

Le 11 avril 2011

M. Gilles Vezina

**L'Office de consultation publique de Montréal**

Cours Mont-Royal

1550, rue Metcalfe – Bureau 1414

Montréal (Québec)

H3A 1X6

**Re: PPU - Quartier des grands jardins**

Dear M. Vezina,

We have been mandated to submit the memoire below on behalf of the owner of the properties located between 1915-1933 Ste-Catherine Street West, at the NE corner of Towers. (See letter of procuration attached)

**Context**

We applaud the objectives inherent in the PPU – “Quartier des grands jardins”. We believe that many of the proposals put forth by the City will significantly improve the urban fabric of Ste-Catherine in this sector of the City, which certainly needs intervention and a requalification of the built form. We believe however that the PPU should go a little bit further in order to better achieve its ultimate objective.

There are a number of proposals put forth that are of particular interest for our property and which could act as catalysts to encourage building owners in the area to initiate improvements to their properties:

- En proposant la densification d'une partie de l'artère et la construction de logements aux étages supérieurs, et en annonçant une série d'interventions pour revitaliser la rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, le PPU appuie la relance immobilière de cet axe stratégique.
- Augmenter le nombre de propriétaires résidents en privilégiant une densification résidentielle des sites à redévelopper
- Soutenir le développement d'une offre diversifiée de logements afin de répondre aux besoins des jeunes familles, des étudiants, des personnes âgées et des clientèles marginalisées
- Des actions concrètes pour stimuler le dynamisme commercial de l'artère ainsi que l'accroissement de la population résidente au centre-ville.
- Le maintien d'une population résidente stable dans le quartier représente donc un enjeu important.



offer a diversity of quality residential opportunities for people to live in the central area. This reduces the pressure for urbanisation to spread outward, which challenges environmental sustainability due to the need for the construction of additional roads and infrastructure.

### **The nature of our intervention**

We believe that the City should be encouraged with the PPU to push further in its objective of residential densification and requalification of Ste-Catherine. The PPU proposes to increase in the Urban Plan the allowable height along Ste-Catherine from 25m to 44m between Lambert Clossé and the west side of Towers Street (See Figure 2). We question why it stops at this line and ask that it be extended further east past Towers towards Guy, to at least include our site and other similar heads of lots on Ste-Catherine that are in need of improvement and ideally suited to respond to residential densification and consolidation. These include corner lots on Saint-Marc, Saint-Mathieu and Pierce.



Figure 2

The site on Towers offers the ideal opportunity to crystallize the objectives inherent in the PPU and the Urban Plan. We have met with the City in order to explore the preliminary possibilities of an important project for this block. It is our intention in the short to medium term to realize a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment which would greatly improve the site. Maintaining a quality commercial frontage on the lower floors at the scale of the pedestrian, the project would set back to accommodate residential levels above. The existing buildings on the site are well over 100 years old and in less than desirable condition. The ability to benefit from an additional height passing from 25m to 44m would be a major impetus in driving a project forward and equates to approximately six residential floors.

### **Previous response of the City**

In preliminary documents to the PPU the City had shown a separation between a “secteur de développement” and a “secteur de conservation et d’insertion”. (See Figure 3) The City has been asked about what seems to be an arbitrary positioning of the line that differentiates between the increased development sector and the conservation and insertion sector. Interestingly, the geometry of the line has since been modified in the

final version of the PPU. The response of the City has been that the line relates to the “patrimonial character” of some of the buildings east of Towers, such as many Victorian row houses, as well as the relative “height and scale” of the sector east of Towers.

