

[San Diego Reader](#)

- [Blog Index](#)
- [Latest Staff Entries](#)
- [Latest Community Entries](#)
- [Blog Groups](#)
- [Blog Comments](#)
- [Create a Blog](#)



- [News Ticker](#)
 0
- [Sherman Heights](#)

Politicians, Community Leaders Speak Out Against Walmart in Sherman Heights

[Dave Rice](#), April 20, 2012

- [Comment](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
-

[Share](#)

- [Email](#)
- [Print](#)

A crowd of Sherman Heights residents gathered this morning in front of the historic Farmers Market building on Imperial Avenue to hear a host of activists and local politicians speak on action recently taken by site lessee Walmart to [demolish the building](#), a move that blindsided locals, many of whom said they'd been [making efforts to communicate with the company](#) about how to help it successfully enter the area.

While protesters successfully stopped the demolition on Wednesday morning, a large amount of debris appeared to have been removed from the site by Friday. New signs, with an artist's rendering of the new store, with Walmart logos adorning the top of the building's iconic tower, were hung on a remaining section of wall, with a message reading "Restore – Refresh – Reinvest."

"I think today's message to Walmart is that we must continue to communicate," said city councilman David Alvarez, the first pol to the podium. "If Walmart wants to be a part of this community, and we think they do, then they should continue to talk to us about what they're doing.

"We want to see this [property] developed. We want a good grocery store to come into this neighborhood," Alvarez continued. "I thank Walmart for actually taking an interest in this property, because no one else has . . . I absolutely support the revitalization of this property," Alvarez said, reiterating that his opposition was not to Walmart itself but the suspended communication between community leaders and the company.

"We're welcoming them to continue that dialogue," assured Georgette Gomez of the Environmental Health Coalition.

"We were encouraged by the fact that Walmart representatives came to the table and met with community leaders," said Christian Ramirez, a Barrio Logan resident. "But sadly, we woke up two days ago to the terrible news that an iconic building was being demolished. This is not what good neighbors do.

"We want to urge Walmart to come back to the table and enter into a legally binding community benefits agreement that respects the integrity of our community, that promotes local hire," continued Ramirez.

Richard Barrera, a San Diego Unified School District board member, also spoke, criticizing the low level of pay and benefits typically offered by Walmart to employees. "If a business wants to help schools, its number-one responsibility is to recognize that its employees are the parents of our kids," offered Barrera.

State assemblyman Ben Hueso also expressed disappointment and confusion as to whether Walmart followed the proper permitting procedure before beginning the tear-down.

"I'm questioning today whether that process took place. I'm questioning today whether the full letter and intent of the law was followed in this process, and from my understanding and my interpretation of the law . . . I feel like the letter and intent of the law was violated in this process," said Hueso.

Perhaps the strongest words of the morning came from state senator Juan Vargas.

"As you can see, Walmart is literally ripping the community apart," charged Vargas. "They cut corners every step of the way. They're cutting corners here today.

"We won't stand for it. We shouldn't stand for it. We should fight back!" Vargas continued.

Community members will appear before a judge on Monday morning seeking a temporary restraining order blocking further destruction of the building, at least for the time being.

- [Comment](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Share](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Print](#)

Comments



[historymatters](#) April 20, 3:41 p.m.

"We want to see this [property] developed. We want a good grocery store to come into this neighborhood," Alvarez continued. "I thank Wal-Mart for actually taking an interest in this property, because no one else has . . . I absolutely support the revitalization of this property," Alvarez said, reiterating that his opposition was not to Wal-Mart itself but the suspended communication between community leaders and the company.

"We're welcoming them to continue that dialogue," assured Georgette Gomez of the Environmental Health Coalition."

Really? "thanking walmart"? No one else wanted to restore the Farmers market? I have a HARD time believing that. That is what they always put out there.."no one else would invest in this community" BS!!!! That is total BS! Id like to see the evidence...the effort they made to get other businesses to invest.

1 0

- [Sign in to reply](#)
- [Sign in to suggest removal](#)



[historymatters](#) April 20, 3:43 p.m.

Also do people realize how much state tax money Walmart gets every year through a program called California EZ. <http://www.sprawl-busters.com/searc...> Walmart gets about \$11,000 per employee for most of the stores they create per year. This while Brown and others are demanding Californians vote for tax hikes.

1 0

- [Sign in to reply](#)
- [Sign in to suggest removal](#)



[historymatters April 20, 3:45 p.m.](#)

"A Sprawl-Busters phone survey this week with 15 EZ managers in California turned up at least 20 Wal-Marts built inside of Enterprise Zones in places like Antelope Valley, Imperial Valley, Kings County, Long Beach, Oakland, Richmond, Salinas Valley, Santa Clarita, Shasta, West Sacramento and Yuba. The voucher manager in the city of Palmdale told me that there are 5 Wal-Mart's inside the Antelope Valley Enterprise Zone alone.

The exact value of the "hiring tax credits" Wal-Mart has received from California is "highly confidential" one EZ manager told me. A spokesman for the California Department of Housing and Community Development, which oversees the EZ program, could not count the total number of Wal-Marts in Enterprise Zones, saying "We don't collect business specific information." Under the California Administrative Code, vouchers granted in EZ zones are confidential, but the figures are accessible to the zone staff, the zone governing body, the California Franchise Tax Board, and the state Department of Housing. An eligible Wal-Mart worker making \$12 an hour for 35 hours a week translates into a "hiring credit" worth roughly \$11,000, or half his salary, in the first year. That's \$1.1 million for 100 workers. The credit continues for 5 years at stepped-down levels---but the total tax break for Wal-Marts in California EZs could be in the millions."

1 0

- [Sign in to reply](#)
- [Sign in to suggest removal](#)



[milossd May 11, 12:13 a.m.](#)

The community of District 8 have asked for a name brand grocery store since the 1970's...and what the City of San Diego and District 8 have given the community is...a Ralphs store in Hillcrest in the 1980's..an Albertson's in Downtown in the 2000's...a 99 cents store in 2012...thanks every single District 8 politco...especially those who showed up at the local protest and have moved on up the political ladder and have forgotten where they came from...just like the rest of politicians in Sacramento...

People Vote for new Blood... Su Voz es su Voto... Hueso y Vargas need to go!! Keep the Term Limits...

1 0

- [Sign in to reply](#)
- [Sign in to suggest removal](#)



[milossd](#) **May 11, 12:14 a.m.**

oh and i got my first pager there too..

Viva Sherman Heights!!

1 0

- [Sign in to reply](#)
- [Sign in to suggest removal](#)

Sign in to comment

Username

- I have an account.
- I'm new.

Password [Forgot?](#)

Or login with:

[OpenID](#)

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Advertise With Us](#)
- [National Advertising](#)
- [Digital Edition](#)

- [Authors & contributors](#)
- [Bands & musicians](#)
- [Columns & features](#)

- [Comic strips](#)

- [Comments](#)
- [Concerts & music listings](#)

- [Email alerts](#)
- [Happy hour specials](#)
- [Legal Guide](#)

- [Movie showtimes](#)
- [Reader archives](#)
- [Restaurants](#)

- [Reader City](#)
- [Reader Jobs](#)
- [Reader Rentals](#)

© 2012 San Diego Reader. All rights reserved. No part of this site may be reproduced without our written permission.