

The Intangibles that Define a Community

By Anne Marie Owens and Mary Vallis - National Post

Thursday October 17, 2002

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An expert examined a range of civic factors in 14 Canadian cities to see how they affected health, such as local environment, air quality, amount of green spaces, crime rates, and laws that protect health, including second-hand smoke legislation.

The civic ranking is just one of six categories of the Post's Healthy Cities project, which will identify Canada's healthiest city by analyzing the many factors affecting the health of a community.

The data were gathered from a broad range of sources, including Statistics Canada, Environment Canada, several special interest groups and our own municipal survey.

When an expert at the University of Calgary combined 14 diverse municipal factors - external factors that influence a community's health - St. John's came out on top.

The city had the best air quality in the country, Environment Canada data for 1998 to 2000 show. St. John's boasted the lowest levels of ground-level ozone and particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns in size - tiny particles so small they can invade the deepest recesses of a person's lungs. The numbers for Toronto were nearly twice as high.

St. John's also benefits from some of the lowest crime rates, according to three-year averages provided by Statistics Canada from 1999 to 2001 on the number of homicides, violent incidents and cases of property crime per 100,000 residents.

The city has a smoking by-law intended to protect residents from harmful second-hand smoke and a bicycle helmet law. Halifax was the only city in the project with a ban on the residential use of pesticides, for which it scored extra points.

Other cities in the project, however, excelled on other indicators included in the category. In terms of access to park space, Saint John, N.B., came first with just 901 hectares of parkland: Its numerous public squares, Irving Nature Park and the sprawling Rockwood Park amount to an average of 12.9 hectares of parks per 1,000 people.

Green space is more than esthetic green frill, said Dr. Jim Dunn, who teaches in the University of Calgary's community health sciences department and helped produce the National Post's rankings. Parks can be a salient measure of community health, he said.

“We have what we call a top lot at the end of my street,” said Dr. Dunn, whose background is in the social geography of health.

“It’s a big grassy space with gymboree kinds of things for kids to play on. Now, I don’t derive any direct benefit from that, since I don’t have any young children who play there. But the fact that there are these kinds of things on my street adds to the overall quality of my life.

It means there are kids and families who live in my neighbourhood. It means the kids are being occupied, developing play-based skills, keeping busy and keeping active.

It’s the same principle behind things like school quality and having an educated populace. Regardless of whether you have kids or not, there are huge payoffs to these kinds of things as a society.”

Calgary, the city in which he lives, was the second-place finisher on park space. A municipal survey conducted by the National Post found it offers 9.67 hectares for every 1,000 people.

The green space findings are limited to municipal boundaries, however, which can greatly affect a city’s overall number. Ottawa, for example, has 4,925 hectares of parks within its boundaries, but that does not include the vast Gatineau Park in Quebec, located across the Ottawa River from the nation’s capital. It gives Ottawans easy access to a 36,000-hectare nature reserve.

Montreal, which has 2,000 hectares of parkland, comes out at the bottom of the measure according to its population size, with only 1.92 hectares per 1,000 residents. That placed it slightly below the levels in the suburban sprawl of Mississauga.

Vancouver, the city that Canadians most readily associate with greenery and nature, actually comes out near the bottom of the survey’s green space category, with its 1,278 hectares of parkland translating into only 2.34 hectares of parks per 1,000 residents. The seaside city’s locale boosts people’s overall impression of its park space because of the surrounding mountains, waterways and mile upon mile of walking trails.

Compared to a factor such as air quality, which can directly correlate to the health of a community, the connection between civic well-being and green space may seem tenuous. Yet it is these intangible qualities of municipal health - park space, school funding and library spending and newspaper readership among them - that can set the tone for a community.

Charlottetown received the lowest ranks on overall municipal factors with Montreal being second last and Saint John is third last.

Residents of Charlottetown reported one of the highest proportions of ‘unmet health care needs.’ Nearly 15% of the population felt they did not receive health care when they

needed it at some point in the past year, a statistic that could indicate barriers to accessing the health care system or inadequate resources. Charlottetown was also the only city of the 14 in the project that does not have a public transit system.

In addition to the three categories already discussed in the four-part Healthy Cities series -lifestyle choices, health outcomes, child development and, now municipal factors - a fifth, 'civic literacy,' also plays a role. The measures in this category assess how informed people are about their community and how involved in it they choose to be.

Henry Milner, a Montreal political scientist who has written a book about the subject, says governments typically make better policies and boast a better quality of life when they have a citizenry that is educated, engaged and active.

