

Commission on the Land Use and Development Plan for Montréal

BRIEF SUBMITTED BY:

KATE COULTER, citizen of Beaconsfield

November 3, 2014

This brief follows the request for comments, in the context of the public consultations, to the Standing Committee on the Land Use and Development Plan for Montreal on the draft of the Development Plan and Development of Montreal ("SAD").

I have been a resident of Beaconsfield for 25 years and an active member of my community. I have raised my children in a community with "green" surroundings, whether it be the "green" canopy created and nourished by our neighbours and city, the "green" mentality of my neighbours concerned for our planet and sustainable lifestyle or our "green" spaces still remaining in our parks and especially Angell Woods.

As a community, we are constantly struggling to find a balance between the need



to develop our city and increase our tax revenues and the need to preserve our quality of live and protect our green spaces.

With development comes increased traffic in the suburban reality. Increased traffic sometimes leads to a threat to public safety, unless it's properly planned.

These concerns inspired me to run for City Council in 2005. During my term on council I learned of the complexity of satisfying the population of Beaconsfield, one, which is incredibly intelligent, informed and well armed with professional advisors. We all want the best for our families and want to maintain a quality of life that we have worked hard to preserve.

I am concerned about the SAD as it relates to our quality of life in Beaconsfield, especially around the area of Angell Woods and the Woodland crossing (highway 20 West exit at Woodland, just south of Angell Woods).

At this particular intersection we find one of the most complex interchanges in Canada with the presence of four railway tracks, used by three carriers (CN, CP and AMT-Vaudreuil-Hudson line) as well as by vehicles and pedestrians crossing over train tracks and four sets of traffic lights. There are several configurations leading either to highway 20 east or west, Beaurepaire Dr. east or west and Elm St. east or west. (see Map A). The traffic at this interchange is at its full capacity and presents a substantial risk to dangerous behaviour by drivers and pedestrians forced to maintain their patience during above average waiting times.



This interchange is highly valuable to residents living in the area and the only other access to reach the southern part of Beaconsfield, where all of our municipal services are situated.

The reality is that there is no bus line along Elm or Beaurepaire Dr. to bring commuters to and from their homes, nor to

service a new development. One has to use a car to get around in the suburbs, due to car-dependent layouts of our communities developed in the 50's and 60's. 80.5% of 19,195 Beaconsfielders use their motor vehicle to get around.



A study completed by CIMA+ firm in August 2012, commissioned by the Association for the Protection of Angell Woods, studied the current scenario at the Woodland interchange and the potential scenario if parts of Angell Woods were to be developed.

Based on the analysis of the development potential, Angell Woods area could accommodate between 373 single-family homes (low density) and 1,301 multifamily unit types (high density).

It was not surprising to learn that any new residential project (low OR high density) will provoke a traffic nightmare for this key north-south access artery. The Woodland intersection is already at maximum capacity.

The study states: "Simulations calibrated to the current situation show that the flow generated by the development of Angell Woods would cause a significant deterioration of traffic conditions with average delays much higher than those of the norm. These significant damages (loss of at least two levels of service) are reflected in, among other things, several movements characterized by levels of service F and E (on a scale of A to F, with F being excessive and unacceptable saturation). Significant delays can create frustration and risky and dangerous maneuvers from motorists who are often potential sources of accidents.
(translation from text below)

"Les simulations calibrées de la situation actuelle démontrent que les débits engendrés par le projet du Bois Angell provoquent une détérioration significative des conditions de circulation avec des retards moyens de beaucoup supérieurs à ceux de l'état actuel. Ces détériorations significatives (perte d'au moins de deux niveaux de service) se traduisent, entre autres, par plusieurs mouvements caractérisés par des niveaux de service F et E. Des retards importants peuvent créer de la frustration ainsi que des manœuvres risquées et dangereuses de la part des automobilistes qui sont souvent des sources potentielles d'accidents."

