

## 2004-12-02: Confirm response public consultation



18, avenue Alliance, Montréal, Qc. H4K 2C6

le 2 décembre, 2004

Mme Marie-France Bissonnette, bureau du greffe  
Arrondissement Pierrefonds / Senneville  
13,665, boul. Pierrefonds  
Pierrefonds, Qc. H9A 2Z4

Objet : Copie conforme : lettre à  
Mme Monique Worth, maire  
Arrondissement Pierrefonds-Senneville

Madame,

Tel qu'indiqué dans notre lettre à madame le maire, nous vous faisons parvenir copie conforme.

Veuillez recevoir nos salutations distinguées.

Richard Marcille, secrétaire  
Coalition Verte Inc

# 2004-12-01: Mayor Worth defies Mulcair veto, TheSuburban

The Suburban - Quebec's largest English newspaper

Page 1 of 1

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## Worth defies Mulcair veto

By Jason Magder, The Suburban

Despite a warning from Quebec environment minister Thomas Mulcair that he'll bar floodplain construction in the Whitehorse Rapids area, Pierrefonds is pressing ahead with development plans.

"We are going ahead because these territories are not in a floodplain," said Pierrefonds/Senneville borough chairwoman Monique Worth.

Worth claims the area was mistakenly labelled as a floodplain on maps drawn up by the Montreal Urban Community in the 1990s and wants Mulcair to redesignate them to allow construction of a 20-building complex that would include five condo towers.

Last week, Mulcair told The Suburban that last February's extensive flooding around Montreal and Laval islands has convinced him construction in the area would be a bad idea.

"I've given a very clear signal to [megacity executive committee member] Alan DeSousa that's a non-starter," Mulcair said. "I've been extremely clear on the fact that there will be no chances taken on development in that area. Right now, nothing is going to be granted [in that area]."

Worth insists there's no flooding risk in the area designated for construction.

"It's up to the minister," Worth said. "He will have to make a decision. No matter what everybody says, the part that is going to be constructed is not in the floodzone."

Last week's announcement is being applauded by local environmental groups.

"Mr. Mulcair's edict that no development should take place in floodzones is exciting news for Rapides Du Cheval Blanc defenders who are struggling to prevent five colossal towers, Miami Beach style, and 15 other substantial structures being built in the rare shoreline ecoterritory," said a news release issued by the Green Coalition. "Changing the floodplain map there is spot-zoning that would give the megaproject the green light."

Last week's megacity council meeting agenda did not include a planned motion to request to the Quebec government that the floodzone in Pierrefonds be changed to developable land.

"It wasn't brought to council because we want to clear this up with the minister," Worth said.

Executive committee member Alan DeSousa, who is in charge of economic development and the environment, said that the minister and the city must discuss the issue further.

"I understand what the minister is saying and in that sense, we will continue to talk to him on an ongoing basis," DeSousa said. "I don't have any disagreement to the minister. If there's a mistake that has to be corrected, then the minister is in a good place to make that assessment."

2004-12-01 10:22:57



**Floodzone or not? City hopes to convince the environment minister to allow construction along the shore of Rivière des Prairies.**

By **Suburban.com**

**2004-12-20: Letter to Federal Environment Minister Dion**



18 Alliance Avenue Montreal H4K 2C6

December 20, 2004

The Honourable Stéphane Dion  
Minister of the Environment

**RE: Saving Montreal's Last Natural Spaces: Meeting – December 10, 2004**

Dear Minister,

Thank you for meeting us on December 10 to discuss the Green Coalition's hopes for saving the last few natural areas in Montreal and for boosting the public transit agenda. The grass-roots are promoting the "sustainable development" goals of our city. We are appreciative that you will review three specific points that are briefly outlined below.

Firstly, we seek the first injection ever of Federal funds for green space acquisition in Montreal, a one-time contribution of dedicated funds of at least \$40 million to match the City of Montreal contribution according to the city's new Natural Spaces Policy. The Policy was adopted last week.

Secondly, we seek your help in setting up a landbank of surplus Federal and Provincial properties that can be swapped for natural spaces owned by developers, as well as trading revitalized brownfields for greenfields. Such schemes can be national in scope, applicable to cities across Canada. We have discussed these matters with Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Mulcair, Mayor Tremblay and many others in recent months. We hope that you can press the "buttons" to make these proposals a reality!

Thirdly, we do hope you will help to promote the Kyoto-conscious proposal for a light rail service on the old Doney Spur linking central West-Island to the Metro at the future Bois-Franc Station. Meanwhile, we ask that you help to ensure the conservation of this vital right-of-way. Part of the track has already been torn up. Also, will you please help to discourage the paving over of the rail-line for a bus route as outlined in Montreal's new Urban Plan.

We look forward to meeting you again in the New Year, Monsieur Dion. We send our best wishes for a Happy Holiday.

Yours sincerely,

David Fletcher, Richard Marcille and Sylvia Oljemark for the Green Coalition

## 2004-11-30: Response consultation publique Mme Worth



*Parti à décider*

Le 30 novembre 2004

M. Richard Marcilla, secrétaire  
Coalition Verte Inc.  
18, avenue Alliance  
Montréal, Qc  
H4K 2C6

Objet : Votre lettre recommandée du 29 novembre 2004

Monsieur,

Nous avons bien reçu votre lettre exprimant de l'intérêt envers une éventuelle consultation publique sur le plan d'aménagement de l'ensemble immobilier des Rapides-du-Cheval-blanc ouest.

Pour l'instant, nous sommes dans l'impossibilité de vous confirmer un échéancier quelconque, ni une date ferme de consultation, puisqu'il n'y a eu aucun développement dans ce dossier. À titre d'information, il n'y a eu aucun échange de terrain, ni bien sûr aucune élaboration de projet sur lequel porterait une telle consultation publique.

Compte tenu de ce qui précède, s'il est votre intention de préparer un mémoire, vous disposez actuellement d'aucune contrainte de temps.

Soyez assuré Monsieur Marcilla que les consultations publiques dans notre arrondissement sont toujours annoncées, tel que prévu par la loi, dans les journaux locaux. Notre Comité Consultatif d'Urbanisme tient également des séances publiques régulières où les projets de développement sont soumis pour approbation avant leur présentation au conseil d'arrondissement.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur Marcilla, nos plus cordiales salutations.

Monique Worth  
Maire d'arrondissement

## 2004-11-29: Demande Consultation publique Mme Worth



18, avenue Alliance, Montreal, Qc. H4K 2C6

le 29 novembre, 2004

Mme Monique Worth, mairesse  
Arrondissement Pierrefonds/Senneville  
Ville de Montréal  
13,665, boul. Pierrefonds  
Pierrefonds, Qc.  
H9A 2Z4

Objet : Consultation publique  
Rapides-du-Cheval-blanc ouest

Madame,

Une consultation publique sur le plan d'aménagement de l'ensemble immobilier des Rapides-du-Cheval-blanc ouest a été promise depuis longtemps.

La Coalition Verte projette présenter un mémoire lors de cette consultation

Nous vous demandons de nous informer de la date, de l'endroit et de l'heure exacte de cette audience publique.

Nous vous demandons aussi une période de temps assez longue pour nous permettre de préparer notre mémoire ainsi que le matériel nécessaire à cette présentation.

Nous attendons l'information demandée ci-haut le plus rapidement possible. Veuillez excepter, madame la mairesse, l'expression de nos salutations distinguées.

Richard Marcille, secrétaire  
Coalition Verte Inc.

cc : Monsieur le maire Gérald Tremblay  
Ville de Montréal  
cc : M. Bertrand Ward, conseiller  
cc : M. René Leblanc, conseiller  
cc : Mme Marie-France Bissonnette, g

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City Ville	<i>H9A 2Z4</i>		1 888 550-6333 <a href="http://www.canadapost.ca">www.canadapost.ca</a> <a href="http://www.postescanada.ca">www.postescanada.ca</a>
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## 2004-11-29: Demande consultation publique Maire Tremblay



18, avenue Alliance, Montréal, Qc. H4K 2C6

le 29 novembre, 2004

Monsieur Gérard Tremblay, maire  
Ville de Montréal  
275 rue Notre-Dame Est,  
Montréal, Qc. H2Y 1C6

Objet : Consultation publique  
Rapides-du-Cheval-blanc ouest

Monsieur le maire,

Une consultation publique sur le plan d'aménagement de l'ensemble immobilier des Rapides-du-Cheval-blanc ouest a été promise depuis longtemps

La Coalition Verte projette présenter un mémoire lors de cette consultation.

Nous vous demandons de nous informer de la date, de l'endroit et de l'heure exacte de cette audience publique.

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Nous attendons l'information demandée ci-haut le plus rapidement possible. Veuillez accepter, monsieur le maire, l'expression de nos salutations distinguées.

Richard Marcille, secrétaire  
Coalition Verte Inc.

cc : Mme Monique Worth, mairesse  
Arrondissement Pierrefonds/Senneville  
cc : Mme Jacqueline Leduc, greffière

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2004-11-26: COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE pour diffusion immédiate

## **Coalition Verte**

Vendredi 26 novembre, 2004

### **La Coalition Verte se réjouit auprès du ministre de l'Environnement, Thomas Mulcair**

Au même moment qu'il annonçait son " Plan Vert ", le ministre a agi pour maintenir certains principes du développement durable à Montréal. Le ministre a courageusement barré des plans pour l'éradication de plusieurs zones inondables sur la carte de Pierrefonds. Étant sur le point d'inclure ces modifications lors d'un vote pour altérer son schéma d'aménagement lundi le 22 novembre dernier, la ville a dû reculer.

L'annonce de M. Mulcair d'une interdiction de développer dans les zones inondables a réjoui les défenseurs du secteur Rapide du Cheval blanc qui se démènent pour stopper la construction de 5 tours d'habitation colossales genre plages de Miami, ainsi que 15 autres structures de grande envergure devant être construites sur une rare bande riveraine d'un " éco-territoire. " Le geste de modifier la carte des zones inondables à un tel endroit équivaut à un re-zonage local qui donnerait le feu vert à ce méga-projet.

### **Officiels récalcitrants**

Les officiels de Pierrefonds ainsi qu'à la Ville tentent de déjouer l'annonce du ministre, prétextant qu'il y a erreur sur la carte des zones inondables. " Il n'en est rien " dit la Coalition. La zone d'inondation dans le secteur Cheval Blanc ouest consiste d'une grande dépression en forme de cuve creusée par la glaciation. Elle se situe quelque peu à l'intérieur, éloignée de la rivière, et sa partie la plus profonde n'est que 16 pouces au-dessus de la rive. Une bonne partie de cette plaine inondable a été remblayée, mais le niveau de l'eau monte ou descend selon le niveau de la rivière. Deux complexes d'appartements adjacents au site de construction proposé furent inondés pendant un mois en février dernier nécessitant un pompage par le service des incendies.



Tel qu'énoncé par le Ministre récemment lors d'une rencontre avec des représentants de la Coalition, " une zone inondable couverte de remblais demeure une zone inondable! ". Il a aussi indiqué que le changement climatologique pourrait engendrer d'autres événements climatiques plus sévères avec en perspective de plus grands risques d'inondations.

## **Outils requis par la Ville pour son plan des espaces verts**

La ville de Montréal adoptera prochainement sa Politique de protection et de mise en valeur des milieux naturels si longuement attendue. L'Équipe Tremblay se targue d'avoir une " boîte à outils " de mesures pour la protection des derniers milieux naturels ou éco-territoires de l'île. La Coalition Verte fait appel aux responsables de la Ville afin qu'ils suivent l'exemple de M. Mulcair, - maintenir les zones inondables afin de sauvegarder quelques hectares verts ici et là, plus particulièrement dans les éco-territoires et leurs zones tampon.

## **On attend toujours de l'argent pour les espaces verts**

La Coalition Verte aimerait poursuivre ses discussions avec le ministre concernant le plan de la Coalition qui consiste d'établir une banque de territoires naturels à partir d'échanges de terrains en milieu naturel pour des terrains décontaminés. La Coalition presse le gouvernement du Québec pour qu'il injecte plus de fonds pour, du moins, égaler les \$36 millions votés par la Ville pour l'acquisition d'espaces verts.