In *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work*, Dr. Milner explains the critical role of factors such as media consumption, adult education, library service and anything that aids citizens in informing themselves about their communities.

The link between high media use and voter turnout seems to be evident in Charlottetown, which has both the highest percentage of newspaper readers and the highest voter turnout during the last municipal election. Both figures are considerably higher than the national average for voting rates. And according to figures from NADbank, an industry group jointly run by newspaper companies, 78% of adults in Charlottetown read their local newspaper, which is nearly 20% higher than the next highest readership city of Winnipeg.

"Democracy requires at least minimal engagement," says Dr. Milner. "Perhaps a place like Charlottetown, which is smaller, has a definite sense of itself and there isn't the same kind of disengagement that would happen in a bigger community."

Residents of Charlottetown inherit their sense of caring for the community from a sense of belonging deeply rooted to the island's long, colourful history, said Tony Reddin, co-ordinator of Environmental Coalition of P.E.I. "If people become even more active and outspoken, things would change," said Mr. Reddin, who is lobbying the provincial government for a ban on residential pesticide use.

Another example of how all of these disparate elements are interconnected is evident in Saskatoon, which has high levels of spending on library materials, long life expectancy, and "is a community known as having the collective efficiency to identify problems, mobilize resources and deal with them," said Dr. Dunn.

He illustrates his point by explaining that when the government wanted to set up early childhood development centres, the banks in Saskatoon engaged in a bidding war about who was going to finance the projects. "People have a general sense that the community they live in makes an impact on their well-being," he explained. "Different things are valued by people at different points in their life cycle... These municipal factors are all

about beginning to bridge that gap between individual benefit and the greater community.”

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Greens unite to save threatened forests

Montreal's new breed of activists makes politicians take notice

MARIAN SCOTT
THE GAZETTE

CLAIRE LE ROUX looks at the network of rusty railway tracks that criss-cross the city's aging industrial areas and she sees tree-lined cycle paths and hiking trails.

When she looks at the St. Lawrence River, she sees clean public beaches and boats ferrying suburban commuters to and from downtown jobs. She looks at garbage-strewn alleys and sees inner-city playgrounds lined with plants and benches.

Le Roux's vision of the greening of Montreal may sound far-fetched, but don't write her off as a dreamer.

She is president of Loisir-Ville, a group that promotes recreation in the city, and Loisir-Ville is a member of the Green Coalition, an umbrella group fighting to preserve green space in Montreal. The Green Coalition is home to a new breed of environmental activists who have been making local politicians sit up and take notice.

Since it was founded in August, the Green Coalition — a loose federation of about 40 groups — has launched vocal campaigns to save green space in several west-end municipalities.

This week, Montreal West lent support to the coalition's goals by passing a resolution opposing neighboring Ville St. Pierre's plan for a high-density housing project on the Meadowbrook Golf Course.

On Jan. 29, Côte St. Luc bowed to pressure from the coalition when it backed down on a plan to support residential development on its part of the Meadowbrook Golf Course.

In January, citizens in St. Laurent blocked city-approved plans to build a cement plant near Bois de Liesse Park.

Dumped landfill

In Beaconsfield this week, members of the Green Coalition called for the resignation of Mayor Patricia Rustad after a contractor dumped about 6,000 tonnes of landfill on a wooded site north of Highway 20 at Woodland Ave. The contractor claimed Rustad knew about the dumping, but the mayor denied it and refused to step down.

The Green Coalition has also taken much of the credit for the Montreal Urban Community's ambitious plan, announced in December, to spend \$200 million — in addition to \$94 million previously approved — to buy, preserve and create green space in the next decade. It includes creation of a "green network" of cy-

cle and pedestrian paths along railway and hydroelectric lines, acquisition of woodlands and the creation of a "green pole" of parkland on the eastern tip of the island.

The MUC also promised in December to buy or expropriate a 30-hectare chunk of the Bois Franc forest in Dollard des Ormeaux and preserve it as a regional park.

Le Roux, a founding member of the coalition, said the MUC's green-space policy marks a long-overdue turnaround.

"To make the island green again and create access to the water is going to take a change of attitude," she said. "Luckily, Montrealers have wakened up in time."

Despite Montreal's stunning setting, surrounded by water and topped by a mountain, poor planning has made much of the city an ecological wasteland, green-space advocates say.

The city lags far behind Toronto and even behind New York for parkland.

The MUC has 1.27 hectares of parkland per 1,000 inhabitants, compared to 3.7 hectares per 1,000 in Toronto, MUC figures show.