The average delay per vehicle would exceed 80 seconds. This is considered unacceptable, by the majority of drivers. Traffic is often backed up on the north side along Elm St. all the way back to Montrose.(See map –A).

Surprisingly, the residents who will be most affected are those coming from or trying to get to Beaconsfield south. If a new residential project is installed in Angell Woods, these residents would see their average wait times double or triple (to over 200 seconds, or 3 minutes), well over the standard "tolerable" wait times of 80 seconds.

Recommendations to mitigate the problematic intersection are cited as almost impossible due to the high costs and physical constraints of the land layout. So we must live with the situation and not agitate it any further.

NOTE: One should note that the study was performed in May when traffic is lighter than the winter months, when less people are driving their cars. During the winter months, Elm St is clogged with parents picking up their children or other family members getting off the train during rush hour, thus adding to the confusion and frustration.

I do not stand alone in my concern for the clogged Woodland- Hwy 20-Beaurepaire interchange. A Facebook page reaches more than 100 people <https://www.facebook.com/woodlandtrafficbeaconsfield>.

Aside from the obvious traffic problem created by any development in Angell Woods I believe strongly that development along Elm would jeopardize the buffer zone required by the species living in Angell Woods.

While on city council from 2005-2009 my first priority was to create the Beaconsfield Environmental Advisory Committee, a committee of about 13 citizens and staff, which is still active today. In April 2011 the BEAC passed an internal resolution stating that:

- i. *The protection of Angell Woods serves to preserve the quality of life for the citizens of Beaconsfield through cleaner air and water;*
- ii. ***The best use for the citizens of Beaconsfield of the lands that make up Angell Woods is the continued protection of the extensive wetlands, old-growth forest, required adjacent buffer and regeneration areas that these citizens so treasure;***
- iii. ***Angell Woods and its buffer provide invaluable habitat for many rare and threatened species;***
- iv. *The preservation of Angell Woods is crucial to Montreal moving closer to the international norm of 8% green space on the island of Montreal (where it is now 3%).*

Kim Marineau, biologist, completed a study in July 2010 of the flora and fauna found in Angell Woods and its buffer zones. In total, 200 plant species were identified and 14 species at risk or interest, including black maple, wild garlic and wild ginger.

Some 43 bird species have been identified by the Marineau study: the Song Sparrow, Starling, Gray Catbird, Eastern Phoebe, Indigo Bunting, Magnolia Warbler, Mourning Dove, warbling vireo, etc. The natural areas of Angell Woods are an important habitat of interest to birds of prey (nesting, migration and wintering area). They can also serve particular feeding area for birds. Species that may be present in the area are the red-tailed hawk, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Brown Hawk, the Great Horned Owl, the Screech Owl, the Northern Harrier and the Kestrel of America.

The study concluded that: *"In light of this inventory, we recommend maintaining the integrity of the territory, consisting of a natural environment of great ecological value species richness and diversity in plant communities by granting them the status of protected area. This is of prime importance as this site is one of the last of its kind on the island of Montreal ... "*

RECOMMENDATIONS:

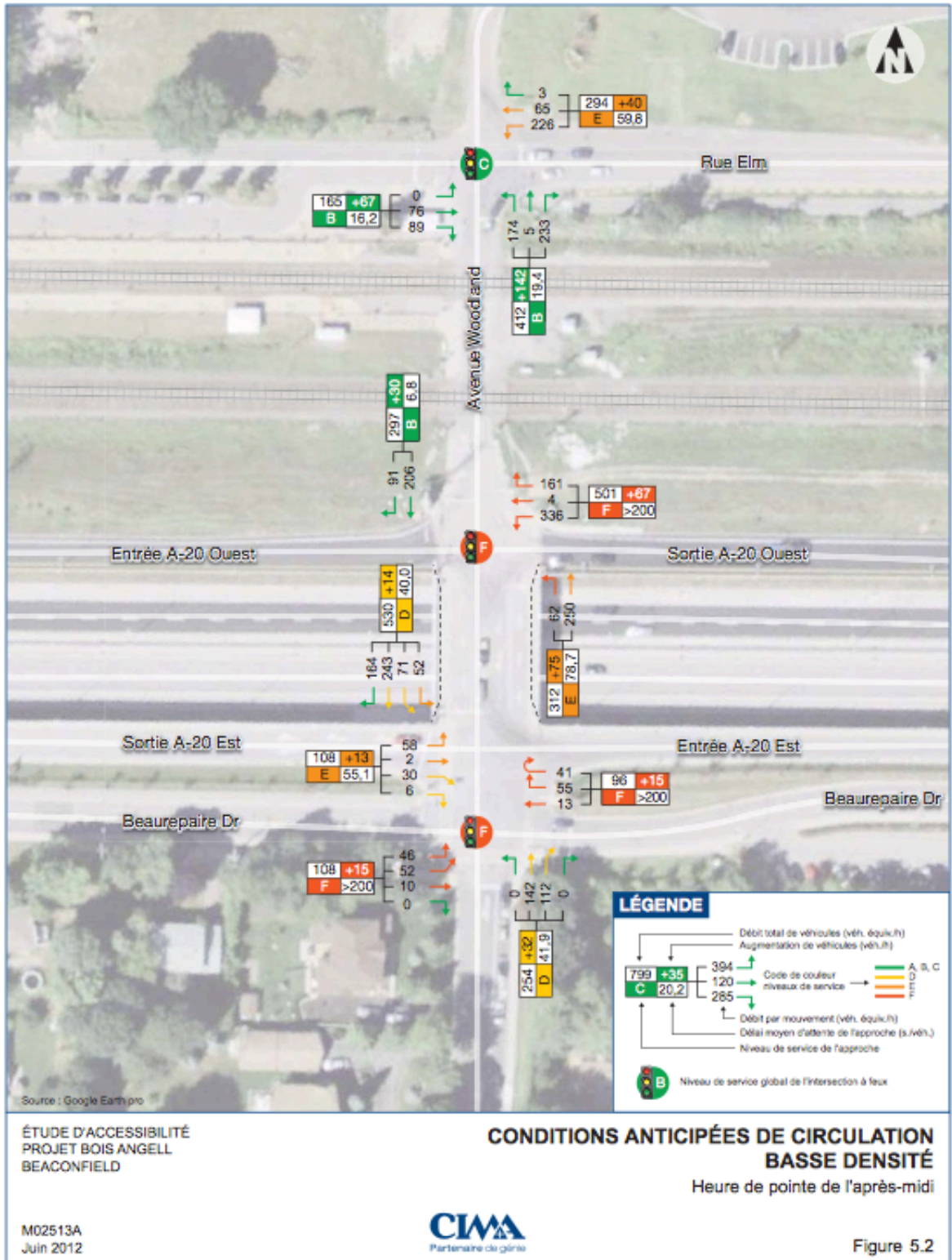
1) I would prefer ZERO development along Elm Street alongside the Beaugrepaire train station. However, I am sympathetic to the landowners in the Angell Woods area and would recommend a secondary goal of 8 units/hectare in the southern sector of Angell Woods.

