



Citizens Against Reckless Development

Tennis Road Informational Booklet

www.agawamcard.com

P.O. Box 626, Agawam, MA 01001-0626

Phone: 413-789-7610

What is C.A.R.D?

- We are a group of Agawam residents dedicated to the responsible development of our town, and to remembering its rural heritage.

Our major concern is the proposed shopping plaza on Tennis Road.



Problem #1

. is the size of the project.

Shopping Center:	Riverdale Shops ¹	Proposed Agawam Shopping Plaza ²
	Kohl's / Stop & Shop Plaza, Costco, Home Depot, Pep Boys, Michael's / Dick's	
Acreage:	71	86
Total Square Footage:	566,340	563,000

¹ West Springfield Assessors Office

² Town of Agawam / National Realty & Development Corporation

Both of these are examples of *regional* shopping centers



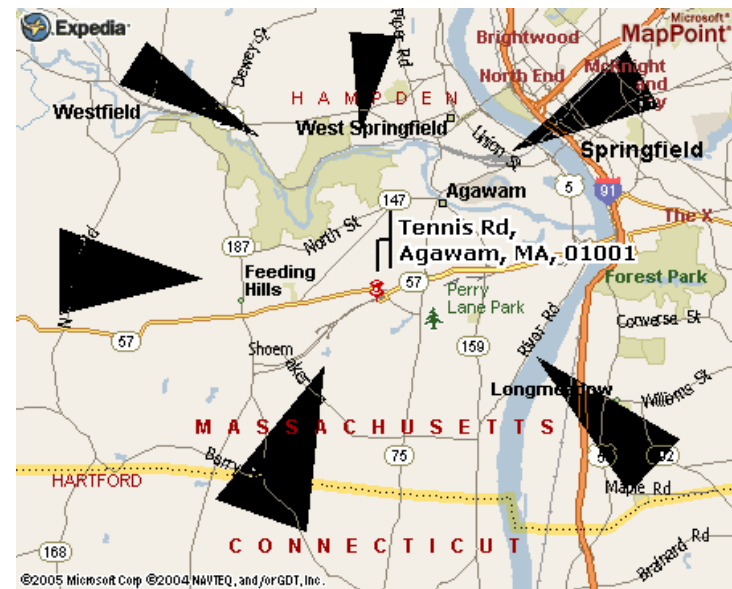
Problem #2

. is the traffic.

The developer has repeatedly said that this will be a community shopping center for Agawam residents. However, their website (www.NRDC.com) shows population figures for a 3, 5, and 10-mile radius.

If you build it, "they" will come from:

- Suffield
- West Springfield
- Longmeadow
- Springfield
- Westfield
- Southwick & the hilltowns



Problem #2

Per an independent traffic study³, it is anticipated that a shopping center of the size proposed will generate over 100,000 vehicle trips every week, with higher amounts during peak shopping periods.

Agawam already has two regional traffic magnets:

- The Big E
- Six Flags New England

³As we go to press, no traffic figures are available from the developer. Our traffic figures are from The Institute of Transportation Engineers (I.T.E.) Trip Generation 7th Edition. See our website, www.agawamcard.com, for details.

Problem #2

The proposed Agawam shopping plaza:

- Will have parking spaces for over 2,800 cars - more than the combined parking areas of Home Depot, Costco and the Kohl's/Stop and Shop shopping complex in W. Springfield.
- Won't "go away" after three weeks like Big E traffic, or after five months like Six Flags. It is permanent, 24/7, 365 days a year, with car traffic in the daytime and truck suppliers at night.

Think about September in Agawam, when Big E traffic meets Six Flags traffic meets the shopping plaza traffic. It will be 3 weeks of gridlock.

Traffic will be heaviest on weekends, during weekday evenings, and during the holiday shopping season.

Most traffic into and out of the shopping plaza will have to utilize Mill St., a narrow, well-traveled, two lane residential road.



Problem #2

More cars meanslonger back ups⁴ at:



- Feeding Hills center, coming and going in all directions;
- The Geissler's, CVS, Dunkin Donuts "corner" (Silver and Suffield Streets);
- Suffield and Mill, Suffield and Cooper, Cooper and Mill Streets;
- Rt. 57/Suffield St. exit ramp;
- The South End Bridge rotary ramps, coming into and leaving Agawam;
- The Suffield Street/Springfield St. / Main Street intersection.

⁴The developer, NRDC, proposed three new ramps to/from Route 57 on his initial rendering. Two of these ramps (Mill St to westbound Route 57 and westbound Route 57 to Mill Street) would intersect the narrow Mill Street Bridge over route 57. Discussions with Mass Highway District 2 office stated that no left turn is allowed from the Mill Street ramp due to a 'sight line' problem on Mill Street. This may prohibit the construction of one or two of the proposed ramps on Mill Street. On the latest developer's rendering, the two proposed Mill Street ramps have disappeared. Is there any proposal that can address the potential traffic headache in this area?



