



# **MOBILE ON THE ISLAND, FAST AROUND TOWN**

**Opinion Paper on Sustainable Transport**

**Summary**

Pollution, caused by transport and industrial waste, is seriously threatening the health of urbanites. On a global scale, these emissions contribute to air contamination, climate change, and the increasing fragility of human, animal, vegetal, geological and hydrological health.

Environmental protection and public health are fast becoming the main concerns of young people all over the world. More and more, young people are actively involved in the decision making process on these issues.

This document is a summary of the opinion paper on **Sustainable Transport** entitled *Mobile on the Island, Fast Around Town*, prepared by the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal's* and submitted today to the Mayor of Montréal.

## INTRODUCTION

In Québec, transport is the major producer of greenhouse gasses (GHG), accounting for 37% of emissions in 2003. This fact is the source of our interest in developing a more sustainable transport system. The organization *Vivre en ville* defines sustainable transport as a system that satisfies the basic access needs of peoples and societies in a manner compatible with human and ecosystem health and equitable within and between generations...

A sustainable transport system favours collective means of motorized transportation, such as busses, subways and car-sharing (carpools or co-ownership), as well as active means of transportation, such as walking and cycling.

Collective and active means of transportation represent favoured means of transportation for an important number of young Montrealers. The role played by these means of transportation in the mobility of young Montrealers, combined with their sustainable quality, are of special interest to the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal (CjM)*.

With this paper, the *CjM* therefore examines whether current collective and active transportation in Montréal adequately meets the mobility needs of young Montrealers, and if it is in step with the perspective of sustainable development. Furthermore, we try to evaluate if the orientation of the City of Montréal on these issues addresses the needs and concerns of young Montrealers. Based on this analysis, *CjM's* members have formulated recommendations that could help to better answer the mobility needs of young Montrealers and add to the sustainability of Montréal's urban transport system, if they are given serious consideration.

Our study is based on:

- Meetings and discussions with experts from transport organisations, and
- Group interviews with young Montrealers (students and workers), 12 to 30 years old, living downtown or in outlying areas.

## YOUNG MONTREALERS' CONCERNS REGARDING COLLECTIVE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The 2003 *Origine-Destination* Survey, conducted by the *Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT)*, examined the transportation practices of young Montrealers. The following table summarizes its findings:

USE OF COLLECTIVE AND ACTIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION BY YOUNG MONTREALERS					
	Young Montrealers (by age group)			Average Age 12 to 30	Average Montréal
	12 to 16	17 to 25	26 to 30		
<b>Collective transport</b>	44.5%	46%	28%	40%	24%
<b>Active transport</b>	23%	16%	14%	17%	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>40%</b>

Source: Agence métropolitaine de transport, 2003 Origine-Destination Survey

Our group discussions identified the shortcomings of the collective and active transportation currently offered in Montréal. These shortcomings directly affect, even limit, the mobility of young Montrealers today.

**a. Collective transportation:** present collective transportation downtown is better than anywhere else on Montréal's territory. Links between peripheral areas seem particularly deficient: lack of synchronization between bus and subway services (especially during the evening); lack of infrastructure that could allow combined use of various means of transportation (bicycle/bus, bicycle/subway); accessibility problems (inadequate schedule, lack of related services, lack of escalators, lack of urban planning to accommodate people with impaired mobility).

**b. Active transportation:** difficulty to transport cumbersome objects, unpractical and uncomfortable in winter, difficult, even dangerous, to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists who share the public space (bothersome for motorists, lack of bicycle pathways, lack of safe bike racks).

**c. Specialized transportation:** the efficiency of specialized transportation – door to door – is not criticized: safe and practical in all seasons. Low floor busses are appreciated, but problems remain with accessibility (sidewalks, etc.). The main constraint is the necessity to book three days in advance for the service, which doesn't allow for unplanned activities.

#### ***Young Montrealers' point of view regarding the present sustainability of urban transport in Montréal***

**Collective transportation:** young Montrealers would like the busses to be more eco-friendly, the network to be more efficient, less costly, accessible to all, and more user-friendly. In short, they would like a system distinct from that of automobiles. They insist that carpooling and services such as **Communauto** should be encouraged.