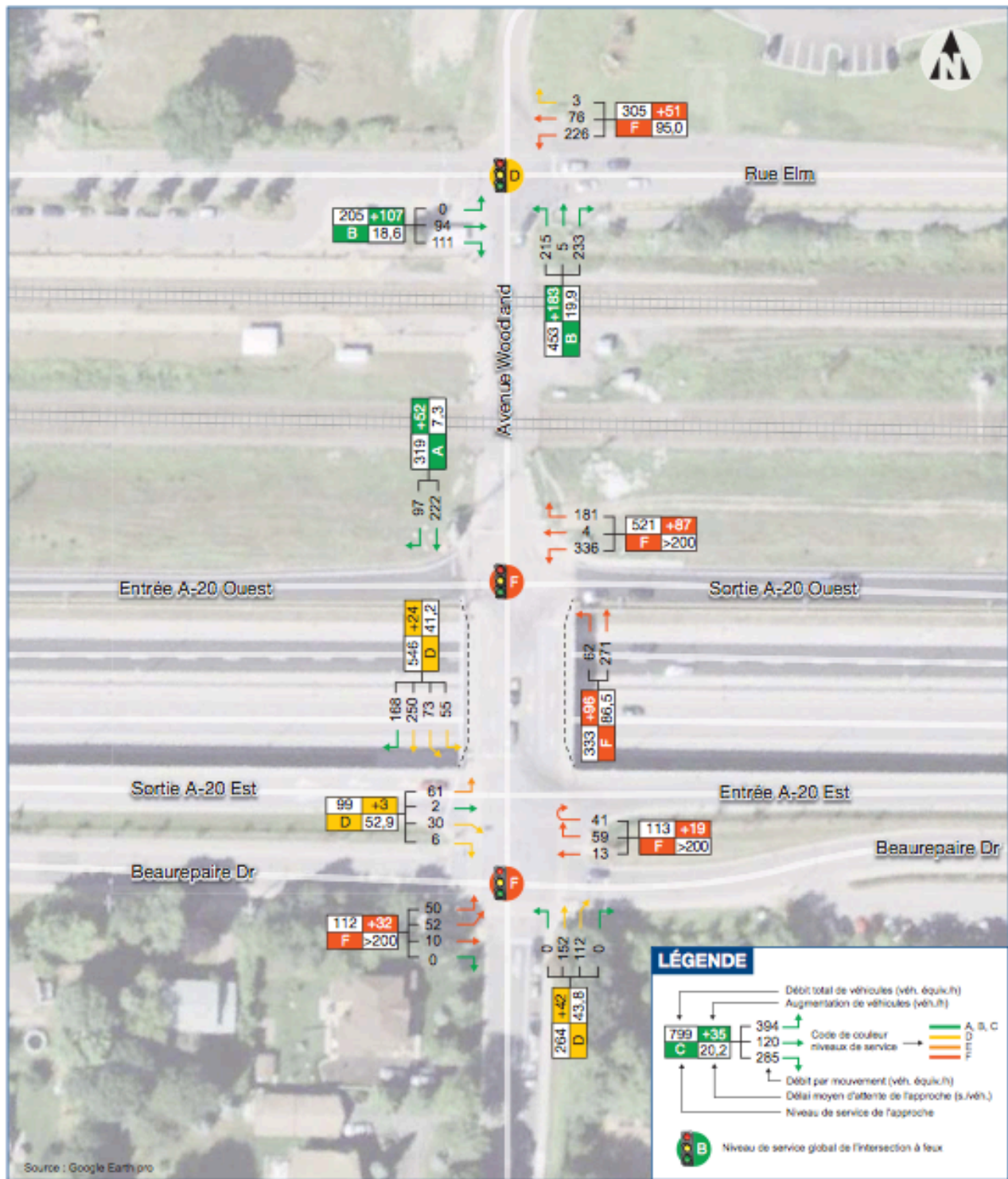
2) Take Beaugrepaire/Woodland interchange out of the TOD. Exempt it from high density development due to the nature of the over-charged interchange as well as the natural environment that must be preserved to protect the habitat for the species living in Angell Woods and the quality of life for all Montrealers enjoying the natural green space.

Map – A (Woodland exit off Highway 20)



Reference: AVIS TECHNIQUE CONCERNANT L'ACCESSIBILITÉ AU PROJET BOIS ANGELL, BEACONSFIELD. Projet no : M02513A 16 août 2012. Available at www.apaw.ca





ÉTUDE D'ACCESSIBILITÉ
PROJET BOIS ANGELL
BEACONFIELD

CONDITIONS ANTICIPÉES DE CIRCULATION HAUTE DENSITÉ

Heure de pointe de l'après-midi

M02513A
Juin 2012



Figure 5.1