

Letters To The Editor Suburban

Re: Many sides to Meadowbrook By Joel Goldenberg, The Suburban, 2008-02-27

The Conservation of Meadowbrook

Dear Editor,

According to Groupe Pacific vice-president Suzanne Deschamps, Meadowbrook isn't "an eco-anything" and is a very poor example of biodiversity. Do non-ecosystems have wild rabbits and hares, groundhogs, raccoon, vole and a whole host of birds such as the Baltimore Oriole, Chimney Swift, Downy Woodpecker, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Cardinal?

[Please see attached partial inventory file as compiled by Marie-Anne Hudson of Macdonald College, 2006.]. Declining species such as the American Toad and Red Fox make it their home. Rare specimens of Hackberry and Shagbark Hickory have been found there. The latter tree is an indication of past Native American settlement.

At the Meadowbrook town hall, (Thursday, February 21, 2008), Lawrence Bergman, MNA for D'Arcy McGee, said "green is gold". This greenspace is a rare sight in a sea of brownspaces. Montreal ranks the lowest among major North American metropolitan areas when it comes to green and natural spaces. It is the only site available for regeneration. Renaturalized, it has the potential to serve the entire Southwest via a network of interconnected linear parks. Groupe Pacific promises an "ecologically rich park" on a site that is supposedly in decline. Sounds like "pave paradise and put up a phony park".

Indeed it is a golf course in a rail yard, with two freight yards adjacent to it, and railway mainlines that operate 24/7 on three sides. It is locked in and is the centre of tremendous noise and air pollution which is likely to worsen over the years... Transport Canada's Railway Safety Act Review Advisory Panel has recently recommended that the "... Railway Safety Act be amended to require the developer and municipalities to engage in a process of consultation with railway companies prior to any discussion respecting land use that may affect railway safety." (See, Recommendation #34: Re, Proximity Issues; P. 107 of "Stronger Ties: A shared commitment to railway safety", [http://www.tc.gc.ca/tcss/RSA\\_ReviewExamen\\_LSF/pdf/TRANSPORT\\_Stronger\\_Ties\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_e.pdf](http://www.tc.gc.ca/tcss/RSA_ReviewExamen_LSF/pdf/TRANSPORT_Stronger_Ties_Report_FINAL_e.pdf)).

As a buffer Meadowbrook is the lungs of the West End. It is undevelopable for housing, given the 300 meter setback guidelines, recommended by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Railway Association of Canada.

Even as a golf course, Meadowbrook can be organically certified by National Audubon Society's Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Hydrologically it is a catchment where several branches and tributaries of the Little Saint Pierre River meet eventually to become the Saint Pierre R. at the base of the St. Jacques Escarpment. The conversion of the Little Saint Pierre to a storm sewer collector does not change this fact.

Genuine green communities include all externalized costs, are transit oriented and are built with the goal of integrating commerce, work place, recreation, parks and living quarters within walking distance. Alexis Nihon Plaza could be used as the template for a green development at Cavendish Mall.

However, is a development truly green when the automobile will be the primary method of conveyance even if there were a token commuter train station?

Moreover, how can you enhance or save something by killing it? Virtual green is only a sheen that runs skin deep. Kafka and Orwell would be proud.

Yours Sincerely,

Avrom David Shtern,  
Cote Saint Luc, QC,