

**Pilot project to stop
transit traffic for
private vehicles
on Voie Camillien-Houde
and on Chemin Remembrance
and**

**Vision for the future
of vehicular access ways
to the Mont Royal**

Summary Document

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1. THE CONTEXT

A vision to be perpetuated and highlighted

Accessibility for the entire community is at the very heart of the design of the Parc du Mont-Royal, one of North America's seven major urban parks, created by famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, in 1876. In fact, as he designed all these parks, Olmsted was guided by the principle that everyone should be able to access the experience. He thus developed a traffic plan for the Parc du Mont-Royal that included eleven kilometers of roads for horse-drawn carriages, as well as several kilometers of walking trails, with the gentlest inclines possible. This traffic plan highlights the diversity of the mountain's landscapes thanks to a slow progression – 185 of elevation – that prepares visitors, including those with reduced mobility, for the summit experience. Since the dynamic experience designed by Olmsted was maintained over the years¹, its preservation and enhancement are the very foundations of the city's interventions in this regard. Moreover, in 2005, the government order-in-council creating the historic and natural district of Mont Royal (name changed to "declared heritage site of Mont-Royal" under the 2012 Cultural Heritage Act) confirmed exceptional heritage value of the Mont Royal.

Object of the public consultation by the OCPM

On March 14, 2018, the municipal administration mandated the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) to engage in dialogue with citizens, both during and after the five-month pilot project, through accessible and transparent consultation.

The pilot project is part of an extensive process undertaken by the city to diversify and improve access to the natural and cultural heritage of the Mont Royal. For this reason, citizens will be consulted on two major complementary components: hearing of opinions regarding the pilot project, and the vision for the future of this access way to the park.

The issue of East-West transit traffic using the Voie Camillien-Houde and the Chemin Remembrance (hereinafter referred to as the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis) was the object of a public debate as far back as 1990, during the public consultation held by the Bureau de consultation de Montréal, preceding the adoption of the 1992 Mont-Royal Enhancement Plan. In its consultation report, the Bureau de consultation de Montréal expressed the opinion that "the axis formed by the Voie Camillien-Houde and Chemin Remembrance must be remodeled by adding terminal loops." Such a measure would have the direct consequence of impeding transit traffic, all the while maintaining vehicular access to the mountain.²

At the time of the consultations held in 2008 by the OCPM, before the adoption of the Mont Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan, in April 2009, the OCPM recommended, among other things, to reduce the predominance of vehicular and transit traffic on the mountain by enhancing the public transit service for the mountain, in accordance with the 2008 Integrated transportation plan for the Mont Royal.

¹ In its declaration on Mount Royal, tabled in 2002, the *National Olmsted Parks Association* stated that the restoration and rehabilitation work in the park are largely inspired by Olmsted's vision and have allowed for the enhancement of significant elements. It also states that the Parc du Mont-Royal is one of North America's most significant elements of Frederick Law Olmsted's heritage.
ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/pdf/P20a/3d10.pdf

² Bureau de consultation de Montréal (BCM), 1990. *L'avenir de la montagne. Plan préliminaire de mise en valeur du mont Royal. Rapport de consultation*. P. 95.

2. THE PILOT PROJECT

2.1 The groundwork for the project

Becoming informed in order to take action

The mountain, located in the heart of downtown, is accessible using various means of transportation: on foot, by bike, car or public transportation. In this respect, one of the main access ways, the Voie Camillien-Houde, is a modern-era addition resulting from popular access to automobiles. In fact, various aspects of this lane affirm its automotive vocation (width of the lanes and shoulders in certain areas, safety barriers typical of high-speed traffic lanes, etc.). Numerous drivers take it to get across the mountain from east to west, thus generating traffic density spikes (up to 80% of vehicles) during rush hour, on weekdays. However, road sharing to access the park and utilitarian traffic for the purposes of crossing from east to west, all reduce the convivial access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as the efficient public transit service on the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis. It seems difficult to improve this cohabitation without reducing the volume and speed of vehicular traffic.

The Parc du Mont-Royal is visited by millions of people every year. Access for all users, including those with reduced mobility, is essential in order to meet one of the three major objectives of the Mont Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan, which is to make the mountain an accessible and welcoming place.

