

Good evening,

I'd like to start off by saying thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion here tonight. It means a lot to me and please know that I am speaking on behalf of **MANY**, seeing how there are some who are too busy and others who are simply too shy to voice their opinions. There are others still who are not even aware of the situation (due to language barriers and other reasons) and they therefore cannot give their opinion. Just know that I do not stand alone when I say that I do not want ANY more of the remaining green-spaces to be torn down.

I have lived in Chateauguay for most of my life, which is more than 3 decades (actually closer to 4!). I moved away for a short while, as a young adult, but I returned not long after, because Chateauguay is **my home**. As a child, I spent my most cherished memories outside in nature. However, as time goes on, I realize that we do not have many green spaces left. This saddens me, as I love to be outdoors and in nature. My children also love to be outdoors, exploring and learning. As an educator, I feel as though exploring nature is very important to one's development. In this day in age, where children are easily addicted to technology, nature serves as a breath of fresh air and a way to connect with what really matters. Nobody can contest the fact that being in nature is good for both our physical and emotional health. If we change the bi-laws to allow more partial destruction of the green-belt, it opens opportunities for more and more development over time. We **NEED** to protect these forested areas now. Please help us to save them.

One reason why I am opposed to more residential development is that it inevitably increases the population and with a bigger population, comes more problems. For example, there is a lack of finite resources, such as water. As it is, we are not allowed to water our grass for most of the summer, due to lack of water. Many Chateauguay residents have also voiced their concerns over issues with reoccurring brown drinking water. With a bigger population, comes increased traffic. Nobody likes traffic and we all know that the Mercier bridge traffic is horrendous as it is. With a bigger population, comes an increased crime rate. Just last year, there were several shootings, 2 of them, just blocks away from my home. There was also an armed robbery at a dépanneur, just blocks away from where my children sleep. I still can't believe that there was even a bank robbery...again, just minutes away from where I live. These things did not used to happen here in Chateauguay, several years ago. It was unheard of in our community, where we could literally go to sleep at night, with our doors unlocked!

Date	Incident	Source
September 2019	Shooting on Jack Circle Street	(globalnews.ca)
November 2019	Armed robbery at Honolulu Depanneur	(cybersoleil.com)
February 2020	Stabbing at La Choie Resto-Bar	(montrealgazette.com)
June 2020	Bank Robbery	(cybersoleil.com)
June 2020	Shooting on Marc-Laplane Street	(globalnews.ca)
August 2020	30 year old man shot and killed at Parc de la Commune	(ctvnews.ca)

If I try to look at the positives of further housing development in Chateauguy and Lery, I do not seem many, if any. Some may say that urban development stimulates economic growth. However, I do not see those benefits here in Chateauguy. I simply see MANY more housing units being built, but it does not seem to create many more jobs or enterprises. For example, our biggest local shopping centre, in the heart of Chateauguy, has been seen as somewhat of a "ghost town" for quite some time now (even before the pandemic), with the entire restaurant section closing over a year ago. Le FAUBOURG, just off of Highway 30, was intended to be a commercial complex, something similar to the shopping area at Quartier Dix30. The developers tore down the green-space and built a Walmart in January of 2013. More than 7 years later, no other companies have been built on that barren stretch of land. In addition, the entire mall on Principale Street was recently torn down. All of this to say, there are many new homes being built in Chateauguy, but not much new is being offered to the growing number of people.

I decided to look at some of the high-density housing development that Chateauguy has undergone within the past 5 years. For example:

- The "Vice Versa" building on Gaspe Street opened 175 apartments in June of 2016.
- Quartier du Centre, just off of Principale Street, is another example of recent high-density housing development. I counted 360 condos/apartments and it looks as though they are planning to build several more in that area.
- A very sad day for many residents of Chateauguy, was when the old Zellers was torn down in order to build **Square St-Francis** (at the corner of St. Jean-Baptiste and St. Francis), which is a 546 unit project. That's 546 more *families* right there!

[The 1st building of 59 units was said to be available for the summer of 2019].

If I count the total of these 3 projects alone, the number of dwellings has already increased by 1081 in a very short amount of time. What concerns me is that if we allow bylaw 215 to come into effect, there is a potential for 1,400 more units to be built (according to urban consultant Jean-Francois Vachon) within the Green-Corridor (given the "Growing Greener" scenario).

There seems to be a direct correlation with the increased housing development that Chateauguay has already endured over the past 5 years and sewage spills. The data shows that our systems are currently not equipped to deal with such large amounts of waste. I collected data for 2015 and 2019 (from "foundationrivers.org") in order to show the increase in sewage spills over the past few years.

Chateauguay Data:	2015	2019
Number of spills	236	768
Intensity of the spills	14,803	586,829
Duration of the spills (HOURS)	316	4,557

The important part to note here is that not only have the "number of spills" and "intensity of the spills" increased drastically over the course of the past 5 years, but the duration of the spills has really increased at an alarming rate! Let's just take a moment to let that sink in...so, in 2015 there was 316 hours of spills, so that's spillage into our river for approximately 13 whole days out of the 365 day calendar. Yuck! But then, in 2019 feces spilled into the Chateauguay River for 4,557 hours, which translates into 189 days out of 365 days...that's more than half of the year! I'm quite concerned about the increase in sewage spills that are not even projected here yet, for 2020.

According to the Government of Quebec, "Water quality is first and foremost a matter of protecting public health. This applies both to human consumption and activities involving contact with water (swimming and water sports)."

