

Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal
1550 Metcalfe, #1414
Montréal, Québec
H3A 1X6

April 13, 2011

Re: Special Planning Program – Quartier des Grands Jardins

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Yael Perez, and I have worked in the area covered by the “Special Planning Program” (SPP) for the past 3 years and gone to school in the area for the past six. The SPP was brought to my attention by a short segment on CJAD Radio.

I am writing this Mémoire in direct opposition to the proposed plan of imposing a park in the parking lot located at 1840 de Maisonneuve Ouest, as depicted in the SPP.

I was present at all three evenings of public consultation and was extremely disappointed in the lack of clear and direct answers to the points raised by myself and other interested stakeholders of the area. Consequently, I have chosen to submit this mémoire in the hopes that these concerns will carry more weight and in the hopes that your recommendations will reflect the thoughts and feelings of the people in opposition to this element of this SPP.

As was brought up at the consultation evenings, many residents are extremely concerned about our neighborhood and the negative elements that are harbored within it. Between the drunks, drug users and dealers, prostitutes, and aggressive panhandlers, the destructive social elements plaguing our quartier are very challenging. Taking away the parking facility would also take away an element that adds to the safety of the area – the day and night attendants who run the lot and provide a semblance of surveillance. If you take away that surveillance and take away the presence of the parking facility, it is a direct invitation to these people to congregate in the proposed green space, where they will be removed from almost all outside view.

Our objectives in the present and future should be to provide firm security and safety for all those who come into the area, not to provide a safe-haven that would hide the downtown core's social issues from the public eye. The outcome of placing a park adjacent to commercial lanes, a bar and in a narrow rectangle surrounded by buildings is simply counter-productive – if the city planners would like to attract families to the area as stated in the SPP, then they are attempting to implement a plan that is detrimental to their goal.

Another goal of the SPP is to promote economic activity. However, the way the plan has been presented appears to undermine that objective as well. The very last public parking lot in this sector is, as previously described, slated to be replaced with green space. Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all who come to the downtown core do so by bus, metro and bicycle – there are very many who drive and carpool with others. The major concern is that there will be nowhere left to park. There are no more parking spots along the south side of de Maisonneuve where the bike path has been installed; the side streets require permits in order to leave a car there; there will potentially be a green space where the parking lot at 1840 de Maisonneuve O. is located and we can only pay the meters on the main streets for a few hours at a time. There will be no more space for consumers and workers to park. These restrictions directly influence local

businesses in a way that absolutely contradicts the SPP's goal of enhancing economic activity. The aforementioned parking lot is **NOT** a place for a park.

Moreover, it is very alarming that during the process of public questions, one of the city representatives stated that no other locations had been considered for a park when putting together this SPP. By taking a simple walk around the area, I have personally noted at least one alternate location – the lot located just behind the Jean Coutu on the corner of St. Catherine and St. Mathieu. That area is often empty, square shaped, visible from all sides by residential buildings and the street, and is located right next door to a fire station – a natural element of security. Already just the description of this lot makes it sound infinitely better than the parking lot on de Maisonneuve as a green space meant to attract families and stable residents.

In conclusion, I find that imposing a park in an unsuitable space is wrongful and ill minded. Using an alternate location would solve the concerns raised throughout the public consultations – it would not hinder the economic stability in the area and it would not hinder the security of the local inhabitants and workers.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my mémoire and opinions in this process,

Sincerely,

Yael Perez