

HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Against the Mall

A lot can be done with several hundred acres of undeveloped land, but would a shopping mall be the best way to go? It is helpful economically, with tourists, revenue, and employment options. The negative features are much greater, though. There are many ways that constructing a mall could affect the environment. Converting the land into a plaza would throw the water system and damage the soil. Not only would the shopping center hurt the ecosystem, but is it really necessary to build? However economically appealing it may seem, a shopping mall would be harmful to the ecosystem by means of pollution, water system damage, and deforestation.

Pollution is a big problem already in most places. Creating this tourist attraction would only spread it further. Litter, such as wrappers and packaging could affect wildlife. Water drainage could run off blacktops and sidewalks, picking up oils and other pollution along the way. Water that makes it into a drainage basin would be heavily contaminated and in need of filtering. In addition, water that does not flow into a drain or body of water would evaporate, taking dangerous chemicals and other litter with it. Once it makes it into the condensation phase of the water cycle, it will have become air pollution. If litter made it into the earth surrounding the mall, it would take years for it to decompose and would affect soil buildup (“Shopping Mall Pollution”).

The water cycle is an important part of all ecosystems. Damage to this system would have critical effects; therefore, it is essential that it be well protected. With vast concrete parking lots, wide blacktops, long sidewalks, and huge building roofs to catch precipitation, ground water levels would lower. When lowered water tables occur, drills have to go deeper, damaging the soil, also. Moreover, clean, healthy drainage basins are needed to hold water or else the water

cycle could be negatively influenced. If proper drainage basins and gutters are not in place, water could overflow and cause flash floods (Perkins).

Deforestation occurs a lot nowadays, and the building of this mall will only further that process. For instance, the mall would destroy habitats for many species that live in the area. Construction work could frighten animals and cause them to flee from the space surrounding the building, too. To add to that, some animals may try and continue to live around or even within the shopping center itself causing conflict between shoppers and animals. Without proper space and shelter, populations would shrink and disrupt the steady pattern (Putatunda).

To add on to the damage of the water cycle, the soil could be inflicted as well. As stated previously, the construction of this building could affect soil buildup. It could also influence the soil horizons, by completely destroying the zero horizon, or the layer of decaying and decomposing organisms that work as nutrients for the A horizon. The A horizon is where almost all underground plants and underground animals live. Plants above the surface would be killed for sure, but biotic beings below the ground would be wiped out as well. Without creatures to live in the soil, it is rendered unable to keep its three main horizons intact. In the future, when the mall would be removed from the premises, the soil would not be fertile or usable (*South Carolina Science Essentials*, pgs 114-122).

Of course, there are some beneficial factors to converting the land into a plaza. The attraction would bring in tourists, whom would generate revenue. That money would be helpful to the economy, as would the employment options it would create. Not to mention that people would enjoy a shopping center, therefore, many citizens would be happier. However, the deforestation in this area could only hinder the economy. Lower animal populations and less vegetation means that people will have to look elsewhere for these vital resources. If a shopping

mall is in high demand, it should be constructed in an area that is not populated with biotic beings already.

In any case, using up that much land for human desire is a risky route that shouldn't be followed. Although the economical features aren't too harmful, the environment will be damaged if the land is fashioned into a mall. Constructing a shopping center would be dangerous enough, so, surely a different decision can be made. The other proposals might not be as beneficial as leaving the land to be, but they would be safer than destroying hundreds of acres of land to build a huge store. In conclusion, converting the land to a mall does not seem like the wisest approach because of pollution, water system damage, deforestation, and harm to the soil.

Work Cited

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