Sources:

David Fletcher: (514) 683-7864

Sylvia Oljemark (514)332-9146

2004-11-24: to Thomas J. Mulcair, Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks vetoes Whitehorse, TheSuburban

**The Suburban** West Island  
QUEBEC'S LARGEST ENGLISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER  
[www.thesuburban.com](http://www.thesuburban.com)  
VOL. 17 NO. 42 NOVEMBER 24, 2004 56 PAGES

# Mulcair vetoes Whitehorse

**By Jason Magder**  
The Suburban

Quebec Environment Minister Thomas Mulcair said Monday he'll veto any development in the floodzone adjacent to the Whitehorse Rapids.

"I've given a very clear signal to [megacity executive committee member] Alan DeSousa that's a non-starter," Mulcair said. "I've been extremely clear on the fact that there will be no chances taken on development in that area. Right now, nothing is going to be granted [in that area]."

Mulcair said that the onus is now on the megacity to prove that a development can be built in the western portion of the area located at the northwest end of Sources Blvd.

"If I can be persuaded otherwise, there might be a change," Mulcair said.

Mulcair said he plans to block any development in the floodzones adjacent to Rivière des Prairies. But he added that the ministry would block any requests by the city for development in a floodzone. That includes a portion of the

See WHITEHORSE, page 4

## 2004-11-24: to Thomas J. Mulcair, Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks vetoes Whitehorse, TheSuburban

4 • THE WEST ISLAND SUBURBAN, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2004

### Mulcair

Cont'd from page 1

Bertrand Creek in Bois de Liésc as well as an area adjacent to Roxboro island, which is slated for a 12-storey tower. The megacity had planned to modify its zoning to allow development in Whitehorse and the Bois de Liésc developments, but a motion to modify those zones was pulled from Monday's megacity council meeting.

Mulcair said his ministry will take a hard line against what he calls haphazard development, which he says contributed to the massive flooding that occurred in February in Pierrefonds and Laval des Rapides.

"Some houses [on the Laval side] should not have been built that close to the water, there's no question," Mulcair said.

But Pierrefonds says that the area has been mistakenly labelled as a floodzone and the city just wants to correct a mistake made on the original floodzone map drawn up by the now defunct Montreal Urban Community.

"Whatever is supposed to be built is not in the floodzone," Pierrefonds/Senneville borough chairwoman Monique Worth said.

The area in question comprises a sizeable chunk of land that was sold to developer Mario Grilli by the former city of Pierrefonds. Pierrefonds has been working



Whitehorse west: development planned for three years could be cancelled.

for the last few months with representatives from the ministry of transport as well as the environment ministry to develop a project that would marry residential development with the construction of a park and a train station. The Montreal Transit Authority told *The Suburban* last week that, while it planned on adding new stations to the Two Mountains train line in the next few years, the Whitehorse area is not being considered as a location for one of those stations.

It's not clear what effect the ministry's decision to quash development in that area will have on the development planned for the area, but it will either force the project to be scaled back significantly or cancelled altogether.

"That's great news and we applaud the

minister," said Green Coalition spokeswoman Sylvia Oljemark.

Officials from the environment ministry met both Pierrefonds/Senneville officials and the Green Coalition on Friday to hear their arguments for and against development.

"We told them that they had some bad information because everything was brought to the minister direct from the green coalition," Worth said. "The correction needs to be done because there's a mistake made by the Montreal Urban Community. We received all the letters we required [from the environment ministry giving permission to build]. What we have done so far, we were permitted to do."

Worth said that the people arguing that the area is a floodzone are doing so merely because they want to block the project and not because they are concerned that there will be flooding.

"We've been working on it for the last three years. I don't know why people are against it," Worth said.

Oljemark said that the city should make it a policy decision to refuse to modify floodzone restrictions as a way to save greenspace.

"Why don't we use this very good tool? They don't even have to lay out cash or change anything," Oljemark said. "Just leave floodzone restrictions in place and they save a few hectares of greenspace." ■



# Mulcair veto boosts Green agenda

By Irene Chwalkowski  
The Suburban

Quebec Environment Minister Thomas Mulcair's veto of a proposed development on the shores of Pierrefonds' Whitehorse Rapids comes as a huge shot in the arm for regional greenspace activists.

Mulcair's decision hadn't been announced as environmental groups and residents gathered at the Pierrefonds Cultural Centre last Saturday to inventory the last remaining green spaces in the Montreal area.

Montreal Opposition leader Pierre Bourque said that the current administration talks a good game, but hasn't done much to preserve greenspace on the island. Among the examples he used were the Whitehorse Rapids and Angell Woods in Beaconsfield.

Bourque said that there has been no sign of the \$36 million that had been promised for acquisition of green spaces by the city of Montreal.

But he said pressure applied, especially when he himself makes appearances at endangered sites, seems to do the

trick. "There was a wooded area here in Pierrefonds they wanted to destroy. I came to see it — they stopped it," he said. "I came here to see the Rapides du Cheval Blanc today," he said.

Former MP for Lac St. Louis Clifford Lincoln was on hand discussing green issues with activists and visitors.

"Unfortunately we have this syndrome of develop, develop, develop (and) raise tax revenue. We believe this is going to solve the quality of life. Well the quality of life is based on nature, is based on water, trees, and if we don't keep close to it, we're all going to be losers. We'll be covered in buildings and roads and cars, and what kind of quality of life is that going to be for our kids? And their kids?" Lincoln said.

That's why the former Quebec Environment Minister believes greenspace preservation is crucial.

"We have to keep what we have left. We've got little left now. So we've got to keep all of it. We don't need to sacrifice floodplains, building on the floodplains, building right in the ponds and rivers, building in green space and then



Leo Bergeron of ZIP, a group of committees dedicated to protect water ecosystems, discusses water quality charts with Pierre Bourque.

we're going to have a place where people won't want to live because it will be covered in concrete and tar and it will be a sad, sad day for all of us. That's why I'm very keen and I'm working with all the greenspace people," he said.

Lincoln is convinced that there will be a Green Party in Canada eventually, like there is in Germany and other parts of Europe.

"I want to see our own party be green. There's no reason why the Liberal Party shouldn't be a green party and there's a lot of people that really believe that. No matter which party it is, if there's enough green people within the party, then action will take place. So the objective is to get as many greens as possible, especially into municipal government. That's where it starts," he said. ■

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"We have to keep what we have left. We've got little left now. So we've got to keep all of it. We don't need to sacrifice the floodplains, building on the floodplains, building right in the ponds and rivers, building in green space and then we're going to have a place where people won't want to live because it will be covered in concrete and tar and it will be a sad, sad day for all of us. That's why I'm very keen and I'm working with all the greenspace people," he said.

Lincoln is convinced that there will be a Green Party in Canada eventually, like there is in Germany and other parts of Europe.

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2004-11-24 10:36:39



**Whitehorse west: development planned for three years could be cancelled.**

By **Suburban.com**

## **2004-11-15: Email to Thomas J. Mulcair, Quebec Minister of Environment**

Email note:

RE: Flood-plains under siege - Council vote possible Monday, November 22

Dear Minister,

Thank you for meeting with us on November 15.

Congratulations on your initiatives that have led to acquisitions of natural areas in our region.

We also applaud your holding fast to your edict that no development should take place in flood-zones. Bravo! This is exciting news for Cheval Blanc defenders who are struggling to prevent the colossal towers, Miami Beach style, and other substantial structures being built in the rare shoreline "ecoterritory." Changing the flood-plain map there is spot-zoning that would give the megaproject the green light.

It is unclear if a vote to change the Schéma or Master Plan < to erase Pierrefonds flood -zones from the map < will be on the City Council meeting Monday, November 22. < This despite your edict to the contrary.

The Tremblay Team has touted putting together a "tool case" of measures to protect Montreal's green spaces. At question period on Monday we will certainly ask why the city is so keen to dispose of flood-plain restrictions. Maintaining the flood-zones is an excellent tool for saving a few green hectares here and there, especially in ecoterritories and their buffer zones!

We look forward to further discussions with you on that other "tool", the Landbanking and Swapping technique as set out in the "Contrat de ville", along with the Green Coalition's greenfields for brownfields scheme. Of course we still seek a cash injection from your government to at least match the city's commitment as well!

In appreciation,  
Dave, Richard and Sylvia for the Green Coalition

cc: Geoffrey Kelley  
MNA for Jacques Cartier

2004-10-05: Thank you Mayor Peter Yeomans, re Clifford Lincoln



*To : Mayor Peter Yeomans*

*Re: A Special Thank You!*

*From : The Green Coalition*

*Many thanks to you, Mayor Yeomans, for helping to make the Green Coalition's Tribute to Clifford Lincoln a very special event. We appreciate your generous assistance, providing for the planting of the Sugar Maple in Cliff's honour, the venue, and for the refreshments too!*

*In years to come, our members and many others will enjoy the tree in the Arboretum at the Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre. And the neat plaque will serve to record this occasion honouring Clifford Lincoln, Champion of the Environment!*

2004-09-24: To the attention of Cody Barker Greene , Attaché politique, Cabinet du ministre de l'Environnement



18 Alliance Ave Montreal H4K 2C6

September 24, 2004

To the attention of Cody Barker Greene  
Attaché politique  
Cabinet du ministre de l'Environnement

**RE :** 'The environmental group said the alterations amount to spot zoning for development in the very areas that have been identified by the city as valuable eco-territories.'

excerpt from The Gazette September 2, 2004 A9 - *City, environmentalists clash over redrawing Pierrefonds flood-risk map*

Hi Cody,

Will the Minister defend the integrity of the entire 20-year flood-risk zones in Pierrefonds/Senneville, specifically in the two écoterritoires known as 'Les rapides du Cheval Blanc' and 'La coulée verte du ruisseau Bertrand'?

You have heard some of the following during our meeting with the Minister. Please find the enclosed documents that can help to clarify the issue a bit more:

- **An enlargement of the flood-risk map in Pierrefonds/Senneville.** The highlighted area shows the 20-year flood zone west of Riviera Street. The borough wants a "correction" to erase this zone from the map. At the public hearings on September 1, 2004, city officials claimed that because the area was land-filled it was no longer a flood-risk zone and no flooding ever occurred there. Residents pointed out that the basement of the adjacent apartment block *farthest from the river* (as shown) was flooded in February 2004, requiring 3 weeks of pumping.\* (The enlargement is to scale with the coloured sketch of the construction plan for comparison and the original map is included.)
- **Sketch of the construction plan most favoured by the borough for "Cheval Blanc West"** with 5 - 10 storey towers and 15 other substantial structures. No mention of this plan or any other building plan for the area was made by officials at the hearing on September 1. Citizens pointed out that it was clear that the "correction" to the flood-risk



map was simply a spot-zoning ploy to permit the colossal project to proceed. Green Coalition reps insisted that a flood-plain with some added dirt on it is still a flood-plain!

- **Félix-McLernan/ Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park area.** The map shows the flood-plain basin of Bertrand Creek that flows through the park. Dérogations are sought for building 6 houses, hard against the park limits, in the flood zone; and a marshland in the nature-park (part of the Bertrand drainage basin) would be “improved” in recompense. Green Coalition members argued that the homes would surely be flooded; more claims for compensation from government would be made. In short, the citizens called for a halt to the costly practice - decades-long - of granting permission to degrade and to deform flood-plain and shorelines for the profit of the construction industry. The participants advised against messing with the marshland unless the illegal landfill can be removed from the marsh with the utmost care. The illegal landfill should be removed from the 6 “building” lots as well. And the activists pleaded that instead of 6 houses, a small buffer zone be left between the park and the residential sector. Of the 6 houses, 1 has already been built!
- **Two letters to Mayor Tremblay re Cheval Blanc West** - written before it became known in August 2004 that much of the site for the construction project lies in the 20-year flood-risk zone where building is prohibited.
- **Entente** – a land-swap agreement between Pierrefonds and the developer signed in 2001 is the basis for the Cheval Blanc West Project. Elements of this Entente have raised many questions. The Entente is not in force until the PAE (Plan d’aménagement d’ensemble) is approved. The Entente, however, may be null and void: it was not approved in 2001 by the Transition Committee. (see clause 21) Many such land transactions were later overturned because approval by the Transition Committee, which was obligatory, was not obtained.\*

\* **The Comité pour la préservation du secteur des Rapides du Cheval Blanc**, a Green Coalition member group, has documents to prove that the fire department had to be called to pump water during the February flood on Riviera Street and also that the Entente was not approved by the Transition Committee.

