

Feb. 23, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

I live at [REDACTED] between Van Horne and Ducharme, and I do not have a garage; I park my car in the street. Before the new parking system, I heard many things that made me a bit nervous:

- I heard that because Outremont is a big territory and we would have a single zone for the entire area, the dense parts would fill up and we would be unable to find parking close to our homes.
- I also heard that because parking permits would be sold to non-residents, our streets would be filled with vehicles owned by students and faculty of U de M.

When I bumped into my borough representative, Valerie Patreau, in the street, I asked her about these concerns, and she told me that the parking system would be re-evaluated after a year. Once it had been tried, she assured me, any problems would be addressed; the system was not set in stone.

It has not been a year, but I can already give some feedback about how well the system is working for me. *The anticipated problems have not come to pass. I live in the densest part of Outremont, in the area very close to the university, and I have found it much easier to find a parking spot!*

Furthermore, it has been my great pleasure to discover that being able to park in other sections of Outremont has made my daily life easier in ways that I hadn't given any thought to. On my way home I can stop to buy wine or groceries, and so far I have always found a spot without having to search. The other day I stopped at my daughter's school for a parent-teacher interview night, and I was able to park in the street.

Another point that was making its way around both the physical and the social media neighbourhoods, was that teachers at Outremont's schools were having to leave their jobs because it was too expensive for them to purchase parking passes. It seemed to me that this was unfair, until I read that the school board owns a considerable number of parking spots which it rents out for profit rather than allowing the teachers to use them!

Social media has made it easy for certain members of the political opposition to spread fears and rumours. If you have a lot of time on your hands, you can spend hours on Facebook every day, belittling the work of the borough mayor and councillors, casting unfounded aspersions, and publishing deliberately misleading information. In the case of the new parking regulations this is particularly silly since they have been put into place on a trial basis. I can only hope that our municipal democracy will not succumb to the same kind of fake news and bully tactics that got the current president of the USA into the White House.

Sincerely,

Heidi Quinsey

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