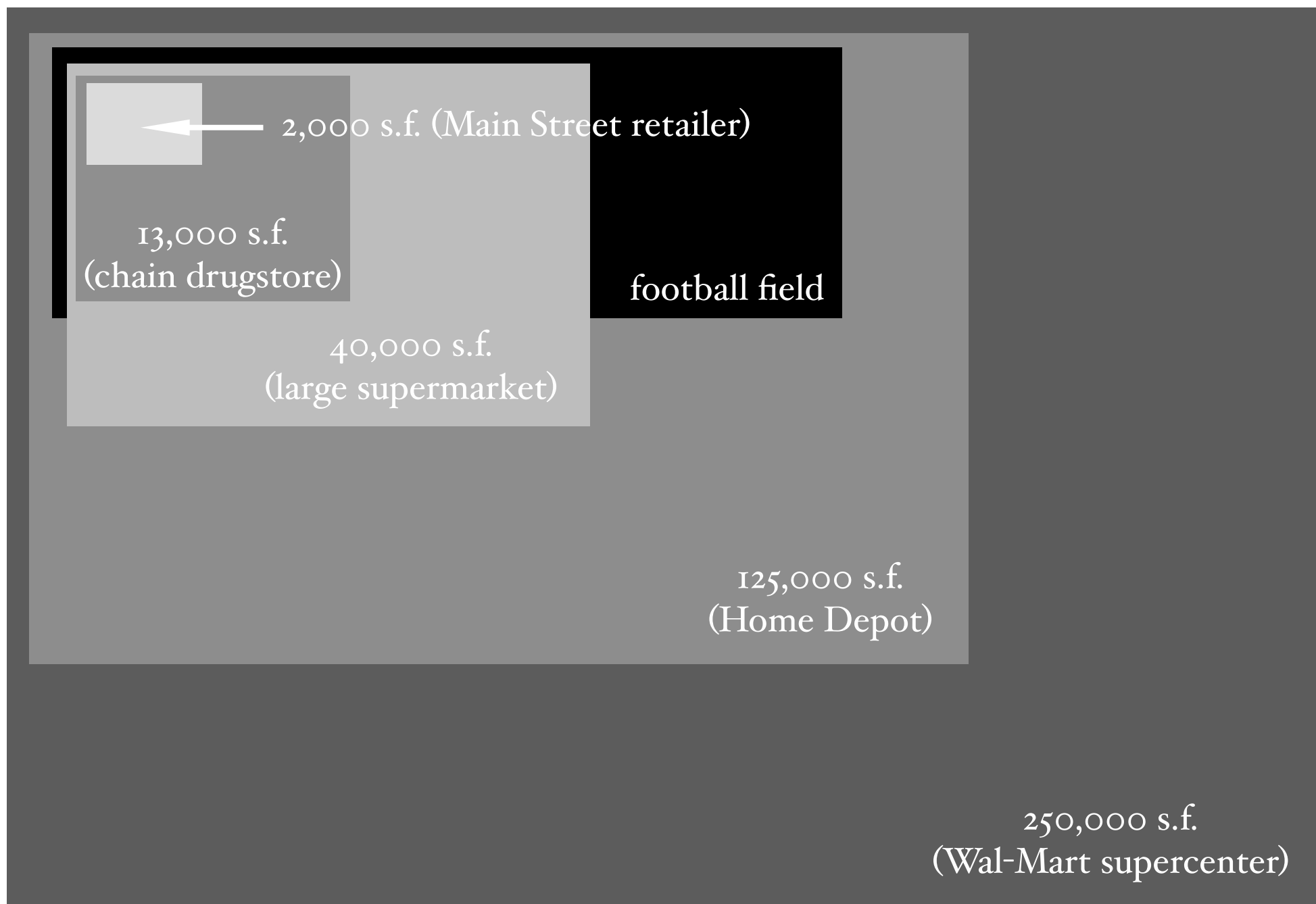


How Big is Too Big?



Notes on store sizes:

Wal-Mart and Target are currently building “supercenters,” which combine their usual array of merchandise with a full supermarket and numerous specialty services from cut flowers to eye glasses. Supercenters typically range from 180,000 to 250,000 square feet, or between 4.1 to 5.7 acres. The parking lots that surround these stores are several times the size of the store itself. Many other big box retail stores—including earlier-generation Wal-Mart outlets, Home Depot, Lowe’s, Office Depot, Bed Bath & Beyond, etc.—are in the 60,000 to 140,000 square foot range. Barnes & Noble and Borders Books stores range from 25,000 to 45,000 square feet, or about the size of a very large supermarket. Free-standing chain drugstores operated by Walgreens, Rite Aid, and CVS are generally 11,000-15,000 square feet.

As for independent retailers, there’s quite a range. Many Main Street stores are under 1,000 square feet. A full-service neighborhood grocery store might be 10,000 square feet. Locally owned hardware stores generally range from 2,000 to 20,000 square feet. An independent bookstore might be 1,500 square feet.

A growing number of cities and towns are adopting **store size caps** to ensure that new retail development is scaled appropriately for the community and does not overwhelm the local economy or exacerbate sprawl and traffic congestion. Most communities choose an upper limit of between 35,000 and 75,000 square feet.

For more information on store size caps and other measures to control big box development in your community, see:

www.newrules.org/retail

Produced by the New Rules Project, a program of the Minneapolis-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance.