



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS & RECREATION.

**Jasper Brandt-Synnott**  
is December's hockey  
player-of-the-month, p. 8

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## City's approach changes to phasing-in

# Feb. 12 meeting set for new plan on Murray Park trees

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

An updated tree planting plan for King George (Murray) Park is scheduled to be unveiled Monday, February 12 at city hall starting at 5:30 pm.

This is expected to be a revised landscaping vision for renewal based on phasing in new trees more slowly than originally proposed while a new cycle of life replaces older trees as they near their natural lifespan.

This follows an outcry at a previous public consultation meeting August 31 from some residents over the felling of some 30 historic black locusts on the east side of the park and the planting of small evergreens rather than shade trees (see story September 12, p. 1).

"The plan is to ensure that the beauty of King George (Murray) Park is not only preserved but enhanced, so that it may con-

tinue to be a jewel and a source of pride for Westmounters to be enjoyed by all for generations to come," city councillor Elisabeth Roux said last week.

As a result, the plan by Westmount landscape architect Sophie Robitaille of RobitailleCurtis on the arboreal future of the park is expected to be presented at the coming meeting. Robitaille told the *Independent* that she would be making the presentation.

"I invite residents from across the city to attend this presentation," Roux said.

After the original public consultation session, she had told the *Independent* that "I think everyone (at the meeting) left reassured that only tree species befitting the stature of KGP would be planted going forward."

The park was created on some of the former property owned by William Murray, who had built a large home on the site of

the current tennis courts. He called the house "West Mount" – to which the Town of Côte St. Antoine changed its name in 1895.

The city was reported to have paid \$75,000 for a portion of the Murray property in the 1920s to create a park, which it named after the Murray family. It was officially renamed for King George VI during the royal tour of 1937. It is still called Murray Park by many, or even (erroneously) Murray Hill Park.

**Real estate market  
accelerates, then  
acceleration diminishes**  
**See p. 16 & 19**

## City renews 10-year-old partnership with YMCA for WRC youth centre

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city's partnership agreement with the Westmount YMCA to create a teen centre at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) was renewed at the city council meeting January 15.

This year marks the Teen Zone's 10th anniversary.

Created April 8, 2014, the centre is "well used and well attended," said Councillor Mary Gallery, whose commissionership

includes sports and recreation, in moving the resolution.

The city's 2024 annual financial contribution will be \$61,420, payable in two equal instalments February 15 and July 15. The "TZ" as it is known, is managed by the Y to combine city resources with the Y's expertise (see story February 11, 2014).

While nothing has yet been organized for the 10th anniversary, a plan is reported to be "in the works."

The centre aims to pro- *continued on p. 3*

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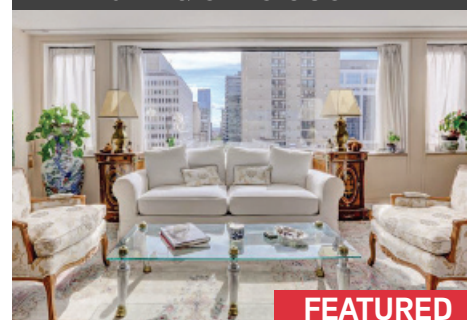
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FEATURED

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# Likely impaired driver stopped by PSO at 3:30 am

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In the dead of night, January 28 at 3:30 am, a Public Security patroller spotted a car heading the wrong way up Greene north of St. Catherine, department officials said. He flashed the vehicle's lights signalling the car to stop.

When the officer spoke to the driver, the man seemed unable to reply, as if impaired. Police were called, took the man away and a tow truck removed the car. A resident of the South Shore, the man was aged in his 60s.

The car, which appeared to have turned north off St. Catherine onto Greene, was stopped in front of 1255 Greene just south of de Maisonneuve.

## 2 tickets issued for dogs running out of Summit Woods off leash

A Public Security patroller spotted two dogs running out of Summit Woods January 28 at 4:40 pm onto Summit Circle. The dogs ran up Oakland without listening to

a man calling to them beside a parked vehicle.

Officials said the officer questioned the man and issued him two tickets totalling \$464. One was for the dogs being off leash, the other was for a lack of dog tags. Described as a resident of the city of Montreal, he was reported to have been previously warned on January 20.

## Woman, 90, falls in pain on sidewalk

When Public Security received a call at 10:07 pm January 28 for a motor accident, it turned out instead to concern a woman who was found lying on the sidewalk at The Boulevard and Clarke, Public Security officials said.

She was attended by two local residents. One was described as a medical person from the Jewish General Hospital. Aged in her 90s, the woman was reported as having fallen when overcome by too much pain to continue walking. A city of Montreal resident, she was taken to hospital by Urgences Santé.

## Public Works employee commended for 'sound judgment' re: naked woman

Public Security officials had good words for city Public Works personnel who came across a woman in her 60s at St. Catherine and Wood who was not wearing any clothes (for story from the police's perspective, see January 30, p. 13). When officers arrived on the scene January 23 at 10:37 pm on receiving a call from Public Works, they found the woman had been wrapped in a blanket and steps had been taken not to startle her.

The Public Works vehicle had been placed in such a way as to prevent the woman from wandering onto the street until the officers could arrive and take over the intervention. Public Works personnel were thanked for their "sound judgment" in a delicate situation.

Wearing a hospital bracelet and still having electrodes attached to her, the woman had clearly wandered away from a hospital, according to Public Security. When police arrived, they transported her back.

WRC youth centre, cont'd from p. 1

vide a safe environment in which those aged 12 to 17 can gather, connect and build relationships.

The teens' access to the WRC is limited to the Teen Zone and its coordinators are responsible for its governance. These are Caitlin Zaloum, as TZ supervisor for Westmount, and Galia Benatuil, TZ coordinator for both Westmount and NDG.

According to Dave Lapointe, the city's director of Culture, Sports, Recreation and Social Development, who has been involved with the centre's operation since it opened, there are an average of approxi-

mately 210 visits a month and a reported 2,450 participations in 2023.

