

Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal

Consultation on :

Quartier Saint-Raymond et les abords du futur CUSM

Mémoire submitted by

Sam Boskey

“Report on Consultation Meeting on Urban Plan for Saint-Raymond - April
11, 1990”

February 16, 2013

The pages which follow (invitation, questionnaire, report) describe a public consultation meeting that I organised on April 11, 1990 in the Church Hall of the Saint-Raymond Parish (5775 Saint-Jacques). The report was presented to municipal authorities and was publicised in The Monitor, the community newspaper at that time.

1990 was during my mandate as City Councillor for Décarie District (1982-1998) which included the Saint-Raymond sector. The City was preparing the first municipal-wide Urban Plan, eventually adopted in 1992.

I organised this meeting for two reasons:

- i) I had great difficulty with the style and the lack of depth of the consultations being organised by the City at that time. It appeared to me that, during the preparation of this plan, the City administration was missing an excellent opportunity to educate Montrealers about the importance of urban planning, to familiarise them with the tools of urban planning (including zoning), and to involve them in anything but the most superficial way in the planning of their community for the future. I set out to demonstrate that discussions on the impact of zoning on a community could be presented, understood and intelligently discussed in a community with a minimum of organisation and cost.
- ii) Daily life in Saint-Raymond was influenced by the consequences of various urban planning decisions of the past: the construction of the Décarie Autoroute which cut through the community causing several streets to disappear and many families to leave; the relative isolation of the community from the rest of the city because of the CPR tracks with limited crossings, heavy commercial and industrial traffic, local elementary schools which had either already closed (Protestant and French Catholic) or were being threatened with closing (English Catholic, since closed), multiple nuisances and inconveniences caused by a close proximity of residential, commercial and heavy industrial functions, etc. It was important that these issues could be articulated, especially by a community where both levels of formal education and mastery of English or French were sometimes low so that they could be seriously considered in the upcoming Urban Plan.

As the introduction to the report explains, door-to-door invitations in 3 languages brought out over 60 people on a cold snowy night on which there was a Stanley Cup hockey game. This would have been proportional to over 4000 people participating in discussions at the level of the CDN-NDG arrondissement, a far cry from the participation in the “official” consultation meetings.

An example of interest: On that night in April, 1990, the representatives of the City who attended asked me to take the pulse of the community concerning a proposal they were examining: the removal of residential zoning on the block between the Glen Yards and the Autoroute (Décarie, Crowley, Prud’homme, Saint-Jacques) so that commercial (office buildings) could be constructed to support the as-yet-undefined use of the Glen Yards. (The hospital proposal was

not yet a reality.) The residents strongly objected to this proposal. When the proposed Urban Plan was presented to City Council in 1992, the residential function had disappeared from this block. A quick petition was organised and the reinstatement of housing on this block was one of the very few amendments to the proposed Urban Plan which was adopted by City Council.

I bring this report from 1990 to the attention of the OCPM and today's Saint-Raymond residents as a contribution to a sense of continuity. While not all of the issues raised at that time are still relevant, I would suggest that many still are; in other words, many current issues were raised long ago and have not been effectively dealt with since that time.

I want to draw attention to two issues that I invite the OCPM to address in 2013.

- i) The arrival of the hospital should not be allowed to destroy Saint-Raymond. There already has been, and will be inevitable pressure on residential housing (increase in rents, conversion to condos, gentrification) caused by the new neighbour. Saint-Raymond has always been a community, home to a multi-ethnic working-class and lower middle-class population. Market forces have already made most of NDG unaffordable for much of its traditional population and for many of the people who work here. Adjustments to urban planning controls should deliberately and forcefully protect the residents from economic cleansing.
- ii) The Falaise Saint-Jacques, while not a daily pre-occupation for most Saint-Raymond residents, is a site which has the potential to offer all residents of the western part of the island with access (presumably controlled) to an urban forest in their midst. The groundwork (including much capital expense for stabilisation, land assembly and expropriation) for the development of the Falaise has been laid and the current examination of the neighbourhood plan would be, I suggest, a last chance to revive this project in the public imagination.