Thank you, Cody, for your attention to these matters,

Dave Fletcher and Sylvia Oljemark for the Green Coalition  
(514) 683-7864 and (514) 332-9146



## Press Statement

### Open Letter to Mayor Tremblay

*Greens to Mayor Tremblay:*

*“We want action, not promises!”*

September 8, 2004

#### **Mayor Gérald Tremblay**

At the August 23 Council meeting, you renewed your pledge to save the natural green spaces of our Island Metropolis, reassuring the long line of concerned citizens who approached the microphone one after the other during question period. You promised that the long-delayed Natural Spaces Protection Policy will be adopted in October and that before year's end \$12 million would be invested for green space acquisition - the first installment of the \$36 million over 3 years earmarked for the purpose.

#### **Rumours and missing millions:**

Mayor Tremblay, only action now instead of promises can dispel the persistent rumours that are undermining your credibility. Some Tremblay Team officials say the administration is backing away from implementing the Policy that is designed to protect eco-systems or écoterritoires from east to west across the city. The quota of protected parkland would be boosted to 8% of the territory - up from the dismal 3.3% that is currently protected. But, these officials are insisting that demerging boroughs, by way of punishment, must forfeit their green spaces. Troubling too are reports from reliable sources that the \$12 million budgeted for green spaces in 2004 has shrunk to just \$7 million, the funds siphoned off for other purposes including sewers.

#### **Demergers - no excuse for foot-dragging: City's Mandate is Island-wide**

The City of Montreal has inherited the legal and moral responsibility from the former Montreal Urban Community to protect the region's natural green spaces. Even though a number of boroughs have voted to demerge from the megacity, some of them having important and endangered natural spaces within their borders, your mandate remains the same, to be the regional arbiter for green space protection - Island-wide! The mandate will remain unchanged until January 2006 when demergers take effect and not until then will your green space duty be transferred to the Agglomeration Council. All boroughs, demerging or not, have paid into the \$36 million green space fund and will continue to contribute for island-wide services - post-demerger!

### **Montreal – the “Sustainable Development City” - a joke?**

City officials continue to tout Montreal as a world-class city – a “Sustainable Development City.” To earn the title, the City must first comply with rigorous international standards. Pivotal among the requirements are the conservation of natural spaces and protection of indigenous biodiversity. So, the City must first save its natural ecosystems. Only then will it validate its claims and be able to take its place on the world stage as a truly Sustainable Development City.

### **Time's running out for natural spaces: There will never be another green space plan**

Unchecked, construction has stripped 1,000 hectares of forested lands from the metropolis since the late 1980s - the city has had no green space program for over 12 years. With 90% of the territory already developed and with the housing boom, valuable biomass is being torn from the city landscape daily. Developers are exerting pressure as never before; they want to build in the last “écoterritoires”. And the city acquiesces! Even established Nature-Parks are threatened by encroachment and road-building. Flood-plain maps continue to be redrawn to accommodate development in sensitive zones that have important flood risks. If the political will to protect the last of our natural heritage is squandered now, there will never be another green space plan. The natural spaces will be long gone before there is the political momentum ever again.

### **Put a construction freeze on écoterritoires – OCPM: Add more écoterritoires**

The Office de consultation publique de Montréal held well-attended hearings on the Natural Spaces Policy in all corners of the city in April and May. In its report, the OCPM, like the Green Coalition, urges the city to act quickly to implement the plan. The Office recommends adding Meadowbrook and offshore islands, bringing the number of protected écoterritoires to 12. Urgent attention is called for Angell Woods - now. *“Moreover, to reduce current pressures on certain areas targeted by the policy, the Commission recognizes the necessity of imposing a moratorium on all development projects in the écoterritoires natural spaces and buffer zones.”* (communiqué OCPM) The City does not favour a Moratorium. Please reconsider: this tactic could gain time until the policy kicks in and additional funding is secured.

**All the tools are in place: All that is needed is action!**

The OCPM emphasized that the Natural Spaces Policy is eagerly awaited by the populace and that citizens are willing to participate on the project. Indeed the City's own polls show that 96% of citizens favour such a policy. These findings bolster and justify your mandate. You have estimated that investments of between \$100 and \$200 million are needed to save the green spaces for posterity. Taking the upper estimate of \$200 million amortized over 20 years at 6%, the investment required from each Montreal Island resident per year would be under \$10, less than the price of a pizza!

**An appeal**

Mayor Tremblay, the Green Coalition encourages you to honour your promises. Fully exercising your mandate to protect the green environment Island-wide will enhance your stature and the stature of our City.

We have opened a dialogue with Federal Cabinet ministers re "innovative" Green Coalition proposals that can help save the natural spaces. We are to meet Quebec Environment Minister Thomas Mulcair next week. Member-groups are confident that Mr. Mulcair can play a pivotal role in settling Montreal's green space crisis before it is irreversible. May we meet you soon to facilitate and coordinate these efforts?

Sincerely,  
Green Coalition Inc

**2004-09-01: Exerpt from a news release prepared by Green Coalition**

## **Green Coalition activists urge that amendments to the development plan be stopped- Spot-zoning could alter the flood-plain map in 3 parts of Pierrefonds**

In 2 cases, changing the 20-year flood-zone would permit construction in 2 "ecoterritoires" that are to be protected by the new Natural Spaces Protection Policy. One of the cases is the colossal Cheval Blanc Miami-Beach style project. Following extensive public hearings on the Policy in April and May, the Office de consultation publique de Montreal's report published in June urged the City to adopt the policy quickly and recommended that a Moratorium be placed on all construction in the icoterritoires and their buffer zones.

Also, the amendments would permit the artificial reconfiguration of a marshland within the limits of Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park. It is part of Ruisseau Bertrand's flood-plain in the park.

Permitting the amendments is inappropriate:

1. Natural Spaces Policy and Moratorium pending at City Council
2. More study needed on marshland proposal
3. Each of the 3 cases should be reviewed separately given their important impacts.
- 4.Errors were glaring in both the English /French public notices.

Mercredi 1er septembre, 2004 ` 19h00 (inscription 18h30)

Hotel de Ville de Montreal - Salle du Conseil

Commission permanente du conseil sur la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine

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## **Des militants la Coalition Verte veulent faire mettre de coté les amendements au plan d'aménagement**

### **Des modifications au zonage ` certains endroits modifieraient la carte de la zone inondable dans trois secteurs de Pierrefonds.**

Dans deux instances, des modifications ` la zone inondable de 20 ans permettraient la construction dans deux écoterritoires qui seraient protégés par la nouvelle Politique de protection et mise en valeur des milieux naturels. Dans un de ces cas, il s'agit du colossal projet d'aménagement du Cheval Blanc, similaire en style à ce qu'on retrouve sur les plages de Miami. Suite à de longues audiences sur cette Politique en avril et mai, l'Office de Consultation publique de Montréal a publié son rapport en juin pressant la Ville d'adopter rapidement sa politique et recommandant un moratoire sur toute construction dans les écoterritoires ainsi que dans leurs zones tampon.

De plus, les amendements permettraient la reconfiguration artificielle d'un habitat faunique ` l'intérieur du parc-nature du Bois-de-Liesse. Ce secteur fait partie de la zone inondable du Ruisseau Bertrand ` l'intérieur du parc.

#### **Permettre ces amendements ne serait pas approprié :**

1. L'adoption de la Politique de Protection et un moratoire par le Conseil de ville seraient iminentes.
2. Plus d'étude est requis pour ce qu'on propose pour l'habitat faunique.
3. Chacune des 3 situations devrait être étudié séparément, leur impact étant important.
4. Il y a des erreurs flagrantes dans les deux avis français et anglais.

2004-06-06: Green Coalition Brief Montreal Master Plan



## **Green Coalition Brief**

**Re: The Master Plan of the City of Montreal, presented to the  
Office de consultation publique de Montréal, in June 2004**

**This brief is to be considered as**

### **Addendum 2.**

**to the brief presented in June 2003 entitled:**

**CITY OF MONTREAL - URBAN PLANNING – JUNE 2003  
GREEN COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**CONTENTS:**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PART 1 NATURAL GREEN SPACES**

#### **CONTEXT**

Progress on the dossier since June 2003

Last chance to save the natural spaces! Even more urgent now - in 2004

Natural Spaces Policy in the new Master Plan: Objectives excellent

Master Plan fails to secure Natural Spaces

#### **OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS**

Add specifics, precision to Natural Spaces Policy

Keep rampant development out of écoterritoires

Set up “Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement Fund” now

Green Coalition seeks help for green spaces from superior governments:

municipal politicians and others are invited to do the same

#### **OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS – RELATED TOPICS**

agricultural zone/ human scale communities/ re-greening/ setbacks/ church lands

### **PART 2 TRANSPORT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **CONTEXT**

Virage Vert for Montreal Transportation

Virage Vert : In 2002, Nature-Parks were threatened by new roads

Virage Vert: City officials say natural spaces are now safe from new road building

Glitches in the “Virage Vert”! New plans shock Green Coalition

#### **GREEN COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Extension of Pierrefonds Boulevard through L’Anse-à-l’Orme Écoterritoire to join Morgan Boulevard in Baie d’Urfé is unacceptable

#### **GREEN COALITION’S DONEY SPUR PROPOSAL (since 1989)**

Doney Spur Light Rail Line should be the backbone of public transit in West Island

Surprise Proposal to roll buses on Doney Spur! No cost/benefit studies, no environmental impact studies in Master Plan to warrant this sudden change in vocation for Doney Spur.

#### **MORE TRANSPORT-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

railbanking/ TODs yes/ in écoterritoires no/ rethink new station/ de Salaberry servitude

#### **CONCLUSION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**



The Green Coalition is a non-profit association of grass-roots volunteers. Its member-groups and individual members are dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment. Members are actively involved in many issues such as, saving the Island's last green spaces, preventing road building through established Nature-Parks and other green spaces, boosting public transit strategies; promoting alternatives to pesticides, pressing for the clean up waste-water runoff and polluted creeks, and for responsible waste reduction and management. In short, the Green Coalition is working vigorously in Montreal, helping to shape a sustainable development city. The stated "general objective of the new Master Plan is to ensure that Montréal's planning initiatives will be based on sustainable development." (Mayor Gérald Tremblay's letter to Montrealers) The Green Coalition is pleased to participate, offering opinion, observations and recommendations as the urban plan evolves.

This brief is presented by Mr. David Fletcher and Mrs. Sylvia Oljemark. Both are porte-parole of the Green Coalition. Mr. Fletcher is Vice-President; Mrs. Oljemark is a member of the Board of Directors and served as the first President of the Green Coalition.

### **Scope of this brief**

In June 2003, one year ago, the Green Coalition presented a brief on Urban Planning for Montreal, giving a number of recommendations on two essential components of sustainable development planning – Natural Green Spaces and Transport. In April 2004, the Green Coalition presented a brief on the draft Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces. Now, this new brief on the Master Plan will review the recommendations made in the two earlier documents, the city's responses and the resulting changes the city has made in planning orientations over the past year. This brief will also stress specific points where rethinking is needed and outline further improvements that are proposed by the Green Coalition. In addition, recommendations and observations on a variety of other subjects are also offered.

## **PART 1 NATURAL GREEN SPACES**

### **CONTEXT**

#### **Progress on the dossier since June 2003**

In its June 2003 brief, the Green Coalition urged the City of Montreal not to repeat the error of the Montreal Urban Community. The MUC's first Master Plan, 1987, had no Green Space Plan. Exceptional grass-roots efforts were pivotal in putting in place the MUC's \$200 million Green Space Program in 1989. Now, in response to citizens' appeals at news conferences, at city hall question periods, and during special events, the City of Montreal is poised to adopt its Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces. In November 2003, the Green Coalition mobilized citizens to city hall, calling for green space dollars in the budget, reminding the administration that if the last natural ecosystems are lost, Montreal can never qualify on the world stage as a

Sustainable Development City. Thirty-six million dollars over three years was set aside in the December Budget for green space acquisition.