While minor changes have been made over the years, the general schedule remains the same, offering drop-ins every day along with interactive games that are group-based, such as cooking workshops, art, basketball and free tutoring.

Objectives include a monthly financial literacy workshop and a "special" event. For the last two years, a youth entrepreneurship program has been offered such as dog walking and gardening – an opportunity that can be added to a CV.



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# Contactivity’s Winter Carnival luncheon returns

By RALPH THOMPSON

The first event of Westmount’s Frosty Fun Winter Carnival programme took place in the Westmount Park United Church hall February 1, the first time since before the pandemic (see February 11, 2020, p. 12-13, including coverage of some the same people photographed this year).

No groundhogs were spotted, just 30 members enjoying a social lunch. Contactivity organizes an affordable lunch (\$13) every Thursday, followed by entertainment. There many other activities for members and guests year-round. Following lunch, everyone went on a virtual tour of New Orleans.



From left, Thomas Burpee, Marilyn Rappaport – who was joining the lunch group for the first time, Susan Steiner, Clement Lam and Lily Lam.



Standing are hard working Contactivity supporters Claude Danis, city of Westmount programme and community services coordinator; Benita Goldin, executive director of Contactivity; and Jennifer Heaps, city of Westmount customer service agent.



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Jasper Brandt-Synnott, hockey player-of-the-month for December

Great ‘team mate,’ goal tender, ‘burgeoning’ leader

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Jasper Brandt-Synnott is described as not only a “great goal tender” for the city’s M13B Westmount Wings hockey team, but also as stepping up to play in that same vital position for a second team, in M15B, also in the Westmount Minor Hockey Association (WMHA).

When Jasper, on the cusp of turning 12, heard that an M15B team risked collapsing from a lack of goalkeeper, he volunteered

despite his initial nerves, according to Andrew Maislin, president of the WMHA and operations manager of the Westmount recreation centre (WRC). “That, to me, was a marker of respect and loyalty.”

Goalies are often few and far between, he explained, and teams simply cannot exist without a goalie. Cited as a “burgeoning leader” by his coaches, Jasper has been named player-of-the-month for December.

“The dedication it requires to – not only play up a level – but to play on two teams



Jasper Brandt-Synnott, front row centre, in goalie pads during November’s Sal Grasso Tournament in St. Ann, Mass., with his M15 B Wings teammates and coaches, from left, back row: Marcel Behr and Nick Shinder; middle row: Jeremy Behr, Jingbo Xu, Clavin Ho, Justin Behr, Shimon Rozhansky, Ivan Pell, Adrian Mohammadebrahimzadeh and Noah Shinder; front row: Luca Robinson, Brandt-Synnott and William Nesbitt.

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speaks to his love of the game; and it shows!” explained André Brosseau, one of the coaches of the M15B team. “M15B is very happy to have Jasper as our goalkeeper this season. With him, not only do we have a goaltender who wants to learn, but more importantly we have a great teammate.”

Attitude sets him apart

Skills aside, one aspect that sets Jasper apart from other young players is his reported attitude, he explained.

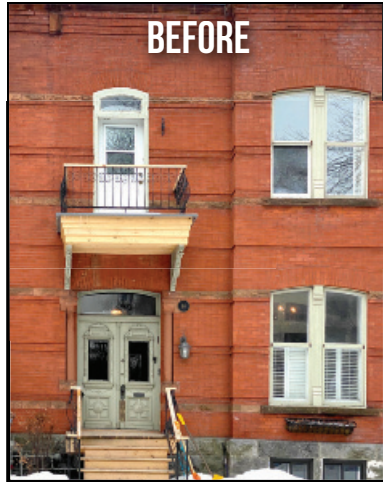
His coaches note how he is often the one to lead a team chant, pre-game stretch, encourage his teammates, invite them over to his house for some team-building hot chocolate and chips, and practise his post-game comedy routine for any teammate

who hangs around to listen.

It’s hardly about the score for Jasper, Brosseau said. “Whether the team wins or loses, he does what he needs to do and enjoys playing the game. On December 9, Jasper played three consecutive Eastern Hockey League (EHL) games for M15B, M13B, and M13A teams as part of each team’s season schedule.”

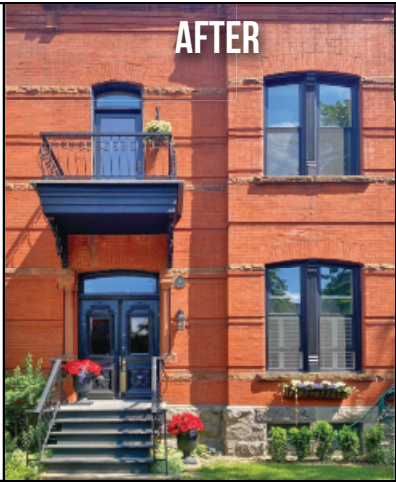
In the November Sal Grasso Tournament in St. Ann, Mass., Jasper played a total of seven games to help Westmount come home with the winning trophy, Brosseau noted.

“Props” were also given by the coaching staff to Jasper’s dad, Nick, for ensuring he makes it to all his six to eight ice times a week.



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## Formalizing workplace updates

# Policy adopted for ‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion’

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

To address current issues facing the workplace, city council January 15 approved a policy of “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.” This formalizes many of the city’s practices.

Councillor Jeff Shamie, whose commissioner’ship includes administration, moved the resolution, explaining that over the past several years many social changes had

taken place in the culture of the workplace. The city was “no exception and wished to put forward its commitment to a culture of openness at the heart of our society.”

As a result and “to ensure that everyone feels welcome,” the adopted policy advocates that certain commitments be undertaken to be implemented by the director general, managers, Human Resources and by employees alike toward each other.

The latest workplace update follows a

hybrid policy adopted on “telework” in March 2022 at a time when many work places including the city began bringing employees back to work after the pandemic.

This had also been introduced by Councillor Shamie at the time saying that telework had become “a must” in the offer of working conditions to applicable employees but included a number of conditions such as use of the city’s laptops for work (see story March 29, 2022, p. 1).

