

For Shame...it's so Québécoise

Tonight – June 1, 2018 – I wept while traversing my "*Mont Royal*"
At a crawl to savour my "last" permitted through passage
A lassitude, a heaviness descended upon my psyche
The rule of the bicycle has arrived,
I cried, in frustration and despair
The lies and the half truths that are being propagated
The emotions that are being manipulated,
Truth is being down-rated, strangulated, mutilated

The city I love is being divided by those whose vision is different than mine
It's a crime, in my eyes at least,
East and west pitted against one another,
I feel depleted, cheated, defeated, robbed of a way across the soul of my island home
Their goal in part...the dominance of the cyclist
The demoralization of the motorist.
I groan in absolute frustration, especially when I see, right there in front of me...
An ugly barricade, blocking a beloved scene I had come to view...boo hoo to
A towering set of ugly wooden bleachers, planks and nuts and bolts and rusty steel,
A real and crude monstrosity, given you see
The undoubtedly and unwittingly ironic nomenclature of "*Belvédère Soleil*".

Pray it's only temporary...because it's all so very visibly, risibly "*québécoise*"
For shame, blocking a view of beauty by such a shoddy, tacky-viewing platform,
By what norm of architectural design can that be viewed as an improvement to
Our wonderful sky-high island park?
No earthly spark, no vision of Olmstead,
So oft referred to in the City's propaganda,
Could have included a monstrosity such as this
Tsk tsk! What is it supposed to tempt a pedestrian mountain population to do?
Clamber high up it, if you're able...
Sit, and spew up...or fall off it...or be clued into
What exactly?
Oh, enjoy the view?
Across the city of the dead to a park called *Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne*
(*Joagay ochira'gaynay*)

In a way, they've aptly named it, though probably not the intended interpretation,
As, for most of the day, the sun indeed will shine right into your eye
Making you blink, perhaps cry, "Why, oh why, Mayor Plante?"
Can't you see Madame P, you've made a mockery
Of a leisurely scenic, beloved passage through the former, then blasted, tramway tunnel pass?

For 65 years the rock funnel or gorge route, has, *sans doute*,
Delighted en masse transiting islanders and their visitors
Being met with roars of heartfelt enthusiasm for our lovely island home,
Alone, among a few others in this world, we have city on an island and a mountain,

Mont Royal with its majestic bird's eye vistas viewable from its many angles
Look at the many tangles of paths and roads that cut through it,
Check a map...you'll see...and maybe you'll agree in time that
No matter how you view it, or which form of perambulation
Your citizens and visitors chose to use to reach it
The Camilen Houde-Remembrance Road motorized axis is truly not a blight
Its habitual users not a slight on our mountain's loveliness

Alas, you've breached our trust, made us fussed and anxious
Unwittingly, you see, you've lit a fuse,
Confused your citizens and their neighbours
You have us primed and ready now to blow,
"No, no, no...You have to forgo your mountain road, it's overloaded"
Such untruths; and so, it's now no go for some of us,
It seems under your rule, you have repealed the
Right of the Montreal island motorist to travel over it.
Indeed, we are those whose very existence you and your political party cohorts
Exhort are an anachronistic "self-entitled" cancer in the city.

Pity Mayor P that you forget, in your zeal to convert us to your view that
You are now mayor and administrator of all the island of Montreal
One and all, we pay our taxes for services and amenities and
For the moment, at least, both on the west and on the east,
We still possess the right to chose our mode of transportation;
Since the island amalgamation, 60-100% each year of all our tax dollars
The Montreal central city now siphons off...and then you have the gall
To proselytize, favorize and raise one or two segments of the population
To even higher elevations, worthy of "only the best". Is it a cruel jest?
"For the good of the city you cry", while alienating all the rest of us
You're supposed to be mayor of all of Montreal, not just of a few of us.

The pedal pushers are the new gods and rulers of the island of Montreal
Mind you all fall into line and remember that
The Mount Royal Heritage Area has become fair game
The peace and tranquility of the City of the Dead
Is becoming overrun with gobs of cyclists racing through
What is a grieving mourner, walker, bird or animal watcher to do
Sigh and sue who exactly, as they are forced to step aside, or risk being toppled?
"Long rule the age of the bicycle...our two-wheeled god", you cry

Sadly what you, and all those now pumped up cyclists, and runners
Don't realize as yet...old age, illness and infirmity
Will, one day, rob so many of you, of your strength and physical powers
Sorrowfully, the flower of youth and of middle age, disintegrates with time
It's a crime...but also a reality...you may one day agree...though
Even today, not all your citizens are, or will be, physically and mentally able
To clamber on and off your designated numbered buses
To straddle a bicycle, or even stroll the sharp inclines,

Or climb your towering, hastily erected, ugly bleacher belvédères
In the way you have, here and now decreed, we all need to do,
Simply to traverse, the former roadway we once all shared quite amicably.

You dare to tell us we, the motorists, did not "care" for cyclists and pedestrians
Who, you scream, were pushed off the road by our "speeding" motor cars,
In what dream or parallel universe do you truly live in?
On Camilien Houde, the elite bike racers were the ones moving the fastest
On Remembrance Road, stop signs prevented any attempt at speeding,
Should most of us have even wanted to,
Phooey, we choose to transit for the peace, the beauty and the vistas
The mist, the breeze, the snow, the ice, the nice sunrises and sunsets, the sky,
We didn't try to speed;
A few minutes of beauty, fresher air, and contemplation was our need

Cohabitation, sharing, respect, equitable shares for all
That is simply what we call for,
Most of Mount Royal Park is given over to pedestrians and cyclists already,
Plenty of traffic-free routes both up and down the mountain abound
Why hound us, from the one route previously provided to the motorist to share?
In no democratic world is everyone permitted 100%, where's the sense in that?

You've alienated in the process, a ton of us
Mourners visiting their loved ones in the City of the Dead,
Unabled bodies, too weak, mangled or ill
For your promoted, vaunted "healthier" forms of transportation,
Even if they would dearly love to have the expectation of using them,
Parents with young children, or ailing fathers and mothers,
Others are grandparents transiting to care for grand-kids
And, of course, some do it to get to work and back,
What's so truly wrong with that?
Did you really think this out? Or did you simply improvise?
Lies aside, there will never be a "one size fits all" solution.

The hammer you brought down to instill your vision is flawed
With this decision, you won't bring peace but anger and frustration
We were Montreal islanders united as a nation in our love of "our" *Mont Royal*
Enthralled we had a special something, to mitigate our other challenges
In a city already plagued with road closures for repairs and festivals and special events
Why did you decide there was a definite need to deny many of us,
Then "bribe" others with a tacky "café suspendu"
Glued awkwardly to the Camilien Houde belevedere of the cross?
It's our loss but who truly benefits, the cafe operator?
No doubt a Projet Montréal aficionado...ho ho ho...

Oh, you really touched a nerve here...put the hammer to the bone
Like lonely Marie-Antoinette's oft misquoted: "Let them eat cake"
You modernized it somewhat with your implied mountain "improvement" offer:

"Let them have some wine along with the view, in time they'll be mollified."
Have you no pride, or what are you trying to turn us aside from, Mayor Plante?
You insult us, with your rough hewn, insanely quétaine "hanging" patio...
Oh so quaintly named: *Café Suspendu*, which blocks the view,
Yet again to those passing on the road.
You really don't need to goad us into action.
Only a fraction of the barbs you have inflicted,
Ensure your vision for our mountain needs to be asphyxiated.

Quétaine indeed. It's an ugly sight and only accessible to those from the east...
For them alone the feast for the eyes and succour to the palate
Why can't you accept your taxpayers live on all sides of the mountain?
Yet how is it only those from the east side get so bonified?
You try to make your case for closure somewhat workable
By funnelling the rest of us on foot, or bike down the only roadway on the mountain
Formerly accessible to the transiting motor car,
You claim it's not in Olmstead's vision, it's not "green"
But he designed our park 30-40 years before
The motorized car came on the scene
And accommodations for the passage of the horse and carriage were included
The 20th century horseless carriage is merely its modern day successor.

So Madame Mayor, aren't you being quite duplicitous here?
Your arguments a marriage of fact and fiction, sheer lunacy?
To save face, you claim you want to make the roadway "walkable"
Without a fear of crossing or of being run down
But do you realize most of that road has an 8% incline?
Not fine for the faint of heart and not too walkable for most
Your resurrection of the ghost of Frederick Olmstead is truly out of line
Since his plans delineated the subsequently named bucolic, meandering Olmstead Road
for pedestrians and, years later yet, a new wheeled breed, the new fangled bicyclists
How come none of your partisan propaganda mention those pertinent facts?

So once again, I query, "Who are you really courting here?"
Who do you holler and cheer for?
What is it that you fear? An island people happy on their hill?
Madame, your methods are ill conceived and crass
You have rent our very Montreal island soul en masse
And hegemony, pure and simple,
Hovers high as your primary goal
With our hard earned tax dollars misused for animations and promotions
Notions our mountain truly didn't need.

Projet Montréal, please, just return to us our mountain parkway to the sky
And perhaps we'll stop wondering quite why you thought this was a good idea.

Quétaine (kétaine): crass; cheaply vulgar; tasteless; shoddy; shabby in appearance; dowdy; tacky, jerry-built.

Hegemony: Social or cultural predominance or ascendancy; predominance by one group within a society or milieu; a group or regime, which exerts undue influence within a society.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 1

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

Insert Photo - [Montreal_from_above_Mont_Royal. jpg image](#)

Caption: Downtown Montreal - aerial view from above Mount Royal Chalet (on the left) to the St Lawrence river and the South Shore

THE STORY BEGINS...

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book I, Chapter 1, The Period.

A new vision...

On a mountain, on an island in the middle of one of the world's longest rivers over the span of less than two hundred years two great cities grew into being, one for the living, the other for the dead. Although the City of the Living dates its founding from 375 years ago, it wasn't truly a city then, more like a small settlement that eventually expanded to become the city it now is. As for the City of Dead, it only came into being one hundred and sixty-five or so years ago, in this particular location at least, as indigenous people had been burying their dead on the mountain in various locales for many years before these two cities grew to the size they are now.

Physically separated 60+ years ago by a roadway that was previously tram-tracks for 30 or so years before that, these two mountain metropolises face one another across what has recently become a hotly contested symbolic strip of asphalt with rumours, half-truths and wild and unwelcome ideas abounding. Representing as they do both life and the afterlife, the cities also symbolize, each in its own way, the heartaches and the heart of an island with its namesake central mountain; which is being torn apart by what some residents see as an cynical, ignorant and unfeeling abuse of power by the ruling political party at City Hall, who wish to close the mountain to through traffic citing opportunistic "serious safety" concerns.

"We'll consult after we've closed the mountain to through traffic" Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal

Pitting citizen against citizen, cyclists and pedestrians against motorists, public transit against private transportation owners, commuters against recreationists, politicians against the proletariat, the young, the fit and healthy against the very young, the old, the disabled, the infirm and the physically challenged. What a perfect storm of emotion and irrationality we are bearing witness to in this the second decade of the 21st century. Welcome to life on Montreal island under the Projet Montréal administration and its misguided, heavy-handed efforts at social engineering.

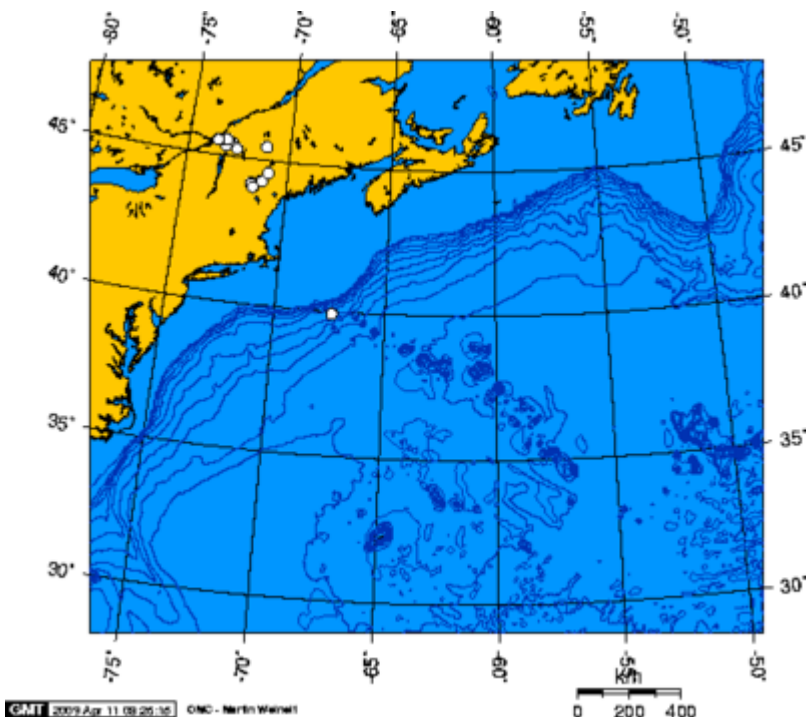
“It equates to social engineering, telling people how they’re going to live. And it’s not going to really reduce the number of cars on the mountain, it’s going to increase the number of cars around the mountain – Cote des Neiges Rd., Pine Ave. Park Ave., what have you,” Jennifer Crane, Montrealer

Our mountain isn't really a mountain but a hill

Not really a mountain at all, and not an extinct volcano either, but the eroded remains of a hill with three defined summits, Montreal island's Mount Royal has loomed large in the mostly flat, glaciofluvial plains of the area since its formation 125 million years ago when lava in the earth’s core burst through the Canadian Shield (composed of Precambrian igneous and high-grade metamorphic rock) as a result of a travelling geological phenomenon known as the **New England Hotspot** (insert link to: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England_hotspot) (And, no, however catchy, it's not the name of mobile night club.)

The resulting **intrusion** (insert link to: http://sappho.eps.mcgill.ca/~olivia/UPE/Field_trips/trip2.html) or bubble (blister) from a geological perspective is neither, as some have incorrectly supposed, part of the Laurentian Mountains to the north and/or the Adirondacks nor the Appalachian Mountain chain to the southeast, but belongs instead to the somewhat more unusual Monteregian Hills formations scattered on the southeastern fluvial plains, or lowlands of the St Lawrence river that stretch almost as far as the Québec-Maine-New Hampshire border.

Insert image: New England Hotspot-Monteregian Hills location -



Caption: A portion of the track of the New England hotspot intrusions. The westernmost white dot is Mount Royal Source: Public Domain

The Monteregians (aka Montregians) are butte-type igneous rock formations, also referred to in North America as monadnocks (and as inselbergs in other parts of the world), which is a word of Native

American origin, and means a solitary hill rising above the flat area surrounding it. The Montregians stretch east from the island of Montréal for 80 km (about 50 miles). Most of them are characterized by high crests or buttes on their northeast sides and gradual slopes on their southwest sides as demonstrated by the other hills in the classic Montregian formation that extend eastwards on the south shore of the St Lawrence into Quebec's Montérégie and Estrie regions, where the "mountains" of Saint-Bruno, Saint-Hilaire (Beloeil), Saint-Grégoire (Johnson), Brome, Rougemont, Yamaska, and Shefford, are found. Mont Mégantic is also considered, by some geologists, to be a part of this grouping of hills, as the most easterly and last of our local series of modnadracks; however, it does not quite share the "classic" form of the others being much larger with four distinct peaks, of which Mont Mégantic is the highest at 1105 m.

Although for the most part collectively referred to as Mont Royal, Montreal's mountain actually consists of three distinct peaks: Mont-Royal (also known as the Colline de la Croix), which is the tallest at 233 m (764 feet), followed by Mount Murray or Colline d'Outremont or Colline de Côte-des-Neiges at 211 m (692 ft) and the Westmount Summit or "Little Mountain", which is the smallest of the three summits at 201 m (659 ft) above sea level.

A summit with many names

Confusingly enough, the Outremont peak is often referred to as Mount Royal's third summit, even though it is its 2nd in terms of actual height. It's also the less well known and possibly somewhat less utilized of the three, especially in terms of access by most Montrealers. Except, of course, during the years the Université de Montréal offered access to a toboggan run, a ski jump and a ski slope with a rope pull and later a T-bar lift.

(Insert photo of ski slope at U of M on Mount Murray)



Caption: Ski slope and T-bar lift on Outremont Mountain, c1960 - the ski jump was to the right of this photo.
Source: Archives, Université de Montréal

Today, it's predominantly mountain bikers who flock there (and who build and rebuild their trails to the detriment of the vegetation and the natural water runoff), as well as local photographers and those who hike up it, both with and without their dogs, trying not to get **run down** by the bikes.



Caption: Hiker and mountain biker on the trail down Mount Murray

In addition, in June 2017, during Montréal's 375th anniversary celebrations, the city formally renamed the Outremont peak yet again (as it seems to be the summit that has had the most names attached to it over the years). Thus, it is now to be known as Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne, which is a Kanien'kehá:ka (aka Haudenosaunee, Mohawk or People of the Flint) name for "the place of the big fire". The gesture was made in commemoration of how the hill had traditionally been used in earlier times as a site for beacon or signal fires used by First Nations people for warnings, or to signify gatherings, although it's not actually clear if they used that peak exclusively and/or either of Mount Royal's two other peaks for their signal fires.

Now, all we have to do is to learn how to properly pronounce the new name; apparently Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne = *djodjâgué otchira'guéné* in French phonetics and pronounced *jojagay ochira'gaynay* in the corresponding phonetical English pronunciation; however, I haven't yet mastered how to make it roll off my tongue without faltering halfway through, but, as always, practise should eventually make perfect.

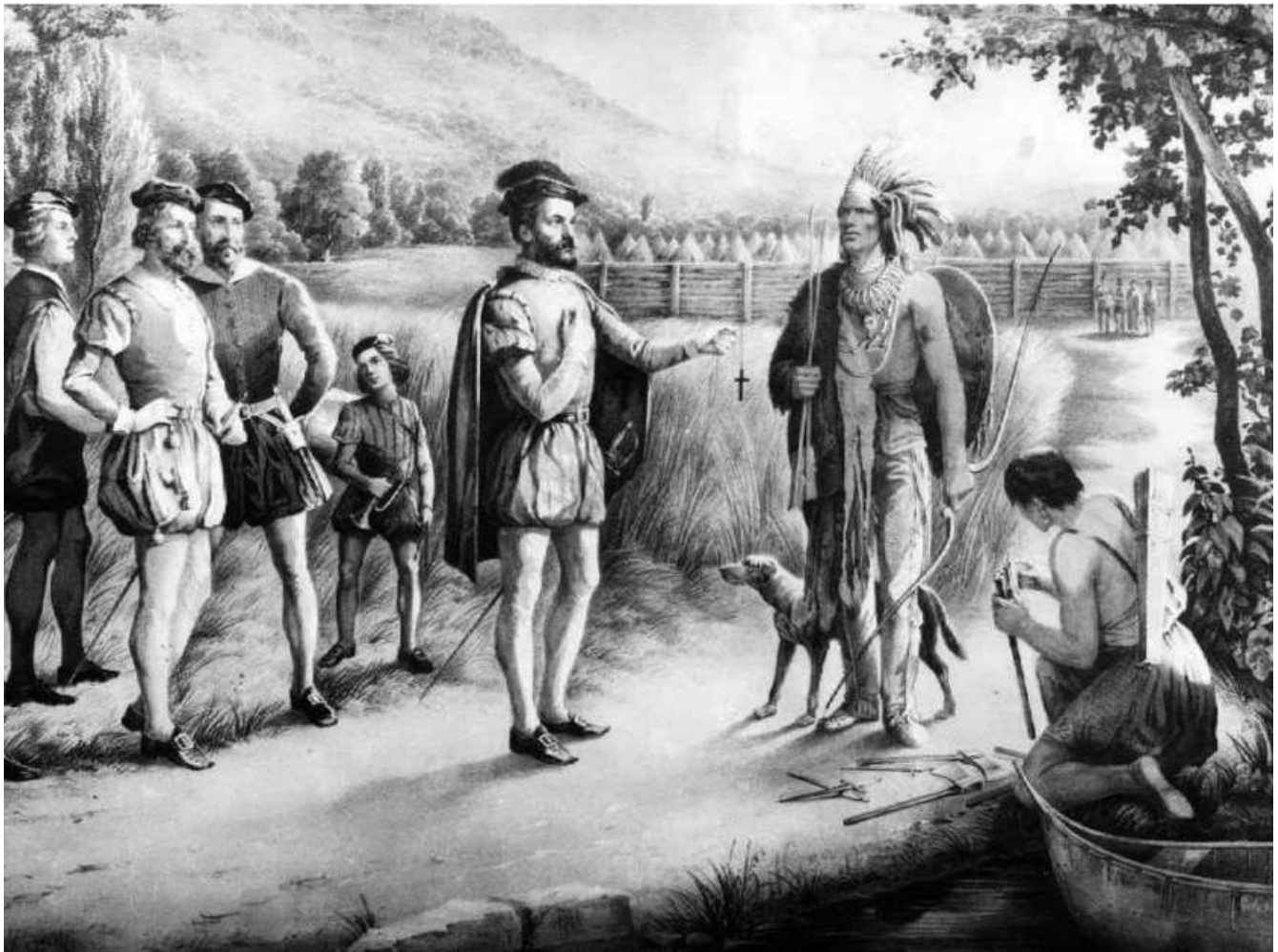
Which indigenous peoples lit the signal fires?

The complete history of the former inhabitants of Montreal Island has yet to be definitively written and probably won't be any time soon but, from all the conflicting information available, there seems to be a fair amount of revisionist history going on as the years pass, but that's a story for another time. What we do know with some certainty is that approximately 10,000 years ago with the receding

glaciers and the eventual draining of the shallow Champlain Sea that used to occupy the area between the St Lawrence and Ottawa River valleys, the island of Montreal was exposed, thus making the area habitable over time for some of the continent's earlier human inhabitants to move onto and travel across. Who they were, and where they came from is still up for some debate with conflicting opinions abounding.

Hochelaga - Whose home?

However, by the time Jacques Cartier first visited in 1535, there were an estimated 1,500-3,000 people living in the fortified settlement on the island that he referred to as Hochelaga, although there continues to be uncertainty surrounding his exact landing place, the exact location of Hochelaga and even the correct name of Hochelaga itself (it was, after all, Cartier's archaic phonetical French interpretation of an indigenous name) along with the actual name of the people who lived there. Not even the First Nations' peoples can agree on that and some "theories" out there are self-serving at best.



Jacques Cartier meeting with the Hochelagans - 19th century lithograph

Source: Public Domain

Some even attribute his landing place not on the Island of Montreal at all but suggest it was on Île Jésus - the 2nd largest island in the Hochelaga Archipelago - sometimes mistakenly referred to today

as the island of Laval, which is understandable since the City of Laval now occupies most of it, but what they probably don't know, or realize, is there are three small islands further up the Mille Îles river that are called les Îles de Laval, or the Laval Islands, so the "Laval" nomenclature has already been used for them. Archeologists still hold out hope that one day the exact site of the village of Hochelaga might be uncovered, so that particular dispute might, at least, be laid to rest...or not.

Why "our mountain" is important to us

Some cities are built around and on hills or mountains, others are built on islands, Montreal belongs to a select few that are constructed on both an island and on a mountain (Hochelaga, HongKong, Honolulu, etc). To Montreal islanders, Mount Royal helps define our sense of home. It's the soul of our city and the place we lay to rest a multitude of souls from our city who have passed on. For most island residents, it's where we first take our visitors to give them a "bird's eye view" of our city. And most of us (take a look at the [online petition numbers](https://www.change.org/p/valérie-plante-non-à-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture) (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/valérie-plante-non-à-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture> to confirm this), well, we drive there, however much Projet Montréal might wish us to walk, or take public transport, or pedal up there on our bikes.

" I am a cyclist, and I don't own a car. However, I am against the blocking of transiting traffic on Camilien Houde and Remembrance Road. Firstly, I never go up there by bike, the road incline is far too steep. When I have friends visiting Montreal, I drive them up it (using Communauto) to view the various aspects of Montreal from the Belvedere Camilien Houde, then parking in order to walk to the Mountain Chalet and the Cross. Then we get back in the car to cross over to visit the Summit Circle Belvedere in Westmount, as well as St Joseph's Oratory. I also go from time to time to what I call the Chalet parking (at Beaver Lake), so I can walk the park trails. I have never ever seen any traffic moving too fast, or overloading these roads. Never. Plus, it's only a handful of people who adventure up and down it by bike: those who are training for serious cycling competitions. So I ask, why are you cutting off access to the most picturesque road in Montreal in order to eventually rework it (at what cost?) for bicycles, and for the sole use of a few dozen elite sport cyclists at best?"
Gabriel Rouette, June 4, 2018

Montreal is unique - it's the only city in the world where the sun "rises in the south"

Before delving further into the conundrum of why Montreal City Hall wants to close off Mount Royal to transiting traffic and in the process bonify the cycling communities over all others, a small aside on the question of orientation, since some news reports are confusing in their description of how traffic travels over the mountain. For the purposes of this article I am sticking with local convention and terminology that has people and traffic going from east to west and vice versa. For in Montreal we use "our" river and "our" mountain as cardinal points, in giving directions, and in following directions. And as the saying goes...when in Rome...so for our purposes it's been adapted to: "When in Montreal, do as the Montrealers do".

"When you are downtown, the St Lawrence River is "south" and Mount Royal is "north"; making the West Island and the East End correct in both their names and orientations. The dividing line between "east" and "west" downtown is the boulevard Saint-Laurent. In downtown, streets slope up "north" toward Mount Royal. This local compass tends to confuse visitors because the "East" End is really to the north and the "West" Island is to the south, and the St Lawrence River runs almost northeast-southwest at this location. Most local maps use this convention as do the highways around the city. For example, Autoroute 15 north actually runs northwest and Autoroute 40 east runs northeast. To underscore this fact, a Montreal map will show that the "south end" of Victoria Bridge is in fact further north than the "north end". Wikitravel, Montreal

Only in Montréal... as yet another hacknied phrase pronounces.

Until this recent restriction on road use, Mount Royal Park was also a place for all seasons

All of seasons of life that is. When some of us were very young it might have been the first place we learned the joys of tobogganing, or skiing, snow-boarding, or skating being treated to a hot chocolate to warm up, or else our parents pushed us up Olmstead Road in our stroller (as we later did with our own child or children) to picnic, run around, float our makeshift boats, or perhaps go for a boat ride on Beaver Lake. Later as adolescents and adults, we hiked, or jogged, or some of us rode our bikes, up and down its many trails. It was the place we always brought out-of-town family and visitors, and/or we later brought our own families to introduce them to the joys of "our" mountain, and to the veritable "soul" of our city.

"I like to bike on the mountain, but as new father, getting the baby around is easier by car. To cross the mountain, when you have a kid, it's much more simpler that way." Victor Rodrigue, Côte-des-Neiges, CBC News, May 11, 2018

As we got older, and our bodies less able, we possibly used less and less of the mountain park pathways, steps and trails themselves but we did use the road as a way to access the cemeteries to visit our friends and loved ones, to grieve and to remember. We also perhaps stopped enroute at the Smith House cafe for a coffee and a snack, or sat by Beaver Lake and chatted about old times, or enjoyed the folk dancing on a summer evening summer. However, many of us as we aged, we used our car to take us there as public transport from where we lived meant far too many buses and far too much time spent travelling. With old age comes a variety of health issues, including chronic fatigue syndrome, which means the car is our preferred and to some of us, our necessary and only, method of getting around.



Skating at Beaver Lake on Mount Royal - a past time for most ages Source: Les Amies de la Montagne

For disabled persons, no matter what age they are, travelling easily around this city is only truly possible by car or van, or sometimes taxis, as the STM disabled bus service means many hours spent waiting to be picked up and no ad hoc, "spur of the moment" journeys as space has to be booked well in advance, so schedules can be drawn up.

When will Montreal make accessibility for all its citizens a priority?

Québec and Montréal's attitude to its disabled and aging population is nothing short of scandalous. Montreal has a relatively "young" metro, with planning and construction beginning in 1960 and an opening in time for Expo 67; and especially when compared the extensive systems that existed in London and Paris, and even Moscow, all much older than ours is. Yet 50 years ago, Montreal City planners certainly paid no heed to the needs of their disabled (of all ages) and older citizens and that attitude seems to reign on even well into the 21st century at Montreal City Hall. We like to tell ourselves we have a world class city, yet we have so few access points in our metro to accommodate the disabled, older persons and parents with children (only 13 elevators currently in the metro and all of them on the Orange line, although more are in the planning stages). And it's much too costly and also seemingly "impossible" to retrofit some stations, according to the STM.

Up till now one wonders, why only elevators on the Orange line? What if we want to go to another part of the city? "Tough luck", seems to be the reply, "You'll have wait around for a bus with space" and, of course, a ramp that works, which they often don't, especially in winter, due to ice and

snowbanks. Tough indeed, also because most buses only have one space for a wheelchair, and what if we are travelling with a friend also in a wheelchair? The new articulated buses do have space for two wheelchairs, but if you're three persons, you're out of luck...you have to wait around for another bus. Plus those new buses aren't on every route. Being disabled in Montreal means a great deal of advance planning and waiting around, or simply giving up and remaining stuck where we live.

Québec even built a brand new multi-billion dollar hospital centre (the MUHC-Glen site) without working with Montreal and the STM to factor in the need, or provide funds to construct disabled access from the neighbouring Vendôme multi-modal (bixi/bus/metro/train) station, still one of the many without an elevator, even though it's on the Orange line. For what great planning reason was it deemed more important for Snowdon station to get its elevator before Vendôme? No one could even explain quite why. "No money in the budget" said the STM when quizzed on it, but why was that a response for why Snowdon before Vendôme? "Not my responsibility" said all the other various parties (City of Montréal, SNC-Lavalin, MUHC, etc) present at the Neighbourhood Liason committee that ran for five or so years while the hospital was being constructed and when the subject was raised by concerned citizens on many occasions.

That grievous lack of critical infrastructure planning is now finally being rectified, due to a public outcry, but since work on it only began in October 2017, two years and a half years after the hospital centre had opened in May 2015. It will take until the winter of 2020 (provided it is completed on schedule, not always a given) before the station platforms are accessible to the the sick, the disabled, the old and parents/grandparents with young children in strollers. Meanwhile the disabled have to take a bus from Lionel-Groulx, the nearest station equipped with elevator access and adding to their journey length yet again.

And when the STM embarks on an expensive refurbishing project of individual stations e.g. the recently announced 80-million dollar refurbishment of the Green line's Beaudry metro station (which isn't exactly chump change, is it?), we are told "No, the amount doesn't include disabled access that would have been too costly". Why spend 80 million and still have an inaccessible station? Obviously new paint and tiles are more important than the disabled, the elderly, and parents with children are to the STM. "Only in Montreal" indeed!

Montréal and Mont Royal for all citizens, not merely the fit and able

This, and other actions by City Hall, tell us that this is a city still being "designed and run" for those who are younger and able-bodied, as demonstrated by Projet Montréal's heavy-handed promotion of "active transportation", especially as far as our namesake park access is concerned. Thus, in spite of protestations to the contrary, their revamped "vision" for Mount Royal Park does little to create accessibility and assist the disabled, and the elderly, or even accommodate families with children in strollers, especially if you are also trying to carry equipment (skates, skis, toboggans, etc) luggage or heavy shopping/picnic bags on public transportation. And this from a city that wants to attract more families with children? Perhaps start with making the City more accessible to all segments of your population, not just to some.

This is also the message being conveyed with Projet Montréal's myopic closure of Mount Royal's two roads that run alongside the park between it and the cemeteries, with its now confusing delineation

of which vehicles can go where. The disabled, the elderly, the ill, parents, grandparents and the very young, as well as the grief-stricken, certainly aren't being accommodated in these plans.

Predominantly it's the fit and able-bodied. Have you no compassion for the less able segments of your population, Madame Mayor and Mr Luc Ferrandez? Obviously not. The message comes across loud and clear. Mount Royal park is primarily for the use of the physically fit and healthy. The rest will have to make do with the little minor bits of the park now so awkwardly accessible to them, or just not bother to go at all. What a self-absorbed, short-sighted vision. Some ill-conceived heritage project you are aiming for here.

Participate in the public consultation process with the OCPM - Yes, you can do it in English!

By the way, the **Office de la consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) Montreal's Public Consultation Office** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) has lots of info on-line (much of it, though not all, in English) scroll down the page to find it. They have also posted the recordings and transcripts from the two public meetings in May. Note: the "English" page on their site is not helpful. It merely tells you to check for English documentation on the French pages...not really helpful if you don't read French well, but the info is there and if you scroll down the French page you will find it.

Here is the [link](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions>) to the OCPM site where you can have your say (by telephone and/or in writing in either English or French or both). Make the effort to participate. Don't put it off too long.

Attention! Leaving a note in writing on the OCPM site stating your point of view is incredibly important if we are to have any hope of altering these changes to our mountain access and maintain access for all. As of Thursday, June 21, the YES to closing Mount Royal are winning the comments battle on the OCPM site, with a overall total of 779 participants leaving a comment, of which 574 are supporting the road closure and only 118 are against. You'll notice those numbers don't tally (i.e. don't add up to 779), so I am wondering what the issue is? i.e. what do the missing 87 people think? Are they neutral or? If so, the OCPM should create a column to let us know that. Nevertheless, and until they get that sorted out, it still means there are far more of those participating in the on-line comment process that are seemingly in favour of blocking through traffic. So, if you want your mountain road to go back to allowing transiting traffic, can I suggest you take the time to let the OCPM know your feelings about the road closures. And in case, you're not sure what to say. Why not spend a few minutes scrolling through other people's comments, they may give you some ideas about how to word your own comment.

Nothing prevents you from leaving a written comment, or comments now, as well as "voting" on a variety of confusing options (truly at first glance they couldn't have made it more confusing and complicated as they seemingly have managed to do) as well as signing up to give a comment in person later (as your verbal statement will only be taken once the pilot project is over). Right now to win the online "hearts and minds" battle, can I suggest you state you preference loud and clear now,

by leaving a written comment clearly indicating your wishes. Yes, the process initially appears somewhat complicated, but there is help and the OCPM does get back to you with assistance.

There is also an [online survey](https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/ocpm-accesmontroyal-sw) (insert link to: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/ocpm-accesmontroyal-sw>) you can answer but be warned it's not available in English and once you do answer your access to it is blocked, which I found out when I went back on the OCPM site to review the questions. I guess that's to stop people answering a multiple of times, so be warned. Not sure if that also blocks computers at public libraries for only one usage too, so I am not sure where that puts households with only one computer, yet two or more users as it erroneously presumes everyone has their own personal computer or tablet connected to the internet, which is not always the case.

May 2018 public information meeting transcripts are posted

The OCPM has also posted the information session recordings along with written transcripts from the two public meetings in May. Once again only in French but I found them very informative. Their documentation list can be accessed [here](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7>).

Note: the "English" section accessed from the top row of "buttons" and marked ENG on their site is not helpful, unless you want to know more about the OCPM and the other past and public consultations they have, or are engaged in. Unfortunately it merely tells you to check for English documentation on the French pages! The link to the English **content** you need is [here](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/actualite/english-content) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/actualite/english-content>)

Participate via the OCPM or, if that doesn't appeal simply [sign the petition](https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture) (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>) signalling your discontent with this move by Projet Montréal. However, I would encourage you to avail yourself of all and every option if you can.

Even though several of Projet Montréal's "improvements" to Mount Royal Park appear very permanent in nature (pun intended), and it may mean this misguided attempt at forceable social engineering could remain on our mountain for a long time to come, it is still worth reading up on and participating in the consultation process with the OCPM

Further information on the process and to download documentation, click here: (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>).

Breaking news! Mayor Plante promised Christina Smith, Mayor of Westmount that a public meeting, or rather a Round Table discussion (whatever that means) would be held in Westmount, so Westmounters and potentially other English speakers from NDG for instance, could provide their input and feedback. Hopefully it will accommodate English speakers from anywhere on Montreal Island, along with those more comfortable expressing themselves in English. It has recently been reported in the Westmount Independent that this will happen on September, 12 2018 at Victoria Hall,

4626 Sherbrooke St W, Westmount, QC H3Z 1G1. No further details as yet, since Mayor Smith explained it is Montreal who is organizing it, consequently they have to wait for them to furnish additional details.

Coming soon

Sign-up for **Part 2** of **A Tale of Two Cities** coming soon in the WestmountMag.ca (Link to: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/newsletter-sign-up/>)

About the ALCC Living History Collection

"The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination." Don Williams, Jr

Do you have a story and memories of your times passing over the mountain and/or visiting Mount Royal Park and/or its adjacent conjoined cemeteries that you would like to share? If so, the Atwater Library Living History team would like to hear from you. Please contact Eric Craven, Atwater Library Community Outreach Librarian at: dlp@atwaterlibrary.ca

For those interested in further info on the background and rationale of the Living History Collection see: **Birth of a Local Living History Collection - Part 1** (insert link to Part 1: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/living-history-collection/>) and **Part 2** (insert link to Part 2: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/living-history-collection-2/>).

