



News Release

for immediate release

CITIZENS ASK “WILL MONTREAL’S NEW GREEN SPACE PROGRAM SAVE THE RAPIDES DU CHEVAL BLANC WATERFRONT?”

Date: Monday, September 23, 2002 - 7:00 p.m. – Question Period

Place: Montreal City Hall
275 Notre-Dame Street East

Note: Green Coalition spokespersons will meet journalists between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. before Question Period.

Plan to protect green spaces and shorelines to be adopted by year’s end

The Green Coalition is credited with convincing the Montreal Urban Community to put in place its \$200 million Green-Space Acquisition and Aménagement Program in 1989. For many months, the Coalition has been vigourously pressing the New City to adopt a similar program to save Montreal’s last green spaces, lands that are owned by developers and zoned for development – rampant, relentless development. The Green Coalition is encouraged and applauds the news from Councillors, Alan DeSousa, Robert Libman and Cosmo Maciocia that a plan to protect Montreal’s green spaces and shorelines will be adopted by the end of the year.

Council vote may give green light to massive development of Cheval Blanc shoreline

On September 23, a critical City Council vote on a change in the city’s Schéma d’aménagement or Master Plan could permit a massive residential development to proceed on Pierrefonds’ Rapides du Cheval Blanc waterfront. Considerable controversy surrounds the building plan for Montreal’s largest remaining undeveloped shoreline. Close to one hundred citizens with placards, banners and buttons were at City Hall for the council meeting August 19, calling for the site to be saved. Le comité pour la préservation du secteur des Rapides du Cheval Blanc, a member group of the Green Coalition, pleaded their case during question period. To change the Schéma is a step that should not be lightly undertaken. If the Schéma is changed to accommodate the Pierrefonds development, a history of public clamour to have this waterfront land preserved, going back to the 1960’s, will have been denied.

Save Cheval Blanc waterfront as part of new green space plan – Green Coalition

We believe that the entire undeveloped area, east and west of Riviera Street, should be acquired to create a waterfront park within the scope of the City's new protection plan for green spaces and **shorelines**. There exists no better candidate for conservation than the Rapides du Cheval Blanc shoreline, vert et bleu, in Pierrefonds. Its acquisition for public use is imperative. It can be easily reached by public transit and would be accessible to all Montrealers! The Green Coalition insists that the two 12-storey towers on the riverbank would be an unacceptable visual blight on this important and all too rare natural shoreline. Under no circumstances should the towers' large parking lot be built in the flood plain; landfilling would be needed and large stands of mature trees ripped out. The land where the developer's construction hut stands today should not mushroom with condos and townhouses but should be claimed by the city as an ideal location for amenities for park visitors, accueil, centre d'interprétation, etc. Public access to the river must not be squeezed onto a narrow shoreline strip behind the massive development.

Fate of Rapides du Cheval Blanc site

The Green Coalition has appealed to City Council to assume its mantle as regional arbiter, to override Pierrefonds, to leave the Schéma as it is and to acquire the Rapides du Cheval Blanc site in its entirety. This is an opportunity for the Tremblay administration to affirm its expressed political intent – “What is green will stay green” – and to leave a lasting legacy – a major new waterfront park for all Montrealers. **However uncertain the fate of Cheval Blanc, certain it is that the New City must act swiftly to implement its green space plans to avoid such controversies in the future.**

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