

# Potential Paradise vs Parking Lot

The Dispute over Fairview Forest

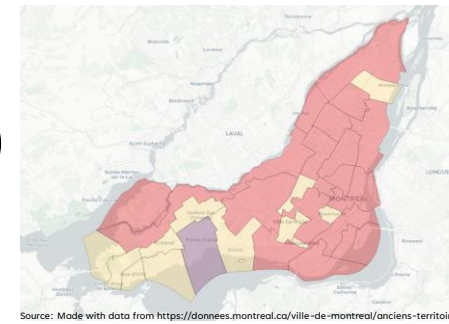
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Case Study #2  
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Source: Google Maps Streetview Jun 2021.

# Pointe-Claire, the Mall, and the Forest

- Pointe-Claire (blue) suburb of Montreal (red) (33 488 people in 2021)
- New REM light rail station (red circle top right) being built at shopping mall with existing bus station
- Owners of mall, a major developer, created plan for mixed-use TOD, “downtown of West Island”
- Adjacent parcel of undeveloped forest as well as parking lot would be build over (stage one in red bottom)



Source: Made with data from <https://donnees.montreal.ca/ville-de-montreal/anciens-territoires>



Source: <https://www.pointe-claire.ca/en/residents-services/reseau-express-metropolitain/>



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# Vanishing wilderness



1970



Today



The future?

- Area has become built up over the decades, suburban, car-centric
- Developers have plans to reduce forest from ~50 acres to <10 acres (red outline)
- Last undeveloped parcel in area, originally owned by a college but sold off
- New development could house ~10 000 people by developer estimates

# Points of Disagreement

- Developing a large part of the forested land is counter-intuitive to sustainability goals
- Fear of new tall buildings, NIMBYism
- Fear of the town developing too quickly, but need for growth and density
- Lack of public engagement in the plan, but the process has barely formally begun, public wants transparency and fears developer is bypassing process
- Mayor and council passed a development freeze for a portion of the town including the forest site in Feb. 2022



# Stakeholders for slow or no development

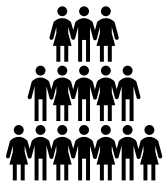




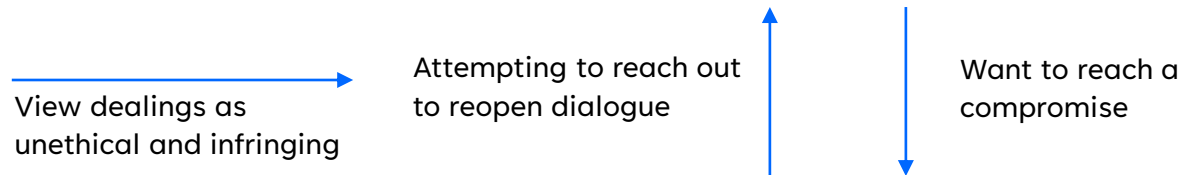
# Stakeholders for resuming the planning process



**The rest of city council:** many feel the discourse surrounding the plan is disingenuous, want growth in town, desire compromise, feel blocked by mayor and threatened by activists



**General public:**  
fear being left out  
of process



**The developer:** owns the forest and mall, feels wronged by the development freeze and stonewalling, filed suit against the city Mar. 2022 which remains ongoing

# As it stands

- Litigation is ongoing
- Jan. 30, 2023 – Special meeting of town council, mayor is overruled, resolved to have private meeting with developers and reopen discussions
- Development freeze remains
- Citizens at meeting directing outrage at councillors
- No alternative plans yet proposed
- No participatory events scheduled by city



# Recommendations

- Reopening discussions and allow planning process to proceed is a necessary first step
- Make intent clear to have public feedback
- Preserve the remaining parcel of forest, build over more of the parking lot
- Try to disregard NIMBY arguments, allow for more density/taller buildings if it offsets clearcutting the forest
- Consider if the forest can be responsibly turned into a nature park, long term preservation, natural greenspace could enhance the development





# Sources

## Environmental Activists:

- <https://sauvonslaforetfairview.org/>

## Developers:

- <https://courbanize.com/projects/pointeclair/documents>

## City of Pointe-Claire:

- <https://webtv.coop/channel/video/20232D012D30-Assemblee-Extraordinaire-de-la-Ville-de-Pointe2DClaire/5e6f680ea0d69af2af2733513014201c/4>
- <https://www.pointe-claire.ca/en/residents-services/reseau-express-metropolitain/>

## Canadian Census:

- <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/search-recherche/productresults-resultatsproduits-eng.cfm?Lang=E&GEOCODE=2021A00052466097>

## News articles:

- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/pointe-claire-citizens-challenge-mayors-downtown-vision-for-suburb>
- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/pointe-claire-mayoral-candidates-tap-into-voter-dissent>
- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/pointe-claire-puts-brakes-on-development-with-temporary-freeze>
- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/cadillac-fairview-building-a-downtown-for-10000-in-west-island>
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- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/cadillac-fairview-takes-legal-action-against-pointe-claire-over-freeze>
- <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/pointe-claire-to-hold-special-council-meeting-on-cadillac-fairview-development>
- [https://www.thesuburban.com/news/west\\_island\\_news/tense-pointe-claire-council-meeting-over-cadillac-fairview-resolution/article\\_36957cbc-5aec-5cfb-a14f-26045945054f.html](https://www.thesuburban.com/news/west_island_news/tense-pointe-claire-council-meeting-over-cadillac-fairview-resolution/article_36957cbc-5aec-5cfb-a14f-26045945054f.html)
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/councillor-resigns-pointe-claire-1.6710436>