### **Last chance to save the natural spaces! Even more urgent now - in 2004**

It is twelve long years since the MUC program collapsed – one-half its budget, \$100 million, was left unspent. One thousand hectares of natural lands have been lost to development since the late 1980s. With the boom in the housing market, the losses continue. Montreal's last remaining natural green spaces (1600 hectares) are owned by developers and are zoned for development. Development pressures are so severe that these unprotected green spaces are at risk of disappearing completely in the near future.

At the hearings on the city's new Policy for the Protection of Natural Spaces in April, the grass-roots applauded this courageous step being taken by the city when fiscal constraints are so severe. Citizens cheered the ambitious scope of the plan: above all, they hailed the Policy as the last chance to save Montreal's natural spaces. But, participants at the hearings also expressed fears that the limited funds for green space acquisition (\$36 million) are inadequate and that encroachment through building will despoil much of the remaining green spaces. Mayor Tremblay has stated publicly that investments of between \$100 and \$200 million are needed.

### **Natural Spaces Policy in the new Master Plan: Objectives excellent**

The objectives outlined in the new Natural Spaces Policy are encompassed in the Master Plan. These objectives are excellent. The city has pledged to boost protected natural areas from 3.3% to 8% of Montreal's territory. Achieving the 8% target would satisfy both Quebec and International norms and serve to validate the City of Montreal's sustainable development aspirations. Ten "Écoterritoires" across the city, offering a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, are delineated for protection. These ten eco-zones correspond in every respect with sites recommended in the Green Coalition's June 2003 brief - all respects except one – the Green Coalition still insists that Meadowbrook be included as an eleventh écoterritoire for protection in the policy.

### **Master Plan fails to secure Natural Spaces**

The new Master Plan fails to embody or entrench any legal and binding mechanisms, such as easements, servitudes, bylaws and zoning to protect any of the écoterritoires. Even core-zone properties within the écoterritoires deemed to be of outstanding ecological value and sensitivity continue to be zoned for residential or other development in the Master Plan. eg. Angell Woods and the southern unprotected third of Anse-à-l'Orme Forest (also known as Woods #3), both of inestimable ecological value and both located in the écoterritoire called "le corridor écoforestier de la Rivière-à-l'Orme" are to be prey for developers' bulldozers according to the Master Plan. (Land Use Designation map 3.1.1) Mr. Stephen Lloyd of APAW, Association for the Protection of Angell Woods, a member-group of the Coalition, wrote in his natural spaces brief: « .... des normes élaborées par la Politique relativement à la conservation des espaces naturels seront incluses dans le plan d'urbanisme à titre « d'objectifs » seulement. La Politique manque donc de mordant. »

## **OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Add specifics, precision to Natural Spaces Policy**

Montrealers, justifiably, expect that their cherished natural spaces will be protected in perpetuity and that they will enjoy free access to them. The Policy and the Master Plan both fail to spell out how Montrealers' expectations can be met; both fail to identify any specific sites for conservation. Clarity is needed in the Policy on these essentials. Also, to provide coherence, to focus energies and stimulate participation in the process, this policy must have a Timetable, provide a Progress Report and set reasoned Priorities.

### **Keep rampant development out of écoterritoires**

The limited funds for the purchase of Montreal's last green spaces has fueled fears that this new policy will be weighted in favour of the interests of real estate development and real estate developers. Commonly, municipal administrations regard "vacant" land as a resource to be exploited for urban development, for increased tax revenues. Expanded populations then require more services, more infrastructure, in turn engendering more development for yet more revenue – an inexorable development spiral! Close to 90% of Montreal's territory has already been built over. The Green Coalition urges that, for truly sustainable practice, this building spiral be stopped outside the last natural ecosystems and that these lands of rich irreplaceable biodiversity be spared any more incursions.

### **Set up "Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement Fund" now**

The Draft Natural Spaces Policy vaguely mentions the possibility of setting up a "Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement Fund". The City is urged to exercise a leadership role now to create the fund, and to put its considerable machinery to work to secure more funds from private, corporate and public sources - funds for green space acquisition. Further, every mechanism to leverage and double up funds must be exploited to the maximum. Citizens are participating. APAW, the Association for the Protection of Angell Woods and the Nature Conservancy of Canada have teamed up to create a fund to purchase Angell Woods.

### **Green Coalition seeks help for green spaces from superior governments: municipal politicians and others are invited to do the same**

In 1991, the MUC Green Space Program collapsed – a Moratorium halted all green space spending until now. That Program was scrapped because of the shameful lack of financial support from the superior governments – at the same time that downloading was draining city coffers! Note that the Federal Government has made no contribution to green space spending in Montreal – ever. Between 1979 and 1992, the MUC invested close to \$200 million in the acquisition and management of its Nature-Parks. The total sum contributed by the Quebec Government since 1979 is \$12.5 million - in two installments back in 1979 and 1981.

## **Seek help of superior governments, cont'd**

### **Pay only once to acquire Natural Spaces!**

The Green Coalition is seeking one-time contributions of dedicated funds of at least \$36 million each from the Federal Government and from the Quebec Government to match or exceed the contribution of the City of Montreal to be used for green space acquisition according to the City's new Natural Spaces Policy. Note that unlike many needs that are constant demands on the public purse, a single investment can help Montreal prevent the terminal loss of its natural ecosystems. The Coalition insists that financial provisions for saving Montreal's green spaces are firmly placed high on the priority list as the "New Deal" between Ottawa, Quebec and our city, Montreal, evolves!

*Greenfields for Brownfields: Swapping to save Natural Spaces:*

*A Green Coalition Landbanking Proposal*

*A landbank of surplus Federal and Provincial properties can be created to be exchanged for the natural spaces owned by developers, thus conserving the ecologically valuable sites. Many surplus properties are contaminated lands, or brownfields that, once rehabilitated through "The National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy" or Quebec's Revi-sols Program, offer exceptional opportunities for redevelopment. Surplus lands, contaminated or not, serve this objective equally well.*

**Green servitudes:** The Green Coalition also seeks that servitudes, once set aside for road building and no longer needed, be turned into green servitudes in perpetuity as natural corridors for flora and fauna and to augment Nature-Parks.

*Nature-Park statutes need boosting*

Currently, portions of Nature-Parks, if not whole parks, can be leased, sold or rezoned. Only one (1) of the nine (9) nature-parks, Parc-nature du Bois-de-Saraguay has a special level of protection under the aegis of the Ministère des affaires culturelles as an Arrondissement naturel. All the Nature-Parks and the natural areas that will be protected by the new Policy must have at least equivalent statutes to the Bois-de-Saraguay, where no trees may be cut.

## **Guarantees, Guarantors for Natural Spaces Policy**

The Green Coalition seeks guarantees that the Natural Spaces Policy would survive a municipal administration change and that the superior levels of government stand as guarantors so that the program would continue. The Coalition urges the City to help secure such guarantees from the superior governments and to formally entrench these guarantees in the Policy for the Protection of Natural Spaces.

## **OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS – RELATED TOPICS**

### **The "Permanent Agricultural Zone"**

**Ms Alison Hackney**, a Green Coalition member who owns a farm in Senneville, offers the following observations about the "Permanent Agricultural Zone":

“It is encouraging to read of the City of Montreal’s stated intention to maintain the “Permanent Agricultural Zone”, however, it is worrisome that in the very next line of section 11.4 of the Plan, it is recognized that land *could be excluded* from the farm zone. It is difficult not to be cynical, as Québec’s Law to Protect Agricultural Land was supposed to maintain the “Permanent Agricultural Zone”, and farmland has decreased yearly since the adoption of the Law. How will the City do better? The City planners should integrate agricultural activities with the plans for natural green space and public transit and bicycle routes. These are very compatible, as the farms that are presently part of the urban landscape are very attractive and harmonious and attract retail customers on-site. The Politique de protection et de mise en valeur des milieux naturels recognizes the importance of buffer zones to protect critical natural sites. Farms could fill this role at the same time as generating economic activity.”

(Historical note:) In 1991, at the request of the MUC, the Quebec government dezoned 700 hectares of Montreal’s “Permanent” Agricultural Zone – some of the best prime farmland in Quebec. This action reversed a long-standing commitment by the MUC to protect the urban farm zone.

### **Human Scale Communities vs Sterile Subdivisions**

In an article entitled, *Sedentary lifestyles are a matter of design – urban design*, printed in The Gazette in May, 2004, **Mr. Avi Friedman**, who teaches architecture at McGill University wrote:

“Building communities rather than subdivisions means that we introduce features that foster social bonding to them. Pathways, play areas, benches and stores don’t simply make environmental sense, they hold social wisdom too. ...common-sense planning can work on a city scale. It is one plan Montreal’s new neighbourhoods should adopt.”

### **Pierrefonds/Senneville to create a human scale quartier**

“With 60,000 to 75,000 new housing units proposed for the city, 6,000 in Pierrefonds West alone, it is important that these new developments be planned on a human scale to create local communities with all the necessary amenities easily accessible on foot and by bicycle. It is a hopeful signal that the new Pierrefonds/Senneville urban plan proposes a mixed development project reflecting the principles of ‘new urbanism’ that is intended to foster the development of a viable community on the scale of a ‘quartier.’” notes Mr. Gareth Richardson of Pierrefonds Environment Committee, a Coalition member-group.

### **Re-Greening Initiatives/ Indigenous species**

Re-greening initiatives, whether undertaken under the purview of the new Natural Spaces Policy or the Politique de l’arbre (that is still in the formative stage) will need planning timetables and targets. Note that the MUC’s ‘Biomass-Map’ report, in 1989, urgently called for the vegetation cover of the Island to be augmented by 25% through re-greening. But, with the limited financial resources, investments in re-greening must wait until the natural parklands are first secured. For re-greening purposes, a policy of planting only indigenous, non-invasive species should be undertaken. Such species are hardy and best adapted to this climate, thus ensuring the success of investments in planting projects.

### **Setbacks can help save Green Spaces**

**Mr. Avrom Shtern**, of Les Amis de Meadowbrook, a Green Coalition member-group contributes the following information:

“Cities have encroached up to the limits of industrial installations and railway yards, which have had pre-existing rights, without regard for the need of safe distance setbacks. A balance must be struck between the conflicting needs of viable economic activities and healthy residential communities.

Class 3 industries such as railway yards and the recently cancelled Asphalt/Soil Decontamination plants in Lachine must have setbacks of at least 300 meters from future residential developments to avoid/ mitigate technological risk and conflicting land uses.

Such setbacks apply in Ontario under the aegis of the Ministry of the Environment. Technological risks to sensitive lands and ecologically important green spaces are recognized in the *Ontario Municipal Guidelines on Compatibility Between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses*. The guideline is “intended to be applied in the land use planning process to prevent or minimize future land use problems due to the encroachment of sensitive land uses and industrial land uses on one another.”

Meadowbrook Golf Course located in Côte-St-Luc-Hampstead, Montreal West and Lachine Boroughs could not be built on or developed if such guidelines were applicable here in Quebec.

The City of Montreal is urged to adopt its own setback standards – equivalent to those in force in Ontario – for future industrial and residential development, railway rights-of-

way, as well as for green spaces and shorelines – as permitted under Quebec Law.”  
(L.R.Q., chapitre S-2-3, *Loi sur la sécurité civile, ch.1 article 7*)

### **Aging religious orders giving up land holdings – new green spaces?**

With shrinking communities, religious orders (like the Grey Nuns) are giving up their huge properties, long-held tax-free. These properties, many on the waterfront, contribute significantly to the city’s biomass, helping offset the effects of urban pollution on air and water. To retain these benefits, these lands should be brought into the public domain. Then as green spaces, publicly accessible, these sites can serve the greater community.

## **PART 2 TRANSPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the Foreword to the Green Coalition’s June 2003 Urban Planning Brief, this appeal was written:

“The Green Coalition respectfully urges the city administration move quickly to adopt its long-promised Natural Spaces Policy and to establish an Integrated Mass Transit Plan now, so that these essential components may become integral to the 2004 Urban Plan as it evolves.”

The Natural Spaces Policy is soon to be adopted, but the Transportation Plan for Montreal is to be adopted only in 2005, albeit crafted in respect of the orientations set out in the Master Plan. An important planning tool, the CIMA II Report with its recommendations for West Island Transport is not yet available.

