

**LA COMMISSAIRE :**

2765 O.K. C'est beau. Merci.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

2770 Merci beaucoup, Monsieur Houle, de votre présentation, qui référait à votre expérience personnelle, c'était très clair.

**M. PIERRE-LOUIS HOULE :**

2775 C'est moi qui vous remercie.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Alors, j'inviterais maintenant monsieur Irwin Rapoport, s'il vous plaît.

2780 **M. IRWIN RAPOPORT :**

Good evening.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

2785 Good evening.

**M. IRWIN RAPOPORT :**

2790 One of the words Montreal's motto is Concordia, which is harmony. And yet this project brought on by mayor Plante, Luc Ferrandez and Sue Montgomery as only brought the furies and deceit and discord on a subject that should have united Montrealers, cause they all love this mountain.

2795 It's a real pity that we've lost sight of what needs to be protected, which is the ecosystem and biodiversity. This whole situation was bundled from the start. Instead of asking, instead of telling Montrealers there is a problem with the mountain, the mayor said:

2800 oh, we're gonna do a pilot project without setting any benchmark as to what will make it a success. They didn't provide any of the questions, any of the data people would need to know whether it was a success. Luc Ferrandez and the mayor said: it's a success.

2805 In fact, it's a real tragedy because we know what needs to be done. We shall get into it later on, but when you look at this photo here, you see a road which Mayor Camillien Houde completely opposed and thousands of Montrealers opposed, because they knew what the disaster would be. This would become a thoroughfare, split the park and then you have mayor Drapeau killing thousands of trees.

2810 And when you look at this photo here, 30 percent of those trees are Norway maples which are invasive. And you have the ash trees which may be another 20 percent or 30 percent which are dying and need to be replaced. We need to have all native flora, trees, shrubs.

2815 And also the big question that was partially raised, we love this mountain to death. There's too many visitors on the mountain. There's a reason why parks such in Serengeti in Africa limited the number of visitors, because the wild life needs room to survive. The ecosystem needs to survive and you put too much pressure on it and it's lost.

2820 We're seeing that now with the mountain and I said it, people opposed this road from the beginning, Camillien Houde. I believe Remembrance road was there before and when you look at the development of the mountain, the graveyards were obviously there in the 1830's, 1840's, and we know of the catholic issues with the barriers and the whole history of Montréal, it's quite an interesting one.

2825 So. What do we do about this? Well, the easiest solution. I don't know what the actual solution for the road is. I would love to see this road eliminated completely. And I would like to see the tramway put up there. Similar to what they have in Darjeeling with the train that reaches the city from the bottom of the Himalayas.

2830 And, there was a road there and reaching Darjeeling before the railroad but I think what we could do is eliminate the road to all automobile traffic, have a bike path. We should reduce the speed somewhat, but it would be a scenic road.

2835 What we should do within the next two years is have a public commission - not  
commission, it's the wrong word. A project where people can be consulted to send in ideas  
of what they have for the mountain.

2840 So we can have three or four possibly five options and people could vote in a  
referendum in 2021, to determine the future of the mountain. Including the road, protection  
of biodiversity, and the whole ecosystem in itself. This would take the pressure of having  
the pilot project. We can do various pilot project, now and then, and do the proper study so  
we know what's going on.

2845 So, we have this opportunity to do the right thing and let's try to take advantage of it.  
So, I'm gonna go through some points here. You've read the brief and I appreciate that. So,  
the questions, the benchmarks and the questions that should have been asked to  
Montrealers were not asked. So this pilot project was flawed and again it was imposed.

2850 As great as these hearings are, these hearings should have been held before the  
pilot project and... So, we know, as the brief says, there's a good number of questions that  
need to be addressed.

2855 So, I'll also mention very quickly, Montrealers are very worried by what the Plante  
administration is doing. It's doing a lot of great things for the environment, but the complete  
destruction of the softball field at Jeanne-Mance park, which was done without any  
consultation whatsoever, and now they're having a consultation after the damage was done.  
It's similar to this.

