

**Public Consultation:** Saint-Raymond Neighbourhood and the Area Surrounding the Future MUHC

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L' Association des cyclistes et piétons de NDG  
NDG Cyclist and Pedestrian Association

## **Our Mission**

The mission of the NDG Cyclist and Pedestrian Association (NDGCPA) is to advocate for improved infrastructure and opportunities for the cyclists and pedestrians of NDG who choose to bike or walk rather than drive their cars to work, to school or for daily activities.

We also aim to raise awareness within the NDG community regarding issues surrounding transportation, as well as safe and responsible use of our streets in order to ensure more harmonious interactions between pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

## **Introduction:**

The NDG Cyclist and Pedestrian Association would like to discuss the importance of encouraging active transportation. To do so, the creation of a safe segregated cycling and pedestrian path in the area of Saint-Raymond, Vendome Metro, and the future MUHC is crucial for the neighbourhood as well as for Montrealers passing through this region of the city.

We are living in a car culture today, with the bus and bicycle often seen as a second class way of travelling. This needs to change. We don't think twice about how much money is spent for roads and highways, but cycle infrastructure seems to be a luxury. We need to learn from the advances that European models have presently and their continued foresight.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has just announced an exciting vision for cycling in London, [The Mayor's Vision-Cycling in London](#) (1) with a 10 year cycling budget plan to include millions of dollars. A

Cycling Commissioner has been appointed in London to draw up policies. The enthusiasm begins at the top levels.

Just as roadway design for cars, trucks and buses is important, transportation experts also need to design bike paths that are efficient and safe. Cyclists should not have to compete with cars, trucks and busses in this area along De Maisonneuve, specifically between Décarie Boulevard and Claremont Ave, in front of the Vendome Metro.

## **Present Concerns**

### **1. For Safety:**

The current De Maisonneuve on-road, painted line bike path, between Décarie and Claremont, where cyclists must compete with buses, taxis, cars and pedestrians is already the riskiest section of the entire De Maisonneuve bike path. It will become much worse when an additional 15,000 staff and visitors access the MUHC facilities daily.

The Décarie and De Maisonneuve intersection is also very dangerous and is referred to by cyclists as the “valley of death”. This area is the only section of the De Maisonneuve path which is not bi-directional and protected. In fact, this region is the key barrier to growth in commuting by bike to school or work, from NDG and communities to the west. Since safe passage is the key essential requirement for most mainstream cyclists, this dangerous link will remain the key obstacle for residents switching from cars to bikes.

According to a **Canadian study** by Megan Winters, Professor Anne Harris of Ryerson University School of Occupational and Public Health et al (2-4), a lack of infrastructure has led to North American cyclists being 8 - 30 times more likely to be seriously injured than their European counterparts, and bike lanes that are not fully separated “offered no significant protection for cyclists”. Her research demonstrates “that transportation planners really need to segregate cyclists from motor vehicle traffic just as we use sidewalks to separate pedestrians”

Measures must be put in place to make it as safe as possible. **Dr. Notebaert** (5), a member of the Association of Canadian Doctors for the Environment, has recommended that the City of Montreal opt for segregated bicycle paths over non segregated bike lanes (with just lines painted on the road). Non segregated bicycle paths using painted lines do not protect cyclists from being hit by a car door opening or from being hit by a vehicle. Dr. Notebaert also noted that non segregated bicycle lanes are often ignored by car drivers, and in fact, they are not visible during intemperate weather.

## 2. For Health:

A recent speaker in Montreal, **Professor James Sallis** (6), who won the 2012 Bloomberg Manulife Prize for the Promotion of Active Health, has written more than 500 studies on how the design of our neighbourhoods affects not only physical activity, but the rate of obesity, nutrition and active transportation.

Designing bike paths which are safe and connected is a key to encouraging, not limiting, the opportunities for young and old to be more active. Exercise that is accessible encourages people from a young age to be more active, and make it part of their daily lives to counteract obesity, and many other diseases related to a sedentary lifestyle.

## 3. For the Environment and Sustainability:

Conferences and hearings around the world and here in Montreal have stressed the need to have more sustainable communities. The **Agora Metropolitaine 2013** held February 28 and March 1 in Montreal, highlighted the value of green and blue belt and greenways throughout our City.

The recent **PMAD** (Plan Métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement) which was adopted March 2012 by the City of Montreal aspires to improve the quality of life for the population of Greater Montreal. The summary of this important consultation recommends the means to make the Greater Montréal more attractive, competitive and sustainable with active transportation as well.

Climate change is a reality. Pollution and smog alerts are becoming commonplace in Montreal. The city of Montreal must encourage active and non-polluting transportation. Encouraging cycling and walking decreases the number of cars on the road, and therefore improves air quality and encourages a culture of sustainability.

## 4. For the Economy:

The traffic congestion on Montreal streets means that many hours are lost in work time and energy. Workers who really do need to use their vehicles for work purposes take more time to do their jobs which often adds to the costs of goods and services. As a result, the economy suffers.

Thus, each person who uses active or public transportation for any number of reasons as a means to commute instead of using a car, aids in reducing congestion on the roads and helps our overall economy. In addition, an increase in disposable income of individuals may result as well.

## **Recommendations**

1. Cycling has a major positive role to play not only on the health of Montrealers, but has a social, environmental and economic impact in the Saint-Raymond Neighbourhood and the Area Surrounding the Future MUHC
2. Cycle paths must be accessible and connect throughout the city for cycling to be a viable means of active transportation, used alone, or in conjunction with public transportation. Forward thinking cities need to make cycling an integral part of their transportation network.
3. The Décarie-Claremont missing link along De Maisonneuve is possibly the worst bike path segment of the important west-east cycle corridors in Montreal. The missing link will remain the key obstacle to residents switching from cars to bikes, and NDG will increasingly become an enclave with no safe exit or entrance for cyclists
4. Having a **safe passage** in the area for **all ages** of cyclists, from children to adult and beyond, is crucial. A safe passage for **all levels** of cyclists, from the beginner to the experienced is needed also. With only a bike helmet, individuals have very little protection from cars and busses on impact. Parents pulling children need time and room to navigate.
5. With the major changes being made to the Vendome metro area, **now** is the time to build a means of long term, safe and connected cycle and pedestrian passage along this section of De Maisonneuve. Investment in cycling and pedestrian paths will result in numerous benefits in the long term.

## **To Conclude:**

The safest and best **solution long term is** to build a bike and pedestrian bridge over Décarie Boulevard on De Maisonneuve Avenue, **with a pathway** continuing behind the existing buildings and the Vendome Metro as far as Claremont Avenue.

**Short term plans** must include segregated paths with bike signage and cyclist traffic lights.

With construction of a proper off the road cycle and pedestrian bridge and pathway on De Maisonneuve Avenue, from Décarie Boulevard to Claremont Avenue, competing with busses, cars, trucks and taxis, is completely avoided by cyclists and pedestrians.

Then, this long standing problem will finally be resolved.



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