Nevertheless, orientations, objectives and stances being evolved by the city administration on transportation decision-making are set out in the Draft Version of the Master Plan. Meetings during the year with city officials and Green Coalition representatives provided exchanges of information. In addition, more information on transport plans that are in the works was provided in the course of public consultation sessions on the Master Plan. Specifically, such information was imparted by messieurs Pierre Sainte-Marie and Alain Trudeau at the Dollard-des-Ormeaux session on May 25. Information gleaned from these varied sources is not consistent in all respects! Discussion of these confusing points follows later in this paper.

### **CONTEXT**

#### **Virage Vert for Montreal Transportation**

The Green Coalition applauds the transportation objectives expressed in the Draft Master Plan. (Chapter 2.2) Emphasis is to be placed on public transit as Montreal’s

transportation mode for the future! And, “The City believes that it would be appropriate for the Québec government to rethink its priorities and to use grants from the federal government’s Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund for public transportation instead of road building.” Green Coalition concurs!

Bicycling and walking are to be regarded as modes of transportation – refreshing! With urban planning approaches for healthier communities, coupled with the excellent plans to complete the City-wide Bicycle Network - the Island’s perimeter circuit – and North/South links, these are certain steps towards sustainable development practice. Clearly, bicycles will require a special niche on all trains and metros - at all times!

### **Virage Vert : In 2002, Nature-Parks were threatened by new roads**

In May 2002, proposals in the CIMA I Report for building a “spaghetti network” of new roads and autoroutes through most of the West Island’s Nature-Parks and other unprotected green spaces became known. Green space defenders were galvanized into action: on May 2, 2002, the Green Coalition wrote:

“Mayor Tremblay, please remember that countless numbers of your citizens have struggled for years for the creation of these Nature-Parks. New roads spawn more cars and pollution. – Is your city’s recent call for Kyoto ratification just lip service? Our transit surveys show 87% of rush-hour vehicles on Trans-Canada carry one person – the driver. There is no need for new roads to encourage such practices. But there is great need for coherent strategies to reduce vehicular traffic – car-pooling, dedicated lanes for filled vehicles, stiff fees for reduced downtown parking, express-bus convoys, off-island beltways to eliminate through trucking (proposed 440 is not a beltway) and light rail systems like Green Coalition’s Doney Spur Proposal for a new Central West-Island/ Downtown service.”

(Recommendations for Integrated Public Transit in the Coalition’s June 2003 Brief expanded on the strategies mentioned in this letter to the Mayor.)

The Visit to Bois-Franc Forest in Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park in October 2002 was a high point in efforts to save the green spaces from rampant road building. The Mayor, his entourage, Federal and Quebec politicians and citizens walked the forest path where six-lane de Salaberry was to be built. They also visited the Doney Spur to consider the old spur’s potential as a new light rail axis for integrated mass transit.

### **Virage Vert: City officials say natural spaces are now safe from new road building**

Through the past year, in public question periods, in meetings with City officials, Green Coalition representatives have been reassured that natural spaces come before roads. De Salaberry Boulevard extension through Bois-Franc in Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park would



be excluded from the new Master Plan; plans to construct the 440 Autoroute to Laval through Île Bizard, its Nature-Park and through Point Théorêt (part of Cap Saint-Jacques located on Île Bizard) were not favoured at all. Plans for road building through Angell Woods were to be cancelled. Most particularly, assurances were repeated and definitive that there would be no new roads constructed through the Anse-à-l'Orme Nature-Park or any part of its Forest (Woods #3). That is, specifically, plans to extend Pierrefonds Boulevard to Morgan Boulevard through the newly-named Corridor écoforestier de la Rivière-à-l'Orme would be abandoned. Bravo!

In addition, assurances were made that, as public transportation planning evolves, serious attention will be given to the **Green Coalition's Doney Spur Proposal** for a light rail system, a Surface Metro for Central West Island.

Laudably, the City is resolved that Notre-Dame Street East be an urban boulevard not an Expressway. It is encouraging also that the City is leaning towards favouring an urban boulevard for the Louis-H.-La Fontaine Boulevard corridor and a modest bridge to Laval, instead of the more invasive version - Autoroute 25 to Laval. The latter would potentially compromise the sensitive Islands Rochon, Boutin, Lapierre and Gagné and the Ruisseau de Montigny Basin. Autoroute 25, like its mirror image in West Island, the 440 Autoroute to Laval, would serve to exacerbate on-Island traffic congestion and promote off-Island urban sprawl. Neither Autoroute is a true beltway. The Green Coalition urges the City to hold to its rejection of the 440: its construction would be an ecological disaster in idyllic Île-Bizard.

## **Glitches in the Virage Vert! New plans shock Green Coalition**

### **Officials are contradicted:**

The repeated and definitive assurances made to Green Coalition reps by City officials that no new road would go through the Anse-à-l'Orme Écoterritoire were contradicted by Mr. Sainte-Marie on May 25. Mr. Sainte-Marie affirmed that Pierrefonds Boulevard will be extended west through the écoterritoire, then south to join Morgan Boulevard; and that the only question remaining is to determine the exact trajectory of the road. Sadly, the Draft Master Plan appears to support Mr. Sainte-Marie's statements in Chapter 2, action 3.3.

### **Boroughs' planning schemes show new road through écoterritoire:**

The planning maps for the boroughs of both Pierrefonds/Senneville and Beaconsfield/Baie d'Urfé have partial indications on their maps labelled "*Projected extension of Pierrefonds Boulevard to Morgan Boulevard*".

### **Doney Spur confusion:**

During all the discussions about the Doney Spur with City and other officials (and they have been numerous because the Green Coalition first made the Doney Spur Proposal in 1989) **no use other than rail service has ever been mentioned for the Doney Spur!** At

the hearings May 25, Green Coalition members were astounded to hear Mr. Sainte-Marie's remarks describing plans to roll buses on the old Doney Spur! In section 2.2 on transport in the Draft Master Plan, a short reference is made of proposed initiatives including reserved lanes for buses and taxis on the Doney Spur.

The Green Coalition has serious concerns about these new developments as described below.

## **GREEN COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Extension of Pierrefonds Boulevard through L'Anse-à-l'Orme Écoterritoire to join Morgan Boulevard in Baie d'Urfé is unacceptable**

#### **Ecological Impact of Road**

- Extending this artery while preserving the ecological integrity of L'Anse-à-l'Orme Écoterritoire is wishful thinking: it is an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. And once the sensitive zone is breached, more development alongside the road will surely follow.
- The hydrology of sensitive forested areas adjacent to the floodplain will be disrupted, in particular the Anse-à-l'Orme Forest (also known as the MUC's Woods #3), east of Chemin L'Anse à l'Orme. This forest is ranked as among the most ecologically valuable on the Island. Its relatively small size is a constraint as far as its long-term viability is concerned and it can little afford further insult if adjoining areas are fragmented. Biodiversity stands to be lost - and visitors impoverished.
- The viability of a beaver marsh that provides habitat for migratory water fowl will be rendered impossible. The marsh lies to the west of the point where Chemin L'Anse-à-l'Orme crosses the Rivière-à-l'Orme and in the path of the only possible route for the road extension. Strains on the water quality of the Rivière-à-l'Orme itself would increase; sufficient water supplies to the river could decrease.
- Traffic will disrupt the tranquil conditions for wildlife in the corridor as well as for people looking for a rare and peaceful retreat from the noise, smell and bustle of urban life. One road, Chemin L'Anse-à-l'Orme, is enough of an intrusion - it destroys the serenity of this prize locale and causes enormous stress to both wildlife and people.
- This écoterritoire is a unique zone that needs all the help it can get in the planning process. Community participation must focus on achieving the protection of this rich ecosystem; energies must not be siphoned off to fighting the new road building plan.

#### **Futility of Extension**

The road is to extend west then south from western Pierrefonds where new housing development is planned to provide enhanced access to a station on the Rigaud commuter rail line in Baie d'Urfe. During morning rush hour, most of these commuters want to go

east towards the city centre. This extension will move commuters westwards in their cars to access the rail service that will then take them eastward; the entire wasteful process being reversed in the evening rush hour. Note that the Rigaud rail service is efficient only during the rush hours during the week. Off-hours and weekends are ill-served. Ecologically valuable lands and their public use and enjoyment could be sacrificed to a less than optimal public transit service. Priority is given to getting people to work, inefficiently, through a disrupted natural space rather than enhancing opportunities for their leisure in the same space. What a cheerless vision we have here!

### **Alternatives to destructive extension of Pierrefonds Boulevard**

- The same commuter traffic that would use the Pierrefonds Boulevard extension could, as easily, be channeled towards the Trans Canada Highway (A40) along the planned boulevard in the servitude reserved for the A 440. The future residents of western Pierrefonds would then be able to reach the train station in Baie D'Urfé by travelling west on the Trans Canada (or Chemin Ste Marie) and accessing the interchange constructed to provide a link between Rte 20 and Trans Canada Highway (A40). Residents of any new development in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue would have easy access to the new Morgan Boulevard/Trans Canada interchange without the Pierrefonds Boulevard extension.
- The boulevard in the A440 servitude would also provide a direct route east by car or by bus on the Trans Canada Highway proper or by way of Chemin Ste Marie. At present, Chemin Ste Marie crosses the Trans Canada Highway at the approximate point where the interchange for the boulevard in the 440 servitude would be placed (near the Coliseum Theatre Complex). Shuttle buses could deliver riders from the new development in western Pierrefonds along Chemin Ste Marie to the south side of Trans Canada Highway to the terminal end of the Doney Spur at Stillview Avenue.

### **GREEN COALITION'S DONEY SPUR PROPOSAL (since 1989)**

**Doney Spur Light Rail Line should be developed as the backbone of public transit in the West Island: Schedules and fares should be integrated with the Metro.**

- Doney Spur Light Rail Line (first proposed by the Coalition in 1989) is the keystone piece of the Green Coalition's integrated mass transit strategies. The old Spur has the potential to be the new Surface Metro for central West Island, operating with schedules and fares comparable to existing Metro lines, conveying passengers to and from Montreal's downtown core.

- Doney Spur runs west to east through the heart of the West Island. The Spur is a virtually disused freight rail line that starts at Stillview Avenue\* in Pointe-Claire and goes eastward along the south side of one of Montreal's most congested and problematic arteries, the Trans Canada Highway. Then the Spur curves north past Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park to join the Two Mountains line near Highway 13. Doney Spur service can be linked at Bois-Franc Station to the entire Metro system, once the planned extension of the Orange Line from Côte Vertu to Bois-Franc is complete.  
\*The Doney Spur right-of-way can possibly be reclaimed as far west as St. Charles Boulevard.
- Doney Spur Light Rail Line can be an important axis for public transit, offering an attractive alternative to daily commuters, alleviating traffic on the Trans Canada Highway and precluding road network building in the same region. The Doney Spur service can have a dramatic effect on the future development of a West Island "downtown", its commercial core, centred on St Jean Blvd and the Trans Canada Highway. Serving the growing West Island suburbs, stations along the Spur can provide access to Lakeshore General Hospital, the Fairview Hub, Saint-Laurent's Techno and Industrial Parks, Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park, etc.

**Surprise Proposal to roll buses on Doney Spur! No cost/benefit studies, no environmental impact studies are quoted in the Draft Master Plan to warrant this sudden change in vocation for Doney Spur.**

**The proposal in the Master Plan for bus service on the Doney Spur Line, with a possible upgrade to rail service in the indefinite future, is a recipe for failure. For the reasons stated below, buses will not draw the sort of passenger volume that will justify an upgrade.**

- Bus service will not capture the commuting public's imagination; buses will not attract riders in significant volume; a train service will. The full trains on the Rigaud and Two Mountains demonstrate this. The riders that could equivalently fill the Doney Spur Light Rail Service now wait in the Trans Canada Highway congestion in their cars. Also, for the most part, buses only appeal to students, the elderly and those who don't own cars.
- Commuters are far more likely to gravitate to a high capacity light rail train than to a bus because: 1. they are more likely to find a place in the train than on a bus 2. they are far less likely to have to wait for the next train than for the next bus. This reliability factor is an important draw for ridership.
- As a light rail line, Doney Spur could deliver large volumes of people on a tight schedule into the downtown public transit system in less time and with less stress and pollution than the present private vehicle alternative.

