

**EMAILS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL OFFICE RE: BIG BOX ORDINANCE  
AGENDA ITEM NO. 7**

Subject: Re: [tina] box box ordinance  
Date: Sat, 29 Jan 2005 10:09:25 -0600  
From: [snowfall@mailbag.com](mailto:snowfall@mailbag.com)

Brenda and Forum:

I support this ordinance for a reason not mentioned so far. Because we downtown are accepting much taller and denser development than before in order to reduce greenfield development in other parts of Dane County, want a big box ordinance that will, at the same time, help accomplish that goal from the other side. Otherwise our efforts downtown will be a failure. Fair is fair.

**Mary P.**

Subject: Big Box ordinance  
Date: Sat, 29 Jan 2005 08:28:17 -0600  
From: [dwaugh@library.wisc.edu](mailto:dwaugh@library.wisc.edu)

Brenda, I want to go on record supporting the big box ordinance. My feeling is that big box stores are an eyesore and they suck the life out of the small business community that makes a community unique and interesting. I would testify but Tuesday night is my son's birthday.

**David Waugh**  
**1213 E. Mifflin Street**  
**Madison, WI 53703**

Subject: Please vote for the big box ordinance  
Date: Sun, 30 Jan 2005 20:21:46 -0600  
From: [lzellers@mailbag.com](mailto:lzellers@mailbag.com)  
To: Mike Verveer <[district4@council.ci.madison.wi.us](mailto:district4@council.ci.madison.wi.us)>, Brenda K. Konkel <[District2@council.ci.madison.wi.us](mailto:District2@council.ci.madison.wi.us)>, Austin King <[district8@council.ci.madison.wi.us](mailto:district8@council.ci.madison.wi.us)>, Judy Olson <[district6@council.ci.madison.wi.us](mailto:district6@council.ci.madison.wi.us)>

Dear Downtown Alders,

While I think the big box ordinance should be stronger, at least this is a start. Please vote in favor. Thank you.

**Ledell Zellers**

1/30/2005 3:11:58 PM

Dear Council Members,

It is with great respect for your ongoing efforts on behalf of my friends and colleagues living and working in South Madison that I write in support of the proposed design guidelines for "big box" retail and commercial development. I write as a concerned citizen, but also to offer my insights

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as a community design professional. In my capacity as a professional, and in public service as faculty at the UW-Madison, I have participated as an advisor to a number of groups and projects in Madison. I am very familiar with the complexity of issues in South Madison in particular.

Upon reviewing the proposed design guidelines, I find that they are informed by solid research specific to the unique combination of social, economic, historic, and environmental aspects of the community, and importantly, they are based on thoughtful investigations into case studies of "best practices" employed in numerous communities around the country. These case studies clearly demonstrate the long and short term economic and social benefits of designing for pedestrian safety and "quality of life" in commercial areas of urban neighborhoods; these principles are at the core of the guidelines in question. Furthermore, these case studies clearly demonstrate that economic development and quality of life are not mutually exclusive, but rather, unplanned development that does not take quality of life into account ultimately diminishes both.

As you deliberate these important policy issues, I respectfully encourage you to keep in mind that the proposed design guidelines are grounded in a considerable body of research, and, as the positive results of your thoughtful decisions over the years reflect, the Council knows that good policy is based in good research. If I may be of any assistance as you deliberate, I am at your service.

Most Respectfully,

**Susan Thering Ph.D. Assistant Professor and Outreach Coordinator**

Department of Landscape Architecture  
Community Design Action Research Group  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Madison WI 53706  
P: 608.263.6506  
F: 608.265.6262  
[sathering@wisc.edu](mailto:sathering@wisc.edu)

1/30/2005 8:18:07 PM

From Carolyn Freiwald [carolynfry@hotmail.com](mailto:carolynfry@hotmail.com)

I support an ordinance; Madison is an attractive enough city where people spend money, so stores will come. This will simply help us control development within our own city.

Thanks,

**C Freiwald**

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From: [JOHNENERGY@peoplepc.com](mailto:JOHNENERGY@peoplepc.com)  
1/31/2005 11:18:43 AM

I support the proposal to limit big box retail stores in Madison.

