

I take this opportunity to express my OPPOSITION to this project. This project IS NOT about making the neighborhood safer and more enjoyable for the residents. This is real estate speculation and it is part of a trend that has destroyed many local businesses and neighborhoods. One only has to walk along Ste-Catherine to see the results of this type of policy: empty high rises sold to speculators of all kinds and business after business going bankrupt.

This trend has arrived in Verdun as well. Léon Charlebois vitrerie – local business established in 1950 – is now in ... Lachute?! The location they occupied across from Usine Atwater was demolished to make space for 500 condos.

Viande McCormack on De l'Église is not there anymore and it seems that the building will be turned into condos.

On Wellington itself I lost count of how many businesses have closed already due to abusive rent increases and as a result of what has happened over the last 5 years. Audacieuse Vanille, La Mistinguette, Salvation Army, Jewelry store next to Chicco, La Tienda, and many others have closed or moved away.

The streets are unsafe for pedestrians. There are no streetlights anymore. They have been replaced with these ridiculous dim bulbs that don't give any light. I almost got run over twice while walking on the sidewalk. I do not feel safe going anywhere after dark. I am an able-bodied person, I do not have any handicaps or mobility issues. I am afraid for my safety after dark.

The sidewalks are in a pitiful state – dangerously uneven, especially in winter when they are covered in slush and ice.

My husband uses a scooter to get around. He had a medical appointment to go to. HE FLIPPED his scooter on De l'Église - this is how bad the sidewalks are. Luckily , he is a big guy, and the scooter fell on his ankle and did not cause any damage. This could have ended up in the ER or at the morgue! He had to wait in the slush for passersby to help him up and to straighten the scooter.

These are the things that need to be fixed and that nobody cares about. The elderly don't go anywhere in winter. They don't go out even in the summer as much. And I am supposed to believe they will flock on the pedestrian Well at -25 C to enjoy....What exactly?

In the summer, at least the schools are closed and some people are on vacation. Businesses put out terraces, there is maybe some small profit to be made during these months. The days are also longer. But most people are out on the street in the evening or weekends.

The other 9 months of the year, people work, children are in school, the days are short and the weather is lousy. But fear not, we will all flock and brave rain, cold, wind, slush, snow to dance to Kumbaya on the Well.

My husband does not go out anymore – not even with the scooter – until spring. And I can assure you he is not the only one. Among the elderly, those who still go out do so because they have a car.

But wait – there is no parking anymore. It has been taken away by the bike paths that litter the whole city now and that nobody uses. I have yet to see one person using the bike path in the winter. Not even the bike path along the canal is used by cyclists in winter, let alone the ones along Verdun and Bannantyne.

So somebody like my husband will fly on a magic carpet to get to Wellington and then will enjoy a drive around in a tuk-tuk to admire the signs of businesses closed. Exciting indeed.

Will the few bars and restaurants that are not bankrupt yet put out a terrace and tables in the middle of the winter? It is probably safe to say they will not. Even if they do, I do not feel safe walking to the grocery store after dark, and I am certainly not going to go sit in the dark for a slice of pizza in the middle of the street at -25 C?!

The only businesses that seem to thrive on Wellington are second-hand stores. There are three within a four-block radius. I think this speaks volumes about the economic situation in the area in case somebody needed more proof that normal working-class people have no money.

The only people with money are speculators. And this is what this is – paving the way for speculators to kick out businesses and residents.

These types of measures have been going on for years masquerading as biodiversity and other such terms.

Another example: parc de La Vérendrye. In the summer, people would have BBQs, play ball or hang around with friends. In the winter, there was an ice rink. Enter the “biodiversity”

agenda. The park is now littered with mounds of earth reminiscent of tombs, on which a few plants struggle to survive. For the sake of biodiversity, these tombs could have been located on a smaller area of the park so that there was still a place for people to enjoy. But no. They are all over the place, and only one lonely picnic table remains. There is no ice rink anymore, either. Nobody is using the park anymore. They cannot.

We are losing services and quality of life all the time. But it is for our own good. Or so the politicians want us to believe.

Will I still go to Wellington if it becomes pedestrian? Yes. I go to the grocery store. I leave in a food desert and so I go to Metro and IGA. Will I go more often? No. I don't go more often in the summer when it is nice outside. I will certainly not do that in winter.

Where will the residents park their cars? Oh I forgot – there will be no residents anymore. They will follow Léon Charlebois to Lachute so that everything can be torn down and replaced with high-rises. Who will be the owners and tenants of these highrises? The elderly that the petition claims to want to help? There is a woman in my building – she has been living here 9 years and I only now met her. She does not even go down to the laundry room due to health limitation. But she will go hang out on the pedestrian Well.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT THE PEOPLE. IT IS NEVER ABOUT THE PEOPLE. IT IS ONLY ABOUT MONEY AND PROFIT.

IT IS CALLED TRANSFER OF WEALTH.

If this is about the people, then this project will be stopped. The rent abuses will be eliminated. The streets will be repaired and made safe again. The businesses will be encouraged to come back and stay. The parks will be given back to the people to enjoy.

I am waiting.