

PRESS RELEASE

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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

WAL-MART PULLS OUT OF NORTHRIDGE

Northridge, CA – Los Angeles Councilman Greig Smith announces that the proposed Wal-Mart in Northridge will not be built. After a long and hard fought battle with Wal-Mart over massive impacts that the community would have sustained, Wal-Mart finally chose not to proceed with their big box store.

This situation was unique because the location already had all of the proper zoning requirements and entitlements for a big box retail store. Councilman Smith negotiated a stringent mitigation package that added more parking spaces, decreased hours of operation, disallowed the sale of alcohol and firearms, created dedicated lanes in and out of the retail center, redesigned intersections, instituted an abandoned shopping cart retrieval plan, and established a traffic mitigation trust fund in partnership with the City's Department of Transportation and the local Neighborhood Council.

Councilman Smith conducted several meetings with local residents, the Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Council members, and local retailers and determined that the mitigation package still wasn't enough. Councilman Smith then demanded that Wal-Mart conduct a full Environmental Impact Report to analyze the economic impacts to other local retail establishments and a complete and thorough examination for issues not yet discovered or disclosed. The EIR would have also allowed more community input into the process.

"Even though they already had the right to build at that location, I was never fully satisfied with the proposed mitigations, therefore I demanded that Wal-Mart conduct a full Environmental Impact Report. That ultimately led to the store's decision to quit. This is a tremendous victory for the community! I've said from the beginning that the traffic in this area, particularly adjacent to the Northridge Mall, is already grid-locked and this was never the right location for a Wal-Mart," Councilman Smith said.

Councilman Smith stated that Wal-Mart's representatives have always been willing to sit down and discuss the issues and the impacts, and for that I thank them. Initially, they agreed to conduct the full EIR, and then they simply decided that because there were no guarantees at the end of the lengthy and costly process, to pull the plug.

Councilman Smith will also be announcing an economic task force with the Mayor's business team, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, the Chamber of Commerce, and business leaders to develop an immediate and long-term economic blueprint for the North West San Fernando Valley.

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