**John Hingtgen**, 14 Corry St., Madison, WI 53704  
608-246-4332

From: [jennifer.belknap@excite.com](mailto:jennifer.belknap@excite.com)  
1/31/2005 12:34:26 PM  
To: Madison City Council

From: **Jennifer Belknap**, 127 N. Franklin St., Madison, WI 53703

Public Comment:

I strongly support the ordinance you are considering to set design standards for large retail establishments. It provides detailed guidance for developers to make large retail buildings more pedestrian-friendly, more attractive, and to better utilize available land in the city. It also provides the necessary flexibility for a developer to propose unique designs, so that developers will not have their creativity limited by the standards.

Limiting the footprint size of retail buildings will not limit the actual size of the buildings since they can be built with additional floors. This is a common sense approach to conserving land and should be supported by anyone who truly believes in the concept of "Smart Growth."

As a civil engineer, I believe it is extremely important to use our land wisely. When we build more compactly we do more than just conserve land, we also save taxpayer money by reducing the number of miles of road & sewer we have to build and maintain. By building more compactly we also reduce our impact to water resources by creating less stormwater and we reduce our impact to air quality by improving transit and bike/pedestrian options for transportation and reducing the miles necessary to drive to stores.

I encourage the City Council to pass the design standards for large retail establishments ordinance. Thank you for considering my comment.

From: [jerubin@wisc.edu](mailto:jerubin@wisc.edu)  
**Jill Rubin**, Institute for Environment Studies  
Department of Urban and Regional, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 608.294.9304  
1/31/2005 12:42:33 PM

Hello City Council Members,

I am writing to voice my support for the big box ordinance you are considering on Tuesday night. The diversity of local businesses in Madison not only improves the quality of life by supporting the unique character of our neighborhoods, meaningful social interactions, and long-term relationships, but also helps the economy thrive locally and doesn't export our dollars to multinational corporations with headquarters far away. In addition, small businesses create walkable neighborhoods and counter the sprawl on the east and west sides of our City.

Thank you for considering my opinion. Please support this much-needed ordinance!

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From: [rekearley@wisc.edu](mailto:rekearley@wisc.edu)  
1/31/2005 12:59:40 PM

Hi, Brenda,

It is possibly too late to add to the ordinance, but did you all consider requiring "green roofs" on big-box developments? Think meadows on roofs. Chicago is encouraging them to help reduce the urban heat island effect; there is one on City Hall and one on the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. Germany has them in high numbers for reducing stormwater runoff -- I think they might be required on new buildings with roofs over a certain size. Green roofs can also help insulate buildings, reducing heating and cooling costs, and they can (amazingly) extend the life of the roof because the roofing layer is shielded from UV by the plants. Finally, they have the potential for providing habitat for insects and birds -- in a small way, helping to offset the environmental costs of developing the land.

I couldn't find Mike Barrett's email address -- could you please forward to him?

Sincerely,  
**Ruth Kearley**, 202 N. Spooner St

From: Brenda Konkel [<mailto:brendakonkel@yahoo.com>]  
Sent: Saturday, January 29, 2005 2:05 PM  
To: 4lakes greens; [pddiscuss@prodane.org](mailto:pddiscuss@prodane.org); ahaa  
Subject: [4LakesGreens] we REALLY need your help on big box . . .

this is the e-mail from mike barrett that outlines the issues - we really need your support - if you can't make it to the meeting, please send an e-mail to [council@cityofmadison.com](mailto:council@cityofmadison.com) . . . I'm sick to death of getting beat up by the business community . . . they think they're the only one's who are effected by anything . . . so please, do what you can . . . we need to hear your voices . . . we need a balance . . .

b

The short story:

What: Big Box Design Standards up for final approval at City Council (Substitute Ordinance, I.D. 33543).  
Where: Common Council Chambers (Rm. 201), City-County Bldg, 210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd

When: 6:30 PM, City Council, Tues. Feb 1, 2005.

Who: You before the Common Council

How: Testify (orally or in writing) that setting standards for Big Boxes is in general a good thing for our community, for business and our environment.

Or contact your alder directly before the Council meeting (contact info: <http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/council/index.html>)

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The long story:

Ald Brenda Konkol, Ald. Ken Golden and Ald. Robbie Webber are co-sponsors of an ordinance to set design standards for large retail establishments - "big boxes." It will be before the Common Council Tues., Feb 2, and we could use a few people to show up and support it. These alders have been working on this thing for two years, and now, there is a hint of a movement to delay it further (I'll leave it purposefully vague, but it is a real threat to the ultimate passage of this thing). Not sure what's up with that, but it's time to move the thing forward or it may die a permanent death by delay. Having just a few people come say "this is something we need and want" would make a big impact.

The Council's agenda for this month is still not up on the city's website (<http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/council/index.html>), but when it is up (this weekend?), look for:

"Substitute Ordinance, I.D. 33543, to create and renumber certain sections of the ordinance to create design requirements for large retail establishments "

Briefly, the ordinance would:

- \* Limit stores to 100,000 square feet OF FOOTPRINT. The store can be of unlimited (or at least undetermined) size, as long as it goes up. After 100k s.f., it must go up into higher stories. Many communities have gone with size standards and this one is quite generous.
- \* Require that only 50% of the frontage of the lot be taken up by parking - that stores would be brought up to the street/sidewalk to create a more urban-friendly look to new developments. Less walking across acres of parking lot to get to the store. Further parking can be around back or between stores.
- \* Require that stores have an entrance on the main street. That means you can get to it from the sidewalk. Again, this is to create a more pedestrian-friendly feel.
- \* Set design standards for stores over 40,000 square feet. Essentially trying to get more attractive big boxes. Urban Design Commission often wants to turn something down for being ugly, but often feels it has no basis for doing so. This would strengthen their hand and at the same time give developers the guidelines they have requested in the past. About half on UDC disagrees with this though; they think it should be a blank slate that will encourage creativity. But from my experience on the UDC, the negotiations always go toward worse/bland rather than better/creative (witness the evolution of Ken Kopp's site on Monroe, now proposed to be sheathed in plasticky EIFS rather than the real brick originally proposed) . This at least sets a minimum.
- \* Set landscaping standards so we don't just see empty parking lots, and minimize the environmental impact of the pavement; e.g., increase bio-infiltration (raingardens, drainage swales, etc.).
- \*Exceptional quality always has an exception. Almost all the requirements can be overridden if a commission feels a design is "outstanding." This allows the flexibility that the development community has requested. They want to be able to bring in something new and unseen in the past and still get it through the commissions. We allowed them to do this by allowing the requirements to be overridden by a supermajority of the commission.

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You might remember a few months back that the UDC (of which I'm a member) got blasted for having the temerity to insist on a minimum of 2 stories. The argument behind the 2 story provision was that without at least 2 stories, this ordinance essentially codified sprawl. I never saw it that way, exactly. While I supported the 2 story amendment (always push for more!), I've always seen the thrust of this ordinance as setting \*minimum\* standards.

The 2 story requirement was quickly, scuttled by the Plan Commission (ahem). But most of the other positive elements remain. Since the city commissions, all the way up to the Common Council routinely cave to developments well below these standards, I feel that this floor is vitally necessary.

Here's your chance to help the city improve on what is going on out on the fringes. And it won't just happen on its own. Call or email your alder, and or go to the council meeting and \*ask\* for it to happen.

Thanks in advance. Feel free to send it to other people or lists.

**-Mike Barrett**

From: [results@careersmiths.com](mailto:results@careersmiths.com)  
1/31/2005 1:29:58 PM

I wish to indicate my active support for The regulation being considered by the council on Tuesday the first. Mass marketers will continue to go where they can sell the most. What we will avoid is out of control development that will litter our landscape with unattractive buildings surrounded by environmentally detrimental blacktop. Most important, we put the brakes on adding more deteriorating empty buildings to our city. Mass chains will take less away from the city's esthetics, it will be a slite check on sprawl. In so far as over development does not occur, thir will be greater opportunity for local business to grow. We can expect that local small business people will give their help greater pay and respect.

Sincerely,  
**Brian Larson**, 910 Regent Street

From: [cecragan@gmail.com](mailto:cecragan@gmail.com)  
1/31/2005 4:01:04 PM

Althought I cannot attend the Council meeting on Big Box Design Standards. I wanted to send an email in support of its passage. As a community member who would like to protect the wonderful aspects that make this town so unique I believe this ordinance is necessary.

