



Jane Sorensen
2004-05-13 10:26

Pour : plandurbanisme.ocpm@ville.montreal.qc.ca
cc :
Objet : Blue Bonnets

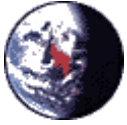
Today in the news:

Marvin Rotrand said he's been calling for the racetrack to be redeveloped for years. "It's an aberration to have a piece of choice land like this in the centre of the city, really valuable land, frozen from development because there's a racetrack there," he said.

Greed, greed, greed! Always looking to expand the tax base without regard to the underutilized developments that already exist! Public covetousness of private land is bad enough, but public covetousness of public land that has a historical value is even worse. The racetrack should stay exactly where it is. Moreover, just like every other city in the rest of North America, the race track, stables and land should be used for an annual agricultural fair and midway, so that urban people, most of whom here have never experienced a fair, can learn a bit about how the other half - the rural population they ignore, deride, or in any case, outvote - lives, shares values, and has fun. Toronto has the CNE. Vancouver has the PNE. Montreal? Has prime real estate going to waste over horses, according to a politician. My god, the arrogance.

You would be far better off pushing through the Cavendish extension than any more eyesore big box development surrounding Decarie and the Cote de Liesse!

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Objet : Saint-Laurent

The Societe Development Boulevard Saint-Laurent (of which I'm a member) submitted to you a plan that would render the street a shopping mall the likes of St. Hubert and Beaubien.

I am opposed to many of the changes, changes involving traffic, greenspace, and the expansion of public property at the expense or infringement of private property.

Parking lots are inoffensive to me (far more offensive is the anti-car lobby that the city seems to entertain; I think your ambitions for city development overreach practicality and actual needs, and trespass on the rights of people to use whatever transportation they want, in favour of a dizzy group that are so jealous of their limited space that they want to limit it further just to punish a theoretical offender: the outsider). Open parking space in busy areas signals a certain welcomeness, such as you would find in a smaller town. They are particularly important in dense areas for more reasons than just the latitude they give for future development. The plan the Societe submitted involved eliminating the parking on one side of the street as well as all of the parking lots; the Plateau is already too dense, and the sidewalk is wide enough - just as much as St. Denis where there are plenty of terrasses. St. Laurent is a commercial street, esp. during the day and early evening, and to render it more of an entertainment street would invite itinerants and even more shenanigans that it is subject to after business hours. Remember the problems on St. Denis with the drug trade? Make St. Laurent the mecca the Societe suggested, and the drug problems move here.

We need open space in this city, and parking lots, like it or not, provide some of that space. You may think it's not green and it's ugly (well, you didn't enforce your own green perimeter laws, did you?) but it's a necessary service, and it keeps the buildings from closing over the streets and turning them into sunlight-lacking canyons.

Speaking of canyons, the part of the plan that I object to the most (symptomatic of public designs over private property, something your department is guilty of!) is the corner of Mont Royal and St. Laurent. There is a private lot there, a garden that has been well-developed by the Savannah restaurant. For some reason the Societe thinks that a multi-story building designed as an interior garden will get visited. I don't think so. And where's the money in that, anyway. That outside garden is visible to all passersby; it's a desperately needed space where few other private entities have the space or the inclination to develop private gardens that are visible, therefore enjoyable, to the public.

Moreover, if that garden is built over by a building at that corner, that already pedestrian-heavy and very windy corner, the wind is going to accelerate, and it will be very unpleasant to walk there. Have you been to the corner of DeMaisonneuve and Atwater? Stand there for half an hour, and you will see why it's not worthwhile putting anything there that requires a passerby to linger. I need to pass by more gardens than stores. And more stores than bars. And more people who have cars than people who have nothing but a hand out for change.

So in effect, there's not much you should develop about St. Laurent; in fact I would caution against the development you've already allowed.

Jane Sorensen