

N.D.G. up in arms against plan to shutter police station

The mayor and opposition councillors in C.D.N.-N.D.G. are pressing Montreal police to back down on its decision to close Station 11.

MARIAN SCOTT, MONTREAL GAZETTE ([HTTPS://MONTREALGAZETTE.COM/AUTHOR/MARIANSCOTTGAZ](https://montrealgazette.com/author/marianscottgaz))

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Police Station 11 is located on Somerled Ave. in N.D.G. It is set to close in the near future. *PIERRE OBENDRAUF / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

The Plante administration will face a storm of protest over plans to close the only police station in Nôtre-Dame-de-Grâce when city council meets Monday.

“I’m very concerned,” said opposition leader Lionel Perez, who represents the Darlington district in Côte-des-Neiges.

“We’re definitely going to raise the issue. They haven’t presented any facts, data or reports as to why a neighbourhood of 67,000 should not have its own police station,” he said in an interview Sunday.

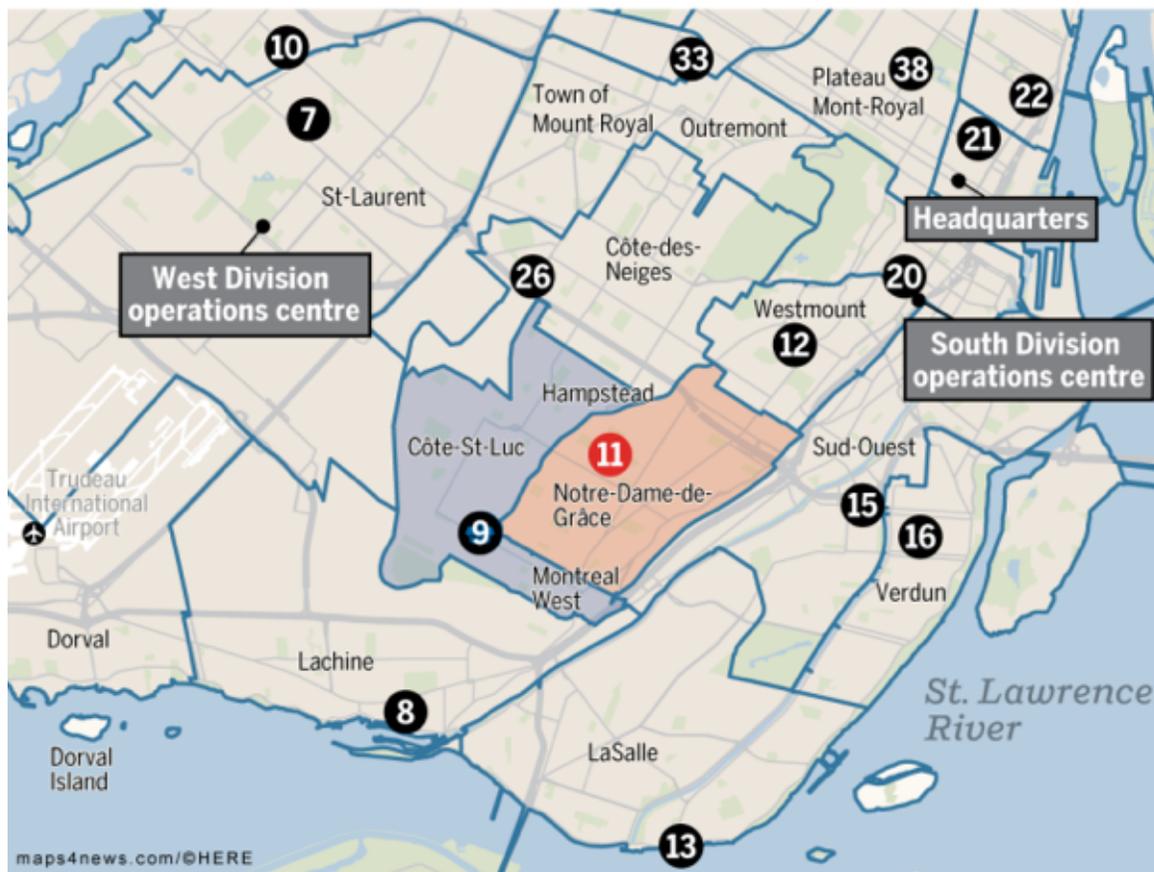
The [closing of Station 11 on Somerled Ave](https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/n-d-g-losing-an-essential-service-as-police-station-11-set-to-close)

(<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/n-d-g-losing-an-essential-service-as-police-station-11-set-to-close>). next fall will leave only one remaining police station in the C.D.N.-N.D.G. borough, the city’s largest, with 166,520 residents, Perez said.