In October 2017, the Service des grands parcs, du verdissement et du Mont-Royal (SGPVMR) was mandated to head a task force on the future of the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis, in collaboration with the Service des infrastructures, de la voirie et des transports (SIVT). This mandate was given following a tragic accident that resulted in the death of cyclist, in October 2017, which had driven citizens to demand priority actions from the administration, in order to improve safety and road-sharing conditions. The city consequently implemented safety measures as of October 2017.

The development concepts and the project monitoring arrangements are produced by the SIVT and the SGPVMR, in collaboration with various partners, such as the STM, the SPVM and Ville-Marie borough.

2.2 Objectives of the pilot project

General objectives

- Inform discussions regarding the vocation and function of the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis;
- Experiment the transit traffic ban for private vehicles and document all relevant data to obtain a full picture of the situation before and after the pilot project. In this regard:
 - Implement a plan to monitor impacts, on accessibility, traffic, safety, parking, the environment and public transit (by the city);
 - Consult citizens through the OCPM;
- For the longer term, plan the future redevelopment of the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis in a way that is consistent with the new vision of accessibility to the Mont Royal.

Interventions related to target issues

- Maintain service, accessibility³ and safety for the entire clientele of the park;
- Minimize impact on bordering property;
- Streamline bus, bike, pedestrian and emergency and service vehicle traffic on the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis;
- Maintain access to the Parc du Mont-Royal from east to west for clients travelling in private vehicles;
- Efficiently manage parking lots during busy periods;
- Ensure the safety of all users everywhere and at all times on traffic lanes and in parking lots;
- Implement provisions for offenders;
- Reduce the speed limit to 40 km/h on the entire road, for all forms of transportation, including bikes;
- Propose pit stops along the routes between Avenue du Mont-Royal and Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges (through light, safe interventions);
- Broadcast and highlight the role of the Voie Camillien-Houde and Chemin Remembrance as part of the road system providing access to the mountain;
- Take into account special events, such as the cyclovias, bike races, etc.

2.3 Traffic plan

The traffic plan is based on the removal of transit traffic between the Maison Smith parking lots and those of the Lac aux Castors. The central segment, that is approximately 550 meters long, is closed to private vehicles; access to this segment is restricted to certain authorized vehicles (emergency, roadwork, maintenance), to pedestrians, to STM buses, to tourist and school buses, as well as to bikes. The Parc du Mont-Royal parking lots are accessible from the east or from the west, depending on where the user is coming from. Access to parking lots P-117 and P-118, near the Maison Smith and the Chalet du Mont-Royal, is reserved to users coming from the east, while access to parking lots P-115 and P-116, near Lac aux Castors, is reserved to users arriving from the west.



³ Excluding certain short periods for special events, the complete closure of the road to vehicular traffic, other than for emergency vehicles. In this respect, the cyclovias will take place on five Sunday mornings during the pilot project, as well as the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal, on September 9, 2018.

The result is that access to the Belvédère Camillien-Houde by private vehicle is only possible from the east. The route to access this belvedere from the east has not changed with the pilot project.

This new traffic plan includes new road signaling validated by city specialists. Among other measures, during very busy periods, effective and adapted traffic management will be provided by security agents.

2.4 Animation program and temporary installations

Light and safe installations will be proposed to users in order for pedestrians to accentuate the areas that are exclusively accessible to pedestrians and cyclists along the Voie Camillien-Houde and the Chemin Remembrance. These temporary measures will be coupled with an activity and animation program that will reveal the potential of installations and place visitors at the very heart of a collective reflection concerning the future of this access way to the park.

The main objectives of this process are:

- to offer the community a renewed use through fun, dynamic and contemplative activities, anchored in the very essence of the park;
- to bring the users to experiment with and experience a convivial cohabitation between the various users of the roadway and an improved connection to surrounding attractions (Belvédère Camillien-Houde, Belvédère “Soleil”, Bois d’Outremont, etc.);
- to reveal the landscape, panoramic views and special places bordering the park.

The city has mandated an organization having a vast expertise in this kind of temporary installations, well anchored in their Montréal environment. The preliminary program contains three intervention components: marking the east and west park entrances and the development of two belvederes and two rest areas near bus stops. These developments will be carried out in two phases. The first will be the inauguration of a “suspended café” on part of the Belvédère Camillien-Houde. Then, for the second phase, a bike rest stop will be set up at a temporary belvedere developed along the Voie Camillien-Houde, at its highest point. This location will offer a breathtaking view of the sunset and the north-east portion of the city.

