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**M. KENNY GROVER**  
**MH Grover et fils**

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Bonjour. Donc, nous sommes de retour avec monsieur Grover. J'avais deux noms, si vous voulez bien vous identifier.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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Okay. Oui. Hello. My name is Kenny Grover, from MH Grover & Sons.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Thank you. Go ahead. So, you have 10 minutes to tell me your opinion. And thereafter, I will notify you during the... when there's 2 minutes left. After that, I can... and we have another, more questions to ask. And I will have 10 minutes to do so.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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Perfect.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Thank you. I'm listening to you.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Okay. Hello. My name is Kenny Grover. I'm a third-generation owner of MH Grover & Sons,

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which is located on Wellington Street. We've been in business for 100 years; 70 years of which has been on that same location on Wellington.

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Our business is a true destination store that caters to Big and Tall Men's who resides across, and beyond the Island of Montreal. We are one of two stores that service this clientele in Montreal. This means that it is of the utmost importance that men who are interested in visiting our store are able to do so with ease.

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Like many stores on Wellington, our business is heavily reliant on customers who reside outside of Verdun. These customers must drive to visit our storefront. As such, parking within a reasonable distance from our storefront is imperative to keep our business accessible to our customers.

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I've spoken to the City on numerous occasions about the importance of making sure there is enough parking in and around Wellington to ensure that my customers can access my store. I have also asked that vendors be consulted, other stores be consulted when such plans are in the works. Yet, as recently as last month, vignettes were added on 3rd Avenue, taking away half the parking between Wellington and LaSalle Boulevard, without consultation of or proper notification. It is my understanding that another 250 parking spots will be eliminated by planned closures on Wellington.

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My business is still recovering from the horrendous situation last summer and the summer before, when the extensive street closures were implemented. These decisions have resulted in a 15 to 20% drop in the summer business. I've worked relentlessly to try to find creative solutions to prevent loss of business during these closures, including personally going outside to jockey cars.

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Simply put, I've done my part to solve problems when the City has been decisions that obstruct parking. I'm now asking the City to do its part by recognizing that the severe impacts that street-closure decisions have made on Verdun businesses. I'm also asking that the City do their due diligence before moving ahead with any future plans to close Wellington Street to traffic indefinitely. While walkability is certainly an important aspect of a thriving neighborhood, this vision cannot be actualized at the expense of businesses. Walking on a street on empty storefronts will not improve

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anyone's enjoyment of the neighborhood. But this is exactly what will happen if viable solutions are not attained to support both car traffic and foot traffic.

3610 I would also like to point out a few facts that support the need to retain traffic flow and parking and... and parking and contest the myth that closing Wellington will result in increased foot traffic. For the last two summers, despite extensive street closures, there have been very few pedestrians walking the streets between Monday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If business had to rely on these pedestrians to sustain themselves, they would all close.

3615 Stores like mine are 800 meters from the closest metro. This makes it difficult, if not impossible for customers with mobility issues, a large part of my customer base, to reach my store by public transportation in the current context.

3620 Many local residents and destination customers have expressed continuous frustration on the difficulties they face shopping on Wellington due to the street closures, limited parking and limited public transportation options.

3625 I would also like to point out some empirical evidence that contests the idea that pedestrian-style models are appropriate and viable for neighborhoods like Wellington... like Verdun, and for streets like Wellington.

3630 A recent article published by Bloomberg in 2022 suggested that, "such malls are largely successful when they are in close proximity to colleges or universities, with young populations who have the volume, ability and affluence to sustain businesses." Verdun has no such population feeding its businesses.

3635 "The project still typically offers reasonable parking options for those who need it." The action on street closures in Verdun haven't included no such accommodation. Pedestrian malls built along one long street are less successful, making it questionable if converting Wellington into a pedestrian mall is advisable.

Burlington's Church Street and Pearl Street in Boulder, Colorado, which have been cited as

success stories for these types of initiatives meet the requirements above. However, Verdun does not.

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In closing, I have a number of recommendations I feel are important to consider to rendering any decision on closing Wellington street to traffic. Do a comprehensive study on the cost of closing the street while making it still viable to retain profitable businesses.

