

Memoir or Statement of Opinion on  
The Revalorisation of the Site of the former Garages of the M.T.Q.  
Arrondissement d'Ahuntsic-Cartierville

My name is Evelyn Kolish. I am the owner of a semi-detached bungalow situated at (...) rue Tanguay, which I purchased in December of 2010. I retired in July 2011, and moved to my new house in Ahuntsic a few months earlier from a two-storey home in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce as part of my retirement planning. I was attracted to my new neighbourhood in large part because of its quiet, peaceful nature, composed as it is of attractive parks and green spaces, and mainly residential streets with one and two storey single family dwellings, as well as modest three to five storey buildings, both residential and commercial, fronting on Henri-Bourassa. The proposed project of construction on the former site of the garages of the Ministry of Transport will undoubtedly have a direct and important impact on the quality of life on my street and in my neighbourhood as well as potentially affecting the value of my house. I therefore feel I have a legitimate interest in submitting the following reflections and recommendations on Mr. Musto's proposed development.

My overall opinion on the proposed development is that it is too high and too dense to fit well into the surrounding urban fabric, and that it is entirely unacceptable that the city authorities (both those of the arrondissement and of the central city) should have approved a project covering only a part of a potentially much larger zone without first having adopted a special planning programme (PPU) covering the entire sector (01-T5).

Briefly, the proposed 8, 10 and 12 storey buildings are higher than all the existing buildings along Henri-Bourassa from the eastern corner of de l'Acadie to Berri. No matter how well constructed they might be, they will give an essentially residential area, dominated by single-family dwellings, a profile more appropriate for a downtown area. People who live in our neighbourhood obviously did not come here for town centre densities or high-rise skylines, as the atmosphere in the three evenings of public meetings held for the purpose of information clearly showed.

In the presentation made by Mr. Sylvain Gariépy on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, he characterized the sector 01-T5 as "un trou béant" with an institutional function (line 414 of the transcriptions). He later suggested that the "dégagements accrus" (lines 446-448) resulting from this institutional function were important in justifying the radical change in height proposed in the project, implying that the lack of residential neighbours on three sides of the project eliminated the need to adjust it to surrounding standards. I would suggest the perceptions of those living around the 01-T5 sector are quite different—the existing institutional buildings being all of modest height and the area including a great deal of open grassy space, is not a "un trou béant" but an area that seems almost park-like and does not contrast in unpleasant ways with the residences to the east or west or to the north of the prison or to the south of Loblaws. Whatever replaces the current

institutional functions should knit seamlessly into the surrounding area and not stand out like a sore thumb.

The proposed project marks a radical departure from the surrounding area because not only would there be high-rise buildings along Henri-Bourassa, but even higher ones on the north side. In the eventuality that one or more of the current institutional property owners in the sector move elsewhere, in the future, the acceptance of Mr. Musto's project will have an undoubted impact in determining the fate of the rest of 01-T5. There is a grave risk that the entire sector will eventually be filled with high-rise apartment buildings—a huge block of downtown buildings inserted into a quiet residential district.

While neighbourhood facilities of all kinds may be able to absorb additional residents (although no studies seem to have been aimed at anything but wind, light and traffic), the high number of potential new residents that may appear quite rapidly, will put a strain on such facilities as local schools and parks. If future developments lead to further high-density buildings, these social stresses may well be exacerbated. As the promoter has no way of telling how quickly he can sell units or what kind of clients will buy, or even what the prices of his units will be, there is too much ambiguity for surrounding residents to be sanguine as to trouble-free integration of the newcomers. The possibility of future projects following on the same pattern can only further increase the anxiety of current residents as to the outcome.

Consequently, I would recommend that

- No projected development be approved until a special planning programme (PPU) is prepared and approved, not only by the arrondissement but also by the residents of the surrounding area
- That density and heights in the said PPU achieve an equilibrium between the city's intention to increase density on the island of Montreal and the existing urban environment

I thank the Office de consultation de Montréal for the opportunity to make my opinions known.