

Good outcome could be result

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Don Mills Centre

Time is running out for the people of Don Mills or, indeed, for any part of a city that wants to maintain a yellow brick road to its community centre. The process now under way by Cadillac Fairview is bound to be a trend for others.

The company, owned by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, plans to demolish the existing covered mall in the centre of Don Mills and rebuild a smaller outdoor centre with high-rise condominiums.

It steadfastly refuses, in any serious way, to reconsider its plans. This is in the face of outright opposition by its residents (a mass meeting of 800 clearly demonstrated this) or the North York Community Council which also is opposed to the plans of Cadillac Fairview.

If the developer proceeds with its short-term plans, it will inevitably produce hostility toward its future commercial and residential interests with a drop in the company's marketable value.

Is this what we are faced with, where a developer's immediate interests are allowed to run roughshod over long-term community interests?

Yet, there is an alternative. If Cadillac Fairview pauses for a few months and is willing to work co-operatively with the community, then a good outcome will result. The traditional centre of Don Mills could be made into a thriving multi-purpose community centre, a part of which is covered, with the relocation of an enlarged library there complete with a local theatre (in exchange for a land swap), with the relocation of the hockey rink (also in exchange for a land swap) and with the relocation of the E.P. Taylor Place adult recreational centre that is across the road.

Seniors, the disabled, young mothers, high school students would all benefit from such a facility whereas all these groups would suffer if Cadillac Fairview goes forward with its plans. The type of regeneration suggested is not original as such projects have been carried out successfully in the United States and, particularly, in the United Kingdom.

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