



NB-31

Date: October 11, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal, First District *BL*
Councilman Dan Baker, Second District *DB*
Councilmember Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District *TRU*

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Zoning Rules to Limit the Impact of "Big Box" Superstores**

A specific objective of the Business Growth and Workforce Development Task Force of the Long Beach 2010 Strategic Plan is, "Revitalize local shopping districts designed to meet the needs of neighborhoods rather than focusing exclusively on large retail ("big box") projects that can disrupt adjacent neighborhoods." (B3.3) Public comments received from the Jobs and Business Strategy workshops continue to cite the need to "improve demographics and income characteristics" to retain more businesses and jobs in Long Beach. (JBS Community Input Report Vol. 4, Page 14, Chamber of Commerce Input – 2.3.1)

As awareness of the negative impacts of "big box" developments has increased throughout the nation, a number of cities have enacted ordinances and zoning rules to ensure adequate review of the economic and community impacts of large-scale retail development, protect the viability of existing commercial areas, and maintain competition by preventing a single retailer from dominating the local market. These zoning rules prohibit stores over a certain size to sustain the vitality of small-scale, pedestrian-oriented business districts, which in turn nurture local business development. Store size caps prevent the many negative impacts of "big box" development, such as increased traffic congestion and overburdened public infrastructure, and they protect the character of the community by ensuring that new development is at a scale in keeping with existing buildings. Such a zoning rule would not ban "big box" retailers from the entire city, but only in those areas where the city has invested substantial state, local and federal resources in economic revitalization. Superstores or "big box" retailer are often defined as a retail establishment over 100,000 square feet that has 10% or more of its floor area dedicated to non-taxable merchandise, with exemptions for membership clubs that sell primarily bulk merchandise.

We would like to request our colleagues' support for referring the matter to the Planning Commission to make the necessary findings in order to develop zoning rules that would limit the impact of "big box" developments.

Suggested Action: **Refer to Planning Commission for development of zoning rules to limit impact of superstore retail on City infrastructure and the community.**