

Cavendish plan will woo young families, Cote St. Luc mayor says

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After years of negotiations, the city of Cote St. Luc and the owners of the Cavendish Mall have come up with a plan to tear down about 40 per cent of the shopping centre to make way for new housing.

But a city councillor says the plan does not do enough to protect the environment.

Residents will get a peek at the proposal at a public information meeting at 7 tonight at Cote St. Luc city hall.

The city had balked at previous mall proposals that called for a series of high-rise buildings that would feature more than 1,000 units. The latest proposal involves 111 low-rise single-family homes. They would go on land where the southern portion of the mall now sits. That part of the mall has been largely vacant since an Eaton's store closed in 1998.

"We want affordable housing for young families, which is really what we're lacking," Cote St. Luc Mayor Anthony Housefather said yesterday.

Under the plan, 38 detached single-family houses, 18 semi-detached homes, and 55 townhouses would be built.

"The townhouses in particular will be attractive to young families," Housefather said. "They'd be affordable and they'll be new properties and within walking distance of many city services," including a new indoor swimming pool the city is building.

Cote St. Luc has the highest median age (49) on Montreal Island. The 2006 census found 30 per cent of residents were over 65. The proportion of residents 80 and over was almost four times the national average.

Under the proposal, a six-storey mixed-use building would be built next to the mall, with commercial space at ground level and offices or residential units above. The mall would gain permission to build an eight-storey seniors' residence above the mall.

City councillor Steven Erdelyi was the only council member to vote against a draft bylaw covering the required rezoning last month.

The city "hasn't pushed it so there isn't anything in the bylaw saying, for example, you have to have grey water recycling or even environmentally efficient windows," Erdelyi said yesterday.

"Cote St. Luc has been a green leader on many fronts," he said.

Housefather rejected the criticism.

"There are bylaws regulating development and we're not going to apply standards to this development that we don't apply to any other development," he said.

If the proposal is approved, construction could start in about two years, the city says.

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For maps and more information about the Cavendish Mall housing project, or to read about McGill's cycling research, visit montrealgazette.com/metnews

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