And to access all the WestmountMag.ca series of articles on the **Atwater Library's new Living History Collection** simply click **here**. (insert link to: <https://www.atwaterlibrary.ca/news/living-history-collection-launch/>)

Note: Parts 1 and 2 of A Tale of Two Cities was published in July 2018 in the local online lifestyle magazine The WestmountMag.ca (<https://www.westmountmag.ca/?s=a+tale+of+two+cities>). The following - Parts 3-10 and the spoken word poem "For Shame it's all so Quetaine" - have not yet been published.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 2

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders



The Weeping Lady - Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

Image credit: ©[MontrealFor 91 Days](http://montreal.for91days.com/) (insert link to: <http://montreal.for91days.com/>)

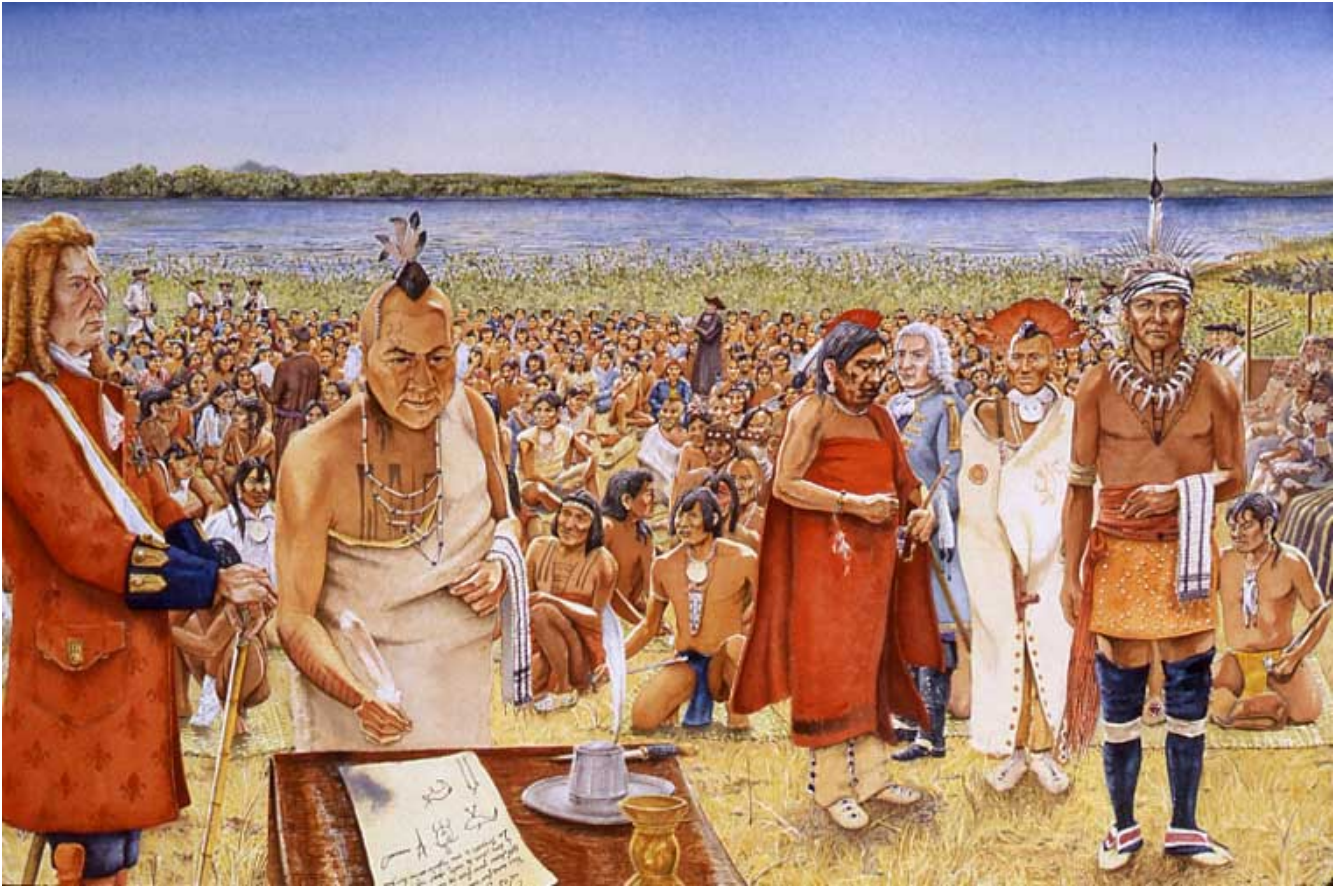
THE PLOT THICKENS...

"If you hear in my voice ... any resemblance to a voice that once was sweet music in your ears, weep for it, weep for it! If you touch, in touching my hair, anything that recalls a beloved head that lay on your breast when you were young and free, weep for it, weep for it! If, when I hint to you of a Home that is before us, where I will be true to you with all my duty and with all my faithful service, I bring back the remembrance of a Home long desolate, while your poor heart pined away, weep for it, weep for it! " *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book 1, Chapter 6

Why I transited Mount Royal by car

On my, and my family's and/or visitors' previous vehicular visits to Mount Royal Park, if we approached from the west, we'd stop first at Beaver Lake (Lac aux castors). Sometimes, we parked and stayed there. Other times, we parked and walked, and if we were able to walk that far we's go to the [Smith House](https://www.quebecoriginal.com/en-ca/listing/things-to-do/sports-and-nature/regional-parks/mount-royal-park-5768516) (insert link to: <https://www.quebecoriginal.com/en-ca/listing/things-to-do/sports-and-nature/regional-parks/mount-royal-park-5768516>) and from there to the [Kondiaronk Belvedere](http://montreal.for91days.com/the-chalet-du-mont-royal-and-kondiaronk-belvedere/) (insert link to: <http://montreal.for91days.com/the-chalet-du-mont-royal-and-kondiaronk-belvedere/>) overlooking downtown Montreal.

"In the summer of 1701, more than 1,300 Indians, from forty different nations, gathered near Montreal. They came from the Mississippi Valley, the Great Lakes, and Acadia. Many were lifelong enemies but all had responded to an invitation from the French governor. Their future and the fate of the colony were at stake. Among them was the great Huron chief Kondiaronk of Michilimackinac, the most influential of France's allies." *Canada: A People's History*, CBC



The signing of the Great Peace - Montreal 1701

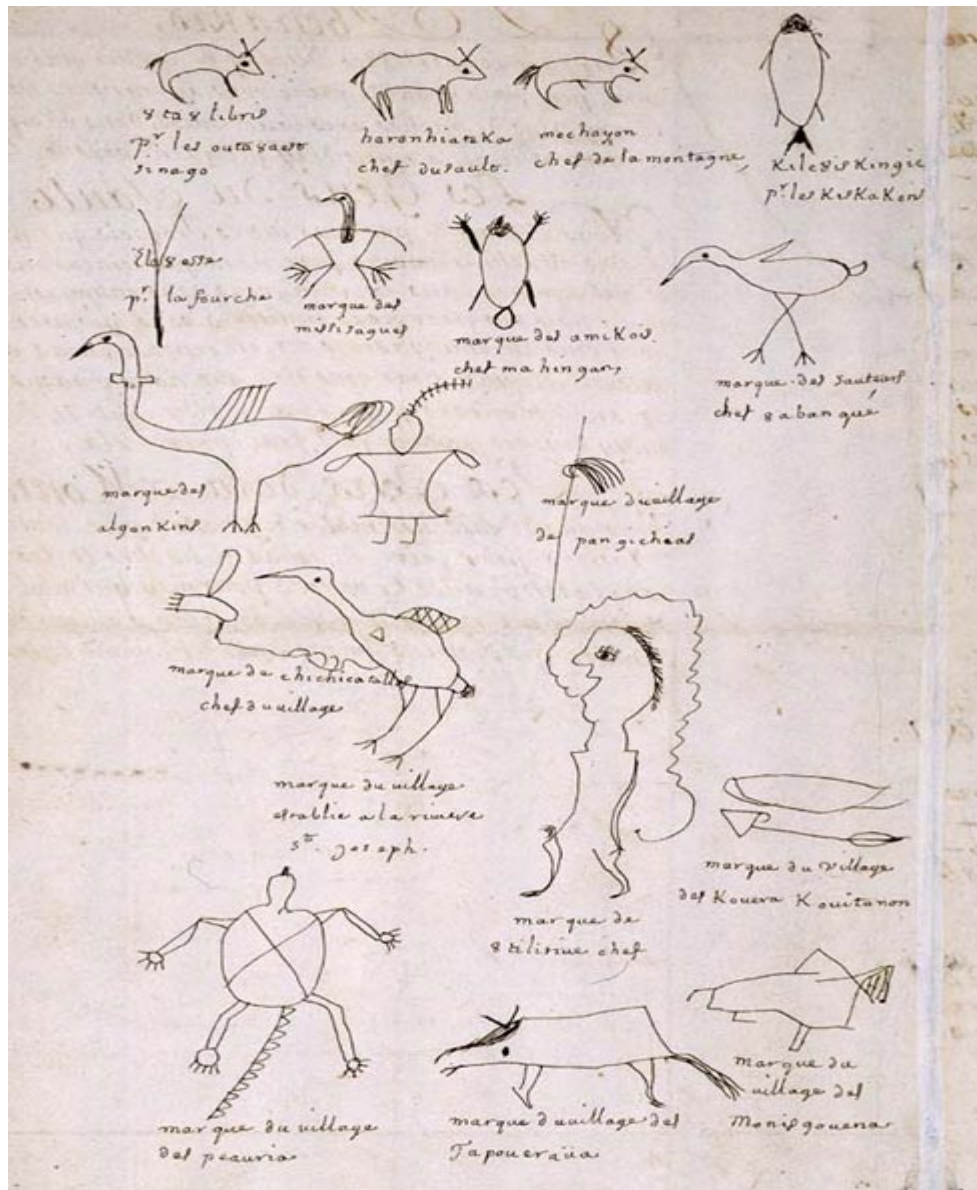
Source: Vidéanthrop-Creative Commons

By the way, **Kondiaronk** (Insert link to: <https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/stories-of-montreal/article/kondiaronk-broker-of-the-great-peace-of-montreal/>) was a Petun or Huron-Wendat chief, not a Haudenosaunee or Mohawk chief, or a St Lawrence Iroquois chief that branch of indigenous peoples, who apparently were the former, and possibly the first, inhabitants of the region, and who had seemingly been wiped out by intertribal wars by the time the 17th century rolled round.

Thus, the "settler" population can't quite "as yet" be held to account for that indigenous "genocide". Even though the word itself didn't exist until the mid-20th century, when it was coined by a Polish-US jurist, although the actions themselves certainly did. Earlier descriptions used for the act of wiping out a people, tribe or nation, or simply those one didn't like, include the 1792 use of the word *populicide* coined during the French Revolution, adapted by the Germans as *volkermeuchelndenand*, and by the English, as late as 1893, as *folk-murdering*; however, genocide is the term the United Nations choose to embody in their international legal definition of the crime itself, and which is first found in Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

Kondiaronk was one of the principal architects of what is known as the **Great Peace** (insert link to: <https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/stories-of-montreal/article/the-great-peace-of-montreal/>) signed in Montreal. He is buried in Notre Dame cathedral in Old Montreal, as he actually died of influenza, which was rampant in the area at the time, two days before the signing. Hence one of the reasons his name was affixed to the belvedere overlooking downtown Montreal in front of the Mont Royal or Mountain Chalet in 1992, in remembrance of a highly respected and influential representative of the

First Nation peoples of Turtle Island (the indigenous name for North America) and of their great gathering in Montreal in 1701. Plus, it's always helpful to have some historical insight for our visitors that explains the somewhat unusual name of our Mountain Chalet belvedere that looks out over the downtown core of our island city.



Caption: First Nation signatures on the Great Peace of Montreal document Source: Vidéanthrop Creative Commons

However, if we had some older or disabled friends and we couldn't, or didn't wish to walk that far, and if we had stopped at Beaver Lake first, and we wanted to press on, we (used to) get back in the car and drive to Smith House, where we pointed the younger, more energetic, or more able-bodied ones in the direction of the Mountain Chalet and its belvedere. Or, if they really want more of a workout, to the pedestrian or "runners trail" as it used to be known by my friends and me that takes

them to the summit of the cross. The trail is now usually identified on the maps as part of Mount Royal's winding pedestrian Olmstead Road, or in others as the "sentier de la croix".



Climbing Mount Royal stairs

Image: ©[Montrealfor91days](http://montreal.for91days.com/) (insert link to: <http://montreal.for91days.com/>)

In the early days of my sojourn in Montreal in the 1970s and 80s, when I was young and fit enough to run significant distances, my favourite [Mount Royal jogging route](http://greatruns.com/montreal-mount-royal-fall/) (insert link to: <http://greatruns.com/montreal-mount-royal-fall/>), three or four times a week, was up Simpson Street from Sherbrooke, across Dr Penfield to Percy Walters park, climbing the neighbouring stairs to Pine and from there "up the snake" to the Mount Royal chalet, and so on to the "top of the mountain" with its great cross and ugly telecommunication towers (and no view at all in those days, it was all woodland glade). It was a glorious workout but I was a lot fitter then and in my late 20s and early 30s. Now I walk with great difficulty using a cane, a result of ill-health, and several bone surgeries, coupled with arthritis and joint and spinal issues, which means my running days are over but not my love of traversing "my" mountain. However, now I mostly do it by car.

"By car it takes me less than 10 minutes to reach Remembrance Road, which I use to transit to get to the Plateau on the east side of Mont-Royal, so I can have my haircut, visit my dentist, shop or eat on the Plateau, see my friends, and, in former days, drop off or pick up my son from his day camp or for his hockey games; and where, while I am on the way across it, I am able to wind down the windows to enjoy the fresh air, the wind in the trees and in my face, the horses in the SPVM coral, the views of the sky and of the park and city and river below, along with the rock face canyon (my personal fave). It's such a scenic drive and my personal communion with 'my mountain' in my adopted city home and I always feel better once I've made the transit.

In Projet Montréal's vision for the mountain, now if I wish to travel across it I will need to clamber on and off 3 buses, or hobble painfully to my "local" metro station, just so I can overshoot my destination by a great many blocks in order to take a bus back up the mountain from the other side spending 45+ minutes to an hour (if I'm lucky and if the buses arrive on time, or a lot longer if they're not) all to make the same journey. There's no sense to it." Wanda Potrykus, March 18, 2018

Later we continued our drive to the newer of the two existing lookouts, which is the belvedere (lookout) on the eastern side of the mountain at the foot of the pathway up to the illuminated cross, which I call the "Belvedere of the Cross" and others refer to as the Camilien Houde Belvedere (although a third, extremely ugly "make-shift" one - the Belvédère Soleil - has now been added to the top of Camilien Houde in time to launch the 2018 pilot project and to draw attention to "what we have been missing" - more on that below). Once again, if there was space, not always a given, we parked there, to take a look through the telescopes, while the younger members made the climb to the cross, if they wished to. Plus for photo hounds the view below, on the climb up the narrow path, is slightly different than the one from the actual bevedere, although the path can be steep, narrow and tricky to navigate when wet; or it used to be, as I haven't done it for a while due to my infirmities, and I do realise some refurbishing has been done in the intervening years.



Caption: Australian homebaked pies on Park Avenue

Image courtesy: Ta Pies

East-West Economics - the ability to easily transit the mountain means time and money spent on the other side

Then we might have headed to the Plateau area for breakfast at Beauty's, bagels on Fairmont or St Viateur, lunch or snacktime at Ta Pies at Park and Mont Royal, hot dogs at Wilensky's, smoked meat at Schwartz's, or, if the budget permitted, dinner on St Laurent (Dirty Dogs, Lawrence, Le Majestique, Moishe's, Patati Patata, Rôtisserie Portugalia, Singh's, Thazard, anyone?) or perhaps brunch at the Sparrow or La Binnerie or at L'Express on St Denis, or at Cafe Cherrier, enroute to concerts and poetry readings on Park, Laurier, or St Laurent, or to the ballet in Lafontaine Park, or to the Botanical Gardens, the Biodome, the Olympic, Saputo, Charbonneau and other collective east-end stadiums, or whatever foodie, or shopping district (Park, Mont Royal, St Laurent, Laurier, St Denis, St Hubert, etc) or myriad other destinations on our island that we had in mind and that we, or our guests, had chosen to indulge in on the other side of the mountain.

No doubt those coming from the east side have their own favourite places and streets to visit on the west side. Hopefully you get the picture? Block us from transiting, and the journey itself will cease to be part of the experience, consequently, we will end up spending a lot less time and money on the other side.

"For it's our mountain and the road across it is our road and a wonderful and necessary trajectory between the neighbourhoods on the two sides. Yes, and that includes the neighbourhoods in the cities of the living and the dead." Louise Charbonneau, Montrealer

Do it our way or no way

Plus, I object to being barred from it or being "instructed" to take public transport from my home on the west side of Mount Royal, a journey, in off-peak hours of a minimum of (if all the stars aka the buses align) 45 to 60 minutes - provided the buses come when they are supposed to - not always or, in fact, rarely a given - via 3 buses (24, 166, 11) or the 24, 165, 11. Additionally, the STM informs me I also have an Option 3, where I can (painfully) hobble 15 minutes to Vendome and take the Orange line metro to Mount Royal (which refers to the street the metro opens onto and not the mountain). In fact, the metro station is situated approximately 18-20 blocks further east than Park avenue, or the start of Camilien Houde. Meaning the STM is suggesting I travel way past my actual destination, just so I can "hop a bus" (I wish) and take the number 11 back up the mountain from the east side!

All that effort to accomplish a drive I can do in less than 10 minutes by car because I certainly can no longer bike, jog or walk the distance from my home. And all Mayor Plante can say is: "Give it a try".

"Why? Ms Plante, why?" Just so you can fulfil your expressed goal of returning Mont Royal park closer to the vision of Frederick Olmstead, which, by the way, you aren't? And so you can claim you are making Mont Royal park "safer" and "more peaceful" and pleasing for some segments of the Montreal island community but not others? Did you forget that you are Mayor of all Montrealers?

Mme Plante, Mr Ferrandez and the rest of Projet Montréal, do join the 21st century please. Olmstead "designed" the park in 1874, almost a century and a half ago. Montreal and Montreal islanders have moved on since then. It isn't the same world, however, much you and your supporters as well as les Amies de la montagne, want to return us to the world of the peregrination on foot, by sled or snowshoe, although (I am presuming) not by horseback, or horsedrawn carriage and sleigh?

Insert photo of horses on Olstead Road near belvedere (see below) : Note: there is a better photo of horses in Mount Royal park (belonging to the Harry Sutcliffe collection at the McCord); however, it isn't yet on McCord site for download (Sutcliffe died in 1945) so it is out of copyright protection) and where it was used in a CBC article on Mount Royal, one can't seem to download it as it says the format isn't supported (See: Horseback riders take a stroll on Mount Royal in the 1920s. (Harry Sutcliffe/McCord Museum) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/beaver-lake-montreal-1.4493218>). I provide it in case you have better luck downloading it than I did. Otherwise there is the 2nd choice of the one below.



Caption: Promenade on horseback - Olmstead Road near beveledere, c 1936 - Harry Sutcliffe Source: McCord Museum

For there's the little matter of the proveable historical fact that Frederick Olmstead "designed" our park for pedestrians, horseriders, and wheeled carriage access, and long before use of the bicycle and the car, or the tramway and public bus, became widespread. And certainly a lot longer before 10-speed bikes, multi-gear mountain bikes, fat-wheeled bikes, and the more recent, very costly, hill climb road bikes that "sport" 30 or so gears, as well as motorized vehicles of all sorts, all became as ubiquitous, comfortable and practical a transportation option for all who choose to use them. In fact, today, even with motorized vehicles, you don't have to actually own a car to use one. "Car2Go", Communauto anyone? As Bob Dylan sang in 1964: "times they are a-changin' ", especially in terms of the public's choice of what transportation options they prefer to utilize.

Autonomous vehicles are on their way

In addition, the era of the self-driven, privately owned car is supposedly drawing to a close. Aren't you a bit late with all this visceral hatred for the automobile? If we believe the pundits, during the next 5-10-20 years, we'll all be using autonomously driven electric vehicles that will travel at a pre-arranged speed limit and drop us off and pick us up, and we won't need to park or take public transport, as it will be the public transport.

A daily dose of nature improves mental health

Mme Plante, one day you and Luc Ferrandez will be old, perhaps infirm, though I don't wish that on you, but spare a thought for those of your citizens who are, but who still wish to enjoy "their" mountain by visiting it, as well as driving across it, enjoying its beauty and benefiting from the [mental wellness its greenery](https://health.howstuffworks.com/mental-health/human-nature/behavior/a-dose-nature-could-improve-mental-health-city-dwellers.htm) (Insert link to: <https://health.howstuffworks.com/mental-health/human-nature/behavior/a-dose-nature-could-improve-mental-health-city-dwellers.htm>) and sky views

impart to us, rather than the alternative; spending time on the orange cone clogged streets to go around it.

Also, as a car driver, I strenuously object to being called "entitled" and "rich" (neither of which I am) when all I, and others, want to do is visit their mountain and/or their dead, as well as traverse it to earn money and to spend their money (Economy 101 anyone?), go to medical appointments, visit friends and family, including their grandchildren or elderly parents. And if they are picking up their grandchildren, they often introduce them to the joys of the mountain on their way back, maybe along with a hot chocolate at the chalet.

“For me this is an amazing opportunity to open up the mountain and I cannot wait for people to go on the mountain and see spots and places they’ve never seen before because it was dangerous for them to go across the road. So I’m really excited about this project and all the potential that comes with it,” Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montreal

The Plante Plan to "open up the mountain"

It also sounds as though Mayor Plante has never spent too much time in Mount Royal Park, or else is being completely disingenuous, since the road axis of Remembrance Road and Camilien Houde Way doesn't go "through" the park for most of its length, but runs along the edge of it, predominantly skirting the parking lots and cemeteries. There are precious few places you can "go to" by crossing these two roads and Mme Plante and Projet Montréal are playing inflammatory mind games with Montreal Island citizens by suggesting otherwise.

But it does seem as though this what her irritatingly "toothy enthusiasm" for a project that precious few of her citizens ever asked for is what all this 'fake joy and excitement' is all about. And to achieve her "vision" and the project she is "really excited about", she is destroying a beloved existing parcours, or mountain roadway that most of us alive today use quite happily, and which her supporters are also erroneously calling an "autoroute", which means most of them haven't much visited Mount Royal park either, and neither have they taken public transport to get there, or they'd know it is far from being an "autoroute". That's a misnomer if ever there was one! Even Transport Québec is moving away from using that term for the currently "interminably under construction" replacement for the former 720 Ville-Marie autoroute that is now going to be called a national route. And all to support her "pie-in-the-sky" assertions that we all need, or have a great need, to get to a certain part of the park we've never been able, or have been prevented by the mass of traffic clogging the mountain road, to get to before. What alternate reality is she living in?

As I said, has she ever actually spent any time visiting and/or transiting Mount Royal? Perhaps she is working on the assumption that if she creates it, talks it up, splashes huge sums of our tax dollars on it that we will all buy wholesale into it and forget about what we had access to before? Do you really imagine we are that dumb, Mme Plante?

Thus, if the City separates Camilien Houde from Remembrance Road i.e. so there is no longer one road with two names but in fact two distinct roads, both of which no longer "permit" motor-assisted transit traffic, except in a few instances i.e. public transit and tourist buses, and to allow motorists to get to parking lots (which is, in effect what the pilot project is doing) so, it becomes Stage One of remaking our mountain access routes, if you will. Add in the cost of the new "funeral cortege"

passage constructed parallel to Remembrance Road in the parking areas, as well as this summer's costly animation and event budget, designed among other things, to "introduce" our mountain park visitors and residents to an unbelievably tacky new belevdere stopping place, along with a rough hewn, oh so quétaine (kétaine) café-terrace on an existing (already overcrowded) belvedere down the road, and "hey voila"...we'll all be as pleased as punch. Just who are you kidding?

Which new area exactly do you want to open up?

All this excessive municipal expenditure and narrative-building to support a contention that this pilot project is to "open up the mountain". The only area left to "open up" is a relatively small wooded area just to the north of Camilien Houde if you are coming from the west going east, and which is west of Blvd. Mont-Royal in Outrement if you are approaching from there and/or driving west up Camilien Houde. So yes, the only existing road access would be from Camilien Houde and yes, you might have to "cross" Camilien Houde to get to it but only depending on which direction you are approaching the area from. Confused, yes, since it's probably the most unvisited part of the mountainside, except perhaps for mountain bikers, or some dog walkers wanting to let their pooches off leash, and perhaps a certain amount of the homeless and/or drug users, and most of them already access it easily enough from Boulevard Mont Royal and/or the eastern or lower end of Camilien Houde.



Northern red oak (*quercus rubra*)

Source: Creative commons

In all reality, it is an area of woodland that few use since most Montreal islanders don't even know its name - *le bois Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, or the fact is is one of the few ecologically important Northern red oak woods left on the island. And it may well be now under threat by those who do use it, predominantly the mountain bikers, who it must be said, don't much care for rare trees or trilliums, in their need for speed and circuitous, denuded, dirt pathways, berms, jumps and slides.



Mountain biker in action

Source: www.pexels.com

Nevertheless, Mme Plante is being disingenuous by saying it's not used because we can't get there, since the majority of us using Camilien Houde have had no wish, or inclination at all, to go there, and those that have, or who already do use it, get to it just fine; by walking and even biking (if they can navigate the steep incline that is) on the wide median along the side of the road. The fact that so few people walk or bike up or down Camilien Houde, supports the notion that most of us don't wish to, or in truth aren't able to.



Looking east -
No 11 tramway route (now Camille-Houde) on Mount Royal

Source : STM

When the tramway was put through in 1930, it was so steep an incline (10% in those days) the drivers on that route

had to undergo special training to be able to navigate it. In fact, for a number of years it was also part of an area some segments of our population did use on an ad hoc basis to meet up and engage in certain sexual pleasures, similar to what continues today, and has for a couple of hundred years, in la Bois de Boulogne park in Paris.

Hence Mayor Drapeau's Morality Cuts

In fact, in the mid 1950s, Montreal's homophobic, strait-laced, prudish mayor, Jean Drapeau, abused his mayoralty powers, around the same time as he replaced the tramtracks and built Camilien Houde Way, by having thousands of old growth trees on Mont Royal cut down in a misguided and ecologically damaging attempt to halt the practise, and "clean up the mountain". A wholesale desecration that was subsequently dubbed the "morality cuts" and created more extensive ecological damage than a few people seeking company and sexual relief ever did. Thankfully, those days are over and society is a lot more accommodating and open, and fewer people need to go into the woods to hook up, have sex, do drugs or whatever. Nevertheless, one wonders why, all of a sudden, there is a "need" to open up this part of mountain? What is truly behind this push to "drive" us to look at the view over the City of Dead and Mount Royal's 'new' Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne park, or to cycle or walk in, or by, a section of woods few of us ever really wished to walk in before?



July 13, 2018 - New stop signs and walkway at the Belvédère Soleil on Camilien Houde - but where are the crowds of people needing to use them? Photo credit: Jennifer Crane

As for existing road crossings, there are several of them equipped with stop signs (at least 4 in those carfree, 550+ m on Remembrance Road) and now a new one on the top of Camilien Houde, in front of the ugly, newly constructed "bleacher" lookout, to allow pedestrians to cross back and forth without peril to take the bus to go home, or to move on elsewhere, or to enter the cemeteries via the gates

across from the various parking lots. So Valérie Plante's comment at her news conference: "For me this is an amazing opportunity to open up the mountain and I cannot wait for people to go on the mountain and see spots and places they've never seen before because it was dangerous for them to go across the road" is really weird, completely out of left field and doesn't make a whole lot of sense, unless she is solely focussing her attention on that lonesome patch of woodland on the north-east and north-west sides of Camilien Houde, which, by the way, is not even close to her tacky Belvédère Soleil.

One truly wonders whether Mayor Plante has ever walked around in any of the 200-260 hectares in the main body of Mount Royal park? (Note: The exact park size is hard to pin down, as it seems it has grown in size since 1876 but it's hard to discover how and when). Or has she ever enjoyed any of the huge variety of stairways, walking, cycling, snow-shoeing, or cross-country skiing pathways? Or even looked at them all on a map? For most of us road and park users, it is really unclear exactly where the motorized traffic is cutting off access to those already walking in the park? Has she even driven the road "on the edge" of Mount Royal park? It certainly isn't going through most of the park no matter which way you look at it.

So where exactly does she want to send us? i.e. where are those "spots and places" we've never seen before? Does she mean the view across the cemetery to Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne? Does she want us just to look at it, or perhaps to encourage us to hike there from Camilien Houde? If she wants us to walk to it, it means traversing Mount Royal cemetery grounds, which actually aren't part of the park but a separate entity, although yes, now indeed part of the Mount Royal Heritage Area; but she forgets to factor in, not everyone enjoys being faced by reminders of their own mortality.

Besides, let's be honest here, the second/third summit (your choice) is more easily accessible from the the campus of the Université of Montréal on the Outremont side and/or from the newly inaugurated "beltway" cycle-hiking path that since 2017 now encircles the mountain, and which has been in construction in segments for the best part of 8 or 9 years. This is also the area to where she is now sending motorized mourners who wish to drive to the burial sites of their loved ones, instead of permitting them to access them, far more easily and effectively, from Remembrance Road that skirts the edge of the actual park itself, and which they seemingly much prefer to do.

Mountain bike heaven perhaps?

Unless, of course, the mountain bikers, who mostly 'own' Mount Murray (now aka Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne Park) have their eye on it and want to gain access to it from the Mount Royal side and vice-versa? More virgin ground, and trees and water courses to cut up and vegetation to tear up and destroy and all that. Is that what this is all about? Creating access to Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne Park through this patch of woodland, or through the Université de Montréal grounds, or through Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges or Mount Royal Cemetery lands? As I previously said, none of it makes any real sense, and for all of Projet Montréal's and City Hall's enthusiasm for it, neither do they.

If you would like to view for yourself what a ride around some of the mountain biking trails (mostly illegal) on Mount Royal is like, can I suggest you view the YouTube video footage entitled *Roots*, which you can access [here](https://youtu.be/44pLAEvWZME) (insert link to: <https://youtu.be/44pLAEvWZME>.) By the way, *Roots-Mountain Biking on Mount Royal* is an apt title as it highlights the significant damage those bikes do to the roots of the trees on the mountain as the riders cycle roughshod, at speed, over them.

Does Montreal's 'new' Mayor think the City of the Dead is parkland?

Or it is more that Mayor Plante considers the City of the Dead already to be a part of Mount Royal Park? It isn't yet, though it might well be one day as the entire area has been named a heritage site; however, there are lots of people living, loving, arguing, chatting, cooking, eating, gardening, growing, playing, shopping, studying, visiting, working and worshipping in the other parts of that Heritage area and, as far as they know, they aren't doing it in a park.



Part of Mount Royal Heritage area in Côte-des-neiges near Queen Mary
Habiter Montréal or Source : villedemontreal.qc.ca

Source: Ville de Montréal -

Which is why I question whether Montreal's mayor has ever really spent any real time in Mount Royal Park itself? And if not, why not simply say that? And basically have the honesty and termerity to own up to it? Is she simply confused, or endeavouring to pull the wool (pure laine or otherwise) over our eyes? A little transparency would be nice coupled with the decency to have asked Montreal Islanders, in advance, if we wanted our tax monies to be spent in this way?

Participate in the public consultation process with the OCPM - Yes, you can do it in English!

By the way, the **Office de la consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) Montreal's Public Consultation Office** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) has lots of info on-line (much of it, though not all, in English) scroll down the page to find it, and they have also posted the recordings and transcripts (in French only) from the two public information meetings in May. Access them [here](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7) (Insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7>).

Note: the "English" page on their site is not really useful. It merely tells you to check for English documentation on the French pages...not really helpful if you don't read French well, but the info is there and if you scroll down the French page you will find it or access it directly [here](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/actualite/english-content): (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/actualite/english-content>)

Sign up to have your say: Here is the [link](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions>) to the OCPM site where you can sign up to have your say (by telephone and/or in writing in either English or French or both). Make the effort to participate. Don't put it off too long.

Warning: The online consultation process can be somewhat confusing, as several respondents, both English and French, initially remarked. One wonders whether this process was purposely designed to annoy people, so all but the most tenacious would give up; or was it more because the City in its directions to OCPM, or indeed, the OCPM itself, is treating this consultation period as more of a done deal by weighting everything in favour of this being a permanent closure. **This makes you taking the time required to contribute extremely important.** You can access the contribution pages directly [here](https://aces-mont-royal.com/projects): (insert link to: <https://aces-mont-royal.com/projects>) Although the text is in French, it provides you with the option of commenting in English or French on up to **ten themes** or issues i.e. the first 4 are: Transiting traffic ([circulation de transit](#)), Sharing the road ([partage de la voie](#)), Public transport ([transport collectif](#)), and Parking ([stationnements](#)). Currently, since this is the most contentious aspect, most respondents have left comments on the **Transiting traffic** (insert link to: <https://aces-mont-royal.com/project/circulation-de-transit/presentation/presentation-7>) issue, although numbers on all the other issues are creeping up, leading me to believe people do come back on line to comment on the different options, which you are permitted to do once you sign up to the process.

Attention! Participating in the OCPM process in English or French stating your point of view is incredibly important if we are to have any hope of altering these changes to our mountain access and maintaining access for all.

Shortly after the process began on May 29, 2018, I was able to access and read through the list of comments and to easily count how many were for and against the proposal. That has now changed and you can only access the various issues that you can vote on (although you can still add a proposition of your own for others to vote on) and which is why there are the somewhat confusing totals provided on each issue (theme).

For instance, on the primary issue of transiting traffic, as of Wednesday, July 19, there had been 849 participants making 383 propositions on which there were a total of 3404 votes cast on the 383 propositions. Which creates a coloured pie-chart for each of the 383 propositions indicating green (for), red (against) and orange (lukewarm or *mitigé*). Confused, yes, so was I, as none of the numbers add up. Apparently, once the consultation process is over, a spreadsheet will be prepared and published.

No wonder most people are finding it much easier to just vote on the existing online NO petition (i.e. 31,400+ since the petition first began of which 3,300+ have been added since the OCPM consultation period started on May 29). Sadly, however, Project Montréal and the OCPM are not paying any attention to those large numbers, much preferring their convoluted and confusingly complicated process, since it apparently results in most people being far too confused to participate.

However, if you want your mountain road to go back to allowing transiting traffic, can I suggest you take the time to let the OCPM know your feelings about the road closures. And in case you're not sure what to say, why not spend a few minutes scrolling through other people's propositions, they may give you some ideas about how to word your own comment, or you can simply vote for theirs, if they correspond in any way to your own point of view.

Nothing prevents you from making your own proposition, along with "voting" on any number of the other propositions, in addition to signing up by telephone to give a comment in person later (as your verbal statement will only be taken once the pilot project is over). Right now to win the online "hearts and minds" battle, can I suggest you state your preferences loud and clear now. And if you really are confused the OCPM does get back to you with assistance (use the Contact page on the top menu).

Note: The initial OCPM online survey is no longer available.

Alert! Sign up for Westmount's Atelier créatif! Mayor Plante promised Christina Smith, Mayor of Westmount that a public meeting, or rather a Round Table discussion would be held in Westmount, so residents could provide their input and feedback. The aforementioned "Round Table" has now morphed into a Workshop (Atelier créatif) for which you will need to **sign up in advance** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) to attend. Problem is this isn't a session where you can express your discontent at a mike but is where you are expected to come up ideas on what you want to see your mountain park become. Not quite what most people had in mind I imagine. This workshop will happen at 7.00 pm on September, 12, 2018 at Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke St W, Westmount, QC H3Z 1G1. I only discovered its existence when checking for consultation participation statistics on the OCPM site. By the by, it is one of 7 similar workshops to beheld over the coming months. For NDG-Côte-des-neiges residents there is one scheduled for September 15 at 1.00 pm. Check out all the dates and locations **here:** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>)

Participate via the OCPM or, if that doesn't appeal simply **sign the petition** (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>). However, I would encourage you to avail yourself of all, and any, options if you can.

Coming soon

Sign-up for **Part 3** of **A Tale of Two Cities** coming soon in the WestmountMag.ca (Link to: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/newsletter-sign-up/>)

Missed the first article?

Access **A Tale of Two Cities**, **Part 1**, (insert link to: [https://www.westmountmag.ca/a tale of two cities/](https://www.westmountmag.ca/a-tale-of-two-cities/))

About the ALCC Living History Collection

"Aim for the sky but move slowly, enjoying everything along the way. It is those little insights that make the journey complete." Chandar Kochhar

Do you have a story and memories of your times passing over the mountain and/or visiting Mount Royal Park and/or its adjacent conjoined cemeteries that you would like to share? If so, the Atwater Library Living History team would like to hear from you. Please contact Eric Craven, Atwater Library Community Outreach Librarian at: dlp@atwaterlibrary.ca

For those interested in further info on the background and rationale of the Living History Collection see: **Birth of a Local Living History Collection - Part 1** (insert link to Part 1: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/living-history-collection/>) and **Part 2** (insert link to Part 2: <https://www.westmountmag.ca/living-history-collection-2/>).

And to access all the WestmountMag.ca series of articles on the **Atwater Library's new Living History Collection** simply click **here**. (insert link to: <https://www.atwaterlibrary.ca/news/living-history-collection-launch/>)

Note: Parts 1 and 2 of A Tale of Two Cities was published in July 2018 in the local online lifestyle magazine The WestmountMag.ca (<https://www.westmountmag.ca/?s=a+tale+of+two+cities>). The following - Parts 3-10 and the spoken word poem "For Shame it's all so Quetaine" - have not yet been published.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 3

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

Insert photo of the The Watcher - Mount Royal Cemetery

The Watcher - Mount Royal Cemetery

Image: © [Valerie Hinojosa](#) (link to:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/valkyrieh116/272435032/in/photolist-oHkZm-3ZbsDm-q5irJ-3ZbpLQ-3Z78wZ-3Z7ihn-oHm4v-oHm8E/>) Creative Commons

THE STORY BECOMES MORE CONVOLUTED AND DEADLY...