Montreal, February 16, 2013

Invitation to a public meeting from **Sam Boskey**, City Councillor

This spring the City of Montreal is collecting information to be included in a master urban plan for our region. The plan will determine the basic rules for future land use, zoning, height of buildings, density, location of housing, stores, and industry, parks, transport, schools and other public services, etc.

I am inviting all residents of the St. Raymond area (Décarie to Grand) to a special public meeting to receive your general comments as well as your answers to specific questions, dealing with your daily lives in our community. Please come and bring your neighbours.

The meeting will be conducted in English, French and Italian.

Invitation à une assemblée publique par **Sam Boskey**, conseiller municipal

Au printemps, la Ville de Montréal est à établir les priorités pour le plan d'aménagement urbain de notre région. Ce plan d'aménagement dictera les règles de base pour le développement futur de notre territoire, les règlements de zonage, le transport, la hauteur des édifices et leur densité, l'emplacement des maisons, des magasins et des industries, des parcs, des écoles et des autres services publiques, etc.

J'invite tous les résidents et résidentes du quartier de St-Raymond (entre Décarie et Grand) à une assemblée publique pour recevoir vos commentaires, vos suggestions et vos réponses à certaines questions spécifiques concernant votre vie quotidienne dans notre communauté. Venez en grand nombre et amenez vos voisins.

L'assemblée sera en français, en anglais et en italien.

Invito ad una riunione pubblica da **Sam Boskey**, consigliere Municipale

In primavera, la Città di Montreal informerà il pubblico secondo le norme riguardo il piano urbano de nostro quartiere. Questo piano stabilirà delle regole che determineranno l'uso dei terreni, le zone, l'altezza degli

edifici, densità, posizione di case e di regozi, parchi, trasporti, scuole ed altri servizi pubblici, ecc.

Invito tutti i residenti del quartiere di St-Raymond (Décarie e Grand) a questa assemblea pubblica per ricevere i vostri suggerimenti come pure le vostre risposte a delle domande specifiche riguardo la vostra vita quotidiana nel nostro quartiere. Per cortesia venite in gran numero, e portate i vostri vicini.

Il colloquio si terrà in inglese, in francese e in italiano.

Wednesday April 11, 7 pm. St Raymond Church Hall **5775 St Jacques**

Mercredi, le 11 avril à 7pm Salle Paroissiale de St Raymond

Mercoledì l'22 Aprile, alle ore 19:00. La sala della chiesa St Raymond

Questionnaire

1) General

How long have you lived in the area?

Do you work in St Raymond? Do you work in NDG?

How do you usually travel? (foot, bus, car, taxi)

Quality of life

What about this neighbourhood will keep you living here?

What changes would make you leave, or has already made former residents leave?

Are there specific facilities or changes in the neighbourhood which are necessary to make the area more attractive for elderly people?

For families with children? (Are there enough daycare services?)

Are specific kinds of housing necessary?

What are the characteristics of the area that affect which people live here: (ethnic groups, social class, age, stability, family size, etc.)?

Intercultural Communication

What determines to what extent different ethnic and racial groups in the area have contact with each other? Are there specific proposals which could improve interaction, communication and understanding?

North/south links across railway tracks

Pedestrian crossings: Girouard, Melrose tunnel, Grand overpass...

Are they useful? Are they sufficient? Should they be relocated? Rebuilt?

How would life in St Raymond be different if they were different?

2) Transport

Buses:

St Raymond is connected to St Henri (17, 104), Atwater and Vendome Metro(90), North-Eastern NDG (17), North Western NDG (104) and Lachine (90).

Are there any changes in bus routes which would be useful? (e.g.: Use of Saint-Jacques as east-west street rather than Upper Lachine Road? Northbound 17 taking Girouard and Upper Lachine to Décarie?)

Are there areas which have particular justification for additional bus shelters?

Parking

Are there parts of the neighbourhood where parking is especially difficult? Near the Caisse Pop/park? Near Bell Telephone? Should any new restrictions be imposed to improve the situation?