## Police Report

# Car thefts, pro-Gaza demo and Alexis Nihon shoplifting keep police busy

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A couple of vehicle thefts on Westmount’s streets, a noisy pro-Gaza demonstration outside the Israeli consulate and shoplifting incidents at Alexis Nihon Plaza kept police from Station 12 on Stanton St. busy last week.

### Car’s contents stolen

During the late afternoon on January 26, a woman made the mistake of parking her Lincoln Navigator luxury SUV in an alleyway adjacent to the Greene Ave. shopping boutique district without locking the doors.

To make matters worse, she had just placed two bags containing purchases inside the vehicle, then left for a few minutes.

Video footage taken by security cameras positioned nearby, which was viewed by the police afterwards, captured images of a middle-aged female suspect approaching the vehicle, opening the driver-side door, getting in for about two minutes, then taking the bagged purchases and walking away.

It was a classic example of an opportunistic act of theft, made all the easier for the perpetrator by a momentary lapse of the victim’s attention, according to Cst. Mike Yigit, Station 12’s community relations officer.

“That’s what can happen if you leave your car unlocked – even if you’re away for just a few minutes,” he said.

### Car thief arrested

Following several weeks when the number of vehicle thefts in Westmount dropped after a significant surge late last year, January 26 turned out to be an unlucky day for at least one other SUV owner – although in this second case there



Protestors on Wood Ave. near St. Catherine on January 28.

PHOTO: JENNIFER BALL.

was some redemption.

Around 11:30 pm, the owners of a Toyota Highlander that had been parked on Clarke Ave. began receiving smart-phone text messages on a car security system app that the vehicle was in motion.

According to Cst. Yigit, they immediately contacted the police and relayed information on the vehicle’s whereabouts and movements via the 9-1-1 operator.

A short time later, after a Montreal police squad car was dispatched to follow the vehicle, it was located with a suspect at the wheel, who was immediately arrested.

### Pro-Gazan protests continue, turnout declines

As has been the case for months now since the beginning of the Israeli/Gaza war, pro-Gaza activists gathered for a noisy demonstration on January 28 outside the Israeli consulate at the corner of St. Catherine St. and Wood Ave. in Westmount.

According to Cst. Yigit, around 400

people turned up. This was a significantly smaller turnout, compared to previous demos when thousands of protesters sometimes crowded the intersection. He said the police deployed personnel and squad cars to manage the situation.

### Alexis Nihon target for shoplifters

While retail shoplifting offenses have reportedly soared virtually everywhere in the last few years, fuelled perhaps by inflation and economic hardship, there are still relatively few shoplifting reports made in Westmount, with one exception, according to Cst. Yigit.

“At Alexis Nihon Plaza there are a lot – like every day, there’s at least one or two,” he said, adding that the Canadian Tire store, the IGA supermarket and the Winners and Marshall’s discount department stores are among the hardest hit.

Outside several of these retailers, the presence of private security guards has become commonplace.

## The Westmount boot?



Last issue (p. 13), the Police Report described the January 21 theft of a Jaguar F-Pace compact luxury crossover SUV from a parking spot near the corner of Forden and Montrose avenues. Coincidentally, we photographed this Denver-boot-esque device on a Jaguar near the same intersection on November 4 of last year. Same car? Was such a device in use at the time of the theft? Was it an anti-theft or police enforcement device? We don’t know.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CLAREMONT BLUES, AND BILLS

As a 20-year resident, I am a victim of the deterioration of Claremont. This past year, my three-year-old Pacifica, still under warranty, had to change the top plates of the front shocks; on our GMC Acadia: the front sway bar and right-side front-end ball joints.

The tracks ◀ from the tram cars of the 1930s are starting to appear, and as often as possible I use the neighbouring streets, which have all been re-surfaced. The city should install proper signage for the safety of motorists.

KIRK POLYMENAKOS, CLAREMONT AVE.

A REASONABLE SOLUTION FOR TRAIN STATION SURVEILLANCE

Regarding my letter: “Former train station needs surveillance cameras,” January 30, p. 8, I share a fast multiplication: 12 years [the time since I first suggested this] paying taxes, times an average of \$5,500 of municipal taxes per year, times 16 households [in the neighbourhood], is equal to \$1,056,000!

And just in one year, 2024: \$6,300 (my tax bill for 2024) x 16 = \$100,800; so please, do not tell us that there is no money.

This is the latest answer from a city official to my proposal to install non-invasive surveillance cameras, initially proposed 12 years ago.

\*

“Your suggestion to install security cam-

eras at the site is intuitively sound. However, the installation, operation and monitoring of such equipment would face additional challenges. For example, the building is unserved to any type of internet connection. Additionally, a camera and recording system deemed sufficiently robust and secure enough to be integrated within our existing network would require a financial expense greater than is offered by a consumer-grade solution sourced from Amazon, Best Buy, or similar.

“The point that I was trying to make earlier is that potential solutions include more than just the cost of equipment acquisition alone. A surveillance camera system requires operational considerations as well. Please note that the city already has a camera system deployed at various sites around the city.

“In general, we try to avoid ‘unique’ systems because they introduce inconsistency and risks. A unique camera system would require novel monitoring, maintenance and back-up protocols. Also — and understandably given our recent cyberattack — our IT department is very wary about introducing untested and potentially insecure devices or networks into our information infrastructure.

“For the reasons enumerated about, it is unlikely that the city will introduce a novel surveillance camera system at the train station.”

\*

My proposal:

A unique solution is needed for this particular situation at the old train station; in engineering “one size does not fit all,” and all the solutions are customized to meet unique needs.

The solution to all the “inconveniences” described above by the city: install a 4G security camera system with power from both a hardwire installation and a solar cell; with a 3TB recording storage. Buy an industrial-grade metal box to put inside the storage device. It does not need to be connected to the very fragile and easy-to-hack city network. Local recording is more than enough. All this is not more than \$2K or \$3K.

DIANA HERNANDEZ, ST. CATHERINE ST.

