

## Summary of the Pilot Project proposals to improve traffic flow and safety at the level-crossing

(Link to the pilot project June 12, 2025 power point at the end)

The pilot project objectives are based on a traffic study commissioned by the Town and aim to **improve traffic flow** and **increase pedestrian safety**. The study found that congestion caused by 3 left turns near the crossing interrupts traffic flow and distracts drivers. It also noted that stop signs on each side of the tracks impede traffic flow. One conclusion held that improved flow would reduce aggressive driver behaviour and thus contribute to increased pedestrian safety. The changes to be implemented are:

**Eliminating 3 left-turns and two stop signs. Eliminating one lane in each direction across the tracks. Constructing a 2-meter wide traffic island for pedestrians in the Broughton crosswalk, and a 2-meter curb-extension on the east side of the Westminster crosswalk. Making two lanes right-turn only, and one left-turn only. No parking on the west side of Westminster between Milner & Sherbrooke during rush hour.**

**1. Eliminating 3 left turns.** The left-turn off Sherbrooke onto Westminster southbound is well-known for disruption of the northbound flow across the tracks, some amazing near-misses, and slowing the two southbound lanes. The 2 left-turns at Broughton – one for southbound Westminster traffic turning left onto Broughton, the other for vehicles on Broughton turning onto Westminster southbound – disrupt the flow somewhat less as they involve fewer vehicles. Physical barriers at locations **#3** and **#6** in the diagram below will prevent these left-turns. *The big caveat is that traffic flow is like water: blocking the flow at one point will shift it to other paths.*

- **Verdict: effective** for the two eliminated left-turns at Broughton, though an annoyance for vehicles wanting to head east on Broughton to avoid delays at Avon.
- **Potential consequences of the Sherbrooke elimination.** Chaos at the Sherbrooke intersection will certainly be much reduced without left-turns, but *the main concern is where the former left-turn traffic will go*. What will need to be accommodated is the additional volume of traffic that flooded southbound Westminster, Ballantyne N. and Strathearn in the summer of 2025 when Sherbrooke was closed, which was all left-turn off Sherbrooke traffic.

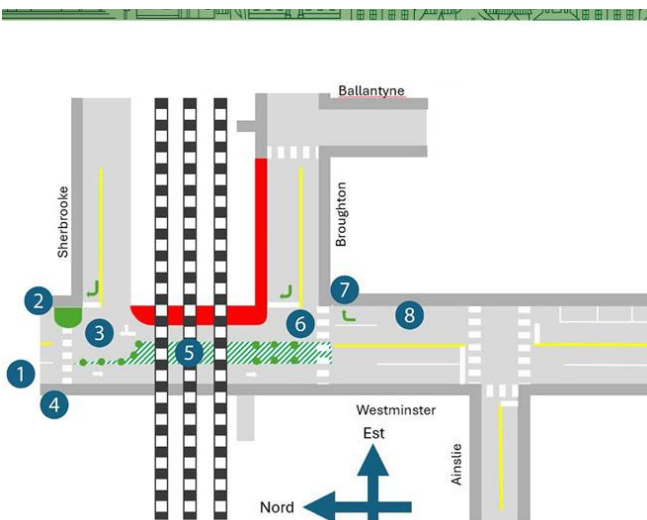
The likely scenario is that most vehicles, including trucks, will use Brock N. and Curzon to reach Westminster southbound. If Curzon becomes congested, Nelson will be used. To avoid back-ups on Westminster some drivers will use the Strathearn–Milner bypass. A few may revert to the Fielding/ Parkside detour from West Broadway to access Westminster southbound as occurred in summer 2025, though these numbers may increase if Brock N becomes congested.

Vehicles hoping to turn left on Westminster, but unaware of the new configuration, will have to turn right. A bold few will attempt U-turns, most some sort of Milner—Strathearn manoeuvre.

3. Interdiction de virage à gauche depuis l'approche est du carrefour de la rue Sherbrooke et mise en place d'obstacles à ce mouvement

3. Prohibition of left turns from the eastern approach to the Sherbrooke intersection, along with the installation of physical barriers to prevent this movement.

6. Prohibit left turns from the east and north approaches to the Broughton Road intersection, and install physical barriers to prevent this movement.