Montreal would need two more parks the size of Mount Royal, in addition to all of the present green space on the island and Ile Bizard, to have an adequate level of green space, said Patrick Donovan, executive director of Conservation Pledge Canada, a nature trust, and an organizer of the Green Coalition.

Vancouver has seven times as much green space per capita as Montreal, Donovan said.

Montreal's green-space deficit is illustrated by a study of biomass — which measures the density of vegetation — commissioned by the MUC in June 1988.

Green space

Satellite images show that 42 per cent of the surface of the MUC has little or no living vegetation — that is, the land is covered with buildings, asphalt and other non-living surfaces.

Forest — considered to have the highest biomass — covers less than 6 per cent of land in the MUC and is limited to Ile Bizard, the West Island and Mount Royal.

Another 22 per cent of the land was rated as low to medium biomass — categories that range from tree-lined residential areas to farmland. Those areas are concentrated on the West Island and a few residential areas closer to the city core such as the Town of Mount Royal.

The few remaining traces of nature are disappearing from the Montreal area at a disturbing rate, says Richard Gaudreau, assistant director of park planning for the MUC.

"If we don't intervene, the situation will continue to deteriorate until it becomes irreversible," he said.

"We're going to see residents leaving the island. We're going to see industries leaving the island — particularly the new, high-technology industries, which emphasize the quality of the environment."

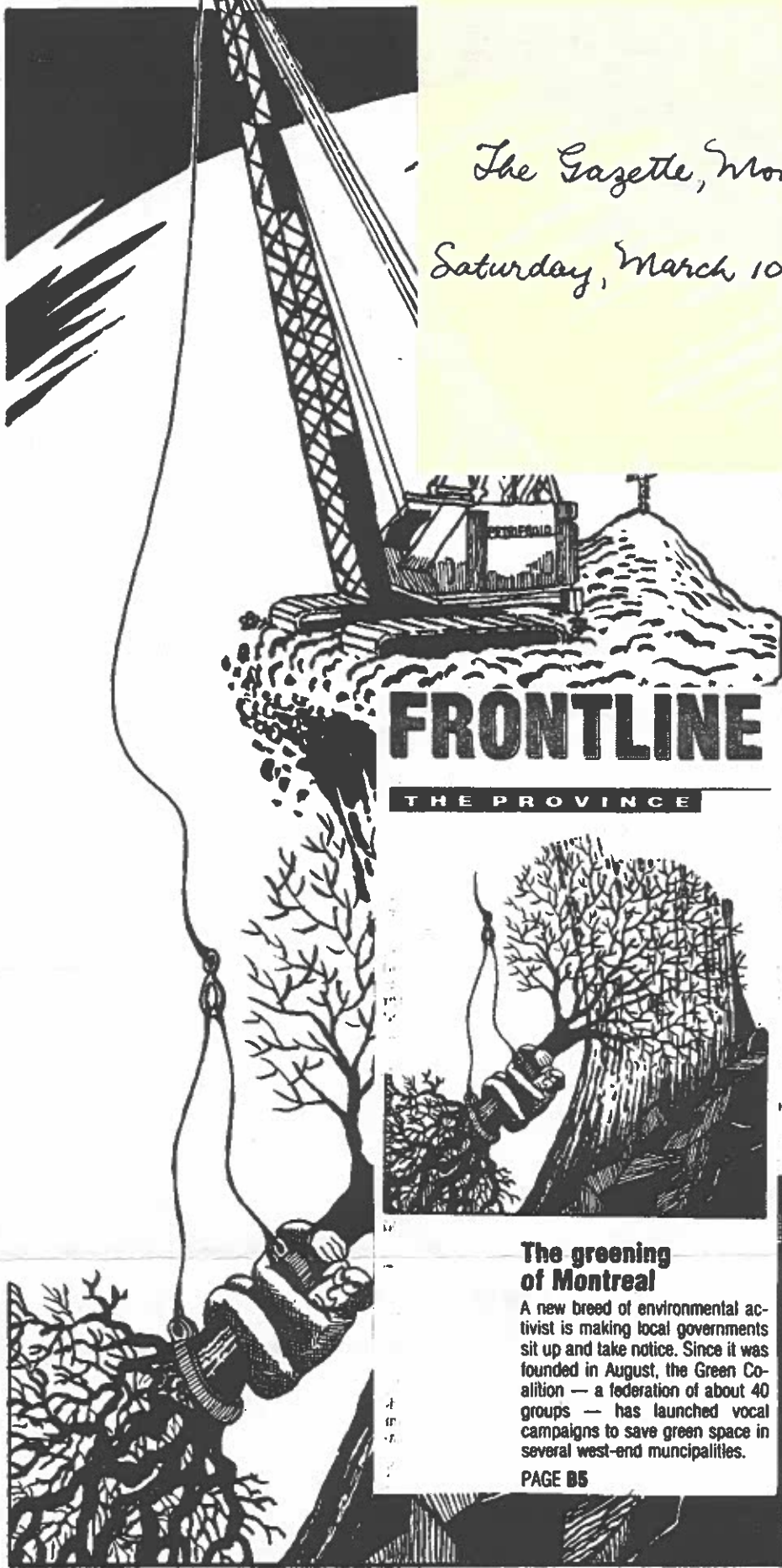
Trees are essential to the environment because they cool the air and purify it by collecting airborne particles and producing oxygen, Gaudreau said. Grass alone has a much smaller impact on air quality and temperature control.

