

## Counting the ways to loath or love Walmart

By Larry Cardozo

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The other day, I finally decided to compose a list of all the good things that could come to Ventura from a super Walmart store on Victoria Avenue in Ventura. Boy, was I impressed! I was even more impressed by how this issue fits with a comparison of David (Ventura) and Goliath (Walmart). Being an American, and wanting desperately to be on the winning team, I naturally find it inconvenient, and probably wrong, that David actually beat Goliath. So, let's give Goliath a shot. Here's my list of pros. They may seem like cons at first, but read on.

1. A super Walmart will bring increased traffic to an already overcrowded Victoria Avenue. Like most of you, I'm not particularly patient when it comes to driving in bumper-to-bumper conditions. What I really need is some tough love, and there's nothing like being stuck behind one, two or even three 18-wheeler Walmart trucks, and at least a thousand or so additional cars, to force me to come to grips with my self-defeating lack of patience. These trucks and cars will force me to develop coping mechanisms that will serve me for the rest of my life, no matter where I may be driving. While stopped in traffic, perhaps I'll trim my fingernails. That might finally even out the bottoms of my front teeth.
2. Walmart delivery trucks will infuse the air with increased noxious diesel fumes. Here, the scientist in me comes to the fore. Consider the flu shot. We inoculate ourselves with dead flu viruses so that our immune system will combat the live ones when they come along. Hey, same with pollution. We need to harden our lungs, people. If you see me on Victoria behind a big rig with my cheeks all puffed out, give me a high-five and take in a deep breath yourself. And don't forget to hold it. It does the body good.
3. A super Walmart will destroy existing businesses. OK, so Kohl's, The 99 Cents Only Store, Ralphs, Trader Joe's, Barnes and Noble, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and maybe Vons fold. And because many of these stores are anchors for other businesses in their centers, those smaller stores may close, too, and goodbye to the sales taxes they brought in. Sure, lots of employees, many among them my friends and neighbors, will lose their jobs. They are just getting by in this expensive city as it is, and my heart truly bleeds for them. But Wal-Mart will be there with open arms to employ them. Their salaries and health benefits won't be the same, but in this economy, it's all about me, and it should be all about you, as well. If these people can't make it in Ventura, then there's always Fresno, right?

4. A super Walmart will destroy Ventura's image as a tourist destination. I say to hell with our budding tourism industry. Venturans need to be a whole lot less selfish. Cities across the state are reeling with negative revenues while their citizens spend their money elsewhere at tourist destinations. The presence of a super Walmart in Ventura will help to make us look exactly like the places these tourists would have come from, thereby keeping them home to spend their money in their own cities. This is a sacrifice Venturans must make, for the good of our sister cities in this great state of California.

So, Venturans, are you with me and Goliath, or are you behind David? Choose wisely.

— Larry Cardozo lives in Ventura.

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