

Brief Submitted to
L'Office de consultation publique de Montréal
(OCPM)

New Nature Park in the Turcot Yards
in the
Falaise Saint-Jacques Ecoterritory

<http://ocpm.gc.ca/fr/parc-nature>

by

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Citizen of NDG

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Introduction

I would like to submit my opinion on the proposed aspects of this OCPM for New Nature Park in the Turcot Yards in the Falaise Saint-Jacques Ecoterritory.

I am a citizen of NDG and am a member of several local community groups including the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of NDG, Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook, and Sauvons la falaise!

I have had the opportunity to attend workshops in St. Raymonde on the proposed project Oct.20, 2018 and also Feb.3, 2015 in the South-West. As well, I participated in the MTQ workshop on the bande verte / greenway at the foot of the falaise St.Jacques Fall 2017.

It is extremely important that Montreal take every opportunity to increase its green space with its 2015 goal of attaining 10%. We were reminded of this in an article in the [Montreal Gazette. Nov.15.2018](#) (1). When explaining why Montreal spends more per hectare on its parks than any other major Canadian city, Mme. Lefebvre, Montreal's director of large parks, Mount Royal and sports had an interesting explanation. She said that it is not because maintenance costs are higher in Montreal. It is "*rather that the city has less green space per capita than other cities*". In fact, Montreal has the least amount of green space with just 250 hectares per 100,000 inhabitants. For large cities, the median is 473 hectares per 100,000 residents. (1)

1. Future nature park on the Turcot Yards

I look forward to seeing the vision put forth by the OCPM Sept. 25, 2018 implemented. The planting of trees for the wooded areas, prairie areas and wetlands will be very interesting to introduce a new habitat for trees, plants, insects and wildlife allowing for increased biodiversity in the area.

I would like to recommend:

- activities for the four seasons to encourage park users to return often
- a visitor/ interpretation centre and tours for school children, high school, Cegep, university field trips and research, day camps, adults/family activities eg. nature walks

- a naturalized play area for children so they have the opportunity to climb (to avoid climbing the trees in the park which would cause damage to the trees)
 - rental of bikes (Biki?), skis, snow shoes
 - tourism promotion
 - a café attached to encourage people to come, socialize and stay in the park
 - **NO synthetic turf** for any sports facilities. It is not something for a nature park and only increases the heat island effect which the park is to decrease!
 - all paths, bridges and facilities be made accessible for those in wheel chairs
 - a focus on indigenous people, plants, geography and history is important
 - public transportation from all areas around make it easy to access the park
- **Water/ Lake in the Turcot Yards nature park**

The September 25, 2018 OCPM Turcot presentation, page 13 (Principal Components of the New Nature-Park) has "a reminder of "**lac a la Loutre" and the riviere Saint Pierre**" that once occupied the site"

In fact, Dec. 3, 2014, the City of Montreal adopted a motion to protect and promote urban streams on the Island of Montreal. It says that the Water Plan should systematically be looking at the renaturalization of streams, especially when large projects are being planned. (Attachment 1- Motion sur les ruisseaux urbans- Motion 65.05. CM14 1141)

I would like to go further by looking into how the Saint Pierre River on the Meadowbrook Golf Course in Lachine could be daylighted to actually be part of this new park. All the benefits of decreasing water flow in Montreal's storm water sewage system can only take the pressure off the sewer system especially when rainfall is excessive. A further note and map on this subject appears below.

In the book *Montréal at the Crossroads (2)*, Pieter Sijpkens, a McGill Architecture professor, and his students looked into opportunities in the Turcot Yards. Restoring the St. Pierre River was something that was proposed. This could be a great benefit to the public and students in many disciplines.

2. The Pedestrian- Bike/ Dalle-Parc / North-South Link

Certainly, this link will encourage active transportation within the surrounding areas.

From the *Interest Survey Highlights (Mon Parc de Reve- Montreal)* presented at the OCPM public meeting November 1, 2018, p.7, 59% of respondents said they use a bike to get somewhere and 83% use it to relax, or for outdoor activity. Cyclists from the area north of the Falaise will be very interested to use this new link, especially to explore the improved access to the Lachine Canal and the cycle paths along the St. Laurent in LaSalle and Verdun. And those cyclists in the South-West will now have a means of cycling north in a more direct way.

I would also like to see the bridge have as green a theme as possible. The photo ideas as seen in Vancouver, Washington with terraces for vegetation appear inviting. More plant and less cement visible would help to tie the separated parts of the ecoterritory and further a green signature entrance to Montreal.

