

Presentation on Station 79 Closing – March 20, 2008

M. le president, member de la commission,

Before the forced merger, Hampstead had its own fire station and fire trucks and everything worked well.

In 2002 when Montreal took over Fire Services, Hampstead's fire station was in excellent condition with a new ladder truck equipped for medical calls and a pump truck also equipped for medical calls. During the merger years, leaks developed in the roof and they were not repaired. After demerger in 2006, the agglomeration council was awarded control of fires services. Hampstead repeatedly asked for a protocol so we could make the necessary repairs to the station but we were rebuffed and stonewalled for over a year until the fire station was closed in April of 2007 because of mould.

Today, the station is in such a state that it cannot be repaired and must be rebuilt. The Hampstead taxpayers paid for the station and for the fire trucks. We are still paying off the \$800,000+ debt on the ladder truck that is owned by the Agglomeration and is based in Montreal North. (I'm no accountant, but according to the matching principle aren't the assets supposed to go with their respective liabilities?) We pay excessive taxes to the Agglomeration and now the Agglomeration wants to permanently close our station which used to get the second most calls of all the stations, leaving us the only town without its own station on the island.

This is outrageous!

The station has been closed almost a year, since April 2007– What has been the impact? Thankfully, there have been no major fires in Hampstead during that time, but response time for minor fire calls and false alarms is almost a minute longer for about 40% of our territory. This level of response conforms to provincial standards but keep in mind that a fire doubles in size every minute.

There are several high rises all along MacDonald from the station south to Queen Mary as well as a school. They need a station nearby, not 5 minutes away. And that in a best case scenario, when there is no rush hour traffic! (Station 4 is located across Decarie, Station 78 on CSL rd, past Cavendish)

Even though, Hampstead has very few major fires, we have many calls to the fire department for First Responder services and for other reasons. In fact, the Hampstead fire station was one the busiest on the island. In 2006, the pump in Hampstead was the 9th busiest (out of 70) pumps on the island with 1606 calls. In contrast CSL station had 1009 calls and Van Horne & Decarie had 1578. Hampstead station also responded to calls from neighboring areas including the high rises on MacDonald on the Cote Saint-Luc side and calls from CDN/NDG.

In terms of First response

We have negotiated a deal whereby we now get exclusive First Responder service from Station 78 on Cote Saint-Luc road so response on average has not gotten worse.

However, the station only has room for one first responder truck, Our station 79 had two trucks equipped to handle First Responder calls. There is no backup if their only truck is on another call or requires emergency servicing. This could leave us in a situation where no one is available to respond to an emergency call.

We have a petition on our website, at TH and at our Community Centre. Almost 300 have signed so far.

Therefore on behalf of the council and the residents of Hampstead, I protest the unjustified closing of Hampstead's only fire station. I remind you that since the station was closed in April of 2007, response time to fire calls that used to be handled by station 79 has increased by almost 1 minute. As well if the ONE First Response truck is on a call or being repaired we have no other First Responder service at all.

This is unacceptable and we urge you to reconsider and reopen station 79 in Hampstead.

Please restore essential services to our residents.

Thank you.