

BENNY FARM CONSULTATION

Supporting document on the mobility issue.

CONTEXT

It is very difficult if not impossible to find adequate (barrier free) housing in Montréal in general and in NDG in particular. NDG is one of the worst areas in Montréal when it comes to provide adequate housing for people with reduced mobility.

The existing apartments and housing on the regular market have two (2) problems specific to this population.

No accessibility to the building, ex: stairs and other physical barriers,

2. No accessibility within the unit itself, ex: door frames and hallways can be too narrow, there may be a small lip to get into rooms and this can extend to all the thresholds. A specific difficulty arises in the bathrooms for those using a wheelchair because of the layout. If a person does get into the bathroom, she/he may not be able to use the toilet or sink due to the angles and may not be able to close the door either.

People with a disability residing in regular dwellings are poorly housed and are often not as autonomous and functional as they would be in adequate housing designed to meet their needs. This, ultimately, affects their dignity and overall outlook on life.

Many NDG citizens are forced away from the area to find more adequate housing, therefore resulting in families and support network dismantled, leaving the person isolated and vulnerable.

BENNY FARM

The Benny Farm plan as it exists mentions that there will be units for people with special needs in some of the new constructions as well as some in the existing buildings.

3500, 3510, 3700 and 3800, Benny (the buildings designed for the veterans) offer a potential solution to a problem that has already been identified. These buildings are well designed and offer barrier free access to buildings and units to people with mobility issues, and this enables them to have a better quality of life. As it stands, there is no guarantee that this valuable resource will be used by people who need them the most.

There are reasons for this concern: the actual rent for these apartments is very high and almost unattainable for people in this situation—most of them live alone and are on a fixed income.

According to l'Institut de la statistique de Québec (census 1998)

Compilation : OPHQ 2002 :

Income for men with a disability: \$18 237. in Montreal and \$18 282. in NDG
and the income for women with a disability: \$13 906. in Montreal and \$16 438. in NDG

At the current rent in these buildings, individuals with disability cannot afford to live there. These apartments, because of high rent, are disqualified for subsidies that could in theory permit individuals with mobility issues to live there.

RECOMMENDATIONS


- 1 Purchase an existing **building** and provide affordable housing for people with mobility restrictions living autonomously and who require minimal services.
2. Purchase a number of **units** and reserve them for people with mobility restrictions and who are living autonomously.

This effort could be accomplished as a joint program from both the Federal and the Provincial governments with assistance from the Municipal government in its particular role.

It makes good social and financial sense in the long term because people living independently with minimal services cost less than institutionalization.

IF A MEASURE IS NOT PUT INTO PLACE, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WILL BE SYSTEMATICALLY EXCLUDED FROM ACCESS TO EXISTING HOUSING SERVICES ON THE BENNY FARM SITE.

This would be a horrible waste of an existing resource, which was designed to deal with individuals experiencing reduced mobility and or autonomy in the first place.


Gina Lacasse

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