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Cost and consideration should include: Making the street more attractive to pedestrians; improving public transportation access, including improved bus routes; generating a plan that includes the development of 500 parking spots within a 10-minute walk, a model typical of a successful pedestrian mall; engaging in consultation with local business owners, residents and customers who frequently shop on Wellington to discuss what each needs to continue thriving on Wellington as businesses and consumers.

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If a decision is rendered to close Wellington Street, a cost-benefit analysis which considers the points and actions above; you should give merchants a five-year window to decide whether remaining in the area is still feasible.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Thank you for your comments. Will you be leaving that document with us?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Yes.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Good. Give me just a moment, I'll be with you.

3670 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

No problem.

3675 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. So, I have a few questions. So, I understand a lot of your clientele comes both from outside of the area and have mobility issues?

3680 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

Yes. They're big and tall men, so they're heavy, very hard to walk.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3685 Okay. What is the parking situation like immediately around your store, both during the pedestrianization period and outside of pedestrianization period?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3690 When it's in the summer, it is awful, because Wellington loses all of the parking spots. There's a parking lot with 18 spots right across, like behind my store. Most of them have the Communauto people park there. So, it's... and you can also get a... I believe you can get a parking permit there.

3695 Thursdays and Fridays, they clean one side of the street in the middle of the afternoon. So, therefore, there is like no place to park at all. Okay. Like, for my people, they can't walk three blocks, they can't walk... it's not possible, it's not feasible.

3700 And then, they've just eliminated another... they took another with the vignettes on... between Verdun... Wellington and LaSalle, they took another probably 40 or 50 spots away that are going to be gone this summer. So, it's even going to get worse than that.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3705 So, those are the ones on 3rd Avenue that you're speaking about?

On 3rd Avenue. But the one... there's like eight metered spots, plus that parking lot, and they're always full, especially in the summer, and especially Thursday and Friday, when they know they can't park on the other side of the street in the middle of the afternoon.

3710 It's really on Thursday and Friday. I mean, I might as well go golfing because there's nothing else to do.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3715 You also mentioned that there is 250 planned spaces that will be removed?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3720 Well, Wellington Street, if they take all the spots away.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. But we're talking about...

3725 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

If they close the street.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3730 ... if they close the street for pedestrianization?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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Right.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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We're not talking about any other plans?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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No. No.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. Do most of your clientele come during the week or during the weekend?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Both. I mean, I can be... I always call... every day is... it's a wild card. I don't know when they're coming. Especially in the summer, it's more they're coming, because we get a lot of out-of-towners, tourists, they'll come. So, it's more... But they can come Monday... Monday to Sunday, we're open seven days a week.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

You're open seven days a week?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Yes. And also, I would say, mornings, it's difficult to find parking; that's when a lot of my customers try and come.

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You know, it's the opposite, like, you... the restaurants, I understand, they are from 4:00... or let's say 4 o'clock on. But we're before that, and I find it's extremely hard to get parking early in the morning.

3770 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

So, most of your clientele comes in the mornings?

3775 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

A lot of it, yes.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3780 Okay. Were you able to determine whether most of your sales are during the beginning of the week or towards the end of the week?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3785 Saturday and Sunday is always a little bit more. But it's... let's say 60%, I would say Saturday-Sunday, and 40%...

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3790 Monday to Friday.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3795 ... rest of the week.



**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3800           Okay. I understand that you've also done some personal jocking?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3805           Yes. Yes.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

              So, how do you do that and where do you...

3810           **M. KENNY GROVER :**

              Well, my customers get angry. So, I said, "Let me park your car. Where do I park?" So, I go outside, I take their car, and I'll park it wherever I'll go, three-four blocks away, and I'll park the car.

3815           **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

              So, you're looking for specific... any possible...

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3820           Yeah, I mean... yes. I have given the City several options, but...

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3825           Okay. Are you on the corner of a street? Are you...

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

              Correct.

3830 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Corner of a street.

3835 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

I'm opposite, actually, Verdun Beach. Even though we have different hours where we need the parking, but...