Problem #3

. . . is safety.

People sometimes dismiss safety as an issue until there is an accident, or until someone is hit by a car.



Problem #3

- The reality is that due to lack of sidewalks on Mill St., High School kids have to walk in the street after crossing Tennis Road on their way to Suffield Street. The athletic teams often jog down Mill St. & Cooper St., where a substantial increase in traffic will occur.
- Some Agawam residents are habitual walkers, on and off the sidewalks. They all will be in greater danger with greater traffic.
- What cannot be dismissed is that fire, police, and ambulance equipment must be able to get over the Mill St. bridge. If an emergency vehicle is blocked from responding to an emergency due to traffic congestion, it could result in tragedy. Remember, Mill St. is a two-lane road with no breakdown lane. It is the only fast route between Feeding Hills and Agawam Center for emergency vehicles.



Problem #4

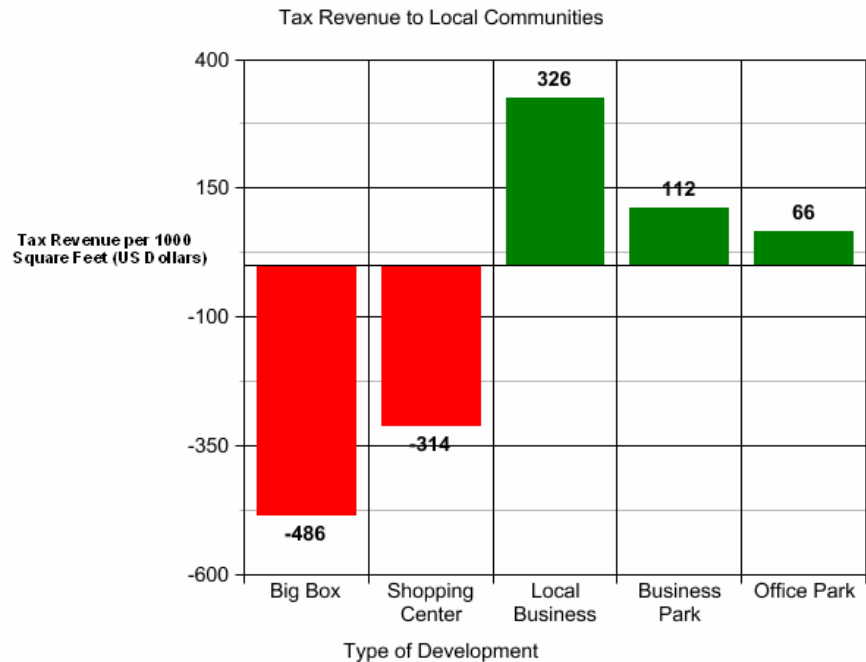
. . . is taxes.

The developer, NRDC, has said that Agawam's coffers will be increased by \$900,000 a year. This equates to about \$70 a year per taxable residential property.

Problem #4

According to a fiscal impact study conducted by Tischler & Associates for Barnstable, Massachusetts⁵, a shopping center generates an annual **deficit** to local tax revenue of \$314 per 1000 square feet. A “big box” retailer generates an annual deficit of \$486 per 1000 square feet. These negative impacts are generally due to the increased infrastructure costs associated with excessive road usage, and public safety requirements.

Conversely, a specialty retailer (i.e. local business) generates annual tax **revenue** of \$326 per 1000 square feet. A business park generates annual tax revenue of \$112 per 1000 square feet, while an office park generates annual tax revenue of \$66 per 1000 square feet.