The "lifeless, barren wasteland" much of the city has become also has psychological repercussions, said David Fletcher, president of Citizens for the Bois Franc.

"You pay for this in the level of frustration of your inhabitants. It creates increased violence and aggression," said Fletcher, a Grade 6 teacher in Pierrefonds.

The Green Coalition's roots are in the unspoiled, treed waterfront community of Sanguay next to Cartierville on the Rivière des Prairies. That's where Sylvia Ojemark, 49, the coalition's soft-spoken co-founder and acknowledged inspiration, grew up.

"We're not wild-eyed radicals. We're just middle-of-the-road people



The Gazette, Montreal
Saturday, March 10, 1990

FRONTLINE

THE PROVINCE

The greening of Montreal

A new breed of environmental activist is making local governments sit up and take notice. Since it was founded in August, the Green Coalition — a federation of about 40 groups — has launched vocal campaigns to save green space in several west-end municipalities.

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"To make the island green again is going to take a change of attitude," says activist Claire Le Roux.

Where the green spaces are

Following are the undeveloped forested areas that are the subject of preservation battles in the Montreal Urban Community.

■ **The Bois Franc:**
Size: 45 hectares, 30 hectares in Dollard des Ormeaux and the balance in St. Laurent and Dorval.

Ownership: Real estate developer Mario Grilli owns 30 hectares in Dollard des Ormeaux. Matrox Ltd., an electronics company, owns the Dorval land while there are five different owners in St. Laurent.

Status: Zoned for high density housing, but so far is protected under the MUC's interim green-space freeze. MUC intends to buy forest and is studying whether to expropriate it.

■ **Ile Bizard forests:**
Size: 220 hectares.

Ownership: Grilli.
Status: Zoned rural and 188 hectares are protected under the MUC's green space freeze. Grilli wants to build a 2,000-unit housing development on 60 hectares in the northwest. The town has accepted his plan, and has proposed to the MUC that the balance be preserved as a regional park.

Forest No. 2 is a 26-hectare woodland near the centre of Ile Bizard. Owned by Grilli, it is zoned agricultural.

■ **The Anse à l'Orme forest:**
Size: 49 hectares in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Ownership: Grilli owns three-quarters

and Belcourt Inc. owns the balance.

Status: Zoned for residential housing, but is protected under the MUC's green-space freeze. The town has passed a resolution asking the MUC to preserve the land as a regional park.

■ **Beaconsfield forest:**
Size: 142 hectares.

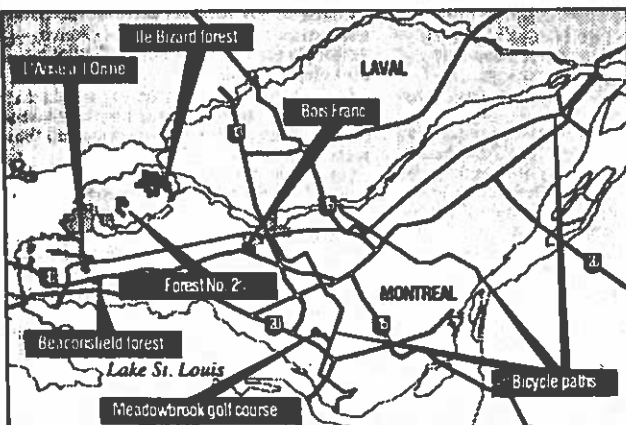
Ownership: Yale Properties owns 31.5 hectares, Optimum Construction owns 30 hectares and a group of small landowners share the balance.

Status: Parts along the strip of land are zoned parkland, single-family dwelling and industrial. Protected under the MUC's green-space freeze. The city has passed a resolution asking the MUC to preserve the land as a regional park.