EMERGENCIES ACT  
SHOULDN’T GIVE CSIS  
POWER TO DEFINE ‘THREAT’

Many civil libertarians and apostles of democracy cheer the Federal Court decision declaring that the Emergencies Act and the constitution was violated by the Trudeau government. The act, a legislative overreaction to the War Measures Act, made the mistake of allowing CSIS to

decide whether there was a threat justifying resort to emergency measures.

It would have been enough to require the government to consult with the intelligence service, but civil libertarians and democracy’s crybabies miss the point when they are happy leaving the last word to an unelected body, instead of to a duly elected government.

HOWARD GREENFIELD, HILLSIDE AVE.

YES TO CONSULTATION,  
AND IN MORE CASES

I am relieved to see that Westmount city council is demonstrating a penchant for public consultation with their third public meeting on Upper Lansdowne’s re-construction (January 30, p. 7).

For most other matters, this council seems to have taken to heart Ambrose Bierce’s definition of the verb “consult”: “To seek another’s approval of a course already decided upon.”

From the forbidding of functional fireplaces to the scrapping of a garbage pick-up service that was one of the ways that made Westmount special – and why we freed ourselves from Montreal’s grasp – there has been not an erg of energy dispensed in consulting Westmount taxpayers. While we did get a new eight-page newsletter from city hall, it should be kept in mind that consultation is a process of two-way communication.

Will we see a re-visiting of the garbage pick-up decision and that some public consultation will indeed take place? I live in hope.

PETER F. TRENT, CÔTE ST. ANTOINE

**Editor’s note:** Peter Trent was the mayor of Westmount from 1991 until 2001 and from 2009 to 2017. – DP.

Scrabble corrections

In the January 30, p. 1 story on the library’s new Scrabble club, NASPA stands for North American Scrabble Players Association. Also, the adult club in which Christine Cardinal played for *five* years in Cote St. Luc comprises *both* men and women.

We welcome your letters

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email us at:

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David Price: 514.935.4537  
editor@westmountindependent.com

Chief reporter

Laureen Sweeney

Graphics

Ted Sancton

Advertising sales

Arleen Candiotti: 514.223.3567  
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3+2 BEDS, 4+1 BATHS | **\$3,495,000**



3711 BOUL. THE BOULEVARD, WESTMOUNT  
7 BEDS, 4+2 BATHS | **\$2,998,000**



NEWLY PRICED

3773 BOUL. THE BOULEVARD, WESTMOUNT  
3+1 BEDS, 3+1 BATHS | **\$2,795,000**



NEW LISTING

21 CH. ANWOTH, WESTMOUNT  
5 BEDS, 3+1 BATHS | **\$2,350,000**



77 AV. HOLTON, WESTMOUNT  
3 BEDS, 2+2 BATHS | **\$2,100,000**



NEWLY PRICED

2015 - 2017 AV. GREY, CDN/NDG  
3 BEDS, 3 BATHS | **\$1,648,000**



3 RUE WESTMOUNT-SQUARE #516, WESTMOUNT  
2 BEDS, 2 BATHS | **\$1,500,000**



NEWLY PRICED

4212 BOUL. DE MAISONNEUVE O. #1, WESTMOUNT  
2 BEDS, 3 BATHS | **\$1,295,000**



4700 RUE STE-CATHERINE O. #613, WESTMOUNT  
3 BEDS, 2 BATHS | **\$1,240,000**



NEW LISTING

33 AV. BURTON, WESTMOUNT  
4 BEDS, 1+1 BATHS | **\$1,025,000**



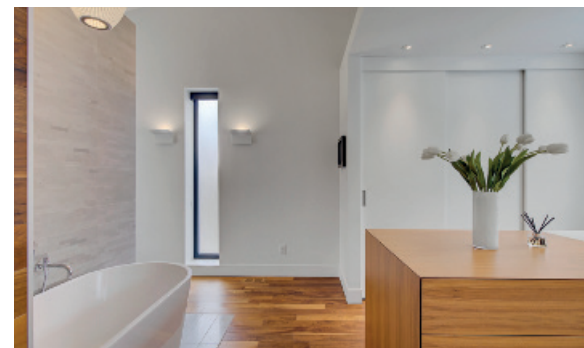
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A year after council approval

# Permits for Hillside project still waiting to be issued

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Even though almost a year has passed since city council approved a project to re-develop the vacant armoury at 1-3 Hillside into 31 residential units, the work is still waiting for the required permits, the *Independent* learned last week.

“The good news is that we are very close to the finish line and expect to get our permits by the end of the month,” said development director Maya Girlando of Grouppimmo. “It’s not an easy process to go through.”

Both the building permit and one for demolition must be issued before any work can start, she explained.

Once the council approval was obtained after a referendum was avoided February 22, 2023, “we (began) working with the different city teams to finalize the architectural, structural, civil, circulation, and other plans,” Girlando said. “We had everything submitted to the city on July 3, 2023.”

It was “a process that was definitely taking longer than expected and forced us to delay the start of the demolition. The building continues to deteriorate, therefore the sooner we can demolish, the better,” she explained.

**Work conditions**

One issue involved in the delay, she added, was working out the conditions for both the demolition and construction work in the congested space at the corner of Hillside Lane and Hillside Ave. across from the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG). This involves traffic and security, especially given the nearby two seniors’ residences and a pre-school, all along Hillside Ave.

The new building, named Hillside Lane, is described by Girlando as combining the heritage character of the original armoury building with the contemporary architecture that includes “generous win-



1-3 Hillside Ave. on February 3. The Westmount Athletic Grounds is in the foreground and Westmount High to the right.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

dows, high ceilings and quality finishes.”

A number of units are already reserved, she said, and the sales office at 4431 St. Catherine will be officially opening next week on February 12. “Appointments can

be booked via our website.” This is hillside lane.ca.

The current project is the result of a lengthy SCAOPI process for “specific construction, alteration or occupancy proposal

for an immovable” that began in 2019. Along the way, modifications were made to address some comments raised in the neighbourhood.

