

**Brief to:** Commissioners for the Public Consultation

*MONTREAL URBAN AGGLOMERATION LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN- DRAFT*

**Brief from:** Deanne Delaney, City of Montreal citizen

Nov.12, 2014

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**Topic:**

I am going to be addressing the issue of green space, specifically one I am familiar with as a resident of NDG- a very small piece of land- 57 hectares- in the borough of Lachine and City of CSL which is presently Meadowbrook Golf Course.

**Draft Urban Plan:** page 20 (map2), page 96 (map 20) pages 124, 125, 126 (maps 30, 31, 32)

**Desired outcome:**

An urban nature park in Lachine and Cote St Luc on the site of the Meadowbrook golf course.

**Present Situation in draft Urban Plan:**

Meadowbrook golf course:

**South side (Lachine borough, City of Montreal) – Residential (medium-high density housing)**

**North side (Cote St. Luc) - Recreation/Green space**

**Desired Outcome/Change**

**The south side (Lachine borough) needs to be zoned green/recreational** like the zoning on the north side in CSL.

In other words, ALL of Meadowbrook Golf Course has to be zoned green recreational, not ½ of this green space.

**Loss of green space loss over time- personal observation**

When I was young, my family lived on the military base in Lachine (Provost Ave. & 32 Ave.) It no longer exists of course, but at the time, our back yards bordered onto another golf course in

Lachine (Highway 20 to Rue St. Antoine between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Ave.) and we were fortunate as children to be able to play and explore in the tree and bush lined extremities of what was woods to us. In fact, I still feel that it was a very important part of my life whenever I am in nature today or smell the bridal wreath flowers in spring. I moved back to Montreal years later to work and observed, over time, half of the golf course was housing with a lovely green space to the south near this housing development. But today, almost the entire area is housing with a recreation park at one end. It was a choice but it did mean lost urban natural green space for Montreal.

I fear a similar situation will happen today with Meadowbrook. Even though half of it may be zoned green in the urban plan, over time, the green space will all disappear. I would wish that all children in the proximity and beyond could have the opportunity to experience nature in a truly urban setting.

### **Reasons for a zoning change at Meadowbrook**

I would like to address the following points to back up my petition.

#### **1. Climate Change**

We are all well aware of what is happening with climate change. If you look at the Meadowbrook area on the map, there are few large green spaces to help alleviate the **heat island effects**. The area is surrounded by rail tracks and rail yards and adding green space to the area would help reduce temperatures in summer.

#### **2. Urban Biodiversity**

I have attended a number of environmental conferences in Montreal in the past couple of years and from what the experts in the field and the scientists who are doing the research report, I think we have to be applying more of their findings within our urban settings.

##### **a. Conference: Rendez-Vous Urban Biodiversity ( Montreal, May 2013)**

[http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=7377,109415570&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=7377,109415570&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

The Ville de Montréal was one of the main sponsors of this conference and it featured urban biodiversity not only in our city, but cities around the world. And what was important for me to hear from several speakers, was that **biodiversity** does not mean green lawns and conventional urban recreation parks with playing fields and playgrounds.

A keynote speaker from the University of Virginia, Timothy Beatley, stressed integrating nature into urban design. The group he is associated with – Biophilic Cities- <http://biophiliccities.org/> devotes itself to understanding how cities can become more biophilic (biophilia= the extent to which humans are hard-wired to need connection with nature and other forms of life).

Since then, in Dec. 2013, there was a Biophilic Cities Launch (<http://biophiliccities.org/launching-the-global-biophilic-cities-network/> )

Partner cities and cities they were studying which were actively fostering connections to the natural world included, at the time, **San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Phoenix, Arizona; Singapore; Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; Oslo, Norway; Birmingham, United Kingdom; and Wellington, New Zealand.**

**COULD MONTREAL ONE DAY BE A PARTNER CITY?** Montreal was represented and presented on a panel as to how nature might be enhanced and reinvigorated in older cities.

b. **PARTNERSHIP FOR THE LIVING CITY: PROMOTING URBAN BIODIVERSITY.**

Concordia University. Montreal March 2014

Many of our municipal politicians and scientists addressed the conference on the subject with all of them stressing the importance of sustainability and urban biodiversity with its numerous mental and physical health benefits.

One poster presentation by Megan Deslauriers & Prof. Jochen Jaeger from the Dept. of Geography, Planning and Environment, Concordia University and soon to be published:

*Increasing the connectivity of the greenway network in Southwest Montreal: Scenarios for enhancing the wellbeing of biodiversity and humans (M. Delauriers, J. Jaeger)*

- illustrates how the **destruction of Meadowbrook** would eliminate its high potential to serve as a vital component of this greenway network in the future.

3. **Connectivity/ Greenways/ Green Corridors**

a. **For wildlife and plants- insects, birds, animals**

- Green and blue corridors are essential in an urban setting.
- Bird protection groups stress the need for green corridors. We need more, not less in the city.

b. **For human mental and physical health**

- Numerous studies show the benefits of natural green space to our mental and physical health. Most people on the Island of Montreal do not have the opportunity to travel to the country on weekends. By increasing the urban nature of different parts of the Island, people of all economic means have the opportunity to walk, cycle, cross country ski in a setting that does not require a car to get there.
- Urban cycling as a means of active transportation and recreation could be greatly encouraged with cycle paths connecting the West Island, Lachine Canal paths & St. Pierre district of Lachine with Cote St Luc and beyond to eastern and northern sections of Montreal.
- Connecting local communities: It would connect various communities on the Island of Montreal. People from Lachine and further west would be able to walk or cycle to areas east and north-east without being on a highway. With the car culture today, people in

communities often have little chance to mix and get to know their neighbours. A park brings them together.

### **Conclusion**

The international organization which is housed in Montreal- the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the CBD ([www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)) has crucial goals for our cities to meet environmental challenges with the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020. Since Montreal signed the agreement in Nagoya in 2010, we have a responsibility to participate.

Meadowbrook should not be a golf course waiting to be developed.

Meadowbrook has the potential to be a very important 57 hectare urban nature park for all Montreal Islanders- part of the green and blue corridor that would connect to the falaise Saint-Jacques and the South–West of Montreal.

I strongly urge this Commission to recommend **changing the zoning of the Lachine section of Meadowbrook- from residential to recreational or green** and making the entire 57 hectares Montreal's newest urban nature park.

Thank you to the Commission

M. Perez (President)

Mme Hawa (Vice-President)

Mme Barbe

M. Bouelle

M. Caldwell

M. Dauphin

M. Deguire