

## **Courriel d'opinion**

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I would be living immediately next to the construction site and have serious concerns about this project. I'm quite worried about the potential noise, dust, traffic problems and potential damage to our house. We have a well-loved cafe on the corner of St-Vallier and another opening on the corner of Chateaubriand, which could easily go under because of this. All of this is very concerning, and it seems that interviews with residents living next to other PVM construction sites suggest that these impacts aren't at all well attenuated.

The most important impact however is the expropriation of the Ly family house.

It's quite clear that there are better options to expropriating this house, either on the Chambre de la Jeunesse property or on the STM lot at the corner of St-Denis and Bellechasse. It's unconscionable to have put the Ly family through the threat of expropriation when these alternatives exist.

What is particularly concerning is that projects like this will continue throughout the city and given how clearly expropriation can be misused, there needs to be clear and transparent guidelines regarding when and how expropriation can be used and that the public should be well-informed of the inputs that contribute to any expropriation decision.

With the recent change in the expropriation law, significant damage can be caused to Montreal families. The PVM Bellechasse project is an excellent example of this. The STM needs to outline how it will justify future expropriation projects, beyond simply stating that it is a public service.

In light of the damage that can be caused to expropriation victims, there needs to be a citizens' advocate, who can have access to relevant information and make sure that significant errors are not occurring.

For example, when this process first began and the Ly family was approached, were they given sufficient information to make an enlightened decision and did they feel like they were being helped through the process? It doesn't sound like that was the case. Expropriation is a scary, intimidating process and someone should be helping potential expropriation victims.

When the STM was told no by the SQI about using the Chambre de la Jeunesse property, what happens then? I assume that the STM bureaucrats have a limited number of actions that they can take - it's not their job to fight for the Ly family - so whose job is it?

When the lawyer went to make an offer to the Ly family for their house, it wasn't his job to make sure that these people land on their feet. It's his job to represent the STM and he's probably thinking that he can't set the dangerous precedent of giving out more money than what the evaluation says - even though the true value of the property is the security and the

housing that it provides. It's not the lawyer's job to make sure that a family isn't ruined in this process - so whose job is it?

It's only being prevented because people are taking time off from work to look into this, because people are signing petitions and writing elected officials and getting the media involved and going to council meetings - but that can't be how it works. The next time this happens, the potential victims may not be so lucky. They might not have such amazing neighbours to fight for them.

There needs to be someone else involved here - someone's whose job it is. A citizens' advocate could serve as a defender of the public trust on behalf of the STM, while maintaining independence from their decisions. This advocate could provide detailed and timely information on the project, facilitate conversations between different government bodies on behalf of the potential victims, or negotiate a fair price in the event of an expropriation to ensure that a family isn't ruined by the process.

There is a terrible mistake that could still be made here and it sounds like it's anyone's job to stop it. The STM clearly needs help in this regard and appointing an advocate in situations like this could help.

There will be submissions to this consultation process from our neighbours that look at the PVM site options in more detail, criticize the STM's evaluation of the site options and demonstrate the value of moving the STM site to the Chambre de la Jeunesse property or to the STM Centre de Transport property. I would like to indicate my support for these submissions.

All of this work reviewing the information related to the PVM Bellechasse project has been done, despite extremely difficulty in getting timely information from the STM regarding how decisions were made on this project. This appears to be a recurring theme in previous public consultations, with residents complaining that documents were not provided until late in the consultation process.