

Policy respecting the protection and enhancement of the natural environment:  
**Brief to the Office de la consultation publique de Montreal,**

**Re: Meadowbrook Golf Course - its protection and enhancement**

Presented Monday May 3rd 2004 7: 30 p.m.  
Eglise Notre-Dame des Neiges Parish Hall, 5320 Cote-des-Neiges Rd.

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**Meadowbrook Golf Course:**

**Goal:**

To secure and enhance Meadowbrook as an ecologically sensitive greenspace, golf course, recreational area and buffer zone. Its preservation must be assured in a comprehensive manner, taking into account adjacent properties, bounded on the west by heavy industries, toxic waste sites, railways and on the east by residential neighbourhoods. The protection of Meadowbrook will benefit flora, fauna and the human environment. All these must be included in the environmental protection plan.

Section 1:

**Physical/Historical/Ecological profiles:**

**Physical profile:**

Meadowbrook covers 57 hectares, (141 acres), and straddles two boroughs:  
-- 31 hectares in Cote Saint-Luc/Hampstead/Montreal West  
-- 26 hectares in Lachine. (Formerly Ville St. Pierre) (see Annex 1)

**Historical profile:**

The site was originally used as farmland prior to being purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railway for recreational purposes for its employees (circa 1917). It was transformed into an 18 hole golf course in the 1930's and remains in use as a public golf course, although now leased to a private operator. Over the years, the land's name has changed from Canadian Pacific Recreation Club to Wentworth Golf Club to the present name of Meadowbrook. (see Annex 1)

**Cultural significance:**

Meadowbrook's architectural design as a golf course is of interest, as it represents an older style that is quickly disappearing, according to Graham Cooke, expert Golf course architect.

**Patrimonial value:**

One of the tributaries of the historic St. Pierre River (Hochelaga Settlement), is present on the southern part of the golf course (Lachine). Although this southern branch of the Little St. Pierre is heavily polluted, today some consideration should be given to revitalizing this river in order to capture storm water overflow. The MUC Environment Committee classified it at its highest level (Indice Ruiss, IR=5). Most of the stream was capped in the 1950's and converted into a storm sewer/collector. (See Annex 2)

**Ecological value and biological diversity:**

Meadowbrook possesses valuable visual and physical features in terms of its vegetation and topography including rolling hills, mature trees and water features. It is an ecological zone for wildlife including fox, skunk, ground hog, hare, frogs, etc. A wide variety of birds nest there. Ducks roost in the early spring due to the availability of water runoff. Canada geese and other migratory birds use it as a way station. Many valuable trees are present, some over 75-100 years old: basswood, white ash, black cherry, bitternut hickory, white willow, as well as silver maple. According to Michel Labreque tree physiologist of the *Institut de recherche en biologie végétale* in a report written on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1994:

*«Le principal intérêt écologique du territoire réside probablement dans le rôle de tampon qu'il joue. Le terrain de golf Meadowbrook constitue une superficie importante qui sépare des quartiers à vocations fort différentes. D'un côté la zone industrielle de Ville St-Pierre, de l'autre des quartiers résidentielles de Côte St-Luc et de Montréal Ouest. Le développement du secteur en zone domiciliaire aurait pour effet de détruire cette zone tampon essentielle, je crois, à la qualité de vie et l'environnement des résidents.*

*Le territoire de Meadowbrook supporte une diversité importante d'espèces végétales et animales dont plusieurs sont menacées de disparaître suite au développement d'un complexe domiciliaire. A l'échelle de l'île de Montréal les espaces verts se font de plus en plus rares et chaque fois qu'un terrain boisé disparaît c'est un morceau de nature et la toute la diversité biologique qui disparaît en même temps. Le territoire comme celui dont il est question constitue une île dans un océan d'asphalte et de béton, le projet de*

*développement la menace de disparition et cette disparition aura certes des conséquences sur les populations de plantes, d'oiseaux et des autres animaux de l'ensemble de l'environnement de la région. »*

(See Annex 3)

**Location:**

As major green space:

Between Mount Royal Park to the east, Angrignon Park to the South, and Bois de Liesse Park to the northwest Meadowbrook is the only significant green space in the West End. It is as far west from central Montreal as Maisonneuve Park (a former golf course), is to Mount Royal's eastern slope. With its century-old trees, it acts as the "lungs of the West End". In view of the present distribution of major regional parks on the island, Meadowbrook is the only remaining large tract of land of its size in Montreal's west-central core. No other green space in this sector could replace it as a regional park. (See Annex 4, 5)

As a buffer zone:

Situated on the western border of the borough of Cote Saint Luc/Hampstead Montreal West, this golf course is landlocked and accessible only from the east through Cote St Luc Road. Surrounded on three sides by the CP railway tracks and yards, it serves as a buffer zone for the residential areas protecting them from the railway tracks and industrial/rail yards situated in the Lachine and Cote Saint Luc sectors. These tracks are used for the transportation of passenger, cargo and hazardous materials and are operating 24 hours a day.

Other industrial activities in the adjacent properties along rue Norman and Highway 20, include chemical yards, automobile transfer compounds, high-tension wires, the future AMT Sortin commuter coach yard (if the MUHC is built on the Glen Yard). Furthermore, a recently announced zoning change in the Lachine sector provides for new industrial installations just west of the Club House. These new facilities will include a decontamination platform with a capacity to treat 100,000 tons of contaminated soil per year, serviced by 10 trucks per hour, as well as a new major asphalt production plant built by Pavages Chenail.