The grade: The architecture and engineering must take into account a grade which can be used by pedestrians, accessible to all, including those with wheel chairs. As well, cyclists of all ages and abilities need a path which is not too steep going up or down the path.

Multi-use: The design should take into account how pedestrians and cyclists can co-exist on the path with 2 directions.

Connectivity Design: The bridge needs to connect the falaise with the green pathway at the bottom of the falaise as well as the nature park on the Turcot Yards

3. La falaise St.-Jacques

The value of this ecoterritory to the area is important and will be outlined in detail by the group Sauvons la falaise!.

It does not appear to now be part of this OCPM. However, I would concur with Sauvons la falaise that the falaise be protected and left natural for now to encourage biodiversity. I also agree that important decisions as to the future of the falaise be made with input from the public and that the falaise be part of the nature park in the Turcot Yards.

Until such time that the falaise is discussed and the public and stakeholders consulted, no trees should be cut and the falaise should only be used as an educational resource.

It will be important that there be a budget and timeline to discuss the future of the falaise soon to see how it can be incorporated into the larger nature park.

4. Connectivity - Green corridors

Creating more green corridors on the Island of Montreal is important. This new nature park, falaise, bande verte, and the pedestrian/cycle bridge will have the means to (re)connect people and neighbourhoods, fauna, birds, plants, trees, waterways.

Dr. Jochen Jaeger at Concordia University, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment has been involved in research projects about the **connectivity measurements of natural areas in Montreal and in southwestern Montreal** for many years. One project he supervised, *Megan Deslauriers et al. 2018 (3)* highlights, in particular, the greenway network in southwestern Montreal including the importance of including Meadowbrook, a natural green space in the region close to the falaise and the new nature park.

One thing to keep in mind about connecting greenspace and water is that birds, animals, insects ex. butterflies can benefit even if different green spaces or green patches, large or small, are connected by semi-natural areas such as golf courses, cemeteries, parks, railway lines, canals, streams, brownfields. Of course, humans do not have the same flexibility and more effort and creativity is needed to find connections that function well for people walking or cycling to overcome barriers like roads and railroads in the area.

Recommendations:

- a. **Pedestrians and cyclists** will be able to access the areas north and south of the falaise and close to the proposed pedestrian bike bridge. But, we need to see how neighbourhoods to the east, west of the proposed entrance way for the bridge (dalle parc) can also access the area. The boroughs of CDN/NDG and Lachine and Montreal West on the north side of the Turcot nature park need to improve active and public transportation means (cycle paths, inviting sidewalks as part of the greenway, bus connections) for residents of St Raymonde and St. Pierre district of Lachine to easily access the area.

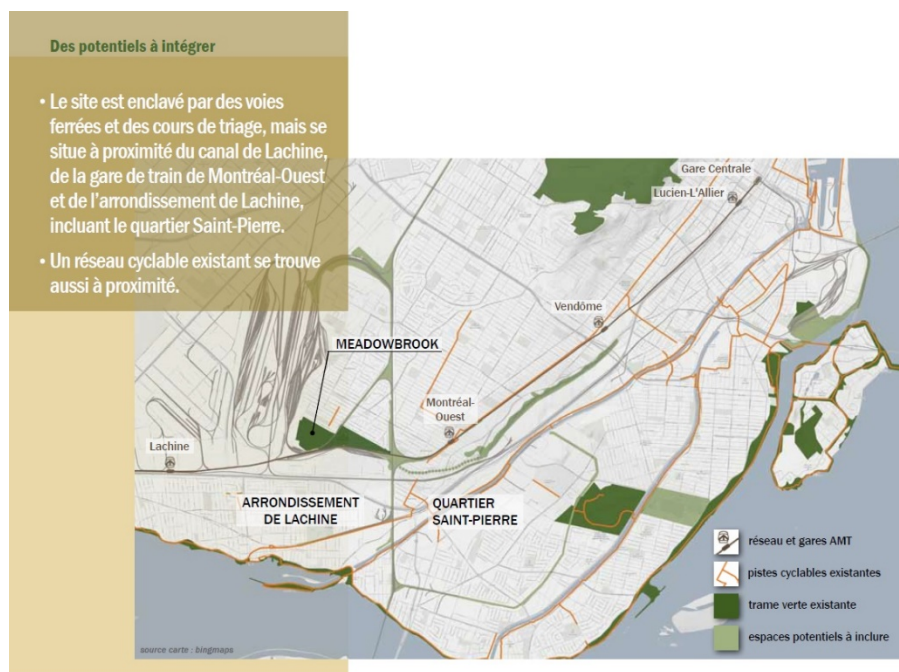
- b. Encourage communication with **Park People**, “an independent charity that builds strong communities by animating and improving parks, placing them at the heart of life in the city.” www.parkpeople.ca
- c. I would recommend that the City regularly consult with the academics such as **Dr Jochen Jaeger** (Concordia University, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment) and co-editor of *Montreal at the Crossroads* (2) and **Dr. Kregg Hetherington**, Concordia Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia Ethnography Lab and the [Waterways Project](#) to benefit from their research in the field, especially as it pertains to Montreal and the Turcot nature park project.

