

Re: Public Consultation, Quadrilatere Saint Laurent (Memorandum)

Thomas Monahan

My name is Thomas Monahan, a full-time CEGEP professor of Theatre. My interests in this project are social, economic cultural and artistic. I acknowledge that this street has suffered recently and could use some help. That being said we immediately need to recognize and applaud those tenants who have invested there lives to keep this neighborhood vibrant and alive. They are a living testament to its proud and colorful history. These are not 'corporate franchises' offering a systematic 'sameness' of product and service which can be found anywhere in North America. They are in fact the antitheses of the 'mono-cultural' approach. These are the 'Mom and Pop' businesses that are the true essence of what is the best of Montreal! They have survived all manners of harsh physical and economic realities through perseverance and dedication to there communities. There have been harsh economic times in the past and will be more in the near future, these individuals have a proven track record and are of cardinal importance to the economic sustainability of this city. They are grass roots contributors; the Montreal Pool Hall is a landmark famous through out the continent. Café Cleopatra is a unique patron of the Arts, dedicating its upper 2 floors to young developing artists and community groups. As a teacher of the theatrical arts I can only offer my students a foundation of knowledge. The essential pedagogical development can only occur after the institutional component with opportunities to use there knowledge and explore and nurture there emerging craft. The Café Cleopatra is the most unique and accessible venue I am aware of for this growth. My opinion of the present project is that we need to re-think our approach. Consistently the language employed pertaining to this project, uses the two words *development* and *re-vitalization*. Development is the enhancement and revelation of the potential of an existing entity. Re-vitalization is to give new life to an existing entity. However, this project thus far, seems to offer only the total destruction and negation of the existing entities.

I would propose that we return to the drawing board and ASK...

- How can we lend a helping hand to the existing tenants?
- What kind of restoration can occur to the existing business to rediscover and reintegrate the streets unique function and historical value?
- Study the feasibility of *geared to income* affordable housing thereby offering shelter and an improved *quality of life* to the inhabitants and workers of the neighborhood.
- Re-think *mega-complexes* of steel and glass for a more energy-efficient, environmentally friendly and most importantly *human scale* architecture.
- To consider height restrictions for the whole area to ensure that the beauty and functional openness of the Place des Arts remains the centre piece of these efforts.

Let's truly begin a process to *develop* and *re-vitalize* this neighborhood with an *open-minded* approach that is considerate and sensitive. This is something that we could be proud of!

Yours Sincerely ,Thomas Monahan.

