

CONSULTATION -- PROJET D'AGRANDISSEMENT ET DE MODERNISATION DE  
L'HÔPITAL GÉNÉRAL DE MONTREAL 9 JUIN, 2008

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J'aimerais d'abord remercier les membres de la Commission et l'Office de Consultation Publique d'avoir accordé aux citoyens le temps et l'occasion de nous exprimer sur ce projet.

Permettez-moi de me présenter. Ma famille et moi sommes résidents de l'arrondissement Ville-Marie et du quartier de Côte-des-Neiges/avenue Cedar depuis 1971. Nous avons longtemps appuyé les énormes et intelligents efforts des Amis de la montagne de protéger et valoriser le Parc Mont-Royal qui est parmi les plus importants biens communs qu'appartient à nous les montrealais.

J'ai deux brèves commentaires que j'aimerais ajouter à la discussion ce soir, soit:

1. La question des demandes constantes d'abrogation des règlements concernant la protection de notre patrimoine historique du Parc Mont-Royal.
2. Le besoin d'un plan de contrôle de circulation sur Côte-des-Neiges/Pine/Cedar que soulève ce projet, et la nécessité de l'intégrer avec les besoins plus générales en transport de la Ville. Si vous me permettez, je vais maintenant continuer en anglais.

As recently as 2005 the Conseil des Ministres passed a law declaring le Parc Mont-Royal and its flanks to be an historic and natural arrondissement. Now, only three years later serious consideration is being given to permitting a vast enlargement of the General hospital to go ahead, in contradiction of the protective charter.

This is not the first time that a variation in zoning bylaws has been requested for development on or near this public space. Our neighbours and ourselves have participated several times now in civic action to halt development in contravention of borough requirements. We have on three occasions duly followed the regulations to register our names at our borough office requesting a referendum in order to vote on proposed zoning changes that we consider to go against the spirit of the protective law.

My point is not that the Mount Royal is never going to be free from the pressures of expansion. There will always be people with plans and projects for this prestigious height of land. What appalls us, however, is the fragility of the statutory protection which has been accorded to such an important symbol of Montreal Island. It appears, to us at least, that there exists no impregnable safeguard of this cultural and public good. For that reason we ask that the Commission give the implications of this project very careful evaluation. Once the trees come down, the building additions go up, the roads get widened, and the sidewalks engulfed there can be no turning back.

My second point concerns the increased demands (an increase of 13% I believe is calculated) on the road system, public sidewalks and public transport that the expansion will engender. Côte des Neiges runs between land that is already occupied, with no margin for widening unless major excavations take place. The same goes for Cedar and Pine. There is no metro at those intersections and no heliport provision on the premises as we understand it.

Furthermore, nothing is mentioned in the proposal about integration of the traffic increase and parking with transport planning and projections of the City. In these days of high energy costs and urban concerns about automobile congestion we would hope that the hospital and the Ministère de la Santé could see their way instead to utilize the ample resources already being specially prepared at the Glen rather than awkwardly squeezing their ambitious project into the Mountain site at the expense of our Park and us all.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.