

To: The Office de Consultation Publique de Montreal

Re: Opposition to the development project in l'Anse-à-l'Orme, Pierrefonds-West

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the planned housing development in l'Anse-à-l'Orme in Pierrefonds, West Island. I feel compelled to protest this plan.

I have used and loved l'Anse-à-l'Orme with my children, friends, and family over many years, and I strongly oppose its development. I believe this area, 100% of it, should be preserved from any development. The forest should be allowed to remain wild and the previously farmed fields replanted with native shrubs and trees to also eventually develop into a good-size mature forest - to preserve the existing wilderness and biodiversity for Montreal's current and future generations.

Here is why:

- **Walks in a wild forest such as l'Anse-à-l'Orme offer enormous psychological reprieve for both urban and suburban dwellers.** They wake our senses, free us temporarily from the confining spaces and din of urban living, they offer constantly changing beauty that is not cultivated but that we innately need. Google “psychological benefits of forest” and study after study reports effects such as lowered blood pressure and heart rate, less negative and more vigorous moods, increased state of relaxation and feeling of well-being, etc.
- **Children in particular benefit enormously from periodic visits of wild forests.** I brought my children to l'Anse-à-l'Orme many times and in all seasons, for hours of pleasure and easy entertainment. They learned here names of wildflowers, mushrooms, birds, and trees, played in the streams, built tee-pees. Studies show forests help children develop physical skills, self esteem and understanding of the outdoors, and increase their levels of creativity and imagination, motivation, and concentration. I've met scout and guide groups here and witnessed their glee and interest in forest wandering and discovery.
- **Montreal is far short of having enough protected forests/green areas.** In 2012, the Montreal Metropolitan Community unanimously adopted the PMAD, which includes the protection of 17% of the territory, as defined in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. At ~12% today, we are far from this figure and I believe that l'Anse-à-l'Orme is the last large undeveloped forest (including an agricultural area that can easily be turned into a forest) left to be protected.
- **As per David Suzuki foundation biologists' evaluation, L'Anse a l'Orme, including the ex-agricultural parts of it, has many species that merit protection.** This call must be heeded.
- **Preserving the entire space is essential to support Biological Connectivity,** i.e. the ability of species to move in the territory, which is crucial to their survival and protection. The currently fallow fields offer a crucial buffer between human living spaces and wilderness.
- **Protecting the entire area is also essential to give human visitors the sense that they can wander unimpeded** in any direction, and in relative solitude. This is a key

component of true forest experience. Traversing the very limited zone that the development plans to protect from east to west only takes about 15 minutes on foot – this makes for a short walk. Also, if the fallow fields are developed as currently planned, human influence will be much too important to allow this remaining narrow strip of a forest to keep its wild character.

- **The North-South green corridor, a long-time goal for West-Islanders who value urban forests, would be much too diminished** by the planned development. Only if l'Anse-à-l'Orme is 100% preserved does this vision of a green belt stretching from Cap St Jacques to Angel Woods stand a good chance of protecting biodiversity and allowing visitors to experience a good stretch of urban forest wilderness.

Forests are not a luxury, they are a necessity for a quality of living. I recently had a chance to visit Singapore (island city/state with a population of ~5.6M on an island of 719 km²) which by its island nature is comparable to Montreal (~2M on 365 km²). Notably, a large reason why the densely-populated Singapore is recognized as one of the most livable cities in the world is its high percentage of public green spaces which totals ~47%(!) and includes 4 large wild nature reserves, 4 park connector networks, and over 60 important parks. This is a remarkable example to follow.

I believe Montrealers similarly deserve a livable city. Affordable and livable housing solutions can and should be found/developed on the island – in those areas which already have infrastructure, including roads, busy public transport, sewage networks, etc., and which perhaps need to be redeveloped. The last remaining areas of forest and wilderness, on the other hand, like l'Anse-à-l'Orme, must be preserved in their entirety: as refuges from urban life stress, as city lungs, as carbon sinks, as guardians of biodiversity, and as engines of psychological and socio-economic well-being of an ever-expanding urban population.

I vote to call off the proposed housing development in favour of protecting the entire l'Anse-à-l'Orme. Thank you for passing on my view on this matter.

Best regards,

Radka Losert

Beaconsfield