



Conseil régional
de l'environnement
de Montréal

News Release

for immediate release

Press conference - Green Coalition and Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal

Date : Monday, May 27, 2002 6 :40 p.m.
Place : Montreal City Hall West-side door, ground floor
275 Notre-Dame Street East
Note : Porte-paroles will also meet journalists after question period.

Two Coalitions rally citizens for question period to save Montreal Green-Spaces

Grass-roots hopes have been high that Mayor Tremblay would lift the Moratorium on the Green-Space Acquisition and Aménagement Program (balance \$100 million) as scheduled in June, 2002. Instead, citizens were shocked and angered by the news (The Gazette, May 10) that the Mayor espouses plans to mangle and destroy established and successful Nature-Parks – Bois-de-Liesse and its Bois-Franc Forest, Anse à l'Orme and Ste-Anne's Forest and eventually Ile-Bizard Forest. Even Beaconfield's Angell Woods that should be on the acquisition list does not escape impacts from the grid of new roads and highways that Mayor Tremblay and Claude Dauphin (Transport) are quoted to consider as "positive". Nor is East-end Montreal spared. The course of Ruisseau de Montigny is threatened by the construction of Autoroute 25 to Laval and other wetlands like Ruisseau Pinel, can be lost to housing development.

Citizens are angry because new roads spawn more cars and pollution; they think the city's call for Kyoto is just lip service. A Green Coalition transit survey shows 87% of rush-hour vehicles on Trans-Canada carry one person – the driver. No need for new roads to promote such practices.

And the countless numbers of citizens who have struggled for years for the creation of the Nature-Parks are angry. The road grid squanders their efforts and the huge investment of public funds in these parks – investments in green-space, not asphalt.

The grass-roots insist the Acquisition and Aménagement Program must reboot now. Montreal's last natural spaces, mostly owned by developers and zoned for development, are disappearing at

an alarming rate with the housing boom. Between 1986 and 1994, 50% of Montreal's forested lands were lost, and more since. At the present rate, in 15 years, all will be gone.

Green Coalition and CRE–Montréal call upon Mayor Tremblay to:

1. Lift the Moratorium on the Green-Space Acquisition and Aménagement Program in June to redress Montreal's appalling green-space deficit. Just 3.8% of Montreal's territory is protected natural green-space: the Quebec and International norm is 8%.
2. Revive the Interim Control By-law (or similar mechanism) now to freeze development of desirable parklands for the next 10 years. Montreal can then proceed at its chosen pace to acquire and create new Nature-Parks. The MUC used this effective tool from 1979 to 1989.
3. Scrap the grid of new roads and highways. Promote strategies to reduce traffic – car-pooling, dedicated lanes for filled vehicles, express-bus convoys, etc. and light rail systems like Green Coalition's Doney Spur Proposal for a new Central West-Island/ Downtown service.
4. Beef up statutes to protect established Nature-Parks from all projects that can diminish their size. Not just roads erode Nature-Parks. Bois-de-Saraguay's Manoir MacDougall and its waterfront property has been targeted for mega-development projects - twice – since 1998. eg: The Hotel/Restaurant plan - 30 year lease. These plans to parcel off the Manoir were repulsed by citizen action.

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