

Maintaining Côte Saint-Luc in one electoral district:

Brief presented to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec
on proposed changes to the Mount Royal electoral district

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Introduction

The City of Côte Saint-Luc welcomes the opportunity to present a brief to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec regarding proposed changes to the electoral boundaries of the Mount Royal electoral district.

Côte Saint-Luc is the third most populous city on the Island of Montreal, with a population of 32,321. Between 2001 and 2011, our population grew faster than the average on the Island of Montreal.

We know that the task given to the Commission to examine the demographic changes since the last redistribution and propose new electoral boundaries is not a simple one. There are 338 electoral districts across Canada and many more villages, towns, cities and regions that must all be fit into those ridings to ensure the principle of representation by population while also taking into account the unique characteristics of each area.

Our feedback and suggestions are entirely apolitical and focus on three issues of great importance to the City Council of Côte Saint-Luc and to its residents:

1. The entire City of Côte Saint-Luc should remain in the electoral district of Mount Royal/John-Peters-Humphrey.
2. The proposed boundaries of the electoral district of Mount Royal/John-Peters-Humphrey should maintain its existing character. The population of the existing riding is much more of a natural community with a common identity and interest than the proposed revised boundaries.
3. The historic name of the electoral district should not be lost and the name of the municipality of Côte Saint-Luc, the largest single municipality in the riding should be included within the riding name.

See the next page for a map showing the current and proposed electoral boundaries.



A visual overview of the current and proposed electoral district boundaries.

1. All of Côte Saint-Luc should be in one electoral district

Currently, all of the City of Côte Saint-Luc falls within the Mount Royal electoral district. Our federal representatives have always taken great interest in the initiatives of Côte Saint-Luc and have been strong advocates for our residents.

We fear that splitting up Côte Saint-Luc into two electoral districts will diminish our influence. Under the current proposal, most of Côte Saint-Luc would be part of the John-Peters-Humphrey electoral district. A small part in south-western Côte Saint-Luc would fall within the Wilder-Penfield electoral district.

To be effective municipal leaders, city councils must be able to lobby our counterparts in the provincial and federal governments. In practical terms, this means we must be able to pick up a phone and speak to the one person who represents our community at another level of government. Splitting up Côte Saint-Luc into two districts would not only complicate matters but also significantly limit the importance of the residents of Côte Saint-Luc living in the Wilder-Penfield electoral district since they would be a small fraction of the population in that district, which diminishes the ability of the municipal council to influence the member of Parliament.

The Commission can offer absolutely no coherent reason to sever one part of Côte Saint-Luc from a riding it has been an indivisible part of for generations and this is one recommendation that the Council of Côte Saint-Luc insists be respected by the Commission. The parts of Côte Saint-Luc that are severed are far more similar to the population of the proposed John-Peters-Humphrey electoral district than the districts that the commission proposes to add. So we are at a complete loss to understand the Commission's rationale for its proposed boundaries.

For that reason, we insist that all of the City of Côte Saint-Luc be located within the electoral district of Mount Royal/John-Peters-Humphrey.

2. The existing community of identity and interests in the Mount Royal electoral district should remain intact

The proposed John-Peters-Humphrey electoral district has removed communities from the riding that have been historically linked to the Mount Royal electoral district and proposed to add areas that are farther away and have very little similarity to the balance of the riding.

Once again the basis for adding portions of several other federal districts to Mount Royal and eliminating existing portions, such as sections of Côte Saint-Luc and a large part of the Snowdon/Côte des Neiges area is simply not logical in terms of commonality of populations. The proposed areas being added to the riding often incorporate communities that would rarely, if ever, travel to the Côte Saint-Luc/Hampstead/TMR/Snowdon areas and add vast industrial sections such as the Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, which would change the character of the riding and the role of the MP who currently supports a mostly residential and largely non-industrial riding.

We urge the commission to reconsider its recommendations by reviewing the existing boundaries of Mount Royal and explaining logically and coherently why any sections of the riding it proposes to move to other ridings are not communities of identity and interest with the remainder of the riding and why those areas it proposes to add are such communities of identity and interest. If the commission cannot explain these boundary changes logically and coherently they should be rejected.

3. The historic name of the electoral district should not be lost

The Mount Royal electoral district has a long history and wide name recognition across Canada because of both its connection to the Montreal mountain with that name and to it having been the electoral district of one of Canada's longest-serving prime ministers.

We much admire John Peters Humphrey. In fact, he was my law professor at McGill University and has been honoured on the Côte Saint-Luc Human Rights Walkway. However, Mount Royal is an historic name and we strongly believe it should not be lost. We also believe that as the largest city in the electoral district, Côte Saint-Luc should also appear in the name (ie., Mount Royal/Côte Saint-Luc).

Conclusion

The residents of Côte Saint-Luc are very politically active and take great interest in the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. We are convinced that the recommendations in our brief are shared by the vast majority of our residents and are confident these suggestions will help improve the work already done by the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec.

We urge the Commission to ensure that all of Côte Saint-Luc remain in one electoral district, that the community of identity and interest of the electoral district not be diminished and that the name of the electoral district be preserved, while incorporating the name of its largest single city.