2860 And it expressed that attitude that was common in the Coderre administration we  
know best: don't ask any questions. And unfortunately, the Plante administration on this, is  
doing the same. Even more so.

2865 So, people enjoy this mountain whether they live in the East or in the West end, north  
or the south, everyone has memories. I was there for my high school graduation, we all  
gathered there. People love to drive across the mountain, going up to Westmount. It holds  
for a lot of power of Montrealers.

2870 And it's disturbing that when the closure for the road was pointed out as a good, as something to do, it was based on a 10 year old study that the OCPM did, I believe, which was out of date. Not that the comments made weren't genuine, but putting something into action, especially with the mountain that unites all Montrealers, you have to be careful because when you have people from the administration saying: oh, they don't live near the mountain.

2875 Well, I don't have to live near the mountain because I pay taxes and it means something to me and the people who live in the suburbs. They pay taxes too to pay for this because it is called a shared service. So it's not fair to say that no one has a right to say anything. So you have de 25 000 people sign the petition saying don't close the road and 7 000 to do so.

2880 So, what do we do? As mentioned, this road never should have been built in the first place. Can we get rid of it? That could be a referendum question. A referendum question on this would certainly bring more people to the poles in 2021.

2885 So right now, I'm not sure what the administration has in mind, but there should be a no closure of this road until 2021, in a referendum. So, and as mentioned earlier, there should be a challenge to get people to propose a design for the mountain and have suggestions.

2890 Stephen Colbert on the *Colbert Report* has Green Screen Challenges, which generated hundreds of thousands of responses and people created videos. People care and they actually did something to make a point.

2895 So, noting that this project itself was a failure, I believe because it didn't say what the benchmarks were and we don't know what the measures of success are. Let's note that this pilot project didn't protect cyclists cause the area where the cyclist was killed by the motorist who made an illegal U-Turn, knowingly, still doesn't have a barrier fence to protect it. And the U-Turn signs are there and the double lines are there. It's the same in California where the motorist comes from. As in here, you don't make a turn.

2900 It's a tragedy that the City didn't challenge the Crown attorney's office in saying that we are not gonna prosecute because they declared an open season on cyclists cause...

2905 anyway. Say: yeah, I made an illegal turn, I'm sorry, I didn't see the person. If they really do care about cyclists, do something on that. And again, I'm not being hard on the Montréal administration because they've done some great things with the Anse-à-l'Orme and the park out in the West Island and they had great hearings on that, I participated in that.

2910 So, now that we know the cost of this pilot project, what it cost and we know that people are still doing illegal U-Turns, and frankly, it was a mess, but that's one thing. So, let's go on to what we need to do about the mountain. As mentioned, we need to get rid of the invasive species, we need to restore wildlife, we need to restore the fauna and flora that was there before development.

2915 One of the things we should do is ban smoking drugs and tobacco on the mountain. We just had a - I forget where I mention it in the brief - but there's one park in Montréal where they're going to... ah, the beach in Verdun. They're gonna ban smoking there. So that would be a good thing. We could ban... dogs should be allowed on leashes, but they shouldn't be there during nesting season, during the breeding season for the birds.

2920 And the dog, the animal inspector should never be there as well. They shouldn't issue tickets, issue warnings. And they do target people who use the park and it does ruin the experience for that.

2925 So, do I have like four minutes left?

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Yes.

2930 **M. IRWIN RAPOPORT :**

2935 Okay, I just wanted to make sure. So, you know, mayor Coderre spent 3.45 million dollars for 27 granites stumps in the mountain. Money that should have been used to restore fauna, flora, improve the mountain. That was a complete waste of money.

As we get people to provide information on what kind of a road we want and what kind of road system we need for the mountain, there's arborists, horticulturalists, naturalists

that can provide information and plans on how to restore wildlife, how to restore the mountain to its natural glory.

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We can start this work now, cause we know the trees that are there, Montréal has the Botanical Gardens, we can go to the Morgan Arboretum. We can start growing the trees to plant. So when we divide the mountain in sections, you take out and put in. And volunteers definitely can help on that.