**Happy with council support**

“We’re very happy to have the mayor’s and council’s support,” Girlando added. Both Mayor Christina Smith and Councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning, had appealed to nearby residents to allow the project to go through without a referendum, based mainly on the proposed residential plan being considered to be for the good of the neighbourhood.

Originally built as a riding academy, the armoury had been neglected over the years. After being home to an engineering regiment for 67 years, the army moved out, citing the need for the building to be brought up to fire code standards (see story April 1, 2014, p. 1).

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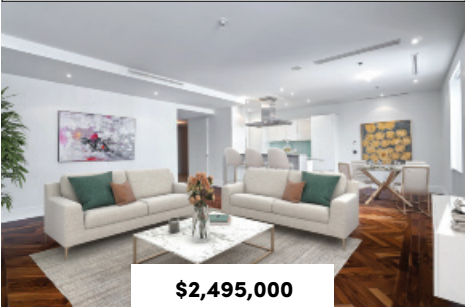
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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

# July transfers: Monthly mark-up goes positive for second time this year

*Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in July 2023, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17.*

Two large detached homes led off the

list of real estate transfers in Westmount last July, and in fact their prices were the two highest for homes in Westmount at that point in 2023.

The stone dwelling at 619 Clarke Ave. sold for \$7,650,000 while the large brick house at 4326 Westmount Ave., at the

corner of The Boulevard, changed hands for \$5,050,000 in July.

They were among 11 single-family dwelling sales registered in July, seven of which brought their owners \$2 million or more.

On the low side were 411 Lansdowne Ave., just above Sherbrooke St., which

went for \$1,095,000, and 420 Wood Ave., whose \$1,451,000 was 32.2 percent lower than its municipal evaluation, the biggest of four single-family mark-downs in the month.

The highest mark-up over valuation, on the other

*continued on p. 18*




420 Wood Ave.



411 Lansdowne



509 Argyle. Photos taken January 3.



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# Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in July 2023

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (±%)
11 Anwoth	James Kaufman	\$2,750,000	\$3,504,300	-21.5%
509 Argyle	9395-5154 Québec Inc.	\$3,250,000	\$1,789,400	81.6%
522 Clarke	Jason Barrett	\$1,800,000	\$1,639,300	9.8%
619 Clarke	Cheryl Kostin & estate David Cohen	\$7,650,000	\$7,271,000	5.2%
30 Edgehill	Maria Svourenos Trust	\$3,899,000	\$3,822,800	2.0%
4 Grenville	Julie Delaney	\$2,800,000	\$2,399,500	16.7%
411 Lansdowne	Leigh Lerner	\$1,095,000	\$1,205,200	-9.1%
338 Roslyn	Nancy Edgar	\$2,000,000	\$2,316,500	-13.7%
14 Springfield	Claudia Win	\$1,635,000	\$1,367,100	19.6%
4326 Westmount Ave.	Macky Tall & Nancy Rodgers	\$5,050,000	\$3,458,900	46.0%
420 Wood	Nancy Windsor	\$1,451,000	\$2,141,100	-32.2%
<b>CONDOMINIUMS</b>				
11 Hillside #302	Marco Lando & Maryna Filonchyk	\$933,000	\$758,400	23.0%
4175 St. Catherine #1004	estate Zdenka Helena Tandler	\$2,125,000	\$2,027,600	4.8%
4700 St. Catherine #405	Norman Levi & Bernice Levi	\$799,000	\$902,000	-11.4%
4700 St. Catherine #501	Galina Souranko	\$1,801,000	\$1,691,900	6.4%
4700 St. Catherine #702	John Costin	\$1,365,000	\$1,226,200	11.3%
1 Wood #604	Viviana Raichman & Paula Raichman	\$1,475,000	\$1,261,600	16.9%
1 Wood #901	9470-1570 Québec Inc.	\$3,295,000	\$2,536,800	29.9%
10 York #302	Jordan Knight & Roland Knight	\$675,000	\$669,300	0.9%
<b>OTHER</b>				
399 Clarke #602 (6C)	John Max	\$688,000	\$677,600 <sup>1</sup>	1.5%
4500 Côte des Neiges #607	Forest Hill Côte des Neiges Property Inc.	\$600,000	\$618,600 <sup>2</sup>	-3.0%

<sup>1</sup>Sold in June    <sup>2</sup>Property straddles the line between Montreal and Westmount, with most of it in Montreal. Valuation is a combination of four evaluations for the apartment and the garage space, two for Montreal and two for Westmount.



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4175 Rue Ste-Catherine O. | Westmount

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# Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in August 2023

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (±%)
597 Argyle	Todd Daley	\$3,250,000	\$2,563,200	26.8%
18 Arlington	Marie-Dominique Vartanian	\$1,270,000	\$1,204,300	5.5%
5 Bellevue	Margot Lande	\$4,245,000	\$4,762,900	-10.9%
643 Belmont	Jack Antel & Avis Bay	\$1,709,000	\$1,760,700	-2.9%
430 Clarke	Larry Joseph & 153412 Canada Inc.	\$1,520,000	\$1,628,700	-6.7%
356 Côte St. Antoine	Christophe Piot & Annabel Piot	\$2,350,000	\$2,369,400	-0.8%
323 Grosvenor	Margaret Wheeler	\$2,068,000	\$3,128,700	-33.9%
71 Holton	estate Manny Barnoff	\$1,282,500	\$1,463,500	-12.4%
5-5A Hudson	Norman Hébert Jr.	\$2,350,000	\$2,191,200	7.2%
14 Hudson	Claude Chagnon & Adrienne Kelly	\$3,350,000	\$2,991,100	12.0%
5 Murray	Jane Silverstone	\$6,250,000	\$6,732,700	-7.2%
6 Springfield	Antoine Ciasson & Stéphanie Gauthier	\$1,800,000	\$1,350,000	33.3%
112 Sunnyside	Randa El Gayar	\$2,291,077	\$2,402,800	-4.6%
477 Victoria	Lorna Dubrofsky	\$1,900,000	\$1,154,900	64.5%
4335 Westmount Ave.	Antonio del Corpo	\$3,050,000	\$2,066,800	47.6%
332 Wood	Frédéric Clément	\$2,600,000	\$2,692,500	-3.4%
DUPLEXES				
437-39 Strathcona	Julie Cuddihy & 4425502 Canada Inc.	\$3,073,000	\$3,013,500	2.0%
CONDOMINIUMS				
1 Wood # 404	Stéphane Sénécal & Angelo Marino	\$1,500,000	\$1,360,300	10.3%
SHARE SALES				
470-72 Argyle, 42.7%	Lisa Bagchi & Krishnendu Bagchi	\$1,125,000	\$1,066,443 <sup>1</sup>	5.5%
388 Olivier, 7.205%	Marie Bricault	\$532,500	\$733,628 <sup>2</sup>	-27.4%
COMMERCIAL				
1245-89 Greene	133812 Canada Inc.	\$22,000,000	\$16,200,000	35.8%