"But indeed, at that time, putting to death was a recipe much in vogue with all trades and professions... Death is Nature's remedy for all things, and why not Legislation's? Accordingly, the forger was put to Death; the utterer of a bad note was put to Death; the unlawful opener of a letter was put to Death; the purloiner of forty shillings and sixpence was put to death; the holder of a horse at Tellson's door, who made off with it, was put to Death; the coiner of a bad schilling was put to Death; the sounders of three-fourths of the notes in the whole gamut of Crime, were put to Death. Not that it did the least good in the way of prevention — it might almost have been worth remarking that the fact was exactly the reverse — but, it cleared off (as to this world) the trouble of each particular case, and left nothing else connected with it to be looked after." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book II, Chapter 1, Five Years Later .

The vision of Frederick Olmstead

According to a pamphlet, produced and published by the City of Montreal in 2009 and entitled: "Mount Royal in the works of Frederick Law Olmstead" authored by Dr. Charles E. Beveridge, Frederick Olmstead - the designer of Mont Royal Park whose name is trotted out ad nauseum as being against this or that as regards ecologically designed parklands in a city and, in this instance, ours in particular - **wasn't against** roads for wheeled transport in his parks and sanctuaries. Although this certainly isn't the message being trotted out by Valérie Plante or Luc Ferrandez of Projet Montréal, who along with the City of Montreal urban planners and bureaucrats, interested parties such as cycle enthusiasts and special event organizers, and all the other so-called historical "experts" on Olmstead, who, one and all, appear to want citizens and island residents to believe otherwise.

For instance, on pages 6-7 of the pamphlet, the text explains:

"This was the element of personal and restorative experience of the urban park as Olmsted conceived it. There were other elements as well, important but nonetheless of secondary importance. These were places for groups of people to enjoy picnicking and other "gregarious" activities; and formal areas, paved and spacious, for civic events and musical performances. In Olmsted's view, some of these activities were better placed in their own sites, where they could be planned without fear of intruding on the landscape. His concept of the park system was a series of public spaces, each serving a particular purpose for all residents of the city. Uniting the scattered elements of the park system--and providing a structure of public open space for the expanding city--were what Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, called "parkways."

Insert The Drive Mount Royal Park photo

These parkways were green ribbons, **preferably 200 feet wide**, that connected parks and playgrounds, providing neighbourhood park space and serving as pleasant carriage drives, either for moving from one park to another and about the city. **Each parkway had a wide, smooth-paved drive for the exclusive use of private carriages**, while carts and wagons were required to use cobblestone roads on either side. Further separation of ways of travel was provided by bridle paths and pedestrian walks. Rows of trees separated the various ways, creating an effect of green and shade. The concept of the parkway, and the term itself, has survived in modern times as a pleasantly landscape drive for private vehicles that excludes commercial traffic. " *Mount Royal in the works of Frederick Law Olmstead*, Dr. Charles E. Beveridge, City of Montreal, 2009, pp 6-7

Our "parkway" already exists. Why destroy it?

This is the function that our already existing conjoined roads play (what Montreal in their public documentation is calling "the axis of Remembrance Road and Camilien Houde Way") and that Projet Montréal wishes to permanently break assunder and block to through, or transiting motorized traffic, with Mayor Plante claiming the idea of a "parkway" belongs to another century. Once again Mme Plante, you shouldn't just pick though Olmstead's ideas for those that you like, and junk the ones you don't agree with, and yet still claim you are bringing back the park closer to Olmstead's original vision.

Insert Tam-Tam photo at Etienne Cartier monument

Caption: Sunday Tam-Tam - George-Etienne-Cartier monument

Source:

©montreal.for91days.com (insert link to: <http://montreal.for91days.com/>)

It appears to be rather more a case of closer to the Projet Montréal vision than that of park designer Frederick Law Olmstead. These existing roadways already can be rightfully considered "parkways", even though even they aren't Olmstead's recommended 200 feet wide, which is much wider than than the existing asphalted roadways that skirt our park. Ever wondered why the so-called Olmstead experts always leave out that particular "vision" of Olmstead's plan for wheeled vehicles? Plus they already lead from one section of the city to another and one park area to another viz. Mount Royal to Jeanne-Mance for soccer or baseball, or the Sunday Tam-Tam around the George-Étienne Cartier monument, and so on to the Outremont and Plateau parks and in the other direction, the parks of Notre-Dame-de-Grace/Côte-des-Neiges and Westmount. And on top of that, our 'private carriage parkway' is correctly situated all along the edge of the main park that current park visitors already enjoy in peace, except, of course, when they aren't being chivied aside by the cyclists speeding by on the "walking" paths.

It sounds like Projet Montréal is working more "against" Olmstead's vision rather than for it, perhaps the City should try and get all its facts straight and "all its ducks in a row" in its various publications and statements, before trying to explain their subsequent decisions and actions to the rest of us.

In fact, Mayor Plante, in her own opinion piece, published in La Presse, earlier this year, where she attempts to justify her and Projet Montréal's actions, calls Olmstead's and later Mayor's Drapeau's concept of parkways, which she describes as "a promenade through nature by car" as "a project from another century".

"Il faut se rappeler que le projet initial du chemin Camillien-Houde en était un de *parkway*, c'est-à-dire une promenade en voiture dans la nature. Il s'agit d'un projet d'un autre siècle." Valérie Plante, La Presse, 2018

Her vision for a new century that we should all understand and get on board with is to make le Parc Mont-Royal into yet another "destination" venue, especially for cyclists; one which stands alone and doesn't connect with the rest of the city, and which you can only plan to visit if are planning to stop there in the areas pre-determined by the Ville de Montréal. It smacks of "isolationism" which seems to be another theme that runs through everyday life in the la belle province. How, as an island city, do we all learn to co-exist if we are blocked from being able to get ourselves easily from one side of our city to the other, over its central mountain, to visit and explore more neighbourhoods via our delightful namesake mountain route? Why are the benefits of the journey itself being so denigrated?

Some of us don't just want to end up in Mount Royal as a destination per se, every time we visit, we simply want to enjoy it on our way to somewhere else. Why does this administration think that is so very wrong? Why is it okay and morally "right" to prioritize cyclists and the young and fit over all others in Montreal? Aren't our parks and parkways places for all Montrealers to enjoy?

The Remembrance Road-Camilien Houde axis is indeed already a "parkway" in all senses of the world and a great many of us want to keep it open all the way from one side to the other. However, from the photos shown in the City of Montreal presentation it appears the politicians and the city planners, along with Les Amies de la montagne, want to reduce the 'parkway' to a walking path, or perhaps what les Amies euphemistically name a "park lane" i.e. some cars but not many, since Les Amies pay lip service to possibility of keeping it open all the way over, but not "if the majority don't wish to". Why is that? The park already has a great walking-cycling path - the aforementioned Olmstead Road. Could it be it is just too busy a route already? And the only viable through space left to co-opt is the asphalted roadway used by cars on the edge of the park?

"You touch some of the reasons for my going, not for my staying away." A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

Also Camilien Houde has a steep 8% incline or gradient. Now that's surely an exercise in familial misery and/or an accident waiting to happen should less fit and/or experienced cyclists, or families with adventurous children on their bikes, try their hand at going up and down that steep stretch of roadway. No wonder the City's presentation handout shows a woman "walking" her bike down the road. It's a lot more accurate than they perhaps realise. Their pilot project may well attract people to "try it" as Mayor Plante suggests in her appeal to us. However, it won't, for the most part, be all that enjoyable for the average Montrealer, as Camilien Houde is far too steep to be pleasurable for walkers, and strollers and families with children, either on or off their bikes.

Accessibility is a buzzword not a fact

"Access to the landscapes he designed was also important to him. His intent was to meet human needs, and to that end he made his parks accessible to all--not only all social groups, but also all ages and all physical conditions."

Neither will Camilien Houde be accessible for disabled people, or the old, infirm and the challenged. Lip service is being paid to "accessibility" on Mount Royal, by the City, by Les Amies but it's

"conveniently" and always extremely short on words and details. However, one thing is sure, those of us who fit into that category, we won't be "walking" Camilien Houde anytime soon, since most of us can no longer even make it as far as the Kondiaronk Belvedere along the more gentle Olmstead Road from the parking lot. Not because we don't want to, we simply can't manage the distance, there and back, especially since the closer parking lot at Smith House is now barred to those of us from the west. Just as Beaver Lake parking is barred to those approaching from the east. Plus many of us want to combine a visit to Mount Royal with a visit to the neighbouring City of the Dead and some of those vertiginous slopes in the cemeteries require a car since it's too far for some of us to walk up and down their steep pathways.

With 1.5 million and counting burials in that city of conjoined neighbourhoods on the side of Mount Royal, many of us, especially us older ones, have friends and family interred there that we wish to go visit, but now, we can't get to them easily if our ways in from Remembrance Road are blocked to all but pedestrians and cyclists. The Outremont entrance is somewhat more convoluted for most of us to find, except for those who live in, or near the neighbourhood.

Insert photo of pink 1877 Olmstead Plan

Caption: Olmstead Plan for Mount Royal Park - 1877

Source: McCord Museum

Page 9 of the City of Montréal pamphlet goes on to say:

"Access to the landscapes he designed was also important to him. His intent was to meet human needs, and to that end he made his parks accessible to all--not only all social groups, but also all ages and all physical conditions. On Mount Royal itself, as part of the system of drives and walking paths that he planned, he included a path that went to the top of the mountain and returned by another route that could be used by convalescents in wheelchairs." *Mount Royal in the works of Frederick Law Olmstead*, Dr. Charles E. Beveridge, City of Montreal, 2009

Note the ongoing use of the word "drives". Yes, Olmstead was talking about horse-drawn carriages, and not "horseless carriages" i.e. the motor car, because in 1874 it didn't exist in his world, but even he didn't expect Mount Royal to be a completely "wheeled carriage" free zone. Unlike Projet Montreal's "vision", he recognized some people weren't able to walk or hike around the park and he wanted routes that "went to the top of the mountain and returned by another route for convalescents in wheelchairs". What is that if not an indication of a need for a wheeled traffic transit route on Mount Royal? He didn't want people to retrace their steps all the time.

Moreover, the existence of highly polluted urban environments that affected the health and well-being of all city dwellers from all classes, were also major concerns for Olmstead, who believed one could partly combat the ill effects through the creation of huge urban parks, that would be extremely beneficial to the health of city-dwellers, as they could go there to breathe clean air. His goals, in this respect, are as valid today as they ever were and underscore why even transiting Montreal Islanders today still want to access their mountain for the fresher air and calming vistas it provides.

"In Frederick Olmsted's original plan, Mount Royal park would have had a far nicer carriage path, a reservoir at the top of the mountain, and a large promenade that would surround it. A distinct approach to the mountain's vegetation was also planned, with flora growing more scarce as you went up the park's path, in order to

exaggerate Mount Royal's height. Unfortunately, a lot of this stuff didn't go through, mainly because Montreal was going through a depression in the 1870s. As such, the city couldn't afford a fair amount of the features included in Olmsted's design, and so they were just left out when the park was inaugurated in 1876." Source: <https://www.mtlblog.com/lifestyle/15-things-mount-royal>

In designing Mount Royal, Olmsted wanted to highlight the differences in a number of natural features existing on each area of the mountain. While he wanted it to look natural, he also wanted to disguise its imperfections, which he did by copying British ideas on park landscaping, with the use of gentle slopes, wide lawns, and clusters of trees, bushes and flowers. As one of his biographers, architect Witold Rybczynski, remarked: "I took the landscape of the mountain for granted; I thought that it was simply a nature preserve. Here was the most significant man-made object in Montreal – arguably the city's most important cultural artifact – and I thought of it as 'natural.' How wrong I was."

A tramline...ran inconspicuously between the park and the cemetery along Shakespeare Road

"Ten years after the park was opened, an inclined railway made a rickety ascent of its north face, to make the mountain more accessible to a greater number of citizens... it was replaced by a tramline from Côte des Neiges that ran inconspicuously between the park and the cemetery along Shakespeare Road. This was later extended to Mount Royal and Park avenues, two of Olmsted's city-and-mountain-connecting streets." Exhibition Catalogue: *Mount Royal Montreal*, McCord Museum, 1977

"All hat and no cattle"

In addition, a fair amount of what Project Montréal and some of the so-called experts are trying to argue in this 21st century, needs to be refuted:

One, **"Mont-Royal park needs to be returned to the vision of Frederick Olmsted"** - Mount Royal park never ever was constructed according to Olmsted's vision and plans, especially as far as the vegetation "design" and mountain top reservoir was concerned, as well as the pathway for convalescents in wheelchairs and the carriageway (note the word "carriageway" i.e. a route for wheeled vehicles); but only "in the spirit of his plans", in part because Montreal ran out of money. Sounds familiar?

Two, **"The mountain needs to be a natural oasis"** - Have you recently taken a good look at what **Mount Royal Park** (insert link to:

[Do take some time to scroll through the photos at the above link, which in fact is pretty confusing since it's entitled "Mount Royal Park" but actually features a mix of photos from the park as well as the Mount Royal Heritage Area \(i.e. which is not actually part of the park per se. This is the same mistake Mayor Plante is seemingly making\). Or, perhaps, start with a map \(see below\) that clearly](https://www.google.ca/maps/uv?hl=en&pb=!1s0x4cc91a3b89d50ee1%3A0x4c8dc463a4718c9a!2m2!2m2!1i80!2i80!3m1!2i20!16m16!1b1!2m2!1m1!1e1!2m2!1m1!1e3!2m2!1m1!1e5!2m2!1m1!1e4!2m2!1m1!1e6!3m1!7e115!4shttps%3A%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipObxp4tAiTGTCglz29HLEVz4m2YyMFfHW4NWVY%3Dw240-h160-k-no!5sMount%20Royal%20Park%20Montreal%20-%20Google%20Search&imagekey=!1e10!2sAF1QipPx759oUq0dXEyIAdr5_c79bh1-7BrI7u438&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiU2_rq-ZXbAhWp24MKHZlJdQAOiolkAlwCg) looks like today?</p></div><div data-bbox=)

indicates exactly how, and where, the axis of Remembrance Road-Camilien Houde Way intersects with the park. The map, although simplified, highlights in bright green what is public parkland and in light grey-green the grounds of the privately administered cemeteries i.e. not parkland.

Insert STM bus map

The STM bus map shows exactly how the the existing roadways abut Mount Royal Park and the cemeteries

The existing road doesn't bisect the park

What you will notice is most of the actual park that the majority of people visit, and spend time in, is to the right of the road (if you are approaching from the west going east, or to the left if you are coming from the east). Thus, what's immediately evident is the roadway simply doesn't "bisect the park". It runs on the "edge" between the park and the cemeteries. Also, be warned, for all the hype from Projet Montréal, the STM's 711 bus is a temporary "seasonal" bus route only, that runs 7 days a week for two months (July and August) and on weekends only in June and September, since the route of the year-round No 11 is lot less accommodating to most Montreal islanders.

Then take a look at what Montreal City Hall has, over the years, sculptured Mount Royal park into? Manicured lawns, stylized city centre-type flower and greenery plantings (not native to Quebec), questionably artistic concrete and stone sculptures, those truly awful, and oh so costly, granite tree stumps (really Mayor Coderre...in what universe?), a motley collection of buildings (the Mountain Chalet at Kodiaronk Belvedere, the Chalet at Beaver Lake, the Musée-Café-Information centre at Smith House (the only extant original building from the time that area was farmed, dating from the 1850s before the park opened), the three futuristic glass shed interpretation centres, the oh so fake waterwalls, the cutesy duck platforms in Beaver Lake, which, by the way, can no longer can be skated on in the winter, since after its recent 3-year refurbishment, it is now deemed a safety risk since the pond is now deeper and the walls are higher, making it too dangerous for skaters to step down onto if the water level is lowered in the winter for security reasons.

Talk about safety issues? How come the City engineers and urban planners weren't blocked from using the mountain for that monumental and extremely costly error? So now the City has to spend more of our tax money to construct a temporary and much smaller skating rink each winter alongside it, so as to continue to offer "skating" at Mount Royal (nowhere near as picturesque, fun and romantic as it used to be on the larger, natural ice surface of the four-leaf clover shaped lake-pond) and all to justify what exactly? Oh yes, when stumped the City blames "climate change"!

Since the "lake" was closed for three years, couldn't they have refrigerated part of it during the refurbishment? Or was that too much advance planning for Montreal to cope with? Or is it more a need to justify the costly refurbishments of the Beaver Lake chalet for usage 12 months of the year, since the pond-lake is no longer the year-round playground it used to be, and people still have to be enticed back to the area? Does any of that appear in Olmstead's vision for Mount Royal? But of course not, Beaver Lake was only constructed in the 1930s as one of Mayor Camilien Houde's "make-work" projects during the depression era, opening for skating in the winter of 1938.

Conversely, they've chosen to strip more revenue from the Beaver Lake chalet this summer by building another café-terrace on Camilien Houde, perhaps because they've blocked off the Beaver Lake one to those approaching by car from Camilien Houde? What are they improving on, and what in all those, and the other, oh so costly, changes effected over the years, is bringing the park closer to Olmstead's vision of an ecological urban park? You can't just cherry-pick the elements you want that support your decisions by adding more ugly, un-natural man-made structures.

Three, "**Olmstead never designed the park to be accessed by cars**" - Olmstead designed his "vision" of Mount Royal park way **before the bicycle and the car were even credible options to access it**. In the 1800s, citizens and their visitors and commercial stone quarriers and woodcutters hiked up the sides of the hill, much as the indigenous peoples had always done, and/or created trails wide enough to be travelled by horses, carts, buggies, sleds and sleighs in winter. Or by snowshoes and skis. The regular means of transportation in those days.

A funicular railway - the Mount Royal Elevator - was even constructed in 1884, up the steep portion of the southeast side that disembarked passengers by the Mountain Chalet belvedere, as a response to demands for easier access by less-well off citizens and visitors, who lacked access to horses, carts and carriages to take them up the mountain. Costing 5 cents per ride, or 3 cents for children, it was very popular, but it wasn't properly maintained, thus in 1918, it was deemed dangerous, closed, and dismantled in 1920.

Insert photo of the Mount Royal Elevator

Caption: The funicular crossing the Mount Royal park trail, now Olmstead Road
Domain

Source: Public

But the public demand was still there, so in 1924, the No 93 streetcar route was inaugurated, to take people from Côte-des-Neiges and the west side up to Smith House, or the Summit Loop as it was then known, which was where it looped around and went back down. This was followed in 1930, by the No 11 tramway (which even had its own tunnel through the rockface just below the cross) to transport those from Park Avenue side up the steep 10% gradient to Smith House, where they could transfer onto the No 93 at the Summit Loop, if they wished to continue their journey over Mount Royal. In fact the current road design and parking areas are what remains of the path of the original tramtracks. The tramway tunnel, itself, was blasted to create the present day rockface and canyon when Camilien Houde Way was constructed in 1955-1958 in the era of Mayor Jean Drapeau.

Insert photo of streetcar entering the tramway tunnel

Caption: No 11 streetcar entering the tramway tunnel on Mount Royal Source: STM - Public Domain

The basic fact is there was always traffic of one sort or another up and down Mount Royal, whether public, commercial and otherwise. And the reality is, there was, and always will be, a public demand for it. For all the roads both over and around the mountain are all constructed "on" the sides of Mount Royal. Thus the mountain always had transit routes up it and over it in every direction dating from indigenous times i.e. Chemin Côte-des-Neiges (probably the, or at least one of the most ancient of the mountain roadways, separating "La colline de la croix" from Westmount's "Little Mountain") is an ancient indigenous transit road...the "cut" between two peaks if you will, and the road from where Remembrance Road (formerly Shakespeare Road) branches off to go up the mountain.

"Then tell Wind and Fire where to stop," returned madame; "but don't tell me." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book III, Chapter 12, Darkness

Bicycles, like cars, weren't part of Olmstead's vision

In the 1870s, when the park officially opened, the bicycle was only coming into vogue as a transportation option, and it wasn't comfortable enough in those early years to even attempt to ride up a steep gradient (no pneumatic tires, or gears and minimal brakes) and the car wasn't yet an option at all. So you're not really returning Mont Royal to Olmstead's original vision, are you? Because, get real, you're not. There are no plans to promote the use of the horse and buggy are there? I thought the central City has been trying to get rid of those with its extreme targeting of the caleche drivers in the Old City?

Insert Sutcliffe photo of horses and sleighs on Mount Royal in winter

Caption: Promenade by horseback and horsedrawn sleigh in winter on Mount Royal Source: McCord Museum

Why not stable the caleches and their horses on Mount Royal?

" I really miss the horse-drawn caleches on the mountain, so romantic, especially in winter. Wish they'd bring them back. I have such good memories about them." Louise Charbonneau, Montrealer, June 30, 2018

Here's a thought, instead of banning them, and bringing in "electric" caleches (what's romantic about those?) why not move them all to Mount Royal? Stable them next to the pampered SPVM horses and then you will really be "returning Mount Royal" closer to Olmstead's vision, by allowing the "sacred" tourist, who must, of course, be permitted every benefit you are denying to residents, the option of "viewing the park" from a horse and carriage, as some residents as well as visitors certainly enjoyed doing; both in later years, and in Olmstead's time, and whom Olmstead happily accommodated in his "vision" for the park?

Insert photo of horse-drawn tram waiting outside the Mount Royal Chalet

Caption: Horse-drawn tourist wagon waits outside Chalet to load park visitors for trip back down the mountain c 1947 - Paul Carpenter Source: Public Domain

Frankly, Madame Plante, you're "helping" in your own way to destroy his "vision of unspoiled nature" by constructing a towering, vertigo-inducing, rickety-looking "new" bleacher-belevedere on a formerly stunning and unspoilt section of Camilien Houde (the former area of the tram-tunnel, which

was blasted when the road was constructed in the mid-1950s), and which will really make it "unsafe" for pedestrians, especially those with children, since the steep height makes it an accident waiting to happen, as it's quite a fall from the top to the asphalt below, and children do like to climb.

In addition, pedestrians will still, for the moment at least, have to walk alongside of the road as some cars are being allowed on Camilien Houde (although I question in the world of Luc Ferrandez and Mayor Plante for how long?). Plus, by adding an equally ugly, wooden, rough-hewn, jerry-built café-terrace to an already over-crowded belvedere further east along Camilien Houde that will need commercial vehicles to supply it, your "vision" is simply adding to the traffic and congestion.

Where was that written in Olmstead's plans? Oh, yes, according to the words of Charles Beveridge: "The concept of the parkway, and the term itself, has survived in modern times as a pleasantly landscaped drive for private vehicles that excludes commercial traffic." I think that covers more the private cars of your citizens rather than your restaurant supply trucks and your tourist buses don't you?

Whose needs exactly are you prioritizing?

"Then, that glorious vision of doing good, which is so often the sanguine mirage of so many good minds, arose before him, and he even saw himself in the illusion with some influence to guide this raging Revolution that was running so fearfully wild." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

What gives here? Whose "needs" are you prioritizing here? All you are doing is cutting off ease of access from both sides of "our" mountain to a great many of your citizens, so as to fit in with the agenda of just who exactly? Cut away all the obfuscation and it's predominantly to segments of the cycling community and the tour operators and tourists to whom you are handing over Mount Royal Park, while hiding behind the notion that you're really providing the pedestrian community and families better access (when in all honesty you truly aren't), and to simply make it sound as though it's benefiting wider segments of the community.

Insert photo of Cafe Suspendu on Camilien-Houde belvedere

Caption: The Hanging Cafe terrasse - Camillien Houde Belvedere - July 18, 2018

Source: Jennifer Crane

So it's somewhat unsettling to see the crude new belvedere (aka the *Belvédère Soleil*) and the equally québécoise new Hanging Café-terrace (aka *le Café Suspendu*) looming large. Is that what Mayor Plante means about it being an "amazing opportunity to open up the mountain and...for people to go on the mountain and see spots and places they've never seen before because it was too dangerous for them to go across the road"? It's all a bit improvised isn't it?

How and where was it so dangerous to cross the road?

Where exactly was it that they couldn't cross the road safely? It's somewhat like the "Emperor's New Clothes" syndrome. You can tell the spinmasters have been at work. Tell us often enough, as the advertising and promotional dictum goes, and (theoretically) we'll all start to believe it. And solely in an attempt to justify a decision that 37, 938 (and counting) persons have already said they oppose. Thus, Projet Montréal is spending considerable monies to try to attract park goers to a newly

constructed "lookout" and to a view from a stretch of road that citizens from both sides of the city have been able to see as they pass by on the bus, in a car, on foot, or by bike for years. They didn't need to cross the road to look at that view, and if they had really wished to walk to it, they could have done that safely enough by crossing at the stop sign at the junction of Remembrance Road and Camilien Houde in front of the Mont Royal Cemetery gates, and by walking safely against the oncoming traffic (as the rules of the road tell us to do) on a relatively wide median alongside the road. Now if you pass it by in a car (coming from the east side, of course) you no longer see the view because that oh so tacky bleacher-belevedere blocks it.

Fact is, Projet Montréal is making up stories, and spending huge sums of money to justify all their bad decisions as they go along. Much as Luc Ferrandez admitted:

"To critics who say the city administration is improvising with this pilot project, Ferrandez replied, "Kind of." " Montreal Gazette, March 2, 2018

Where is the absolute need to make (at significant expense) Camilien Houde a "destination" by telling people about "spots and places they've never seen before". Perhaps Mme Plante and her decision-making team have never seen them before, but a great many other Montreal Islanders have, and will, no doubt, probably be completely underwhelmed by the "newness" and "excitement" of it all.

Roadway cafe with a view

It's also somewhat hard for most Montrealers (especially those from the west) to visualize just where, on that already overcrowded easternmost belvedere on Camilien Houde, they have constructed a café-terrace - hanging or otherwise? Fact is, they stuck it at the upper end of the parking area right in the middle of the entrance passage area, so now fewer cars will fit into this much visited viewing spot and those that are lucky enough to enter will be forced to try and navigate around it, as the resulting passageway is extremely narrow. As for the tour buses, it will be really difficult for them to enter and off-load passengers, no doubt meaning, at peak times if there is more than one of them, they will possibly choose to off-load passengers on the Camilien Houde roadway, so as to keep to their schedules. Talk about creating, not alleviating, more safety issues on Camilien Houde!

Insert view of Camilien Houde Belevedere parking and back of Café suspendu

Caption: Cafe Suspendu on Camilien Houde belvedere- blocking the view - July 18, 2018 Image: Jennifer Crane

No view at all for passing motorists, cyclists, or public transit users

Also by "designing it" this way, they have effectively blocked the view from the road to passing traffic of any sort. As often, when the Camilien Houde belvedere parking was full, as it usually was in the summer, with the area overcrowded with waiting buses and vehicles hoping one of the parked cars would reclaim its occupants and depart, so freeing up a space. But the fact was, one's visitors could still enjoy the view while driving slowly by and not stopping, since it was already difficult to find parking there at the best of times, especially when the tourist buses were all crowded in there. Now they've simply reduced the parking area even further with their ill-conceived, and did I mention ugly "Café Suspendu", and passing traffic (buses, cars, bikes, etc) can no longer "see" the view, either at the Belvédère Soleil, or at the Belvédère Camilien Houde. And that's supposed to be an improvement? Even less of a reason for the disabled, the infirm and the elderly to attempt to travel there by bus.

As for calling it a "pop-up" café, that's a misnomer if ever there was one. It's there 24 hours a day, blocking the view from passersby on the road 7-days a week, even if its scheduled opening hours are a lot less. Some pop-up! Not sure of the coiner of that description actually understands the concept.

Plus, when did the tender go out and the plans get drawn up to operate that new alcohol distribution venue? And how come the City can get a provincial liquor license issued on short notice when most privately owned bars and restaurant establishments in the rest of the City have to wait a year or two, or at times a lot more to get one? There was no public consultation about the installation of liquor vending establishments on Mont-Royal was there? Not that I recall. And did it go out to tender? But isn't that so very Montréalaise and a tad condescending and dismissive? "Let's give them another a café-terrace serving alcoholic beverages for them to visit and they'll be happy!"

Dangerous drop if you step askew?

In addition, haven't we already had two persons recently falling off that side of the mountain late at night? One in 2017, a 38-year old surgeon, who died, and the latest one in May 2018, a 21-year old, who was very badly injured. In fact, it took a considerable time for rescuers to retrieve their broken and mangled bodies, although it was never confirmed whether or not they had simply mis-stepped, were inebriated, drugged, dizzy, fatigued, or simply foolish? And I didn't hear anything about pedestrians being banned from the mountain for "safety" issues after those two unfortunate incidents happened? In fact, the response from the city spokesperson Alex Norris, Montreal city councillor, was: "We don't want to increase unduly the number of fences and structures in what is a beautiful, natural setting". Yet, you construct an ugly, abysmal looking, makeshift "hanging" café without a murmur?

Plus that's twice as many as serious incidents as the one, unfortunate young cyclist killed by a traffic incident on the same area of the mountain in 2017, for which the visiting Californian tourist - the perpetrator of the illegal u-turn - was never charged, as it was determined: "We weren't sure we could get a conviction"!

"Death may beget life, but oppression can beget nothing other than itself. A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

However, for that infraction thousands of Montrealers and their visitors are being heavily penalized. There's something seriously wrong with that Projet Montréal logic! Potentially, both the surgeon and the cyclist who died were engaging in risky behaviour...one walking at night in a steep, possibly badly lit area, the other travelling at speed down a steep incline and unable to stop in time to avoid colliding with a tourist doing an illegal u-turn. Everytime you go out on the roads you have to be mentally prepared for other people doing stupid things. 100% security for everyone is impossible to achieve. We're humans, we do do stupid things. But both these errors of judgement were both accidents, however, they are not being treated the same in the minds of the biased politicians and lobbyists.

And remember that was all before the "hanging" café-terrace was opened with its 7-day a week location on the belvedere parking, but offering extremely limited weekend opening hours; and which is...oh yes, only easily accessible to those from the eastern side of Montreal. Unless, of course, we now "ghettoized" citizens from the west opt to drive around the mountain, passing a whole host of other café-terrasses on the way to get to it, for the sole reason of potentially having a "drink with a

view" in the equivalent of a crowded layby rest area on the side of a road surrounded by cars and buses, which is as far from "a beautiful, natural setting" as you can get. It's totally nonsensical thinking all-round.

"Repression is the only lasting philosophy." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Book II, Chapter 9, The Gorgon's Head

So many unanswered questions Madame Mayor? Instead of spending you and your team's valuable and expensive (to us) time dreaming up all these tacky "improvements" to our mountain, most of those 31,700+ (now 37, 938) signatories to the NO petition would have preferred you had at least taken the time to ask us our opinion first. Your "improvements" ain't cheap - construction of a junky "new" belvedere, construction and operation of a makeshift "pop-up" café-terrace, and all those additional traffic cops, security guards and parking meter "maids" and "misters" being paid overtime to regulate, police, hand out infraction tickets and direct it all? Not to mention the elevated "costs" of all those summer animation and special events that "our" mountain park absolutely did not need and that comes with a \$1 million price tag! (Finally, someone let slip the project's budget allocation...after months of obfuscation).

Quite some "over-the-top" pilot project, Madame Mayor. Sounds more like a rather expensive, badly conceived, hastily constructed, and did I mention extremely ugly "fait-accompli"!

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 4

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders



L'Hydre Aristocratique.

Ce Monstre méle et simule, né d'Humains sur têtes; son naturel est féroce, Barbare, Sanguinaire; il ne se repait que de sang, de larmes et de la subsistence des malheureux; il cherche de tous côtés à croquer, pour satisfaire son ambition et son insatiable avidité; il croit que tout ce qui respire doit lui être soumis et ne vit que pour lui; la dévotion, la famine et la mort, sont toujours à sa suite. Chacun successivement des différents Empires qu'il parcourt, il s'échappe depuis longtemps réfugié en France, ou la cause le plus grande malice; ses têtes se multiplient à un tel point qu'il ne lui est plus de possible de se nourrir; Il a été apperçu le deux juillet 1793 à 4 heures du soir, sur la route de Versailles à Paris; sous une impulsion impure de tous les esprits, en vertu un décret général, le Cri de la liberté rassemble le patriote dans tous les coins; on s'arme de toutes parts, on le 24 on attaque la Bastille, ce trait horrible, ou le monstre sacrifie ses victimes, on a honoré cette fête avec des prières d'actions; Le Monstre qui s'y était réfugié est assailli de toutes parts; chacun s'empresse de débâter ses têtes, plusieurs tombent sous le glaive vengeur de la liberté; Mais un nouveau protège, ce Monstre échappe aux regards de ces courages armés, il fait sous différents formes des séductions, brisant avec lui le désespoir et la honte; Délivré d'un Rouage si redoutable, la France jusqu'à l'abbaye et plonge dans le deuil sa regardant une nouvelle face; ses habitants régis désormais par des lois sages, un Roi citoyen, et des Ministres patriotes, vivront heureux.



Caption: The aristocratic hydra monster mounting an attack on the people - French satirical cartoon Image: Anonymous, c. 1789, Public Domain

or



Caption: Death of King Louis XVI - January 23, 1793 - Image: Anonymous, c. 1789, Public Domain

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

“The new era began; the king was tried, doomed, and beheaded; the Republic of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death, declared for victory or death against the world in arms; the black flag waved night and day from the great towers of Notre Dame; three hundred thousand men, summoned to rise against the tyrants of the earth, rose from all the varying soils of France, as if the dragon's teeth had been sown broadcast, and had yielded fruit equally on hill and plain, on rock, in gravel, and alluvial mud, under the bright sky of the South and under the clouds of the North, in fell and forest ... and among the cropped grass and the stubble of the corn, along the fruitful banks of the broad rivers, and in the sand of the sea-shore.” *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

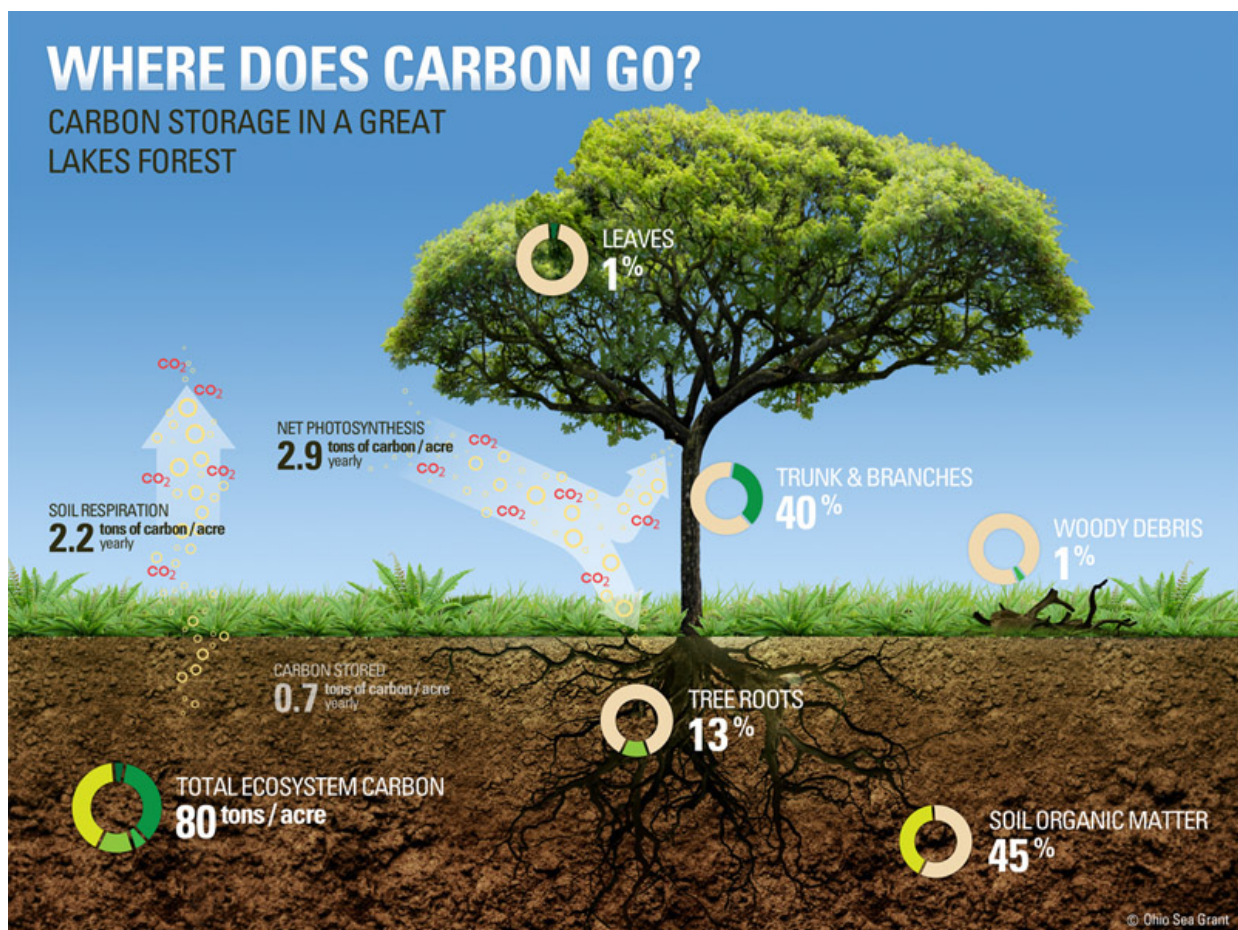
Sanity or Insanity? Parc Mont-Royal Park is now closed to through traffic

As of June 2, 2018 Montrealer islanders no longer have the right drive over Mount Royal from east to west and vice versa. The new regime at Montreal City Hall has tried, doomed and found motorized Montrealers wanting, and in consequence they have decreed a huge segment of their citizens no longer has the right to drive up and down their signature mountain road. Unless, of course, your machine is pedal powered, then you have the right to free passage where you will. Long live the pedal pushers.