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We need more wetlands and ponds on the mountain, which could be created. We could get help from Parks Canada, Provincial Park system, the American Interior department. This mountain is a key stop from migrations of birds going north and south. So there's things we can do on that one.

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We should do a survey on protects of wildlife, the flora that are there. We should have more nest boxes, we should built caves for bats, a safe one where we can protect them and monitor them.

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We should have some pollinator gardens. We need to plant lots of land weed, the destination of insects worldwide is a fact and you know, we can do our pit with the green space that we have.

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Too many people use this park. Not that people shouldn't use the park, but we are loving it to death. So that means that we have green spaces to create nature parks all across the city. You guys are having the hearings on the park for the Falaise, Turcot, oui. So that's one park and falaise need to be restore. We need to create the Meadowbrook Nature park as 57 hectares.

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So both the falaise, the Turcot park and Meadowbrook would be a nature spot for hundreds of thousands of Montrealers and a project is looking to create the nature park at the golf course in Anjou. So that would reduce the traffic going to Mount-Royal, because Mount-Royal is the only place we have.

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It's really green and really natural. I mean, sadly we are losing the Technoparc, wetlands which are pretty much the wilderness. But this can be restore to a great wilderness.

2975 Also part of protecting Mount-Royal is getting rid of the mountain bikes that are causing severe damage. Everyone knows that. They're creating trails that shouldn't exist. They should be banned, ticketed and that's an issue that has to come up.

2980 As the *Gazette* recently pointed out, Montréal lacks green space for its citizens. The Canadian average is 473 hectares per 100 000 residents. We're at 250. We're gonna need several Mount Royals.

So, as mentioned - do I have a minute or two left?

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

2985 Oui.

**M. IRWIN RAPOPORT :**

2990 Okay. So basically my solution is let's find the various options that people can vote for in a referendum in 2021. We can do it, we have the time. Let's ask, let's put together a really good plan explaining what problems the mountain has, what are the possible solutions, what are the ones that can be done easily, but don't impact many... what are the ones that will impact. I love this road, but I'd be glad to see Camillien-Houde closed completely, restored to nature, have the tramway. I'm not sure, was there a tramway before? So that can be restored.

3000 And Montrealers really want to do this right and we shouldn't rush into things. So, I appreciate your patience if it was a little disjointed, but I know people have made some great comments over the hearings and I just hope that we can take what we have and put it into good use and find an equitable solution for all.

**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3005 Thank you. We have a few questions.

**LA COMMISSAIRE :**

3010            You had so many ideas. If you had to choose two or three priorities, which ones would they be?

**M. IRWIN RAPOPORT :**

3015            First priority is restoring the ecosystem and protecting biodiversity. We know it's been lost. We know it has to be restored. Through this survey of wildlife that's there now, the Smith House has the history of wildlife at the park. So we know it can be done. Second part is the road. As I mentioned, I would see this road closed. It's not probably gonna happen. People accept this road as being there and when you look at the map, it's very clear the damage that's been done. The road cuts a huge slough through it. The graveyard's fine, but it's extended too much and we saw the problem with building the crematorium. So that would be second, dealing with the road. The third point is making people, all Montrealers aware of the fragility of the ecosystem and having discussions right across the island to say: this is what we can do, we need your help, what is your suggestions? So that would be my three points.

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**LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

3030            So, thank you very much for your brief. Alors, avant de conclure, j'aimerais savoir si la Ville souhaite faire des rectifications. Ça va? Merci beaucoup.

3035            Alors, la soirée est donc terminée. Après les séances d'audition, mes collègues et moi de même que notre analyste commencerons à analyser l'information reçue et les opinions qui nous ont été communiquées que ce soit par le biais des questionnaires, de la plateforme de consultation, des ateliers créatifs, des opinions en ligne, de vive voix ou encore à l'aide des mémoires.

3040            Le rapport de la commission, comme je vous l'ai indiqué, sera transmis par la présidente aux élus municipaux au printemps et sera rendu public deux semaines plus tard.