Three types of animation will be offered:

- daily activities by way of interactive installations and services aiming to highlight the vocation of this temporary location.
- recurrent fun or educational activities (thematic pick-nicks, conferences, star gazing, etc.)
- special activities organized as part of specific events (cyclovias, thematic projections, etc.).

2.5 Other highlights

Duration of the pilot project

The pilot project will last from Saturday, June 2, to Wednesday, October 31, 2018.

User services

All of the park's user services will be maintained.

Accessibility

- Maintenance of all pedestrian access ways to the park;
- Maintenance of the access to the Voie Camillien-Houde and to Chemin Remembrance by public transit, tourist buses and certain authorized vehicles (emergency, roadwork, maintenance, etc.);
- Improvement of the public transit service:
 - Between June 2 and June 17, 2018: addition of bus line 711 on weekends;
 - Between June 18 and August 26, 2018: return to the full service of bus line 711, daily, like in 2017;
 - Starting on August 27: extension of the weekend service on bus line 711;
 - Addition of two bus stops: at the entrance of the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and of the future "Belvédère Soleil".

Safety

- Revised signaling according to the situation, both on the roadway and in the park;
- Prior information and continuous information:
 - Montrealers and tourists;
 - Neighboring boroughs;
- Parking lot management during very busy periods;
- Support provided by the SPVM according to a three-phase plan: prevention, intervention and assessment;
- Implementation of a monitoring committee and adjustments during the project;
Ex.: Reassessing signaling and user behavior four weeks after the implementation of the project, in order to validate the success of the pilot project.

2.6 Project monitoring

In an effort to paint the whole picture regarding the situation, the city will collect important data before and during the pilot project. This data will mainly pertain to the following aspects:

- **Traffic:** vehicular traffic will be tallied before and during the removal of transit traffic on the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis and on peripheral roads. An analysis will also be carried out with respect to the transit of private vehicles.

- **Safety:** the city will regularly follow up with the SPVM in order to assess user understanding of and compliance to the new signaling.
- **Parking:** the city will collect data during the pilot project and will compare it to the data from previous years.
- **The environment:** the improvement of air quality and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will be assessed following the removal of transit traffic. Sound pollution will also be measured before and during the pilot project. The Direction régionale de la santé publique has offered its collaboration in this respect.
- **Public transit:** the city will compare the duration of the route of buses transiting along the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis, their punctuality, ridership, and speed before and during the pilot project. It will also collect information from bus drivers.
- **Partner comments:** the city will collect comments from partner organizations and associations all along the pilot project.

A follow-up committee will be assessing the pilot project all along, in order to make the necessary adjustments quickly, so as to ensure the safety of all users of the Mont Royal.

All this essentially quantitative data will be available to the public, at the OCPM consultation meetings, before the hearing of opinions.

2.7 Potential impacts on traffic on peripheral roads, around the Mont Royal

Before elaborating a development concept, the city had analyzed the impact of removing transit traffic for private vehicles on the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis, on traffic around the Mont Royal.

This analysis was carried out in two steps. Firstly, transit traffic was tallied on-site on a weekday, during morning and afternoon rush hours. This tallying consisted of collecting all license plate numbers, in November, 2017. The analysis showed a very high transit traffic rate, representing up to 90% of total local traffic. In fact, during weekdays, the vast majority of vehicles circulating on the Mont Royal are not headed to the park, nor are they going to the cemeteries: they are only crossing through the mountain. A new tally operation will be carried out before the beginning of the pilot project, on a weekend, to measure transit traffic. Secondly, an analysis assessed the capacity of the axes neighboring the Mont Royal, and on which the traffic density is set to increase as a result of the transit traffic ban. According to the starting point of these vehicles (determined from the license plate numbers) and the available routes, the city has analyzed traffic redirection possibilities. Thus, the current volume of transit traffic was redirected on axes around Mont Royal. This analysis did not reveal any problems with respect to the capacity of streets such as Avenue des Pins, Avenue du Docteur-Penfield and the Chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine.

The following conclusions were drawn:

The road link crossing the Mont Royal is interesting during rush hours, as it serves as a shortcut during rush hour and cuts transit time in comparison to the roads around the mount. Users can transit through the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis in five minutes.

