



**Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre**

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**MCGILL UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTRE
BRIEF**

RÉINVENTER MONTRÉAL

The 2007 Transport Plan

August 30, 2007



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Brief

Réinventer Montréal—The 2007 Transport Plan

INTRODUCTION

The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) is a merger of five teaching hospitals affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine of McGill University—the Montreal Children’s, Montreal General, Royal Victoria and Montreal Neurological Hospital and Institute, as well as the Montreal Chest Institute. Since 1822, these institutions have contributed to the City’s vitality, landscape and history. They have also nurtured an international reputation for excellence in clinical care, research and teaching that attracts specialists and students from near and far.

The MUHC employs close to 14,000 healthcare professionals and support personnel while training roughly 825 medical and surgical residents; 1,075 nurses; 450 medical students; and 525 students in allied health fields every year. As the nerve centre of the McGill RUIS (*Réseau universitaire intégré de santé*), the MUHC serves a multicultural population of 1.7 million people over sixty-three per cent of Quebec.

As a result, thousands of people of all ages travel on a daily basis, and at all hours of the day and night, to and from its multiple sites. It is therefore with enthusiasm that the MUHC welcomes the opportunity to submit this brief on the third phase of the City of Montreal’s 2007 Transport Plan—“*Réinventer Montréal*”, and contribute comments and recommendations that it believes would embellish the Plan. Indeed, it is by supporting a common vision through strong partnerships and the exchange of ideas that plans become powerful levers of change.



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McGill University Health Centre

The MUHC congratulates the City of Montreal for the work accomplished thus far. The Plan is ambitious and full of promise. As the MUHC is engaged in a parallel process with municipal and provincial governments as well as other organizations for its future Glen and Mountain campuses, this brief will not focus on specific accessibility plans being developed for the Redevelopment Project. Rather, it will primarily address mobility issues and opportunities associated with its current hospital sites. There will, however, be some natural overlap and mention of the needs of the future campuses is inevitable.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As a public healthcare institution, the MUHC recognizes the importance of implementing best practices in sustainable development. Moreover, given the nature of its vocation, the MUHC is committed to providing patients and their families, as well as staff and visitors, with a safe, comfortable and healing environment.

For these reasons, the MUHC adopted its Environmental Policy in July 2006, and embarked on an action plan to implement an Environmental Management System (EMS) that would reduce its environmental footprint. In so doing, it would also lay the groundwork for modern facilities that embrace all facets of sustainable development, from design right through to operations. In addition, the MUHC has undertaken a host of voluntary sustainable development initiatives, including: certifying its buildings Go Green/Go Green Plus by BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association); registering the Glen and Mountain campuses as LEED[®] candidates; becoming the first Quebec member of Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E); and carrying out energy performance projects at each of its hospitals. Furthermore, this fall the MUHC is partnering with the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal and the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention (C2P2) to provide EMS training to several Montreal-area hospitals. Most recently, the MUHC became the first healthcare centre to partner on the City's Strategic Sustainable Development Plan.



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McGill University Health Centre

A COMMON VISION

The MUHC endorses the vision outlined in the City's 2007 Transport Plan, namely its focus on pedestrian safety, on improvements to the bicycle network, and on improvements to the quality and variety of public transit, all of which will encourage an increased use of active and public transit and a reduction in air pollution associated with greenhouse gas emissions.

The MUHC recognizes its role in achieving the objectives set forth in the Transport Plan and in the Pedestrian Charter. It bears mentioning that the MUHC generates more than 22,055 movements of persons per day across its sites, so the institution is counting on the City to help make this necessary travel efficient and safe so as to respect the quality of life of all Montrealers while assuring appropriate access to one of the City's vital healthcare providers.

The MUHC has already made some commitments relative to the Transport Plan by:

- Promoting carpooling;
- Implementing mobility management plans; and
- Encouraging bicycles as a useful mode of transport.

The MUHC was proud to support the City by getting involved in *La Marche des entreprises*. This opportunity allowed it to encourage MUHC employees to discover different ways to travel to and from the healthcare centre's sites. At the same time, it afforded the MUHC an opportunity to promote its carpooling programme along with its incentives that encourage the return of parking permits. The MUHC has also operated a shuttle service between its hospitals and administrative buildings for several years now to decrease vehicular usage and traffic, as well as to improve the travel efficiency for employees.