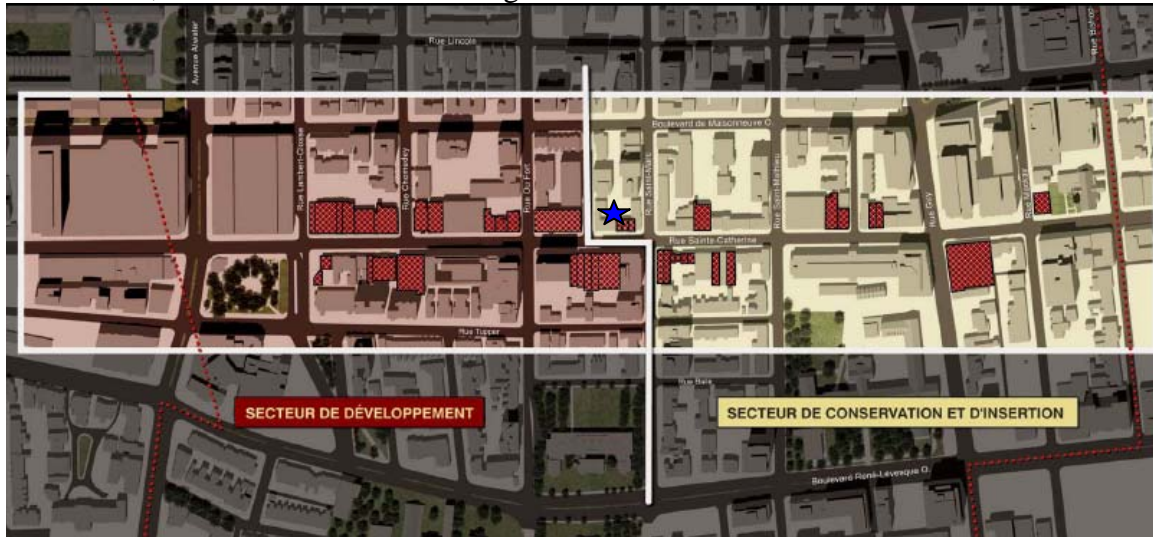


Figure 3 - Preliminary planning documents showing a split in the two parts of the sector

**Patrimonial character:** We question whether the City’s response is perfectly accurate. Our buildings were initially built in 1885 and were renovated about 50 years later. Although from a distance, the buildings may appear to possess a charming Victorian character, or a European style, a view from much closer illustrates that the architecture is not really Victorian at all but with replica Victorian details applied to the façade, with materials such as corrugated metal and stucco. (See Figures below).



Figure 4 – The property at Ste-Catherine and Towers





The structural integrity of our existing buildings at the corner of Towers is in bad condition. Furthermore, most of the quality Victorian architecture in the sector is further up or down the streets running perpendicular to Ste-Catherine, such as Saint-Marc, Saint-Matthieu or Pierce. There are a number of beautiful Victorian row houses that are also prevalent west of the site. The heads of lots actually fronting on Ste-Catherine do not possess the same architectural character. Many of these street corners represent an ideal opportunity for densification and the consolidation and improvement of the built form. These properties east of Towers should be included in the new densification initiative which would greatly improve these corners and this sector of Ste-Catherine. An improved built form for commercial purposes below with greater residential development opportunity above would encourage these owners to respond to the objectives of the PPU.

**Height and scale:** The City's response that their decision to stop the 44m increase at Towers, due to the prevailing height and scale of that part of the Sainte-Catherine corridor, also seems somewhat arbitrary. Immediately to the east, at the corner of Saint-Marc and Sainte-Catherine is already an existing 14 storey high rise residential building (See Figure 5). The prominence of the looming buildings of the Concordia campus at Guy also dominate the horizon. (See Figures 6, 7 and 8) The existing eclectic mix of low rise and high rise buildings to the east and west of Towers does not seem to follow any set urban planning pattern as far as height or density is concerned. There does not seem to appear to be a reason to stop the strategy of densification at Towers for reasons of existing height or scale.

As one of the major objectives of the PPU is to encourage current property owners to improve their properties with the possible redevelopment and densification of residential use, the initiative of increasing the height from 25 to 44 meters will have a positive effect. This objective should be consistent however and apply all the way to Guy Street in order to achieve the desired objective. If the existing zoning or height is frozen at its current ceiling between Towers and Guy, this desired effect is unlikely to materialize for this section of Ste-Catherine. By stopping the line at Towers, the City risks having the properties between Towers and Guy to remain in their current state, despite their obvious need to be improved. Incentives for property owners are important in encouraging the private sector to accomplish the City's own goals and results in a win-win scenario.



