

OPINIONS

Remington Woods must be preserved

The new Seaview Avenue corridor is ill-conceived, unnecessary and extremely costly to Bridgeport taxpayers.

Who will it serve? The super-rich DuPont Corporation by providing road access to Remington Woods so that a corporate office park can be built to provide jobs for white-collar employees from other towns.

Who will pay for it? The feds, the state and, especially, Bridgeport taxpayers. It is so expensive to Bridgeport that our local bureaucrats haven't dared to figure the costs and can't respond to that question. But besides contributing to the construction of the road, the huge DuPont development will undoubtedly require extra police, a new firehouse and firefighters, widening of Boston Avenue and much else, all of it shouldered by Bridgeport taxpayers.

Tax revenues? Any tax revenues to offset Bridgeport costs won't be realized for at least 10 years and then only when DuPont's project is completely developed. It's a questionable risk.

What about jobs? The promise of jobs for Bridgeport can more easily and more likely be achieved by continuing to improve the existing Seaview Avenue so businesses like Lacey Manufacturing and Magnetec will expand and provide more appropriate jobs for Bridgeport citizens than corporate offices.

Finally, it should be noted that DuPont is not waiting for

the new corridor, but now has plans to develop its 422-acre parcel by parcel using existing roads for access.

DuPont seems to have realized that the new corridor road may not be necessary, and so should Bridgeport.

Jacqueline Heneage
Bridgeport



This letter refers in part to the recent *Connecticut Post* OpEd piece by Bridgeport Regional Business Council President Paul Timpanelli and other regional leaders on the Seaview Avenue/open space controversy [Forum, June 15, "Lake Success vital to city's future"].

Bridgeport has a history of trying to get ahead by trashing its treasures. In a few months, we'll have the opportunity to elect a new mayor who will end this practice.

First, contrary to the OpEd essay, in order to preserve Remington Woods, taxpayer money would not necessarily have to purchase it. Once the cleanup is complete, were DuPont to be relieved of eternal liability on the property, donation could become an option with tax credits compensating the corporation for the remediation.

In the development scenario Timpanelli's piece advocates (the preferred alternatives of the Maguire Group), the problem is the end result: As the saying goes, "The only sure things in

life are death and taxes" — meaning that regardless of any chosen alternative, Bridgeporters will be paying taxes.

However, the authors of the essay in question would have the citizens of Bridgeport pay taxes to destroy the city.

Why do I say "destroy?" Because the business community wants taxpayers to carry the bill for butchering two of the three prime undeveloped properties in town — namely, Remington Woods and GE (the third being the waterfront).

And while the *Post* piece implies the rest of Bridgeport's structural plate is useless, it was with great bitterness that the recent summit conference of suburban leaders allowed as how their business overtures had been turned away by the current administration.

How would the GE property be butchered? If cars are brought to or past GE's door, GE will develop. GE will both want to and have to. GE is awaiting the corridor. And further, GE will *have* to develop because — do we dream that employees of a Woods corporation of the caliber DuPont seeks will, each day, silently drive past GE in its present state?

Realize that for jobs and taxes GE doesn't need cars going past its door—only to its door.

Within the preservationist scenario, Bridgeporters' taxes would go to making the city beautiful — i.e., the return on the taxpayers' investment would

start with a clean city, funding beyond taxes to achieve that goal, likely subject to Bridgeport's commitment to the effort with a growing reputation so stating.

We must not develop both GE and Remington Woods — the Woods ought to be saved as an air buffer and a draw — a Bridgeport gem and a benefit for corporations interested in inhabiting GE.

A combination of the corridor to Boston Avenue plus enhancement of the whole of GE's property, while advertising Bridgeport's long-range commitment to a quality city—the Park City-including a GE-contiguous 422 acre Fairfield County oasis for man and animal alike, preserved with an eye to a Bridgeport renaissance far exceeding the original—is a much more realistic goal than a city *en masse* of concrete and noise and pollution which all but the poorest will leave and which no one will happily enter when they can work somewhere else.

The Maguire report does not reflect urban planning, but rather, opportunism. And I don't say this critically — I say it descriptively: i.e., in his *Post* essay, Timpanelli says that the essence of the issue is the fact of private funds in Remington Woods. And it's that private opportunity which has led to all of us taking this trip.

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Friends of Remington Woods*