Let's look a quick look at those who are lobbying for limited transit traffic on the mountain, shall we?

1) Those who think it is being over-used as a commuter short-cut and say that as if it's a bad thing: The number of transiting car totals, oh so regularly trotted out with a straight face by Projet Montréal councillors, and repeated ad infinitum by the print and broadcast media is that an estimated "up to" 400 cars per hour pass over the mountain giving a daily estimated total of 10,000-12,000. They forget to mention that the "up to 400" figure is at "peak hours only". Which begs the question: Is fact-checking by the media a dead art in this era of "fake news"? Fact is, no one at City Hall actually has credible, bonified figures - and whoever came up with the "estimated total of 10-12,000 cars per day" definitely has rudimentary math skills at best, since if you multiply a maximum of 400 cars by 24 (hours) you will get a total of 9,600 cars per 24-hour period but it's a far-from-accurate estimate. So, frankly, it's disingenous for Project Montréal and its PR spin masters to say up to 400 per hour daily because for the most part "les heures de pointe" or commuting hours are, at best, only a couple of hours in the morning and a max of two more at the end of the afternoon and perhaps, a few additional cars (maybe) at noon hour on a nice day as some might come to eat their lunch there, giving you, at the very most, 1,600-2,000 transits per day max - a far cry from 10-12,000! But, of course, the "higher figure", works a lot better for the Vélo-Québec lobbyists and the City Hall PR folks.

The reality is, most of the time the road is pretty sparsely travelled, especially in the early morning, evening and night hours (and that includes the summer season too). Plus, those who go over in the morning are probably much the same people and cars that come back in the afternoon. So sorry but that's a far cry from "an estimated 10-12,000 cars per day". Talk about fudging the figures! Yet read any news article and the 10-12,000 figure is endlessly repeated. But it's so wrong!



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And even if it wasn't. Why is that so bad? It's a maximum of 400 cars per hour in rush hour not stuck in traffic and emitting CO2 into the air in the neighbourhoods surrounding the mountain. Whereas on the roadway over the mountain there are trees that not only pump oxygen into the air but also **store CO2** (insert link to: <http://urbanforestrynetwork.org/benefits/air%20quality.htm>).

Thus, what's so terrible about commuters using the roadway? Most of them are paying for it in their taxes. What harm are they actually doing to the mountain? They're on asphalt. 7.2 km of asphalt to be precise. Carbon dioxide goes up into the atmosphere no matter which roadway they travel on (over or around the mountain). The argument is spurious at best.

In addition, it isn't as though all the other users of the mountain aren't inflicting their own damage. Other habitual users such as the mountain bikers (who tear up and destroy fragile woodland terrain) and all the pedestrians, photographers, hikers, joggers, cyclists, dog walkers, etc (whose constant passage both on and off the mountain trails causes trampling, soil and leaf litter compaction, erosion, littering, wildlife disturbance and habitat fragmentation and edge effects, which impact certain plant and animal species). Mount Royal Park already has 5 million visitors a year. Les Amies de la Montagne want to increase this even further by getting Mount Royal on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites, thus potentially increasing that already high visitor number from overseas tourists. Who's really causing the most environmental damage to Mount Royal? Why just pick on the transiting motorists?

"...the mountain is a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels...Today, we are asking the Montréal administration, as soon as the election is over, to eliminate transit traffic on Camillien-Houde" Suzanne Lareau, President and CEO, Vélo Québec, November 2017

Frankly travelling on asphalt is a great deal better than the motley assorted groups of mountain bikers, who are tearing up and damaging the woodland terrain in the rest of the park? How come there aren't more news stories about that destructive element in the park? Or about the adrenaline-pumped, elite sport "need for speed" cyclists Vélo-Québec lobbies so effectively for, and who want to claim Camillien Houde - the steep east side mountain road - for their own fitness and training ground? What is fair or correct about that?

As for the environment damaging aspect? You're not fixing that since you're only moving the cars off the mountain to the surrounding roads, which you cheerfully say: "Oh, those roads, they can accommodate them. Overall it won't make much of a difference". So basically, you don't really care too much about the environment either. You aren't getting rid of the cars, you're simply moving them somewhere else at the request, and to the benefit of the road racing cycling lobby.

Weird logic vs a refreshing scenic drive: How is it that the road over the mountain can't tolerate the number of cars but the surrounding, already traffic clogged streets can (according to the City of Montreal urban planners that is)? In addition, even commuters, in fact,

especially commuters, should be entitled to a little pleasure getting to and from their places of work. People work long hours, they spend more hours commuting to and from work. Not everyone lives within walking or easy public transport, and/or cycling distance to their workplaces.

Mr Luc Ferrandez is able to bike to and from work in Old Montreal, and even he takes shortcuts going the wrong way up a one-way street and cycles on the sidewalks, almost knocking pedestrians over. Luckily for him he lives in the Plateau, and can commute by bike, but most Montreal Eastenders and Montreal West-Islanders don't have that luxury and currently their commute is a nightmare, either by public transport or by car, due to the current dilapidated state of island-wide infrastructure. But when someone during question period at the May 15 information session brought up the current commuter nightmare of the Turcot interchange rebuilding and asked why the "mountain project" couldn't be delayed three years, until that was over, they were cut off abruptly with the words "those two issues aren't related".

But Madame Mayor, they are, if you are commuting from the South Shore, Lachine, Montreal West, NDG, Westmount, or the West End, or the West Island and need to get to the Plateau and beyond to go to work. My query: Why cut off commuters access to a few minutes of a scenic drive and a mouthful of fresher air up over the mountain? Why is it that commuters do not deserve a drive along the edge of a park they pay for, with at least a daily glimpse of nature as reflected in the sky, trees, and rockfaces, but cyclists do? Remember, pedestrians and cyclists don't actually "need" to use this roadway. They already have Olmstead Road, and a fair number of other motorized-traffic-free entrances and exits to the park, including a newly completed walking/cycling beltway right around and through the park and cemeteries.

What ever happened to accessibility for all?



Drapeau-racetrack, beach and rowing basin Source: Ville de Montreal

Sanity saving tips - traveling from the mountain to the river

My twice daily "natural beauty boost" or sanity saving tale: As is the lot of many a single parent, one has to find a myriad of little ways to make it all work. When my son was small and I had to take him to daycare and later to summer camp before starting work downtown each day (since there was no else to do it), and in order to get to work on time and be back in time to pick him up before the expensive overage charges kicked in after 6.00 pm, I had to use my car, as trying to do the commute by public transport was simply undoable. For a couple of summers, I commuted via Cité du Havre, and Île Notre Dame to take him to summer roller-blading camp on the Gilles Villeneuve race-track. It was the only tiny bit of fresher air and alternative scenery I got all summer.

Ditto for when he was attending the McGill Summer Sports camp on the east side of Mount Royal, and so as to give myself a little bit of pleasure in nature, I took a few extra minutes to commute across the mountain, so I could have my daily "natural beauty and sanity saving boost" on "my mountain" before dropping him off at camp and heading to downtown to work. Yes, these were tiny pleasures and the only ones I could allow myself, in the course of a lengthy day as a full-time worker and parent and when there was precious few minutes in the day that permitted any sort of commune with nature. But you, Madame Plante, and your colleagues, seemingly appear to begrudge some of your citizens that tiny amount of pleasure, grabbed enroute to and from work. Those few minutes crossing to the islands in the river, or driving over the mountain road made my daily commute and my overloaded, stressful and busy day bearable. Why deny your citizens that, especially when there is more and more scientific evidence available saying urban dwellers need daily access to greenery for the maintenance of their mental health, in particular?

2) Those who believe Mount Royal should primarily be for cyclists becoming "a unique training and fitness site": What has become clear in the media coverage when speaking with Projet Montréal both prior to, and at the two information sessions in May, is that somehow cyclists appear to be very much the favoured group in this discussion of "who should now benefit the most from access to Mount Royal", and it appears motorists, especially transiting ones, as well as people with disabilities, the old, the infirm and the cemetery visitors have been relegated to the bottom of the heap of Mont-Royal park users, especially as regards usage of the road across the mountain.

Montréal, physiquement active - An unattainable goal for some:

"For many years, we have emphasized to the City of Montréal that the *Camillien-Houde Highway* no longer serves its purpose and that the mountain is a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels - a magnificent illustration of *Montréal, physiquement active!* In this regard, a few years ago, we proposed the idea of Cyclovia on the mountain to successive members of the Executive Committee. Today, we are asking the Montréal administration, as soon as the election is over, to eliminate transit traffic on Camillien-Houde and modernize public transit access to Mount Royal, so that in the spring of 2018, we can revive the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted. The tranquility of the mountain and the safety of its users must become a priority." Suzanne Lareau, President and CEO, Vélo Québec, November 2017

Valérie Plante, Luc Ferrandez, the Projet Montréal team and the City of Montréal bureaucrats all seem to want the cyclists, in all his or her or their forms, to reign supreme. Vélo-Québec has done a superb lobbying job over the years that seemingly has paid off "big-time" with the

election of Project Montréal and their over-the-top promotion of "Montréal, physiquement active", which is great if you can manage it and yes, it's a goal we should all try to aspire to it within the limits of our physical abilities. It is, however, somewhat of an impossible dream for a great many of us. Before you start closing off road access, take a look at the island demographics.

Table 2.1 Percentage of population by broad age groups, Montréal, 1996 to 2016

Table Summary

Age groups	Years		Population (percentage)							
0 to 14 years:	1996	18.8	2001	18.1	2006	17.1	2011	16.5	2016	15.6
15 to 64 years:	1996	69.1	2001	69.0	2006	69.3	2011	68.8	2016	67.5
65+:	1996	12.0	2001	12.9	2006	13.6	2011	14.6	2016	16.9

Source: Statscan, 2017

Cyclists are already ubiquitous on Mount Royal: Problem is, for the most part cyclists already "own" the mountain and the cemeteries. Take a look at this map on Montreal's [BikeAbout](http://www.bikabout.com/best-city-bike-routes/montreals-mount-royal) website (Insert link to: <http://www.bikabout.com/best-city-bike-routes/montreals-mount-royal>) where you can also download a pdf of the map with a description of what you are passing by, or through. It shows a 7-mile ride through and around Mont Royal cemetery and through the park itself. Note: Interestingly enough, it doesn't show cyclists going either up or down Camilien Houde, as that's a ride predominantly for the elite road racing cyclists only. It has them riding on Olmstead Road - the primary traffic-free route that most recreational cyclists and pedestrians use for getting up or down the mountain. However, the cyclists "do have to share" it with hikers, walkers, runners, motorized wheelchairs and families with toddlers and older children, as well as people pushing strollers, so it is "suggested" the ride is best accomplished on weekdays, as weekends can be quite crowded. However, from experience, the cemetery paths are in use 7 days a week and many a cemetery visitor has had reason to step aside for a bunch of cyclists racing through.

" "There has been mountain biking on Mount Royal for as long as the sport's been in Quebec," explained Francis Tétrault, Vélo Québec's mountain biking project manager. "Montreal has a lot of bikers who want a place to ride, and it's the only real, feasible option in the city." " Montreal Gazette

Now, seemingly, the bike lobby, and primarily the elite sport cyclists, even more than the mountain bikers (who prefer unpaved sloped terrain, dirt berms and jumps, and so operate for the most part "under the radar" and "in the shadows" in woodland areas) want to add unfettered access to Camilien Houde to their repertoire of best cycling spots in Montreal and they seem to feel the number of cars traversing the mountain is impeding their "glorious descent down it". It has an 8% average grade, which means climbing up is only for the very strongest and fittest, however, going back down is extremely fast - 70-120+ km fast. Therefore, most visitors to the mountain still won't be walking or biking up and down Camilien Houde any time soon. It's far too steep. So the City has decided to see if it can "attract" more pedestrian traffic (good luck with that) by creating additional destination "spots" on Camilien Houde. See a trend here?

3) Or perhaps it's more the Special Event organizer lobby? Why, suddenly, all this great emphasis on adding belvederes and "improvements" such as a "hanging café-terrace" to an existing belvedere? What isn't the City administration telling us, or being honest about? Logically, it's a bit 'over the top' to fork out large sums to build new infrastructure for a temporary 5-month pilot project, unless you have already made up your mind it's going to be permanent.

Plus there's all those "new" special events that are going to be happening during the 5-month pilot project. The "car-free" Sundays, the themed picnics, concerts, the mountain closed to all motorized traffic 6+ times for the "Cyclovias", etc. Announced with great fanfare but with precious little detail as to what it entails, except for one "pro-cyclist lobbyist" - Cyclovia organizer, Marc-Antoine Desjardins - at the May 15 information session in Côte-des-Neiges, who waxed eloquently about how "amazing it was going to be" and tried to let us all know what a "fantastic idea" this was to close the park to motorized traffic because of all the special events that are going to be held for cyclists. "Oh yes, and it includes families too" he hastened to add, as though he suddenly remembered he had strayed from his brief.

Or is it that the special event organizers got spoiled last year with Mayor Denis Coderre's 375th extravagant spending on special events and they want to continue to step up to the municipal trough each year? And perhaps Projet Montréal sees it as a way to buy votes? Just as Denis Coderre thought he did.

The revised usage of the Remembrance Road-Camilien Houde Way that was unveiled by Madame Plante at her press conference on April 17, 2018, and by city planners at the two public information sessions in May, includes the closure of a 550 m stretch of Remembrance Road to access by private motorized vehicles (however, buses - public transport, school and tour - as well as service, police and emergency vehicles and hearses will still be allowed to pass) for five months; along with the complete closure of Mount Royal to traffic six times on Sundays mornings during the project duration period for activities that are seemingly focussed, in particular, on showcasing the joys of biking on Camilien Houde without motorized traffic i.e. [Cyclovia](http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/cyclists-enjoy-car-free-mount-royal) (insert link to: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/cyclists-enjoy-car-free-mount-royal>)

The first of this year's Cyclovia's (yes, they were held last year too, except this year Projet Montreal "doubled" the budget for them - how much went into the pocket of promotor/organiser Marc-Antoine Desjardins?) held on the May 20th long weekend, attracted an estimated 250 (whose math skills did they employ?) mostly elite sport cyclists, with a few hikers and a couple of runners (yeah, mostly young and the only ones fit enough to venture up and down Camilien Houde. Interestingly enough, the area for use of the "pedestrians-runners-hikers" was sectioned off using orange cones - for security reasons - as apparently even road racing cyclists can't be trusted not to run down those not on bikes). The promotional material and the politicians tout the event as: "so cyclists and families (they hasten to add) can experience the mountain road without cars". The truth is, most families and most cyclists aren't able to walk, or bike, or push strollers up Camilien Houde. So do you sense an ongoing theme here? These road closures are in addition to the regular closures for the elite biking races such as [Le Grande Prix Cycliste de Montreal](#) (Insert link to: [Le Grande Prix Cycliste de Montreal](#))

http://cyclingmagazine.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/GPC_MTL_PARCOURS_EN_2017-1500x1297.jpg) that happens in early September and other races at intermittent times of the year.

Insert photo: Caption: Le Grande Prix Cycliste de Montreal on Mount Royal Source: GPCQM.ca

(see photo choice on: <https://gpcqm.ca/en/media/>. To use you will need to contact media person to request the photo you choose. Personally, I like the one of two cyclists on Camilien Houde in blue and black wearing Quick Step along the side of their shorts with spectators alongside the road). Contact: Veronique Lavoie, Director Media: vlavoie@cpcqmq.ca Tel: 514-554-2161

Of course, add to that the 10+ closures of Dr Penfield and Pine and University for the Alouette football games, which are....oh yes, some of the roads the motorists are now supposed to use since they are blocked from transiting Mount Royal!

Once again I say: What about the disabled, the infirm, the elderly, the physically challenged, the parents, caregivers and grandparents, who need to pick up their children, charges and/or grandkids from the other side, and those who need to check on older friends and parents, and oh yes, all the people who want to access and visit the gravesites in the cemeteries in a timely and convenient manner?

4) The Montreal City Hall spinmasters deflecting attention away from the fact most Montrealers lack access to adequate neighbourhood green space: "But Parc Mont Royal is a park for all Montreal Islanders to use" they protest while simultaneously blocking access to motorists. What City Hall is choosing to ignore is that although Mount Royal was a park bought, designed and designated for all Montrealers, a significant number of them don't live close enough to visit that often, and the ones that do live closer, and who like to transit over it, to enjoy it for a short while, even if they are on their way to somewhere else, are being denied. Thus, seemingly the City feels they have to spend money on special events to help draw people there (unnecessary as it already gets a large number of visitors annually and Les Amies de la montagne express concerns the paths are getting "overused"). In part because the City traditionally uses the size of this mountain park - 200 or 280 hectares (494 or 692 acres) - both figures are out there but no one seem to be able to explain when exactly it grew - touting it as the central city "pearl" and "green lung", whose size they use to shore up their overall green space tally, since the bare truth is the city is woefully short of adequate green space for its citizens.

Montreal's miserly green space allocation per resident

The recommended average amount of green space in urban environments is four hectares (10 acres) per 1,000 residents. Unfortunately, most of the City of Montreal per se falls a good **50% below that recommendation** since the average in Montreal is only two hectares per 1,000 residents, and much of that is not evenly distributed. With the forced amalgamations of the Montreal island cities on January 1, 2002, Mont-Royal became a park for all Montreal Islanders

(not that it didn't already play that role for many of us). Nevertheless, even if some of the previously merged cities chose to demerge in 2006, we now all still help pay for its upkeep and its use as a park through the over-large share of our taxes (60+%) that are funnelled off to the central city for "services".

Part of the puzzle perhaps?

Maybe this is part of the puzzle. Spend all this money on bonifying a central park that has no trouble at all attracting visitors (apparently over 5 million + per year), in order to avoid the issue that they need to create more parks and green spaces that some neighbourhoods on the island of Montreal desperately require, but that the City cheerfully hands over to developers (e.g. former Montreal Children's Hospital and Franciscan priory sites in the inappropriately and/or ironically named "Quartier des Grands Jardins" of Ville Marie. Which "large" gardens you might question? Whoops, there aren't any, although there were plenty in the 19th and early 20th centuries!).

Is it perhaps because property and business tax dollars rank as income and parkland is on the debit side of the ledger i.e. it costs something to maintain? The City of Montreal already uses the size of Mount Royal park as a PR tool to tout its extensive 'green space' for the use of all Montrealers and to draw attention away from the fact it consistently short-changes a great many of its citizens in terms of providing them with adequate and easily accessible neighbourhood green space and parklands, especially when compared to most other cities of comparable size.



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061 trees cut down in Parc Jean-Drapeau in 2017

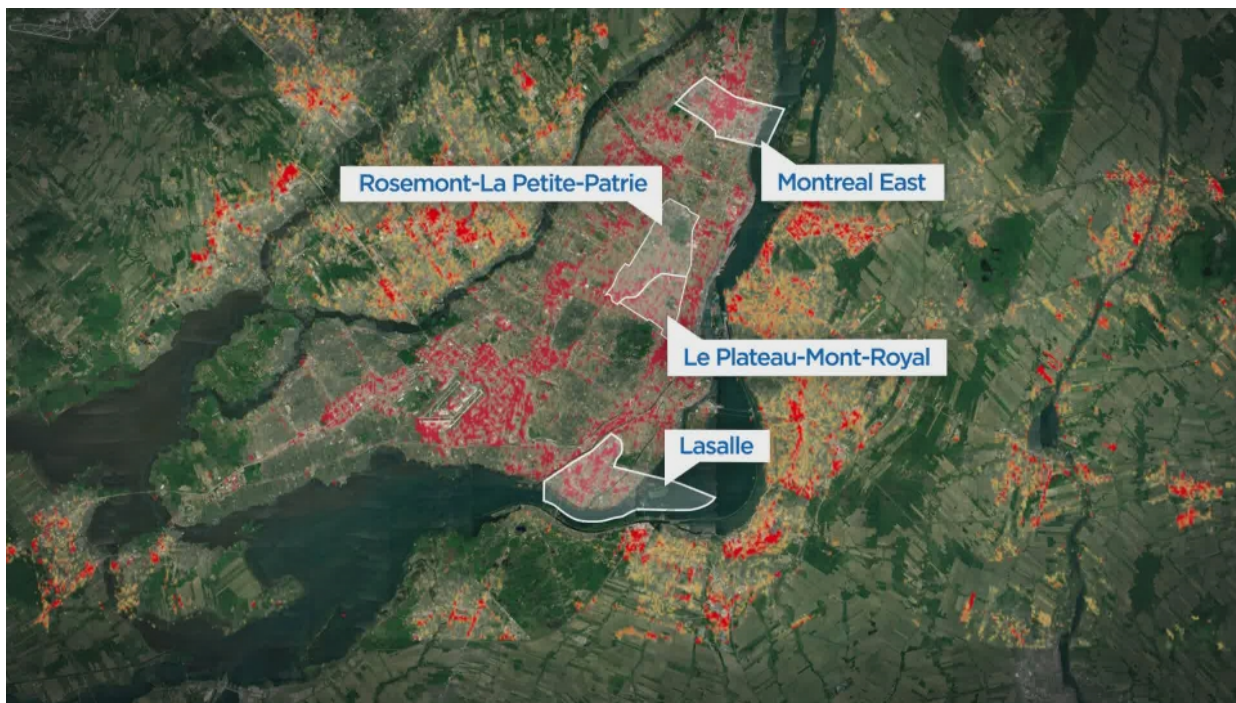
Source: CBC

Mayor Plante, Luc Ferrandez and the central city should be ashamed of its collective self; however, by centering people's attention on existing parks, such as Mount Royal, with its now extensive summer animation projects. Along with Île Ste-Hélène and Île Notre Dame and the wholesale ecological damage inflicted there by former Mayor Denis Coderre last year with his massacre of over 1000+ mature and CO2 storing trees. Simply, in that instance, to benefit the privately owned, special event promotor Evenko and assorted concert goers, and impede some Montreal, St Lambert and Brossard residents from enjoying their summers due to the noise levels; along with blocking access to a variety of beloved summer recreation activities, such as the Montreal aquatic centre pools, Gilles Villeneuve racetrack and Jean-Doré beach,

the rowing basin, and other areas of the park in the process. Just what is it about Montreal mayors and their scorched earth policy and love of destroying trees with their oxygen emitting and carbon dioxide absorbing abilities, in favour of spending tax dollars to install a variety of large and smaller ugly concrete structures? Wouldn't it be preferable to provide additional and much needed green space their citizens desperately need and ask for? Talk about a skewed vision of reality existing among those who run the city.

Here's a novel idea: How about spending all that money you're lavishing on Mount Royal and the Expo islands and that you're paying for the public consultation machine, in order to deny some segments of your population access to existing green spaces and to inordinately benefit a few others, and use it instead to purchase some of the fast disappearing, existing (but not designated parkland) green space that many Montreal islanders have been desperately asking the city to save from developers? Green spaces such as the Falaise St Jacques, Meadowbrook Golf course in the West End, Cap Nature in Pierrefonds in the West Island and [Anjou Golf Course](http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/turn-anjou-golf-course-into-real-park-not-business-park-activists) (insert link to: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/turn-anjou-golf-course-into-real-park-not-business-park-activists>) in the East End of the island.

As a whole, Montreal is woefully short of green space (only half the recommended amount for cities of comparable size i.e. only five acres per 1000 residents instead of ten) but did you also know scientists have calculated that a mere 185 hectares (457 acres) of green space actually captures 925 tonnes of CO2 per year?



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Source: Global News.ca

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Montreal has a mere 3.3% protected green space - the norm is 8%

Westmount is the most densely populated city on the island with 20,000 persons living in a landmass of only 4 square kilometers, yet over 10% of its territory is composed of protected green space and this is "real" green space not the heat emitting, recycled rubber-synthetic-turf playing field variety that Montreal is wholeheartedly converting many of its natural grass playing surfaces to i.e. Jeanne-Mance park and others. Compare this to Montreal, where just 3.3% of its territory is protected green space compared to the International and Quebec norm of 8%. No wonder the East End of Montreal is suffering from a growing proliferation of "heat islands" that contribute to higher levels of CO₂, triggering thermal stress and respiratory problems, such as asthma. It, in particular, is especially in need of more green spaces.

"Montreal's east end is also combating "heat islands," which are significantly warmer urban areas caused by a lack of green space. The hotter it gets, the worse the effects of air pollution...Even psychologically, people feel better in natural areas." Gareth Richardson, Green Coalition President, [Hit Below the Green Belt](https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/hit-below-the-greenbelt) (insert link to: <https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/hit-below-the-greenbelt>), The Link newspaper

Thus, Mount Royal Park this summer didn't need any all those special events, Île Ste-Hélène and Île Notre Dame didn't need more concrete and less trees, and more concert goers, but Montrealers all over the island certainly need more green space closer to their homes than Mount Royal and the Expo islands are. Montreal's extensive use of "green alleys" and tiny concretized "pocket" parks in park-poor neighbourhoods is a joke, and which they use to boost their tally of "green space". What green space? A few plants in a concrete planter and a bench doesn't constitute green space. A very bad joke indeed. Luc Ferrandez, as master of Montreal parks and 'grand projets', you should have saved all our tax money that you are spending this summer on Mount Royal and used it, ecologically-speaking, to build up a "greenspace fund" to purchase more parkland on the island. Wouldn't that have been a far better use of our tax dollars?

4) Just who are those who are placing all this emphasis on the "dangerous" roads across Mount Royal? What dangerous roads? At peak hours when the road sees its highest number of transiting cars, the motorized traffic certainly isn't travelling fast, although the cyclists quite happily weave in and out. Frankly, for cars during "les heures de pointe" it's more like a slow crawl, or even more 'stop and go', since all the existing multiple stop signs all along Remembrance Road see to that, which means the "commute" isn't fast at all. Maybe, Mayor Plante, people are travelling on their "parkway" for different reasons than speed of crossing? Sorry to upset your narrative but Montreal islanders have many reasons for driving across Mont-Royal and speed is the least of it.

Quite possibly, later in the evening, and at night when the mountain road is deserted, cars may, or may not, speed up, but Mount Royal has its own cosy cop station to catch those somewhat fictitious road racers, and now there are also illuminated speed signs to let motorists know how fast they are travelling and the City reduced the speed limit from 50km to 40km, so that's not too much of hardship either. In fact, most times it might be nice to travel at that speed, but mostly the motorist doesn't ever reach it, although the road racer cyclist does -

and even exceeds it on the descent of Camilien Houde that is. Besides it's far more enjoyable to drive slower to enjoy wind, the mist, the rock wall, or the night sky and/or the view, or it used to be. Westmount has had 30 km an hour speed limit on most of its roads for years, due in part to the presence of so many pedestrians, schools, churches and parkland on its terrain and transiting commuters still get to work, mostly cursing the non-synchronized traffic lights rather than the speed limit.

As for the cyclists...well, there are those that obey the rules of the road and the speed limits, and those that don't. But since cyclists can't be ticketed for speeding anywhere in the province, and seemingly with the "new" rules of the road that have just come into effect across Quebec, they can also go through red lights (and stop signs) without stopping, even when the pedestrian "walk" light is on. Like that's safe for pedestrians or cyclists. In addition, motorists are now also supposed to keep a distance of 1.5 metres from a cyclist. How is that going to work? Who judges what was and wasn't 1.5 metres? Sounds like a recipe for more accidents and more discord between cyclists and motorists, not less.

"Others worried that the move could fray the already tenuous relationship between Montreal's motorists and cyclists even further. "As a cyclist, of course I'm in favour, I just don't think it's going to be so welcome," said Kianoush Missathi. "It may just accelerate the tension that's already between cyclists and car users." CTV Montreal, June 1, 2018

As for the dead...to Projet Montréal, the number of naysayers to their plan...both alive and dead don't appear to count

The four cemeteries adjoining Parc Mont-Royal, with their 1.5 million interments and located between "le sommet de la croix" and Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne are not 'officially' part of the Mount Royal park, being privately owned and administered, yet the City of Montréal seems to be acting as though they are, since they keep claiming the road passes "through the park" when, in fact, it mostly skirts the edge of the park i.e. between the park and the cemeteries. The entrance gates of the two largest (Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and Mount Royal Cemetery) also open, or exit, directly onto Chemin Remembrance Road...or at least they "used to".

For one of them - Mount Royal Cemetery - the entrance is the principal entryway that most people coming from the west use (or used to use) to come to bury, visit or mourn their dead family and friends. Or to quietly walk to perhaps reflect on their own mortality, while arranging for their own, or their loved ones funeral requirements and/or other services. For those coming from the east over the mountain to access the vehicular entry for Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-neiges, just past the juncture of Remembrance Road and Côte-des-Neiges, they're out of luck too. Thus, many Montreal Islanders from both the east and the west will be highly inconvenienced by being blocked entry to one or other of their principal burial grounds from the mountain road, as they will now have to go around the mountain to gain entry to them. Not so the cyclists though, they have the right of way, right the way through, in every direction, cemeteries included.

Under the new pilot project plan, those from the west are no longer being permitted vehicular access in taxis (traditional, Uber or otherwise), hired car, with or without a private Tourism Montréal guide, or in private vehicles to Mount Royal Cemetery via Remembrance Road, unless it is in a funeral cortege (although there are rumours of some sort of compromise in the works such as those from the the west can enter but still only exit east on Camilien Houde - meaning they still have to drive round

the mountain to get back home) you can go in but can't exit except by driving back around the mountain on the now traffic clogged streets. Though wow betide you if you get there too late a few minutes after the main procession has passed, as sometimes does happen with traffic lights, especially if it's a long cortege. You'll be out of luck and will have to turn around and drive back down Remembrance Road and around the mountain via the streets of Côte-des-Neiges and Outremont to enter the cemetery from its more awkwardly positioned Outremont entrance on Chemin de la Forêt at the end of another cul de sac. I'm sure the residents of Côte-Ste-Catherine, Edouard-Monpetit, Vincent d'Indy, and the relatively quieter residential roads like Pinouel Avenue and the neighbouring portion of Mont-Royal Blvd are just going to be delighted with all the increased traffic along their residential roads. And if you get stuck in the neighbourhood traffic, highly likely especially at peak hours on those roads (think the insection of hospitals, churches, schools, university campus buildings, etc), you'll probably miss the actual burial. Tough luck for you if that happens. And Project Montréal doesn't care. Not their problem. "We'll only concern ourselves with what's happening on Parc Mont-Royal during this pilot project" stated the unfazed trio of bureaucrats from City Hall at the public info sessions in May.

"Liberty, equality, fraternity, or death; — the last, much the easiest to bestow," A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

Nevertheless, for public transport riders and pedestrians (and some cyclists perhaps) it's a bit tough to carry bags of earth, pots of flowers or bouquets, and gardening utensils on your bike, on your back, or in a pushcart, if you are walking from the bus stops or the parking lots of Beaver Lake, and especially if you are elderly and incapacitated in any way. I know, as I walk with difficulty using a cane and carrying heavy items is near to impossible. When this point was brought up at the May 15 public information meeting, the trio of City Hall representatives, merely looked blank and had no words at all that demonstrated this was something they had thought about, or even cared to address. "Tough luck" was all their attitude seemed to convey to the lady posing the question.

Justice is blind...ultimate power corrupts

But as of June 2, 2018, Mayor Plante has decided, without prior public consultation, (except for two very last minute, hastily convened and relatively unpublicized public meetings on May 10 and 15) to thumb her nose at all those asking for a "delay" and more public consultation and without paying heed to the thousands (currently 37, 900+ and counting vs +/- 8,300 against) who have signed a petition asking them to reconsider, without concern for a second mandate, or without truly explaining why they, "the all-powerful", think this is such a spectacularly good idea. What universe are they living in?

Basically, they have blocked our freedom of choice of access to, and over, our mountain; only, and unless, we want to do it in the ways they have decreed we can viz. (videlicet = namely) by public transport, in a sanctioned "tour" bus (oh yes, the tourists get priority in terms of through transit over those who live here and pay taxes), in a school bus (but for that we have to be under 18 and in school or day camp), in a hearse, or as part of an official funeral cortege on the actual burial day, or by ambulance if we haven't yet died, in a police car or fire truck, or on a bicycle, or by shanks pony or mare (for those not familiar with that last expression, it means "by foot"). What about the extremely physically challenged and those who can't easily walk the distances required?

Unfortunately for us though, not all of us are able to avail ourselves of Projet Montréal's favoured means of perambulation, except on very special occasions. We, who can't, are the very young, the

elderly, the physically and mentally challenged, the obese, the fragile, the ill, the grieving, the time-constrained, the commuter, the lover of the sky at night, or of the sunset over the Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne (formerly the Outremont) summit, and of the rock wall canyon encased in ice in winter, and all of whom are residents of and/or visitors to the island of Montréal; especially, when most of the places we actually want to go are barred from us, especially to those entering from the west, who want to travel east and back again over, and not around, Mount Royal.

East Montreal vs West Montreal Islanders

What's noteworthy in the newly presented "plans" unveiled on May 10 and 15 by Projet Montréal is that the "new" attractions on Camilien Houde are most easily available to those who live on the Plateau and/or who approach the mountain from the east side. Thus, M. Luc Ferrandez and Madame Valérie Plante have made sure their, and their constituents' access to mountain is the most secure and the most bonified. Somehow City Hall has ignored the fact that the city coffers from which monies to administer and maintain the roads and parks, including Mount Royal park, are being contributed to by 'all' Montreal Islanders.

Mayor Valérie Plante and her Projet Montréal political party seem to be oblivious to, or simply choose to ignore the needs of their citizens from the western half of the island. Blinkered, self-interested vision at its best! Indeed they also seem to have forgotten the island domain over which they rule stretches from end of the island to the other. Sure, there are some independent municipalities scattered around (mostly in the west who pay an average of 60+% of their municipal tax revenues to the the central city) but everyone, no matter who, probably tries to take their visitors at one time or another to Mont Royal...but will they in the future? Only the ones with younger more sprightly members, I surmise, and only those willing to experience the traffic chaos this regime has inflicted on their citizenry by messing up a hereto simple traffic option of transiting using our mountain parkway. But maybe that's what this is all about? Less people on Mount Royal so les Amies concerns about the mountain being "over-used" are dampened? Problem is...instead of a park for all Montrealers, they're turning it into a park for the use of only "some" Montrealers and whole busloads of tourists.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 5

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

THE NEW WORLD ORDER...

"All through the cold and restless interval, until, dawn, they once more whispered in the ears of Mr. Jarvis Lorry — sitting opposite the buried man who had been dug out, and wondering what subtle powers were forever lost to him, and what were capable of restoration — the old inquiry: 'I hope you care to be recalled to life?' And the old answer: 'I can't say.' " *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

A divided city - is a ghettoized city

In Projet Montreal's current "vision" for Mount Royal, we, their western citizens, it has been determined, no longer have the right to drive over the mountain and/or to stop when and how we wish in the allocated stopping places. And those from the east no longer have the right to travel west over the mountain. The powers that be in Montreal City Hall have mandated that we and/or our caregivers, and our taxi-drivers can only drive "around" the mountain and not "over" it in order to go to and from work, take our children to school and/or day camp, visit our friends, our family, our dead. Or to get from the west to east or vice versa, and to sit, to play, to walk, to dream and/or be entertained when and where we wish.

"Montreal is once again divided along into yes and no camps - but this time on the issue of closing Camillien Houde to through traffic. That's fine; this city loves debates" Ferrandez wrote (on a Facebook post)." James Foster, CJAD News, March 2, 2018

And if we do have the temerity to go up the mountain to visit our mountain, we can only stop and park in one of the two parking areas that are not connected to one another, and if we want to visit the other side, we have to retrace our steps and drive around the mountain in order to drive up again from the other side. What a waste of time, effort, gasoline, patience and increased CO2 emissions. What ever happened to common sense?

"The powers that be...have mandated... What happened to common sense?"

Note the use of the word 'mandated'. The big issue here is, City Hall **doesn't have** the mandate from us, the people, to do this. They didn't campaign on it, although they now "loudly" claim they did, and blithely tell us most of us who voted for them that we just didn't realise it. Ah yes, the art of fact fudging in this era of fake news. By seizing on the extremely sad, unfortunate, politically-charged and highly emotional event of the accidental death of a young cyclist, in the closing weeks of the municipal campaign, they have chosen to opportunistically orchestrate the narrative to play on citizens' sensibilities by claiming that cyclist Clément Ouimet's death by illegal U-turn by an American tourist from California gives them an ethical, and necessary, and urgent 'reason' to do it now.

Consequently, they proclaim, vociferously and self-righteously that it is for "safety" reasons they need to close the road to through traffic and bar most Montreal Islanders and visitors from driving over their mountain. Well, at least the politicians, along with the proficient lobbyists from Vélo-

Québec, are claiming that. What was interesting is, at the May 15 information meeting in Côte-des-Neiges, the city urban planners who were present, made an evident attempt to downplay that line of reasoning. At least they seemed to understand it was and still is a crass, opportunistic argument at best. Begging the specific question as to why does one death of a young cyclist that even his grieving mother admitted "liked to go too fast" down Camilien Houde, warrants road closure to through traffic?

