

Balance between the Natural and Built Up Environments

"Using urban development expertise to strike a balance between natural and built up environments with a view to creating living areas favourable to citizen well being constitutes one of the major challenges facing municipalities today." (07 + 08 Report Working Document, Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats, April 2009, Montreal)

Meadowbrook

On the Island of Montreal, the built up environment dominates the natural environment. This is particularly apparent in the Montreal South West where there are no natural spaces in proximity to the hundreds of thousands of residents who live in the area.

The Meadowbrook Golf Course is the only green space of considerable size that can make up for this lack. It thus behoves the City of Montreal to make Meadowbrook Golf Course the eleventh eco-territory, and to preserve it as a green space.

It is not a considerable sum of money that would be required to ensure that Meadowbrook is preserved in perpetuity relative to the recreational and health benefits which would result.

It would be of enjoyment and benefit to hundreds of thousands of citizens living nearby and for all citizens off and on the Island.

Former mayor, Pierre Bourque, visited the site and found vestiges of the original forests.

Health Benefits of Natural Spaces

The Lancet reports that mortality rates are very significantly reduced for citizens fortunate enough to live near natural spaces.

(Effect of Exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study. Dr Richard Mitchell Phd and Frank Popham Phd, The Lancet, Volume 372, Issue 9650, pages 1655-1660, 8 November, 2008.)

La Trame Verte Sud-Ouest

Over the past 35 years I have watched the development of bicycle paths and green space along the Lachine Canal. In the seventies, only a small section of the canal was open to the public, few persons were aware of its existence and few people used it. As it became better known and as it was extended, it became more and more widely used, so that today, on a weekend the path has become a busy thoroughfare with thousands of bicyclists, roller bladders, hikers and picnickers. Citizens are coming out and enjoying the green space and becoming healthier for doing so.

Imagine green right of ways connecting Meadowbrook with the Falaise St. Jacques, the Falaise with Agrignon Park, Agrignon Park with the Douglas Hospital and the river beyond etc. etc. and the whole

area interconnected with walking and bicycle paths and corridors for wildlife. Maybe we can catch a little glimmer of the walking paths in Europe, and, at the same time, place Montreal on the map for its vision.

Al Hayek

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