Traffic

Should heavy traffic using the tunnel at Upper Lachine Road between Girouard and Décarie be allowed to use Upper Lachine Road from Hingston to Girouard, or should they be restricted to St Jacques and Girouard?

Is it important that the shallow CPR underpass at Décarie eventually be deepened to allow big trucks to use it?

Is the viaduct (overpass) at the western end of Upper Lachine Road useful? Does it bring heavy traffic away from St Jacques? Would a traffic light at this intersection be more useful instead?

Green Spaces

Oxford Park:

Are facilities adequate? Adequate for babies and young children? For youth? For adults? For the elderly? How could park be improved?

Terry Fox Park:

Should it be extended east or west? Are other small parks needed in area? If so, where?

Community Gardens:

At present, there is some space behind the Seniors residence. Is more space needed (where) (beside Rose Bowl?) or do most people find space in their back yards?

The Falaise (cliff)

Eight years ago the City announced a major program concerning the Falaise St-Jacques: a park across the whole top, bike paths to connect with the rest of the city, exchange of land with neighbouring owners, anti-erosion plantations, recreational facilities, etc. Not all of these have been completed.

What use would you like the Falaise put to? Should the park at the top of the cliff be extended? Should new accesses (e.g. beside Rose Bowl) be added? What restrictions would this mean for businesses at the top of the cliff?

4) Buildings

Height

At present, the tallest new buildings allowed in the district are 4 stories (on some streets - on others it is 2 or 3). Is there any reason to allow taller buildings? Would the advantages be diminished by additional parking problems and shadows?

Patrimony

Are there buildings with particular historical, cultural or architectural value in the area which should be preserved?

5) Housing

Are housing conditions bad in certain parts of the neighbourhood? Are tougher inspections or more renovation programs needed?

Do many people pay over 25% of their income for housing? Is there a need for subsidies? Are many people already on the waiting list for subsidised housing?

6) Commercial

Should the businesses on St Jacques (between Madison and Decarie) concentrate on services for NDG residents (smaller businesses) or should they be serving the whole region (larger businesses, more customers and cars)?

Has the opening of Super Carnaval hurt the food stores in St-Raymond? Or did residents also shop elsewhere before it opened? Should the City prevent other huge stores from opening nearby or should it encourage them?

St Jacques

How should the visual impact of St Jacques be improved? Should billboards continue to be allowed? Should there be changes in the kinds of signs allowed? Should parking be allowed?

Upper Lachine Road

Should there be any changes to the design of Upper Lachine Road?

7) Industry

Industrial/residential coexistence

At present, there are many complaints because industries (especially on St Jacques) cause problems for residents who live next door. (Example: automobile repair shops) The City can restrict what new industries are allowed to move in. Owners of industrial-zoned land may be inconvenienced until they can find the proper tenants. What are the proper kind of restriction on industrial activity in areas close to housing? Should the same rules apply to the south side of St. Jacques?

On some side streets in the district (e.g. Hingston and Beaconsfield) new industries can move in right beside houses. Should new construction on these streets be reserved for housing only?

Madison Yards

At the west end of St Raymond are the Municipal Yards. Do these bring about inconveniences which should be rectified? How?

8) Future Uses

Glen Yards:

There will very likely be new activities taking place in the Glen Yards in the next several years. They could be residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional, or any combination of the above. Are there specific activities which should be avoided? Are there current activities in your area which should be moved there? What are your preferences or ideas for Glen development?

The block between the Glen Yards and the Autoroute (Decarie and Prud'homme, between St Jacques and the railway) will be right across from new developments at the Glen Yards. Should the city start examining the possibility of relocating the housing here and let new industry/offices take over, or should the residential area be maintained?

If they are maintained, are there specific suggestions to make the quality of life here more pleasant (sound barriers, changes in the park)? If housing remains in this area, should the City examine the possibility of converting the Modern Motors land (north side of St Jacques between Decarie and Prud'homme) to housing or any other use?