<http://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/eau/politique/index-en.htm> The Quebec Government site also says "When ecosystems break down and water quality deteriorates, the benefits for the population are reduced accordingly. This situation threatens the entire food chain, and consequently, the very survival of human populations. Water has no substitute." Upon further research, I discovered that sewage exposure, either from direct contact or from animals that have been in contact with sewage, can cause several diseases in humans, including: bacterial, viral and diseases caused by parasites.

(<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-enhealth-manual-atsi-cnt-l~ohp-enhealth-manual-atsi-cnt-l-ch2~ohp-enhealth-manual-atsi-cnt-l-ch2.3>)

It's clear that there is an increase in sewage spills that coincides with increased housing development. Not only is it ecologically unfriendly to have such huge amounts of spills run into the Chateauguay River, it literally STINKS! I have put in several requests to do something about the smell at the St. Eugene Pumping Station, seeing how I live in close proximity to it. It is really distasteful to have a backyard family BBQ and to literally have to smell feces. When I did a simple Google search, I asked "Is Breathing in sewage harmful?" and the answer was "Hydrogen sulfide is **dangerous** even at low levels. Prolonged exposure to sewer gas can cause irritability, headaches, fatigue, sinus infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, loss of appetite, poor memory and dizziness." Despite some efforts on behalf of the Head of Environmental Hygiene of Chateauguay, the problem remains. The overflow of the spills runs into the Chateauguay River, a place where I used to swim as a child and young teenager. This to me, is detestable and the problem needs to be solved before we bring in more residents and therefore more waste.

On another note, the green-space within the Chateauguay-Lery Corridor is something that I think should be protected forever, as it is without question an invaluable ecosystem. It is important to really realize the value of the green space within the Green Corridor. Botanist Andre Sabourin claims "In **twenty** years of professional practice in field botany, I have rarely inventoried territories so rich in rare or interesting plants, over comparable areas." He also concluded that the greenbelt **SHOULD** be designated as a protected conservation in the zoning plans of Chateauguay and Lery and that the Chateauguay-Lery Greenbelt is globally an exceptional forest ecosystem. We cannot ignore the science. Luc Lecuyer (DG, Heritage Saint Bernard), also showed the importance of conserving the land, as he said:

*« La nature qu'on protège ici, les végétaux principalement et les marécages, sont essentiels à la vie. Sont essentiels pour retenir l'eau. Le marécage c'est une grosse éponge qui retient de l'eau. Quand il pleut beaucoup, ça le retient et quand il y a des temps de sécheresse, ça la libère lentement. Alors, si t'enlève les milieux naturels, tu vas avoir un apport d'eau **BEAUCOUP** trop rapide vers la rivière parce qu'il ya pas de rétention et ça va créer des inondations »*

Lecuyer further explained that the Chateauguay-Lery Green Corridor is considered an EFE, which is "un écosystème forestier exceptionnel, le **plus haut**, et il faudrait le protéger à cause de sa valeur écologique ». He also mentioned « C'est la plus importante frayère (spawning ground) du Lac Saint-Louis, alors si on l'enlève, tu vas assister une grande diminution de poissons pour le Lac St-Louis. Le Lac St-Louis c'est le plan d'eau le plus pêcher à Québec...Le cote économique, c'est plusieurs centaines de milliers de dollars par année pour la pêche ... Si on se met à mettre des

maisons un peu partout la dedans, tu vas empêcher la libre circulation de l'eau et tu vas avoir un frayère qui marche pas, ou qui marche très peu. »

There are many more points that I can touch on when it comes to the importance of protecting this valuable land (global warming, rare species, etc.), however, I realize there is a time limit as well.

One point that I would like to emphasize is that the people of Chateauguy continuously voice that they DO NOT WANT to lose any more green-space, as we have already lost so much...however, the issue of tearing down green-spaces in order to build, keeps coming up (For example: Lang Street 2020, Robert and Bernard Street 2020, Chateauguy-Lery Greenbelt also in 2020). We can remove trees in order to build houses, however, we cannot remove houses in order to build forests. Once a forest is destroyed, it's gone forever (along with all of the biodiversity), which is why we need to protect the Green Corridor. I've heard on several accounts that the mayor of Chateauguy does not have the support of his city council in the procedure to adopt bi-law 215 and there is good reason for it. Like the mayor of Ville de Lery said: « Si on fait ça, c'est le commencement de la destruction totale du bois », which I believe is true. In closing, I'd like to quote Chateauguy Mayor, Pierre-Paul Routhier, when he re-opened Industrial Boulevard in October of 2020

(www.cybersoleil.com Le mercredi 21 octobre 2020). He said "Le boulevard a coûté 13.5M\$. Il va durer un minimum de 35 ans. Mais le 13.5M\$, sachez que ce n'est pas une dépense, mais un investissement ». I would love to hear him say the same about purchasing the invaluable land within the Green Corridor. Surely, it would be an investment that would last more than 35 years.

In closing, I'd like to thank you again for your special attention to this situation, that means a lot to so many people. I'd also like to thank the non-profit organization SOS Forêt Fernand-Seguin for their continued support and especially to Guy Turcotte, who spends tireless hours attempting to inform the people about information that is difficult to find, while trying to protect the forests. It has literally become a full time job trying to piece together this puzzle and I hope you appreciate my continuous efforts. There are still some things that are a mystery to me (such as why some are threatening to sue 44 million dollars for a plot of land that is valued at approximately 2 million dollars). However, I am thankful that SOS Forêt Fernand-Seguin has a very good plan (to create a large Regional Park accessible to all citizens), a Scenario 3, if you will, that will hopefully protect the green-space forever. Please don't let our people down. Please help us to protect the Chateauguy-Lery Green Corridor. Thank-you!