

April 29, 2013

Walmart to open its Neighborhood Market in Pleasanton in mid-July

Full-service supermarket to move into building in Meadow Plaza vacated by Nob Hill 3 years ago

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Walmart representatives have announced that they will open their Neighborhood Market in Pleasanton in mid-July, wrapping up several years of contentious debate over whether Walmart should be allowed to expand here.

The Neighborhood Market will be one of about 200 of the company's grocery stores in the U.S. and similar to one opened late last year in San Ramon.

Construction crews are now renovating the former Nob Hill store, a unit of Raley's that was closed three years ago. By agreeing to make only upgrades to the building, Walmart was able to acquire a Pleasanton permit to move into the store since there are basically no major construction changes to the site, which has long been zoned for a grocery store.

Former Councilman Matt Sullivan and union representatives opposed Walmart's bid to open here. They claimed that Walmart pays its employees "below scale" wages and benefits and that, as a non-union grocer, it could undercut other grocery stores in the way it prices merchandise.

Walmart first opened its Neighborhood Markets in 1998 as part of a grocery-focused business that is separate from regular Walmart stores, including one in Pleasanton. The new Pleasanton store will be approximately 34,000 square feet and feature a wide variety of products, including fresh produce, meats and dairy products, frozen foods, dry goods and staples. The store will include a pharmacy, deli and bakery.

Chester Gray, district manager for Walmart, and Amelia McLear briefed City Manager Nelson Fialho and others on the city staff earlier this week. They said the new Pleasanton store will bring additional economic activity to Meadow Place, which is located on Santa Rita Road, and will create up to 65 new jobs. They said Walmart's full-time hourly wages as of Jan. 1 are \$12.93 an hour.

In 2011, Walmart, the Walmart Foundation, Sam's Club and customers and associates throughout the state gave more than \$33.3 million in cash and in-kind gifts to communities throughout California.

In the Pleasanton area, those benefiting from Walmart contributions included Tri-Valley Haven Food Bank, Open Heart Kitchen, Alameda County Food Bank, Valley Humane Society, Foothill High School and Alisal, Fairlands and Donlon elementary schools.

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