

Notes

for a statement from

Claude Trudel

Verdun Borough Mayor
Chairman of the Board of the STM

upon submitting the Bridge Committee's report

at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 2, 2008
in the Council room at Borough Hall

Check against delivery

Dear colleagues on Council,
Ladies and gentlemen:

This evening, I'm pleased to be tabling and announcing the contents of the very long-awaited report from the special committee examining the appropriateness of building a bridge between the two shores of the Verdun Borough.

However, before I do so, I would like to briefly backtrack to last fall. As you may well recall, getting into and out of L'Île-des-Sœurs was a tough adventure then, at times, both morning and evening. Many residents had shared their worries, at that time, over the entrances and exits of the L'Île-des-Sœurs neighbourhood. The concerns expressed related to the flow of traffic, to safety and security and to the time it took to get off the island.

It was then that a great many residents from all over L'Île-des-Sœurs once again took up the idea of building a bridge connecting Verdun's mainland to the L'Île-des-Sœurs neighbourhood.

In keeping with what my Administration agreed to do, as soon as it took office, we took steps to consult the Verdunites and to evaluate their perceptions of this project, which could change their quality of life in one way or another.

This past February, as you will recall, I announced right here that a special committee had been formed to do the following—and I'm being careful here to use the same words as last February—"to examine, without any strong feelings or any ambitions other than all Verdunites' best interests, whether it would be appropriate to build a new bridge and the conditions under which such a project could be carried out".

The members of the Committee were as follows:

- **Gilles Baril**, Borough Manager
- **Paul Beaupré**, Borough Councillor
- **André Desmarais**, Resident, President of SDC-Wellington
- **Hellen Dionne**, Resident, representative of APRIDS
- **Raymond Fréchette**, Engineer, *Services techniques*
- **Jacques Larose**, Resident
- **Luc Maurice**, Resident
- **Claude Ravary**, Resident
- **Marc Touchette**, Borough Councillor
- and myself

The committee members, whom I want to thank and congratulate today, worked very hard and managed to submit a unanimous recommendation! And that, in itself, is worthy of mention.

Before I announce this recommendation—which my colleagues on Council and I fully endorse—I'm going to prolong the suspense a bit and briefly explain to you the Committee members' approach in drawing up their recommendation.

In order to reach a consensus, the Committee met three times and had access to all the documentation available to the Borough. Its members had the opportunity to examine everything that was relevant and they asked themselves questions about many aspects, including:

- the relevance of building a bridge
- the purpose of the bridge
- the costs associated with building such a bridge
- the environmental impacts
- the impacts, on residents, of the possible construction of a bridge directly in line with rue Galt and boulevard Marguerite-Bourgeoys
- the architectural design of the bridge, so that it is in keeping with the distinct nature of the two neighbourhoods that it will be connecting

They also perused—even before it was published—the findings of the opinion poll that had been conducted, at the request of the Borough—through its constant concern for consulting the residents. This poll was carried out this past May, among 900 Verdunites, 300 of whom are residents of the L'Île-des-Sœurs neighbourhood. One of the focuses of this opinion poll dealt with the possible construction of a bridge.

I must mention that the findings of this opinion poll—and particularly those concerning the bridge—show a change in Verdunites' line of thinking. In fact, 71% of all Verdunites and 74% of residents in the L'Île-des-Sœurs neighbourhood said they were in favour of the construction of a new bridge reserved for buses, bicycles, pedestrians and emergency vehicles. We are faced, here, with a MASSIVE "YES"!

In light of the information to which they had access, the questions that were asked, the Verdunites' opinion and the excellent work they accomplished, the members of this special committee are unanimously recommending to the Verdun Borough:

"the construction of a service bridge, particularly for emergency and maintenance vehicles, buses, bicycles and pedestrians, provided that it is accepted, in principle, by the majority of Verdunites and that it is financed by an authority other than the Borough."

And I repeat: the Council members and I are endorsing this recommendation.

As a follow-up to this matter and reiterating our firm intention to consult the population whenever necessary, I am announcing this evening that we will pursue our discussions with the emergency services, and with Ville de Montréal's *Service des incendies* (SIM), in particular, so as to speed up—insofar as possible—the pre-feasibility study for construction of a bridge, which SIM is to soon ask the *Division des ponts et tunnels* of Montréal's *Service Infrastructures, transport et environnement* to carry out.

Similarly, as suggested in the recommendation, we are going to study the various sources of funding so that the Borough doesn't amortize the total costs of a service bridge, if it is decided to build one.

So that's a summary of the report. I thank you for your kind attention and invite you to pick up a copy on the table at the entrance or to consult it on the Borough's website.