

15 novembre 2018

À qui de droit,

On behalf of the NDG Community Council, it is with great pleasure that we submit to the O.C.P.M. our reflections and comments on the proposed Parc-nature dans la cour Turcot.

Founded more than 75 years ago, the NDG Community Council is the Table de quartier for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Our mission is to promote, improve and sustain the well-being of the NDG community and its residents by bringing together and mobilizing key stakeholders (community organizations, associations, institutions, the private sector) as well as residents to involve them in a concerted effort to identify community needs, set priorities for action, and ensure implementation and follow-up.

The Falaise St Jacques forms the southern boundary for all of NDG and acts as a barrier to functionally isolate the neighbourhood from the Boroughs of the greater south west on Montreal. For many years, the Council has been very active in mobilising residents in St Raymond and Westhaven, two low-income neighbourhoods in NDG that span the top of the Falaise St Jacques. Many residents that we have worked with over those years have expressed interest and concern regarding the future of the Falaise, which sits literally in the backyard of these communities. The reasons for this interest and concern are evident - the Falaise is neither accessible as a community asset, nor preserved as a natural space. Instead, it is functionally a fenced-off dumping ground for garbage from the various garages along rue St Jacques at the top of the cliff.

And yet, there is tremendous potential for NDG and all of Montreal to benefit from this large piece of land. The arrival of the Turcot Interchange project opened the door to re-imagining the potential for the Falaise, both how it could be protected as a natural green space and traversed by a much-needed link between NDG and the neighbourhoods to the south. The Council and many of our NDG partners (including many residents who live near the Falaise) have been very active in the campaign for the Dalle-Parc and remain engaged to this day. We applaud the developments we have seen in regard to how the green space elements of Falaise, the Dalle-Parc, and the Turcot project have been unfolding recently. What follows are our reflections, priorities, and concerns for the steps ahead from the position of the NDG Community Council.

### **Design and vocation**

- We strongly believe that the entirety of the Falaise St Jacques itself must be considered part of the project as a whole (the Grand Parc) and that the agencies responsible for maintaining the Falaise be determined. We believe that preserving as much natural green space as possible on the Falaise St Jacques is essential
- The vocation of the new green space proposed on the land being made available with Autoroute 20 being moved could be transformed into more naturalized green space than a highly developed open space for sports and recreation. In general, we would prefer to see more trees in the area than sports fields. The heart of the project will still be some distance from the nearest residential areas, it is not ideal as a space for sports fields but is well suited for more naturalised greenery.

- The ecological potential of this Parc should be taken full advantage of. A key element for the project should be the protection and indeed enhancement of local biodiversity, which would include the reintroduction of native plants along with bird & bat houses, bees and pollinator flowers, and related.

### **Integration of the Parc within the City**

- In creating a north-south cyclist-pedestrian connection, a focus should be on the efficiency and safety of that link. We wish that by adding this important new element to the active-transport network of the City we will not only serve better those that choose to get around on foot or by bicycle but also encourage others to consider it a viable option. Efficiency and safety are two key components to ensure that that happens.
- The neighbourhoods surrounding this project - St Raymond and Westhaven in NDG, as well as Ville Saint-Pierre, Ville-Émard, Côte-Saint-Paul, St Henri - are all lower income neighbourhoods characterized at least partially by being physically isolated from the rest of the City. It is essential that connections to and through these neighbourhoods be well designed and take into consideration how residents of these areas are able to make use of them
- In the case of NDG, understanding how access to the Falaise will be ensured is essential as there are railway tracks that separate most of NDG from the Falaise. Though rue Cavendish was identified as a possible area to build a pedestrian-bike connection under the tracks and to the Falaise, it needs to be taken into consideration that currently Cavendish is a very busy and fast moving road and so building a secure connection for cyclists and pedestrians needs to be a priority for the project and not an afterthought.
- We encourage the Ville de Montréal to collaborate with the MTQ to ensure that the Parc-nature Turcot connects to the Bande-Verte that is being built at the base of the Falaise as part of the official Turcot Interchange project. The value of a pedestrian-cyclist network depends in large part on how well each section is linked together.
- Because the parc will be surrounded by physical barriers like highways, it is important to avoid creating cul-de-sac zones where unsavory activities take place.
- This Parc will benefit the City at different levels. We encourage the Ville de Montréal to take also a global view of how this project can be a part of a network of green spaces that would include the Parc de Rapides, the Douglas Hospital, Parc Angrignon, the Canal Lachine, the Falaise St Jacques, and other green spaces, including Parc Meadowbrook and points beyond

### **Governance**

- The Parc will cover several different jurisdictions. It will be essential to establish which agency will be responsible for the maintenance of the Parc as a whole. This includes determining how the Parc will be maintained throughout winter must be taken into consideration from the outset ; will it be open year round, and how will the security of path be maintained during months when ice and snow will build up? Furthermore, we believe that the Parc should not be used as dumping site for salt-filled snow cleared from the highway.
- There are so many stakeholders involved in this project - community organisations and residents along with the Ville de Montréal, 4 different Boroughs including Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the MTQ, Parcs Canada, and others. For coherence and transparency, we would encourage that a steering committee be formed that will play a role in ensuring that the vision for the Parc translates into a successful project

- The vision presented by the Ville de Montréal for this Écoterritoire is ambitious and welcomed. It is however essential that this project be fully and adequately financed, that no half measures are taken in its conception and construction. It is a tremendous opportunity to build an iconic project for all of Montreal and this opportunity should not be missed due to insufficient investment that does not match the vision.

Our final comment mirrors a contribution made by Mme Ackaoui and M Asselin at the public presentation of the results of the OCPM consultations on November 1st. This project is a great opportunity to do something bold and special for the whole city of Montréal and at all times we project should be guided by the project's objectives, not limited by its constraints.

For more details on the position of the NDG Community Council and the suggestions contained within this submission, please contact Steve Charters at [stevecharters@ndg.ca](mailto:stevecharters@ndg.ca) or by phone at 514 484 1471 ex. 232

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