<sup>1</sup>Valuation is 42.7 percent of \$2,497,500, the valuation of the entire duplex. <sup>2</sup>Valuation is 7.205 percent of \$10,182,200, the valuation of the entire apartment building. Exclusive use of Apt. 4.

Real estate, cont'd from p. 16

hand, was a staggering 81.6 percent for 509 Argyle Ave., which had been owned by a numbered company for just over a year.

Overall, the 11 sales averaged just under eight percent more than their valuations, involving \$33,380,000 paid out for houses with a municipal tax value of \$30,915,100. It is only the second month (after May) covered so far for 2023 to record a positive average mark-up. For the year to July, the ratio is -0.8 percent.

Condos

The condominium market, on the other

hand, showed a more positive overall figure, at an average for July of almost 12 percent above valuation and with only one sale, at the “Pom Bakery” building, 4700 St. Catherine St., selling below valuation.

There were eight sales. all apartments (as opposed to converted duplex or town-house arrangements), with prices ranging from \$799,000 to \$3,295,000 – the latter for a ninth-floor unit at 1 Wood Ave.

Another apartment at 399 Clarke Ave. sold in June, but was reported after the publication of our June transfers. The price was \$688,000 and the buyer was moving from another apartment in the same building.

One more July sale involved a apartment in the new building fronting on Côte des Neiges Rd. just north of the intersection with Belvedere Rd., where a Texaco service station once stood.

The building straddles the city boundary with Montreal, which shares transfer taxes with Westmount, with the whole apartment in Montreal and some of the surrounding land in Westmount, while the garage space is deemed to be in Westmount, along with a small amount of surrounding land in Montreal. As it turns out, \$567,700 of valuation belongs to Montreal, while \$50,900 is attributed to Westmount. The buyer can expect to receive four tax

bills every year, two from Montreal and two from Westmount.

In the city’s list of transfer taxes, none of the deeds signed in July involved commercial or multi-residential properties. The 11 single-family sales make July the second-largest monthly value this year (after 15 sales were registered in June), and the eight condominium sales equals the number in June, both months way above any other monthly counts so far in 2023.

Statistics for condominiums are usually kept by quarter-year, so the eight July sales make up only the first part of the third quarter.

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## Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

# August: Monthly mark-up stays positive, but slows to 2% (from 8%)

*Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in August 2023, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 18.*

One of Westmount's largest mid-level houses sold in August for \$6,250,000, the second-highest sale to that point last year, for 5 Murray Ave.

The house was sold by Jane Silverstone, who with her husband, Herschel Segal, had managed the Le Château clothing store empire, founded in 1959, and Davids-Tea, founded in 2008.

The huge mansion was the highest-priced sale among 17 Westmount residential sales in August, the highest volume for any month (to that point) since June of 2022, when 22 sales were registered. Besides the \$6-million-plus in the Murray Ave. sale, the list includes one sale in the \$4-million range, four between \$3 and \$4 million and five more between \$2 and \$3 million.

Still, in spite of the relatively strong prices, the average mark-up over municipal valuation for 16 single-family homes and a duplex was only two percent, down from eight percent in July.

For the first eight months of 2023, the average is -0.002, or virtual parity.

The August sales include a very wide range of mark-ups and mark-downs compared to valuations, with a 64-percent mark-up in the sale of 477 Victoria Ave. and a 34-percent mark-down in the sale of 323 Grosvenor Ave.

The former is a small row-house on Victoria north of Sherbrooke St. which sold for \$1,900,000 while its tax value was \$1,154,900; the latter is a large, detached house on Grosvenor just north of de Maisonneuve Blvd. whose price of \$2,068,000 defied its municipal valuation of \$3,128,700.

## Condos & commercial

Only one condominium sale was regis-



5 Murray Ave. Photos taken January 29.

tered in August – Apt. 404 at 1 Wood Ave. – while eight condo sales were closed in July. The average of the nine condo prices is \$1,552,000 and the mark-up over valuation is 12.3 percent, with only one of the nine in July-August selling below valuation, though we are still awaiting September sales to round out the third-quarter statistic.

Two shares of buildings changed hands, including another co-op apartment at 388 Olivier Ave. – the three-storey, 17-unit building, which is now fully sold up. This is believed to be the second re-sale of apart-

ments in the building.

Also sold in August was one apartment of the duplex at 470-72 Argyle Ave., the 43-percent share which was picked up by the owners of the rest of the building, so now the duplex is entirely owned by them.

The large office/commercial building at the southeast corner of Greene Ave. and de Maisonneuve Blvd., built back in 1989 and now sporting the Greene Ave. presence of the TD Bank, changed hands in August for \$22 million. According to city transfer tax records, this is the first commercial building to sell in 2023.



477 Victoria.



323 Grosvenor Ave.



18 Arlington Ave.



1245-89 Greene Ave.



TD closes Claremont ATM site overnight

# Most of Westmount's banks mum on homeless policy, trends

By JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* noticed on January 2 that the TD Bank at Sherbrooke and Claremont had begun closing its ATM when the bank itself was closed.