Figure 5 - The SW corner of St-Marc and Ste-Catherine



Figure 6 - The corner property at Towers and Ste-Catherine



Figure 7 - The corner properties at St Marc and Ste-Catherine



Figure 8 - The corner properties at Pierce and Ste-Catherine

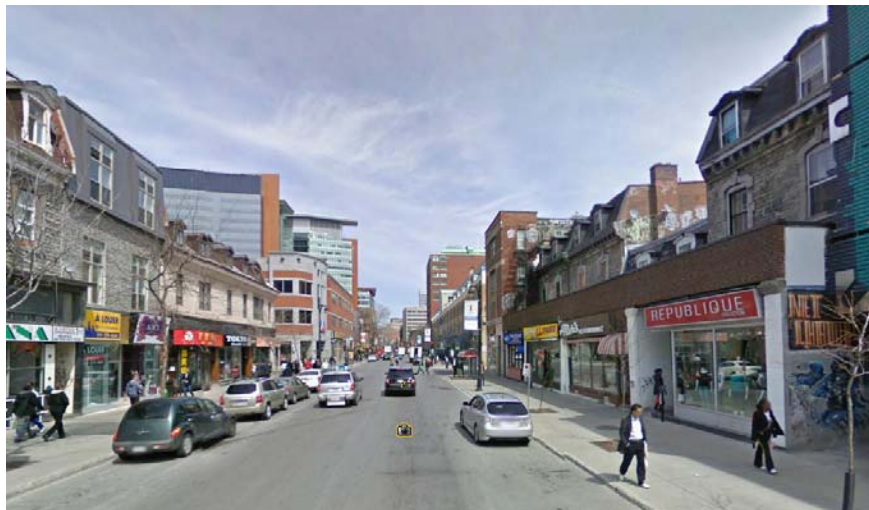


Figure 9 - The properties at St.-Matthieu and Ste-Catherine



## Conclusion

The PPU recognizes the importance of residential densification in the downtown core, as an overall urban planning objective in containing urban sprawl. The City is prepared to implement the specific measure of increasing the allowable density in the urban plan from 25m to 44m to encourage the strategy. This is an important measure in giving an incentive to property owners to redevelop and improve their properties. This will result in cleaning up and improving the commercial frontage along Ste-Catherine and also adding a wide diversity of new housing up above, which may also result in a greater availability of affordable housing. This strategy coalesces perfectly within the over arching objectives of Montreal's Urban Master Plan adopted by City Council in 2004.

**The planning objectives of the City:** The Master Plan's principal objectives can be summarized as follows: « de faire de Montréal une ville encore plus conviviale et dynamique en freinant l'étalement urbain, de consolider le tissu urbain existant et d'encourager le transfert des habitudes des Montréalais vers le transport en commun. Voici trois des pierres angulaires du plan destinées à favoriser l'atteinte de ses objectifs :

- La croissance considérable de l'offre résidentielle sur l'île
- La consolidation et la densification du cadre bâti, principalement vers le centre
- Le développement durable.

« Dans la région métropolitaine, on prévoit, entre 2004 et 2014, une augmentation de 150 000 ménages. Le développement escompté étant modeste, il faudra d'autant plus veiller à ne pas l'étaler et à consolider le tissu urbain existant, en renforçant notamment les liens entre les divers secteurs d'activités urbaines. Dans l'esprit du développement durable, cela contribuera à mieux rentabiliser les infrastructures et à mieux couvrir les coûts afférents d'entretien et de réhabilitation. » ... page 5 (Plan d'urbanisme de Montréal)

