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Wildomar, CA. Does Wal-Mart Make You A City?

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Some residents in Wildomar, California are growing increasingly upset by the news that a super Wal-Mart wants to locate in this small community. The corporation, of course, wants to build on land that is not commercially zoned, but that's just details to Wal-Mart Realty. The people who want Wal-Mart to come apparently think it will turn the town into a city. Here's a report from Wal-Mart Opponents: "The land itself is in the County of Riverside. The governing body or permitting entity is Riverside County, not Wildomar. Wildomar is an unincorporated area in the county. The Wal-Mart store itself will be 207,751 s.f., almost 5 acres wall to wall. I am not sure what the residents have done to fight it so far. I have heard that some residents of Wildomar are for it because they think it will make them that much closer to being a city. Wildomar has strongly opposed being annexed into the cities of Lake Elsinore to the North and Murrieta to South. So some feel that if they had a large business like Wal-Mart they could eventually become a city, because as of now the area is mostly homes and low density at that." According to the North County Times newspaper, Wal-Mart is seeking to

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build a superstore on more than 25 acres east of Interstate 15 and south of Bundy Canyon Road on land currently zoned for rural homes. The center, if approved as planned, would also include two fast-food restaurants and two additional retail buildings with a total of 20,000 square feet. One county official told the newspaper in August that he had not heard from Wal-Mart since he informed them in April that the company would have to pay its own way for flood control improvements needed for development. Local officials figure that growth in commercial retailers brightens the chances that Wildomar will be a potential future city.

What you can do: And what, exactly, is the advantage to Wildomar of becoming a city? Wider roads to carry more cars. More stop lights. More police to patrol the malls, more activity in the local court system. More "city" services to serve the growing residential population, a need for more homes, longer sewer and water lines to maintain. Is it possible that Wildomar will get what it wished for—and then wish it had never become a city. Wal-Mart is, indeed, a great big shove into suburban living. And with it goes the character of a small town, and the priceless small town quality of life. But if Wal-Mart can't put a price tag on it, it doesn't really have any value.

"Norman has become the guru of the anti-Wal-Mart movement" ~ 60 Minutes

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