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**RETAILERS TARGET
URBAN SHOPPERS**
BY JENNIFER EVANS-COWLEY

Big box retailers are moving beyond the standard box to build stores that meet the needs of individual communities. These days, they are looking for sites they would not have considered ten years ago.

Big box retailers typically need four to six acres to build a 100,000- to 250,000-square-foot store. These size requirements have traditionally limited available sites. But Wal-Mart and other big box retailers are now looking beyond typical suburban sites.

In part this is a response to local government regulations that set design standards, maximum store size caps and moratoriums on new development. Retailers also are reaching out to new markets, such as people living in downtown urban areas. High population densities and high per capita income in these areas can produce high sales figures.

Several retailers including Home Depot and Target have developed "urban" store concepts. These stores are designed to fit into urban neighborhoods and meet the needs of urban residents. The invention of escalators that can accommodate both people and shopping carts has enabled

BOXES

big box retailers to locate in multistory buildings.

Home Depot developed three urban stores in 2003, in Chicago, Staten Island and Brooklyn. The Chicago store is four stories and has 80,000 square feet. The top two stories are for parking, with the first two stories providing 40,000 square feet of store space. This is significantly smaller than the typical Home Depot store. The store has floor-to-ceiling glass windows, smaller signage and other features that make it fit better into the downtown environment.

According to a Home Depot press release, "We saw the tremendous demand. . . . We decided we could better serve our customers by designing a special store . . . by carefully choosing the merchandise that is in demand within the neighborhood, we can get the job done extremely well in a smaller store."

Wal-Mart has selected a site in Atlanta, Ga., to build the most urban Wal-Mart in the country. This store is setting the standard for urban Wal-Mart stores.

The 17-acre site includes a 150,000-square-foot Wal-Mart store and an additional 15,000 square feet of retail space on the second floor. A



Source: Institute for Self-Reliance
The Hometown Advantage

280-unit apartment complex will be adjacent to the stores, along with 1,240 parking spaces on two levels. Much of the parking is nearly hidden underground.

The site is on a hill at the intersection of two roadways, facing I-75 on one level and Howell Mill Road on a higher level. The Wal-Mart will be located on the lower level.

A boulevard will divide the rows of shops. The boulevard will have trees, fountains, benches, bike racks, restaurants with outdoor seating and a narrow park that will run the length of the development to the apartments.

"We believe this store will be

representative of how retail development in urban centers should be done," says Michael Driver, Wal-Mart's real estate manager.

Atlanta is not the only city getting an urban Wal-Mart. Panorama City and Baldwin Hills, Calif., are two other examples.

Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Target have had success with urban stores and plan to extend the concept to new locations.

Daphne Davis Moore with Wal-Mart says that, "We recognize that lots of people live in these urban areas, and more are moving back from the suburbs. We want to be where our customers are." 📍

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TARGET'S URBAN MINNEAPOLIS store (opposite page), Home Depot's downtown Chicago location (above) and a planned Wal-Mart in Atlanta were designed to serve downtown residents.



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