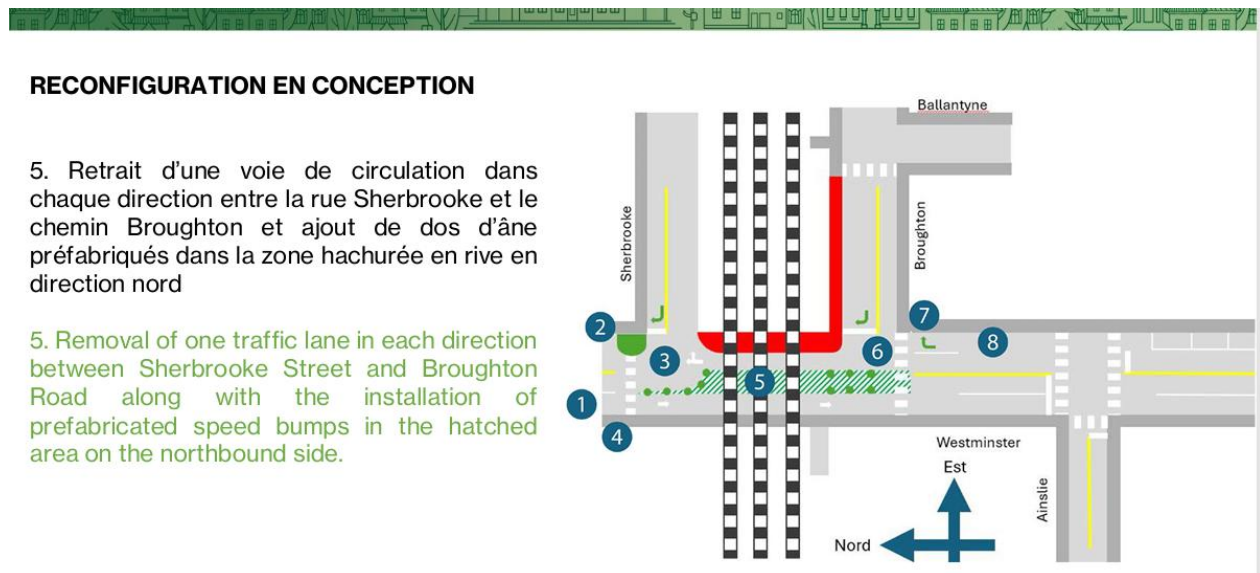
**2. Removing one lane in each direction across the tracks (#5).** Lane reductions can only slow the flow and create more bottlenecks during rush hour – which is certain to enflame driver aggressiveness.

Eliminating the *right northbound* lane across the tracks, the red line in the diagram, serves no purpose. Vehicles wishing to turn right onto Sherbrooke would have to use the single left lane together with traffic continuing up Westminster. This lane is halted when pedestrians use the crosswalk at Sherbrooke and the stop sign at Milner, whereas the current right-turn lane onto Sherbrooke is not.

Eliminating the *left southbound* lane across the tracks will be achieved with a left-turn-only lane at Sherbrooke (#3 on the diagram) supported by a physical barrier just before the tracks. The rationale for the southbound lane closure seems to be to allow the construction of a 2-meter wide pedestrian island in the Broughton crosswalk.

- **Verdict: not effective.** In high-volume traffic situations, flow in each direction will be reduced and bottlenecks created more frequently. A disaster for northbound vehicles wishing to turn right onto Sherbrooke. *Problematically, vehicles caught on the tracks when the barriers come down now often use the second lane to exit if their lane is backed up; this “escape route” will no longer be available.*

The purpose of Broughton crosswalk island is psychological, and not as a pedestrian gathering point. The alternative, which does not require a lane closure, is to use 1-meter wide low concrete dividers such as found protecting some bike paths, with striped “bollard” poles. The low median on Rene Levesque just west of Guy measures 1.16 m wide on Google Earth and is satisfactory. (The choice of a 2 m wide island appears to be strictly aesthetic so that flower planters could be installed. See the green text for the description of change #7 on the next page.)



### 3. Right-turn-only lane on Westminster northbound at Broughton (curved arrow under #7).

The objective appears to be to force northbound traffic into the left lane well ahead of the intersection in preparation for the single lane across the tracks. But, even with a couple of large right-turn-only signs many northbound drivers will inevitably end up in the right lane – some by design as they take advantage of the tempting lower-volume right lane. This would force a merge of these vehicles into the single lane across the tracks at Broughton creating a bottleneck.