■ **Meadowbrook Golf Course:**
Size: 57 hectares; about half in Ville St. Pierre, bordering Montreal West, and half in Côte St. Luc.

Ownership: Marathon Realty, the development arm of Canadian Pacific.

Status: Zoned for low density housing. The citizens' group Guard Our Local Face wants the entire golf course preserved as a green space. Marathon has proposed a 3,000-unit housing development, with 2,000 units in Ville St. Pierre and the rest in Côte St. Luc. On Jan. 29, Côte St. Luc has passed a resolution calling for preservation of the golf course as a green space. Ville St. Pierre is determined to press ahead with housing.



Land developer blames city for poor planning

AARON DERFEL
THE GAZETTE

For environmentalists in the Montreal area, Mario Grilli is public enemy No. 1.

Grilli owns 1.9 million hectares of forests and fields on the island of Montreal and in Ile Bizard, Pierrefonds, Laval and Blainville — just to name a few municipalities.

He's the biggest and most powerful real-estate developer in the area. In the last 30 years, his company has built more than 5,000 houses.

And if he has his way, he will build thousands more on the land environmentalists claim are the only remaining green spaces on the island.

But Grilli, 54, says he's not the enemy here. He's

just trying to make an honest dollar, and has followed a philosophy that land can make you rich.

"I built my first house with a pick and shovel with my brother in 1957," the Italian-born businessman recalled in an interview in his Kirkland office.

Grilli says the real culprits are the politicians and urban planners for a city that doesn't know how to plan for its future.

In the last 15 years, Grilli has seen his land holdings mushroom from three tracts in Pierrefonds, Pierrefonds and Ile Bizard to almost all of the undeveloped land on the West Island.

And he now has a stake in three forests which environmentalists are struggling to save from the bulldozer — the Bois Franc in Dollard des Ormeaux, the Anse à l'Orme forest in Ste. Anne de

Bellevue and the Ile Bizard forest.

But Grilli wants environmentalists to know he is not against preserving those forests and says his developments are abundant in green space.

The Ile Bizard resident pointed out that he has offered to sell his 30-hectare portion of the Bois Franc to the Montreal Urban Community for \$15 million — more than twice what he paid for it four years ago.

"We think the Bois Franc is an important forest and should be protected. It's in the heart of the MUC territory," he said.

Grilli blamed the green-space crisis on poor planning by the MUC. "As a developer, we plan ahead for a minimum of five to 10 years. The MUC should have planned ahead 15 years ago and bought the land," he said.

West Island, which was replaced by the Green Coalition in August 1989.

She says it is not right that developers owning huge tracts of land, such as the Groupe immobilier Grilli Inc., negotiate major projects with municipal officials behind closed doors.

"The Grilli corporation is calling the shots. He's drawing the map, not the MUC, with input from citizens. We want to put an end to that."

Local municipalities must make green space a top priority, said Jean-Claude Marsan, head of the faculty of architecture and urban planning at the Université de Montréal.

In this century, the Montreal area mushroomed, but little thought was given to preserving green space, he said. "In the 19th century, it was more common to provide for parks."

Many parks lost

In the late 19th century, Montreal had many public squares and parks, such as St. Louis, Viger and Victoria Squares and the city's pride, the park on Mount Royal, which was created in 1888. But many were lost under new buildings and streets as the city grew.

"In the 20th century, the tradition was lost," Marsan said.

Beaconsfield Mayor Rustad is a leading critic of the coalition. She charges it represents primarily privi-

leged West Island residents who already have more than their fair share of the island's green space. "The West Island people are spoiled," she said. "They've got a lot of park land. The east end people don't."

But Ojemark rejects the perception of the coalition as a West Island movement.

"The West Island has been the focus of the Green Coalition but it's becoming something else," she said. "It started here because there is still some green space left on the West Island."

For Ojemark, the next major challenge is to make the coalition, whose members will elect their first board of directors at a meeting April 4, an effective force throughout the Montreal area.

The coalition has become involved in battles over Oka, where the Kanisatake Mohawk band opposes a proposal by the Oka Golf Club to cut down forest to expand its golf course, to the Iles de Boucherville, where South Shore residents have opposed a planned condominium development.

The coalition proposes to help finance the acquisition of green space by a green lottery and provincial government issue of \$500 million in conservation bonds. The lottery scheme has received accolades, but no firm commitment, from MUC and provincial officials.

