

The Conservation Working Group/CWG

These are the summarised recommendations from the CWG commissioned on January 10th, 2022 with the mandate to provide recommendations on the priorities identified in the 2020 Eco2Urb report.

Group members

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Wetlands (treed and open):

- Use Tier 1 established by Eco2Urb as a guide to identify areas already protected by current bylaws such as rivers and their 10-15 m riparian strip, wetlands (and +10 m buffer), slopes (>20% grade). ZIS (special intervention zone, flooding), as well as public parks and conservation zones;
- No backfilling, excavation, drainage or construction in Tier 1 or in any other wetland not depicted in Tier 1;
- Width of a wetland buffer zone to be defined from the actual external limit of wetland, not the highwater mark.

Forests:

- Enforce restrictions written by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) to the Bois et corridors forestiers métropolitains (BCFM) already identified on the territory and work to include the Como Forest as part of these BCFM;
- Extend BCFM restrictions to all unprotected wooded areas outside the Urban Perimeter (i.e., those that are not CIMA+ Boisés d'intérêt already protected according to R526.15-2021);
- Restrict tree felling within the CIMA+ Boisés d'intérêt located within the Urban Perimeter;
- Minimize forest fragmentation within the Urban Perimeter by limiting the proportion of tree felling in all wooded areas;
- Create a catalogue of "*Mother Trees*", (trees with a diameter at breast height (1.3 m) > 80 cm, and severely restrict any interference with them except in exceptional circumstances.

Connectivity:

- Create a map showing all primary blue (river/wetland) and green (forested) corridors within the territory;
- Enforce the 10 to 15 m buffer/riparian strip along blue corridors where gaps exist;
- Establish a 30 m buffer along blue corridors where land use will be limited e.g., tree felling for any reason other than removing dead or dying trees and prohibiting the use of fertilizers or pesticides;

- Establish a 60 m wide green corridor (width based on CIMA+) where there is no blue corridor to ensure connectivity (e.g., Gary Cirko trail).

Additional:

- When biological studies are conducted, one must adhere to the “Site Characterization Requirements” (see below);
- Significantly increase fines and penalties for non compliance of these regulations.

Site Characterization Requirements

- Studies to be submitted to the town must meet or exceed the following requirements in order to be accepted:
- Studies are to be done by one of 4 firms on the list of preselected firms that the town has chosen.
- A biological site characterization must include the following elements, with clearly defined methodology and references to support approach, where appropriate:
 1. General description and regional landscape: climate, geomorphology, hydrography + watershed;
 2. Plan of study area showing: topography, natural elements (rivers, streams, ponds, vernal pools, wetlands, woodlands, fields, etc.), existing infrastructure and buildings (if any), trails, neighbouring properties;
 3. Wetland delimitation as per MELCC’s *Guide d’identification et de délimitation des milieux humides* (methodology as set out in Bazoge et. al. 2014¹);
 4. Forest composition (connectivity, age, resilience, etc.);
 5. Field surveys to be completed through spring, summer, and fall;
 6. Fauna surveys will include birds (eBird, Quebec Breeding Bird Atlas), mammals (incl. bat survey), reptiles + amphibians (MFFP: *Protocole d’inventaire des anoues du Québec*, AARQ), insects (Canada Wild Species Insect listing), and aquatic invertebrates in ponds and vernal pools;
 7. Fish survey for sites with direct access to the Ottawa River;

¹ Bazoge, A., Lachance D., Villeneuve, C. (2014). Identification et délimitation des milieux humides du Québec méridional. Ministère du Développement durable, de l’Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, Direction de l’écologie et de la conservation et Direction des politiques de l’eau. 64 pages.

8. Flora surveys will include trees, shrubs, and vascular plants (Go Botany, Vascan, GBIF, Flora of North America, Canadian Wildlife Service Protocol, iNaturalist);
9. A full inventory of potential species at risk will be included (CDPNQ, SARA, COSEWIC);