Bell Telephone land

What are the advantages, the problems, of the Bell Telephone land (north of Upper Lachine Road between Melrose and Harvard)? Does its presence provide customers for stores? Parking problems? In the long term, should the City be thinking of alternate use of this space: e.g. non-profit housing, housing for seniors, some green space?

9) Your role in planning for the future

What kind of **consultation and involvement** should the City be undertaking before putting any of these changes into effect? Should there be a permanent mechanism in the district for discussing these points in the future?

Report

This is a report of a meeting which took place on Wednesday April 11, 1990 at the Church Hall of St Raymond Parish, 5775 St Jacques at 7 pm.

I took the initiative of organising this meeting for two reasons: i) as an attempt to stimulate discussion on the urban planning process in the St Raymond area, and ii) to guarantee that there would be input from St Raymond into the current discussions on the City's master planning process.

I am particularly convinced, due to the fact that the St Raymond of today is marked by the results of past urban planning decisions - a community located between a railway track and a cliff, divided by an expressway and surrounded by heavy industry - that deliberate urban planning attention is needed to help the area and that its residents must play an active role in the process.

As well, there are not a great number of specific proposals in the City's discussion papers concerning St Raymond. Furthermore, due to its geographic isolation from the rest of the Cote-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame de Grace arrondissement and the linguistic makeup of its residents, there was very little participation by St Raymond residents in the round-table workshops organised by the City's Bureau du Plan.

The April 11 meeting was publicised by a door-to-door delivery of invitations throughout the neighbourhood, by posted notices in local stores and by articles in the Monitor and the St Raymond parish weekly bulletin.

60 people took part during a 3-hour period. This is quite significant considering that there was a snow fall that day and a Stanley Cup Hockey game that night, as well as a power failure during the meeting.

I wish to thank Father Ernest of the St Raymond Parish for making the hall available; the representatives of the City's Service d'Habitation et de Developpement Urbain (SHDU), Louis-François Monet, Jean-François Circe and Martin Gaulin-Gendreau for their co-operation; the Service de Loisirs et Developpement Communautaire (LDC) for the use of their sound equipment; and all the animators, report makers and translators who co-operated to make the meeting a success.

Sam Boskey

City Councillor (Décarie)

The evening's activities

Following a general introduction to the planning process and the purposes of the meeting presented by Councillor Boskey and M. Monet, the meeting divided into small workshops according to language. There were 2 groups which operated in Italian, one in French and one in English.

A questionnaire, prepared in the 3 languages, made up of 9 chapters and containing nearly 75 questions was used as a guide for discussions, though the workshops were encouraged not to be bound by the questionnaire but to discuss matters of interest to the participants.

The questionnaire dealt with:

- what attracts people to, or keeps in them in the neighbourhood;
- an appreciation of existing facilities;
- intercultural and interracial communications in the area;
- links between northern and southern NDG across the railway tracks;
- bus service, traffic configurations and the routing of heavy vehicles and parking;
- existing green spaces, parks and community gardens;
- the Falaise St Jacques Cliff);
- building densities and height limits;
- architecture and old buildings;
- present and future housing needs;
- zoning for residential, commercial and industrial functions;
- the effect of new large commercial stores on neighbourhood stores;
- and the future use of undeveloped space including the Glen Yards and the Bell Telephone land.

As well the workshops discussed how the community should be involved in future decision-making concerning urban planning.

At the end of the meeting, a brief summary was presented by a member of each workshop.

While the results are clearly not methodologically rigorous, they do represent the opinions of the participants at the meeting who have, on the average, been living in the neighbourhood for about 25 years.

North-south links

St Raymond is separated from the rest of NDG by the CPR tracks. Many St Raymond residents depend on services and facilities north of the tracks (such as shopping on Sherbrooke Street, buses transportation (105), churches, schools, etc). At present there are 3 crossings: a car underpass including pedestrian sidewalk at Girouard, a pedestrian tunnel at Melrose and a pedestrian overpass at Grand. Each of the three presents problems.