d. Connect to Meadowbrook green space

For almost 30 years, Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook has been promoting an urban nature park on the golf course, located about 1.5 km from the falaise St. Jacques, in Lachine and Cote St Luc. The master plan (5) (6) illustrates the connection to the Falaise St. Jacques to add to a green corridor.

Mission: To protect Meadowbrook from development and transform it into Meadowbrook Park, a new 57-hectare urban nature heritage park, open and accessible to all, and connected through a greenway to a network of parks, including the falaise Saint-Jacques. The master plan provides a framework for creating a park one day.

The master plan for Meadowbrook Park provides a framework for creating a park.



Along with the research at Concordia University discussed above, Patrick Asch (4) makes the case for connecting the 57 hectare green space Meadowbrook with the falaise ecoterritory. Meadowbrook has never been developed except for a golf course and many trees still remain from long ago.

In addition, **the St. Pierre River** can be seen on Meadowbrook and provides the opportunity to consider daylighting the river as it leaves Meadowbrook to lead into the Turcot nature park eventually. See the potential in the Meadowbrook Park Master Plan for the area (5) (6).

The St. Pierre River today and in the past:

photo credit: Nigel Dove



Photo credit: Ville de Montreal archives

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project which we all look forward to having in Montreal one day in the future.

References

- (1) Montreal Gazette. Nov. 15, 2018. A10. <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/park-funding-under-the-spotlight-in-budget-hearings>
- (2) Montreal at the Crossroads. Superhighways, The Turcot and the Environment. (2009) Edited by Gautier, P, Jaeger, J., Prince, J. Chapter 3: What is Still Very Good at Turcot: **Pieter Sijpkes**. Black Rose Books No. NN372. Montreal, Canada
- (3) Deslauriers, M.R., Asgary, A., Nazarnia, N., Jaeger, J.A.G. (2018): **Implementing the connectivity of natural areas in cities as an indicator in the City Biodiversity Index (CBI)**. *Ecological Indicators* 94: 99-113 doi: 10.1016/j.ecolind.2017.02.028 + Corrigendum, *Ecological Indicators* 94: 114-115, doi: 10.1016/j.ecolind.2017.09.037.
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and the Corrigendum: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1470160X17306052>
- (4). Montreal at the Crossroads. Superhighways, The Turcot and the Environment. (2009) Edited by Gautier, P, Jaeger, J., Prince, J. Chapter 4: Turcot, un modele mondial ou un clou dans le cercueil? By **Patrick Asch**. Black Rose Books No. NN372. Montreal, Canada
- (5) [Master Plan](#) for Meadowbrook Park. Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook. 2015
- (6) [Plan Directeur](#) Parc Meadowbrook . Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook. 2015

Attachment 1: pdf file: Ruisseaux urbains. Motion 65.04. CM14 1141 Dec. 3, 2014

City of Montreal.

