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Cancer Wellness Centre step closer to moving to Kirkland

 *KATE SHERIDAN, SPECIAL TO MONTREAL GAZETTE*
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Published on: December 9, 2015 | Last Updated: December 9, 2015 9:30 AM EST

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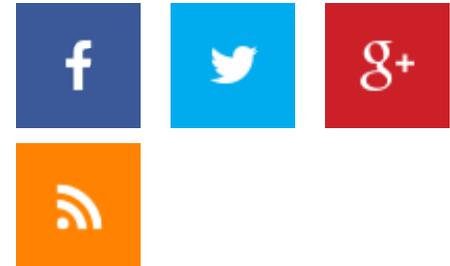


This is a sketch of what the new West Island Cancer Wellness Centre to be built in Kirkland will look like.

COURTESY ZINNO ZAPPITELLI ARCHITECTES

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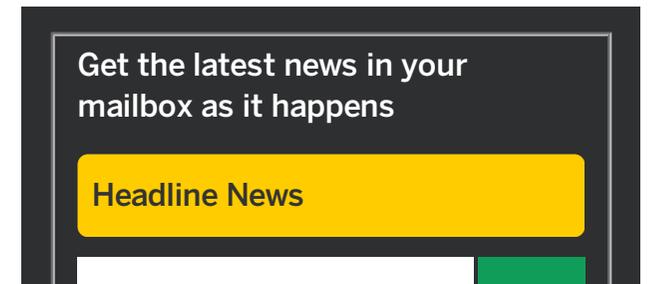
UPDATES



A zoning change that will allow the West Island Cancer Wellness Centre to move to a new home passed another hurdle Dec. 7.



The centre has been planning a move from its current site in Beaconsfield





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to Kirkland. The centre is looking to expand, according to director and co-founder Debbie Magwood — and needs about three times the space of its current building.

“Cancer is epidemic,” Magwood said. “Our current building is too small. We need a building that’s three times bigger to help three times the people.”

The centre participated in a public consultation Dec. 7, held at Kirkland town hall. Magwood presented the vision for the site at the corner of Barry and Hedgerow Streets. Residents did not have any questions about the bylaw, which would rezone a lot from residential to public. Charitable or non-profit groups may use public-zoned lots for recreational, educational, social or cultural purposes.

The next step would be for council to vote on the second reading of the draft bylaw. That step is scheduled for Feb. 1, when the public zoning bylaws will be reviewed, Kirkland director general Joe Sanalidro said during the town council meeting on Dec. 7. After that, residents will have the option to start a petition to force the zoning change to go through a referendum process.

However, Magwood is optimistic that the zoning change won't be subjected to a referendum. “The residents have been very supportive, and the city has been amazing,” she said.

The new zoning should be in force by March 16 at the latest.

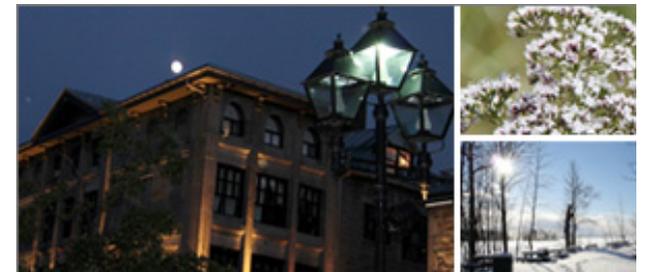
The centre also needs to do some final fundraising for the new building, Magwood said. About 85 per cent of the \$3 million required has already been raised in the past 18 months, mostly from foundations and corporations. “It speaks to people’s belief in what we do,” Magwood said, adding that she hopes the community will push them across the finish

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line.

“Who hasn’t been touched by cancer?” she said. A capital campaign will be launched in the next few weeks.

The new centre should be up and running in the spring, if all goes well.

The centre has been open for about six years, and has helped nearly 1,500 people, according to the centre’s website. The Canadian Cancer Society has estimated that the number of people diagnosed with cancer will increase by 40 per cent in the next 15 years.

After months of planning and work with the city on permits, Montreal's first 'barcade' has opened its doors on St-Laurent Blvd.

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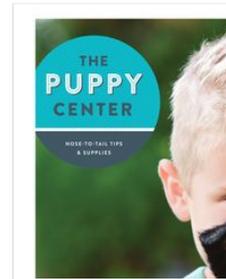


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