**Active transportation:** considered by those interviewed as the “par excellence” means of sustainable transportation. Nevertheless, they see the need for some improvement for bicycle users (bicycle pathways, parking areas, and combined means of transportation).

All in all, young Montrealers expressed a wish for the development of a better performing, more accessible, more user-friendly public transportation system; that bicycles have a better place in the public space; and that modal transfer between various transport options be improved. Other environmental concerns are the basis of their demand for the development of clean technologies and alternatives to the one-car-one-driver option. Finally, they expressed concern in regard to issues of safety on the network. This issue and its various aspects require more study.

### **CITY OF MONTRÉAL'S ORIENTATION REGARDING COLLECTIVE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

Montréal's three administrative levels – the Agglomeration, the Central City, and the Boroughs – share responsibility for developing and managing the territory's public roads.

#### ***Some observations regarding collective and active transportation***

**a. Collective transportation service:** the service remains poor on the island's east and west ends and in industrial sectors such as Lachine, Dorval, Saint-Laurent and Anjou. The last decades have been characterized by stagnation, even degradation, of public transport service and infrastructures, mainly caused by the revocation of the provincial contribution to transportation corporations in 1992 (Ryan Reform). Small improvements have been noticed since 2000, but the overall quality remains well under 1990's level, both for the subway network, increasingly in disrepair, and the bus network.

**b. Use of bicycle:** bicycle infrastructures, mainly created in the last twenty years, are now suffering from lack of maintenance or do not meet new design standards. New infrastructures, including bicycle parking, are required. In addition, utilitarian use of bicycles requires urban layouts that take into account efficient cross-neighbourhood mobility and year round usage.

**c. Car-sharing services:** *Communauto*, a private enterprise with social and environmental concerns, aims at rationalizing automobile usage. However, in order to increase its points of service, the company is faced with difficulties related to parking space availability (on and off the streets), parking interdictions, and constraints related to maintenance and snow removal. Unique to Montréal, *Communauto* has a membership of 7800 users. Spread over numerous points of service in various neighbourhoods, “self-serve” vehicles are available day and night for rental “à la carte” at low hourly, daily or longer term rates.

**d. Modal transfer possibilities:** to ensure connection between various means of transportation and introduce fare integration when possible, we must continue to develop infrastructures favouring modal transfer (parking incentives, terminal, car/train intermodal station), at this time almost inexistent in the eastern part of the island. More effort is also required to facilitate the transportation of bicycles on subway cars (hook & release mechanisms) and make bicycle parking available in the vicinity of main service points (subway, commuter train and bus stations).

**e. Development of clean technologies:** in 2002, the *Société de transport de Montréal (STM)*, with the help of several partners, implemented various initiatives, notably:

- *Biobus*: 155 buses ran on biodiesel for a year, **reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the island of Montréal by 1 300 tons**. Unfortunately, the program proved too costly in the long run.

- *Conducteur averti/Conduite écologique*: this program was implemented to encourage bus drivers to contribute to GHG reduction efforts.

- *Branché, la mobilité réinventée!*: in the same vein, the *Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT)* and its partners launched a self-service vehicle project. Initiated by Transport Canada’s Urban Transportation Showcase Program, in partnership with *Communauto*, the project’s goal was to evaluate the efficiency of electric vehicles as urban transport. The plan involves putting about a hundred electric cars and 50 bicycles on the road in downtown Montréal, and 10 low-speed electric vehicles in Saint-Jérôme. The project is pending while awaiting Québec government contribution.

#### ***A will to develop***

At the *Sommet de Montréal*, in 2002, the city and its partners determined that Montreal needed a transportation plan based on the following broad orientations: promoting alternatives to the one-car-one driver option (collective and alternative means of transportation); giving preference to collective transport, especially in servicing the major commercial poles...