This "technological risk" to the Meadowbrook environment has often been recognized by the MUC in reports and resolutions dating back to 1990. (See Resolution September 8<sup>th</sup> 2003, and all resolutions and reports attached in Annex 6.) As well the safe distance setbacks between industrial facilities and sensitive land uses have not been adequately addressed in Quebec as they have been in Ontario by the Ontario Municipal Guidelines on compatibility between industry and sensitive land uses. (See Annex 6)

The importance of public safety and security, access and emergency evacuations has often been raised by the MUC and the former cities of Montreal West and Côte Saint Luc in connection with the preservation of Meadowbrook. The value and vocation of this site as a necessary green space protecting the health and safety of its surrounding

populations has often been recognized. (See Annex 6) More recently, the proposed Montreal Urban Master Plan recognized Meadowbrook's significance as a valuable green space in terms of public security, health and welfare of its neighbouring citizens. In its description of this site as a "secteur de planification détaillé", the City of Montreal has urged the concerned boroughs to find an accommodation for this site. (See Master Plan Annex 7)

### **"L'interarrondissementalité" and contiguous zoning:**

In this case there is a conflict of zoning. In the year 2000, after many years of debate, controversy and public outcry, the former City of Côte Saint Luc re-zoned the 9 holes in its jurisdiction as Recreational/Commerce. The Lachine borough inherited the zoning from Ville St. Pierre which is residential medium to high density for approximately 1200 housing units. This conflict of zoning engenders many debates and discussions. The future status of Meadowbrook affects these and other sectors of the west end including Côte-des-Neiges/NDG. It is imperative that neighbouring boroughs be included in the decision making process when major projects from one borough affect a wider area. One city, one island should not have any barriers or borders. (See Annex 8, 9)

### **Recreation and tourism:**

According to a 1989 report of the MUC Planning Department entitled "Projet de politique sur les espaces verts" there is a need for eight additional golf courses on the Island of Montreal. The norm is one 18 hole golf course per 100,000 people. Montreal Island needs eighteen courses. Only 9 public golf courses exist: three have 36 holes, three have 18 holes including Meadowbrook, and three are 9 hole courses. In addition to the Nun's Island driving range, there are three private courses in the City of Montreal. Fresh Meadows in Saint Laurent Borough is the latest course to close. (See Annex 10, 11) As well Fairmont Hotels who presently owns the course have an award winning Green Partnership Program committed to environmentally responsible golf course management. A major thrust of this initiative is the enrolment of all Fairmount Hotels golf courses in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, a program designed to optimise the use of golf course green space as a refuge and habitat for wildlife. (See Annex 12)

## Section 2

### **Conservation and management objectives:**

- Supplement the deficiency of natural spaces in the West End of Montreal.
- Preserve biodiversity by protecting the remaining natural spaces of ecological interest
- Preserve Meadowbrook as a public golf course. It is centrally located and serves a diverse clientele including many seniors.

- Increase public accessibility to Meadowbrook's natural spaces.
- Preserve the inherent value of Meadowbrook as a buffer zone or "zone tampon" between heavy industry, the railways and the residential sectors.
- Maintain it as a valuable winter recreational resource. For example, Cross country skiing and snow shoeing, etc.
- Develop the potential of Meadowbrook through recreational tourism and connect the site by train with downtown hotels as was done in the past.
- Draw up a protection plan based upon the New Master Urban Plan in concert with the concerned boroughs.
- "Green the greens". That is apply the policy of Fairmont Hotels particularly the initiative of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System. This includes:
  - Environmental planning
  - Wildlife and habitat management
  - IPM/Integrated pest management
  - Water conservation
  - Outreach and school education

Other conservation and management initiatives could include:

Habitat mapping of flora and fauna. Biological, toxicological and archaeological tests to be conducted by environmental scientists. Naturalize non-play areas and forested areas even more. Encourage and develop wetlands by installing water hazards. Top dead trees and leave them standing to encourage woodpeckers and other wildlife. Protect the den site of the fox. (See Annex 12)

### **Conclusion:**

We encourage the members of the Office de consultation to tour Meadowbrook and appraise its natural value and potential and appreciate the great community need for this green space for the sake of the flora, fauna and human species.

Respectfully,

Avrom Shtern and Wendy Dodge

## **Annexes to Meadowbrook Brief**

1. Wentworth Development Concept, see pages 2 to 7, 11, and figures 5 A and 5 B.
2. Réseau de suivi du milieu aquatique, MUC.
3. Lettre de Michel Labrecque de l'Institut de recherche en biologie végétale dated June 1 1994.
4. Côte Saint Luc Meadowbrook pamphlet 1989.
5. Map of Montreal's Regional Parks 2003.
6. Resolution re Meadowbrook, Borough Cote Saint Luc/Hampstead/Montreal West September 8<sup>th</sup> 2003 paragraphs 5, 7, 12 and all annexed documents.
7. Preliminary Montreal Urban Master Plan, Chapter 4-19.
8. Rapport de Consultation Publique OCPM re: Document complémentaire, le 5 septembre 2003, Considérations Transversales p. 42.
9. Rapport de Consultation Publique OCPM re: Projet de modification du plan d'urbanisme RDP/PAT/ Mtl-Est. OCPM le 4 mars 2004, p. 8.
10. Projet de politique sur les espaces verts, MUC Service de la planification du territoire, 14 septembre 1989.
11. Golf 2004 Special supplement of the Gazette April 10th 2004.
12. Best Environmental Practices at Fairmont Hotels and Resorts Golf Course
- (13) Notice of zoning change Lachine, map of location of projected asphalt and decontamination plants
- (14) Flyers re Meadowbrook.