Thank you,  
Clare Cragan  
[cecragan@gmail.com](mailto:cecragan@gmail.com)

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From: [justinmog@terracom.ne](mailto:justinmog@terracom.ne)  
1/31/2005 4:24:34 PM  
Dear Madison Common Council,

Though I will not be able to attend the February 1, 2005 city council meeting, I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the ordinance (authored by Alders Konkel, Golden, and Webber) to regulate the size and design of "big box" retailers

As an employee and patron of small, locally-owned, downtown businesses, I urge the Council to take whatever action it can to help curb any further invasion of "big box" retailers into Madison. Of course, it is problematic to generalize, but countless examples from communities around Wisconsin and the nation show that when large, national chains like these move into the outskirts of towns, the community suffers much more than it gains. Sure, shoppers may save a few bucks on mass-produced, low-quality items, but consider all of the potential drawbacks:

- \* Typically, wages and worker benefits are depressed as big box retailers like Wal-Mart are world-renowned for their low pay and horrible treatment of workers.

- \* The environment is bound to suffer as precious, fertile land is covered with vast impermeable surfaces -- thereby reducing greenspace, increasing runoff (typically poisoned by oils, salts and other industrial chemicals on parking lots) and reducing recharge of our falling water-table.

- \* Transportation and urban sprawl challenges arise as people are further encouraged to drive in private automobiles to the far-ends of town or to move out to new homes in the suburbs. The city is forced to accommodate this increase in traffic and we all suffer from the adverse human health and climate-change impacts of increased automobile pollution.

- \* The local character and aesthetic charm of our wonderful city is reduced as national chains replace what is unique to Madison with the ugliness of standardized, cheaply-built big box stores emblazoned with national logos.

- \* Local businesses, economies, and downtown destinations suffer as big box retailers draw shoppers to the suburbs and siphon money off to national corporations with low prices made possible by the abuse of workers and the environment. These things have happened over and over again all around the country. It has already begun to happen in Madison. We should do everything we can to stem that tide.

The ordinance being introduced on February 1st does not substantially address the economic issues surrounding the phenomenon of big box retailers; but it at least makes a start towards limiting their impact. I think we must begin by limiting the allowable size of stores, and the 100,000 square feet limit on footprint is a good start. We must also address the aesthetic issue of a big box set behind acres of store-front parking and the ordinance takes such a step by requiring that only 50% of the frontage of the lot be taken up by parking. Encouraging a human-scale, pedestrian-friendly feel is essential, and I therefore support the ordinance's requirement that stores have an entrance on the main street. I also support the notion that the city set design and landscaping standards for stores over 40,000 square feet. Finally, this ordinance is actually quite friendly to even the largest businesses, as long as they are interested in working with the city to develop an appealing plan. By allowing the requirements to be overridden by a super-majority of the commission we are making compromise possible.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to pass this ordinance and thereby take a bold step to protect what is unique and special about Madison as the city continues to grow!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Justin Mog, 315 N. Ingersoll St, Madison, WI 53703-1611

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From: [erikasanders@hotmail.com](mailto:erikasanders@hotmail.com)  
2/1/2005 9:40:13 AM

Dear Members of the Common Council:

We are writing to support the proposed ordinance to set design standards for large retail establishments. The proposed ordinance will have many advantages:

- 1) By limiting stores to 100,000 square feet of footprint, it will promote efficient land use and help reduce sprawl.
- 2) By requiring an entrance on the main street and that only half of the lot frontage be taken up by parking, it will enhance accessibility of stores by pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders and wheelchair users. This increased accessibility promotes energy-efficient transportation choices and improves the ability of all people to have equal access to shopping opportunities.
- 3) By setting landscaping standards, it will reduce the parking lot run-off that harms our environment.
- 4) By encouraging attractive design standards, it will help us ensure that Madison's outskirts don't become the homogeneous, barren concrete landscape that typifies so many other cities. Madison has a lot of character and a great architectural history -- let's keep it that way.