The removal of this transit way through the Mont Royal may increase transit time for users: depending on traffic density on alternate routes and on the time of day, the projected transit time increase varies between zero and twelve minutes.

Since the road system offers several alternate routes for the users of the Mont Royal transit way, the capacity of the analyzed roads should suffice. Traffic lights may be reprogrammed at certain target intersections, in order to minimize the impacts and to increase the capacity of the alternate routes.

The redistribution of traffic on alternate roads should stabilize within a few weeks following the closure of the Mon Royal axis.

3. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

3.1 Orientations

An evolving vision

The Bureau du Mont-Royal of the SGPVMR has been carrying out for several years various projects aiming to improve access and routes through the park, and more generally, throughout the Mont-Royal heritage site. In June 2017, the SGPVMR was mandated by the municipal administration to elaborate a global accessibility vision for the Mont Royal and to ensure that all ongoing and upcoming projects on park property and within the Mont-Royal heritage site are in line with this vision. The vision for the future of the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis, a major artery for internal traffic on the mountain is part of this general framework.

Furthermore, the mandate given to the Bureau du Mont-Royal is in line with the orientations already identified in the main planning documents elaborated by the city over the past few years, the Mont Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan (2009), the integrated transportation plan for the Mont-Royal (2008) and the Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats (2004), given that the Mont Royal is home to one of the city's ten ecoterritories, *Les sommets et les flancs du mont Royal*.

The following are examples of some of the orientations:

1. Give the Voie Camillien-Houde a “park lane” character, in line with the natural aspect of its location, and having an enhanced landscape quality;
2. Setting up convivial itineraries, that are safe, enticing and welcoming, and that provide access to the mountain's various spaces and landscapes;
3. Welcome all categories of visitors;
4. Enhance the mountain's landscape qualities through simplicity and permanence;
5. Promote developments that blend in harmoniously with the natural aspect of the Mont Royal and reduce the visual effect of traffic lanes.

Moreover, in order for interventions to meet conservation and enhancement objectives for the Mont-Royal heritage site, several orientations are added to the above:

1. Consider the entire heritage site, including all its components, such as the residential sectors, institutions, cemeteries, parks and itineraries meant to update the accessibility to the Mont Royal;
2. See to it that interventions meeting accessibility criteria also meet objectives with respect to the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage;
3. Consider the road system, including the roads bypassing the mountain, as elements forming an integral part of the heritage site;
4. Offer a diversified experience of the heritage site, as much in terms of internal itineraries as for connections with the city.

Revisiting the preponderance of cars

Revisiting the major presence of cars in central neighborhoods and in Montréal's large urban parks is part of a trend that has been growing both in North America and in Europe. In doing so, for instance, the administration has opted to close both the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes to vehicular traffic during certain periods, in accordance with the Paris Breathes⁴ project, just like the complete and definitive closure to vehicular traffic of certain streets in Prospect Park⁵ and Central Park⁶, New York, as well as the entire redevelopment of Time Square, in New York, a few years ago.

Already, in 2005, the city demolished the Parc/des Pins interchange, replacing it with an urban boulevard at ground level. Shortly thereafter, the South lane of Chemin de Remembrance was removed from the vehicular traffic system while the North lane, previously one-way, was converted to a two-way road. The beltway (at 80% completion) and the redevelopment of the Peel and Cedar entrances are in line with all major orientations of the planning documents. For the future redevelopment of the Côte-des-Neiges/Remembrance intersection, necessary because of the state of disrepair of the exchange, the reconstruction of a similar structure is not being considered.

Finally, the city can draw inspiration from interesting precedents with respect to developing convivial and safe park lanes.



Blue Ridge Parkway



Carriage road



Stowe, Vermont

A better understanding of the evolution of vehicular access ways

From 2007 to 2013, the city has carried out several landscape and accessibility analyses. Moreover, it has elaborated various scenarios validating the potential of different interventions, namely along the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance axis, in order to:

- meet the objectives regarding the reduction of vehicular traffic;
- improve pedestrian experience;
- allow the continuation of the beltway;
- consolidate the ecological network; and
- integrate the ecological management of water and vegetation.

