

## Memorandum concerning the Redevelopment of Namur—Jean-Talon Ouest Area

*Submitted by Jeff Deeprise, Quebec Region Coordinator of SGI Canada (5025 rue Buchan)*

SGI Canada owns the building located at 5025 rue Buchan, and we have been at this location since 1992. SGI (Soka Gakkai International) is a worldwide organization with more than 12 million members in 192 countries and territories. , The SGI promotes peace, culture and education based on the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism. The SGI Canada Montreal Culture Centre is one of three major centres in Canada, the other two being in Toronto and Vancouver. SGI Canada has a membership of 7,000.

In a general sense we see much value in the proposed changes. The neighbourhood is rather desolate, and an influx of people would make it a more attractive, and probably a safer neighbourhood. The addition of trees and park space would also make the area far more attractive.

As well, a clearly stated goal of this proposed redevelopment is to promote public transport, in particular, the use of the Metro stations Namur and De la Savanne. Again, we support this idea; a reduction in car use, pollution and green house gases is clearly important in our world.

At the same time, we need to be realistic about the present needs of our membership. **Our main concern with the project is the proposed limits on parking.** The building at 5025 rue Buchan is the only SGI centre serving the Montreal region. We have more than 300 people who attend meetings and activities twice a month, and 100 people who attend weekly. We also hold smaller activities most nights of the week. Our members come from all parts of the Island of Montreal, as well as from the South Shore and Laval. It is possible that up to 50% of our members use public transit, but the other half drive. We have 16 parking spots on our site, but if, as proposed, street parking is banned, and no public parking lots are created, there will be a serious negative impact on our membership's ability to participate in our activities and services.

Another concern is that the street parking will be reserved for residents of the new condo developments in the evenings. Our events take place almost exclusively on evenings and weekends and so our members would be excluded from adequate parking. If the parking is not reserved, we would nevertheless be in competition with residents for the few spots.

We also have one other point to make regarding the proposal. In the promotional material from the Ville de Montréal, the cities of Barcelona, Seattle and Vancouver were cited as models. It is important to note that none of these cities have 5 months of winter, and that walking long distances to one's parked car is far more difficult in our climate.

Thank you,

Jeff Deeprise