

Public Consultation

Glen Yards - McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)

Impartiality of the process

Allowing the promoters' consultants to present the proposed zoning changes and giving them apparently equal status with the city representatives was, in my view a serious error. In my experience, presentations have always been given by city representatives and I believe that this represents best practice.

Height

Considering the nature of the neighbourhood and the views from the south, height should be restricted to somewhere between ten and twelve storeys. The desire to have high towers with glorious views to the south appears more concerned with the rental of private and semi-private rooms than with healthcare, urbanistic or neighbourhood concerns.

Sight lines

The placement of buildings on the sight should respect the continuation of sight lines from Grey, Vendome, Marlowe and Northcliffe avenues. The hospital will be an extension of a densely, almost exclusively, residential sector and its buildings should respect the existing frame urban.

Neighbourhood concerns

While the hospital is welcome in the neighbourhood it must respect the residential nature of the area. It is extremely important that the hospital and its ancillary buildings should be contained on the south side of the tracks. We would not want the residential neighbourhood to the north to be destabilized by the incursion of laboratories, clinics and the like.

Traffic concerns

It appears to me that the traffic rerouting premises put forward by the promoters' consultants are based on flawed premises and are thus of extremely limited value. In addressing these issues I would stress that I am not proposing an overall solution to traffic routing issues but rather highlighting the errors of the consultants and proposing some simple improvements.

Upper Lachine Road. The proposal to close Upper Lachine Road to private traffic and thus creating a ghetto-like enclosure for the St-Raymond neighbourhood to the west is simply not acceptable for consideration. If it were to be implemented it would only have to be reopened in the future. Upper Lachine Road serves as a major *local* route back-and-forth, east-and-west for those living in St-Raymond, eastern NDG and Westmount. Even if Girouard

were to be made two-way Upper Lachine Road would still remain necessary for east-west local traffic. In addition, shutting Upper Lachine Road would isolate Addington to the south. Addington would have to be made two-way and access would only be possible from St-Jacques. Since it would not be possible to have a traffic light (two close to Girouard) and since an eastbound left turn without a light would be too dangerous, Addington would only be able to be accessed from the east on St-Jacques. This would not be acceptable.

Claremont. The consultants have claimed that it would be impossible to have an overhead road access to the site from the north at Claremont. They are wrong, and two possibilities (apart from underground) exist.

1. Regular overpass. A road overpass would need to achieve a railway line clearance height of about thirty feet (including 1.5metres for road thickness). Since the maximum slope for an overpass is said to be 5% this means that a distance of six-hundred feet would be needed for the overpass road. This is the approximate distance between the railway line and the northern end of the empty lot to the north of de Maisonneuve on the west side. All of the land necessary for an overpass is currently vacant land with no built structures. If an overpass were to start to the north of de Maisonneuve there would no longer be sufficient clearance to pass under on de Maisonneuve. This could be rectified by rerouting deMaisonneuve at about Bulmer so that it would go south and join Ste-Catherine at about York. Westmounters would still be able to access de Maisonneuve by making a small detour to the south. If there were to be an overpass entry it would not have to descend again in the same fashion. Since it would only be leading to a parking lot the ramp could simply enter a parking, or other, structure at the one of the upper levels. Descent onto the rest of the site, if desired could be achieved using the same sort of interior parking garage spirals such as are common elsewhere.

2. Parking-garage type spiral to the north of the railway line. The vacant lot to the south of de Maisonneuve and west of Claremont is large enough to accommodate an access road that would lead to a parking-garage type spiral to the north of the railway line. In this scenario, the access road south of deMaisonneuve would be private and, much like the internal roads in parking lots would not be subject to public road rules. In other words, it would both be technically feasible and legal to have a parking-garage type spiral. The available lot to the south of de Maisonneuve is sufficiently large to accommodate cars that might be delayed as those in front slowed down to access the spiral. On the south side of the railway line the cars could be brought back down to ground level in the manner described in '1' above. The two spirals would be connected by an ordinary overhead roadway. Traffic that entered on Claremont could either be allowed to exit again on Claremont or, alternatively, rerouted through the site to exit at Décarie or elsewhere.

The refusal of the hospital consultants (and by extension the hospital) to consider a very necessary entry from the north in Westmount is very difficult to

comprehend. Perhaps the administrators, doctors and even consultants live in Westmount.

Entry-Exit at St-Jacques and Décarie. It is absolutely imperative that there will be an entry-exit on St-Jacques directly adjacent to and adjoining Décarie. The connection between St-Jacques and the site is level at this point. Traffic lights. In this scenario, a single set of traffic lights would control entry and exit to both the hospital site and to Décarie. Since there would be no space between lights (only one set of lights) the configuration would respect traffic norms. Traffic would be able to leave the hospital directly onto St-Jacques, in an east or west direction and would also be able to exit onto Décarie to head north. Décarie would remain one-way north. I believe that it is clear that there will be a very large surface parking lot on the Décarie side of the hospital site and that the mid-block Décarie entrance is being proposed for no more nobler reason that to maximize the potential number of parking lot spaces.

Drawings to illustrate each of the traffic scenarios that I have discussed are not currently available but will be available at the consultation hearing.

Traffic conclusion. Given the need for major revision to the traffic access proposals (for example, Upper Lachine Road *cannot* be closed) and the failure of the consultants to identify the technical feasibility and general desirability of entry exits from St-Jacques (at Décarie) and from Claremount, I believe it fair to say that none of their conclusions about traffic impacts are at this point relevant. Consequently, I propose that it is best that the traffic aspect be entirely reconsidered and that only then will it be possible to draw meaningful conclusions regarding traffic flow and impact. In addition, all traffic studies and analysis, for the purposes of this process, should be undertaken by independent experts and not by consultants reporting to the real estate developer – in this case McGill Hospital.

Respectfully submitted.

June 3, 2005

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The Montreal Fluency Centre
Centre de la fluidité verbale de Montréal

June 10, 2005

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Rosalee C. Shenker, Ph.D.,
Executive Director

Dear Mr. Searle,

Thank you for bringing our attention to the MUHC's plan to close Upper Lachine Road to private vehicles in both directions between Girouard and Décarie. The Montreal Fluency Centre is vehemently opposed to this proposal.

The Montreal Fluency Centre (MFC) has recently purchased a building on Upper Lachine Road. Our proposed relocation is September 2005. The MFC is a non-profit centre offering services to children with speech-language and learning problems and their families from Montreal and surrounding communities. Often the MFC acts as an agency to provide services to families while they are waiting for public sector services at one of the MUHC clinics or in collaboration with public sector services. The new MFC will house a learning resource centre open to families, teachers and schools across the district, plus an integrated nursery with a full-day programme in addition to the more than 100 families who visit the centre for scheduled appointments each week.

It is essential that families and professionals have easy access to the centre from all major autoroutes and from the eastern part of the city. Closing the Upper Lachine Road at the points proposed would substantially isolate the Montreal Fluency Centre from the communities it serves.

Therefore, the Montreal Fluency Centre strenuously objects to the proposal by the MUHC to close the Upper Lachine Road to private vehicles and will take all opportunities to oppose this closure.

Sincerely,

Rosalee C. Shenker
Executive Director