- Doney Spur is the only transit solution in the West Island that can satisfy Montreal's declared sustainable development objectives.
- **Two new overpasses** on the Trans Canada Highway, one at Delmar/Tecumseh between Sources and St Jean Boulevards, the other at Stillview between St Jean and St Charles Boulevards, could relieve bottlenecking on the three existing overpasses while providing ready access to the Doney Spur line from north of the Trans Canada Highway. The two new overpasses could favor bus shuttles during rush hour. The shuttle buses could bring passengers to the Doney Spur line from park and ride facilities in peripheral localities.
- **The Doney Spur right-of-way must be preserved intact for light rail public transit use – if not in the short term, then certainly for such use in the future. In the interim, the Spur can serve as a linear/nature corridor, for walking/cycling.**

## **MORE TRANSPORT-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Railbanking:**

The City of Montreal, in conjunction with the AMT (Agence métropolitaine de transport), should be acquiring or otherwise securing the abandoned, or underused railway lines on its territory for light rail transit (or even modern trolleys where appropriate) in the longer term and for linear/nature corridors, for walking/cycling in the shorter term. Examples of such rights-of-way are: the Montreal/Lachine Subdivision (Victoria/Bouchard), the Lasalle Loop, the North/South Lachine Canal Bank Branches, the Park Avenue Subdivision and of course the Doney Spur. Serious attention must be given to enacting a moratorium to prevent any building in such rail transit corridors.

### **TOD – Transit Oriented Development and ‘Intensification’**

The Green Coalition is completely in accord with TOD or Transit Oriented Development - the principle of intensifying residential and commercial development, as well as community services, close to metro and rail public transit nodes. This can promote sustainable development practice, reducing the eating up of natural and other land in uncontrolled urban sprawl. Creating new, denser communities close to transit hubs can reduce the dependency on the automobile

**TODs inappropriate in écoterritoires:** Creating intensification poles within the last rare, remaining natural ecosystems in the City – within the écoterritoires is inappropriate. Two areas deemed for Intensification, shown on map 2.2.2 of the Master Plan are located in particularly sensitive natural environments within the Écoforestier corridor of Rivière-à-l'Orme near Beaurepaire Station and within the Rapides du Cheval-Blanc Écoterritoire near the proposed new train station at Cheval Blanc. These areas must be spared the impacts of high density development.

Particularly distressing is the immense development with its Miami Beach profile slated for Cheval-Blanc West. Five 10-storey towers and fifteen other substantial structures are to loom over the shoreline green space. The mega-project appears to compromise guidelines in the Master Plan for boosting Montréal Bleu! Chapter 2, objective 11—enhance the island character of the City’s identity; action 11.2 – Control the site coverage and height of buildings along the waterside....Maintaining visual access to the water ....

**Rethink new train station at Cheval Blanc: Divert investment to Doney Spur Line**

Planners and decision-makers should rethink plans for a new station at Cheval-Blanc on the Two Mountains Line - its capacity is already exhausted – and the line goes off-Island just past Cheval Blanc, providing little service to most of West Island – even if the line is double-tracked. The new station will pull desperate train-commuters looking for a seat on the train to the environs. With the population explosion of the mega-high-rise project in this zone “enclavé”, major traffic headaches are on the way. Instead, investments should be diverted to the Doney Spur Light Rail Line to serve a broad spectrum of West Islanders, while offering opportunities for “intensification” and for economic exploitation along the Line – a gold mine!

**Vacant land ideal for enhanced transit hub at St Jean Boulevard on Doney Spur**

The large tract of vacant land on the south/east corner of Trans Canada Highway and St Jean Boulevard, diagonally across from Fairview Centre, should be secured now by the City. This site will be invaluable as a major transit hub on the Doney Spur Light Rail Line.

**De Salaberry servitude should be deleted**

When the Montreal Urban Community purchased the southern part of the Bois-Franc Forest for \$14.9 million in April of 1990, it was a magnificent addition to the Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park! But the deed of sale included a servitude, (33.5 meters wide) through the middle of the forest for the construction of six-lane de Salaberry. This legal servitude reinforced the provision for the construction of the road that had been included in the Schéma d'aménagement in 1987. Green Coalition members are celebrating the news that the de Salaberry extension is finally going to be removed from the Master Plan, the new Schéma!

But, there are still serious concerns - if the legal servitude is retained it would be far too easy for any future administration to bring back the plan and build the road. The Green Coalition urges the City to take the necessary legal steps to remove the de Salaberry servitude from the title deeds to the Bois-de-Liesse Nature-Park.

**CONCLUSION**

**The City of Montreal’s Master Plan is the blueprint for the future of our beautiful Island Metropolis. The Green Coalition is proud to make some contribution to**

**shaping the city's sustainable development. We extend our thanks to all who have made our participation possible.**

June 2004

2004-04-30: Honourable John Godfrey April 20 2004 meeting Green Coalition



18 Alliance Avenue Montreal H4K 2C6

**April 30, 2004**

The Honourable John Godfrey, P.C., M.P.  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with special emphasis on Cities  
Ottawa

**RE : A Canadian city in need - Montreal's last Natural Spaces - situation critical**

Dear Minister

Kindly accept our thanks for meeting with us in your office "on the Hill", April 20, 2004. We were grateful that Mr. Clifford Lincoln was on hand to pre-brief you as your duties in the House made the meeting very short. We intend to share the outcome with our member-groups and others – many people are keen to know if the Federal Government will help save Montreal's last endangered natural green spaces! Our Ottawa mission was a big discussion point when we presented the Green Coalition's Natural Spaces brief at public hearings on April 27.

Minister, will you please verify that our understanding of the proceedings and of your advice and remarks is correct, as we recount below? We asked you to please consider two (2) requests. We also had a third proposal to make. We simply ran out of time to do so; we therefore include the third request in this letter. First, a brief update.

**Cheers and Fears at Public Hearings on Natural Spaces Policy**

Public hearings on the city's new Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces are underway. Mayor Gérald Tremblay has pledged to boost the amounts of protected green space to 8% of Montreal's territory up from the dismal 3.3% currently protected. The grass-roots are applauding this courageous step being taken by the city when fiscal constraints are so severe. Citizens are cheering the broad vision, ambitious scope and sustainable development goals for our city embodied in the plan. But, participants at the hearings are also expressing fears that the limited funds for green space acquisition (\$36 million over 3 years) are inadequate and that encroachment through building will despoil much of the remaining natural sites. (eg: new "Miami Beach" style plans for Cheval Blanc - we showed you the sketch) Indeed, Mayor Tremblay has stated publicly that investments of between \$100 and \$200 million are needed.



### **Our First Request**

**Landbanking** – A landbank of surplus Federal and Provincial properties can be created for exploitation in place of the natural spaces owned by developers, thus conserving the ecologically valuable sites. Many surplus properties are contaminated lands, or **brownfields** that, once rehabilitated, offer exceptional opportunities for redevelopment. Montreal has no lack of such land - 4,800 hectares, threefold the amount of green space that's protected.

Minister, you were enthusiastic about this “creative” application of “**The National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy**” that was initiated by Prime Minister Paul Martin. Details that you requested about our proposal and a similar land exchange that saved some of the Cheval Blanc shoreline are in Annex A. You noted that the Strategy applies only to federally-owned land. Mr. Lincoln continues to be concerned that Canada Lands insists on a profit when such properties are turned over. You indicated that transactions like these are being re-grouped under the Environment Ministry thereby solving potential problems. Such endeavours can be national in scope, applicable to cities across Canada.

### **Our Second Request**

**The Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund** provides for investments in projects of large importance, the minimum threshold for a project being \$75 million, with investments generally shared by the 3 levels of government. Eligible categories include “Sustainable Urban Development.” We asked, then, that within that category, the Federal Government contribute \$36 million in dedicated funds, matching those of the City of Montreal, with a further matching sum to be sought from the Quebec Government, for a total of \$108 million, towards the project for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces. “**Développement durable, le choix de Montréal**” is the city's new slogan. To attain its goals and international endorsement, the city must first conserve its natural spaces and ensure the indigenous biodiversity of its territory.

Your reply was that, although you were “on the same page” as us – that in this era of Kyoto and sustainable development, natural green spaces must be considered integral to the fabric of urban infrastructure – the Strategic Infrastructure Program was not “flexible” enough to include our request.

### **Our Third Request – a cash injection for eleventh-hour Natural Spaces Plan, please!**

We are asking for a **one-time contribution of dedicated funds of at least \$36 million from the Federal Government under any program** to be used for green space acquisition in Montreal according to the city's new Natural Spaces Policy. Please search diligently for funds to top up our city's contribution. We will seek matching funds from Quebec. As we described, such funds are urgently needed in the very short term because - *Development pressures are so severe that these unprotected green spaces are at risk of disappearing completely in the near future.* (paraphrased from the City Contract, January 28, 2003)

You described urban infrastructure needs like Water and Transport as ongoing and inexorable, a constant demand on the public purse. Agreed! By contrast, we repeat, a **single investment by your government** can help a Canadian city - Montreal - to prevent

the terminal loss of its natural ecosystems. Our city's laudable efforts to become a bona fide "Sustainable Development City" serve as a model for cities across the country and are worthy of financial support from the government! Benefits that accrue from one-time investment in the purchase of urban green space are permanent and perennial. Vital green space biomass mitigates the effects of urban pollution on air, soil and water - moderates ambient temperatures and global warming; sweeps particulate matter and GHG emissions; and sequesters carbon, etc. Green spaces provide recreational potential for the physical and mental well-being of urban dwellers, diminishing health care costs. And other economic spin-offs are compelling – the natural attributes of our Island Metropolis are not only "Recreo-Touristique" attractions, but green landscapes also enhance the city's quality of life that attracts people, economic investment and enterprise.

As we mentioned to you, it is twelve long years since the Montreal Urban Community's \$200 million Green Space Program collapsed – scuppered by the lack of financial support from superior governments – at the same time that downloading was draining city coffers! One-half the budget, \$100 million, was left unspent. Exceptional grass-roots efforts have been pivotal in putting in place both the MUC program and the new Natural Spaces Policy. We trust, Minister, that you will help this green space plan succeed; that the incessant appeals from a growing constituency of green space defenders will be rewarded; and that the natural heritage of all Montrealers will be protected.

Will you kindly keep us apprised of the progress of this dossier, of further steps we can take in our quest, and if you can shake loose federal funds? For our part, we will meet with our Mayor (you advised us to "Go back to your city.") and Quebec Environment Minister Thomas Mulcair and others to ensure that financial provisions for saving Montreal's last green spaces are firmly placed high on the priority list as the "**New Deal**" between Ottawa, Quebec and our city, Montreal, evolves. Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

David Fletcher

Sylvia Oljemark

Porte-parole, Green Coalition Inc. (514) 332 – 9146

c.c. Clifford Lincoln, M.P.

Lac-Saint-Louis

Right Hon. Paul Martin

Thomas J. Mulcair

Ministre de l'Environnement

Jean-Marc Fournier

Prime Minister	Ministre des Affaires municipales, du Sport et du Loisir
Hon. David Anderson	
Minister of the Environment	Jacques P. Dupuis Leader du Gouvernement
Hon. Andy Scott	Ministre délégué à la Réforme des institutions démocratiques
Minister of State (Infrastructure)	Ministre de la Justice et Procureur général
Hon. Mike Harcourt, Chairman External Advisory Committee on Cities/ Communities	Geoffrey Kelley Député de Jacques-Cartier
Gérald Tremblay	
Maire de Montréal	Pierre Marsan
Membres du Comité exécutif	Député de Robert-Baldwin
Harvey L. Mead	
Chairman N.R.T.E.E.	

## **Annex A**

### **The Green Coalition Proposal: Greenfields for Brownfields: Swapping to save Montreal's last Natural Spaces**

A landbank of surplus Federal and Provincial properties can be created for exploitation in place of the natural spaces owned by developers, thus conserving the ecologically valuable sites. Many surplus properties are contaminated lands, or **brownfields** that, once rehabilitated, offer exceptional opportunities for redevelopment. The thrust of this proposal is trading revitalized brownfields for greenfields. Note however, that the scheme is equally applicable to surplus Federal and Provincial properties that are not contaminated!