Extrait authentique du procès-verbal d'une assemblée du conseil municipal

Assemblée ordinaire du lundi 24 novembre 2014
Séance tenue le 25 novembre 2014

Résolution: CM14 1141

Motion de l'opposition officielle sur les ruisseaux urbains

- 1- Attendu qu'à la fin du 19^e siècle, il y avait 36 ruisseaux sur le territoire de l'île de Montréal, dont plus de la moitié s'étendaient sur plusieurs kilomètres;
- 2- Attendu qu'une bonne partie des ruisseaux ont été canalisés dans les années 1940 et 1950, entraînant leur disparition complète ou partielle dans les secteurs fortement urbanisés;
- 3- Attendu que depuis 1988, 20 ruisseaux et cours d'eau situés sur l'île de Montréal font l'objet d'un suivi de la qualité de l'eau, par le Réseau de suivi des milieux aquatiques, et que celle-ci est considérée comme mauvaise ou polluée dans plus de la moitié des cas selon l'indice RUISSO;
- 4- Attendu que les ruisseaux sont des éléments importants d'un écosystème puisqu'ils sont des habitats et refuges pour plusieurs espèces, et que leur présence contribue à la richesse de la biodiversité;
- 5- Attendu que la qualité des eaux du fleuve Saint-Laurent et de la rivière des Prairies dépend de la qualité de ses affluents;
- 6- Attendu que les ruisseaux augmentent la capacité et la superficie disponible pour évacuer les eaux de ruissellement notamment lors d'orages intenses ou en période de dégel et diminuent le risque d'inondation et de surverses;
- 7- Attendu que les ruisseaux offrent une alternative beaucoup moins onéreuse et plus écologique que les bassins de rétention souterrains des eaux usées qui coûtent plus de 1000 \$ par m³ et qui ne servent que quelques heures par année;
- 8- Attendu que leur parcours naturellement sinueux ralentit la vitesse de l'eau et diminue l'érosion comparativement à l'écoulement linéaire en conduite, et qu'ils permettent l'infiltration de l'eau dans le sol;
- 9- Attendu que les ruisseaux et leurs bandes riveraines végétalisées sont des îlots de fraîcheur naturels et jouent un rôle important sur le plan de la santé et du bien-être des montréalais;

Il est proposé par M. Sylvain Ouellet

appuyé par M. Peter McQueen

- 1- que la Ville de Montréal s'engage à réaliser des plans de protection et d'aménagement des ruisseaux urbains existants à Montréal;
- 2- que la Ville de Montréal évalue systématiquement la possibilité de créer ou de recréer des ruisseaux urbains dans la conception de ces grands projets, notamment dans le redéveloppement du site de l'hippodrome.

Un débat s'engage.

Il est proposé par Mme Chantal Rouleau

appuyé par M. Jean-François Parenteau

d'apporter les amendements suivants à la motion sous étude :

- de modifier le 6^e « Attendu » afin qu'il se lise comme suit : « Attendu que dans le cas des ruisseaux sous-alimentés, il serait possible de les mettre à contribution pour évacuer les eaux de ruissellement notamment lors d'orages intenses ou en période de dégel et diminuer le risque d'inondation et de surverses »;
- de modifier le 7^e « Attendu » afin qu'il se lise comme suit : « Attendu que certains ruisseaux asséchés dans le passé pourraient aider à l'évacuation des pluies et éviter ou réduire la taille de certains bassins de rétention des eaux strictement pluviales »;
- de remplacer le 8^e « Attendu » par le suivant : « Attendu que les ruisseaux et leurs bandes riveraines végétalisées sont des îlots de fraîcheur naturels et jouent un rôle important sur le plan de la santé et du bien-être des Montréalais »;

- d'ajouter les « Attendus » suivants :

« Attendu l'adoption de la déclaration sur le Plan de l'Eau au conseil municipal d'août 2014 (CM14 0723) par laquelle la Ville de Montréal s'engage à réaliser des projets avec les partenaires du milieu, d'ici le 375^e anniversaire de Montréal en 2017 »;

« Attendu que ce Plan de l'eau vise non seulement à réaliser des projets mais que ceux-ci soient intégrés et cohérents, dans une perspective de développement durable et d'accessibilité à l'eau par la population »;

« Attendu que la renaturalisation de certains ruisseaux est une constituante importante de ce Plan ».

- de modifier le « Résolu » comme suit :

« que la Ville de Montréal, dans le cadre du Plan de l'Eau, s'engage à :

- réaliser des plans de protection et d'aménagement des ruisseaux urbains existants à Montréal;
- réaliser la renaturalisation de certains tronçons de ruisseaux actuellement canalisés pour en faire des infrastructures vertes;
- évaluer systématiquement la possibilité de créer ou de recréer des ruisseaux urbains dans la conception des grands projets, notamment dans le redéveloppement du site de l'hippodrome ».

Le président du conseil juge les propositions d'amendements des conseillers Rouleau et Parenteau recevable.

Le conseiller Marvin Rotrand soulève une question de privilège déplorant le fait que les documents d'amendements ne sont pas distribués assez rapidement.

Un débat s'engage sur la proposition d'amendement des conseillers Rouleau et Parenteau.

Le président du conseil met aux voix l'article 65.04, tel qu'amendé et le déclare adopté à l'unanimité, et il est

RÉSOLU

en conséquence.

65.04
/cb

Denis CODERRE

Maire

Colette FRASER

Greffière adjointe

(certifié conforme)

Colette FRASER
Greffière adjointe

Signée électroniquement le 3 décembre 2014