3840 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Do you have a laneway behind your building?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3845 Yes, we do.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. And how does that impact or benefit, your deliveries?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Okay. Twice this past summer, I had to go get the truck because he couldn't maneuver around streets to get to Verdun. I mean, I... it's hard, because they also block one end of the laneway. So, they can't drive through when there are big trucks that are coming.

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So, they come, and then, they've got to back out. They don't want to do it. And that's a problem.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3865 Okay. In terms of organizing the times, are you able to fit your deliveries within the morning schedules?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3870 No. I can't. I... They just show up when they show up.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

It is not something that you could request of them?

3875 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

You know what? It's not a huge problem, because I will get people to go outside and take the boxes out. But it's not that convenient. But no, I've never tried to get them to come between 9:00 and 11:00 in the morning.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. Would that make it easier for you if you did ask them?

3885 **M. KENNY GROVER :**

Yes and no. It's not that major a problem.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Okay. Okay. You were also mentioning that in different areas where there have been successful projects, that it's close to... in close proximity to colleges and universities, where there's a young population, where they have a higher revenue?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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Well, they have... they're more affluent, I mean.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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More affluent.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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You're going to University of Vermont, to get in, it's \$30,000; I checked both. And in Colorado, it's like \$42,000 just to get in. So, people have money who are going there. And their parents are coming to visit. They're going to go shopping, they're going to go...

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Okay.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

... walking on the street.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

I missed the other criteria that you mentioned.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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Let me just see. No parking.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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Parking. Just making sure.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Because on Church Street, we have three parking lots within a 20 minute, 15 minute walking, over 15... I think it was 500 spots within 15 minutes of walking.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Three parking lots with about 500 spaces?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Within about 15 to 20 minutes to walk to like Church Street or the walking mall.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

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500 spaces within a 15-minute walk?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

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...minute walk, correct.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay. And you said that you've had important impacts upon your financial situation?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Oh, for sure. In summer, it's... it's brutal, it really is. And it's also the... in the summer even, you're seeing the same people over again, and nothing is changing. I mean, if they're not bringing more people out, every summer, it's the same thing. The same thing would happen in the winter, if you're not doing anything different, constantly doing something.

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3960 I mean, you've got to setup a committee that's going to do something every single week to bring people to the street, otherwise, no one is coming except for the same people. You're not bringing people in from anywhere else.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3965 Okay. How about in terms of clientele that are passing on the street? How does that advantage or impact your business?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3970 Well, my people are not real walkers, to be honest with you, so it's not... you know, they might tell somebody, but it's very rarely do I pick up people walking on the street. We're also at the end, so it's a little bit quieter where we are.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3975 Okay.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

3980 You know, we're not near the metro or anything like that. We're 800 meters from the metro, so it's a long walk, and there's no bus service. So, unless you're young and agile, you're not walking towards me.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3985 So, in terms of your location, you said that you're at the end of the pedestrianization (inaudible)

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Well, it goes to 6th Avenue; we're on the corner of 3rd Avenue.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay.

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

But we're 800 meters from the metro.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

I'm sorry?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

800 meters from the metro.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Yeah. Okay. And you were talking that if there is further pedestrianization, or even with the summer pedestrianization, that there should be more bus access?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

Yeah, for sure. I mean, there's nothing coming up to any of the avenues. So, there's really... there's no way to get to the store unless you're walking.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

So, you would be suggesting that there be buses going north-south basically?

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**M. KENNY GROVER :**

4025 That's correct. I mean, they have this guy on a bicycle who takes people from one end to the other. But I don't think he wants to take any of my customers in there.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

4030 You were also talking about the importance of a five-year window -- and I have one more minute, so -- a five-year window of consultation to evaluate your viability. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

4035 I would be more than happy. It's more, you know what, if they don't do anything about parking, and they... my business is not viable. I would go to... I need a place that has parking, whether I go to a strip mall or something like that. It's just not feasible. I know there's a lot of other destination shops on the street. There's a shoe store that's a destination shop. There... People come from all over. It's...

4040 And people, our population is aging, and my clientele is older as well. It's not feasible to stay open, it won't be, I don't believe so.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

4045 Okay. Thank you very much for your comments tonight.

**M. KENNY GROVER :**

4050 You're welcome. Do I give this to you, or?