Previously, the ATM space had been open at all hours. Over the last few years, the *Independent* had also noticed a homeless man sleeping quite regularly in the enclosed space. Could there be a connection?

The *Independent* reached out to all Canadian banks with branches in Westmount to assess their experience with homeless individuals on their premises.

The following banks were contacted:

- Bank of Montreal (BMO) at 1299 Greene Ave. and 4817 Sherbrooke St.,
- The Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotiabank) at 1326 Greene Ave. and 4821 Sherbrooke St.,
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) at 4854 Sherbrooke St.,
- Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) at 1 Westmount Square and 4849 Sherbrooke St.,
- National Bank at 1246 Greene Ave.,
- The Toronto Dominion Bank (TD) at 1289 Greene Ave. and at 5002 Sherbrooke St.

All bank branches were asked for a report on homeless individuals in their banks or the ATM sections of their bank, whether ATMs in their branch were accessible after tellers' banking hours or if the exterior doors were locked after banking hours.

Furthermore, they were queried on whether they had made changes to ATM accessibility – after reports of homeless individuals sleeping in the ATM area – and whether their own security officers' have been called on to deal with the issue or the police.

National Bank would not comment. Matthieu Charest, senior advisor, public affairs & internal communications of



These signs were photographed on the door of the TD bank at Claremont and Sherbrooke on February 2. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

National Bank, said, "We don't have specific comments. Thank you and have a good day."

Jessica Assaf, senior manager, regional corporate communications at RBC said, "...at RBC we take the safety and security of our colleagues, clients and community members very seriously. We regularly review and sometimes adjust our ATM operations to best serve the needs of our clients and communities..."

Stephanie Marcus, public affairs consultant with CIBC, provided a statement that read "the operating hours at any one of our ATM locations are based on a range of business considerations including client access and community safety, which we regularly review and adjust as appropriate."

Natalie Yuen, manager of Canadian banking communications with Scotiabank, indicated that "our Westmount branch has not experienced any re-occurring issues and our ATM accessibility and branch hours of operation have not changed."

(This would seem to contradict the testimonial of a District 8 resident in November, see box at right.)

Caroline Phemius is the manager of public affairs at the TD Bank Group. She indicated that she would provide a state-

ment to account for the change, but did not respond in time for the *Independent's* print deadline.

There was no response from BMO.

The number of unhoused people in Quebec has increased by 44 percent since 2018, a recent report uncovered. It was conducted by Quebec's public health institute (INSPQ) and commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, comparing headcounts on the night of October 11, 2022 to those taken on April 24, 2018.

## Homeless in Westmount's ATMs

At a District 8 neighbourhood meeting on November 21, 2023, a local resident informed Westmount Public Security, the Montreal police and the CIUSSS that she encountered homeless individuals in Westmount banks daily.

Westmount's District 8 is located between Atwater Ave., St. Antoine St., Hallowell St. and de Maison-neuve.

The meeting was organized by Westmount's commissioner of public security and District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez to address residents' concerns about the increase in crime and car theft, but one resident used the occasion to express concern specifically about an increase in homeless individuals sleeping and resting in bank ATM areas.

She said, "Every morning I go to the bank and there is one [homeless person] in the bank of Nova Scotia. There is one in the TD bank..."

"They do not bother you but just to see them in there [was unsettling]."

## Vehicle ploughs into tree near Temple

By JENNIFER BALL

On December 30, a vehicle veered off the road, across the sidewalk and lawn, and into a Norwegian maple tree that is located on the west side of Wood Ave. outside Temple Emanu-El Beth Sholom. The acci-

dent occurred at the intersection of Wood Ave., at Sherbrooke St., and both the sidewalk, the lawn and the tree sustained damage.

The Montreal police were contacted for comment, and they indicated there was no police report on the incident.



Wood Ave. south of Sherbrooke St., as seen December 31, 2023.

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# Vic Hall hosts carnival’s PJ Party



Leopold (left) and Theodore pose for a photograph all Ninja'd up.

The city’s Community Events division organized a PJ Party February 2 in Victoria Hall, the second event in its Frosty Fun Winter Carnival. Over 100 pyjama-clad children and their parents scampered around the hall grabbing loot bags and popcorn handed out by city councillor Elisabeth Roux and city staff, while others posed for photographs dressed as Ninja Turtles in the photobooth or coloured in Ninja sketches with crayons. Organizer Emily Gamble welcomed everyone and the lively audience quickly settled down for 2023’s *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle: Mutant Mayhem* film. Provincial legislator Jennifer Maccarone was spotted chatting to several attendees.



Aditi (left) and Advika pose for the camera in the Turtles photobooth.

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# Robbykins, a sweetheart



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER



A dear young fellow, a year-and-a-half old, Robbykins is a stunning black-and-white longhair with a perfect ruff.

His huge green eyes follow all the activity around him and he is most interested in being part of things. Meals, relaxing, working – whatever family members are doing – he wants to be there.

A bit like a dog, he follows everyone around and chats away to get attention and cuddles. He enjoys adults and children, also being companionable with other cats.

A sturdy juvenile, he is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations and neutered. Robbykins was found abandoned as a kitten in a front garden in our neighbourhood. He was given regular food and water, then shelter in the house. A very loving cat, he will fit into a household routine very easily.

If you would like more information on him, please do not hesitate to write to me at my email lysfow@gmail.com.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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LYSANNE FOWLER

Billy is an adorable little fellow, quiet and uncomplicated. A bichon-type with adorable dark eyes and a button nose, he is a poster boy for extra cuteness.

He is presently in foster care for the Montreal SPCA and the family reports that he is calm in an adult environment in the home and enjoys walks.

Billy is 10 years young, very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Billy is not used to children and a lot of activity, as he was probably in a less bustling home in the past.

A wonderful companion, he is ready for a new family and you can refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll to Billy's information page using his identification number, 43817884, and click on the "Fill out the form" box to provide contact information to the shelter's adoption coordinators. Once this is done, they will be able to reach out to you to provide more information on Billy and find out more about your adoption interest.

