

**For Immediate Release**

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

**Contact Person:**

William Borah  
(504) 944-4010  
[wborah@aol.com](mailto:wborah@aol.com)

**The National Trust Joins Legal Battle to Stop Wal-Mart in Historic New Orleans**  
***Fifth Circuit also Accepts Second Brief from Great Rivers Environmental Law Center***

The tenacious legal fight to stop a massive Wal-Mart Supercenter – slated to sprawl across New Orleans’ historic Lower Garden District as a key component of the St. Thomas redevelopment project – has now become national in scope, propelled by two formidable allies whose briefs were both recently admitted into Federal Court.

The prestigious National Trust for Historic Preservation and the St. Louis-based Great Rivers Environmental Law Center have each filed independent Amicus Curiae briefs, which have been accepted by the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, to support several local groups’ injunction request to halt all construction on the controversial 64-acre project. The Motion for an Injunction Pending Appeal was filed by Smart Growth and four other area nonprofits on December 24, 2003.

A literal translation for “friend of the Court,” an Amicus Curiae brief serves as the legal vehicle for someone who is not a party to the litigation, but who believes that the Court’s decision may affect its interest.

As the only congressionally chartered nonprofit dedicated to preserving America’s historic places, the National Trust cites “significant adverse effects in the areas of traffic, drainage, vibration damage to historic properties, economic harm to businesses in historic districts, [and] incompatible design of the Wal-Mart store” in its brief supporting the plaintiffs. The brief also states that “the Defendants began work on the project without completing their responsibilities for reviewing the effects of the project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act or the National Environmental Policy Act.”

In a separate Amicus brief filed by Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, the non-profit public interest law firm contends that “information has been minimized or concealed in an apparent attempt to facilitate the construction of a big box store in an environmentally unsuitable urban area.” Great Rivers also cites that “the proposed project, despite being financed partly by Defendant HUD through a \$25 million Hope VI grant, is an instance of egregious environmental injustice” due to the permanent displacement of 800 low-income St. Thomas families. While HUD promised these families would “be relocated to safe, decent and sanitary housing,” the harsh reality was “a mere 30-day notice to vacate... forcing them to continue their lives in deplorable conditions.”

From the National Trust’s emphasis on “the historic resources at stake” to Great Rivers’ charges of a “short-sighted, greed-driven absence of comprehensive urban planning,” the briefs now add two powerful, national voices to the Wal-Mart opposition.

**For More Information, Contact:** William Borah at (504) 944-4010 / [wborah@aol.com](mailto:wborah@aol.com)

###

---

---