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cle and pedestrian paths along railway and hydroelectric lines, acquisition of woodlands and the creation of a "green pole" of parkland on the eastern tip of the island.

The MUC also promised in December to buy or expropriate a 30-hectare chunk of the Bois Franc forest in Dollard des Ormeaux and preserve it as a regional park.

Le Roux, a founding member of the coalition, said the MUC's green-space policy marks a long-overdue turnaround.

"To make the island green again and create access to the water is going to take a change of attitude," she said. "Luckily, Montrealers have wakened up in time."

Despite Montreal's stunning setting, surrounded by water and topped by a mountain, poor planning has made much of the city an ecological wasteland, green-space advocates say.

The city lags far behind Toronto and even behind New York for parkland.

The MUC has 1.27 hectares of parkland per 1,000 inhabitants, compared to 3.7 hectares per 1,000 in Toronto, MUC figures show.

Montreal would need two more parks the size of Mount Royal, in addition to all of the present green space on the island and Ile Bizard, to have an adequate level of green space, said Patrick Donovan, executive director of Conservation Pledge Canada, a nature trust, and an organizer of the Green Coalition.

Vancouver has seven times as much green space per capita as Montreal, Donovan said.

Montreal's green-space deficit is illustrated by a study of biomass — which measures the density of vegetation — commissioned by the MUC in June 1988.

Green space

Satellite images show that 42 per cent of the surface of the MUC has little or no living vegetation — that is, the land is covered with buildings, asphalt and other non-living surfaces.

Forest — considered to have the highest biomass — covers less than 6 per cent of land in the MUC and is limited to Ile Bizard, the West Island and Mount Royal.

Another 22 per cent of the land was rated as low to medium biomass — categories that range from tree-lined residential areas to farmland. Those areas are concentrated on the West Island and a few residential areas closer to the city core such as the Town of Mount Royal.

The few remaining traces of nature are disappearing from the Montreal area at a disturbing rate, says Richard Gaudreau, assistant director of park planning for the MUC.

"If we don't intervene, the situation will continue to deteriorate until it becomes irreversible," he said.

"We're going to see residents leaving the island. We're going to see industries leaving the island — particularly the new, high-technology industries, which emphasize the quality of the environment."

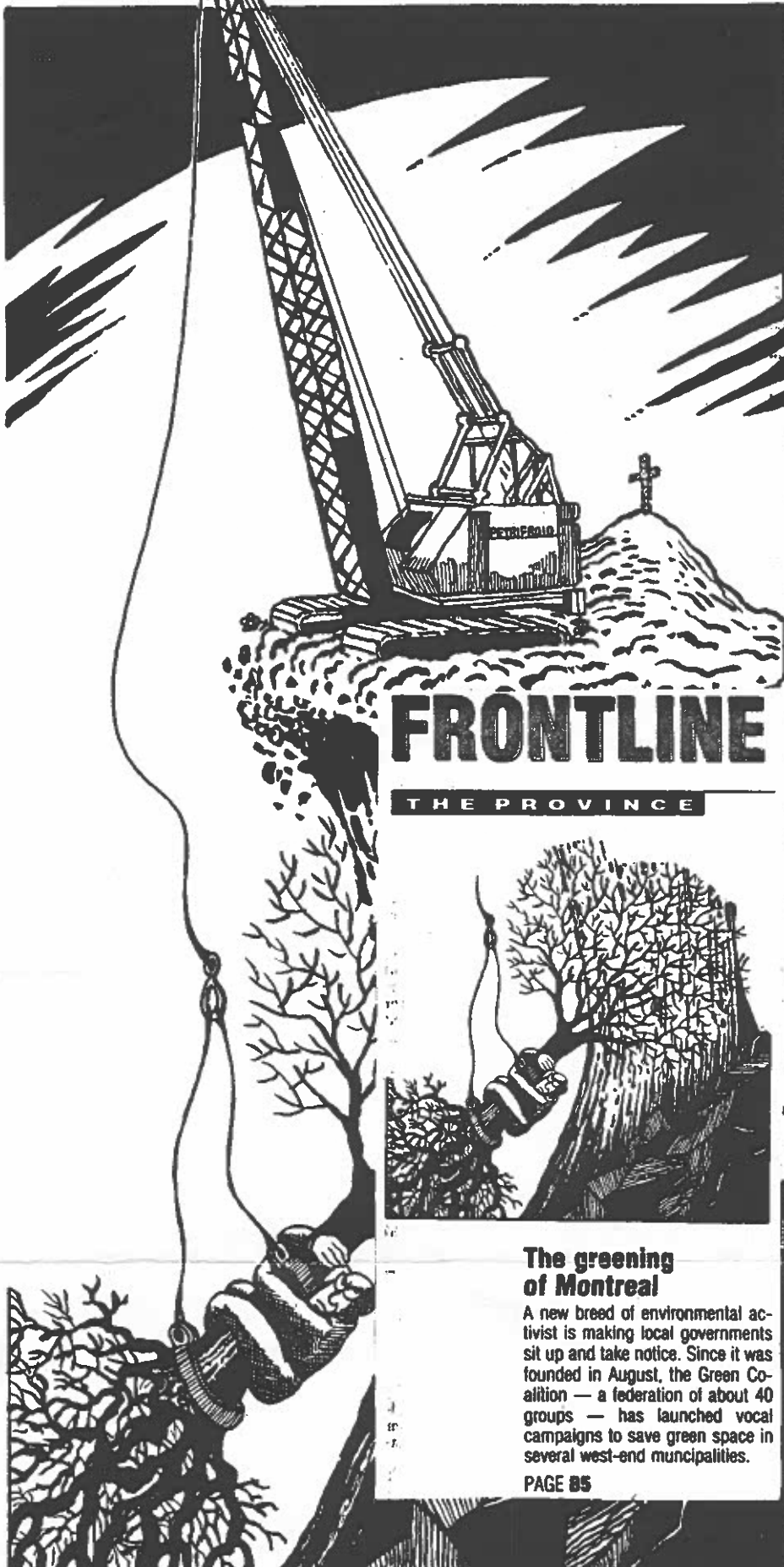
Trees are essential to the environment because they cool the air and purify it by collecting airborne particles and producing oxygen, Gaudreau said. Grass alone has a much smaller impact on air quality and temperature control.