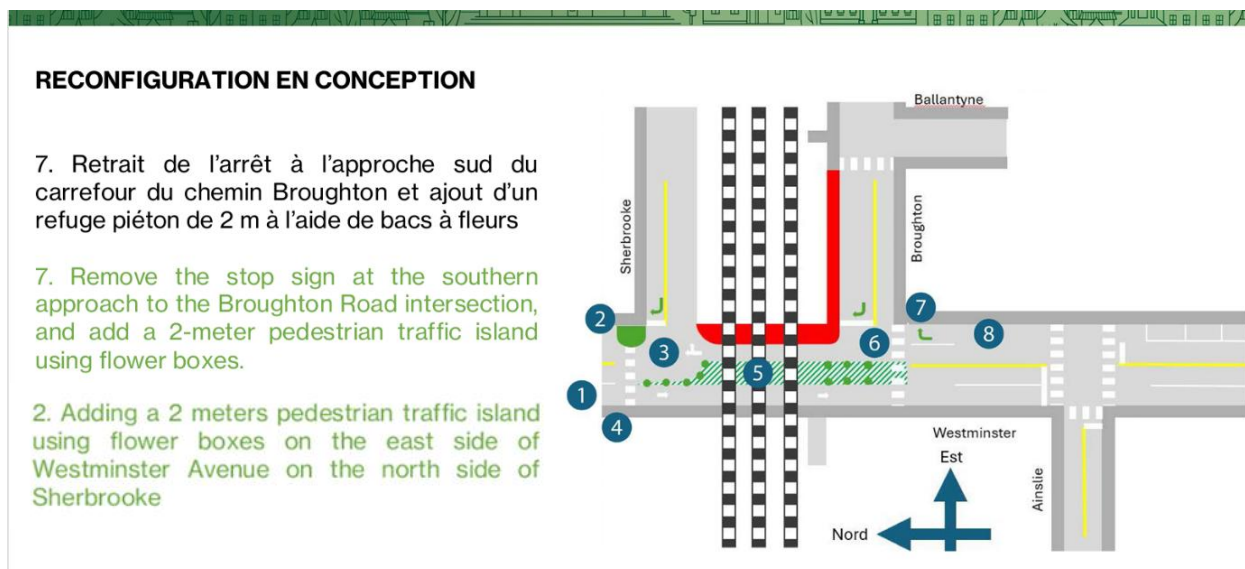
- **Verdict: Not effective** in preparing for the single lane across the tracks; a high chance for merging chaos at this intersection.

**4. Eliminating the stop sign northbound on Westminster at Broughton (#7) to allow vehicles to maintain speed.** The reasoning appears to be that the stop sign will no longer be necessary since the two left-turns here have been eliminated. And that traffic flow would increase if vehicles can maintain speed when no pedestrians are in the crosswalk. What seems to have been overlooked is that, particularly during rush hours and train crossings, *this stop sign has two other important functions:*

1. It interrupts northbound flow across the tracks which gives Sherbrooke traffic an opening to turn onto Westminster, and southbound Westminster traffic to turn left onto Sherbrooke. Coupled with the existing stop sign southbound on Westminster in front of the Action Sport parking lot, the flow interruption gives pedestrians an opening to brave the Sherbrooke crosswalk.
2. The stop sign makes it easy for vehicles on Broughton to right-turn onto Westminster northbound.

This stop sign also provides some reassurance to pedestrians using the Broughton crosswalk

**Verdict:** May not increase traffic flow in periods of high traffic in view of the loss of one lane across the tracks. **Forfeits the two secondary benefits** described. Will probably increase traffic flow in periods of low traffic outside of rush hours and train crossings.

