

# Remington Woods a giant filter for region

I was one of many who helped at the Friends of Remington Woods booth on Stratford Day this summer. Hundreds of people stopped by (to those who left a donation, thank you very much!).

Our photos of Remington Woods were admired enthusiastically but few knew where the photos were taken. This 419 acres of air-purifying woodland is located between the old GE building off Boston Avenue in Bridgeport and Broadbridge Avenue. It contains a beautiful 23-acre lake (Lake Success).

Those who didn't know about the proposed office park development project were appalled at the idea, but felt helpless to do anything about it. Some even expressed an unwarranted animosity toward developers who target open space.

The supporters of the Remington Woods office park project don't deserve to be chastised for seeking to create much needed jobs and tax revenue. However, of the

documents I've seen, \$56 million was the least amount projected to cost Bridgeport and Stratford for this project, while only generating \$8 million to \$10 million annually in property tax revenue.

The Urban Land Institute has advised Bridgeport and Stratford to put this project "on the back burner." Yet both communities continue to invest our tax dollars on road projects to accommodate the traffic that's projected to be generated by the proposed office park.

The article headlined "Future of redevelopment projects appears doubtful," *Connecticut Post*, July 24, 2005, stated that developers are pulling out of a project in Bridgeport because they are "unable to establish a clear need for the office space." In that same edition, a subheading reads: "Connecticut is severely overdeveloped... undermining, traffic, environment and housing ..." [It's a development, not a highway problem, *Post*, July 24].

The American Lung

Association's report on the "State of the Air in 2005" contained charts that showed Fairfield County to have the 13th worst Ozone Air Pollution in the country. Only 12 counties in California and Texas are worse than Fairfield County! Our air quality is already showing the effects of too little open space to cope with the huge amount of pollution we continue to pour into our air.

Remington Woods filters our dirty air without electricity or gas. It works 24/7, day and night, through storms, blackouts, weekends and holidays. Without this air filter, just to maintain our already unhealthy air, emissions would have to be more strictly controlled, creating more expenses for manufacturers and causing more cars to fail their *emission tests*.

These hidden costs, as well as the declining health of our citizens, far outweigh the revenues. There are other sites in Bridgeport and Stratford

that need redeveloping — sites that could be used for commercial or industrial projects that are better suited to generate revenue and jobs. We would all benefit more if blighted, unused areas were redeveloped, leaving our precious open space alone.

The Remington Woods office park project is not the hopeless "done deal" so many people seem to believe it is. We must let our elected officials and candidates for office know how we feel. We can have healthier air. We can see our tax dollars used more effectively. We can make a difference. If Remington Woods is destroyed, it will be gone forever.

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