### **Favoriser la construction de 60 000 à 75 000 logements entre 2004 et 2014**

« Le défi est de taille puisqu'au cours des dernières décennies, la croissance résidentielle a favorisé le développement des secteurs périphériques de Montréal. La Ville se fixe l'objectif ambitieux, mais réaliste, de soutenir la construction de 60 000 à 75 000 nouveaux logements. Elle accueillera ainsi 40% à 50% de ces 150 000 nouveaux ménages (dans la région métropolitaine), alors que la part des logements mis en chantier sur le territoire de la Ville de Montréal entre 1994 et 2003 a varié de 22% à 34%. **Pour atteindre son objectif, la Ville devra donc consacrer d'importants efforts.** » ... page 25 (Plan d'urbanisme de Montréal)



« Par ailleurs, des défis importants doivent être relevés en matière d'aménagement et de consolidation du territoire. Sur une superficie totale de 500 km<sup>2</sup>, 26 km<sup>2</sup> sont encore vacants à Montréal. Quelque 11 km<sup>2</sup> de terrains vacants sont disséminés dans les secteurs établis. Les secteurs à construire, destinés à des fins d'habitation ou de lieux d'emplois, représentent également une superficie de 11 km<sup>2</sup>. **Il s'agit en fait de soutenir la reconstruction de la ville sur elle-même.** » ... page 6 (Plan d'urbanisme de Montréal)

**Accroître le dynamisme résidentiel vers le Centre**

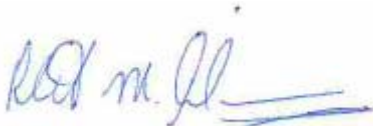
« Le Centre de Montréal est caractérisé par une importante population résidente qui lui procure une animation bénéficiant aussi de la présence des occupants des hôtels et des résidences étudiantes. Le Centre recèle toujours un important potentiel de développement immobilier, sous la forme de terrains vacants, sous-utilisés ou occupés par des stationnements qui se prêteraient à la construction d'environ 15 000 logements. Il présente l'avantage d'un environnement où les rues, les infrastructures d'égout et d'aqueduc et les réseaux de transport collectif sont déjà en place. **La consolidation de la fonction résidentielle au Centre contribuera ainsi au développement durable de Montréal.** » ... page 79 (Plan d'urbanisme de Montréal)

The PPU certainly is moving in this direction. However it stops short by limiting the objective of densification to stop at Towers. By allowing the increase in density from 25m to 44m to extend from Lambert Clossé further east to Guy, it would have a fuller impact. It would encourage many more properties on Ste-Catherine between Towers and Guy to also consolidate and improve their built form.

The Ville Marie Zoning bylaw and its careful review of all projects via its PIIA will ensure that the proper scale, the maximum acceptable height along the street of a basilaire, the volumetry up above and architectural integrity will be rigorously maintained. These new measures could have an extremely positive impact on Ste-Catherine and the City should not hesitate in moving forward quickly.

**Consultations Libcorp Inc.**

Par:



Robert Libman, O.A.Q.

**9170-1649 Québec Inc.**  
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4920 de Maisonneuve Blvd., Suite 107  
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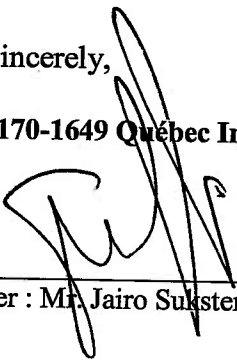
M. Gilles Vezina  
**L'Office de consultation publique de Montréal**  
Cours Mont-Royal  
1550, rue Metcalfe – Bureau 1414  
Montréal (Québec)  
H3A 1X6

Dear M. Vezina,

As the owner of the properties located between 1915-1933 Ste-Catherine Street West, we hereby authorize *Consultations Libcorp Inc.* and Robert Libman, O.A.Q. to submit a memoire on our behalf to the O.C.P.M. concerning the PPU- "Quartier des grands jardins.

Sincerely,

**9170-1649 Québec Inc.**



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Per : Mr. Jairo Sukster