Business development in Madison is necessary and desirable. It is incumbent upon all of us, however, to make sure that business development occurs in a way that balances the interests of the general public, of consumers, and of businesses. We believe that this ordinance would help create this balance.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Erika Sanders and Adrian Hegeman  
5746 Bittersweet Place  
Madison, WI 53705

From: [kidsgarden@trovgardens.org](mailto:kidsgarden@trovgardens.org)  
2/1/2005 12:07:33 PM  
City Council Members-

I have read through the proposed "Big Box" ordinance and would like to express my support of it and encourage you to approve it. One of the things I love about Madison is that the majority of stores that I visit day to day to buy my groceries, get a bottle of wine, pick up a pair of socks or something for my kitchen are independently owned businesses. I think Madison needs to regulate chain stores more closely, they are not of the city so therefore they often do not have much regard for their impact on our city. Madison is one of the best cities in the country to live in, let's try to keep it unique and personal.

Sincerely,

Megan Cain  
53704

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From: [jodi@progressive.org](mailto:jodi@progressive.org)  
2/1/2005 10:39:36 AM

Dear Madison Common Council, Though I will not be able to attend the February 1, 2005 city council meeting, I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the ordinance (authored by Alders Konkel, Golden, and Webber) to regulate the size and design of "big box" retailers. As an employee and patron of small, locally-owned, downtown businesses, I urge the Council to take whatever action it can to help curb any further invasion of "big box" retailers into Madison. Of course, it is problematic to generalize, but countless examples from communities around Wisconsin and the nation show that when large, national chains like these move into the outskirts of towns, the community suffers much more than it gains. Sure, shoppers may save a few bucks on mass-produced, low-quality items, but consider all of the potential drawbacks: leftTypically, wages and worker benefits are depressed as big box retailers like Wal-Mart are world-renowned for their low pay and horrible treatment of workers. The environment is bound to suffer as precious, fertile land is covered with vast impermeable surfaces -- thereby reducing greenspace, increasing runoff (typically poisoned by oils, salts and other industrial chemicals on parking lots) and reducing recharge of our falling water-table. Transportation and urban sprawl challenges arise as people are further encouraged to drive in private automobiles to the far-ends of town or to move out to new homes in the suburbs. The city is forced to accommodate this increase in traffic and we all suffer from the adverse human health and climate-change impacts of increased automobile pollution. The local character and aesthetic charm of our wonderful city is reduced as national chains replace what is unique to Madison with the ugliness of standardized, cheaply-built big box stores emblazoned with national logos. Local businesses, economies, and downtown destinations suffer as big box retailers draw shoppers to the suburbs and siphon money off to national corporations with low prices made possible by the abuse of workers and the environment. These things have happened over and over again all around the country. It has already begun to happen in Madison. We should do everything we can to stem that tide. The ordinance being introduced on February 1st does not substantially address the economic issues surrounding the phenomenon of big box retailers; but it at least makes a start towards limiting their impact. I think we must begin by limiting the allowable size of stores, and the 100,000 square feet limit on footprint is a good start. We must also address the aesthetic issue of a big box set behind acres of store-front parking and the ordinance takes such a step by requiring that only 50% of the frontage of the lot be taken up by parking. Encouraging a human-scale, pedestrian-friendly feel is essential, and I therefore support the ordinance's requirement that stores have an entrance on the main street. \* Set design standards for stores over 40,000 square feet. Essentially trying to get more attractive big boxes. Urban Design Commission often wants to turn something down for being ugly, but often feels it has no basis for doing so. This would strengthen their hand and at the same time give developers the guidelines they have requested in the past. About half on UDC disagrees with this though; they think it should be a blank slate that will encourage creativity. But from my experience on the UDC, the negotiations always go toward worse/bland rather than better/creative (witness the evolution of Ken Kopp's site on Monroe, now proposed to be sheathed in plasticky EIFS rather than the real brick originally proposed). This at least sets a minimum. \* Set landscaping standards so we don't just see empty parking lots, and minimize the environmental impact of the pavement; e.g., increase bio-infiltration (raingardens, drainage swales, etc.). \*Exceptional quality always has an exception. Almost all the requirements can be overridden if a commission feels a design is "outstanding." This allows the flexibility that the development community has requested. They want to be able to bring in something new and unseen in the past and still get it through the commissions. We allowed them to do this by allowing the requirements to be overridden by a supermajority of the commission. Sincerely, Jodi Vander Molen 841 Williamson St., #5 Madison, WI 53703