"A lot of people on both sides are very, very unhappy with this because we like to use the road. It's a nice roadway. You can drive very gently over the road. Nobody's going 70 kilometers an hour - except for the cyclists" Jennifer Crane, Montrealer

The City isn't closing roads in other parts of the city where cyclists have been killed or injured. Plus, two persons in the last year have fallen off a pedestrian-only pathway in that area and yet there hasn't been an outcry by the politicians and the mountain hasn't been closed to pedestrian traffic. In fact, Projet Montréal are conversely attempting to up the number of pedestrians using that area of the mountain and enticing them with alcoholic beverages to boot.

When asked, at the May 15 information meeting in Côte-des-Neiges, the City couldn't come up with any statistics as to the number of actual "accidents" on the mountain and of the actual number of collisions between pedestrians, cyclists and motorized vehicles. When pressed during Question Period that 'if' there happened to be a collision between a public transit vehicle i.e. a bus and a cyclist or pedestrian during the pilot project would the City close down the road to public transport and the gist of the response was: "Don't be absurd, of course, not!"

"This is about protecting our mountain. It is about protecting lives. It is about making sure that cyclists and pedestrians can use that road without being scared of being hit." Valérie Plante, Montreal Gazette, February 7, 2018

"We want to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists" the politicians proclaim but the fact is not that many Montreal cyclists and pedestrians are truly fit enough to climb the steep incline of Camilien Houde Way.

For the most part, only the elite sport cyclists do that and even for them it doesn't look easy as they labour up the heart-pounding, leg burning 8% incline/gradient of Camilien Houde. Except on the way down, of course. I'm travelling in my car at the (formerly) posted 50 kph but the elite sport cyclists frequently zoom past me at high speed. How come speed limits apply to cars but not to cyclists? No wonder it's hard for them to stop should someone change traffic lanes, make an illegal U-turn, or step out on the roadway (in the case of those oft cited but extremely scarce pedestrians on the route).

As for pedestrians, I've never actually seen too many on my way up or down Camilien Houde. I'm not saying there aren't some at certain times of the day or night but pedestrians do have other, **more viable options** (Insert link to: <https://www.tripsavvy.com/mount-royal-park-guide-1481910>) to climb Mount Royal as do cyclists i.e. the aforementioned Olmstead Road, plus all the multitude of other assorted stairways and walking/cycling trails offering both access and egress to Mount Royal. All this emphasis on Camilien Houde as a pedestrian access road makes it sound as though this is a principal entry way, when it certainly isn't. Cyclists, pedestrians, runners, hikers, all have a myriad of ways to climb over and around Mount Royal, motorists have only one.

Can't ticket cyclists for speeding

The only reason the elite cyclists want freer rein on Camilien Houde is to travel as fast as they can on the way down, secure in the knowledge they'll never be ticketed for exceeding the speed limit. Since, we just found out that "provincial law doesn't allow police to ticket cyclists for speed infractions" as one of Montreal's finest (the SPVM officer in attendance) informed us at the May 15 information meeting in Côte-des-Neiges.

Plus, if you listen to the soundbites of Luc Ferrandez and Valérie Plante of Projet Montréal along with the pro-cyclists lobby, they make it sound as if there are literally hundreds of people choosing to cycle and walk up and down Camilien Houde on a daily basis, whose safety and security is in such danger from all those transiting vehicles, a situation which is so far from the truth it would be laughable, if it wasn't so appallingly frustrating and sad for the over 37,900+ people, who signed the petition requesting the road be kept open all the way over the mountain in both directions.

Can't prevent U-turns, can't verify the numbers

Where there are perhaps potential safety issues is at the entrance and egress of the existing easternmost beveledere on Camilien Houde and also further down Camilien Houde where cars do attempt illegal U-turns. But securing these areas doesn't seem to be in the cards as yet? Why ever not? Plus with the addition of the new hanging café-terrace the situation will surely be exacerbated, not improved.

"Keep where you are because, if I should make a mistake, it could never be set right in your lifetime." A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

Projet Montréal claims the mountain is too "heavily" used with 10,000-12,000 commuter trips per day in privately owned vehicles. While others also claim it's only 1,000-2,000 per weekday, with greater numbers on weekends. How are those widely differing traffic estimates arrived at? Or are they simply an instance of poor math skills? It would be nice to know why Projet Montréal has that large number registered so exactly for cars (especially the oft repeated higher figures) when it seems impossible to get the any kind of a definitive figure from them on the number of pedestrians and cyclists who use Camilien Houde Way on a regular basis? (No one at the info meeting could answer that). At best it seems an extremely high guesstimate, but without access to the data, supposedly collected and hopefully verified, how can we truly trust the figures that are being bandied around? Even Luc Ferrandez had to admit when pressured he wasn't exactly sure how the number they're using was arrived at. That's because the figures are a result of extremely rudimentary math skills, or quite possibly "faked" to add weight to a spurious argument. And the media chooses to repeat them ad infinitum.

Plus, it's a road, not an autoroute

However, it's great fodder for the City spinmasters and, of course, for the equally adept Vélo-Québec lobbyists and their supporters, who insist on referring to the mountain roadway as an "autoroute" or "highway". Perhaps they should check the definition of those words? They are playing fast and loose with them as "autoroute" is not simply a "road for cars". It's a French (from France) word that is basically equivalent to the British English word "motorway", which is defined as "a major controlled access highway with several lanes in each direction that has been specially built for fast travel over long distances with no stop signs or traffic lights...and special places where traffic gets on and leaves. Entrances and exits to the highway are provided...by slip roads (ramps), which allow for speed changes between the highway and arterial and collector roads." Québec and Canada has adopted usage of the word "autoroute" in both French and English but to mean the equivalent of similar North

Americans words such as highway, freeway and expressway. The Remembrance Road-Camilien Houde Way axis is as far from an autoroute/motorway/freeway as it can possibly be i.e. only two lanes wide and only 7.2 km long and definitely not multi-laned with access ramps. It has only one lane, in either direction up and over the mountain, from east to west or vice versa with plenty of stop signs. It's simply a mountain road. Definitely **not** an autoroute or a highway, and those who insist on claiming otherwise are merely engaging in the politics of deception, or espousing the practise of disseminating "fake facts".

What about the safety of those living around Mount Royal?

Also has anyone counted how many cars go "around" the mountain in each direction each way passing through school, hospital, university and residential zones? Isn't the health and safety of all those residents, pedestrians and cyclists an issue too? Won't it all get a lot worse if those "estimated 5-10,000" cars are added to those roads? You can't have it both ways Mayor Plante.

Epecially, since in the days after the June 2, 2018 road closure to through traffic, Projet Montréal spokespersons crowed there was little or no effect at all on the surrounding roads, thus, giving lie to their upper estimate traffic figures (up to 400 cars per hour and 10-12,000 trips per day) that they had been using to explain why they were doing this for our own good, as the mountain road route was being **too heavily used!** Of course, they didn't discuss that claim, or their seemingly over-inflated traffic estimate figures (i.e. $400 \times 24 = 9,600$ and truthfully there aren't 400 cars an hour for most of the 24 hours in a day in the life of the road over Mount Royal). Although they did suggest the lack of traffic could also, maybe, be explained on the fact it is summer time, people are away and students (university) are out of school, but on June 4 primary and secondary students certainly weren't "out of school", and people were still going to and coming from work, and doctors' appointments, etc, so maybe their guess-timates of up to 400 cars an hour were more than a little over-generous and, in all reality, simply highly inflated?

Cyclists and pedestians have several other routes to use

No one from Projet Montréal, in their zeal to tell us our mountain road is so very dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians, bothers to ever mention that younger and fitter pedestrians and hikers also have several "safer" completely traffic-free routes onto Mount Royal. Steps and paths climb their way up several sides of the mountain. The aforementioned "snake" or "serpentine" from Peel and Pine and the steps alongside the McGill campus and from Trafalgar off Côte-des-Neiges, or Pine, or the newly created entrance on Cedar-Côte-des-Neiges, or the new beltway route encircling the mountain, or especially the wide and winding Olmstead Road path at Duluth that links up with the bike path on Rachel.

For vehicular traffic, such as buses, cars, taxis, hearses, emergency and service vehicles, there is only one road with two (or more) names. For instance, the original and oldest west side "road" entry to Mount Royal Park, which used to be known as "Shakespeare Road" (not Remembrance Road) until the city decided to rename it that is.

Montreal City Hall over the years just seems to delight in changing names of Montreal streets for political and other reasons, creating confusion as one tries to explain what used to be where. Was Shakespeare considered too English sounding perhaps? Or was it called Remembrance Road in honour of the two entrances to the cemeteries? Maybe it needs to be renamed again, now that you can't enter either of the two cemeteries from there by car, especially if you're approaching from the

west up Remembrance Road itself as you have to detour from it onto some weird parallel parking lot road.

Even the funeral corteges approaching from the west can no longer drive the length of Remembrance Road, which also gives lie to its name, as at the Beaver Lake parking lot they are being awkwardly detoured (not more orange cones please) off Remembrance onto a newly constructed parallel roadway between Remembrance Road and parts of the parking lots.

Insert photo showing trees growing between parking areas



Caption: Beaver Lake Parking areas are now missing trees - replaced by a new roadway for hearses

Source: Ville de Montreal

How many parking spaces did the construction of that "new roadway" eliminate? And how many trees were cut down to accommodate it? Check out the map above showing trees growing between parking areas. Well, they are no longer there. One more example of Montreal City Hall's scorched earth philosophy at play? i.e. "Let's cut down a few more trees to make a new roadway". Now you really are making a roadway intrude into the park when there's a perfectly good existing one - Remembrance Road.

Just why was that necessary for a 5-month project? And what was the cost of that bit of road construction, Mayor Plante? Bet that won't be included in the pilot project budget will it? And wouldn't that money have been better spent repairing or refurbishing other far more needy road infrastructure in Montreal? Especially since it parallels a perfectly good stretch of road that is now used by predominantly by buses and bikes?

Or maybe it was called Remembrance Road as a "tongue-in-cheek" reference because the road is the dividing line between the cities of the living and the dead and we are to remember not to travel too fast in case we end up on the wrong side of the road? But now, since we can't even drive most of it, or use it to enter the cemeteries, maybe its name will now remind us of a time when we could? Or perhaps it's time to give it another name? Memory Lane?

"The Ghost Bikes organization has installed eight bikes in the past four years, including one for Ouimet." CTV News October 18, 2017

Closing the road access to through traffic doesn't make a lot of sense no matter which way one looks at it. However, when we protest we are called "self-interested", "entitled" and "rich". Those "slurs" work both ways, as the proclamations of the vocal cycle lobby sound pretty "entitled" and "self-interested" too. It's not as easy as saying it's a case of the "rich" against the "poor" as some try to imply. Some of those high-end sport bikes aren't exactly bought with a poor man's purse with their \$3000-7500+ price tags, especially those capable of climbing Camilien Houde. Plus with the money cyclists and others potentially "save" by commuting by bike, or by walking, or taking the bus, possibly means some could conceivably have more disposable income to use to spend on other things. It all comes down to a question of choice as to how we spend out disposable income.

Not everyone 'owns' a car

Besides some of us that choose to travel by car don't actually own a car. We rent them. That explains the popularity of Comunauto and Car2Go with Montrealers, as well as ordinary rental car options should we have a bigger group of family or friends visiting. Personally I do own a car, however, it is my one major expense budget item. To run it, I choose not to do a great many other things. Due to my limited and painful mobility and other medical issues, it provides me with the freedom I prefer to have to travel around Montreal Island, or to quit it to visit family and friends. Journeys that would prove well-nigh impossible for me to do with the available public transport options, and therefore I wouldn't even undertake. Thus, isolating me in my immediate neighbourhood.

Some of those crying for motorists' heads

Luc Ferrandez, you use your two-wheeled vehicle to commute to work, as well as for pleasure, and some vocal cyclists' lobby groups and some Projet Montréal supporters seemingly only want bicycles (and the so called "active transportation options), as well as pedestrians and public transport (along with the school and the tourist buses) to be permitted to use Mount Royal park and to transit the mountain. Why should those groups be entitled to that benefit and the rest of us denied it? We all pay for it. We should all share it and agree to co-habitate more effectively (if that is indeed the problem).

"Death may beget life, but oppression can beget nothing other than itself." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

Plus, in reality cyclists and pedestrians already enjoy the greater share of the roads and paths through the park - approximately 95%. Thus, why it is you seem to think they also need the one roadway that services motorized traffic?

Check out this map (insert link to:

http://montreal2.qc.ca/rep_parcs/media/documents/application/pdf_doc_carte_mont_royal_en_rv_lr_id44.pdf) offered by Les Amies de la montagne. It shows all the various walking and cycling trails

and paths in Mount Royal Park (the legal ones, not the mountain bikers' illegal ones). Not exactly a dearth of them are there? You will also clearly see Remembrance Road and Camilien Houde Way run along the edge of the park, not through it.

Insert (if possible) a screen capture from the pdf found at the above link, or if not possible, due to size, just do a link Source: Les amies de la montagne website

Unfortunately, it's true, in our city, as in many others, cyclist deaths do happen (of which eight or nine in four years have been commemorated by the white bikes installed by the Ghost Bikes organization) but only one of those is in Mount Royal park. In addition, no one seems to have a recent correct tally of the overall accident or death figures, or at least it's not easy to find or not easily accessible, even for the representatives from City Hall as they couldn't produce them at the public meeting. Plus, what's strange is, until now, none of those deaths have resulted in permanent road closures or any sort, or in cyclists being asked to use other less dangerous routes.

When one cyclist died recently on Iberville Street, one of her family members (a lifelong cyclist himself) asked for the road to be banned to cyclists and it was rebuffed as being "out of the question". He was told cyclists have as much "right" to use Montreal's roads as anyone else. However, on Mount Royal, cyclists will now have far more "rights" than motorists. Another dictum also not part of Olmstead's vision of Mount Royal.

No death is ever unimportant but in a clash between steelclad drivers (whether bus, car, truck or semi-trailer) the cyclist and the pedestrian is undoubtedly the most vulnerable to the most damage and likelihood of being killed. However, no one has seriously discussed closing Berri, Iberville, Parc, St Denis, St Urbain or St Zotique to through traffic? They've seen their share of cyclists' untimely deaths and horrible accidents. But no, Project Montréal have merely chosen of their own volition to build themselves into a cul-de-sac, similar to the one they have imposed on us, the citizens living to the east and west of the Mount Royal. And why? Because they can...is their reply.

"To critics who say the city administration is improvising with this pilot project, Ferrandez replied, "Kind of." " Montreal Gazette, March 2, 2018

Now Luc Ferrandez (Plateau Borough Mayor and Projet Montréal Executive Committee member in charge of parks, recreation and Grands projets) has made it clear he jumped on this opportunity of the untimely death of a young cyclist to benefit from the public emotion it generated and to help him "force" vehicular traffic off Mount Royal. Only he didn't. Not quite, as motorized traffic is still allowed "on" parts of the mountain road, for the 5-month pilot project period at least. However, he has just done what Montréal does best...created a traffic jam and a blockage, and built a mountain of trouble out of a molehill of a problem and Mayor Valérie Plante has allowed him to do it.

Tax the rich to placate the poor? Off with their heads!

"To the eye it is fair enough, here; but seen in its integrity, under the sky, and by the daylight, it is a crumbling tower of waste, mismanagement, extortion, debt, mortgage, oppression, ... and suffering". A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

There are several roads around Mount Royal passing through residential areas and through hospital, school, and university zones as well as two roads over the mountain - or in all reality one road with two names, just to confuse our visitors even further (Chemin Remembrance Road and Voie Camillien Houde Way) although they appear to most of us to be one road. **One or two roads that our taxes**

have paid for to build and to maintain. Plus you'll still be able to access parts of Mont Royal Park by car and pay Montreal City Hall for the privilege of doing so, since if you come from the west you'll have to pay to park at Beaver Lake (Lac aux Castors) and walk uphill almost a kilometre to the other side if you want to access the Mount Royal Cemetery and/or the new *Belvédère Soleil* overlooking Mount Royal cemetery to view the 'new' Parc Tiohtià:ke Otsira'kéhne (formerly the Outremont summit). All of which previously you could have done easily, and without charge, by foot, bike, or car.

Or hike even further to reach the "new" Hanging Café at the easternmost Camilien Houde belvedere overlooking the eastern part of the island, part of downtown Montreal and the river. All the while taking care to avoid the 'still permitted' two-way traffic coming up and back down from the eastern side; and who are (for the pilot project anyway) going to be allowed to drive past the newly constructed *Belvédère Soleil*, where they will need to stop at the newly created stop sign but will be blocked from seeing the view by the back of the huge bleacher-belvedere. And all this, in order to get to the Mount Royal Cemetery entrance gates (but not to the Cimetière Notre-Dame-de-Neiges), or to park at the larger of two parking centrals (or cash generating spots) at Smith House. Funny none of those weren't in Olmstead's original vision either. Guess if you're Projet Montréal, or Montréal City Hall or Vélo-Québec you get to choose which of Olmstead's "visions" you promote and which you ignore or trample over.

Cash grab perhaps?

But of course, silly me, the motor car didn't exist as a transportation vehicle in 1874, so how could Olmstead have envisioned the urban world 145 years into the future? However, doing it this way the City of Montréal gets to maintain its parking revenues and potentially increase them. So, perhaps that is really what this is all about. We don't want cars passing through and not stopping because then we don't get any additional revenue flowing to the City. So, you can pay \$9.00 to park your car in one or other (but not both unless you drive around the mountain and pay twice for the privilege), or Option 2, we'll force you onto STM buses at \$3.75 a journey i.e. \$7.50 round trip. Win-win for the ching-ching into city coffers.

Or you can walk and dodge the gungho cyclists speeding downhill without a care in the world. Until they bump into you, your child, or your car, which is when the cycling community bands together to cry foul. I'm all for healthy pursuits but some (no, certainly not all) of the the cycling communities of Montreal are growing a little too greedy, especially in the context of their wholesale appropriation of Mount Royal park - "the mountain is a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels" says Vélo-Québec - along with the adjoining cemeteries, which, by the way, are still active, contemplative burial grounds, and not recreational play, or training grounds, for cyclists, although many seem to think they are.

What happened to the idea of co-habitation?

Some readers will no doubt think by now that I seem to be coming down heavy on the cycling community and I'm not really, as I'm all for sprucing up the rules of the road and for improving co-habitation, and improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians, but there's precious little of that mindset going on here, especially with the pro-bike lobby ensconced at City Hall, who care little for anyone else's needs, except for their short-sighted, blinkered ones.

And yes, of course, our taxes (including those of the motorized vehicle owners) will continue to maintain and pay for that road and its refurbishments, along with all the additional costs that will be added to the construction, maintenance and supervision budgets to ensure Montréal and Mayor Plante are able to deny through access to our road, our dead, and our mountain, as well as our friends, our places of employment, our schools, day cares, shopping places and restaurants, hospitals, doctors and dentists, therapists, sports and entertainment venues and parks on either side of the mountain, in a timely, cost-effective, less stressful, scenic and enjoyable manner.

Where are the cost estimates?

For costly it will be. But no one's talking cost estimates here. Why should they? They are Projet Montréal after all and big city budgeting is new to them.

Cost of Camilien Houde 'improvements': (Un)surprisingly no one at the info meeting had a cost estimate available of what the new "temporary" *Belvédère Soleil* and/or the hanging café-terrace (*Café Suspendu*) was going to cost.

Costs for the 5-months of mountain animation and special events: Likewise, no one could come up with the budget amount for this significant budget item.

Cost of gas: For the motorists (and the STM) gas costs are sky rocketing, oh yes, partly since summer is approaching, which means, so is air conditioning season (but not on most STM city buses), as we choose either to sweat it out while we wait in traffic jams on the already over-burdened roads surrounding the mountain, due in part, to road closures that will be in effect for infrastructure maintenance and refurbishing, and partly because we are being denied the right drive over the mountain with our car windows open to avail ourselves of the fresher air up there (which I do, or should I now say, have previously done, quite frequently over the years I've lived here).

Cost of traffic police and security guards: Along with the spiralling costs (which yes, we have to pay for) of all the off-duty police 'guards'(all being paid double or triple time to engage in traffic duty in their "off-hours") just to ensure confused visitors and cars won't bypass the "interdit de passer" or "do not drive any further signs" and the painted lines that will tell automobile drivers they can't take the road but that buses and ambulances, fire trucks and funeral corteges can, along with, of course, foot traffic and bicycles. What a polluted irritated mess it will be, as cars idle as they wait to try and park or to turn around to drive back down the mountain no matter which side you end up on?

Parking nightmare: The Beaver Lake parking lot is a lot smaller than the Smith House one, so just to confuse things even further, if the one serving west side Montreal islanders and visitors is full, you will be directed to Smith House one (provided it has space) and then if, in fact, you had only wanted to visit Beaver Lake or Smith House, and were planning to exit west again, you won't be permitted to retrace your drive but will be forced to exit east down Camilien Houde, just so you can have drive back around the mountain to get home. Perfect summer recipe for frustrated motorists and park visitors. See why all those traffic cops and security guards will be required? Or maybe people will just stay away. Time will tell.

Other possible hidden costs: Will there be a charge to turn around if one doesn't park? Ah yes, City Hall hasn't thought to inform us, the citizens of Montreal island, of that little piece of the convoluted puzzle they have inflicted on us. Possibly not, at least during the pilot project, it's going to be mayhem enough. But will Mayor Plante will ever release the true costs of this exercise in social engineering

and traffic control and redistribution? Don't hold your breath. No doubt it will be buried, though probably not in Mount Royal Cemetery.

Welcome to Wonderland: Until then, welcome to the mad, mad, mad world of Valérie's Wonderland. Yes, folks, it's the updated, 21st century version of that other 19th century classic - not Olmstead's Vision and not Dickens this time but Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (*Alice au pays des merveilles*), where this summer one of the "themed" picnics promised to us by Projet Montréal's event planners to get us reacquainted with our 19th century "central" park vision inspired by Mr Olmstead, should surely be the Mad Hatter's Teaparty. To quote another Dickens' classic turn of phrase: "Bah, humbug!" Indeed.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 6

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

THE COST FACTOR

" "How goes the Republic?"

"You mean the Guillotine. Not ill. Sixty-three to-day. We shall mount to a hundred soon." " *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

Why the decision to go first for the most costly and disruptive of the options available?

According to the October 6, 2017 [news coverage by CBC \(Insert link to: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/cyclist-solution-mt-royal-camillien-houde-way-1.4343902> \)](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/cyclist-solution-mt-royal-camillien-houde-way-1.4343902) after the death of cyclist Clément Ouimet, discussions about the future of the road alongside Mount Royal Park were already happening at Montréal City Hall under the Coderre administration, and in the final days of the 2017 municipal election campaign, and thus prior to the Projet Montréal assuming the reins of power.

"Plante said a low speed limit and separating the cyclist path from the vehicle lanes are some of the ideas for how to make Camillien-Houde safer. " Elysha Enos, CBC News, October 6, 2017

However, closing Mount Royal to transiting traffic was then only one of the several options seemingly being discussed at that time. What is noteworthy is the plan, in its present format, still doesn't include the construction of a permanent barrier on Camilien Houde where motorists (and others such as the police and first responder vehicles) are still able to attempt a U-turn.

"One of the founders of the cycling advocacy group #dansmapiste, Maxime Denoncourt, said that even before major changes are planned for Camillien-Houde Way, a physical barrier should be put up to block U-turns." "Unless people are physically blocked from doing it, they will keep doing it," Denoncourt said." Elysha Enos, CBC News, October 6, 2017

Thus, technically, illegal U-turns (the cause of Ouimet's untimely and unfortunate death along with the fact he was travelling very fast) can still occur. The Plante plan does nothing to address this concern, nor does it include her earlier thoughts about creating a separate bike path for cyclists.

And what happened to idea of constructing a separate bike path?

The same article also informs us that "Camilien Houde Way is a popular training route for serious cyclists" (translation = elite sport cyclists) since the average cyclist does not attempt the descent of Camilien Houde and probably not the ascent either, since it demands a serious level of fitness and control. Ditto for pedestrians. A walk or cycle up Olmstead Road (which begins on the same side of the mountain as Camilien Houde Way) is more easily accomplished for most (who have the physicality and fitness level to do it, of course). Ah, perhaps this is where the pedal truly hits the metal, or the

story hits home. If a bike path is built, it might be possibly too narrow for the elite sport cycle races and training runs held on Camilien Houde. **Perhaps the elite cyclists don't want to simply share the road, they want all of the road.**

"Seems the road will be shut down and only bikers will be able to enjoy that particular view of our city...If it's about protecting bikers why not put up concrete road dividers so bikers can have their own bike path over the mountain? Or rather than ban cars why not ban bikes from using the main road past Beaver Lake parking lot."
Jim Stone, Dorval, Quebec

Cyclists already get a free ride

It's highly unlikely that any "solution" will be acceptable to all users, but in this instance it appears even though the greatest number of users of "the road on the edge of the mountain park", for both destination and for transiting purposes, is motorized traffic, it begs the question: Why are so many being penalized for the needs of so few? Unless, of course, it is to implement what Suzanne Lareau, President and CEO, Vélo Québec wants: "*Camillien-Houde Highway* no longer serves its purpose...(as)...the mountain is a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels."

Oh, what purpose is that Ms Lareau? Camilien Houde's "purpose" was that it was built as a road for for motorized vehicles. Simply because you want it now to be used primarily for the fitness and training of cyclists, doesn't make it no longer useful to those motorists who are using and sharing it.

"Owners of bicycles and operators over the age of 16 ought to be required to register their bicycles and obtain driving permits from the municipal government. Fees from these could then be devoted to paying for the ever-increasing demands for cycling infrastructure as well as the hiring of additional police to enforce cycling laws."
Matthew P. Harrington, law professor, Université de Montréal, Montreal Gazette, Sep 25, 2015

Perhaps if cyclists started paying licensing fees and being taxed annually for the use of the roads that they bike on, all without contributing their fair share to them as motorists do, their "needs" might carry more weight. Cyclists, for the most part, already get a free ride, both in and around the park and the cemeteries, without paying any extra (or anything at all for that matter) for all that bonified access, so now they want the one road over the mountain for their exclusive use for fitness and training? Why should the rest of Montreal island fund your fitness and training needs?

"For many years, we have emphasized to the City of Montréal that the *Camillien-Houde Highway* no longer serves its purpose and that the mountain is a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels - a magnificent illustration of *Montréal, physiquement active!* In this regard, a few years ago, we proposed the idea of Cyclovia on the mountain to successive members of the Executive Committee. Today, we are asking the Montréal administration, as soon as the election is over, to eliminate transit traffic on Camillien-Houde and modernize public transit access to Mount Royal, so that in the spring of 2018, we can revive the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted. The tranquility of the mountain and the safety of its users must become a priority."
Suzanne Lareau, President and CEO, Vélo Québec, November 2017

Thus, since it is a case where both the elite sport cyclists and the motorized traffic want continue using the road, why does that have to change so radically in favour of one relatively small group over all the others more sizable in number? Where's the democracy in that?

Wouldn't traffic calming measures have been preferable?

If indeed it is excess speed that is the issue on Camilien Houde, and that is not a given as the situation is far more nuanced than that. Motorists claim it's the elite sport cyclists who are going too fast downhill and the cyclists claim somewhat backhandedly that they don't feel secure with cars on the road, without actually saying it's because they are travelling way above the posted speed limit; which means, in essence, they are significantly contributing to the contravening of road safety rules, putting their lives in danger, thus, not always victims of it.

Wouldn't it, therefore, be preferably for both sides to modify their behaviour through the use of improved security barriers, speed bumps, photo radar, even traffic lights, if they are really determined to be so necessary (not a given, by any means, as the existing stop signs such as those on Remembrance Road work well enough). However, I imagine the elite sport cyclists would detest all forms of traffic slowing measures such as speed bumps, traffic lights and stop signs, as to solve one problem, others, might be created, perhaps far less acceptable to them in the overall scheme of things, since it would impede their self-avowed primary need for speed, which isn't helped by current laws which state cyclists in Quebec can't be ticketed for exceeding the posted speed limit. Thus encouraging and condoning, rather than calming, their out of control, anarchic behaviour.

"As a result, it is high time that our traffic laws catch up to the true nature of the traffic. Just as rules had to be developed when cars replaced horses, and heavy trucks were added to the roads, so our laws need to be updated to account for the fact that large numbers of people are operating two-wheeled vehicles in a dangerous fashion...Government officials are ever willing to spring into action creating all manner of complex regulations in order to protect against even the most attenuated or theoretical threats to public safety. Yet these same officials are strangely silent and inert in dealing with the utter chaos taking place on the streets... The reason for this is not hard to glean. Cyclists make up a large and vocal political pressure group. They have clearly cowed vote-seeking politicians to close their eyes to the obvious dangers posed by anarchic cyclists. The result is that a politically powerful interest group has succeeded in exempting itself from the laws of safety and common sense. Unfortunately, this is a recipe for disaster." Matthew P. Harrington, law professor, Université de Montréal, Montreal Gazette, Sep 25, 2015

In addition, the majority of the cyclists I see on the road (and on most roads in Montreal) go through stop signs anyway, as they apparently never seemed to think they and/or red lights applied to them as well motorists. With the rules of the road now changed as of June 30, 2018 to permit "rolling" stops for cyclists at red lights (and one would suspect stop signs), provided they look out for pedestrians, that mindset isn't going to change anytime soon, and consequently heaven help the pedestrians. Except for the conscientious few, most cyclists weave haphazardly in among them now, even when it wasn't permitted to cross on red. So now they can cross with all impunity. Road-sharing in Montreal has rarely been collegial no matter which user group you belong to.

Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?

But in a sensible world, wouldn't closing off the parts of Camilien Houde that allow the possibility of u-turns have been one of the more sensible places to start? If the City really wants (in all ignorance) to attract more pedestrians and the middle-of-the-road cyclists (pun intended) onto Camilien Houde, maybe the building of a separate bike and walking paths on Camilien-Houde could have been another way go? Not that I am convinced too many would use them for all the aforementioned reasons.

Cars slow them down

Which leaves the elite sport cyclists, who really want the road left as is, but without the cars that slow them down.

"Then it's back down and traverse alongside parc Mt Royal beside the forest over to Camilien Houde...Finally a satisfyingly fast descent, but after the hairpin corner I am slowed down by some car driving rubes who seem to think 70 is quite fast enough" CyclingFunMontreal.blogspot.com/2007/11/mont-royal-in-8-easy-after-work-climbs

Alternative options combined with collegial, creative thinking

Especially here, wouldn't sitting down together for some 'outside of the box thinking and proposals' have been a much better way to start, without the anger, disgust and self-interested tirades this pilot project has engendered? Right now emotions are running high, which seems to be how Luc Ferrandez and his "team" like it. Instead of starting out with "closing off the road" discussions should have begun with open and transparent meetings of special interest groups, such as Les amies de la montagne and the two cemeteries most grossly affected, as well as a cross-section of the public distributed evenly along demographic lines (young, middle-aged, old, disabled, parents, commuters, cyclists, pedestrians, etc). Thus, permitting a far wider consultation and spirit of collegiality to help craft a workable solution to "sharing" the road alongside the park? The current OCPM "public consultation" process is unwieldy, complicated, confusing for some citizens, especially for those whose written French communication skills are not at a high level with a damaging "us versus them" angry atmosphere. Highly unpleasant.

Road sharing is possible as long as everyone is prepared to compromise

"More personal responsibility and an increased focus on respecting the rules of the road is a better way to prevent accidents between cars and cyclists said Sergio De Paoli." CTV News/Morgan Lowrie, The Canadian Press, June 2, 2018

Just as Mount Royal is closed to all traffic for elite sport cycle races, maybe at certain times during the day, or week some ongoing traffic-free, or traffic limited "practise" runs could be built into a "special access plan for shared road use". I don't think this is necessarily the best solution but it certainly beats the current total blockage of all transiting traffic.

It would mean, at a variety of set times of the day and/or weekend, private cars, and the corollary sometimes cyclists, are banned from using Camilien Houde between certain hours? Thus most users on both sides would/will have to plan ahead (not always an easy) and compromise a little in their use of the road; and on their visits to the cemeteries and on their access to the various sections of the park? Better some through access for a multitude of users, than no access at all, or the costly, convolutedly awkward one now in effect as of Saturday, June 2, 2018. Provided, of course, use is apportioned fairly, which means sometimes, but not all the time, transit motorists are accommodated and sometimes the elite sport cyclists.

It surely won't please all of the people all of the time, but at least it's worth trying to please, some of the people, some of the time. Large illuminated panels could be erected at the start of Remembrance Road on the west and at Camilien Houde on the east, to let everyone know whose turn it is to use the road? Similar signs are used in some heavily trafficked parts of Europe and they have plenty of towns and cities built all the way up and over mountains and hills, most with a variety of options for the passage and accommodation of motorized vehicles.

Dead wrong - on so many levels

"I disagree with blocking transit traffic over the mountain for any type of user. The City has failed in its duty to provide a basis of impartial, measurable and reliable evidence to support that transit traffic on the mountain is a problem, that blocking transit traffic will resolve their perceived problem, that they have in good faith tried other less extreme and punitive measures to resolve said imaginary problem, or even that that they are impartial, credible experts with the appropriate experience necessary to resolve sensitive and controversial issues related to the mountain. I must therefore reject a pilot project in its entirety that is designed with this action as its basic premise."

But with this polarizing 5-month pilot project, City Hall and Projet Montréal seem to be going for the most disruptive of the various options. Against the will of a majority of Montreal Islanders, against the advice of Les Amies de la Montagne, against the needs of the operators and users of the burial grounds, against the needs of the disabled, the elderly, the infirm and many parents, grand-parents and caregivers. Currently, this decision made at City Hall by the Plante administration seemingly only benefits a few select citizens (predominantly cyclists along with some motorists - but not the ones who wish to transit - more those living in Outremont and on the Plateau area). Thus, to bonify the needs of the very few, they have chosen to block the needs of the many, and inconvenience some of their citizens a lot more than others. It's too obviously the Ferrandez Vision or the "Plateau-ization" of the City of Montreal.

Not that I necessarily agree with the naming and shaming of different areas of Montreal Island, which that epithet seems to do. As I, too, supposedly live in a privileged "rich" neighbourhood close to downtown and the mountain, and yet I have always had to manage on an extremely restricted budget. Nevertheless, this has been my home for 40 years, and with tight controls on my spending, I manage. However, I do like to travel over "my" mountain, and currently travelling by car is the least painful, disruptive and easiest option for me since my disabilities preclude all those options Mayor Plante is offering.

"Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it." Greg Anderson

Thus, we all have our reasons for living where we do and travelling to where we want and that is part of Montreal Island's attractiveness. For the fact is, we don't all live in "cookie-cutter" neighbourhoods, which is why we enjoy visiting our family and friends, working and/or spending our money in areas different from those on our immediate doorsteps. It's part of what makes Montreal well...Montréal. Mayor Valérie Plante and Projet Montréal are simply going to making it harder to do so, and in the end, we might just stop visiting altogether, or a lot less, especially if there's no pleasure and beauty being allowed to us in the "getting there". For some of us "the journey itself is part of the overall experience."

"We have done wrong, and are reaping the fruits of wrong." A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

But how does blocking us from where we want to go make any sense? And one is not simply talking of commuter transiting traffic here. The families and friends of the citizens in the City of Dead (1.5 million and counting) are also being heavily penalized, as are the operators of the cemeteries, along with the grieving, the disabled, the old, the challenged, the families with young children, and the caregivers (parents taking their children to and from school and/or after-school programs or day camps, grand-parents driving to and from either side of the mountain to pick up and care for grandkids, or adult kids keeping an eye on their parents, etc.) all to please a few self-interested elite sport cyclists and/or those who detest for their own varying reasons, the idea of taxis and privately owned motorized vehicles traversing "their" mountain?

It's all "our" mountain, which we all pay for

The mountain "belongs to all Montreal Islanders". For some it is our "soul" or the "spirit" of our island. For most, it is our principal identity symbol of the place where we choose to live. Our situational icon, if you will. It is our green space, it is our gathering place (much as apparently some indigenous people used it for before the Europeans "settled" the island) and it shouldn't be reserved only for those fit enough to walk, or cycle up and down it, and for those travelling on public transport, or on the tourist buses. Plus, we shouldn't be coerced into taking assorted metros and buses to get there and to transit over it, like a lot of recalcitrant children, who are being summarily disciplined and "taught a lesson" the hard way, in order to be converted, or persuaded to learn the time-consuming "joys" or "miseries" of public transit on our island.

Something is definitely wrong when tourist buses are allowed through transit on Mount Royal and the private vehicles of the citizens, who provide the funds through their taxes that pay for the upkeep (and all those unasked for special events and animation) are not. Oh, but we can't deny the tourist, the City needs the revenue visitors bring, opines (or should that perhaps be whines?) the central City. Yet 70% of Montreal's funding comes from residential property taxes and Projet Montréal wants to ban us from using a roadway along the edge of a park that we all help to fund and maintain through

our heavy tax burden along with the extra taxes levied on motorists on their car registration and license fees?

Mount Royal as a vital component for maintaining our mental and physical health

"I live in the west, I go to my shop in the east and I take this morning route to decompress. It gets my morning started in the perfect way, I see sunrises and it's being taken away from me," ... "It's pretty difficult when you're in business and you're a citizen of Montreal to get around." Richard Bennett, Montrealer, CTV Montreal, June 1, 2018

Studies conducted in the UK and reported recently in the *BioScience journal* (insert link to: <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/67/2/147/2900179>), published by the American Institute of Biological Sciences in 2017, indicate that daily or frequent exposure to nature for those living in urban areas provides significant mental health benefits, especially in the areas of ameliorating depression, anxiety and stress. Thus giving weight to those residents of Montreal island, who have stated their daily or weekly passage over Mount Royal helps "make their day". They may not know the exact scientific reasons this is so, but these experiments certainly back up their assertions (i.e. provide "scientific proof" if you will) and support their demands for wanting to continue transiting Mount Royal (alongside the park).