TWENTY-ONE TARGET AREAS

The MUHC salutes the City for targeting twenty-one areas (“*chantiers*”) to improve mobility throughout the city. It is pleased to put forward the following comments and recommendations:

TARGET AREA #2

Create a train shuttle between Montréal-Trudeau International Airport and downtown Montreal.

The MUHC is delighted with the City’s plan to build a rapid public transit link between Montreal-Trudeau International Airport and downtown Montreal. As a world-class university health centre, the MUHC hosts many international conferences, researchers, visiting professors, and clinical specialists, as does McGill University. This transit link to the downtown core would therefore be strongly welcomed. However, the MUHC feels that an opportunity to support the international endeavours of one of the City’s longstanding public institutions would be missed if a midway stop were not considered for the future. This stop would also, in the process, have a positive impact on reducing traffic congestion.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Create a stop along the train shuttle route between Montréal-Trudeau International Airport and downtown Montreal at the Vendôme intermodal station.

The Glen Campus will be well served by the public transit network. Its location, in fact, was selected in part because of its actual and potential accessibility. The addition of a rapid public transit link from the airport would provide a direct link for visiting professionals and cut down on the number of cars travelling between the airport and the campus.



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McGill University Health Centre

In addition, plans for the Shriners Hospital to join the MUHC on the Glen Campus are moving forward on a number of fronts. As the Shriners treat patients from other cities across North America, as well as from countries around the world, and also host visiting specialists and researchers, their Canadian hospital would also benefit from such an important transit link.

TARGET AREAS #5 and #10

Improve the Société de transport de Montréal's service to increase usage by 8% within five years and implement mobility management plans.

The MUHC has proactively developed a mobility management plan for the future Glen Campus, and is now in the process of creating one for the Mountain Campus. For its current sites, the MUHC's Mobility Management and Parking Department has undertaken a variety of initiatives to address access and travel between the healthcare centre's current sites. It launched a survey, for example, to better identify the different means to influence the mode of transport used by employees to travel to and from work. However, the ability of the MUHC to serve the needs of its community depends in large part on the City's willingness and capacity to provide adequate transportation services.

Public transit schedules, routes and infrastructure must accommodate the needs that are inherent to healthcare operations (service at all times of day, stops in front of the facilities, ease of access). Safe bike routes must be created, while more bike racks need to be installed around the City. Pedestrian safety must also be increased.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Work closely with stakeholders to ensure the services being provided will support the mobility management plans being implemented by large institutions.



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McGill University Health Centre

The City would do well to ensure sufficient dialogue takes place between the various stakeholders so that the different needs of institutions that rely heavily on public transit are met.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Ensure Metro infrastructure is welcoming to those with mobility issues.

Metro stations must be able to accommodate people who require a wheelchair, a walker, a cane or crutches to get around. This will be particularly important for the future Glen Campus, which will be linked directly to the Vendôme intermodal station.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Create a new bus route to better serve the MUHC's personnel, its patients and their families, as well as its visitors.

Numerous employees would have liked to return a parking pass and take public transit but the serious gap in bus availability dissuaded them. The bus service along the north-south corridor, which leads to the MUHC's hospitals, is poor. This has an impact on hospital users and the general public. Those travelling from the South Shore don't have much desire to use the network either, as they claim the availability of buses heading up the hill from the bus terminal and the train station is non-existent. The MUHC therefore suggests a new bus route that would improve access dramatically. The bus could replace the #107, whose limited route and frequency make it ineffective.



The Proposed Bus Route

- **Start:** Bonaventure Metro station; head north along University Street
- **1st stop:** McGill Metro station
- **2nd stop:** Prince-Arthur Street (serves McGill University)
- **3rd stop:** Turn west onto Pine Avenue and make stop soon after (serves Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal Neurological Hospital and Montreal Neurological Institute)
- **4th stop:** Pine Avenue and Peel Street (serves McGill University's Faculty of Medicine and Genome Quebec Innovation Centre, Francesco Bellini Life Sciences Pavilion, and Royal Victoria Hospital)
- **5th stop:** After traffic light on Pine Avenue by Dr. Penfield Avenue (serves Académie Michèle-Provost and the Shriners Hospital)
- **6th stop:** Montreal General Hospital (serves also MUHC Research Institute and users wanting to make bus connection to the Jewish General Hospital or St. Mary's Hospital); continue south along Côte-des-Neiges and turn down Atwater Street
- **7th stop:** Atwater Metro station; then turn east on Tupper Street
- **8th stop:** The Montreal Children's Hospital
- **End:** Turn right onto Lambert-Closse Street and return to Bonaventure Metro station for a new departure (24/7, fluid service)

RECOMMENDATION #5

Review regular and adapted bus schedules to increase the hours of service.

