

For the OCPM (Office de Consultation Publique de Montreal)

Quartier des Grands Jardins

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Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Megan MacGregor and I study at Concordia University and have been working in the area of the proposed "Quartier Des Grands Jardins" for a number of years now. I have seen the area positively transform with the introduction of the 2 new Concordia towers, the renovation of Norman-Bethune square, and the installment of bike paths in the area. Many of these improvements have made me thrilled to be in the area and to be part of this beautiful city.

I could only hope that this PPU for the "Quartier des Grands Jardins" would introduce bold improvements for the area. However, having reviewed the documents, I am greatly disappointed and shocked at some of the ideas proposed in this plan.

Let's begin with the green spaces and greening as stated in the PPU. This includes opening up the current institutional green spaces to the public, creating a new park, developing Norman-Bethune, and adding playground equipment in Hector-Toe-Blake.

I would remind the commissioners of some instances where green spaces were unsuccessful in the area. Cabot Square for one is littered with homeless and vagrants, roaming the park at night waiting for their next prey. The former Norman-Bethune park was a pigeon

nesting ground as well as a dirty, unattended spot for bums. Similarly, a few years prior ago, on Guy Street, corner of deMaisonneuve, there was a poorly kept grassy area used mainly by drug users and natives.

Since then, the city and Concordia took steps to revitalize Norman-Bethune. By removing grass and planting trees and benches, the area is now used by students and is beautiful in the summer months (incidentally, this renovation was finished long ago so it seems peculiar that it is mentioned in the urban plan). The grassy area on Guy & deMaisonneuve was replaced with the building that is now the John Molson School of Business. It seems that opening up green spaces to the public has not worked in the past, and as we consider plans for the future, we should be cautious as to how we implement green spaces.

I understand that the city is proposing creating a park next to the Old Victoria School that will be a garden for the public. That area is closed in on 3 sides by buildings and gets no sunlight. A park that's closed in and is constantly shady will not be attractive to families or students. I will add that the city's attempts at having gardens have never been successful because the maintenance of such a place is never imposed.

Another objective in the PPU - Quartier des Grands Jardins is to stimulate the local economy. However, I cannot understand how the creation of this most unusual park will succeed at such an objective. It

seems more likely that the loss of a successful parking lot will bankrupt several small businesses in the area that cannot survive without the parking available, and it will end up stimulating nothing but the homeless community. The proof shows that the successful attempts of ridding the area of homeless infestations has been to remove green spaces, not create them.

The city seems to underestimate the odds against some of the aspects of this plan that if overlooked, could seriously damage the area. I ask that you, the Commissioners, please reconsider some of these points mentioned before turning a blind eye to the public's awareness.

Thank you,

Megan