"Experiences of nature provide many mental-health benefits, particularly for people living in urban areas. The natural characteristics of city residents' neighborhoods are likely to be crucial determinants of the daily nature dose that they receive... the greatest benefits are provided by characteristics that are most visible during the day and so most likely to be experienced by people...Furthermore, dose-response modeling shows a threshold response at which the population prevalence of mental-health issues is significantly lower beyond minimum limits of neighborhood vegetation cover (depression more than 20% cover, anxiety more than 30% cover, stress more than 20% cover). Our findings demonstrate quantifiable associations of mental health with the characteristics of nearby nature that people actually experience." *BioScience*, Volume 67, Issue 2, Feb 1, 2017, American Institute of Biological Sciences

Why employ the sledgehammer principle?

"In military parlance, using a sledgehammer to kill a fly is using heavy firepower (the sledgehammer) that may, or may not, be effective in killing the enemy (the fly) but creates a lot of collateral damage (destroys the house) and very silly when lighter firepower (the fly swatter) would do just as good or better job, at less cost." *Understanding Holocausts: How, Why and When They Occur*, Bad Posturee, page 251, iUniverse, 2002.

In effect, aren't Projet Montréal also being somewhat heavy handed here? Why not opt for a series of smaller changes first, rather than a hugely expensive, drastic and highly emotional one from the get-go? No wonder they needed to increase taxes island-wide in their first months in office, in part to help pay for this ill-conceived and extremely costly "pilot" project that is, and was, simply not required. And in the process, penalizing every Montreal Islander instead of just those using the mountain road. Talk about cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Or is it more...thumbing your nose at the hands that feed you? i.e. that help pay your wages, Mme Plante, Mr Ferrandez and promotional mouthpieces, Ms Marianne Giguère, a city councillor in the Plateau—Mont-Royal's De

Lorimier district and Mr Alain Vaillancourt, Sud-Ouest borough councillor and seemingly (of late) Projet Montréal's English speaking spokesperson on this project? Even though I notice Sue Montgomery, CDN-NDG (Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) Borough Mayor has been brought back into line, and is now also toeing the party line on this dossier - no more back-handed remarks about Luc Ferrandez. Ah yes, the travails of the political party system!

Mountain road as buffer zone - ecologically speaking

Discussions about protecting Mount Royal and the lands in its heritage area are not new. The OCPM (Office de consultation publique de Montreal) published a draft **Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement discussion document** (Insert link to: http://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/document_consultation/1aen.pdf) sometime after 2005 and before the official City of Montreal document of the same name was published in 2009. The OCPM document is undated, but as it references studies conducted in 1992 as well as the 2002 and 2004 Montreal Master Plans and archeological digs that took place around the Sir George-Étienne Cartier monument on Park Avenue in 2005, it was logically published sometime after then. On page 10 you can find an extremely interesting map of the ecological conservation area of our mountain. The roadways over mountain are clearly marked as being in the buffer zone i.e. between the park itself and some of the other areas of interest, such as the cemeteries. Thus, not "in" or "through" the territory of the park itself, except for (as previously noted) a very small area of woodland at the foot of Camilien Houde Way - part of the Saint-Jean-the-Baptist wood.

Mount Royal Heritage Area - whose heritage?

Page 16 has another interesting map that shows the location of known sites of indigenous graves (e.g. cave burials on the border Westmount and Côte-des-Neiges Road, just east of Remembrance Road? How come that site isn't on any tourist map?) as well as on and around the mountain, along with other sites of archeological interest, such as the sites of the ancient indigenous quarries on top of the mountain. It also indicates the location of the remains of the higher up of our mountain's two former mountain reservoirs, which was shuttered in 1930, although apparently, according to the report, its retaining walls might be still fairly intact and could be excavated (although I am not sure quite why you would want to - swimming hole perhaps?) The lower McTavish reservoir, on the McGill campus below Pine and above Penfield, is still in use but was covered over in 1947, and used as a sports field, and has since been renamed Rutherford Park. A similar fate befell the Vincent d'Indy/Bellingham Park reservoir in Outremont, which was covered over in the 1963, and which is now so extensively used by the Université de Montréal, it has become identified on maps as the Vincent d'Indy Playing Fields rather than a park.



or



Caption: Postcard of the McTavish Reservoir in 1930 before it was covered over

Luc Ferrandez's "idealized" vision of a road over the mountain with no people or traffic on it

"Montreal is once again divided into yes and no camps - but this time on the issue of closing Camillien Houde to through traffic. That's fine; this city loves debates. It is not a war....It's a debate - and a pretty interesting one too." Luc Ferrandez, Facebook page, March 1, 2018

In March 2018 Luc Ferrandez posted 11+ photos on his Facebook page all showing empty mountain roads (all in the United States countryside) that were completely devoid of any humans and/or transportation of any kind whatsoever (including bikes). Apparently they are his "vision" of what a mountain "road" in a tourist area should be like (interestingly he thus 'positions' Camilien Houde as a "mountain road in a tourist area", rather than a road in the middle of a city). Unfortunately, none of the roads he chose to highlight on are on islands or in, or even near, the centre of any major cities or urban centres. Neither do they pass alongside urban parks and/or large cemeteries. I won't try to fathom his circuitous thought processes. The less time spent in, or around his head, the healthier it will be for most of us. Suffice it to say anyone who expresses satisfaction at having divided Montreal, once more, into "yes" and "no" camps (for no matter what reason) and who says "that's fine" has no empathy for anyone, and certainly no compassion (empathy in action) for those of us who have already lived through far too many of this city's, and this province's harmful and divisive "debates", pitting neighbour against neighbour. This one is no different. It isolates and frustrates and tears at the very fabric of our souls. It isn't interesting either, no matter how much Ferrandez says it is. It's painful, stressful and is just plain wrong on so many levels. As is Luc Ferrandez.

What can you do about it?

Have your say and participate in the public consultation process with the OCPM - Yes, you can do it in English!

The **Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM)** [Montreal's Public Consultation Office](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) has lots of info on-line (much of it, though not all, in English) scroll down the page to find it, and they have now also posted the recordings from the two public information meetings in May.

Note: the "English" page on their site is not helpful. It merely tells you to check for English documentation on the French pages...not too helpful if you don't read French well, but it is there and if you scroll down the French page you will find it.

Have your say in person!

Here is the [link](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions) (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/inscriptions>) to the OCPM site where you can have your say (by telephone and/or in writing) in either English or French or both. Make the effort to participate. Don't put it off too long.

Pat, as the date of publication of these later articles come closer, I will update this following info from the OCPM consultation site. So this this is for positioning only.

Attention! Leaving a note on the OCPM site stating your point of view is incredibly important if we are to have any hope of altering these changes to our mountain access and maintaining access for all. As of Thursday, June 21, the YES to closing Mount Royal are winning the comments battle on the OCPM

site, with a overall total of 779 participants leaving a comment, of which 574 are supporting the road closure and only 118 are against. You'll notice those numbers don't tally (i.e. don't add up to 779), so I am wondering what the issue is? i.e. what do the missing 87 people think? Are they neutral or? If so, the OCPM should create a column to let us know that. Nevertheless, and until they get that sorted out, it still means there are far more of those participating in the on-line comment process that are seemingly in favour of blocking through traffic. So, if you want your mountain road to go back to allowing transiting traffic, can I suggest you take the time to let the OCPM know your feelings about the road closures. And in case, you're not sure what to say. Why not spend a few minutes scrolling through other people's comments, they may give you some ideas about how to word your own comment.

Nothing prevents you from leaving a written comment, or comments now, as well as "voting" on a variety of confusing options (truly at first glance they couldn't have made it more confusing and complicated as they seemingly have managed to do) as well as signing up by telephone to give an opinion in person later (as your verbal statement will only be taken once the pilot project is over). Right now to win the online "hearts and minds" battle, can I suggest you state you preference loud and clear now, by leaving a written comment clearly indicating your wishes. Yes, the process initially appears somewhat complicated, but there is help and the OCPM does get back to you with assistance.

There is also an [online survey](https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/ocpm-accesmontroyal-sw) (insert link to: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/ocpm-accesmontroyal-sw>) you can answer but I am not certain if it's available in English as my access to it is blocked since I already answered it (in French). Guess that's to stop people answering a multiple of times, so be warned. Not sure if that also blocks computers at public libraries for only one usage too. Thus, I am unsure where that puts households with only one computer, yet two or more users, meaning only one person in a household can answer the survey (not particularly fair as differing opinions usually abound in most multi-person households) as it also presumes everyone has their own personal computer or tablet connected to the internet, which is not always the case.

Further information on the process and to download documentation, click here: (Insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>).

Participate via the OCPM or, if that doesn't appeal simply [sign the petition](https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture) (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>). However, I would encourage you to avail yourself of all three options if you can.

Even though several of Projet Montréal's "improvements" to Mount Royal Park appear very permanent in nature (pun intended), and it may mean this misguided attempt at forceable social engineering could remain on our mountain for a long time to come, it is still worth reading up on and participating in the consultation process.

If it effects you, also participate in the public consultation process with the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

To help canvas their mourners and visitors, Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges also has an [online survey](https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en) (Insert link to: <https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en>) on their website, where there is a short explanation in English and a link to their survey (in French). Unfortunately, although the survey itself is only in French, do still try to do your best to complete it, especially if you have loved ones, friends and family buried there and if you want to express your dissatisfaction with the entryway on Remembrance Road being blocked to you. It is also important as this cemetery, and even more so the Mount Royal cemetery next door, are being taken over by cyclists moving fast on the winding paths.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 7

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

"Above all, one hideous figure grew as familiar as if it had been before the general gaze from the foundations of the world - the figure of the sharp female called La Guillotine... (and) the one woman who had stood conspicuous, knitting, still knitted on with the steadfastness of Fate." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

Guillotine as metaphor and motif

Although it may seem "over the top" to some readers, I am using the metaphor and motif of the guillotine and the numbers of those affected by it during the French Revolution (eerily similar to the amount of persons who have signed the petition against this action by Projet Montréal) to illustrate how much this is affecting the psyche of residents of this island.

"To travel the jewel of the mountain, to have 10 minutes of scenery, how dare they take that from me?" said Westmount resident Arlene Lutter. Lutter said she drives across the mountain, via Camillien-Houde Way, almost every Saturday and Sunday to enjoy the scenery. "It's ours...The mountain road belongs to all of us — to cyclists, to pedestrians, those in wheelchairs and to those of us who love the joy and pleasure of traversing the mountain in our cars — and that was taken away from us." Sabrina Marandola, CBC, May 11, 2018

In France, during their infamous late 18th century "Revolution", an estimated 30-40,000 persons died from the [kiss of Madame La Guillotine](https://www.history.com/news/8-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-guillotine), (insert link to: <https://www.history.com/news/8-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-guillotine>). From 1933-1945, the Nazis also used it as a favourite weapon of control and of war, decapitating at least 16-20,000 persons (although some say many more as it was wartime and a time of great atrocities, so statistics are hard to verify).

Here in Montreal, our City Administration isn't literally cutting off its citizens' heads with a big sharp knife; however, they are symbolically cutting out our collective hearts (emotions) and lopping off our heads (rational thought) - yes, a bit over the top, or perhaps too melodramatic for some, but I'm trying to make a point here, and hyperbole is a tried and true method to accomplish this - by curtailing Montreal Islanders use of "their mountain" and choosing to ignore the wishes of the approximately 38,000+ people, who have signed a petition asking them **not to deny** their through road access to their mountain.

Yes, the one that runs "alongside" their park (not "through it" as Projet Montréal keep on stubbornly insisting it does) and that allows them to transit the mountain from one side to another and to enjoy the journey while they are doing it. Or to enjoy travelling over the mountain to where ever they are going and doing it safely and in the way and at a time they please, without being summarily forced to

take public or active transportation, since their choice and method of transportation may differ from Projet Montréal's vision of how citizens, their guests and off-island visitors should be travelling around the island.

So, if nothing else I'm employing the guillotine motif, along with the extracts from Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities as metaphors for what is happening with this unnecessary and damaging action by Projet Montréal. Perhaps too extreme a metaphor for some, but it's symptomatic for how strongly I, and others, feel about the road closure for transiting and other traffic over Mount Royal.

Fake facts abound...and are alive and well and living in Montréal

"Obviously, a real public consultation in the present tense is a terrifying concept to this regime. Obviously describing the road in question in an honest way is out of the question as well. Primarily it runs along the edge of the park area between the park and the cemeteries. There is a small forested area that is accessible with far less hiking and by far fewer people than what is in store for people from the Eastern side of Montreal portaging to Beaver Lake or people from the Western side of Montreal hiking to the lookout. Heck, they COULD install a traffic light to enable people to go from the woods in the entirely car free body of the park to get to the relatively empty small wooded appendix next to the cemetery on Mt. Royal in Outremont. It's NOT as though the Camillien Houde-Remembrance Road goes through the actual vast majority of the park. It runs along the edge and connects Montrealers with THEIR park and EACH OTHER. Almost ALL of the actual park is entirely car free and peaceful and is enjoyed by many right now. I keep hearing about restoring peace and tranquility to the park and it's as though those who keep repeating this spin have never been into the actual park. The road that gets us to the park is pretty but REALLY traffic IN the park??!!! It's like reading and hearing Kellyanne Conway and her swarm of spinners spewing "alternative facts". There are many of us who get themselves and their families and friends and picnic stuff and skis transported there by car from ALL sides of the city enjoy and use our road to get to the car-free oasis of our park.... for now. It's about to be taken away and without real consultation, and all the reasons put forward are disingenuous at best. The last regime's negatives pale by comparison and the damages far less lasting..." Lex Stercus, Montreal Gazette, Comments section

Sign the petition

The comment (see above) from a certain Lex Stercus (I imagine that's a pseudonym or maybe a tongue-in-cheek nickname) sums up the situation well enough. Others, such as Theodore Rigas, have decided to leave all the mistruths, the spindoctors and the messes (higher taxes, Mont-Royal re-envisioning, St. Catherine Street refurbishing, etc) being managed by Projet Montréal behind.

"I didn't think it was possible, but Plante and her sidekick Ferrandez are even more autocratic than Coderre was - no small feat. The scary part is they've got at least another 3 years to continue destroying the city. I know that I've had enough of this stupidity. They just keep taking more taxes from us but don't want to listen to the wants and needs of their constituents unless it aligns with their own agenda. I'm done - definitely planning to move my family to the suburbs and I know many more who are planning the same. Sad what's happening to this city. My heart goes out to the many business owners on Ste Catherine street who are about to lose everything they've worked for because of this madness..." Theodore Rigas, Montrealer

However, for those of you who would like to sign the petition informing Valerie Plante and Luc Ferrandez you don't think much of their pilot project or their closure of Mount Royal to transiting traffic, do please **take the time to sign** (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>), if you haven't already done so.

Note: The text of the petition itself is in French (there was another one in English initially but this is the one most people, both French and English, are signing); however, if you don't read French, what you have to know is that it is simply asking you to sign up against closing the road to through traffic, which you can do in the box on the right hand side of the webpage. You can also leave a personal comment on the situation (yes, in English or French), or read through those left by others, by using the Comments section. It's well worth the effort.

If you have more to contribute, that is what the **Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM)** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) site is for and you can also answer (be warned a fairly poorly drawn-up questionnaire, which will tend to slant the results somewhat but still worth doing if only to demonstrate solidarity in numbers) as well as submit your ideas/brief/input on the subject in both English and/or French, in writing and/or by telephone.

Businessman and mountain parkway commuter, Michael Silas, the petition organizer, is hoping for at least 35,000 signatures by the time the 5-month pilot project is over on October 31, 2018. Problem is, several of Projet Montréal's "improvements" to Mount Royal Park appear too permanent in nature (pun intended), so this mis-guided attempt at forceable social engineering looks as though it will scar our mountain for a long time to come.

What do we really need?

Do we really need more road closures, the blocking our easier and more practical motorized traffic accesses to our cemeteries, yet another lookout, yet another café, along with more special events in our park? As it turns out Mount Royal already has too many visitors at times, especially on weekends in summer when the parking areas are often full. For years, Les Amies de la montagne has been warning of the long-term damage (insert link to: <http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-sos-for-mount-royal>) that the number of visitors are already having on the paths and woodlands, some from special events, others from the sheer volume of visitors trampling over fragile woodlands, littering and tamping down existing pathways, along with the ongoing "battle" between the City, Les Amies and the mountain bikers. "...Les amis' opposition to mountain biking is part of a broader environmental concern for Mount Royal: "Any off-trail activity is detrimental to the ecology ... it prevents the indigenous species from growing in these areas and allows invasive species to come in and take over, it also fractures the habitat for wildlife, and this all happens very quickly." " Jake Bleiberg, The Gazette, April 28, 2014

In addition, there are significant costs associated with these latest "improvements". At the City press conference launching the project on June 2, 2018, and presided over by Councillor Marianne Giguere, since Mayor Plante was in Japan, she finally disclosed the "budget" for this latest extravaganza Montreal Islanders did not need: \$1 million! (Albeit, without a breakdown of what "budget items this amount is, and isn't, covering.) Wouldn't that sum have been better allocated to purchasing additional green space elsewhere on the island of Montreal?

Is Projet Montréal so naive as to think their efforts are going to work i.e. to force us onto public transport, and/or bicycles (so called "active transportation options) and to walk further than some of us can? Social re-engineering, especially negative impact social engineering, takes a lot more than

that to achieve results. However, if they want to make us angry and annoyed but also very, very sad, they are certainly going the right way about it.

Yes, undoubtedly some Montrealers will be delighted. As with most changes no one is ever 100% for or against. However, a larger number, as reflected in the local petition numbers - 31,136 vs 7,901 as of July 3, 2018 - aren't at all happy. Many more remain silent, either through lack of language skills (as yes, unfortunately for unilingual Montreal Islanders, most of the information and consultation processes are taking place in French; although the OCPM (Office de consultation publique de Montréal) aka Montreal's Public Consultation Office has some of the documentation on its site translated into English, but by no means all. Plus, since none of its surveys, or descriptions of how to participate, and what you can vote on, are in English, it makes it extremely difficult to try and participate and register your vote on the various options.

Others perhaps lack the requisite internet or computer skills, or who are not familiar with signing on-line petitions, through ignorance (wait until those who haven't yet realised what Projet Montréal's blockage of Mount Royal means for them, or with whom it hasn't yet registered, and won't until they try to drive out-of-town guests over the mountain) or because of laziness or negativity i.e. "petitions don't work"; but I propose they do and besides, if want to make change happen you need to find a way to participate. Can you perhaps enlist the help of a bilingual friend or family member to help you?

Mayor Plante doesn't like the NO petition numbers

And even though Mayor Plante may attempt to decry the numbers, especially on the NO/NON petition: "After all, we don't exactly know among all those names who exactly is signing the petition, or where they live". Come on Madame Mayor, read the comments that many have chosen to append to the petition (most in French) and still try to continue to tell us the numbers don't count. Plus what if some are visitors to Montreal Island? It means they care and Montreal still needs tourists and off-island visitors, and many of them drive, or have driven over the mountain, and have an interest in seeing it kept open for future visits. You're permitting tourists to visit in buses, so why penalize tourists visiting in private cars? Your "protests" about "les gens de Chicago" (folks from Chicago) signing the petition basically sound like a lot of sour grapes.

Plus the same rationale can be applied to the less than 8,000 who have signed in support of your plan. And as for those 5,000 names you so like to trot out that apparently were in favour of closing Mount Royal in 2008-9 and about which you have been saying "gives you the right not to consult as it's already been done", there's not a lot of background available on who they were either is there? Finally, if the total amount of the figures were reversed, you probably wouldn't be denigrating the size of the YES/OUI petition, would you?

In addition, the overwhelming numbers of the "against" petition (in May approximately 25,000+ vs the current 37,900+), apparently **did** force Mme Plante into convening two hasty, grossly under-advertised, extremely partisan, "public information" meetings at the last minute in May, after telling us consistently a few months earlier she would only "consult" after her pilot project had begun, and seemingly perhaps only so she can now claim in the future that she did, in fact, consult "before".

However, sadly for her citizens, and the rest of us Montreal Islanders, who are affected by her decision, her meetings were more of a PR stunt and came far too late to make a difference. Or maybe

in her world the pilot project has already begun since the contracts for the special events, the construction of an ugly new beveledere along with the "pop-up" café-terrace planning and approvals (liquor license?) were surely already set in motion by the time of the May "information" sessions? With politicians, and their "spinmeisters", it's often difficult at times to interpret reality in their double-speak and re-speak, especially when emotions are running high.

Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM)

By the way, **Montreal's Public Consultation Office** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) known by the acronym of the French name i.e. OCPM has lots of info online (some of it, though not all, in English) and they have also posted the recordings and transcripts from the two public meetings in May (only in French). I listened to much of the May 15 proceedings online (since I had found out too late about them and so had missed attending the May 10 one at Hotel Bonaventure - strange location but at least accessible by metro for some, although I am not sure about the exact composition of the audience who attended) and I was very impressed by the quality of the transmission. Money is surely being spent by the administration at City Hall to support this expensive attempt to modify citizens' behavior.

May 10 and May 15 Public Info Sessions

The online streaming of the May 15 meeting in Côte-des-Neiges was remarkably clear and easy to follow (provided you understand French, of course) but I wanted to participate in the Question period and to obtain an English transcript of the presentation, as well as a French one to compare it to, so I rushed myself down there in the scheduled break - by car, of course, as 3 buses or two metros (i.e. Vendome on the orange line with a transfer at Snowdon to the blue line, so as to get myself to Côte-des-Neiges metro stop) would have taken far too long. Unfortunately, although I got an English presentation document, a French one wasn't available, though I was assured one would eventually be posted on the OCPM website and I can attest to the fact it is now there.

However, participating in the Question period proved impossible, for me at any rate, even though a good number of people did wait around to do so, and the Public Consultation Office extended proceedings to after 10.00 pm to allow all the questions to be at least tabled (if not exactly answered). Sadly towards the end, many had given up waiting to be allowed to ask their question and had left but kudos to the OCPM President, Mme Nicole Brodeur, who did her best to give all those who wanted their turn at the microphone.

Another thing to note for future events organized by the OCPM is, even if you ask your question in English, it will be responded to in French, so be forewarned. Still, it's worth asking the question since the answer, or non-answer, will provide information and insights to others present and/or those listening to the recordings. One gentlemen, obviously a veteran of previous consultations, politely both asked his questions in English and gave each person on the responding side a written copy of them. But even for him the response was in French. And in the written transcript his English questions are not reproduced.

Unfortunately, it proved impossible for me to stay to ask the two questions everyone was permitted as the acoustics in the basement room of the Notre Dame des Neiges church hall were such that I couldn't understand a word of what either the questioners, or the folks from Montreal City Hall, or the Office de la Consultation publique de Montreal (OCPM) were saying. This was a huge surprise as

the on-line transmission had been very clear and this was the first time I've experienced this. But the echo in the room was insupportable, to my ears at any rate, although those that stayed seemed to be able to hear, but I certainly couldn't decipher a single word of what anyone was saying. Yet another downside to the aging process I am presuming, although there is also a phenomenon known as a "flutter echo" which happens when sound waves bounce back and forth between the walls, ceiling, and bare floors, making communication unintelligible, if not down right impossible, as was the case with me. I am supposing the recording engineers for the online transmission had compensated for that.

"If you've ever been inside a large public space or loft with bare walls and hard surface floors, you may have noticed a distinctive ringing sound called flutter echo. This phenomena occurs when sound waves bounce back and forth between the walls, ceiling, and floor, making conversations difficult." *How to reduce echoes in rooms, www.apartmenttherapy.com*

So, I jumped back in my car, after trying to explain to a Global News reporter some of my concerns, and why I was leaving so abruptly after arriving so precipitously. I probably came across as somewhat crazed, as the clip wasn't used, but I was disappointed and somewhat flustered about not being able to hear and to ask my questions, especially after making the effort to get there, and I was in a hurry as I wanted to get back home to listen to the rest of the question period online. So yes, with all that dashing to and fro, I did miss part of the question period but hopefully it is reproduced in the recording available on the OCPM website, so I can listen to the parts I missed at my leisure. I recommend it.

The squeaky wheel

I also encourage citizens to participate in the consultation process and make your opinions heard and they might even count. Plus, we can all hope with time, and after "consultations" have happened with those who are intimately concerned with the welfare of the mountain (i.e. Les Amies de la Montagne) and those who rely on the mountain road for accessibility reasons, along with the users of the cemeteries and their administrators, so that, in the end, reason and rationality, with a rather large splash of common sense, are victorious.

Participate in the public consultation process with the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

Can I suggest you [Read the letter written by the Mount Royal Cemetery to Mayor Plante](https://www.mountroyalcem.com/index.php/en/) (insert link to: <https://www.mountroyalcem.com/index.php/en/>) and/or that you complete the survey on the site of the [Cimetière Notre-dame-des-neiges](https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en) (insert link to: <https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en>). Once again, only available in French, although there is a small pop-up section in English at the top the page explaining it.

Even though the survey itself is only in French, do still try to do your best to complete it, especially if you have loved ones, friends and family buried there and if you want to express your dissatisfaction with the entryway on Remembrance Road being blocked to you. It is also important as this cemetery, and even more so, the Mount Royal cemetery next door, are being taken over by cyclists moving fast on the winding paths.

And you don't have to leave home to do it!

Participation can be done by phone and/or in written form (and you can also sign-up to present your views in person after the end of the trial period and before the decision is taken to cancel the road closures, or to make them permanent. All signs point to that is the ultimate direction Mayor Plante wishes to go. So do make the effort, please. Since it's down to the residents of Montreal Island to help make City Hall know this is not what we want (unless, of course it is. This is supposedly a democracy after all). Nevertheless, the more feedback the OCPM and Projet Montréal get from citizens and the users of the mountain road, the less credible it will be to continue to say the petition numbers don't count. And hopefully it will mean someone at Montreal City Hall will listen. As always, hope springs eternal in these instances.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 8

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

DEAD LAST - I

"I see Barsad, and Cly, Defarge, The Vengeance [a lieutenant of Madame Defarge], the Juryman, the Judge, long ranks of the new oppressors who have risen on the destruction of the old, perishing by this retributive instrument, before it shall cease out of its present use. " *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book 3, Chapter 15, The Footsteps Die Out Forever

Who will speak for the dead?

In the above excerpt from Part 3 of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dicken's character Sydney Carton was referring to the excesses of Madame La Guillotine, at whose sharp hand he was soon to perish. Be reassured, I am not suggesting in any of this series of articles that Madame Mayor, Valérie Plante, her lieutenant, Luc "Vengeance" Ferrandez and the rest of the crew at Montreal City Hall are guilty of the wide range of abuses of power demonstrated during the French Revolution. But I am intimating that they are abusing their political power by removing ongoing road access to an integral part of our island city that is, for the majority of us (pay attention to the NON petition numbers and comments, Mme Mayor) also the psychological and spiritual heart, as well as the most iconic symbol of our island city.

Plus, they are diminishing its stature and the place it holds in the hearts of residents of Montreal Island by treating Mount Royal as a mere destination park and by repurposing it (and the adjoining cemetery grounds) for "active transportation" rather than allowing it to be a vital part of many Montrealers' daily lives, if only for scant few minutes each day. For however short the length of time spent passing along side the park and absorbing its many moods, it nevertheless brings a significant number of their citizens a daily, weekly, or bi-monthly dose of pleasure. Why should that be denied to them so brutally?

"I live in the west, I go to my shop in the east and I take this morning route to decompress. It gets my morning started in the perfect way, I see sunrises and it's being taken away from me," ... "It's pretty difficult when you're in business and you're a citizen of Montreal to get around." Richard Bennett, Montrealer, CTV Montreal, June 1, 2018

Why a tale of two cities?

This series of articles is entitled: "A Tale of Two Cities", which is, in part, a reference to Charles Dickens' classic work of fiction, although in his book the two cities were the veritable cities of London and Paris, whereas in my non-fiction articles it refers to the abutment of two fictional Montreal Island "cities" on the flanks of Mount Royal. And although references have been made throughout the text to the more silent of these two fabulous cities viz. the City of the Dead, most of the focus, so far, has been on the strident and diverse needs and wants of those living in the clamorous City of the

Living, which is, for these series of articles, a composite of all Montreal Island residents in all of their various "island cities". Time to rectify somewhat that imbalance.

The population on the Island of Montreal surrounding its central mountain comprises approximately 2 million living persons (the City of the Living). Whereas the City of the Dead on the side of Mount Royal currently accommodates approximately 1.5 million, apportioned out into 4 distinct and separate cemeteries; with a whole host of other sections contained within them, some of which are divided along cultural, religious or occupational lines, and whose needs are few, but whose visitors are many.

Living vs the Dead - the dead have been there for millenia

"From the mid-19th century to the early 20th century, many prehistoric graves were unearthed in different places on Mount Royal. One specific site, known as the Westmount burying ground (S1), comprised the graves of some twenty individuals. Graves were also discovered around 1850 on the Lyman lot, in the Mount Royal Cemetery (S2), and on the important Dawson site (BjFj-001), the only St. Lawrence Iroquoian village identified to date on the Montréal plain. In the early 20th century, some graves were discovered in a small cave north of the Westmount burying ground (S3). On the north or Outremont side, a number of graves were found on Rue Pratt (S4), along Chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine (S5) and, more recently, on Chemin Queen-Mary (S6). Reinterpretation of these data shows that the graves might be associated with prehistoric populations from the Late Archaic period (4000 to 1000 B.C.), but also the Late Woodland (1000 to 1550 A.D.). In any case, the distribution of these many discoveries shows that Mount Royal and its slopes were used as sacred places by the prehistoric peoples who visited and lived on the Island of Montréal. (Larocque 1990, Tremblay 2004)." Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Discussion document, OCPM, page 84

In the ongoing debate over the use of Mount Royal, some citizens have objected to the existence of the cemeteries themselves on the side of Mount Royal, complaining it is "only the rich" who get buried there, but the basic facts are:

a) indigenous people have been burying their dead on various sites all over the Mount Royal Heritage Area for millenia. The OCPM draft [Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement discussion document](http://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/document_consultation/1aen.pdf) (Insert link to: http://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/document_consultation/1aen.pdf) has an extremely interesting map (page 16) that shows the locations of the various burial sites discovered to date.

b) the two largest of the four currently existing cemeteries, where the greatest number of persons are interred (1.2 million+), came into existence well before Mount Royal park was created, and a great many ordinary people, and definitely not all of them rich persons, from all walks of life, nationalities and religious beliefs, are interred in them. In fact, one of the identified prehistoric indigenous burial sites, named the Lyman site, is located within the current borders of Mount Royal Cemetery.

The association managing Mount Royal Cemetery was created by an Act of the Provincial Parliament of Canada in 1847, land was purchased in 1850 and the cemetery opened in 1852. Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges was opened in 1854. The City of Montreal didn't begin to acquire land for Mount Royal Park until years later and the park itself was opened in 1876, which was over 20 years 'after' the

first cemeteries were created on former farmland, in the then countryside, and dedicated to the necessary business of burying the dead. They were called "rural" cemeteries for a reason, since at the time of their establishment they were in the midst of farmland and a good distance from the "city" per se. In fact, at that time (the mid-1850-60s) a large part of what we now know as Mount Royal park was still being farmed or used for orchards, along with the commercial harvesting of its trees to fill the furnaces and fireplaces of the population of the city below its southern flank. However, it is also to be remembered the region's prehistoric indigenous people had been quarrying flint on Mount Royal for millennia before that as evidenced by the identified remains of their mountain quarries.

Chemin de ceinture du Mont Royal - Mount Royal Beltway project for cyclists

One day perhaps, when the cemeteries are full, they may well become an actual extension of the park but not, one would have expected a few years ago, in the immediate lifetime of many of us alive today. However, since nothing in life is certain, except, as the saying goes, "for death and taxes", that time may be coming sooner than many of us could have imagined.

Seemingly as a direct result of the classification of the three peaks of Mount Royal and the surrounding area as a Heritage Area (Site patrimonial du Mont-Royal) Les Amies de la Montagne, Héritage Montreal, the City of Montréal and certain groups of walkers and cyclists already appear to be treating them as such. This is especially true on the grounds and pathways of Mount Royal Cemetery, as I've had to step aside for fast moving bunches of cyclists quite frequently. Perhaps this is how Mme Plante and her Projet Montréal team has come up with the erroneous idea that the two roads over the mountain divide the "park". Sorry to disabuse you Mme Plante, but for the moment those four cemeteries are 'not' parkland but very much occupied, and extensively visited, and active burial grounds.

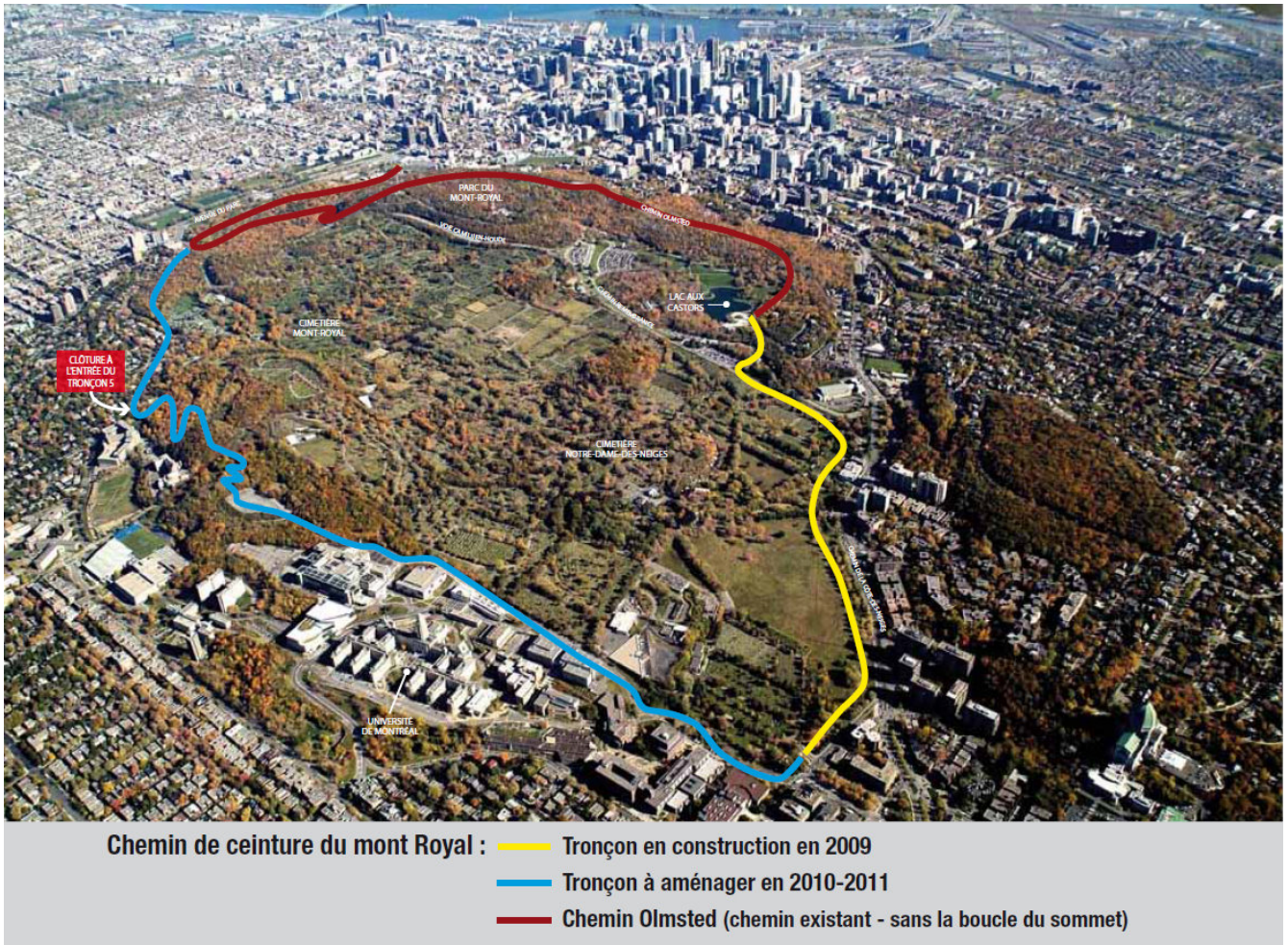
That being said, significant portions of the Mount Royal Heritage area is now being very much appropriated for the use of the living, especially the cycling community. If you click through to one the many pages on Montreal's 375th site you can access a pdf of a [revised interactive map \(Insert link to: http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/375/en/legs/escales-decouvertes-du-mont-royal \)](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/375/en/legs/escales-decouvertes-du-mont-royal) of the 2017 version of the *Escales Decouvertes (Discovery Stops)*. By studying the trails indicated on that colourful map, you'll quickly notice how the entire Heritage area is being claimed for both cyclists and hikers, to the detriment, in particular, of the visitors to the cemeteries. Even Les Amies de la Montagne, whose mission is to "protect Mount Royal", and which I had erroneously thought just meant the park. It now appears, they have expanded their mandate, which has grown to encompass the entire Heritage and Natural Area; since as part of their money making activities, they now offer a day-long hike, approximately 15 km in length that includes all three peaks, and comes with additional routes that now also cut through Cimetière Notre-dame-des-neiges.

