

# Wal-Mart's 'shopping bag jobs' not welcome in Leslieville: councillor

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[CBC News](#)

The City of Toronto has vowed to fight plans to build a big-box outlet near the waterfront in Leslieville that would likely include a Wal-Mart, saying the minimum-wage jobs the giant retailer offers aren't welcome in the east-end neighbourhood.

Coun. Paula Fletcher (Ward 30 Toronto-Danforth), whose ward includes the development site, is leading the fight against the proposal by developers Rose Corp. and SmartCentres Inc. to build a two- or three-storey facility on Eastern Avenue near Carlaw Street.

The site is designated for employment lands and councillors argue that the low-paying jobs synonymous with Wal-Mart don't cut it.

"This whole area has grown up around good jobs, film jobs, creative jobs. They shouldn't be shopping bag jobs at minimum wage, part time," said Fletcher.

Dozens of locals who came to Toronto City Hall Tuesday to oppose the proposal were even more scathing in their criticism. "It is tantamount to shooting this fledgling neighbourhood in the head," said Victoria Dinnick, who lives near the site.

Developers defended plans to build the facility, arguing the building will be different than other big-box stores that have recently sprung up.

"It's a very innovative, skillfully conceived mixed-use development with human scale and a strong pedestrian orientation and an urban design that fits into the community," said Dennis Wood, a lawyer representing SmartCentres.

Wood, however, conceded the plan includes 2,000 parking spots and would total nearly 700,000 square feet in size.

Fletcher sponsored a motion at community council Tuesday to have developers submit a detailed site proposal. The full city council will consider Fletcher's motion next month.

The developers and the city are to go before the Ontario Municipal Board this fall, where the city will argue that it wants a smaller retail component to the development.