

September 29, 2011

Mrs. Louise Roy, Présidente
Office de consultation publique de Montréal
Cours Mont-Royal
1550, rue Metcalfe – Bureau 1414
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1X6

RE : CADRE DE RÉVISION DES HAUTEURS ET DENSITÉS DU CENTRE-VILLE

Dear Mrs. Roy and commissioners,

My name is Mathieu, and as a resident of the area affected by the proposed changes to the planning program (plan d'urbanisme,) I am writing to you in order to express my thoughts and opinions in relation to the preliminary document issued in June 2011 by the City of Montréal, in regards to its allotted heights and densities within the specified area of downtown Montréal.

Unlike other residents who may be against the theory of densification and increased building heights, I would like to begin by stating that I am in favour of the Idea and approve of the modifications that have been proposed by the City of Montréal.

As is the case in many other large city centres, such as New York City, Chicago, and Boston to name a few, higher densities and taller buildings are what make a city's downtown core thrive. As seen throughout evolution, city centers and central business districts became to be as a result of their central location, proximity to a seaway and or railway and for the need to centralize the powers that made a city run (ie; government institutions, financial institutions, major corporations, etc). For this reason, and for the fact that a typical downtown core is limited in size, it has become essential to maximize the potential of a landsite by increasing a buildings height and overall floor area. As stated on page 10 of the city's document, over the past two centuries our city has seen a clear shift from an industrialized core to a central business district with hotels, office buildings and large stores. The era of low density industrial, residential and commercial buildings has come and gone. That style of development is and should have always

been reserved for the suburbs and outskirts of a city's centre. In today's society, a city's core needs to be comprised of taller buildings, denser zones, and a mixity of uses.

Throughout the document in question, it was stated several times that the heights and densities mentioned in the planning program adopted in 2004 are a carbon copy of the plans established in 1992. Although it may be obvious in stating the following, however, a planning program that continues to emphasize certain elements that are twenty years old, need to evolve in sync with the pace of a city in order not to impede it.

The document and proposals put forward by the City of Montréal are a much needed step forward in what is to be Montreal's future. A statement that was mentioned in the presentation document, which holds a lot of power, is the fact that Montréal and Montréal's have begun to shift from the days of the automobile that we saw in the last half of the 20th century to a preference for public and active transit, especially when commuting to and within the city's core¹.

What this tells us, is that the above ground parking lots that were created over the past 60 years to accommodate the influx of automobiles, have now become prime locations for development, whether it be commercial, residential or a mix of the two. In essence, a combination of an increased and more efficient public transit system coupled with the introduction of BIXI, as well as sky high parking and fuel costs have influenced residents, employees and tourists to change their transportation habits, thus eliminating the need for the excessive amount of parking lots that we see throughout downtown.

With the amount of "potential" available, we now have the opportunity to make the city more dynamic by improving its landscape and animation along the streets. My belief is that, in order to accomplish this, we must densify the City's core by introducing more residents, businesses and offices. Each is dependent upon on another in order to function properly, and the only way to meet the City's target of increasing the square footage of office space and the number of residents is to build up.

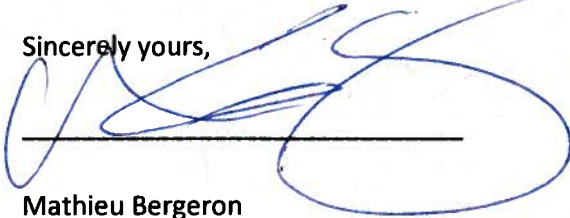
¹ Ville de Montréal, arrondissement de Ville-Marie. Cadre de révision de hauteurs et densités du centre-ville. Juin 2011. Pg. 10 et 20.

That is not to say that densifying and building up everywhere within the City's core is a good idea. A balance must be achieved between what has been argued above and integration with historical sites and or sectors whereby the majority of the buildings have a lower density and height.

I believe that the City has done a fine job of delimiting the sectors whereby an increase in height and density should be allowed, as well as the sectors whereby the opposite is true.

Montréal and its downtown are finally heading in the right direction, and on behalf of all citizens, I am excited to live in a place that will be vibrant, animated, dynamic, and that will offer a wide variety of everything for everyone.

Sincerely yours,



Mathieu Bergeron

