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CSL Scotiabank branch planned closing riles residents

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Customers are riled in light of the planned closure on Oct. 9 of the Scotiabank branch on Westminster Avenue and Côte St. Luc Road in Côte St. Luc.

The area surrounding the Scotiabank branch includes several seniors residences, Le Waldorf, King David and B'nai Brith House; and various apartment buildings with many senior residents.

The issue was brought to the attention of area Councillor Steven Erdelyi and at least one reaction was posted on Facebook.

"I am very, very disappointed, shame on you," Ethel Ann Annett wrote to Scotiabank's Facebook page.

Scotiabank replied with: "Hey Ethel, your feedback is important to us about the branch closure and we will pass it along. If you'd like to chat further, please send us a message by clicking on the following link <https://www.facebook.com/messages/scotiabank>.

Also, a notice on the branch door says: "If you have questions about the branch relocation [to Quartier Cavendish] and its effect on the community, you can contact the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada at 1-866-461-FCAC (3222). The FCAC may require that a bank hold a public meeting with their representatives, the FCAC and members of the community. If the bank has not adequately considered the impact on all interested parties in the area, an individual or community representative may submit a written request to the FCAC for a meeting provided the request is legitimate and not trivial."



Late last year, Scotiabank announced that as part of restructuring, it would cut 1,500 jobs, mostly in Canada.

A more recent *Globe and Mail* story, from this past June, quoted Bank of Nova Scotia CEO Brian Porter predicting bank branch closures in various locales, primarily because of the ability of customers to bank online from their computers and Smartphones.

"Today, the average Scotiabank customer visits the branch once every two months and accesses the Internet banking platform twice a month, said Mr. Porter," says the *Globe and Mail* story. "Traffic is accelerating in the mobile banking application that clients now access an average 18 times a month. That amount of activity has the potential to increase, over the next four

months, to an average of once a day."

However, from conversations *The Suburban* has had over the years with various Côte St. Luc seniors, it is clear many do not own computers or Smartphones.

The Suburban spoke to Erdelyi about the issue just before his annual District 4 meeting at the Le Waldorf residence last week.

The councillor said he received some complaints.

"I spoke to one of the managers there about it, and explained the concerns," he added. "They said the other bank is available at Cavendish Mall (now known as Quartier Cavendish). I told them that customers are going to go with what's best for them, and if it becomes too much of a dis-

ance, there's another option across the street (the TD and Laurentian bank branches). I implored them to stay open, but the decision was made at a much higher level than the branch. It just comes down to Scotiabank, as a business, trying to maximize their profits."

Erdelyi said he was told the decision was irreversible.

"People are used to having the bank at Westminster, and it's especially hard for senior residents to travel that far [to Cavendish Mall]. I encouraged them to complain as well. If enough people complain, it might make a difference. But right now, from what I'm getting, it seems not much can be done."

CODERRE

Cont'd from page 1

mission's detailed report that recently condemned the post box initiative as both an illogical and inefficient way to deliver mail in an urban environment, the city has also joined the lawsuit that seeks to impose an immediate moratorium in order to put a stop to any more communal mailbox installations on the island and across the nation. As Coderre believes Canada Post has already indicated that it intends to proceed with its community post box project regardless of any objection people might have about their initiative, the mayor now believes that it's time people use their vote in order to send a message to both the crown corporation as well as to the government that is supposed to oversee its activities.

"The government cannot keep using

the excuse that it's a crown corporation and that it (the government) is not responsible for the Canada Post (community post box) initiative," said Westmount's Mayor Trent. "That's simply not true. The government owns the corporation and that means that we, the people, own Canada Post."

When asked what the mayor intended to do about the new installation, the mayor's reply was nothing less than a repetition of what former prime minister Pierre Trudeau said when he was asked to what lengths he was prepared to go in order to defeat the FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec) during the 1970 October Crisis.

"Just watch me," he said.

Later that afternoon, Coderre put some skin in the game when he went to the West Island borough accompanied by Pierrefonds-Roxboro Mayor Jim Beis,

pulled on a pair of steel-capped boots, a workman's vest and a hardhat and began to use an electric jack-hammer to break up the concrete slab Canada Post workmen recently installed in the Anse à l'Orme green space. To his credit, and contrary to some who accused the mayor of using the incident as a golden opportunity to grab some headlines, several well-placed sources within city hall told *The Suburban* that the mayor decided to take on the responsibility for both his orders and his actions rather than let some innocent city worker get sued for breaking up Canada Post property.

"It's time they understand that we're serious," said a hot and sweaty Coderre. "I've had enough of their (his words) bullshit."

As there was little more than an answering machine at the end of the Canada

Post media line, the only official reply (so far) to *The Suburban's* questions put to the corporation about the new community mailbox initiative is the standard answer that "...they are open to working with municipalities to find ideal locations for the community mailboxes."

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