### **Canada's sustainable development agenda resonates with Green Coalition goals**

“The National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy,” initiated by Prime Minister Paul Martin with the 2001 Budget, and elaborated by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, has squarely placed rehabilitation of contaminated lands on Canada's sustainable development agenda. The “Executive Summary” from the NRTEE task force report entitled “Cleaning up the Past, Building the Future,” (August 2003) points to the significant economic, social and environmental benefits derived from implementation of the strategy. The environmental benefits are “reduced urban sprawl pressures on greenfield sites around a community, restoration of environmental quality in the community, and improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas.” **IN ALL RESPECTS, THIS IS A WIN, WIN, WIN STRATEGY.**

The Budget Speech of March this year states “. . . few things have a greater impact on the quality of life in our communities than the quality of our environment. This generation has both the responsibility and the opportunity to leave this land better than we found it, and that means cleaning up polluted sites. This cleanup will have long-term benefits, leaving a healthier environment for our children and our children's children.” The Green Coalition is excited that “This budget commits \$3.5 billion over 10 years to accelerate the cleanup of sites for which the Government of Canada is responsible . . .”

Green Coalition members also insist that our generation must assume its responsibility and must take the opportunity to leave an improved environmental legacy for those who follow. In the context of our proposal, “that means cleaning up polluted sites” and exchanging them to protect endangered natural sites. We have observed that land owners welcome land swaps if, in return, they receive land of equal value. But it cannot be assumed that redevelopment of contaminated sites will preclude development of natural spaces unless municipalities intervene proactively to bring them into the public domain. Undeterred, a developer will build on his site however green it may be: it is his right and it is his mandate. Cities must have the bargaining chips with which to strike deals.

### **Cross fertilization of two National initiatives**

Considerable potential exists for cross fertilization of brownfield rehabilitation with the budgetary commitment to bring a “New Deal” to Canada's municipalities — in a manner not envisaged in the budget but in an innovative manner compatible with its goals. The

budget states “. . . a New Deal is not just about federal transfers of fiscal resources. It’s about a transformative new partnership, involving all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal. It’s about doing things differently and doing things better.” We believe there is a synergy to be derived by linking these two National initiatives to provide a benefit that will be more than summative!

### **An EXTRA WIN is possible – leveraging the green spaces**

Since the Federal Government has already dedicated moneys for The National Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and recognizes the need to bring new approaches to meeting the needs of its communities in a New Deal, the turning over of developable, decontaminated federal lands to the municipalities is a way to maximize the benefits of both programs. Here is one more way to bring cities the bargaining resources they need. It must be kept in mind that these polluted lands are a liability, draining the community and the environment of its health and vitality. **An extra win in Montreal** - landbanking these federal turnovers and trading them for ecologically valuable lands owned by developers allows the city to realize its Natural Spaces Policy ambitions. This policy helps conserve diverse ecosystems in a unique region of the Province of Quebec at the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers. Protecting this vanishing natural legacy is a priority.

### **Attaining the Natural Spaces Policy Objectives and Restraining Urban Sprawl**

Montreal’s new Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces seeks to sustain viable ecosystems or “écoterritoires” across the city - to protect eco-sensitive core zones, provide adequate buffer zones for them, and create linear links from one core zone to another. In many cases, green-belts or corridors can be created by the strategic acquisition of keystone properties between large green spaces that are already protected. And, corridorizing to shorelines, wherever possible, benefits flora, fauna and people. Targeting these keystone properties for brownfield swapping can promote green-belt creation. Many of the threatened natural spaces are in outlying suburbs. To build on these lands would contribute to the expanding donut effect. In this land swapping example, protecting the keystone pieces can maximize green space biomass and curb urban sprawl.

### **Revitalizing the city core**

By contrast, many of Montreal’s brownfields, 4800 hectares in total, lie in previously developed areas in or near the city core. Some of these are federally owned and qualify for cleaning up under the Redevelopment Strategy. As things now stand urban natural space will be lost if not purchased or if trades for brownfields are not effected. Linking these polar opposites in trade is very attractive way to bring sustainable development goals to fruition. The turning over of federal assets to a landbank for greenfield/brownfield trading will allow Montreal to achieve a long-frustrated goal: protecting its last cherished natural spaces. And redevelopment of the brownfields will stimulate the economic vitality of the city centre.

## **Matching up greenfields for brownfields**

Thanks to Ms. Jennifer Adams, Special Assistant to Mr. Lincoln, we have in hand a list of contaminated sites or brownfields that are federally-owned in Montreal. We will provide the list to the city administration for matching up the brownfields for exchange with ecologically valuable properties identified in its natural spaces program.

## **Cheval Blanc Land Swap in 2003 – A Model - Swapping for Green Space Public outcry fuels land swap – Four News Releases**

A precedent-setting land exchange provides a model for the Green Coalition's proposal. In April, 2003, the City of Montreal swapped a parking lot in Old Montreal for a rare shoreline property along the Cheval Blanc Rapids. Instead of constructing two (2) ten-storey towers on the sensitive riverside environment, the developer is building in the city core. Public outcry against the towers fueled this arrangement. Sadly, plans for building towers on the Cheval Blanc shoreline are back. This time, five (5) ten-storey towers are proposed for waterfront land farther west, as well as fifteen (15) other substantial structures. Please find attached four news releases that chronicle and document the land exchange. Included for Annex A are the City of Montreal Communiqués of September 2002 and April 2003, and Green Coalition News Releases of September 2002 and May 2003.

## **Green Coalition Proposal - Swapping to save Montreal's last Natural Spaces An urgent appeal to political leaders for action**

This Green Coalition Proposal is an appeal to you, our decision-makers – Federal, Provincial and Municipal. It is urgent! Your invaluable participation and action is needed to save Montreal's green spaces – the city's irreplaceable natural heritage is teetering on the brink of extinction. The Green Coalition will continue in its mission, pressing for immediate action – Montreal's green spaces can't wait.

April 30, 2004

**2004-04-27: A Draft Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces, presented to the Office de Consultation publique de Montréal, in April 2004**



## **Green Coalition Brief**

**Re: A Draft Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces, presented to the Office de Consultation publique de Montréal, in April 2004**

**This brief is to be considered as**

### **Addendum 1.**

**to the brief presented in June 2003 entitled:**

**CITY OF MONTREAL - URBAN PLANNING – JUNE 2003  
GREEN COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**The Green Space crisis**

**Citizens act**

**The City of Montreal responds**

#### **COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, QUESTIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Policy objectives: excellent**

**Timetable, Progress Report, Priority List, Guarantees and Guarantors needed**

**Ways and Means to achieve objectives: not so simple**

**Securing the land: securing public access: citizens expectations**

**Écoterritoire #11: Meadowbrook, please**

**Miami Beach style project at Cheval Blanc – poor blueprint for other écoterritoires**

## **CONCLUSION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**The Green Space crisis**  
(24, 2003)

*(Exerpt: Green Coalition News Release November*

ONE-HALF OF MONTREAL'S NATURAL SPACES IS IN DANGER OF BEING LOST IN THE NEAR FUTURE

*The scope of Montreal's green space crisis cannot be overstated. More than 85% of Montreal has been developed. Just 3.3% of the city's territory is protected natural green space compared to the International and Quebec norm of 8%. Recent Quebec government studies show that approximately one-half of Montreal's remaining natural green spaces (1600 hectares) is in peril - forests, old farmlands 'en friche', marshlands, creeks and shorelines. These natural sites are owned by developers and are zoned for development. Development pressures are so severe that these unprotected green spaces are at risk of disappearing completely in the near future.*

### ***EVEN THE NATURE-PARKS ARE ENDANGERED - THE OTHER HALF!***

*The other half of the city's natural spaces (1614 hectares) is "protected" within the limits of the Nature-Parks. Unbelievably, current Nature-Park statutes are so weak that portions of nature-parks (if not whole parks) can be leased, sold or rezoned! Such amputations of the parks have already happened or have been fought off by citizen action. And now a 'spaghetti network' of new roads threatens established Nature-Parks and other green spaces in the West Island.*

## **Citizens act**

*The Green Coalition traces its roots back to early conservation efforts in the 1970s. The green space issue, like no other issue, has stirred the passions of Montrealers and*



*spurred the greatest long-term community participation in the city's history. November 24, 2003 was a highpoint in these extraordinary grass-roots efforts. On that date, the Green Coalition mobilized ordinary citizens, men and women and children too, to the Montreal City Council meeting. They called for dedicated funds for the protection of our natural spaces to be included in the new budget. Above all, they demanded action now to save Montreal's last natural green spaces.*

### **The City of Montreal responds:**

On November 27, 2003, when the City of Montreal tabled its budget, \$36 million was set aside over the next 3 years for green space acquisition. Almost two years ago, on May 27, 2002, facing similar appeals from the public at city council, Mayor Gérald Tremblay announced that he was lifting the Moratorium that had halted all green space purchases in 1992. He also promised to create a new framework for the protection of Montreal's natural spaces and shorelines. The launch of the new "Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces", signals that City Hall has heard the citizens and is ready now with its action plan to protect the natural heritage of all Montrealers.

Grass-roots activists are adamant that Montreal's last remaining green spaces must be saved; nature-parks must be protected with stronger statutes; and new road development cannot be allowed to destroy established nature-parks. The new policy is our city's last opportunity to achieve these objectives. The Green Coalition volunteers, groups and individuals, look forward in great anticipation to its full implementation.

### **COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, QUESTIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Policy objectives: excellent**

The new policy embodies the long-standing promise of the city administration to boost protected natural areas from 3.3% to 8% of Montreal's territory. Achieving the 8% target would satisfy both Quebec and International norms and also serve to validate the City of Montreal's sustainable development aspirations. To attain international recognition as a bone fide "Sustainable Development City", Montreal must first conserve its natural spaces and ensure the indigenous biodiversity of its territory.

To sustain viable ecosystems or "écoterritoires", the policy will protect sensitive core zones; provide adequate buffer zones for them; and create linear links from one core zone to another, while designing compatible and sensitive peripheral urban development to preserve the integrity of the natural environment. In many cases, green-belts can be created or augmented by the strategic protection of linking lands between large green spaces that are already protected. These admirable objectives have long been promoted by the Green Coalition.

## **Timetable, Progress Report, Priority List, Guarantees and Guarantors needed**

It is twelve long years since Montreal has had a functioning green space program; many natural sites have been lost to urban development; time is running out for the last green spaces. Time must not be wasted in implementing this new Policy.

To provide coherence, to focus energies and stimulate participation in the process, this policy must have a Timetable, a schedule designed to achieve specific goals by specific dates. For the same reasons, a Progress Report is needed to publicly monitor specific gains in hectareage of natural lands protected. And, a Progress Report can measure Montreal's progress towards achieving the international green space quotas needed to achieve sustainable development status.

Many citizens, keenly interested in the fate of their cherished green spaces, are asking which sites will be conserved first. Will scientific attributes of sites determine priority action? Will proximity of a natural area and the size of population it serves for recreational, social and educational needs be factored in? Will sites serving the most people win out? Or, will choices be simply market-driven, with priorities determined in reaction to pressures being exerted by urban developers?

Are there any guarantees that the Natural Spaces Policy would survive a municipal administration change? Could superior levels of government stand as guarantors so that the program would continue? The Green Coalition recommends that such measures be sought and secured for the policy.

## **Ways and Means to achieve objectives: not so simple**

Mayor Gérald Tremblay has publicly stated on many occasions that to achieve his administration's objective – to boost the protected natural areas in Montreal to the 8% benchmark – will require investments of between \$100 and \$200 million. Funds now promised are \$36 million – a beginning....

It is imperative that the \$12 million, identified in the 2004 Budget for green space acquisition, be invested during the current fiscal year, 2004. Otherwise the \$12 million could be lost.

It must be noted that the \$12 million for 2005 and the \$12 million for 2006, promised so many times for green space acquisition, are not **earmarked in the Budget. This omission must be rectified.**

There are also concerns about the \$12 million promised for 2006. That year is beyond the end of the current mandate. Are there guarantees, in the event a different city administration is elected, that these funds would be secure?

The Green Coalition is lobbying the superior levels of government for funds to augment the city's contribution; municipal politicians are invited and encouraged to redouble their efforts to do likewise and also to bolster the other initiatives mentioned below.

The Coalition is also actively promoting the creation of a land-bank of surplus Federal and Provincial properties to be exchanged for the irreplaceable natural spaces owned by developers. Some of the surplus properties are contaminated lands, or brownfields that, once rehabilitated, offer exceptional opportunities for redevelopment or re-greening to boost the city's depleted biomass. Montreal has no lack of such land – namely 4,800 hectares, threefold the amount of land currently protected.

