

Erin Mills Town Centre – A Planned Community for the 21st century

By Jenny Walker, Program Developer, Heritage Mississauga

As Mississauga reaches its 40th anniversary, it's interesting to look at the changes that have occurred; the City has grown from a collection of farms and villages to the sixth largest city in Canada. The 2011 census quoted a population figure well in excess of 713,000 and the local demographics include people from all nationalities, brought here by an international airport that, despite its name, is actually in Mississauga.

The growth of the city is no accident. People have followed jobs created by international companies who were attracted by good rents and incentives; services and infrastructure inevitably followed. Erin Mills Town Centre was built to service this local population, and after 25 years is now being revamped. As one of our supporting partners we take a brief look at its history in Mississauga and its plans for its future.



The Erin Mills Lands, c1954, HM

In 1955 almost 20 years prior to the city's inauguration, land was acquired by the highly successful Don Mills Development Limited. A plan was drawn up in 1969 for the Erin Mills New Town, a purpose built community that included shopping centres, schools, entertainment centres and places of worship. The area was expected to develop over 20 years, and in 1989 the "jewel in the crown," Erin Mills Town Centre, was completed.



Aerial View of Erin Mills town Centre, 2014, HM

The centre was owned and operated by Cadillac Fairview until it was bought by the Ontario Pension Board in 2010 for \$370 million; the property is now managed by 20 VIC Management Inc. and the landscape is very different as the whole area continues to develop.



Erin Mills Town Centre gets its sphere, 2014, EMTC

In 2013, a \$100 million redevelopment was announced to celebrate the centre's 25th anniversary. The renovation is now well underway, as the iconic clock tower has been replaced by a unique, giant glass sphere 283ft in circumference that can be seen from a great distance.

The proposed modernization is both ambitious and impressive. Throughout the whole process, the centre remains open for business. Vice President Nance MacDonald said, "It's important to keep things as pleasant as possible throughout the renovations. The Centre is an important part of the community throughout the year, and this is especially true at Christmas. We want to keep the public informed at all times as we move forward with this exciting phase in our development; we look forward to the next 25 years in the Erin Mills community."



Vice President Nance MacDonald monitors renovations, EMTC

The redevelopment is expected to be completed by summer 2015, providing an enhanced shopping experience for over 500,000 customers; almost three times more than the centre's original target audience. Its position in the community is well documented. Councillor for Ward 9 Pat Saito has said, "Erin Mills Town Centre was built early in the development of the community well before most of the homes were constructed. It quickly became the focal point for the new residents and has continued to support and welcome the residents it serves. It is not only a retail centre providing many jobs to our citizens but a strong supporter of many community organizations and programs."

It is this policy of community involvement that sets Erin Mills Town Centre apart, it has always been a big part of the community and this will continue well into the 21st century.