

## **Redevelopment of Namur- Jean-Talon Ouest Area.**

I, Charles Hammer, am submitting this brief on behalf of Uptown Automobiles Inc., which is currently operating various automobile related businesses in three separate buildings at the following addresses:

4900 Pare, 4815 Buchan, and 4985 Buchan.

Our facilities at 4900 Pare, and 4985 Buchan have both been substantially upgraded and renovated in the past 10 years. All three buildings are currently in use to exploit the operations of a car dealership operating under the name Uptown Volvo. We employ between 50 and 70 people in a full time capacity depending on the seasonality of our business. We sell and lease new and used cars, as well providing after sales service for them.

This project is of interest to us because the plans which have been proposed show our three buildings being replaced by some form of residential housing, and because the nature of the streets giving consumers access to our buildings ( namely Victoria, Pare, Buchan, and de la Savanne) are planned to be changed substantially to our detriment.

I have attended two meetings organized by the Public Consultation Office, one for a select group of business owners in the area, and the other a public forum held on November 22, 2009. At these meetings the city planning department representatives have been very eloquent in explaining the reasoning and logic which is driving the need for the proposed changes. In principal, we are in agreement with most elements of the TOD concept, however we feel that the proposal is slightly "utopian" in its current form due to the fact that it shows a current picture (being sure to show the area at its worst) and a picture of the final result , without really addressing how the transition will be made from the perspective of the current business owners.

In both these meetings I was astonished to hear that both business owners and current residents of the area had the same concerns. Namely:

- Inadequate parking capacity
- ease of access by car
- indirect access by city bus.

On the positive side, the same groups agreed upon the benefits provided by:

- "greenifying" the sidewalk areas
- Addressing pedestrian issues.

Our concerns about this project, from the perspective of our business, are:

- What can be done to ensure our clients have easy access to our business with their car?
- What can be done to maintain and/or increase the amount of parking available in the area?
- How can this be achieved while meeting the city's goal of a TOD environment?

My office has a view of the corner of Jean-Talon and Victoria, De la Savanne, Buchan and Pare, which allows me a lot of time to observe the ebb and flow of traffic in this area on a daily basis. In my opinion enhancing the pedestrian experience in our area could be achieved by doing the following:

- Cancel the plan to have Victoria terminate at Jean-Talon, and allow it to cross Jean-Talon as it currently does.
- Eliminate the small passage way where Victoria bridges Pare and De la Savanne.
- Convert Pare, between Decarie and Jean-Talon into a two-way street with a "beautification" median dividing the two directions of traffic.
- Reduce the useful width of Buchan, between Mountain Sights and Pare, to a width large enough to allow parking on both sides, with one lane for traffic.
- Allow Buchan to exit only on the right towards Jean-Talon.

Adopting these changes would adequately address the concerns of local business owners by still allowing their clients the accessibility they currently have, while at the very least not decreasing the amount of parking available. For the current, and future, residents of the area the sidewalks would be more inviting and the street crossings less imposing than they are currently. Also, by keeping Victoria open, the possibility of having a bus line which goes past the doorsteps of the new residences, equidistant from the De la Savanne and Namur Metro stations, thereby truly embracing the TOD theory, remains in play.