Where Should We Build The New Wal-Mart Supercenter?

Background:
You work for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC). The LVPC was formed by Lehigh and Northampton counties to create a **comprehensive plan** to guide responsible growth in the Lehigh Valley area in Pennsylvania. Comprehensive plans include policy statements regarding the character, location, and rate of growth desired by the community. They also include guidelines for how to achieve these goals. Comprehensive plans address land use, transportation (such as roads and railways), and natural resources (such as rivers and lakes).

At LVPC, you work with many other people to provide **advice** and **recommendations** to cities and towns that wish to further **develop their existing lands**.

As part of your mission, you do your best….
- To coordinate plans for orderly growth, development and redevelopment of the Lehigh Valley.
- To encourage appropriate land use.
- To make sure that new development occurs in an appropriate area.
- To direct growth to existing population areas.
- To encourage the use of the existing infrastructure (**such as roads and commercial and business areas**) and to plan for new infrastructure as needed (**such as roads, water, and electrical**).
- To promote the conservation of land, water, air, and energy in the Lehigh Valley.
- To protect sensitive areas and preserve unique historic and natural features.
- To promote improved traffic and transportation flow.

The LVPC has adopted a **Smart Growth** policy. Smart Growth is a term used to describe the desire and strategy to provide new growth and development in the most appropriate areas while protecting our natural resources.

Goals of Smart Growth include:
- To save our most valuable remaining natural resources before they are forever lost.
- To support existing communities and neighborhoods by developing in areas where the infrastructure is already in place.
- To save taxpayers millions of dollars in unnecessary costs for building new infrastructure (**such as roads and commercial and business areas**) required to support sprawl.

Smart Growth encourages growth and development in ways that focus on wise resource use. These include:
- Taking advantage of existing structures, such as reusing abandoned industrial sites (**brownfield redevelopment**).
- Building along public transportation routes and rail lines.
- Preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

Your Task

The Wal-Mart Corporation has contacted LVPC for **advice and recommendations** to locate a new Wal-Mart Supercenter in the Lehigh Valley area. A new Wal-Mart Supercenter requires the development of a very large building and a very large parking lot area. Wal-Mart seeks to have minimal impact on the environment when they develop a new store.
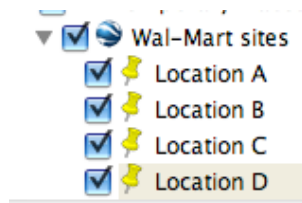
Wal-Mart has provided your team with a Google Earth file that shows the location of **4 different proposed store sites**.

Your task is to....
1. Analyze each site with Smart Growth principles in mind and select the best site to build a new Wal-Mart Supercenter that will have the least impact on the environment.
2. Write a proposal statement for your site selection.
3. Create a presentation and present it to the Wal-Mart Corporation.

1. Use Google Earth to explore and analyze each proposed store site.
You can move from one site location to the next by extending the Wal-Mart sites drop-down list and clicking on a specific location name.

2. Record your observations and analysis on the **Proposed Wal-Mart Supercenter Analysis Form**. **Each team member must complete his or her own form**.

Helpful hints:
Turn on the **roads** layer in Google Earth to view the existing transportation infrastructure.

Use the **Ruler Tool** in Google Earth to measure the distances of residential areas to the proposed Wal-Mart locations.

3. After completing the **Proposed Wal-Mart Supercenter Analysis Form**, select the best site that will have minimal impact on the environment. *Write this down on your Analysis Form*.

4. Write a **proposal statement** for selecting the best site for a new Wal-Mart Supercenter location that will have the least impact on the environment. **Each team member must write his or her own proposal statement.**

Clearly describe how your proposed site selection promotes "**smart growth**" to slow down effects from sprawl by addressing the following questions in your proposal:

▪ What are the major transportation issues (**such as existing roads, water, and electricity**) facing the Wal-Mart development plan?
▪ How will the new Wal-Mart Supercenter impact sensitive areas (such as nearby rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams) and natural features?
▪ How will the new Wal-Mart Supercenter preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas?
▪ How does your site take advantage of existing structures, such as reusing abandoned industrial sites (**brownfield redevelopment**) or existing roads?
▪ How will the new Wal-Mart Supercenter support existing communities and neighborhoods where roads, water, and electricity are already in place.
▪ What actions could Wal-Mart take to protect farmland, forests and other natural areas?
▪ What else can Wal-Mart do to develop this site to reduce the impact on the environment? Make your recommendations.

5. **Present your proposal** orally to the class.
Your team will develop a short, 5 minute PowerPoint presentation that describes reasons why your development plan is the best plan. Remember, you are trying to convince the rest of the class that your site selection is the best plan. Your presentation needs to be factual and persuasive as possible. **Make claims clearly and support them with facts and evidence**.

Guidelines:

- Your PowerPoint presentation can contain no more than **5 slides**.
- You should include at least **one graphic of your proposed site**. It is recommended that you take a screenshot from Google Earth and **talk about the site area** during your presentation.
- Describe the proposed site. What does the existing land look like?
- Describe how the proposed site takes advantage of existing structures, such as reusing abandoned industrial sites (**brownfield redevelopment**) or existing roads.
- Describe how the proposed site supports existing communities and neighborhoods where infrastructure (**sidewalks, roads, and other commercial areas**) is already in place.
- Describe how the proposed site will impact sensitive areas (**wildlife habitats**) and natural features (**rivers, agriculture areas**).
- Recommend how Wal-Mart can develop this site to reduce its impact on the environment?