Please don't hesitate. Billy is ready for the best of love and care, as well as all the fun activities that are available for small dogs in our neighborhood.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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Travel Column

# Tulum, like you've never known it – For Valentine's?

BY MARISSA DE MIGUEL

A romantic getaway for Valentine's Day? Consider Hotel Esencia in Tulum, Mexico – a hidden gem in an otherwise cheugy (*passé*) destination.

Originally the home of an Italian duchess, the hotel was given new life by Hollywood movie mogul and media entrepreneur Kevin Wendle. He has a keen eye for design and a deep sensitivity for the customer experience. Indeed, his touch is felt throughout.

From the moment you arrive, you feel less like a hotel guest than a hosted friend. Not only does the staff make a point of addressing you by your name, you have a personal concierge to organize reservations and activities, including booking court time outside of sweltering heat hours as well as scheduling your daily doorstep drop of fresh coffee and warm pastries.

Such personal touches punctuate your day, travelling quietly to your brain to tell it you can rest now. And rest we did. Upon arrival, I booked a massage; my personal "airplane mode." Then I booked one daily for the rest of the trip: It was that good.

A Mayan ritual precedes your treatment and then a house-brewed tea in your private hot tub closes it. Bliss. Treatment descriptions read like a menu: I could eat the ingredients. You actually could, since most of the oils they use are infused with botanicals grown organically on site.

If this sounds like peak spiritual wellness, it is, and it isn't. Most days started with yoga (included) and ended with a pina (maybe two) and a plunge. Rooms have private heated plunge pools: just look out for coati voyeurs, perched high on the Chi-



"I spy with my little eye." Coati peeking through the leaves. They are diurnal mammals related to the raccoon.

cozapote trees.

For couples feeling forever young, there is an underground speakeasy. Not me. I was born feeling old and rejoiced in the nightly turn-down service delights. They lent the feeling of a holiday advent calendar: mini chocolates (topped with regional chili flakes) and a notepad (for journaling).

Rooms are outfitted in tastefully curated pieces, bringing a rich cultural texture to an otherwise fresh and clean white-washed space. Food is top notch. Juices squeezed from local tropical fruits, guac on the beach served with fresh jicama and house-made tortilla chips, and three restaurants to choose from. Now I have a love for Mexican food, culture and design, which Kevin Wendle shares, all the while bringing global standards of service to make the Hotel Esencia experience world class.



Private beach with turquoise-glass waters.



# Fun fundraiser raises \$375k for inflammatory bowel disease clinics



*Social Notes*

VERONICA REDGRAVE

In partnership with the Montreal General Hospital Foundation, the McGill Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Research Group, held a fun fundraiser at the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall.

The evening featured comedian **Sugar Sammy**, who performed to great applause. Media personality **Marini Orsini** served as emcee.

The annual event raises funds for patient care at the IBD clinics in the McGill teaching hospitals – the MUHC IBD Centre at the Montreal General Hospital, and the IBD clinics at the Montreal Children’s and Jewish General Hospitals.

This year, the event’s honouree was **Albert Cohen**, chief of gastroenterology at the Jewish General Hospital. Attending with his wife Karen and daughter Veronique, he was presented with the Dr. Ernest Seidman Award in IBD Excellence by his long-time friend **Dr. Alain Bitton**, director, division of gastroenterology and



Honoree Albert Cohen and Alain Bitton.

hepatology, McGill University – there with his wife Dr. Christine Soulieres.

The evening’s co-chairs were McGill



Howard and Matthew Stotland.

IBD Research Group co-presidents **Ryan Abrams** (there with his wife **Melissa Buck**) and **Matthew Stotland** (with **Sarah**

**Shapiro**). They were ably assisted by the event organizer ..... *continued on p. 26*



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 25

Emily Shore, there with her husband Adam Gold. Event chair was local res Matthew Stotland. Organizing committee members were Vanessa Abissidan, Lisa Blatt, Mike Cohen and Sarah Shapiro.

Noted during the evening were Carolyn Polak and Ryan's father Harold Abrams; MUHC gastroenterologists Talat Bessisow and Waqqas Afif; McGill IBD Research Group past president Lorne Mayers with his wife Lois Wiltzer and his mom Eunice Mayers, and Thomas Postigo (Marina Orsini's son), who performed with the Swoon Show Band.

Before the show, Tiffany-Tanya Creese shared her story as someone who suffers from IBD. Her journey and struggle led her to become a nurse and to join the McGill IBD team at the Montreal General Hospital.

The fun evening raised \$375,000. Monies will offer ongoing support for IBD nurses, auxiliary and support staff, and psychologists. The aim is to raise enough to hire a new part-time nurse for the IBD clinic at the Montreal Children's Hospital, with the goal of improving care for the IBD pediatric population.



Melissa Buck, Ryan Abrams, Sugar Sammy, Carolyn Polak and Harold Abrams.



Adam Gold and Emily Shore.



Jon Wayne, Joanne and Raquel Gurman.



Marina Orsini and Thomas Postigo.



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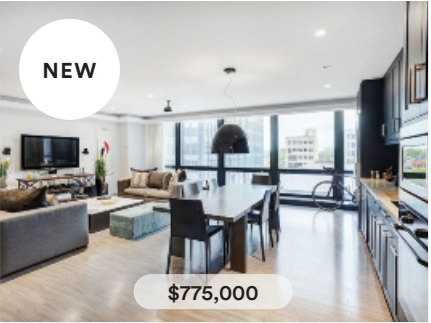
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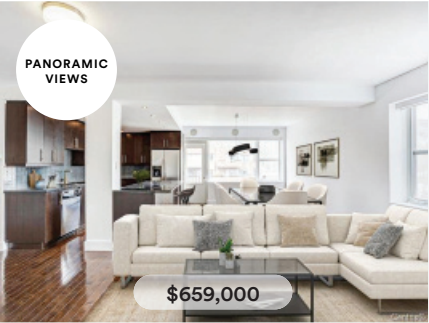
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