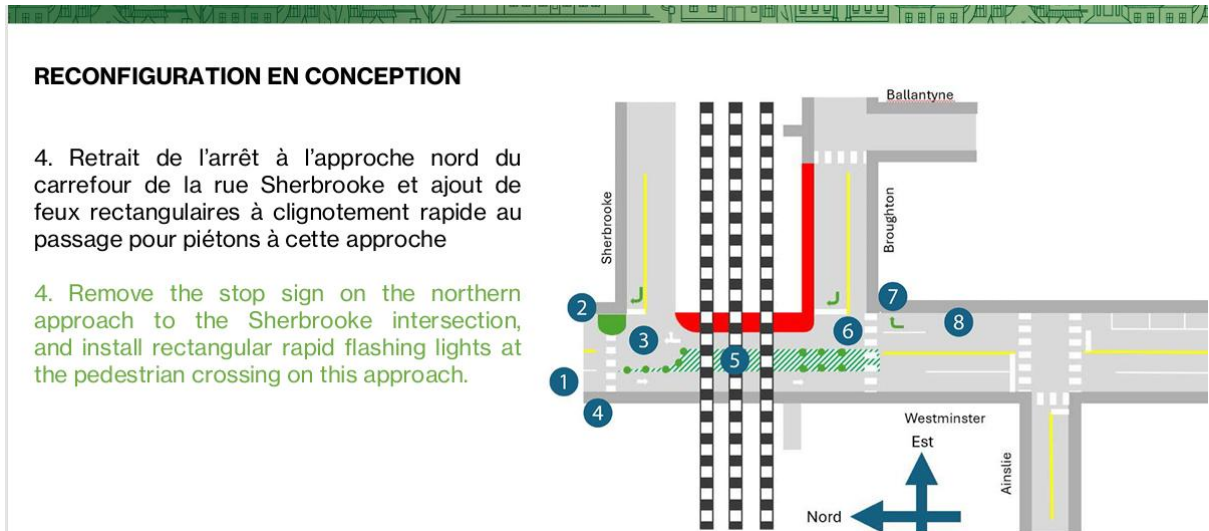


**5. A 2-meter pedestrian island (#2),** really a peninsula/curb-extension, attached to the eastern side of Westminster at the Sherbrooke crosswalk. The purpose is to shorten the distance of the crosswalk. Unfortunately, at this location exactly at the corner, **it will impede right-turns off Sherbrooke onto Westminster** northbound by trucks, buses and some cars. Trucks and buses currently turning right often encroach slightly into the left southbound Westminster lane. The addition of a 2-meter traffic peninsula at this location will exacerbate the situation.

- **Verdict:** **Not a good location.** Move the island and crosswalk farther up Westminster to where vehicles are allowed to park in front of Pharmaprix (in line with the southern end of the Pharmaprix building). This would eliminate one parking space in front of Action Sport.

**6. Eliminating the southbound stop sign at the Westminster crosswalk just north of the tracks and adding “rectangular flashing lights” (#4) to alert drivers to the crosswalk.** The objective, as with the Broughton stop sign removal, is to increase traffic flow by maintaining vehicle speed when no pedestrians are in the crosswalk. The problem is that during high traffic periods the right lane often backs up from Avon to the tracks which forces vehicles to stop north of the tracks. And the single lane across the tracks will also contain traffic previously in the left lane which can't shift left until after Broughton – which will contribute to the back-up.

**Verdict:** No increase in flow during high traffic periods. However, flow will increase outside rush hours and train crossings, but then drivers are probably not stressed at these times and wouldn't necessarily be aggressive at the Ainslie and Broughton crosswalks. Even with the flashing lights, the absence of a stop sign will probably increase pedestrian stress levels.



## Recommendations

- Reduce the width of the pedestrian island at Broughton to one meter.
- Maintain two lanes in each direction across the tracks and eliminate the right-turn only requirement at Broughton.
- Develop a contingency plan for dealing with excessive traffic on Brock N. Though short of blocking Brock at Sherbrooke – which would cause its own chaos, it's difficult to imagine what might be done. Did the traffic study experts not have any suggestions? And if none were mentioned, don't the consultants owe us that?
- If the stop sign at Broughton must be removed, install flashing lights as done for the stop sign removal north of the tracks (#4).

## Other suggestions

- Vastly improved lighting at the Sherbrooke/Westminster intersection should be a priority.
- Change the train schedules slightly so that trains arriving or passing through Montreal West are separated by 10 to 12 minutes.

**Link to pilot project:** [https://montreal-ouest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025\\_VMO\\_Securisation-du-passage-a-niveau\\_Seance-dinformation-JUIN-2.pdf](https://montreal-ouest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025_VMO_Securisation-du-passage-a-niveau_Seance-dinformation-JUIN-2.pdf)