

L'Anse a l'Orme land contested Conservation risks loss of future funds, Tierney says

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<http://www.westislandchronicle.com/article-212291-LAnse-a-lOrme-land-contested.html>

Ste. Anne de Bellevue Mayor Bill Tierney says he is not opposed to conserving land along l'Anse a l'Orme Road in his town, but is concerned Montreal's green space plan could lead to a loss of future revenue.

According to Tierney, the owner of the land in question has put forward a plan for the approximately 13 residentially-zoned acres along l'Anse a l'Orme Road bordering on the Town of Kirkland that would see the construction of 60 high-end "green" homes. The plan is currently waiting for Ministry of Environment approval.

"Montreal is now, at the very last minute, looking at the possibility of acquiring it," to add the the l'Anse a l'Orme Park, most of which is located in the borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Tierney said. He added the three parties – the developer, the City of Montreal, and Ste. Anne de Bellevue – are currently in negotiations. "With 60 homes at about \$500,000 each, that would be approximately between \$30 million and \$40 million in evaluation. The opportunity cost for us is approximately \$200,000. So, if Montreal buys the land and makes it eco-territory, it's going to cost us \$200,000 in future revenues."

Ryan Young, member of the Ste. Anne de Bellevue environment committee and member of the Green Coalition, said he believes both Ste. Anne's and the City of Montreal should be working toward conservation – a sentiment he says was voiced during a November 2006 public consultation addressing the urban plan for the north sector.

"There was a lot of opposition to that plan," Young said. "The town of Ste. Anne de Bellevue said they'd take everybody's concerns into consideration. But they didn't change the plan one bit."

According to Kirkland resident and Green Coalition member Daniel Oyama, the proposed residential development is also causing distress in the part of Kirkland that borders the land in question.

"It's surprise first, and then resignation," he said of the reactions he has received. "Overall, the residents are very angry."

With herds of deer calling the area home and many different plants found in the l'Anse a l'Orme Park, Young believes there are three parties at fault for the current situation: Ste. Anne de Bellevue for "coming up with an urban plan with no concern for conservation;" the City of Montreal for not purchasing the land for its eco-territory years ago; and the province for not stepping in.

"There should be a moratorium on development on the city of Montreal on natural spaces. There's nothing left," Young said. "We have so little protected as it is."

Tierney said the next two months will be crucial in the negotiation process and the future of the land.

"We're negotiating with Montreal to make sure Ste. Anne's is compensated, to make sure Ste. Anne's is not penalized for developing the Montreal eco-territory," he said. "We have no problem with eco territory, but there's no reason why little Ste. Anne de Bellevue, with a \$6 million budget, should be paying for the Montreal eco-territory. Everyone on the Island should be paying for it."