

## **Monteregie Connection**

### **Scenario 1: Too much is like not enough.**

After thirty years of development toward the North of Montreal, in 2016, the city starts expanding toward the South of the St-Lawrence river, particularly toward municipalities located in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> sectors of the Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC). During this period, great lengths are taken to encourage immigration as to compensate for the effects of the aging population of the area. Results of this campaign are greater than expected in the Regional County Municipality (RCM) of La Vallée-du-Richelieu, expanding population growth to an average of 2.2% annually between 2018 and 2014. In just 25 years the population of the region augments by 60%.

During this period of demographic growth a great deal of new infrastructure is put into place, leading to urban sprawl in the municipalities located in the South of the RCM (ie. Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Carignan and Chambly). Engaging socio-economic programs allow businesses to attract specialized workers and provide them with good salaries. These economically stable and prospering families advocate for the building of additional conventional housing in the area, such as bungalows and single-family homes. To accommodate for this need, certain golfing courses are converted into large residential areas. In these new developments no specific attention paid to important features that promote life quality, such as proximity to services, green spaces and access to active transportation routes. In high-density areas there are also a number of new condos and town homes built along major roads and close to public transportation entry points in order to adhere to the norms prescribed by the metropolitan land use and development plan (PMAD).

This urban sprawl has important consequences on green spaces and forested areas. The majority of unprotected green spaces were transformed into residential areas, commercial zones or big box stores. As development increased, people began to experience a loss of contact with nature, and so, they turned toward urban agriculture programs. Municipalities also attempted to help re-establish the connection with nature by establishing green spaces in industrial and commercial sectors.

Previously implemented policies assured the long-term protection of agricultural land South of the RCM, which lead to an increase in its value. North of the RCM, land is under intensive agricultural exploitation with extensive soya and corn plots.

In 2025, the expansion of the Montreal Port to Contrecoeur is finally finished. This new industrial pole is located close to Highway 30, around which a number of shopping centers are opened. Due to this development, thousands of jobs are created in this area. In the following years, this leads to significant urban sprawl around Highway 30. Consequently, municipalities located to the North of Montreal, like Saint-Marc-sur-Richelieu and Saint-Antoine-sur-Richelieu develop. Transportation infrastructure is adapted to the needs created by this local expansion by creating a bridge that joins the two shores of Richelieu at the height of

Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu, which is completed in 2035. At this point, the Chemin de la Pomme d'Or is also transformed into a highway.

Industrial and commercial development, expansion of transportation infrastructure, and urban sprawl, all affect the forested areas of this part of the RCM. Maple plantations are heavily impacted by a massive reduction in their surface area. Constant population expansion coupled with the loss of forested areas and the natural habitats, which once characterized the Vallée-du-Richelieu, causes the departure of people that once came to the region searching for tranquility. The decline in life quality and services intensifies as of 2035, which in turn translates into a decrease in the value of property and leads to affordable housing in the region.