The needs of hospital personnel are not met by the frequency of the service outside peak rush-hour periods. Hospital work is not your average 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. job. Being on-call causes difficulties, as do different work shifts that range from eight to twelve hours. Moreover, patients have shared comments over the limitations of public adapted transport buses. The advance notice to secure pick-up, the delays and circuitous routes do not make the service as efficient as possible for those with special needs.



TARGET AREAS #6 and #9

Promote carpooling and implement priority measures for buses on 240 kilometres of arteries.

It is well known that the MUHC does not have an unlimited amount of parking space. Its lots are always very full, making it incredibly difficult to serve patients and their families adequately. Therefore, since the fall of 2006, the MUHC put in place its *Allégo* programme. Using advice from *Voyagez, futé Montréal*, personnel were sensitized to alternative modes of transport rather than relying on a car to travel to and from work. Two programmes that were launched involve the buy-back of permits and carpooling. They aim to reduce the number of parking permit holders. With fewer permit holders, not only will the MUHC better serve its patients and their families, but it can also free up space so that important repairs can be carried out, notably at its Montreal General Hospital site.

Despite a cost increase of roughly ten per cent for parking permits, the two programmes did not attain the desired objective. A number of reasons contribute to this result. Work shifts, as previously mentioned, is one. The critical need to be on time, given the nature of the work, is another.

RECOMMENDATION #6

Further develop a network of priority carpooling/bus lanes leading to and from downtown Montreal.

A network of priority carpooling and bus lanes would help the MUHC increase the percentage of personnel who opt to carpool. Much like the successful priority lane on Highway 15, lanes for Highways 20, 13 and 40 should be explored, in addition to the city arteries mentioned within the Plan.



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McGill University Health Centre

TARGET AREA #7

Create a greater public transit capacity along the Champlain Bridge-Bonaventure corridor.

The MUHC supports the fact that this area is being targeted, as many MUHC employees, patients and visitors travel from the South Shore. Improved bus and commuter-train access from the South Shore, from points west of the Longueuil Metro station, would likely encourage greater public transit ridership.

TARGET AREA #13

Double the bicycle network in Montreal in seven years.

Many MUHC employees don't use their bicycles to come to work because they consider the bicycle network in Montreal unsatisfactory. The creation of a more comprehensive and safe bicycle network for the downtown area would be most welcomed by the MUHC. It would help the institution achieve its goal of encouraging employees to use other modes of transit between home and work, and promoting an active lifestyle for its personnel.

RECOMMENDATION #7

Create a new bike path that connects downtown Montreal to Mount-Royal Park and increase the portability of bicycles within the public transit system.

The MUHC encourages the City to consider a bicycle path that would connect the downtown core to Mount Royal Park. Not only would this path serve cyclists wishing to access the park, but it would also serve employees wishing to travel to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal Neurological Hospital and Institute, and Montreal General Hospital. Those currently cycling to these sites have voiced their concerns over the lack of safety and the danger they face regularly.



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

In addition, some employees have said that they would like to cycle a part of the way to work and home, given that they live too far away to go the whole distance. Therefore, the MUHC encourages the City to explore agreements with transport providers that would allow employees to travel conveniently with their bicycles on buses, trains and the metro system so that they can use their bicycles and thus be more active. Rush-hour periods should be investigated if convenience is to be truly explored.

RECOMMENDATION #8

Make provisions for more bicycle racks on the street and in parking areas.

The MUHC supplies bicycle racks and bicycle storage areas for employees, as well as access to storage rooms and showers, for regular hospital users. The MUHC has noticed that the bicycle racks that used to be downtown were not reinstalled this past summer. The tower located at 2155 Guy Street is home to several administrative departments and the MUHC cannot resolve a number of requests from employees who work at this site because it does not manage the building, its parking lot or the adjacent land.

A municipal by-law obliging downtown parking lot owners to reserve a percentage of space so that the City could install bicycle racks would be worthwhile. Moreover, having more bicycle racks around the city would encourage cyclists to travel throughout the day, knowing there would be a place to park their bicycle safely.