Searching back through the years for the origin of that idea, I came across news and blog reports which indicate much of this has been in the planning stages at Montreal City Hall, at least since the time of Mayor Gerald Tremblay, when Alain de Souza was the councillor in charge of "Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks".

For instance, in 2011, the blog [Cycling Fun Montreal](http://cyclingfunmontreal.blogspot.com/2011/08/new-mont-royal-loop-road-delayed-until.html) (Insert link to: Source: <http://cyclingfunmontreal.blogspot.com/2011/08/new-mont-royal-loop-road-delayed-until.html>) penned this description of the "Ceinture Mont Royal" cycling route, then in the construction phase, with a descriptive text that was evidently rather poorly adapted from French, and which was bemoaning the fact the "Ceinture" or Beltway route was going to be "delayed" even further until 2013.

"Everything comes to those who wait. The city of Montreal was supposed to inaugurate in May, the Park on the Third Summit of Mount Royal. But the work has been delayed. The inauguration of the Outremont summit will finally happen in 2013, together with...sections four and five...of the mountain beltway. Two components of a project of particular interest to Outremont, since it is a beltway (permitting) easier access to the park from the north-west. But it also (signals) the development of the wooded St. John the Baptist area. "In the summer of 2013, visitors will have a panoramic view of the north of the island. This is the northern flank of Mount Royal we want to highlight, "said Alan De Sousa, Head of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks of the City of Montreal." ...The future (cyclist) ring road winds up the north side of the mountain, crossing Notre-Dame-des-Neiges (cemetery) and along the University of Montreal (grounds) ...Both of these institutions granted the City ...23 hectares in total. The beltway is an extension of the type of experience offered by the Olmsted Road, located in the Parc du Mont-Royal. Ultimately, it will connect the main peak at the top of Outremont, to join the Olmsted Road along Park Avenue...putting the Saint-Jean-Baptiste wood into the spotlight... (as)...until now, the (red) oak forest, unique in Montreal, is relatively unknown to visitors." CyclingFunMontreal blog, August 2011

The blog post went on to note that at the time this "opening up" was not wholeheartedly supported by les Amies de la montagne due to concerns about safeguarding the ecological sensitivity of the wooded area in question (le bois Saint-Jean-Baptiste): "This wood has really significant ecological value. It includes native species such as the white trillium, for example, " said Communications Director, Gabrielle Korn (not to mention being one of the few woods left on the island of Montreal with stands of Northern red oak trees).



Caption: Map showing the Ceinture Mont Royal cycle route

What is also interesting in the Cycling Fun Montreal blog post is their provision of a second map, somewhat less colourful and graphic than the one above (see below), which indicates new cycling trails (in blue) being added to the interior of Cimetière Notre-dame-des-neiges, one of which exits onto Remembrance Road, and which up until then had not been much used by cyclists, unlike the adjoining Mount Royal cemetery.



Caption: Map showing the Ceinture Mont Royal cycle route as well as new routes (in blue) through the cemetery

This was the first example I could find of what eventually came to fruition with the 2017 launch of the revised *Escapes Découvertes (Discovery Stops)* map, which turned out to be a combination of the two 2011 maps, delineating the "ceinture" or beltway cycle-hiking route around the mountain, and, indeed, opening up those heretofore little used (and ecologically significant) wooded areas off Mount Royal Boulevard (the "Bois Saint-Jean-Baptiste" - so much for prioritizing ecologically significant areas) as well as passing through sections of the Université de Montréal and the Cimetière Notre-dame-des-neiges lands. Sort of looks like Les Amies de la montagne eventually compromised big time on this one.

What about persons with disabilities?

Apologies for sounding like a broken record but so far all these changes to Mount Royal all seem to focus on accommodating cyclists, joggers and hikers, and from what I can see there's not really any accommodations being made for any special access and other ways to accommodate those with disabilities and limited walking abilities, plus parents, grandparents and/or caregivers, both with or without young children in tow.

In addition, access to the cemeteries, especially that of the Mount Royal cemetery grounds, are being severely curtailed with this pilot project. Not only is access being restricted to both island motorists and out of town visitors, by funnelling, those approaching from the west, off to the awkwardly placed Chemin de la Forêt entrance in Outremont. But by making Mount Royal cemetery even more complicated to reach for those from the west, accessibility, especially to some areas of the park and

to the cemeteries for persons from both sides of the mountain, in particular, those with disabilities, is becoming even more of an issue, which no one from the City of Montreal is really addressing. Not surprising since it's never been a top priority, even with the city's public transport providers.

Mount Royal Cemetery - a rural garden cemetery

"Because there was no precedent in Canada, the Protestant corporation turned to American planners, who had been designing picturesque landscapes in cemeteries since 1831, when Mount Auburn Cemetery was created in Boston, for models of the first rural cemetery. J-C. Sydney, surveyor and civil engineer, was commissioned to design the Mount Royal Cemetery. He was said to follow in the school of Andrew Jackson Downing, who had been the corporation's first choice but (who) died suddenly in 1852. President Smith of the Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia recommended Sydney to lay out the first two thousand lots." Meredith G. Watkins, Department of Geography, McGill University, August, 1999

The slopes and vales of Mount Royal Cemetery provide a surprising succession of views over its 165 acres. As one of the first specifically designed "rural" cemeteries in North America, it followed the trend of American rural cemeteries of the mid-1800's, the model of which was to combine the commemoration of the dead with beauty through the creation of gorgeously landscaped grounds and meandering pathways.

"Founded in 1852 by the Protestant community of Montreal the cemetery is a private non-profit organization. Administered by 21 Trustees elected as representatives of the six founding denominations, it is open to persons of all faiths and races. Burial rights in perpetuity were offered and by so doing, the Cemetery Management made the commitment that no graves would ever be reused or abandoned. Since its founding the Charter of the Company has never been changed and still stipulates that all profits should be entirely devoted to the embellishment and improvement of the property." About Mount Royal Cemetery, www.mountroyalcem.com

What is maybe less well-known is the not-for-profit organization that administers **Mount Royal Cemetery** (Insert link to: <https://www.mountroyalcem.com/index.php/en/past-present-and-future-sp-182048161.html>) has deemed the cemetery as non-denominational i.e. open to anyone who wishes to be interred there. Plus, it also sells burial rights in perpetuity, which means the cemetery undertakes to continue ongoing maintenance, and they ensure that any and all profits are reinvested back into the property; however, that is no longer the case for some plots in the neighbouring Cimetière Notre-Dames-des-Neiges, which are merely "rented" or leased for a 100-year term. Which begs the question, what is done with bones and grave markers interred there when the grave site is re-leased? Initially, that cemetery also offered 10-year term burial sites (a sort of short-term rent-a-gravesite option) but have since dropped that offering since it proved "unpopular". Nevertheless, offering gravesites in perpetuity is a costly undertaking, especially as the cemetery approaches the end of its useful life i.e. when it no longer has burial plots to offer for sale, meaning there will be less income coming in to pay for the ongoing maintenance. What to do? A question that will be somewhat addressed in another article.

A walk through a cross-section of Montreal history

Currently, Mount Royal cemetery shelters the final resting places of some 200,000+ persons. Undoubtedly there are a number of "prominent" Montreal Island citizens buried there (albeit mostly white men - why is that history seemingly always focuses on the male of the species and in our local history - the white men?), but it's also true that a great many very ordinary female and male citizens (spinsters and bachelors, mothers, children, wives, husbands, nurses, office, hotel, hospitality and store workers, shopkeepers, farmers, writers, artists and craftsmen and women, railway workers, teachers, doctors, etc) are sharing their final resting place with them as death has always been the great equalizer. Prominent inhabitants of this neighbourhood in the great silent city include: **Honoré Beaugrand**, journalist, author, folklorist and 18th Mayor of Montreal; **Sir Arthur William Currie**, Commander of Canadian Troops during WWI, and Principal of McGill University from 1920 to 1933. His was the largest funeral procession ever with a crowd of approx. 20,000 following the coffin. A military monument, the Cross of Sacrifice, marks his grave; **Sir Alexander Galt**, Father of Confederation, Finance Minister under John A. Macdonald and businessman (railroads, mining and agriculture); **Charles Melville Hays**, President of the Grand Trunk Railway (now part of CN Rail), victim of the Titanic maritime disaster; **C.D. Howe**, engineer, politician, Liberal Cabinet Minister; **Anna Leonowens** (insert link to: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/edwards_anna_harriette_14E.html), governess (and the Anna of *Anna and the King of Siam*, which is a largely fictional account of her life) and co-founder of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; **Hannah Willard Lyman**, feminist, educator, principal of Vassar College; **John Samuel McCord**, lawyer and Superior Court Justice, founder of Bishops College School, Chancellor of Bishops University, Montreal General Hospital director, first president of the Mount Royal Cemetery Company and father of David McCord, who created and funded the McCord Museum; **Charles McKiernan** (insert link to: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mckiernan_charles_11E.html) aka Joe Beef - a true "man of the people" whose 3-storey building held a tavern, a restaurant with free food for the homeless, a dorm of 100 beds and a basement full of assorted strange animals. On the day of his funeral every office in the business district closed for the afternoon and there were representatives of workers from all classes in the procession; **Shadrach Minkins** (insert link to: <https://www.amazon.com/Shadrach-Minkins-Fugitive-Slave-Citizen/dp/0674802993>), an American-born fugitive slave rescued in 1851 and eventually brought to Montreal, where he ended his days a free man; **John Molson**, brewing tycoon; **Howie Morenz**, Hall of Fame hockey player; **William Notman**, photographer and businessman; **John Redpath**, building contractor who expanded into sugar refining, building the Province of Canada's first sugar refinery, importing sugar cane from the West Indies on his own vessels, supported missions, hospitals and colleges and his son Peter financed McGill's Repath Museum and Library; **Mordecai Richler**, author, journalist; **Sir Thomas Roddick**, surgeon, promoter of the Joseph Lister antiseptic methods of sterilization, deputy surgeon general of the Northwest Rebellion expedition, whose family burial monument is modelled after the **Roddick Gates** (insert link to: <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2016/12/restoration-of-roddick-gates/>) at the entrance to the downtown campus of McGill University; **Reverend William Squire**, the first person buried in the cemetery on October 19, 1852; and **David Thompson** (insert link to: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/david-thompson/>), explorer, astronomer, surveyor, who died penniless with no grave marker. In 1926, 70 years after his death, the Canadian Historical Association erected a monument with the epitaph: "To the memory of the greatest of geographers who for 34 years explored and mapped the main travel routes between the St. Lawrence and the Pacific". No mention though where Martha, his beloved Métis wife of 58 years, is buried, and who died a mere three months after him.

Cemeteries come and cemeteries go

"From an early age we are all well aware of where we are heading – 6 feet under – but little did we know that the 21st century would mix things up a bit. Checking out is cool now. You can be 3D printed into a clothes peg, or have your ashes sent into space so you become *actual* space dust. The downside is the death part, but we can gloss over that for now and try to get excited, or terrified in some cases, for what is to come for us and our loved ones." Source: www.lexikin.com/funerals/burial-alternatives/

From time immemorial humankind has seemingly had a need to bury and commemorate their dead. As we run out of space, certainly in cities, we are trying to persuade ourselves there are a variety of less space consuming ways, such as cremation and columbariums, memorial forests and gardens where the deceased ashes are intermingled as fertilizer in the roots of trees, bushes and flowering plants; and other, sometimes more ecological and sometimes not, options such as: sea burial, river burial (ice urn burial anyone?), home burial, tree burial, cliff hanging coffin burial (yeah, it was a thing), mummification, and being made part of a coral reef, as well as: exposure, promassion, cryonics, aquamation, resomation, dissolution, plastification or plastination, memorial diamond or 3D ornament making, or vinyl compression - with the option of your voice being included on the LP recording. Or maybe you'd prefer being mixed into paint and made into an artwork, or sent up into space, or exploded in a firework display - maybe even one day at the Fireworks Festival at La Ronde? What a way to go with all those thousands of people watching your last "hurrah" from the Jacques Cartier bridge, or the banks of the St Lawrence river. However, many of these are, as yet, still perhaps too squeamish-making for most people to gravitate towards, at least in the short-term. Change happens, but oh so slowly.

Most of us though (except perhaps for Projet Montréal, it seems) accept that change takes time. We might get there, and some of us might not, but what's certain, especially as far as certain religions and burial rituals are concerned, no one is, as yet, on the same page at the same time. Neither, it seems, are we in accord about the closing of the road over the mountain that runs along side the cemeteries and the park.

Once 'non-Catholics' had the St Lawrence-Dorchester Burial Grounds

What is maybe less well-known is that Mount Royal Cemetery was not Montreal's first or only Protestant and non-denominational burial place. Apart from those interred in Protestant (and Catholic) churches and churchyards i.e. those plots of land surrounding church buildings, those of the Protestant and other faiths were also buried in a now completely vanished downtown cemetery - known under a variety of names as: the St Lawrence, the Dufferin Square, or the Dorchester Burial Grounds - located on and around the site of the former Dufferin Square in the area stretching between Viger and today's Complex Guy Favreau on Blvd René-Levésque West (previously Dorchester), just outside the old walls of Ville Marie (Old Montreal) and close to that dividing line between east and west Montreal. When that cemetery was closed some, but not all, of the bodies were transferred, meaning they are still being uncovered, some as recently as 2017 during roadwork on René-Levésque near the Hydro-Québec building.

"... "But the burial grounds were not reserved for the wealthy, says Brian Young, emeritus professor of Canadian history at McGill University (and author of *Respectable Burial: Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery*). They also became the resting place for the farmers, railway workers, ship-builders and cabinetmakers who made up the vast majority of the Protestant community of the day. In death, rich and poor from various denominations came together in a single meeting spot – Scottish Presbyterians, British Methodists, American Congregationalists, Anglicans and others. The cemetery also buried Jews and excommunicated Catholics...It was part of Montreal's multicultural experience." " *Whose bones are these?*, Ingrid Peritz, *Globe and Mail*, July 24, 2017

By the way, Montreal's or Ville-Marie's very first cemetery was on the site of Old Montreal's [Musée Pointe-à-Callière](https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/) (insert link to: <https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/>), and as the settlement and later the city grew, so did the need (understandably) for larger and larger burial grounds, mostly always located outside city boundaries (except for those around and inside some churches and convents).

Whereas the Catholics had Cimetière St-Antoine

"In the nineteenth century, most cemeteries were built next to churches, to allow worshipers to pray for their departed loved ones. The cemetery was located on the current Dorchester Square. A solution had to be found when the City Council of Montreal adopted a by-law prohibiting burials within the limits of the city, in 1853. In 1854, the Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal purchased some land on Mount Royal from Dr. Beaubien, in Côte-des-Neiges. The first burial of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery was on May 29, 1855; it was of Jane Gilroy, a young 35 year old Irish girl." History - Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

The cemeteries that accommodated the corpses of the Catholic population of Montreal had moved to seven different locations between 1642 and 1855. In fact on the site of present day Dorchester Square and Place du Canada - those two welcoming downtown oasis-squares, lying north and south of Blvd René-Levesque (which was previously called Dorchester Street) - was once located quite a large Catholic cemetery - Cimetière St-Antoine.

When I arrived in Montreal in 1971, both sections of those squares were still called Dominion Square by most people, even though the southern part had been renamed - Place du Canada - in 1967, in commemoration of Canada's 100th anniversary; and the Sun Life Building (once the tallest building in the Commonwealth) was still referred to as the Dominion Square building (by some) even though this was a misnomer as that nomenclature actually belonged to another architecturally imposing "comb shaped" commercial building built in 1912 (a year before the Sun Life building) located to the north of the Square with facades on both on St Catherine St and on Dominion Square and whose actual name was the [Dominion Square Building](https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/stories-of-montreal/article/dominion-square-building-an-architectural-landmark/) (insert link to: <https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/stories-of-montreal/article/dominion-square-building-an-architectural-landmark/>). (It was also the location of my very first job in Canada). It once boasted two floors of exclusive shopping galleries connected by Montreal's first wooden escalators.

As Montreal has a long-running habit of doing, in 1987-1989, the City shuffled street names around yet again. In 1987, it had moved unusually swiftly, a few weeks after the death of Quebec's polarizing sovereignist premier René Levesque, to rename Dorchester Blvd, the 8-lane east-west boulevard that

Jean Drapeau and City Hall had created in 1955, in his honour. Then in 1989, no one quite knows why, it decided to apply the name Dorchester to the northern section of Dominion square and to an adjacent, now traffic-free street on its north side, thus leaving the majestic Dominion Square building without its namesake adjoining square.

"The remains of some Montrealers remain buried under the square, in some cases just centimetres from the surface. To commemorate the area's history as a graveyard, crosses are etched into some of the pavement stones in both Place du Canada and Dorchester Square." Andy Riga, Montreal Gazette, November 12, 2015

What is less known is that the St Antoine burial site, in use from 1799 -1854 was initially only supposed to be a temporary burial site that had been rushed into service as a result of several cholera epidemics. Then in 1853, the City of Montreal banned downtown burial sites altogether, fearing further disease outbreaks, especially cholera, since it was thought the decaying bodies of those who died of the illness might infiltrate and poison the ground water and so transmit the disease to the living.

Circumstances combined, leading to the decision in 1852 by la Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal, the administrator for all the large Catholic cemeteries, to purchase "farmland" further north on the other side of Mount Royal on Côte-des-Neiges. It also undertook, the later removal of some, but not all of bodies from the old Catholic burial ground to their present location in what is now North America's 3rd largest interment site - Cimetière Notre Dame-des-Neiges. Although records are by no means complete, it seems as though only a small portion of the interred corpses were actually moved. Reasons varied but once again it was partly due to the fear of transferring diseases but also because there were substantial costs involved such as: location of the body, removal from the gravesite, transport to the new interment site, plus purchase of a new burial plot. Not everyone could afford those type of elevated costs, so today they rest in anonymity in unmarked graves under the two downtown squares.

It should be remembered that in both instances, all these locations were originally in the countryside when they were first used as burial sites. In the case of the current Mount Royal cemetery that was a hundred and sixty five years ago. And the City of the Living simply grew up around them, much as the City of Montreal had previously expanded from its original site in present day Old Montreal, which once had also been located behind its walls and a fair distance from both Dufferin and Dominion Squares, and especially in the mid-19th century, from the Côte-des-Neiges farming area located far away on the other side of the mountain.

Thus, it's thanks to the existence of Montreal's old St Antoine cemetery that today downtown Montrealers can enjoy a nice square and park, although Place du Canada could certainly do with a few more trees, to help cool it down in summer, but which are, nevertheless, appreciated by both citizens and visitors to central Montreal, all due to the previous existence of that now paved over, and pretty much forgotten, Montreal burial place. Otherwise, it could all have been towering skyscrapers and wind tunnels by now, like much of the area surrounding it.

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 9

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

DEAD LAST II

"I hope, sir," pleaded the abashed Mr. Cruncher, "that a gentleman like yourself wot I've had the honour of odd jobbing till I'm grey at it, would think twice about harming of me, even if it wos so—I don't say it is, but even if it wos. And which it is to be took into account that if it wos, it wouldn't, even then, be all o' one side. There'd be two sides (or more) to it." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book 3, Chapter 9

Engaging in the business of death

This Dickens' character, Mr. Jerry Cruncher, a grave robber by night and a porter for Tellson's Bank by day, espouses some engaging moral relativism in the above extract. Certainly it's shocking he digs up graves. Then again, if we think back, between medical schools, doctors, medication, medical bills and procedures, morticians, embalmers and funeral homes, notaries, lawyers, florists, churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and burial grounds, and in this day and age, governments, a great many persons, institutions and corporations have, over the centuries, made some money off a lot of dead bodies, haven't they? So his rationale is, why shouldn't he? After all is said and done, burying the dead, and in his case, digging them back up to harvest parts, is primarily a matter of business.

"A porter for Tellson's by day and a grave robber by night, he provides some of the little comedy in *A Tale of Two Cities*. His euphemisms create a topsy-turvy world in which grave robbing becomes respectable and prayer is degraded to "flopping." In digging up buried bodies, he parodies the theme of resurrection." Cliffs Notes, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016

Cimetière Notre Dame des Neiges - Canada's largest cemetery

"Founded in 1854 as a garden cemetery in the French style, it was designed by landscape architect Henri-Maurice Perreault, who studied rural cemeteries in Boston and New York"
[Wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre_Dame_des_Neiges_Cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_des_Neiges_Cemetery)

The Fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal (i.e. the non-profit organization that has managed the parish of Notre Dame and its extensive archives since 1642, including the Cathedral on Place d'armes in Old Montreal) has also owned and managed the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery since 1854: "The cemetery is one of the jewels of Montreal's religious, cultural, historical and architectural heritage" so reads the text on their website. Today, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges is the largest cemetery in Canada with one million plus people buried there, and is the third largest in North America.

"New ideologies, associated with the movement, brought about the design of the "picturesque landscape" as seen in the Catholic and Protestant cemeteries on Mount Royal created in the 1850s. These two cemetery landscapes were designed according to a popular trend first adopted in the creation of Père Lachaise Cemetery (1804) in France, and later utilized in such cemeteries as Mount Auburn (1831) in Boston." Meredith G. Watkins, Department of Geography, McGill University, August, 1999

Unlike Mount Royal Cemetery, who went with J-C. Sydney, an American civil engineer and surveyor, for its initial design, the Fabrique reached out to French landscape architect Henri-Maurice Perreault, who, although he had studied the rural cemeteries in Boston and New York, also took inspiration from the very first garden cemetery in Paris, the Père Lachaise Cemetery created in 1804. Thus, the Cimetière Notre-Dame was founded in 1854 as a garden cemetery in the French style.

Previously and predominantly Catholic and francophone, with the huge waves of immigration that began in the second half of the 19th century in Montreal, the Cimetière Notre-Dame was required to adapt and become more inclusive, and in fact, its first recorded burial was not a Catholic francophone person at all, but an Irish woman, Jane Gilroy McGready, the 35 year old wife of Montreal city councillor Thomas McGready.

Thus, Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges has been open to the various Christian communities of varying national heritages since its foundation. This, eventually, resulted in the development of different sections where those of similar cultural background could be buried with others from the same geographic and cultural heritage area of the world, if they so wished, resulting in a multitude of different architectural "styles" for the grave markers. First French Nationals in 1894, then Chinese Catholics in 1917, and so on. Today there are different sections established for those of Greek Orthodox, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, and Serbian descent.

There is even the grave of a Huron man, who died in 1690 at the age of 100. A great age for a man living in those times. He had been baptised into the Catholic faith by the famed Jesuit priest, Jean de Brébeuf, who, as a direct result of his missionary work among First Nations' peoples, in particular the Huron First Nation, that he later became known as the Apostle of the Hurons. Brébeuf was martyred in 1645, and eventually canonized as a Saint of the Catholic Church in 1929. Somewhat inexplicably the indigenous man's bones, it seems, have not, for a variety of reasons, been permitted to lie in peace, having been exhumed three, and buried four times, in the intervening centuries, the last time in 1992. Thus, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery is now "hopefully" also the final resting place of centenarian François Thoronhiongo of the Huron First Nation.



Caption: Grave marker of centenarian François Thoronhiongo of the Huron First Nation Source: Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

Burialplace of (some) of the rich and/or famous

Some famous (and infamous) Montrealers, Quebecers, and Canadians are buried in the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, but the majority of those in most of the million graves are understandably not quite so famous, or indeed rich. However, among some of the more well-known names are:

From domain of the arts: actress-comedienne, Janine Sutto; architect, Ernest Cormier; artist, Jean-Paul Riopelle; author, actor, director, playwright, politician, producer, Gratien Gélinas; composer, musician, Calixa Lavallée; poet, Émile Nelligan; René Angélil, promoter-manager-husband of Céline Dion; radio and television personality and host, actor, singer, performer, Jacques Normand; singer-performer, "[La Bolduc](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/madame-bolduc-emc/)" (insert link to: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/madame-bolduc-emc/>) (proper name - Marie or Mary Travers); and writer, essayist, journalist, criminologist, Alice Poznanska-Parizeau.

From the worlds of business and politics: Lord Thomas George Shaughnessy, President of Canadian Pacific Railway; Pierre Peladeau, media mogul; as well as politicians/business people of all stripes, including two 19th century Fathers of Confederation, Sir George-Étienne Cartier, co-premier of the Province of Canada, lawyer, rebel, railway promoter, French Canadian politician; and **Thomas d'Arcy Etienne Hughes McGee** ([insert link to: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/thomas-darcy-mcgee/](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/thomas-darcy-mcgee/)), assassinated Irish-Canadian politician, Catholic spokesman, journalist, poet, whose passion for Confederation garnered him the title of 'Canada's first nationalist'. Along with Charles Wilson, businessman, politician, 7th Mayor but first elected Mayor of Montreal, Senator after Confederation when the parliament moved to Ottawa; Sir Louis-Olivier Taillon, 19th century Quebec Premier; 19th-20th century politician and publisher, Henri Bourassa; Laurent-Olivier David, a 19th-20th century journalist, lawyer, politician and senator; 20th century activist, feminist, reformer, senator and stateswoman, **Thérèse Forget Casgrain** ([Insert link to: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/therese-casgrain/](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/therese-casgrain/)); 20th century politicians, such as the first female Governor-General of Canada, Jeanne Sauvé, who was also a well-known journalist before entering politics where she held a variety of posts including the first Quebec woman named (1972) to a Cabinet post, and the first woman speaker of the House of Commons; Québec Premier Robert Bourassa; Québec Deputy Premier and Minister of Labour, Pierre Laporte, a French Canadian lawyer, journalist and politician, who was kidnapped and assassinated by members of the FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec) a separatist and Marxist-Leninist paramilitary group; plus a veritable "who's who" list of 20 Montreal Mayors from the 19th and 20th centuries, including: Jean-Louis Beaudry, Alphonse Desjardins, Jean Drapeau, Charles Duquette, James John Guerin, Sir William Hales Hingston, Camilien Houde, Médéric Martin, Louis Payette, Adhémar Raynault, Dominique-Sévère Rivard, Charles Wilson, and whose collective number represent almost half of all past Montreal Mayors (some of whom had multiple terms in office).

Military personnel: General Jacques Alfred Dextraze CC, CMM, CBE, DSO & Bar, KStJ, CD was a Canadian soldier and Chief of the Defence Staff from 1972–1977; Arthur Mignault, MD was a French Canadian pharmaceutical entrepreneur, physician and colonel of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, serving in the First World War.

Finally, from the world of sports: hockey hall of famer, **Harry Hyland** ([insert link to: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/mystery-nhl-first-game-montreal-1.4049433](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/mystery-nhl-first-game-montreal-1.4049433)), who scored the NHL's first hat trick at The Arena in Westmount at the first ever NHL professional hockey game that took place on December 19, 1917 between the Montreal Wanderers and the Toronto Hockey Club; hockey legend, **Maurice "the Rocket" Richard** ([insert link to: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/rocket-richard/](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/rocket-richard/)); professional wrestlers, Adolfo Bresciano, better known by his ring name Dino Bravo, and Jean "Johnny" Rougeau; and famed sportscaster, René Lecavalier.

"Marc Lepine...killed fourteen women and injured ten other women and four men in just under 20 minutes before turning the gun on himself." Source: [Wikipedia.org/wiki/École_Polytechnique_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/École_Polytechnique_massacre)

Those in the "infamous" category include Marc Lepine, perpetrator of the Université de Montréal's Ecole Polytechnique massacre in 1989, and Canada's worse mass shooting, who shot 28 persons,

killing 14 women, and injuring 14 more (10 women and four men); as well as Bill "the cat" Blass, bank robber and also murderer of many. His most notorious act was the burning to death of 13 people in a Montreal bar (Le Gargantua) in 1975, which, until the Marc Lepine's despicable shooting spree, had ensured he held the dubious "title" of murderer of the largest number of citizens at one time, and whose gravestone epithet reads: "freed for God, freed from mankind."

For the dead - the uniting power of military service and of war

Since Cimetière Notre-Dames-des-Neiges and Mount Royal Cemetery are operated and managed as distinct entities, there is a fence separating the two i.e. one does not drive, cycle or step easily or seamlessly from one burial ground to the other. This probably explains somewhat why it is that Mount Royal Cemetery is on a well-known cyclist route around and on the mountain but not so much Notre-Dame-des-Neiges (although that is seemingly set to change with the advent of the new maps and the beltway route); and however much the proponents of the Mount Royal Heritage Area (MRHA) claim it as part of the walking/hiking/cycling parcours. It is, in fact, the reason for the two gates (one from each cemetery) that open onto Remembrance Road. There does exist, however, one opening in the fence between them. It is where two adjoining military sections are located (one in each cemetery). It has led to some thinking that there is another distinct cemetery on the mountain, i.e. a military one, which is not quite the case. An estimated 1000+ military service personnel are buried in this area of the two cemeteries.

"Shortly after World War I, to emphasize the comradeship and uniformity of sacrifice of Protestant and Catholic soldiers, the Imperial War Graves Commission insisted on an open passage between the two plots and a **Cross of Sacrifice** (insert link to: <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/national-inventory-canadian-memorials/details/4001>) was erected. There are 445 identified Commonwealth service war grave burials commemorated here, 252 from World War I and 215 from World War II. Those whose graves could not be individually marked are named on bronze plaques attached to the Cross of Sacrifice. The Quebec Memorial on the **National Field of Honour** (insert link to: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Field_of_Honour) in Pointe-Claire lists 24 servicemen buried here, whose graves could no longer be marked or maintained, as alternative commemorations." [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre_Dame_des_Neiges_Cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre_Dame_des_Neiges_Cemetery)

Some rich, some famous, some just very unlucky

Mount Royal's two largest cemeteries are also the repository of a few of the graves of some of the victims of the Titanic sinking in April 1912.

In Mount Royal cemetery, you can visit the final resting places of Titanic passengers, such 35-year old Liverpudlian, **Joseph J. Fynney**, (Section G- 1701A), and of businessman and President of the Grand Trunk Railway, **Charles Melville Hays**, along with his wife, **Clara Jennings Hays** and daughter, **Orian Hays-Davidson**, as well as a memorial stone to Orian Hays' husband **Thornton Davidson** whose body was never recovered. Clara and Orian survived, the two men did not (Pine Hill Side, 246). There is another memorial stone dedicated to **Henry Markland Molson** (Section F-1), whose body was also never found.

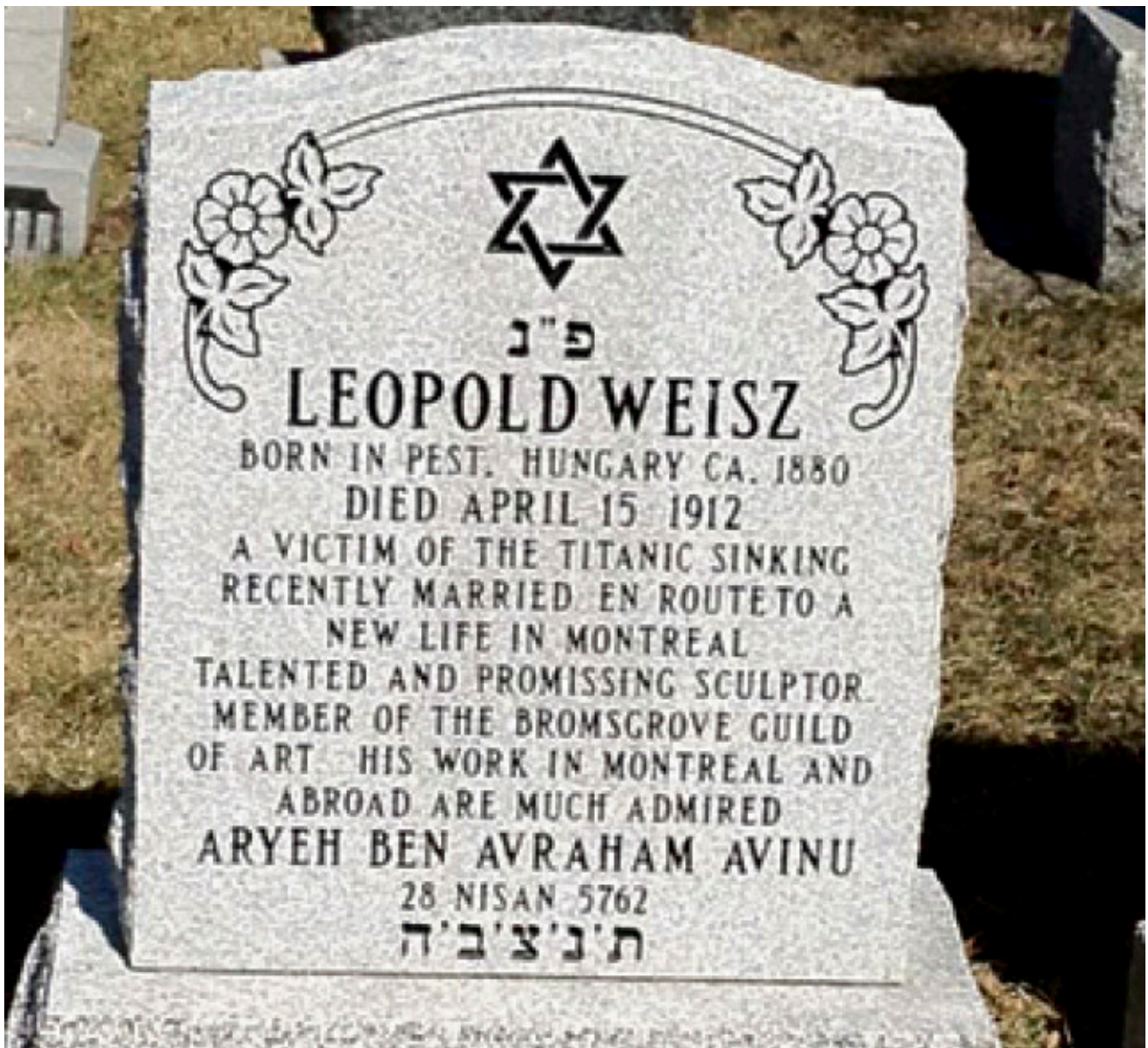
Whereas in neighbouring Notre-Dame-des-neiges cemetery are found the graves of Titanic passengers Vancouver banker **Thomas McCaffrey** (Section B2139), and **Hélène Baxter** (who survived), although her son **Quigg** drowned and his body was never recovered. Thus, next to Hélène is a memorial marker for her son (Section T469). Other survivors of the sinking, who were later buried there include **Paul Achille Maugé**, who was a kitchen clerk working in the Titanic's à la carte restaurant (Plot V5123) and **Mathilde Weisz-Wren** (Section TR7532).

The Belgian-born **Mathilde Françoise Weisz** (née Pède) was one half of a pair of newly wed, star-crossed lovers. Her husband was the talented young Jewish artist and sculptor, **Leopold Weisz** ([Insert link to: http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/headstone-now-marks-titanic-victims-grave](http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/headstone-now-marks-titanic-victims-grave)). He was a 32 year-old British-trained, Hungarian craftsman, who had already achieved some modicum of fame in Montreal by creating the carvings on the frieze at the top of the original building housing Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts that opened, in 1912, on Sherbrooke Street (and which is now known as the Horstein Pavillion). He also sculpted the stone shields of nine of the Canadian provinces found on the former Dominion Express building on St Jacques West in Old Montreal, then the heart of the financial district, where they can still be viewed today. He was travelling back from England to Montreal in the company of his new wife, intending to go into partnership with Edward Wren, because Montreal, then in the middle of a building boom, offered the opportunity to make an excellent living for a skilled artist such as he was.

"According to Encyclopedia Titanica, the couple were to have travelled earlier on another ship – first class – but because of a coal strike, they were re-directed to the Titanic, which was making its maiden voyage." Janice Arnold, *Canadian Jewish News*, April 1, 2012

They were travelling in 2nd Class on the Titanic from England a short time after their wedding and a few days after the end of Passover. She survived the sinking, he did not. In fact, the newly weds weren't even supposed to be on that ship, but should have departed some time earlier, travelling in First Class on another vessel; however, as a result of a coal-strike, they had been advised to re-book passage with White Star Lines on the Titanic, then preparing to undertake its (ill-fated) maiden voyage.

Weisz paid 26 pounds for their tickets and luckily for his wife, he had sewn the rest of his money into the lining of his coat. When his body was recovered, so was the money, to the great relief of his wife, who by that time was set to be deported back to England. She had been deemed by authorities as friendless and destitute, and who, as one might imagine, understandably enough, was grieving her husband's untimely death and probably also dreaded the thought of another transatlantic crossing so soon after her disastrous and terrifying first one.



Insert photo of Weisz's 2012 grave marker

The grave-marker of Leopold Weisz Source: Jewish Canadian News

However, Weisz, himself, wasn't laid to rest in any of the Mount Royal cemeteries. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Baron Hirsch Jewish cemetery on rue de la Savane. It was only a 100 years later, in 2012, on the 100th anniversary of the Titanic sinking, that his grave was located and a marker was raised to him, identifying him as a victim of the Titanic sinking. In fact, his was the 293rd body recovered out of a total death toll of 1,517 persons. (Shame after all that time that the stone's engraver misspelled the word 'promising'. Thus, even in death he wasn't very lucky.)