The city of Montréal developed or acquired various tools on which its transportation plan must rely or already relies: **Montréal’s New Urban Master Plan**, adopted in 2004; **STM’s Collective Transport’s Strategic Development Plan**, also adopted in 2004; **Montréal’s Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development**, adopted in 2005, and **The Pedestrian Charter**, announced in 2006. This Charter’s objective is to make Montréal a city where pedestrians can move about safely in a friendly environment. In addition, projects have recently been initiated in Montréal, such as the application of **New Prescriptions by Regulation Favouring Bicycle Usage** in Plateau-Mont-Royal. This initiative is part of a process started in April of 2007 to develop an Urban Traffic Plan for the borough. Équiterre has also launched a pilot project: **“Je m’active dans mon quartier”** to promote active transportation (bicycling and walking) for daily errands and to encourage buy-local habits. The *Conseil régional de l’environnement de Montréal (CRE)* has conducted a research project on **Traffic calming measures in Montréal’s central communities**, in order to convince motorists to modify their behaviour and adopt safer driving habits.

## **ISSUES AND OBSTACLES**

The major issue is the financing of these means of transportation. Another related issue is the economic accessibility of public transportation.

Other issues include:

- to ensure that bicycle users get their fair share of public space; to create utilitarian and safe bicycle pathways and parking spaces; to promote harmonious cohabitation between the various users of the public domain; to find a solution regarding bicycle storage for city dwellers.

- finding alternatives to the one-car-one-driver option. Some questions remain concerning the actions that will be taken to promote car-sharing services. It seems that there are differences of opinion within the municipal administration about the relevance of supporting such services.
- the difficulty of putting into practice modal transfer principles; the transportation of bicycles on buses as an impediment to efficient travel speed. To this, we might add recent considerations regarding the possibility of new product fares to retain current users and attract new ones.

The strategy to develop collective and active transport aims to reduce car usage. However, changes in transport behaviour depend greatly on the offer of attractive alternatives as well as on the sustainability of the collective and active transportation options developed, with consideration given to the financial burden that these options represent.

## **Some initiatives from Québec, from Canada and from abroad**

### ***1. in terms of collective transport:***

*In Sherbrooke*, since 2004, the University of Sherbrooke, in collaboration with the *Société de transport de Sherbrooke* offers free access to the public transport network for all university students. In Germany, Switzerland and Austria, to accommodate young clientele, a bus service called *Noctambus* operates at night in areas frequented by young people offering transportation service back to residential suburbs.

### ***2. in terms of active transport (walking and cycling):***

In 1995, the city of *Vancouver* put into service its *Greenways Program*, a network of recreational and alternative corridors for pedestrians and cyclists. These corridors interconnect through parks, natural reserves, cultural attractions, historical sites, neighbourhoods, etc. Recently, another component was added: the *Neighbourhood Greenways*: smaller-scale networks that answer local needs as defined by neighbourhood residents. With its specific road signs and coloured pavement, these networks share thoroughfares, utilitarian bicycle pathways, local and residential streets and main roads.

Since 2005, in *le Grand Lyon (France)*, there is a self-service bicycle network called *Vélo'v*. This service offers bicycles on stand-by at every 300 m or 5-minute walk. More present downtown, these stations are located close to train, bus and subway stations. The service is accessible 24/7 and is available to *Vélo'v* cardholders of 14-years old or over.

## **TEN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSEIL JEUNESSE DE MONTRÉAL FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT**

The *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal* wishes, with the following ten recommendations, to endorse initiatives taken or contemplated by the City which appear essential to the development of collective and active transport in Montréal. The *Conseil* also proposes some complementary courses of action that could contribute to better answer the mobility needs of young population and ensure greater sustainability of the Montréal urban transport system.

### ***Therefore, the Conseil jeunesse de Montréal recommends:***

**1. integrated development of the various modes of transportation, coherent with the City and the agglomeration's urban planning design:** in order to achieve better sustainability, the city of Montréal must establish a transport system that offers its citizens an interesting variety of choices and combinations. A significant development effort must be undertaken in that direction regarding collective and active transport;

**2. a perennial financial framework for collective transport:** the city of Montréal should also enter into negotiation with other levels of government to obtain more financial support. New financing sources must be found. The City should also work to mobilize new partners to finance social measures associated with

collective transport, as done in the City of Paris, or work to introduce new fiscal measures, for instance parking taxes;