Further, the Green Coalition is seeking that provision be made for servitudes, once set aside for road building and no longer needed, to be turned into green servitudes in perpetuity as natural corridors for flora and fauna and to augment Nature-Parks.

Citizens are participating. APAW, the Association for the Protection of Angell Woods, a Green Coalition member-group and the Nature Conservancy of Canada have teamed up to create a fund to purchase Angell Woods. Matching funds will come from the city. This is an excellent initiative, but it is a model that may be difficult to replicate on a broad scale across Montreal with little time left before the natural sites are lost to development.

The draft policy states that “the city foresees the creation of a Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement Fund” and that existing leverage mechanisms should be exploited to the maximum. Excellent! Provision is to be made for programs for support, cooperation, and promoting public awareness, as well as the involvement of private and public sectors. Where does the onus lie to provide leadership, recruit participants, animate and manage this substantial body of work? With the city? With the private sector? The time left to achieve these noble goals is extremely short!

### **Securing the land: securing public access: citizens expectations**

If all 1600 of Montreal's last undeveloped green space hectares are protected, 6% of the territory can be conserved. Adding in and protecting strips of shorelines and borders of inland watercourses can boost Montreal to the 8% target. Note, however, that the quoted base figure of 3.3% for protected lands is misleading because it includes, for example, the privately owned Morgan Arboretum. The Arboretum is not in the public domain – nor is it freely accessible to the public.

Laudably, the policy delineates “Ten Écoterritoires” across the city for protection. Ecological profiles describe the rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, and the varied attributes distinct to each écoterritoire. These zones, shown on planning maps by dotted lines, encompass lands that the Green Coalition has long sought to protect.

However, no specific sites are identified for conservation within the écoterritoires, in these general target zones. Urban development projects will be permitted within these eco-zones. The policy fails to state how much or how little of the natural spaces in each écoterritoire will be saved.

Ordinary citizens expect that their natural green spaces will be protected and secure in perpetuity. Average citizens are shocked to learn that only one of the nine large Nature-Parks is protected as an “arrondissement naturel” where no trees may be cut – and that all the rest are at risk of encroachment by development or road building. It is unclear if the policy will bolster the statutes of established Nature-Parks that are in the public domain to grant them protection in perpetuity. Nor is it clear just which legal and binding mechanisms will protect the lands within the new écoterritoire limits and for how long.

Will easements, servitudes, bylaws and zoning to protect the eco-territoires be entrenched in the new Urban Development Plan? Will Quebec and Federal Environmental policies for the protection of shorelines and wetlands be enforced? Will land owners not regard any legal conservation mechanisms as liens on their lands or disguised expropriations?

Acquisition through outright purchase is to be used to secure desirable parklands only as a last resort, according to the policy. Rather, negotiation and dialogue with land owners - in most cases real estate developers - is to determine which lands will be saved and which will not. Let's note that developers are in business, are profit-oriented, answering to shareholders: they are not philanthropists. What manner of fair compensation is to be offered to owners of properties in which they have invested and paid taxes in reasonable expectation of profit?

Officials have cited delicacy in such negotiations as reason not to include citizens at the table as plans evolve. “Why not?” “It's our money!” called out participants at the public consultation. Many citizens have excellent negotiating skills!

In addition to their expectations that green spaces will be protected in perpetuity, citizens also expect to enjoy free public access to the natural spaces. Lands earmarked for protection in this policy will not necessarily become part of the public domain. With lands in the écoterritoires (just how much is unknown) retained in private hands, will the public enjoy access to the green spaces or be guilty of trespass if they set foot on these properties?

Private ownership implies that owners have certain rights to alter the landscape as they see fit - perhaps destroying the intrinsic ecological value of the land. Measures should be included in this program to ensure this does not happen.

Acquisition before “aménagement” is a general principle that the Green Coalition advocates. With such limited financial resources, park amenities for park visitors must wait until parklands are first secured. Sadly, expenditures for re-greening (badly needed to replenish the city's biomass) must also wait.

## **Écoterritoire #11: Meadowbrook, please**

With barely enough undeveloped green space left on Montreal's territory to reach the 8% target of this program, and with such spaces being finite in number and disappearing fast, the Green Coalition urges that Meadowbrook be included as the eleventh écoterritoire. While not a natural green space in the purist definition, Meadowbrook is an invaluable urban green space in its own right, offering great potential in the context of this policy. Being the only sizable green space biomass between Mount Royal and the West Island, serving a large, diverse population, Meadowbrook must be included.

Note that the Green Coalition called for Meadowbrook to be included in the Montreal Urban Community's Green Space Acquisition Program in 1989. Its omission then must now be rectified.

### **Miami Beach style project to mar Cheval Blanc – a poor blueprint for other écoterritoires**

On the Cheval Blanc riverside - citizens have called for its conservation for 35 years and more – a massive high-rise, high-density development is planned that runs counter to objectives set out in this policy. There's no buffer zone and the abrupt transition to the high-impact construction project with its Miami Beach profile would fail spectacularly to “ensure the enhanced integration of the natural and living environments” and “to preserve the integrity of the natural environment”. (quotes from the Draft Policy) (A road is proposed as a buffer zone. Roads are not buffers; they are invasive in natural areas.)

The project hinges on a complex land swap deal. The city owns a large part of the proposed construction site; this land would be exchanged for property the developer owns in the flood plain where he cannot build. A Nature-Park is proposed for the flood plain lands. The scheme should be abandoned in favour of the status quo – the flood plains are already protected. This rare shoreline ecosystem, currently subject to ongoing urban development, should be spared the impacts of the colossal new mega-project.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Green Coalition applauds this courageous step being taken by the City of Montreal towards protecting the natural heritage of all Montrealers, especially when fiscal constraints are severe. The broad vision, ambitious scope and sustainable development goals for our city embodied in the **Draft Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces** merit hearty congratulations. These goals dovetail with principles long espoused by the Green Coalition. Laudably, our political leaders recognize not only the intrinsic value of the natural spaces, and their mitigating effects on the urban pollution of air, soil and water, but also that such spaces provide recreational potential for the physical and social well-being of citizens. And, for decision-makers, economic considerations are compelling – the natural attributes of our Island Metropolis enhance the city's quality of life that attracts people, economic investment and enterprise.

This brief is offered in a spirit of constructive collaboration. Any criticism, harsh in some cases as to how goals are to be attained, stems from the tight money situation. The limited funds for the purchase of Montreal's last green spaces has fueled fears that this new policy will be weighted in favour of the interests of real estate development and real estate developers – fears that encroachment through building will despoil much of the remaining natural sites. Commonly, municipal administrations regard “vacant” land as a resource to be exploited for urban development, for increased tax revenues. Expanded populations then require more services, more infrastructure, in turn engendering more development for revenue. If no action is taken, this inexorable development spiral will finally be halted at the “bande riveraine” of our Island with all the land built over. Before then, the Green Coalition urges that, for truly sustainable practice, this building spiral be stopped outside the last natural ecosystems and that these lands of rich irreplaceable biodiversity be spared any more incursions.

To that end, the Green Coalition appeals to the city to put its considerable machinery to work to nail down more funds from private, corporate and public sources - funds for green space acquisition. Further, every mechanism to leverage and double up funds must be exploited to the maximum.

The Green Coalition also urges that all possible manner of easements, servitudes, bylaws, etc. be rapidly set in place to hold in abeyance the development of Montreal's last green spaces until such time that funds are available for their outright purchase. Such investments in our City's future can ensure in perpetuity the protection of these lands of great ecological value and provide public access for the enjoyment of all Montrealers.

Green Coalition members are eagerly waiting for the **Policy for the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Spaces** to roll into action! This is the last call for the survival of Montreal's natural green spaces. Let's get it right!

April 27, 2004

**2004-02-24: Thank you letter to Helen Fotopoulos, Executive Committee Member for Mount Royal, Green and Blue Spaces, Parks:**

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Sylvia Email

**To:** hfotopoulos@ville.montreal.qc.ca

**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2005 4:29 PM

**Subject:** In appreciation-Coalition Verte

To the attention of Helen Fotopoulos, Executive Committee Member for Mount Royal, Green and Blue Spaces, Parks:

Dear Helen,

Thank you for receiving us so graciously last week. We appreciate such opportunities to discuss our common concerns for a Green Montreal! We look forward to more collaboration as your important new mandate for the protection of Montreal's Natural Spaces evolves.

Sincerely,

Dave and Sylvia for the Green Coalition

## **2004-02-15: Letter to Mayor Tremblay**

18 Alliance Ave Montreal H4K 2C6

February 15, 2004  
Mayor Gérald Tremblay  
Montreal City Hall

City ref.: GD040022269

**RE: Second request for a meeting re Cheval Blanc West  
Towers on the waterfront - again!**

Your Honour

We wrote to you on January 26, 2004, to request a meeting with you about Cheval Blanc West. We fear that colossal concrete towers, Miami Beach style, visible from miles around, will soon loom over the rare shoreline green space in Pierrefonds. The building plans have stunned green space activists who have been expecting that the long-awaited Natural Spaces Policy would save such sites from ongoing, rampant development. Mayor Tremblay, so very few natural green spaces still exist in Montreal: Cheval Blanc West is the last undeveloped waterfront – a unique candidate for protection under the new Policy!

**A reply from your office, dated February 2, 2004, ignored our request to meet you, but referred our concerns to the attention of executive committee member responsible for urban planning, Mr. Robert Libman.**

It is entirely appropriate that Mr. Libman scrutinize this project – it's an urban planning disaster of major proportions. Among many disturbing elements surrounding the planning scheme are impacts on the existing built environment and social fabric. Infrastructures in the area, designed decades back to serve long-settled residential communities, are already strained by the rapid growth throughout West Island. Now the population explosion expected at Cheval Blanc West threatens to severely diminish the quality of life of many long-term residents. No amount of potential increased tax revenues can offset the negative impacts.

**Mayor Tremblay, we know full well how supercharged your agenda is! But we are so concerned about the future of Cheval Blanc West that we ask once again – will you please talk over this matter with us?**

Yours sincerely,

David Fletcher (514) 683-7864  
Sylvia Oljemark (514) 332-9146  
Porte-parole, Green Coalition Inc.  
c.c. Executive Committee Members, Montreal City Hall



**2004-01-26: Letter to mayor Tremblay**

18 Alliance Ave Montreal H4K 2C6

January 26, 2004  
Mayor Gérald Tremblay  
Montreal City Hall

**RE: Exceptional request for a meeting re Cheval Blanc West  
Towers on the waterfront - again!**

Your Honour

Will you kindly meet with us to discuss the critical Cheval Blanc situation at your earliest convenience? We believe that the City is making a big mistake.

For more than 35 years, residents in Pierrefonds have called for the conservation of the Rapides du Cheval Blanc waterfront. (Much of Cheval Blanc East has been lost to development.) Now citizens are shocked that plans are well underway for a massive high-rise development in Cheval Blanc West. Citizens vehemently opposed plans for two 10 storey towers on the Cheval Blanc East waterfront in 2002. The plans were halted. Wasn't a precedent established? But the towers are back – 5 of them, plus 15 other substantial structures! Included in the 'package deal' is a train station and Nature-Park.

This development – like a small town in size - will not only impact heavily on the shoreline green space but will add more strain to overburdened infrastructures in neighbouring communities. The effects on a large part of West Island will be negative and permanent, yet this project is to be excluded from the new Urban Plan for Pierrefonds and from Montreal's new Schéma. Where's the legitimacy for this project?

Please note that the developer currently owns just 1/3 of the proposed development site: Pierrefonds (or the megacity) owns 2/3. An entente has been signed to exchange that 2/3 for land the developer owns farther west in the flood plain – land that he cannot build on!

Mayor Tremblay, most of the land proposed for the Nature-Park lies in the flood plain; it cannot be built on. We believe there are alternatives, including the status quo, for this waterfront land that has long been regarded part of Montreal's natural heritage. We know that you are very busy, but will you please talk over this matter with us.

Yours sincerely,

David Fletcher Sylvia Oljemark  
Porte-parole, Green Coalition Inc.  
c.c. Executive Committee Members, Montreal City Hall