

Brief on the draft Schéma D'Aménagement de
l'Agglomération de Montréal (SAD)

Presented to the Commission for hearings
regarding the SAD

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The draft plan for the Montreal Agglomeration lacks vision and ambition.

With natural spaces disappearing at an alarming rate and screen time dominating their free time children are spending little or no time in nature . The incidence of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and attention deficit disorder in children is increasing, due in large part to a lack of time spent in nature. The term nature deficit disorder was coined by Richard Louv in his book Last Child in the Woods to describe a wide range of behavioral problems that human beings, especially children, are experiencing as a result of spending less time outside. Gone are the forests, fields and wetlands that used to be accessible to us when we were growing up. They have been built over and filled in. It's almost all gone. We need to act now. Be aggressive in our approach to planning for a healthy city. This can only become a reality by ensuring access to natural spaces for everyone, every day again. It has to be near our homes, schools and workplaces, so that we use them and reap the benefits that nature provides us. Our childhood days spent outside playing and exploring helped shape us into adults with a healthy appreciation for the natural world and we must ensure our children and their children have the same opportunities.

In 2012 the CMM adopted the PMAD that included goals of protecting 17% of the territory and creating a green and blue belt. Municipalities were to adopt their own urban plans in accordance with the PMAD's recommendations. Now Montreal itself is ignoring these recommendations, lowering their target of protected land to a very disappointing 8% and cutting the budget for these acquisitions from a previously allotted \$12 million to only \$7million for 2014 and \$0 for 2015. Why isn't the Montreal Agglomeration required to meet the objectives of the PMAD in its own urban plan? How can they possibly expect the other municipalities to protect what little natural space is left, the bulk of which lies in the west islands boroughs, without setting an example themselves?

There is still time. The underachieving goal of protecting 8% of the territory is not possible without a plan that clearly outlines the process to protect these key areas; Angell Woods and the Rivière Á l'Orme ecoforest corridor to Lake of Two Mountains, Meadowbrooke Golf course linked with the St Jacques Escarpment, linking the Promenade-Bellerive in the east end to the Ruisseau de Montigny. A truly good, ambitious plan would follow the PMAD 's recommendation to protect 17% and would mean looking at more than the 'Territories of Ecological Interest' shown on page 15 but also identifying and acquiring vacant lots that remain in many neighborhoods that could provide a small retreat with nature for the local residents.

The Schéma can be better. Montréal deserves better.