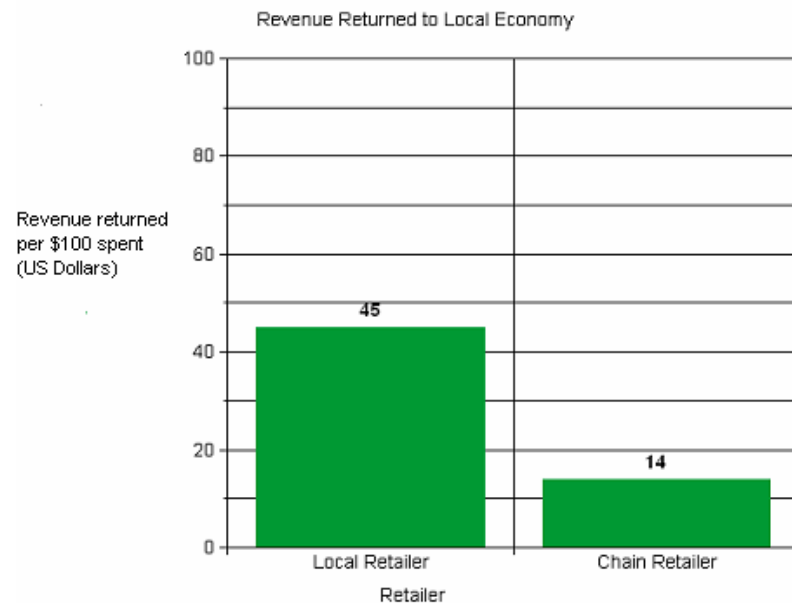


⁵Prototype land use fiscal analysis conducted by Tischler & Associates Inc. for the Town of Barnstable, Massachusetts, based on fiscal year 2002 figures. See our website, www.agawamcard.com for details.

Problem #4

In addition, a 2003 study conducted by The Local Institute for Self-Reliance⁶, showed that for every \$100 spent at a local retailer, \$45 is returned to the local economy, versus \$14 returned for every \$100 spent at a national chain retailer.

You must also factor in loss of tax revenue from businesses that will close or lose business. In addition, there will be a loss of tax revenue from residential properties, which will lose value. As you can see, the **anticipated** \$900,000 in tax revenue could actually lose the town money, and will return less money to the local economy than comparable locally owned businesses.



⁶The Economic Impact of Local Businesses vs. Chain Retailers. A Case Study in Mid-Coast Maine. Local Institute for Self-Reliance. September 2003. See our website, www.agawamcard.com for details.

Problem #5

. . . is local business impact.

The developer stated that when this shopping plaza is built, other Agawam businesses would benefit.

The reality is that a new shopping mall does not create new spending or new jobs. It is a shell game that redistributes spending, and any new jobs created are offset by job losses at existing businesses.

Problem #5

. . . As we go to “press”, the developer is unable to identify who his tenants will be so we thought it would also be instructive to:

“PLAY DEVELOPER”

Winner	Loser
Target	Hardware
Wal-Mart	Lawn Equipment
Lowes	Nursery
Home Depot	Building Materials
Barnes & Noble	Kitchen Cabinets
Staples	Auto Parts
Christmas Tree Shops	Restaurant
Sports Authority	Grocery Store
Bed, Bath And Beyond	Bakery
Panera Bread	Optician
Kohls	Furniture
Borders	Florist
Auto Zone	

Choose one “store” from the left column for your new “mall”. Choose one local merchant from the right column that will be severely impacted, or go out of business as a result.

Feel free to insert the businesses you patronize...



Problem #5

Don't forget the impact the shopping plaza would have on the redevelopment of the Foodmart / Ames Plaza:

- How long will it continue to survive if the Tennis Road Regional Shopping Center is built?
- Are we ready to accept more empty storefronts all over Agawam?

There is one other glaring problem that we haven't mentioned.

Problem #6

. . . is crime.

When was the last time that you were at a shopping plaza and did not see security vehicles? Some critics have called our concerns about crime "a scare tactic."

Well, we *are* scared.



Problem #6

Here is the latest available data comparing crime between West Springfield and Agawam:

2003 Uniform Crime Statistics⁷

	Agawam	West Springfield
2003 Population	28,416	28,008
Crime Index	240	651
Murders	0	1
Rapes	10	8
Robberies	3	54
Assaults	30	81
Burglaries	291	241
Thefts	279	1,218
Motor Vehicle Thefts	70	221
Arsons	6	7

⁷www.melissadata.com Uniform Crime Statistics 2003

Problem #6

- While police are responding to shopping plaza calls, they can't respond to other places in town when they are needed. This will mean more police, more cruisers, and a "hidden" tax on automobiles.
- Currently, Agawam has an insurance rating of "6" and West Springfield has an insurance rating of "9." A new Honda Accord costs \$1,035 to insure in Agawam versus \$1,141 to insure in West Springfield.⁸ If the shopping plaza is built, Agawam's hazard rating will rise. Please ask your car insurance agent how a rating change will impact your family's car insurance costs.

⁸ Rate provided by Axia Insurance Group, Springfield, Massachusetts.

In Conclusion . . .

Many of us have seen what other communities have “bought” when a large shopping plaza comes into town.

In Agawam, we see money and profit pouring into the corporate headquarters of the out of state ‘big box’ retailers.

We see the new face of Agawam, a nightmare of an excessively large shopping plaza consuming family-run businesses, heavier traffic all over Agawam, increased crime, limited accessibility to the High School, library, and post office, and the decreasing values of our homes.

In Conclusion . . .

There is no lemon law to protect our town from reckless development; no buyer's remorse.

It is buyer beware. If they build it, Agawam owns it:

Forever