TARGET AREAS #14 and #17

Put the Pedestrian Charter into action and increase travel safety.



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McGill University Health Centre

The MUHC's sites, in particular the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Montreal Neurological Hospital and Institute, and the Montreal General Hospital, present significant access issues due to the steep hills (worse in winter), the heavy flow of traffic in the area, and the lack of safe pedestrian routes. Any solution presented by stakeholders should be considered such that pedestrian safety and comfort is enhanced.

RECOMMENDATION #9

Consider textured surfaces and handrails for particularly steep sidewalk sections, and clearly marked pedestrian crossings around MUHC sites.

Adequate and timely snow and ice removal of sidewalks and streets remain a critical concern for the MUHC's patients, visitors, and employees. Sidewalks on the steep inclines that surround the approaches to the hospitals on the slope of Mount-Royal should be resurfaced with a rough texture more resistant to slips and falls, and timely snow removal given even greater priority. In some places, handrails should be considered since the steepness of the sidewalks causes even able-bodied employees to fall, let alone elderly patients with reduced mobility.

Several intersections around the MUHC's sites are especially dangerous for pedestrians, namely University Street, Pine Avenue, Côte-des-Neiges Road and Atwater Street. More needs to be done to mark these busy intersections and pedestrian crosswalks, and to improve their safety.

The intersection at Peel Street and Dr. Penfield Avenue currently has a protected pedestrian crossing that unfortunately reduces the time allotted for motorized vehicles to cross the intersection, thus causing traffic to back up onto the Royal Victoria Hospital's site. Perhaps a protected pedestrian crossing on demand could be considered. This would lessen motorized traffic congestion at this intersection, which is particularly problematic during afternoon rush hour.



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

TARGET AREA #20

Review governance.

The MUHC encounters difficulties in its dealings with the City around issues pertaining to access and transportation due to the complexity of the various departments involved and the apparent lack of internal coordination.

RECOMMENDATION #10

Name one coordinator at the City to intervene with large institutions, such as the MUHC, around issues pertaining to access and transportation.

The MUHC believes that collaborating with one coordinator at the City on mobility management issues and opportunities would allow it to help ensure that access to and from its sites becomes safer and more convenient.

CONCLUSION

The MUHC is pleased that the City of Montreal's Transport Plan addresses many of the institution's existing concerns about safety and accessibility. Furthermore, it feels that the overarching objectives of the Plan will also serve the future Glen and Mountain campuses admirably.

The MUHC remains convinced, however, that the City's ambitious plan still leaves for improvement. It strongly encourages the City to work closely with private and public-sector stakeholders to ensure that every avenue that merits being explored gets the due attention and also the budget required to promote a sustainable mobility system.

Those avenues include the comments presented herein and the following recommendations:



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

1. Create a stop along the train shuttle route between Montréal-Trudeau International Airport and downtown Montreal at the Vendôme intermodal station.
2. Work closely with stakeholders to ensure the services being provided will support the mobility management plans being implemented by large institutions.
3. Ensure Metro infrastructure is welcoming to those with mobility issues.
4. Create a new bus route to better serve the MUHC's personnel, its patients and their families, as well as its visitors.
5. Review regular and adapted bus schedules to increase the hours of service.
6. Further develop a network of priority carpooling/bus lanes leading to and from downtown Montreal.
7. Create a new bike path that connects downtown Montreal to Mount-Royal Park and increase the portability of bicycles within the public transit system.
8. Make provisions for more bicycle racks on the street and in parking areas.
9. Consider textured surfaces and handrails for particularly steep sidewalk sections, and clearly marked pedestrian crossings around MUHC sites.
10. Name one city spokesperson to intervene with large institutions, such as the MUHC, around issues pertaining to access and transportation.

On a final note, the MUHC is proud of the important healthcare role it continues to play in this City. Its commitment to outstanding clinical care, research and teaching goes hand in hand with its desire to reduce its environmental footprint. By working consistently and progressively together on tangible initiatives that embrace a common vision of sustainable development, the MUHC believes Montreal's future can be bright. With this in mind, the joint exploration of the comments and recommendations presented within this brief would serve as a solid commitment on the part of the City towards the collective well-being of the community that the McGill University Health Centre serves and employs.