

## Mega retailers a threat to communities

An article by Christopher Hume in the March 14, 2008, issue of the Toronto Star ([click here](#) to read) discusses David Miller's and City Council's disapproval and rejection of a planned big-box retail complex on Eastern Avenue at Leslie Street, and their concern that the OMB has agreed to hear the case and may well give the development the green light regardless of the Mayor's and Council's rejection of the plan.

Here in Don Mills, we certainly sympathize. We know what it's like to have an inappropriate development forced upon us. But when it began to happen here, David Miller had no sympathy for us. He completely ignored our pleas for his involvement and support. And Council allowed the plans to proceed, disregarding a City planning document and massive opposition from residents. The OMB, of course, put its stamp of approval on the plans as well, but all that did was add insult to injury. The damage was already done.

In the Eastern Avenue project, as the article says, the City has even asked Queen's Park to declare a provincial interest in the case. This should have been done for Don Mills as well, especially given Don Mills' heritage status and the fact that it is North America's first planned community. Why did no one at City Hall step forward with this request?

Mega-retailers are never good for a community. In the book [Big-Box Swindle](#), author Stacy Mitchell writes about how communities composed of many small, locally owned businesses are healthier and more prosperous than those dominated by a few large chains. This is exactly the type of retail environment that Don Mills enjoyed and that served the needs of the residents. Even people from other areas of Toronto regularly came to Don Mills to eat, shop, and enjoy the amenities and conveniences of a model neighbourhood mall. The concept was unique, well executed, and effective. Now faced with the prospect of upscale stores that don't fit our community, the loss of our medical building at 75 The Donway West, and highrise condominiums that are completely inappropriate for our neighbourhood, we have been exiled in our own land.

It's too bad David Miller and Council did not and still do not offer Don Mills the same interest and support that they have been showing for Eastern Avenue and Leslie Street. If you think they have been unfair by being concerned about some neighbourhoods but ignoring others, including Don Mills, let them know. Tell them you expect them to take action NOW to prevent the construction of monster highrises in Don Mills, as well as the conversion of the medical building at 75 The Donway West to residential. Remember, as Christopher Hume stated in a previous [article](#), "Final decisions regarding development rest with councillors."

Here's how you can contact them:  
([Click here](#) to read what one resident wrote)

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