Girouard needs more maintenance (cleaning, lighting and repairs) and surveillance (there should be more regular police visibility).

Melrose is widely considered to be dangerous, especially for women. It has a reputation for muggings. It is proposed that there be better lighting within the tunnel and outside at both ends; regular police presence (regular checks at both ends). As well, the tunnel should be cleaned more often.

Grand: Especially for elderly people, this overpass is difficult. There are too many stairs. A rest area is needed; some would like to see a small green space and benches nearby.

Some would like to see an additional crossing, especially since Melrose and Grand are inconvenient for bicycles.

There are often safety problems caused by holes in the fence beside the train track. As well, CPR was criticised for poor cleanliness of the rights-of-way beside the tracks.

Transportation

Buses

Since many people in St Raymond are without cars, buses are very important.

There are complaints that for the 104 and 90, passengers have too long to wait and that more frequent service is needed. Residents are happy that there buses use Upper Lachine Road.

There was a proposal that the northbound 17 take Girouard between St Jacques and Upper Lachine Road rather than Décarie so that it would be closer to most of St Raymond's residents.

More bus shelters are needed especially in the area of the St Jacques/Upper Lachine Road junction between Belgrave and Hingston.

Traffic

There is still a substantial number of trucks using Upper Lachine Road between St Jacques and Girouard to get to the underpass, despite signs which forbid it. There was complete agreement that trucks should be banned from Upper

Lachine Road and rerouted along St Jacques and Girouard, though some Girouard residents complained that Girouard, which is residential, already has too much traffic.

Commercial vehicles on St Jacques create noise, dust and gravel pollution for the area and some residents would be happier if heavy trucks used Highway 20 or Pullman Street rather than St Jacques.

Restrictions on parking on St Jacques during rush hours would, according to some, prevent the street from being clogged.

At the Upper Lachine/St Jacques viaduct, some suggested that a STOP sign, traffic light or some other form of control be installed to prevent high speed entries onto Upper Lachine Road.

Bell Telephone trucks often use residential streets to get to their parking lot, much to the consternation of residents.

Traffic light cycles throughout the neighbourhood are considered too short to allow the elderly, the handicapped and children to cross busy streets. Of particular concern to pedestrians is the crossing at Cavendish and St Jacques.

There is no light at Grand and St Jacques which is a corner used by many residents to get to the bus stop on the south side of St Jacques.

There were mixed opinions concerning both the deepening the Decarie tunnel under the CPR tracks, and the removal of the viaduct at the Upper Lachine/St Jacques intersection, and replacing it by a traffic light.

Better signs indicating the school, the park and the seniors' residence are needed along Upper Lachine.

The lane south of the CPR tracks should be opened in its entirety.

Parking

Parking is a problem in two specific areas:

- 1) Near Upper Lachine and Old Orchard because of the Caisse populaire, stores, and Oxford Park. It is suggested that parking be restricted, possibly by installing meters in the immediate area, to prevent cars from parking here for the entire day, while

permitting short-term parking. As well, the rules against double parking should be rigorously enforced in this area.

2) Near Bell Telephone (Harvard and Melrose, near Upper Lachine). Bell employees formerly parked on Bell land but are now required to park on the street.) Neighbours consider this to be very serious. If Bell will not permit these cars on its lot, the residents would like a reserved parking area for local residents.

While signs indicate that parking is prohibited in front of the seniors residence at 5655 Upper Lachine, it should be enforced at all times. There are buses for the handicapped and ambulances which require access to this space at all hours.

Any new commercial or industrial establishment setting up in the neighbourhood should be required to provide their own parking space for employees and customers; there is little room left on the street.

Green Spaces and Parks

Oxford Park

1) Immediate improvements in service:

There should be better regular cleanup of the park facilities (for example, broken glass around the sandbox).

Dogs and bicycles should be prohibited from the park.

Some lights should be left on at night as a means of improving safety.

There should be better enforcement of the speed limit on Oxford Street.

There should be more frequent police patrols, especially by the youth squad to deal with drug use and sales in the park.