More recently, historic studies have yielded a better knowledge of the mountain's western sectors (Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges) and of the eastern sectors (Parc Jeanne-Mance and Côte Placide) and a better understating of their respective heritage value. An ongoing

⁴ www.paris.fr/parisrespire

⁵ www.prospectpark.org/news-events/news/mayor-announces-car-free-prospect-park/

⁶ Starting on June 27, 2018, excluding streets crossing through the width of the park, located beneath pedestrian and bike paths.

study concerning the evolution of the Voie Camillien-Houde and the Chemin Remembrance will complete our knowledge of the history behind these vehicular access roads.

3.2 Upcoming steps

- Summary of the evolution and heritage interest of the Voie Camillien-Houde and the Chemin Remembrance;
- Summary of the problems and issues (the consultation report is a major component of this summary) and diagnosis;
- Preliminary vision statement;
- Final vision statement.

All the above-listed steps will be discussed and improved as part of the participative process with our partners, with the support of the Table de concertation du Mont-Royal.

4. SCHEDULES

4.1 Orientations from the reference documents, providing the groundwork for the vision for the future

Excerpts from the MONT ROYAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN (2009)

Protecting and enhancing Mount Royal

- Protect features of interest, integrate the concept of landscape and recognize the designation of and heritage site;
- Apply protection and enhancement measures in the development of the road network:

2.1.1.2 Natural habitats

Take into account the development of the ecological corridor along the axis of Chemin Remembrance (map of the Conservation Plan and Appendix 1 – Biodeviserity).

2.1.2.4 Road network

Establish a balance between the functional transportation issues and the enhancement of the heritage site:

- balance the network to make more room for pedestrians and cyclists and allow them to safely appreciate the surroundings;
- signage, landscaping, sidewalks, plants and urban furniture should complement and respect the Mountain's heritage character and landscape components, in particular those of Mount Royal Park.

Voie Camillien-Houde and Chemin Remembrance must be converted from a high-speed through road into a "park road" better suited to the natural surroundings, with better landscaping and an enhanced view northward from Voie Camillien-Houde:

- emphasize pedestrians' and cyclists' needs;
- reduce focus on traffic;
- take into account the need for access by public transit, emergency and tourist vehicles, cemetery visitors and park users);

Making the Mountain an accessible and welcoming place

- Continue to redevelop access to the mountain and surrounding roads:
 - make all routes user-friendly, safe and inviting;
- Apply an integrated approach including the different components of access to the Mont Royal (public transit, parking, approaches, etc.);

- Promote and improve access to the various areas of the mountain:
 - offer a variety of routes and means of transportation to all visitors;
 - avoid compromising the integrity and preservation of natural, heritage and landscape elements, as well as the nature of the different areas;
- Implement the *Plan de transport intégré du Mont-Royal*.

Excerpts from the *PLAN DE TRANSPORT INTÉGRÉ DU MONT-ROYAL (2008)*

Orientations

- Promote public transportation as the preferred means of accessing the Mont Royal;
- Reduce the predominance and use of automobiles on the mountain;
- Reduce transit traffic;
- Prioritize pedestrians' and cyclists' needs in planning the road network;
- Consolidate the bike path;
- Improve pedestrian access;
- Improve directional signaling (towards and on the Mont Royal).

Proposed interventions for the Côte-des-Neiges/Remembrance overpasses

- Measures ensuring the safety of the overpasses (as of 2008);
- Dismantlement of the overpasses and construction of a ground-level intersection:
 - Prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists with respect to safety;
 - Integrating the reserved lane on Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges.

Excerpts from the POLICY ON THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL HABITATS (2004)

ECOTERRITORY – SUMMIT AND SLOPES OF THE MONT-ROYAL

Conservation and development objectives

- Update the Mont Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan, namely by integrating objectives related to ecological management much like the one currently in effect in nature parks.
- Preserve the symbolic value of the mountain's green summits and slopes.
- Protect the forest made up of g three strata of vegetation (herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees) on the summits and slopes, so as to protect feeding and nesting areas for a wide variety of birds.
- Preserve exceptional forest populations on the norther slope of the mountain, rare remnants of the original Mont Royal vegetation.
- Maximize the views and the possibility of contact with nature all around the mountain.
- Favor green links between the natural islands located on the three summits, both inside and outside the existing parks.
- Preserve the wooded corridor framing the Voie Camillien-Houde.

