenter

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Our Community First remains resolute in their fight against a 200,000 square foot Wal-Mart supercenter in west Bend. According to a news release issued August 15, the organization is committed to building continued community opposition to the supercenter, and remain confident that what they believe is a growing number of Bend residents think that the proposed Wal-Mart would be bad business for Bend.

Wal-Mart Supercenter, Photo by: Wal-Mart "Broad citizen participation has made all the difference and will continue to be the key to stopping a Wal-Mart supercenter in Bend. The Land Use Board of Appeal's (LUBA) denial of Wal-Mart's supercenter application vindicates the hard work of ordinary people in our community. Wal-Mart's decision to move forward ignores community concerns," said the release.

Last month, the Oregon LUBA upheld Bend's thumbs-down on the Wal-Mart proposal, declaring that a city hearings office had properly ruled that traffic concerns raised by opponents were not adequately addressed. Wal-Mart dropped their appeal of the decision and plans to submit a revised application.

Our Community First expresses disappointment, but not surprise, that Wal-Mart will proceed with its plans. "Wal-Mart is used to having its own way regardless of community response. The corporation's track record in communities across the U.S. attests to its willingness to spend millions of dollars to site a new store at the same time that it refuses to provide employees a decent living standard, engages in predatory business practices that kill local businesses, and looks for ways to buy into the public process," said the release.

Even with an expected multi-million dollar investment by Wal-Mart to promote a transportation plan solution, Our Community First takes the position that a development of this magnitude would only add to traffic

congestion and be another sign of runaway growth that worries so many Bend residents.

According to the news release, Our Community First would like to see Wal-Mart abandon its supercenter plans and instead channel those dollars into living wages and affordable health care for the existing 450 Central Oregon Wal-Mart employees.

More information about Our Community First may be found at www.notanotherwalmart.org.

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