

## Full-grown trees cut on Don Mills Centre site

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### *Developer says more trees to be planted*

By [Lorianna De Giorgio](#)

Last month's removal of 12 trees on the Don Mills Centre property is an act of urban terrorism, say members of the Don Mills residents group opposed to the development of the outdoor mall.

The Concerned Don Mills Residents for Maintaining the Don Mills Centre Indoor Mall are angry that full-grown, healthy trees were cut down along the property on Lawrence Ave. East and The Donway West during the first week of January.

The tree removal adds to the loss of urban forestation in the area, as 39 trees on the property were cut down last August.

The 51 trees that were cut down were all on privately-owned Cadillac Fairview property, said Heath Applebaum, spokesperson for the development company.

Cadillac Fairview cut them down in order to make way for their site's plan, which is comprised of an outdoor mall and other elements, including an 80,000 sq. ft. public square with a skating rink in the winter and pond in the summer.

However, Cadillac Fairview is rectifying the tree removal by planting 300 new trees of varying maturity on the site in the spring for the expected August 2008 opening of the new mall, Applebaum said.

The removal of the trees is part of a master landscape plan for the property which was submitted last summer and legally approved by the city, including the appropriate permits to cut down the trees, he continued.

The trees most recently removed were an integral part of the area's design and provided



Tree stumps on shopping mall construction site seen through chain-link fencing.

much-needed shade for many of the area's residents during the summertime, said Karl Frank, a member of the Don Mills group and a retired urban designer.

"They were encouraged to plant trees 20–25 years ago as part of the Don Mills streetscape," he said. "The city giving the permission to do this is ludicrous."

Cadillac Fairview's plan to plant new trees in the spring doesn't do anything to quell Frank's anger about the removal of the trees.

Frank said the trees had been there for decades and were part of a plan for Don Mills to be a green town. Now that they are gone the area is barren, he said.

Since the summer, he has sent two letters to the city's urban forestry department asking how they could permit the destruction of the Don Mills landscape.

"It takes 25 years to get trees in Ontario to be a certain size," he said, arguing the new trees that Cadillac Fairview will plant will not benefit the community until years from now.

"We are suffering here with all the dust and dirt."

Simone Gabbay, who has spearheaded the group's opposition to the construction of an outdoor mall, said the removal of trees adds insult to injury for the Don Mills residents who lost their indoor mall when bulldozers demolished the popular mall.

Like Frank, she said the tearing down of trees doesn't just have negative local consequences, but national and international ones as well.

"Hollow promises of planting new trees down the road will not undo this ruthless crime," Gabbay wrote in a Jan. 8 email notifying residents of the removal of trees. "There is simply no excuse for cutting down full-grown, healthy trees anywhere."

Of the 300 new trees Cadillac Fairview plans to plant, more than 100 will be planted on the periphery of the site, while 179 will be planted along sidewalks and roads within the site.

As well, once construction is complete the developer will also plant a variety of bushes, shrubs and ornamental grasses on the property.

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