

OCPM mémoire Pierrefonds West

To Whom it may concern:

My organization is concerned primarily with transportation issues and especially the electric train proposed by the CDPQ, but it is difficult to separate land development questions from transportation issues.

By superimposing a map of Cap Nature on top of the projected CDPQ train, it is clear that the two projects are interlinked. While some individuals will likely make a lot of money from the two projects, both are bad for the environment and for society at large.

My group is opposed to the proposed residential development (Cap Nature) in Pierrefonds West which will destroy some of the last remaining unprotected green spaces on Montreal Island. This area harbors endangered species such as bobolinks and Jefferson Salamanders. It would be a travesty to turn this wilderness into houses and make a mockery of Montreal hosting the world headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Mayor Denis Coderre has stated that he wants to preserve 10% of Montreal Island as protected green space. Given that less than 6% is currently protected, it is difficult how he can ever find the 2,000 additional hectares of green space needed to make that target unless he starts by turning Cap Nature into a park.

We believe that Cap Nature will simply exacerbate urban sprawl, already a major problem around Montreal and strongly support the call made other environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club, to put a 10-year moratorium on all residential development on green spaces on Montreal Island. There are thousands of hectares of brown fields (former industrial sites) currently available for such residential development.

Rather than low-density sprawl, Montreal needs more population densification. Such densification will help public transit to run more efficiently and will also result in lower costs for many other municipal services. It is very sad to see how much of Montreal Island has been built up in recent decades while the population remained fairly stable.

Cap Nature residents will be 30km from downtown and without decent public transportation meaning they will be forced to drive cars, adding another 10,000 or so vehicles to the already overcrowded Highway 40.

There are other reasons why this area is unsuitable for building houses. I have walked over most of the 185 hectares and found the ground wet almost everywhere. The ground level and the water table are essentially the same here, likely meaning serious problems with water infiltration and eventual mould growth inside homes. Such moulds are bad for human health. Let's leave these wet meadows for the flora and fauna that can make good use of them and build houses elsewhere.

Thank you for your time,

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