



News Release

for immediate release

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GREEN SPACE DEFENDERS ASK BOROUGH COUNCILS FOR HELP ANGRY ACTIVISTS SEND OPEN LETTER TO MAYOR TREMBLAY

Grass-roots activists are struggling to convince the Tremblay administration to save Montreal's last unprotected natural green spaces. Green Coalition members are getting vapid and empty promises at City Council question periods. And now, Councillor Frank Zampino has stated that there are many priorities in his upcoming budget, clearly signalling that funding for green space protection is not one of them!

Frustrated and angry by inaction at Montreal City Hall, green space defenders are turning to their borough councillors for help. At many Borough Council meetings this week, concerned citizens spoke out on the subject of Montreal's green space crisis. They asked for help to secure funding for green space protection; for resolutions requesting Montreal to include such funding in its new budget; or failing resolutions, letters.

In the spring of 2002, Mayor Tremblay gave Alan DeSousa, Robert Libman and Cosmo Maciocia, executive committee members responsible for sustainable development, urban planning, and parks, respectively, the mandate to create a new conservation policy. The Natural Spaces Policy was promised for late summer 2002, then Christmas, then springtime 2003... The Policy is ready to roll. Without funding, it is mired at a dead stop.

OPEN LETTER TO MAYOR TREMBLAY FROM THE GREEN COALITION

**RE: Green Space Crisis in
Montreal – “The Sustainable Development City”**

Your Honour

You are breaking your promises to save Montreal's last green spaces. Grass-roots volunteers, our members in the Green Coalition, groups and individuals, are distressed. And angry - that unprotected ecologically valuable natural spaces, approximately 1600 hectares, will soon fall prey to developers' bulldozers. **“What's green will stay green”**, you proclaimed during the election campaign in 2001. But, you have failed to bring the new “Natural Spaces Policy”, promised so many times since May 2002, to city council for adoption. A stable, dedicated fund is needed for the conservation policy. Instead, we fear there will no green space dollars in Councillor Zampino's new budget. Deplorable!

Under your leadership, city council has unanimously adopted resolutions in favour of shaping the Montreal of the future on sustainable development principles – twice. Most admirable! But, Mayor Tremblay, sustainable development is not just a label, a ‘macaron’ for public relations purposes and photo ops. Distinction for sustainable development practice must be earned through compliance with rigorous international conventions and standards. Central and essential to these global standards is the conservation of natural spaces and protection of indigenous biodiversity.

If your administration dooms the city’s last natural spaces to extinction through inaction, Montreal can never take its place on the world stage as a Sustainable Development City.

“Montreal chooses Sustainable Development” is the city’s new slogan! But, for sustainable development to become a reality, you must choose to defend and protect Montreal’s last green spaces and the natural heritage of all Montrealers. Mayor Tremblay, your credibility depends upon it!

Letter dated November 3, 2003

Note: What Green Space Crisis?

The scope of Montreal’s green space crisis cannot be overstated. More than 85% of Montreal has been built over. Just 3.3% of the city’s territory is protected natural green space compared to the International and Quebec norm of 8%. Montreal’s last green spaces (approximately 1600 hectares) are 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. And, even the Nature-Parks are endangered.

Now a ‘spaghetti network’ of new roads threatens established Nature-Parks and other green spaces in the West Island. Bois-de-Liesse and its Bois-Franc Forest, l’Anse-à-l’Orme and Ste-Anne’s Forest, Bois-de-l’Île-Bizard and Pointe-Théorêt at Cap-Saint-Jacques and Angell Woods in Beaconsfield - all face this new menace.

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