Station 26 on Mountain Sights Ave. serves both Côte-des-Neiges and Outremont. The Service de police de la ville de Montréal plans to merge Station 11 with Station 9 in Côte-St-Luc.

THE BATTLE OVER STATION 11

Elected officials in the Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce borough are opposed to plans to close N.D.G.'s only police station and merge it with Station 9 in Côte-St-Luc.



SOURCE: SPVM/MAPS4NEWS

STEVE FAGUY / POSTMEDIA NEWS

Perez criticized the SPVM for lack of transparency, saying it did not inform local officials of the planned merger.

On Friday, independent borough mayor Sue Montgomery, independent councillor Marvin Rotrand and Perez wrote to Mayor Valérie Plante and members of her administration saying they were “surprised and disappointed” to learn of the planned closing. They asked Plante to press Montreal police to reconsider it and requested that Montreal’s public security committee hold public consultations on the issue.

The N.D.G. Community Council is also calling for the SPVM to back down. It has launched an [online petition](https://www.change.org/p/service-de-) (<https://www.change.org/p/service-de->

[police-de-la-ville-de-montr%C3%A9al-maintenir-le-pdq-11-dans-notre-dame-de-gr%C3%A2ce?](https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/ndg-up-in-arms-against-station-closure)

[recruiter=544110452&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition](https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/ndg-up-in-arms-against-station-closure)) and is mobilizing community groups to oppose the closing.

“To me, it’s just another indication that they don’t really know or understand our borough,” Montgomery said Sunday.

Having a station in the heart of N.D.G. favours the community policing approach and fosters good relations with citizens, she said in an interview. “We have a lot of newcomers who come from countries where the police are either feared or not trusted or both,” she said.

However, [in a statement posted to Facebook on Saturday \(https://www.facebook.com/christian.arseneault/posts/10156840243191899\)](https://www.facebook.com/christian.arseneault/posts/10156840243191899), the borough’s three Projet Montréal councillors, Christian Arseneault, Peter McQueen and Magda Popeanu, asked residents to reserve judgment. They noted the SPVM contacted elected officials in C.D.N.-N.D.G., Côte St-Luc, Montreal West and Hampstead on Friday offering to explain the merger at a meeting.

Rotrand is calling for a one-year moratorium on the station closing, to allow time for the public security commission to hold public hearings.

But Rosannie Filato, the member of the executive committee responsible for public security, said that since the lease for Station 11 has not been renewed, it is not realistic to talk about delaying the merger.

Filato said she was open to holding public consultations on community policing but said they would not be restricted to the situation in N.D.G.

There is nothing new about merging stations, Filato said. There are currently 31 police stations on the island, compared with 49 a quarter-century ago, she noted.

“It’s a new, modern way of policing,” she said.

Having fewer stations frees up staff and budgets so the police can focus on more important priorities like training, she said.

“There’s less officers answering questions from walk-ins,” Filato said.

Nowadays, most questions can be dealt with online or by phone, so there is less of a need for bricks-and-mortar stations, she said.

Previous mergers — of police stations in Mile End and the Plateau in 2014, and in Outremont and Côte-des-Neiges last year — have not diminished service or aroused controversy, she said.

Filato, who represents the Villeray district, said the next planned merger will be in her borough. Police officers in Villeray—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension have told her they are excited about the coming move, she said.

Greg Brown, a former Ottawa police officer who is now a postdoctoral research fellow at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in Toronto, said there is no agreement on whether centralizing policing in a smaller number of stations, or dispersing officers among smaller stations located closer to citizens, results in better service to the public.

“There is no consensus,” he said.

Neighbourhood stations are reassuring to residents, who perceive police as being closer to the population, but the cost of staffing and maintaining those buildings is high and might not achieve measurable results, he said.

“It’s all about where will you put your money,” Brown said.

What’s most important is for police departments to communicate the reasons for their decisions clearly and straightforwardly, he said.

“Don’t be afraid to be transparent,” he said.

“Clearly articulate the rationale. If it’s cost, just say so,” he added.

In 2007, west end mayors defeated a proposal to merge Stations 11 and 9.

Montreal has flip-flopped on expanding and reducing the number of stations over the years. In 1997, it went from 23 police stations to 49 in a single year, but later reversed course.

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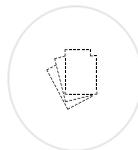
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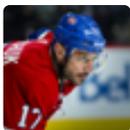
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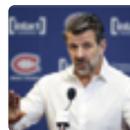
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