2) Changes in the park

There should be more trees planted.

There should be a pond or a fountain.

There should be a proper jogging path.

There should be more lights.

There should be more benches, including some which do not face the noise and traffic of St Jacques.

There should be a skating rink reserved for recreational skating (not organised hockey).

There should be an all-weather bocce court, weatherproofed and heated.

The Falaise (cliff)

Terry Fox Park should be extended westwards as a linear park. A pedestrian walkway or traffic light at the corner of Oxford and St Jacques is needed because now the park is nearly inaccessible.

As much of the cliff area as possible should be kept as green space, cleaned up and made accessible. Plans announced years ago should be completed to make it more attractive. Trees should be planted on the top of the cliff to make it visually attractive. A bike path on the side of the cliff should be completed.

There should be no more new industry on top of cliff.

More green space

More park space is needed in the western part of St Raymond.

More community garden space is also needed.

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning by-laws

Zoning by-laws are difficult to understand because they are not written in simple language. They should be available in a form which everyone can understand.

There is some feeling that the zoning and permits by-laws are not uniformly applied. Some feel that they are denied permits while the City turns a blind eye to similar activities operated by others.

Height of buildings

Residents do not want any changes in the heights of buildings. 2 stories should be the usual height with some exceptions at 3 stories. There should be no tall buildings.

Housing

Residents have the impression that many older buildings need upgrading. The bricks on some buildings are falling into the street.

New housing could be built in the neighbourhood to serve three needs:

- subsidised housing (HLM - many residents spend over 35% of revenue on housing),
- family housing (to increase the school population),
- seniors housing (possibly a centre d'accueil). The Bell lands are a possible location for housing.

Architectural reviews should be carried out on all new construction to make sure that it will fit into the community.

Commercial streets and zoning

There are constant problems for residences caused by commercial and industrial establishments. There should be better separation between residential and non-residential functions.

Examples in the area are companies involved with building materials, tar, gravel, delivery trucks, snow removal and landscape equipment. Of particular concern are automobile garages and body shops which are often dirty, noisy, and cause parking problems.

Upper Lachine Road:

There should be no more stores allowed. Stores cause more traffic. While the new Super Carnaval (west of the immediate area) is appreciated by the residents, they would like future stores in the area to stay small. Apart from not creating new traffic, small stores maintain the tradition of personal service and attention.

The electric wires should be buried. Not only are they ugly but many of the poles are leaning dangerously.

St Jacques

There are too many billboards. (If they have to exist, residents prefer the smaller vertical to the larger horizontal boards).

The sidewalks on St Jacques should be rebuilt.

Mixed zoning

The area in western St Raymond in which commercial, industrial and residential zoning are all permitted (Hingston to Grand) should be rezoned residential only.

Future Use

Glen Yards

Density in the Glen Yards should be kept low.

When decisions on what to allow are being made, the needs of the neighbouring local community should be taken into account. Where necessary, compensations to help the local community should be sought.

Bell Telephone land

Since Bell offers little to the community except problems, an alternate use for the site should be examined. The land could be used for low cost housing or green space or a centre d'accueil or community facilities such as an arena, but not for industry.

Various other concerns

Recycling containers should be installed in the area.

There should be a more extensive community centre than the existing 4 rooms and a part-time gym in the John 23 School.

There is fear that John 23 School (English Catholic) might close. Already the English Protestant and French Catholics schools have closed. The City could help both by pressuring the CECM not to close the school and by suggesting the establishment of French and English education in the same building. As well, by building more family housing in the area, there would eventually be more children.

The distribution in the area of The Monitor and The Suburban are poor and could be improved. This would improve ties with the rest of NDG.

There is concern about the rising crime rate, particularly break-ins and muggings; in general, residents would like greater police presence.

Some suggestions for increased intercultural and interracial relations; community-centre could function as a meeting place for both youth and adults; inter-ethnic games could provide interchange.

Consultation

There should be more frequent public meetings of citizens in St Raymond. Residents should be able to vote in local referenda on major decisions to ensure local participation between elections.