"Mathilde's resting place also went unmarked, until 2003, when a monument was donated by a local manufacturer and the Titanic International Society paid for the engraving." Canadian Jewish News, Janice Arnold, April 1, 2012

However, very much alone and friendless in a strange country, Mathilde Françoise Pède-Weisz, who was not Jewish, went on, in 1914, to marry her husband's former potential business partner, Edward Wren, and they settled in Westmount, where she attracted some fame as a Titanic survivor, as well as a talented amateur singer; and which is why she, but not her first husband, is buried in Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, when she died in 1953 at the age of 79. Although, Mathilde Weisz-Wren too, was buried in an unmarked grave, until 2003 that is, when a local monument manufacturer donated one for her, with the Titanic International Society paying for its engraving.

The cemeteries of Montreal's Jewish communities

The first three early Jewish cemeteries in Montreal were operated by Montreal's first three founding synagogues and they are now all currently located, adjacent to each other on the slopes of Mount Royal, ready to inter those of Jewish heritage and faith according to their beliefs and practices. In fact, one, the [Temple Emanu-El Cemetery](https://www.templemontreal.ca/life-cycle/death-mourning-2/) (insert link to: <https://www.templemontreal.ca/life-cycle/death-mourning-2/>), a Reform Judaism burial ground, actually lies within the Mount Royal Cemetery grounds, although it has its own distinct area. The synagogue itself was founded in 1882 by American Jews who settled in Montreal and, at the time, it was only the third Jewish congregation in Montreal and the first ever Reform congregation in Canada. Its inaugural meeting was held on St Catherine Street, and then in the basement of the Zion Church on Labour Street at the bottom of Beaver Hall Hill, moving to a new building constructed on Cyprus at Stanley Street in 1892. (Labour and Cypress Streets no longer exist.) As its membership increased, the Temple relocated once again in 1911 to the corner of Sherbrooke Street and Elm Street in Westmount, where it remains today. It is now known as the Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, following a merger in 1980 with the Temple Beth Shalom.

However, Montreal's and Canada's first synagogue was the [Shearith Israel](https://www.thespanish.org/250th-history.html) (insert link to <https://www.thespanish.org/250th-history.html>), now more widely known as the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. It was established 250 years ago, and for many years, it was Montreal's only Sephardic synagogue, although a number of its early members may well have been Ashkenazic. Its first cemetery was originally located in the area south of Dorchester on Janvier Street (which also no longer exists) near the much larger Catholic Cimetière St-Antoine. The land had initially been purchased in 1797 by one of its influential members, David David, for the burial of his father, Lazarus David. The following year, in 1798, David offered the land to the Shearith Israel Congregation as a site for the synagogue's burial ground. Nevertheless, it, too, was forced to close in the 1860s, as a result of yet another cholera epidemic in Montreal, in the 1850s, which had led to the City of Montreal instituting a ban on further burials within the city limits.

However, the writing, as the saying goes, had already been on the wall. Consequently, a few years prior, in 1854, the Shearith Israel Congregation had, with some foresight, purchased land, beside the new Protestant Mount Royal cemetery on Mount Royal. Shortly thereafter, an adjoining plot of land was also bought by Montreal's second-to-be-established synagogue - the [Congregation Shaar Hashomayim](https://www.shaarhashomayim.org/history) (insert link to: <https://www.shaarhashomayim.org/history>) - founded in 1846, and first known as the St Constant Street Synagogue. It is now also located in Westmount, although for a time it was housed in an architecturally spectacular synagogue building (no longer existing) on McGill

College. It serviced a growing Ashkenazi Congregation of English, German and Polish Jews. It's Mount Royal Cemetery opened in 1874. In 2016, the much beloved Montreal poet, troubador, musician, songwriter Leonard Cohen was laid to rest there beside his parents.

So, over the course of some years beginning in the 1863, the buried remains were removed from the relinquished St. Janvier Street site and reinterred at the boundary between these two new cemeteries on Mount Royal. Thus, it was that the deceased of these three Jewish communities were added to the great mix of the dead citizens of Montreal Island laid to rest on the side of Mount Royal in the latter half of the 19th century and beyond.

To the cemetery naysayers and detractors

To those who grumble about the existence of the City of the Dead on the side of Mount Royal and complain about its somewhat high-priced real estate, they should perhaps do some reading up about the cost of engaging in the burial business in Canada. A good resume can be found [here](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/the-battle-for-your-bones/article18852856/) (insert link to: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/the-battle-for-your-bones/article18852856/>). But as a business, it is not (excuse the pun) easy to kill since cemeteries also provide a much valued, and currently still required, service to all levels of society.

"By law...all Canadian cemeteries provide basic gravesites and dignified burials to families or individuals who cannot pay for them—services provided by municipalities at prices that often cover a fraction of the actual cost. Beyond that, they provide valued, often elegant green space, a version of parkland, even to those who will never buy a plot or spend a nickel on their upkeep." Charles Wilkins, ROB, The Globe and Mail, May 19, 2014

In addition, many of us, whether pedestrian, cyclist, jogger, or motorized vehicle driver, rich or poor, visit them for whole variety of reasons - to pay our respects, to talk to our dead, to grieve, to clear our heads, or for their beauty, for bird and animal watching, to take photographs, for some peace, or to meditate, and sometimes simply "to read them" much like a brief history book of our city and of our country that our cemeteries have come, each in their own particular fashion, to represent.

"With their green grass in summer, their shovelled paths in winter, their marble and granite and hardwoods, they are also a kind of reassurance; someone is watching out for the dead, and indirectly for their survivors. If not for eternity, at least for now." Charles Wilkins, ROB, The Globe and Mail, May 19, 2014

Time to step up and be counted

"I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people rising from this abyss, and, in their struggles to be truly free, in their triumphs and defeats, through long years to come, I see the evil of this time and of the previous time of which this is the natural birth, gradually making expiation for itself and wearing out." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens, Book 3, Chapter 15, The Footsteps Die Out Forever

Since we are humanbeings, there is always hope that circumstances, no matter what, in times of social and political upheaval can change for the better. But they won't, unless we make our needs and wants and voices heard. Hopefully without resorting to some of the extreme measures that have

bubbled up throughout the pages of history, whether real or imagined in the pages of historical or fictional story books.

Sign the petition

Make your opinion heard and counted. Do you want your parkway over your mountain and alongside your mountain park and the cemeteries to stay open, or do you want what Projet Montréal has already decided for you? Either way, step up and be counted, or like those already silent citizens of the neighbouring City of the Dead, forever hold your peace.

For those of you who would like to sign the petition informing Valérie Plante and Luc Ferrandez you don't think much of their pilot project or their closure of Mount Royal to transiting traffic, do please **take the time to sign** (insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>), if you haven't already done so.

Note: The text of the petition itself is in French (there was another one in English initially but this is the one most people, both French and English, are signing); however, if you don't read French, what you have to know is that it is simply asking you to sign up against closing the road to through traffic, which you can do in the box on the right hand side of the webpage.

The petition organizer, NDG resident, Michael Silas, who used to travel daily to his place on business on Blvd Mont Royal in the Plateau, transiting and enjoying the mountain in all its many moods on his way and bringing joy to his daily commute, like the same journey does for so many of us Montreal islanders who also loved to cross it for all our various personal reasons. He, and currently 37,900+ others who have signed, were hoping for at least 35,000 signatures by the time the pilot project concluded on October 31, 2018. They exceeded that and now hope for 50,000, which is probably optimistic but it's still a lot more than 8000 the equivalent OUI petition has garnered. Leave a message there too, if you care to. Its Comments section makes an interesting read, especially for English speakers daunted by the French on the OCPM site, and if you want to find out what a wide variety of your fellow islanders are thinking.

As for why the petition text is in French, he obviously wants to make it easy for Projet Montréal and the French-speaking folks at City Hall to read, and not simply ignore it (as they are seemingly endeavouring to do) but it's easy enough to see where to sign and your comment can be in English. (See [comments section](https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture/c?source_location=petition_show) (Insert link to: https://www.change.org/p/val%C3%A9rie-plante-non-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture/c?source_location=petition_show)).

Participate in the public consultation process with the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

In addition, Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges has an [online survey](https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en) (Insert link to: <https://www.cimetierenotredamedesneiges.ca/en>) on their website, where there is a short explanation in English and a link to their survey (in French). Unfortunately, as the survey itself is only

in French, do still try to do your best to complete it, especially if you have loved ones, friends and family buried there and if you want to express your dissatisfaction with the entryway on Remembrance Road being blocked to you. It is also important as this cemetery, and even more so the Mount Royal cemetery next door, are being taken over by cyclists moving fast on the winding paths.

Finally and most importantly, participate in the public consultation process with the OCPM - Yes, you can do it in English!

Even though several of Projet Montréal's "improvements" to Mount Royal Park appear very permanent in nature (pun intended), and it may mean this misguided attempt at forceable social engineering could remain on our mountain for a long time to come, and even if it seems an uphill battle (pun also intended) it is still worth reading up on and participating in the consultation process.

By the way, the **Office de la consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) Montreal's Public Consultation Office** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal>) has lots of info on-line (Portions of it, though not all, in **English** (insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/actualite/english-content>)).

May 2018 public information meeting transcripts now posted

The OCPM has also posted the information session recordings along with written transcripts from the two public meetings in May. Once again only in French but I found them very informative. Their documentation list can be accessed [here](http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7) (Insert link to: <http://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/voies-daces-au-parc-mont-royal/documentation#7>).

A Tale of Two Cities - Part 10

by Wanda Potrykus

What the closing of Mount Royal to through traffic symbolizes to some Montreal Islanders

BUT WHERE DOES THE STORY END?

"it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens



Liberty,
Fraternity,
Equality
-
Basic
rights

Caption:
Equality
(égalité)
Means
Equality
|
Access
for
All

Source:
Public

Domain

"We gaze...from Mount Royal, clothed in its early spring mantle; we look out upon scenes of richest beauty. I shall let them speak for me." William Hingston, Mayor of Montreal, *The Gazette*, Thursday, May 25, 1876

At the opening of Montreal's new Mount Royal park on May 25, 1876, then Mayor William Hingston told the collected dignitaries that although the mountain park would be a pleasure area for the wealthy in their well-cushioned carriages; it would also be a breathing space for merchants and skilled artisans. But above all, the park was for use of "poor laboring men who, fatigued and worn with toil, will seek to reinvigorate yourselves with the free air of Heaven." Thus, from day one it seems the intention, if not the reality, was that Mount Royal park would be for the use and benefit of **all** Montrealers. It took us time to get there...almost 100 years in fact, but get there we did and now we are faced with losing that hard won "access for all" route. For it seems the existing roadway, yes, the one that goes up and over the mountain and that only opened less than sixty years ago is seemingly being modified in order to bonify and provide road access to what is in all reality a relatively small number of sport cyclists whose need for an open road so they can speed down one side of it at a momentum way above the posted speed limits. And they can't be ticketed for any infraction since in Quebec speed restrictions on roadways only apply to motorized vehicles.

Thus as we fast forward one hundred and twenty-two years, the hard won route that allows equal access for all and that many of us, along with our visitors, have enjoyed for the last fifty plus years is on the verge of being denied to us due to Projet Montréal's visored vision and the lobbyists from Velo Québec's predominantly self-interested one. In their world there's no place for equal shares for all and our mountain is definitely not for the use and pleasure of all. In their vision Mount Royal is predominantly "a unique training and fitness site for cyclists of all levels - a magnificent illustration of *Montréal, physiquement active!*" The Projet Montréal administration with their ban of through traffic on roads that skirt the edge of the park and on people and traffic that has had that access for the last almost sixty years and that are in danger of being closed forever to transiting traffic so that the "poor laboring men (and women) who, "fatigued and worn with toil" are summarily being banned from transiting the mountain to and from their place of work to again and from reinvigorating themselves with that breath of free mountain air and magical vistas. Add to them the physically and mentally challenged to whom "active transportation" and in many instances public transportation, as it exists, is not suitable for easy and timely access to "their" mountain and you wonder where all reason has departed to.

There are plenty of other options to the complete ban of transiting traffic as the previous installments of this present Tale of Two Cities saga have enumerated. But for those whom scrolling through the previous pages is far too long and arduous a task I provide the following summary:

What our mountain means to us

Mount Royal is more than mountain, more than a simple park. It is the place our city is named after, it is the soul and visual icon of our city. It is first thing most immigrants that came by ship see of the city as the boat bringing them here rounds the bend in the St Lawrence river and it is the physical landmark we orient ourselves with as we navigate the streets of our city. It is the first site we show our visiting friends and relatives. As such it is so much more than just a place to walk, cycle or

practise our various sports and outdoor activities and it should never be reduced in the way Projet Montreal envisages.

The mountain "belongs to all Montreal Islanders". For some (including our indigenous peoples) it is our "soul" or the "spirit" of our island. For most, it is our principal identity symbol of the place where we choose to live. Our situational icon, if you will. It is our green space, it is our gathering place (much as apparently some indigenous people used it for before the Europeans "settled" the island) and it **shouldn't** be reserved only for those fit enough to walk, or cycle up and down it, and for those travelling on public transport, or on the tourist buses. Plus, we shouldn't be coerced into spending huge amounts of time to take assorted metros and buses to get there and to transit over it, like a lot of recalcitrant children, who are being summarily disciplined and "taught a lesson" the hard way, in order to be converted, or persuaded to learn the time-consuming "joys" or "miseries" of public transit on our island. Finally, it's the place many of us come to bury our dead and later come to visit them to mourn and to be consoled amid nature's natural beauty and bounty.

Why we need to maintain our road access as is with unimpeded access both ways over our mountain

- For the majority of the population of this island and mountain city: 38,000+ people have signed an online petition requesting Projet Montréal keep the road open both ways and from both sides. (Insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/valérie-plante-non-à-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>) Whereas only 8000+ have signed a similar petition agreeing with the closure of the road to transiting traffic. (Insert link to: <https://www.change.org/p/oui-%C3%A0-l-interdiction-de-traverser-le-mont-royal-en-voiture>) That's 4.8 times more against the idea of blocking transiting traffic than are for it. So why is it some petition numbers count more than others in the eyes of Projet Montréal?
- For the disabled and those with limited mobility issues: Need parking access from both sides of the mountain and easy access between the two parking areas. Above all we need our independence or at least a semblance of it. The forms of public transit available to us are limited at best and take far too much time out of already difficult days to utilize;
- For our mental health: daily access to greenery, sky, trees, birds, beauty, fresher air;
- For caregivers, grand-parents, parents transiting to care for children, elderly parents and to take children to school, day-camp, hockey and other games. Parents and care-givers shouldn't have to take 1.5 hours to drive each way around the mountain as it did this summer (roadworks on Cote St Catherine, Laurier, St Joseph, Doctor Penfield, Pine, etc) with all the ongoing road works in progress and continuing i.e. The REM station being constructed in Outremont will be an active and dangerous work site for the next four years. The nightmare of driving around this mountain continues and will continue. Pine

and Penfield regularly get blocked (such as 10x per summer for Alouette games, as does Cote St Catherine;

- For workers, school children and students going to and from work/school/sports arenas;
- For countless numbers of citizens, visitors travelling back and forth across the city to socialize, shop, eat, go to exhibitions, sporting events and shows, attend medical, hairdressers, therapists' appointments, etc
- For the grieving and those seeking peace, tranquility, artistic inspiration: To access both of our cemeteries easily without confusing detours through parking lots;
- To avoid ghettoizing our island city: Block easy access to the different parts or neighbourhoods of our island city risks impeding and preventing easy access and visits. People are kept in their own areas simply because it takes too long or is just too difficult to get anywhere by public and/or private transport. Our worlds become smaller and less varied. We cease to spend money in different areas and the economy suffers. Shut-ins, retirement homes and hospital visits are curtailed or stopped because it just too hard and it simply just takes too much time. This is what happened this summer. I cancelled hair and other appointments; I gave up frequenting Plateau stores and restaurants, I visited the east end friends (some shut-ins) far less, I avoided my friends in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve due to road closures on Notre Dame for both roadworks and fireworks because my usual return route over the mountain was blocked to me. I gave up my sunset and sunrise views from Mount Royal. And my world shrank because of it. I lost access to my mountain and consequently I never went there and I missed out on its pleasures. I stayed home and I and my friends and my friendly merchants and shopkeepers were poorer for it.

Whose needs exactly are you prioritizing with your pilot project and your future plans?

By blocking and/or altering our access road axis you aren't improving access and safety since pedestrians will still, for the moment at least, have to walk alongside of the road as some cars are being allowed on Camilien Houde (although I question in the world of Luc Ferrandez and Mayor Plante for how long?). Plus, by adding an equally ugly, wooden, rough-hewn, jerry-built café-terrace to an already over-crowded belvedere further east along Camilien Houde that will need commercial vehicles to supply it, your "vision" is simply adding to the traffic and congestion.

Where was that written in Olmstead's plans? Oh, yes, according to the words of Charles Beveridge: "The concept of the parkway, and the term itself, has survived in modern times as a pleasantly landscaped drive for private vehicles that excludes commercial traffic." I think that covers more the private cars of your citizens rather than your restaurant supply trucks and your tourist buses don't you?

Whose needs exactly are you prioritizing with your pilot project and your future plans?

"Then, that glorious vision of doing good, which is so often the sanguine mirage of so many good minds, arose before him, and he even saw himself in the illusion with some influence to guide this raging Revolution that was running so fearfully wild." *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

What gives here? Whose "needs" are you prioritizing here? All you are doing is cutting off ease of access from both sides of "our" mountain to a great many of your citizens, so as to fit in with the agenda of just who exactly? Cut away all the obfuscation and it's predominantly to segments of the cycling community and the tour operators and tourists to whom you are handing over Mount Royal Park, while hiding behind the notion that you're really providing the pedestrian community and families better access (when in all honesty you truly aren't), and to simply make it sound as though it's benefiting wider segments of the community.

So it's somewhat unsettling to see the crude new belvedere (aka the *Belvédère Soleil*) and the equally québécoise new Hanging Café-terrace (aka *le Café Suspendu*) looming large. Is that what Mayor Plante means about it means about it being an "amazing opportunity to open up the mountain and...for people to go on the mountain and see spots and places they've never seen before because it was too dangerous for them to go across the road"? It's all a bit improvised isn't it?

How and where was it so dangerous to cross the road?

Where exactly was it that they couldn't cross the road safely? It's somewhat like the "Emperor's New Clothes" syndrome. You can tell the spinmasters have been at work. Tell us often enough, as the advertising and promotional dictum goes, and (theoretically) we'll all start to believe it. And solely in an attempt to justify a decision that 37, 938 (and counting) persons have already said they oppose. Thus, Projet Montréal is spending and has spent considerable monies to try to attract park goers to a newly constructed "lookout" and to a view from a stretch of road that citizens from both sides of the city have been able to see as they pass by on the bus, in a car, on foot, or by bike for years. They didn't need to cross the road to look at that view, and if they had really wished to walk to it, they could have done that safely enough by crossing at the stop sign at the junction of Remembrance Road and Camilien Houde in front of the Mont Royal Cemetery gates, and by walking safely against the oncoming traffic (as the rules of the road tell us to do) on a relatively wide median alongside the road. Now if you pass it by in a car (coming from the east side, of course) you no longer see the view because that oh so tacky bleacher-belvedere blocks it.

Fact is, Projet Montréal is making up stories, and spending huge sums of money to justify all their bad decisions as they go along. Much as Luc Ferrandez admitted:

" "To critics who say the city administration is improvising with this pilot project, Ferrandez replied, "Kind of." " *Montreal Gazette*, March 2, 2018

Where is the absolute need to make (at significant expense) Camilien Houde a "destination" by telling people about "spots and places they've never seen before". Perhaps Mme Plante and her decision-making team have never seen them before, but a great many other Montreal Islanders have, and will, no doubt, probably be completely underwhelmed by the "newness" and "excitement" of it all.

Roadway cafe with a view

It's also somewhat hard for most Montrealers (especially those from the west) to visualize just where, on that already overcrowded easternmost belvedere on Camilien Houde, they have constructed a café-terrace - hanging or otherwise? Fact is, they stuck it at the upper end of the parking area right in the middle of the entrance passage area, so now fewer cars will fit into this much visited viewing spot and those that are lucky enough to enter will be forced to try and navigate around it, as the resulting passageway is extremely narrow. As for the tour buses, it will be really difficult for them to enter and off-load passengers, no doubt meaning, at peak times if there is more than one of them, they will possibly choose to off-load passengers on the Camilien Houde roadway, so as to keep to their schedules. Talk about creating, not alleviating, more safety issues on Camilien Houde!

Insert view of Camilien Houde Belvedere parking and back of Café suspendu

Caption: Cafe Suspendu on Camlien Houde belvedere- blocking the view - July 18, 2018 Image: Jennifer Crane

No view at all for passing motorists, cyclists, or public transit users

Also by "designing it" this way, they have effectively blocked the view from the road to passing traffic of any sort. As often, when the Camilien Houde belvedere parking was full, as it usually was in the summer, with the area overcrowded with waiting buses and vehicles hoping one of the parked cars would reclaim its occupants and depart, so freeing up a space. But the fact was, one's visitors could still enjoy the view while driving slowly by and not stopping, since it was already difficult to find parking there at the best of times, especially when the tourist buses were all crowded in there. Now they've simply reduced the parking area even further with their ill-conceived, and did I mention ugly "Café Suspendu", and passing traffic (buses, cars, bikes, etc) can no longer "see" the view, either at the Belvédère Soleil, or at the Belvédère Camilien Houde. And that's supposed to be an improvement? Even less of a reason for the disabled, the infirm and the elderly to attempt to travel there by bus.

As for calling it a "pop-up" café, that's a misnomer if ever there was one. It's there 24 hours a day, blocking the view from passersby on the road 7-days a week, even if its scheduled opening hours are a lot less. Some pop-up! Not sure of the coiner of that description actually understands the concept.

Plus, when did the tender go out and the plans get drawn up to operate that new alcohol distribution venue? And how come the City can get a provincial liquor license issued on short notice when most privately owned bars and restaurant establishments in the rest of the City have to wait a year or two, or at times a lot more to get one? There was no public consultation about the installation of liquor vending establishments on Mont-Royal was there? Not that I recall. And did it go out to tender? But isn't that so very Montréalaise and a tad condescending and dismissive? "Let's give them another a café-terrace serving alcoholic beverages for them to visit and they'll be happy!"

Dangerous drop if you step askew?

In addition, haven't we already had two persons recently falling off that side of the mountain late at night? One in 2017, a 38-year old surgeon, who died, and the latest one in May 2018, a 21-year old, who was very badly injured. In fact, it took a considerable time for rescuers to retrieve their broken and mangled bodies, although it was never confirmed whether or not they had simply mis-stepped, were inebriated, drugged, dizzy, fatigued, or simply foolish? And I didn't hear anything about pedestrians being banned from the mountain for "safety" issues after those two unfortunate incidents happened? In fact, the response from the city spokesperson Alex Norris, Montreal city councillor, was: "We don't want to increase unduly the number of fences and structures in what is a

beautiful, natural setting". Yet, you construct an ugly, abysmal looking, makeshift "hanging" café without a murmur?

Plus that's twice as many as serious incidents as the one, unfortunate young cyclist killed by a traffic incident on the same area of the mountain in 2017, for which the visiting Californian tourist - the perpetrator of the illegal u-turn - was never charged, as it was determined: "We weren't sure we could get a conviction"!

"Death may beget life, but oppression can beget nothing other than itself. A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

However, for that infraction thousands of Montrealers and their visitors are being heavily penalized. There's something seriously wrong with that Projet Montréal logic! Potentially, both the surgeon and the cyclist who died were engaging in risky behaviour...one walking at night in a steep, possibly badly lit area, the other travelling at speed down a steep incline and unable to stop in time to avoid colliding with a tourist doing an illegal u-turn. Everytime you go out on the roads you have to be mentally prepared for other people doing stupid things. 100% security for everyone is impossible to achieve. We're humans, we do do stupid things. But both these errors of judgement were both accidents, however, they are not being treated the same in the minds of the biased politicians and lobbyists.

Why we need to maintain our parking areas as is with current access to the park from them

- The parking lots on the former Victoria Hospital site are not a viable option for the, elderly, the young, parents and kids, the physically and mentally challenged to get to and to find parking easily and wait for the shuttle bus service further up the mountain. They were impossible when the hospital was open and it won't get any better when they are used for visiting Mount Royal with the added inconvenience of a shuttle bus service thrown in. This "solution" simply doesn't easily accommodate the disabled, the elderly, young parents with strollers, skis, skates, picnic baskets, etc a family gathering necessitates as the current parking area does;
- Some visitors to the park visit both the cemeteries and the park. Reducing current parking area off Remembrance Road/Camilien Houde to open up the southern downtown side access to parking lots prevent this;

Transiting Mount Royal as a vital component for maintaining our mental and physical health

- *"I live in the west, I go to my shop in the east and I take this morning route to decompress. It gets my morning started in the perfect way, I see sunrises and it's being taken away from me," Richard Bennett, Montrealer, CTV Montreal, June 1, 2018*

- Studies conducted in the UK and reported recently in the ***BioScience journal*** (insert link to: <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/67/2/147/2900179>), published by the American Institute of Biological Sciences in 2017, indicate that daily or frequent exposure to nature for those living in urban areas provides significant mental health benefits, especially in the areas of ameliorating depression, anxiety and stress. Thus giving weight to those residents of Montreal island, who have stated their daily or weekly passage over Mount Royal helps "make their day". They may not know the exact scientific reasons this is so, but these experiments certainly back up their assertions (i.e. provide "scientific proof" if you will) and support their demands for their wanting to continue transiting Mount Royal (on the road alongside the park).

"Experiences of nature provide many mental-health benefits, particularly for people living in urban areas. The natural characteristics of city residents' neighborhoods are likely to be crucial determinants of the daily nature dose that they receive... the greatest benefits are provided by characteristics that are most visible during the day and so most likely to be experienced by people...Furthermore, dose-response modeling shows a threshold response at which the population prevalence of mental-health issues is significantly lower beyond minimum limits of neighborhood vegetation cover (depression more than 20% cover, anxiety more than 30% cover, stress more than 20% cover). Our findings demonstrate quantifiable associations of mental health with the characteristics of nearby nature that people actually experience." *BioScience*, Volume 67, Issue 2, Feb 1, 2017, American Institute of Biological Sciences

- It's NOT as though the Camillien Houde-Remembrance Road axis goes through the actual vast majority of the park. It runs along the edge and connects Montrealers with THEIR park and EACH OTHER. Almost ALL of the actual park is entirely car free and peaceful and is enjoyed by many right now. There's no need to go about "restoring peace and tranquility to the park" since it's already there. It's as though those who keep repeating this spin have never been into the actual park. The road that gets us to the park is pretty but REALLY traffic IN the park??!!! It's like reading and hearing Kellyanne Conway and her swarm of White House Republican spinners spewing "alternative facts". There are many of us who get themselves and their families and friends, their physically and mentally challenged neighbours and children along with strollers and picnic stuff, skates and skis transported there by car from ALL sides of the city and who enjoy and use our road to get to the car-free oasis of our park. Can we stop all this nonsense about "the autoroute through the park". It's untrue and it doesn't exist except in the spinmasters' minds and the politicians and cycle lobbyists who repeat it ad infinitum, as if saying it enough times will make it come true.

Mount Royal - A Park and a Parkway for All Seasons

Apologies for sounding like a broken record but what about persons with disabilities? So far all these changes proposed for and to Mount Royal to "improve park access and usability" all seem to focus on accommodating cyclists, joggers and hikers, and from what I can see there's not really any accommodations being made for any special access and other ways to accommodate those with disabilities and limited walking abilities, plus parents, grandparents and/or caregivers, both with or without young children in tow.

In addition, access to the cemeteries, especially that of the Mount Royal cemetery grounds, are being severely curtailed with this pilot project restrictions. Not only is access being restricted to both island

motorists and out of town visitors, by funnelling, those approaching from the west, off to the awkwardly placed Chemin de la Forêt entrance in Outremont. But by making Mount Royal cemetery even more complicated to reach for those from the west, accessibility, especially to some areas of the park and to the cemeteries for persons from both sides of the mountain, in particular, those with disabilities, is becoming even more of an issue, which no one from the City of Montreal or Les Amies de la montagne or the urban planners are really addressing. Everyone parrots out the same words but there's very little concrete action or care taken. Not surprising since it's never been a top priority, even with the city's public transport providers. Limited adapted transport availability, long book ahead times (no 'spur of the moment' travel plans for most users), overlong wait around times for pickup, drivers who "charge extra fees" for accomodating walking frames, etc. Impaired mobility accomodation is a "buzzword" but it really doesn't happen in practise. Wake up folks the population is aging. Try looking at us directly for a change rather than looking past us.

No one plans on having mobility issues but stuff happens

No one "plans" on being physically or mentally incapacitated but some are born into it and others have it thrust upon them at some point in their lives. Once I could run up Mount Royal from Sherbrooke to the belvedere and the cross and back most days before supper. Now I walk slowly and painfully using two walking sticks and I am unable even to make the relatively short distance from the Smith House parking lot to the Mountain Chalet at the Kondiaronk Belvedere. Sad (for me) but that's the reality of arthritis and other debilitating medical issues. This summer my "access" to my mountain was curtailed even further limiting me to Beaver Lake. I couldn't even get to Mount Royal cemetery unless I spent an hour in traffic to get to Outremont entrance and back the same way. it was too hot to make the effort so my mourning was done at a distance. Does the Projet Montreal administration care? Not seemingly. They are too eager pleasing the cycling lobby and the physically fit quite forgetting those of their tax payers who are incapacitated and thus unable to avail themselves of "active transportation" no matter which form it comes in (but whose contributions to the municipal coffers they are still quite willing to spend). Montreal parks, including Mont Royal, are supposed to be accessible to all as are the cemeteries, which are not parkland (not yet anyway and definitely not for conceivable future either).

Until this recent restriction on road use, Mount Royal Park was also a place for all seasons

All of seasons of life that is. When some of us were very young it might have been the first place we learned the joys of tobogganing, or skiing, snow-boarding, or skating being treated to a hot chocolate to warm up, or else our parents pushed us up Olmstead Road in our stroller (as we later did with our own child or children) to picnic, run around, float our makeshift boats, or perhaps go for a boat ride on Beaver Lake or skate there in the winter. Later as adolescents and adults, we hiked, or jogged, or some of us rode our bikes, up and down its many trails. It was the place we always brought out-of-town family and visitors, and/or we later brought our own families to introduce them to the joys of "our" mountain, and to the veritable "soul" of our city.

"I like to bike on the mountain, but as new father, getting the baby around is easier by car. To cross the mountain, when you have a kid, it's much more simpler that way." Victor Rodrigue, Côte-des-Neiges, CBC News, May 11, 2018

As we got older, and our bodies less able, we possibly used less and less of the mountain park pathways, steps and trails themselves but we did use the road as a way to access the cemeteries to visit our friends and loved ones, to grieve and to remember. We also perhaps stopped enroute at the Smith House cafe for a coffee and a snack, or sat by Beaver Lake and chatted about old times, or enjoyed the folk dancing on a summer evening summer. However, many of us as we aged, we used our car to take us there as public transport from where we lived meant far too many buses and far too much time spent travelling. With old age comes a variety of health issues, including chronic fatigue syndrome, which means the car is our preferred and to some of us, our necessary and only, method of getting around.

Mont Royal - Burial Place for our Dead Whether Some Like it or Not

To those who grumble about the existence of the City of the Dead on the side of Mount Royal and complain about its somewhat high-priced real estate, they should perhaps do some reading up about the cost of engaging in the burial business in Canada. A good resume can be found [here \(insert link to: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/the-battle-for-your-bones/article18852856/\)](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/the-battle-for-your-bones/article18852856/). But as a business, it is not (excuse the pun) easy to kill since cemeteries also provide a much valued, and currently still required, service to all levels of society.

"By law...all Canadian cemeteries provide basic gravesites and dignified burials to families or individuals who cannot pay for them—services provided by municipalities at prices that often cover a fraction of the actual cost. Beyond that, they provide valued, often elegant green space, a version of parkland, even to those who will never buy a plot or spend a nickel on their upkeep." Charles Wilkins, ROB, The Globe and Mail, May 19, 2014

In addition, many of us, whether pedestrian, cyclist, jogger, or motorized vehicle driver, rich or poor, visit them for whole variety of reasons - to pay our respects, to talk to our dead, to grieve, to clear our heads, or for their beauty, for bird and animal watching, to take photographs, for some peace, or to meditate, and sometimes simply "to read them" much like a brief history book of our city and of our country that our cemeteries have come, each in their own particular fashion, to represent.

Possibilities for Sharing and Caring for "our" mountain

- If necessary, the Camilien Houde/Remembrance Road axis can be closed at certain times of day to allow for road racer cyclists to train and race, for "cylovia" events, scheduled races, etc. Closure times can be clearly indicated on large computerized billboards at base of Camilien Houde/Mont Royal and at the Remembrance Road/Cote des neiges entrances. This happens in Europe with over-used tourist attractions and features why not here?
- Road kept open overnight 365 days a year so "night owls" and those returning late or going to work early from either side can benefit of the night/early morning skies and vistas;

- If deemed truly necessary, behaviour of road users can be modified through the use of improved security barriers, speed bumps, photo radar, even traffic lights, if they are really determined to be so necessary (not a given, by any means, as the existing stop signs such as those on Remembrance Road work well enough). Simply install more on Camilien Houde if speed is deemed to be such a issue, as it won't affect the cyclists. They mostly "blow through" most stop signs anyway, and if a physical separation for a dedicated bike and/or pedestrian pathways are needed they can be installed. My reading is that this action would **not** please the road racers as they would ideally still prefer to have access to all the current width of the road not just a cycle pathway width, which is too narrow to accomodate bunches of cyclists racing together;
- Concrete barriers to prevent U-turns should be installed if roadway safety is truly an issue not just a poor excuse for the rammng through the pilot project;
- Why not petition the Province to change Quebec's highway code to ticket cyclists for excess speed? Currently cyclists can go as fast as they like or can pedal and cannot be ticketed for exceeding the posted speed limits imposed on motorized vehicles. "Cyclists make up a large and vocal political pressure group. They have clearly cowed vote-seeking politicians to close their eyes to the obvious dangers posed by anarchic cyclists. The result is that a politically powerful interest group has succeeded in exempting itself from the laws of safety and common sense. Unfortunately, this is a recipe for disaster." Matthew P. Harrington, law professor, Université de Montréal, Montreal Gazette, Sep 25, 2015;
- Something is definitely wrong when tourist buses are allowed through transit on Mount Royal and the private vehicles of the citizens, who provide the funds through their taxes that pay for the upkeep (and all those unasked for special events and animation) are not. 70% of the City of Montreal's funding comes from residential property taxes and yet Projet Montréal wants to ban citizens from using a roadway along the edge of a park that we all help to fund and maintain through our heavy tax burden along with the extra taxes levied on motorists on their car registration and license fees? Tax the rich. Problem is most commuters aren't that rich, just trying to commute to work in a timely fashion so they can pay their taxes and keep them and their families' heads above water and many need to transit a natural block of rock that is a beloved but also immovable feature of our city. Plus adequate, accessible public transport is not available to all Montreal islanders and/or those off-Montreal commuters who work on the island and for whom the car is still (like it or not) the only viable means of transportation. Projet Montréal why not try viewing the world around you with a more nuanced spyglass? You are now responsible for maintaining viable access to this island city for a far larger amount of people who work and travel onto and off the island each day than merely your inner city denizens;
- Get rid of the ugly, embarassing, makeshift Belvédere Soleil and the Hanging Café-terrace on the Camilien Houde Belvedere. They block the view of those walking, cycling and driving past and who don't have the luxury of stopping or the ability or

manoeuvrability to climb up to view. However, it used to be possible to drive slowly past and enjoy the sunset or see the sun or moon rise over the city and the river below. That again is now lost to the passerby on the road. So if the Camilien Houde parking area was full one still hadn't wasted a journey up Mont Royal as one was still able to show it off to the visitors in one's car with a promise maybe to come back and park if time allowed later. Those summer "improvements" didn't improve our mountain they simply detracted from it as ugly and quétaine as they were/are. ([Link to: spoken word poem "For Shame, it's so Quétaine!"](#))

- Mont Royal doesn't need any more man-made improvements and structures. If anything it needs less and certainly not those ugly ones of "the summer of our despair" as 2018 has proved to be for a great number of Montreal islanders and their visitors. Mayor Plante your "structures" along with the tacky granite tree stumps of your predecessor, Mayor Coderre, embarrassed those of us who have long extolled the natural "beauty" of our island mountain, parkway and park.

Finally, make Mount Royal into a place for all seasons of life and one we can all be proud of with equal access for all Montreal. Stop bonifying some persons access and quit blocking others. Please provide us with Equal Access for All not just for some. Part of Mount Royal is a park bought and created for all Montrealers to come and relax and play in, not as a sports ground for elite athletes to train in or hold too many races in, or for mountain bikers to destroy or racers to run people down in. Part of Mount Royal is burial grounds. Part is roads, pathways and stairs to access it. Part of it people live in, get medical attention in, worship in, learn and study in, drive through, walk and cycle through and yes, park in. Respect that Mount Royal belongs to all of us. Not just a few healthy ones and not as a symbol of some political party's power to push through a personal political agenda that grossly favours some segments of the island population over others. Your current constituents are a lot more multi-dimensional than you seem to think we are. We want our access road back. We want our mountain back. It belongs to all of us and you are wrong to block us from accessing it the way we are/were happy and used to doing. There is a lot other work you need to be doing and paying attention to on the island of Montreal. Messing around with Mount Royal access road and parking area is definitely NOT one of them. Apparently just some ego/power trip you seem to be on. It's a clear waste of our hard-earned tax payers' money and trust.