**3. combining efforts to develop collective and active transport along with measures dissuasive to car-use, especially downtown:** such measures would positively impact the collective transport custom base and financing (e.g. measures related to parking);

**4. better cohabitation between the various users of the public domain:** the city of Montréal must see to it that all users of the public domain (motorists, cyclists and pedestrians) coexist in harmony. In the Pedestrian Charter, there is mention of soon establishing a Road Safety Office. The *CjM* supports this initiative and believes in the importance of its preventive role. It should not only intervene in conflicts between users but also get involved in all projects related to road network planning and refitting. This office would also promote principles of peaceful cohabitation, especially between motorists and cyclists. Moreover, the *CjM* supports Montréal's efforts, past or in progress, to establish a network of bicycle paths. It is important that this network be planned with safe infrastructures, as in Vancouver, and answers the requirements of utilitarian bicycling;

**5. modal transfer between various means of transportation:** to that end, the *CjM* supports initiatives increasing the number of safe parking spaces for bicycles in close proximity of subway and train stations and highly-frequented bus transfer points, as well as increasing the capacity and the number of incentive car parking areas. The *CjM* also proposes replicating initiatives such as were implemented in Lyon, where bicycles are available to citizens through a self-service plan. The *CjM* reiterates the following recommendations formulated in a prior opinion paper entitled *Fostering healthy lifestyles among young Montrealers*:

- \* the promotion of better linkage between collective transport and bicycle networks
- \* the installation of bicycle storage devices in busses and trains
- \* the development of new fare formulas allowing for the integration of various means of transportation;

**6. the development of alternatives to the one-car-one-driver option:** the *CjM* encourages the City of Montréal to pursue the implementation of its *Allégo Program* throughout all its services. The *CjM* also supports the establishment of HOV lanes for high occupancy vehicles, busses and taxis on Montréal island's main access roads.

The *Conseil* also believes it is important for the City to provide clear guidelines to the boroughs regarding the allocation of parking spaces for car-sharing services. Such spaces should be available in municipal parking areas and other municipal lots suited to this service. Likewise, the City should make the boroughs aware of the necessity to build safe and weather-protected parking areas for bicycles. School, work and commercial areas should be given priority;

**7. the pursuit of efforts to improve STM's collective transport offer:** the *CjM* believes it is necessary to improve the quality of the network's overall service, and encourages all STM's initiatives in that direction. As for night service, the *Conseil* invites the City to emulate *Noctambus*, and create a network of night busses such as are found in numerous cities of Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

The *Conseil* believes it is important to establish a network with exclusive right-of-way lanes in Montréal. The *SjM* also supports STM's initiatives promoting greater efficiency in mobility and better access to post-secondary institutions, industrial zones, and the island's east and west ends.

**8. affordable access to STM's collective transport service:** the *Conseil* strongly recommends the City of Montréal and the STM insure affordable access to its collective transport service for its young population by establishing, among other things, partnerships with the Department of Education and the Department of Health;

**9. continued efforts to improve services offered by the STM to mobility-impaired persons:** to this end, the *CjM* proposes:

- \* to improve specialized bus services to alleviate constraints related to itinerary planning and management of unplanned activities

- \* to collaborate with car-sharing services to offer vehicles adapted to the needs of mobility-impaired persons
- \* to take in account accessibility for mobility-impaired persons all the way to the boarding platform when renovating subway stations;

**10. an extensive study of the situation of collective transport's young users (12-16 years old group):** the *CjM*'s study has demonstrated that Montrealers between 12 and 16 years old are often subjected to rudeness from the part of collective transport staff. The age group as a whole seems to suffer from the delinquent behaviour of a small number of youths. An extensive study could bring a better understanding of this phenomenon and its consequences.

## **CONCLUSION**

Developing collective and active means of transportation is essential in a city like Montréal which is working steadfastly to incorporate sustainability to its urban planning. Furthermore, by giving transportation priority, the City will enhance the mobility of its young population, and in doing so, encourage the advancement of this group within society. With this opinion paper, the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal* wishes to convey to municipal elected representatives and city administrators the view of young Montrealers regarding urban transport. Our hope is to have provided inspiration toward better addressing the mobility needs of young people and toward the sustainability of Montréal's transport system.