The "lifeless, barren wasteland" much of the city has become also has psychological repercussions, said David Fletcher, president of Citizens for the Bois Franc.

"You pay for this in the level of frustration of your inhabitants. It creates increased violence and aggression," said Fletcher, a Grade 6 teacher in Pierrefonds.

The Green Coalition's roots are in the unspoiled, treed waterfront community of Saraguay next to Cartierville on the Rivière des Prairies. That's where Sylvia Ojemark, 49, the coalition's soft-spoken co-founder and acknowledged inspiration, grew up.

"We're not wild-eyed radicals. We're just middle-of-the-road people



"To make the island green again is going to take a change of attitude," says activist Claire Le Roux.

Where the green spaces are

Following are the undeveloped forested areas that are the subject of preservation battles in the Montreal Urban Community.

■ The Bois Franc:

Size: 45 hectares, 30 hectares in Dollard des Ormeaux and the balance in St. Laurent and Dorval.

Ownership: Real estate developer Mario Grilli owns 30 hectares in Dollard des Ormeaux. Matrox Ltd., an electronics company, owns the Dorval land while there are five different owners in St. Laurent.

Status: Zoned for high density housing, but so far is protected under the MUC's interim green-space freeze. MUC intends to buy forest and is studying whether to expropriate it.

■ Ile Bizard forests:

Size: 220 hectares.

Ownership: Grilli.

Status: Zoned rural and 188 hectares are protected under the MUC's green space freeze. Grilli wants to build a 2,000-unit housing development on 60 hectares in the northwest. The town has accepted his plan, and has proposed to the MUC that the balance be preserved as a regional park.

Forest No. 2 is a 26-hectare woodland near the centre of Ile Bizard. Owned by Grilli, it is zoned agricultural.

■ The Anse à l'Orme forest:

Size: 49 hectares in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Ownership: Grilli owns three-quarters

and Belcourt Inc. owns the balance.

Status: Zoned for residential housing, but is protected under the MUC's green-space freeze. The town has passed a resolution asking the MUC to preserve the land as a regional park.

■ Beaconsfield forest:

Size: 142 hectares.

Ownership: Yale Properties owns 31.5 hectares, Optimum Construction owns 30 hectares and a group of small landowners share the balance.

