

MAILBOX

An open letter to Monique Worth

On the evening of Dec. 12, you presided over the public consultation on the Rapides du Cheval Blanc "Val des Brises" residential project with most of the borough council in attendance. One fundamental issue with the project, which has nothing to do with green space protection, is the inability of the borough council to invoke higher quality standards and impose the construction of sidewalks – 90 per cent of the project will be without them.

This contradicts the proposed Montreal pedestrian charter that was announced in June. In his preamble, the mayor, Gérald Tremblay, states that Montreal's pedestrian charter will "make urban development respond first to the needs of people before vehicles." When asked why so few sidewalks were to be built in the project, I was told by you, Madame Worth, that the streets were "de nature champêtre" – rural and rustic. People can walk in the street and around parked cars. Kids have no choice where to ride their bikes.

Municipalities across North America have adopted quality standards for residential projects so they can be evaluated objectively. By accepting a project that goes against Montreal's pedestrian charter, the Pierrefonds borough council is once again demonstrating that they prefer to protect the economic interests of developers who must pay for the sidewalks and give up the precious land they require, than the safety of the new residents who would use them.

So please answer the following questions, Madame Worth: How many phone calls do you receive each spring and summer from concerned residents regarding speeding on residential streets? Why in 2006, when it comes to new residential projects in Pierrefonds, is a child denied the right to walk safely on the street he or she will live on? Does Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay share your opinion when it comes to our "rural and rustic" streets? Why don't you offer to help subsidize the cost of sidewalks and make Pierrefonds a model to be proud of when it comes to new residential developments?

*Michael Labelle,
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