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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this brief in response to the city of Pierrefonds' plan for the future of Pierrefonds West.

This sector of the borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro hosts the last, largest section of continuous natural land on the island of Montreal. Together with the Cap Saint-Jacques Nature Park, the Parc-Agricole Bois-de-la-Roche, Senneville Forest, the Morgan Arboretum and Angell Woods, the Anse-à-l'Orme ecoterritory forms a wildlife corridor that covers almost 10 (square) kilometers. The potential for conservation on a mass scale, from regional, provincial and even federal jurisdictions is right before us.

I have been involved in environmental and sustainability education for 35 years, with national and international recognition for developing experiential programs for adults and children that exemplify the restorative aspects of exposure to Nature. As part of a position paper on Well-Being for All, Sustainably, a core value of Dawson College's new and bold strategic plan, the following is stated:

*An ever-increasing body of evidence demonstrates that contact with Nature develops well-being and can also be an important part of transforming education. Naturalized areas have an impact on people's mental state, mood and sense of security, which contribute to sociability (Kaplan, 1995). Connecting with Nature is associated with positive emotions and recognized as a significant restorative agent (Hernandez & Hidlgo, 2005, O'Brien & Adam 2016).*

*In fact, it has been demonstrated that Nature's beneficial effects go beyond mere restoration by positively enhancing true mental health and well-being (Passmore 2011) and can help mitigate stress (Bagshaw, 2014).*

Fact: Nature heals and is restorative. It is part of a healthy city. It lowers negative behavior and increases happiness. The long-term true cost of losing these natural living machines is significant. Beyond purifying water & air, they are living labs that house a library of information for society capable of inspiring artists, engineers and architects, to name a few...

Partial development with the aim of leaving “enough” natural space is detrimental to species as research demonstrates with increased fragmentation comes a decrease in species diversity and numbers. Montreal needs to show that it is a city that is joining the new ecological paradigm needed for future cities, not holding onto the old social paradigm that views Nature as something to be exploited.

At Dawson, through our Living Campus project, we are trying to invite Nature back to an urban setting and want to benefit from all it offers the educational community. It makes no sense that our cities model the opposite – and destroy what can't be put back together again.

Please consider the leadership needed to demonstrate that Nature matters and begin to rewrite what the history books will call a terrible time when we used, abused and neglected what so much scientific literature is telling us is a remedy for many social ills. Conservation lives in cities that believe in peace. Let Pierrefonds West be such a place.

These places cry out in silence for someone's help. I write this letter in the hopes that you, the reader, are a voice that others will follow in our challenge to safeguard what is so precious to us all.

Regards,

Chris

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