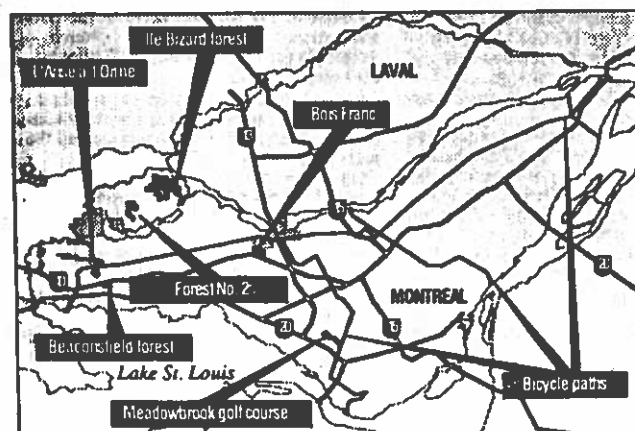
Status: Parts along the strip of land are zoned parkland, single-family dwelling and industrial. Protected under the MUC's green-space freeze. The city has passed a resolution asking the MUC to preserve the land as a regional park.

■ Meadowbrook Golf Course:

Size: 57 hectares; about half in Ville St. Pierre, bordering Montreal West, and half in Côte St. Luc.

Ownership: Marathon Realty, the development arm of Canadian Pacific.

Status: Zoned for low density housing. The citizens' group Guard Our Local Face wants the entire golf course preserved as a green space. Marathon has proposed a 3,000-unit housing development, with 2,000 units in Ville St. Pierre and the rest in Côte St. Luc. On Jan. 29, Côte St. Luc has passed a resolution calling for preservation of the golf course as a green space. Ville St. Pierre is determined to press ahead with housing.



Land developer blames city for poor planning

AARON DERFEL
THE GAZETTE

For environmentalists in the Montreal area, Mario Grilli is public enemy No. 1.

Grilli owns 1.9 million hectares of forests and fields on the island of Montreal and in Ile Bizard, Pincourt, Laval and Blainville — just to name a few municipalities.

He's the biggest and most powerful real-estate developer in the area. In the last 30 years, his company has built more than 5,000 houses.

And if he has his way, he will build thousands more on the land environmentalists claim are the only remaining green spaces on the island.

But Grilli, 54, says he's not the enemy here. He's

just trying to make an honest dollar, and has followed a philosophy that land can make you rich.

"I built my first house with a pick and shovel with my brother in 1957," the Italian-born businessman recalled in an interview in his Kirkland office.

Grilli says the real culprits are the politicians and urban planners for a city that doesn't know how to plan for its future.

In the last 15 years, Grilli has seen his land holdings mushroom from three tracts in Pincourt, Pierrefonds and Ile Bizard to almost all the undeveloped land on the West Island.

And he now has a stake in three forests which environmentalists are struggling to save from the bulldozer — the Bois Franc in Dollard des Ormeaux, the Anse à l'Orme forest in Ste. Anne de

Bellevue and the Ile Bizard forest.

But Grilli wants environmentalists to know he is not against preserving those forests and says his developments are abundant in green space.

The Ile Bizard resident pointed out that he has offered to sell his 30-hectare portion of the Bois Franc to the Montreal Urban Community for \$15 million — more than twice what he paid for it four years ago.

"We think the Bois Franc is an important forest and should be protected. It's in the heart of the MUC territory," he said.

Grilli blamed the green-space crisis on poor planning by the MUC. "As a developer, we plan ahead for a minimum of five to 10 years. The MUC should have planned ahead 15 years ago and bought the land," he said.

Beaconsfield Mayor Rustad is a leading critic of the coalition. She charges it represents primarily privi-

leged West Island residents who already have more than their fair share of the island's green space.

"The West Island people are spoiled," she said. "They've got a lot of park land. The east end people don't."

But Ojemark rejects the perception of the coalition as a West Island movement.

"The West Island has been the focus of the Green Coalition but it's becoming something else," she said.

"It started here because there is still some green space left on the West Island."

For Ojemark, the next major challenge is to make the coalition, whose members will elect their first board of directors at a meeting April 4, an effective force throughout the Montreal area.

The coalition has become involved in battles from Oka, where the Kanisake Mohawk band opposes a proposal by the Oka Golf Club to cut down forest to expand its golf course, to the Ile de Boucherville, where South Shore residents have opposed a planned condominium development.

The coalition proposes to help finance the acquisition of green space by a green lottery and provincial government issue of \$500 million in conservation bonds. The lottery scheme has received accolades, but no firm commitment, from MUC and provincial officials.

Local municipalities must make green space a top priority, said Jean-Claude Marsan, head of the faculty of architecture and urban planning at the Université de Montréal.

In this century, the Montreal area mushroomed, but little thought was given to preserving green space, he said. "In the 19th century, it was more common to provide for parks."

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The greening of Montreal

A new breed of environmental activist is making local governments sit up and take notice. Since it was founded in August, the Green Coalition — a federation of about 40 groups — has launched vocal campaigns to save green space in several west-end municipalities.

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