

À l'attention de:
Monsieur Michael Applebaum



Plan de transport 2007

Mémoire de la Coalition Verte

ORIENTATION

We at the Green Coalition support a truly integrated transport system and an improved public transit network. As a society we must encourage motorists out of their cars and into subways, trains and light rail vehicles. But that cannot happen without massive investments in Montreal's mass transit infrastructure. The crack at the McGill metro station speaks volumes. As such we are calling for a moratorium on new road/highway construction until the current network is fixed. Exceptions are the Cavendish extension and the conversion of the Highway 440 servitude into an urban boulevard. The Cavendish Link is necessary in order to improve egress in the secluded sections of Cote Saint Luc. But this project must provide enough space for a future LRT [like the South Shore's proposed [Système léger sur rail](#)/train **léger sur rail**]. The designation of the 440 as a restricted access urban boulevard must be enshrined in perpetuity. It must not be used as a tool for further development. Also, Morgan Road should never connect with Pierrefonds Boulevard. The integrity of the l'Anse à l'Orme and Ile Bizard ecoterritories is paramount. Laval Mayor **Gilles Vaillancourt** has called for a 440 autoroute which is contrary to the requisite needs of Montreal. This has to cease.

We congratulate the Tremblay Administration for finally extending the Downtown bike path along de Maisonneuve Boulevard: It is great news that it is finally becoming a reality: "Le nouveau tronçon de la piste cyclable permettra de traverser le centre-ville [...] entre la rue Berri et..." NDG/Montreal Ouest. ([Journal de Montreal](#), Mardi 1er Mai, 2007, p.5.) We hope that it continues notwithstanding the damaged tunnel at McGill metro.

Bicycling, walking and the concept of electronic telecommuting are very important. Transit Oriented Development, [TOD], should be emphasized and car oriented urban sprawl de-emphasized. Alexis Nihon Plaza is a great example of TOD.

However, all too often regional transport policy is up against the excesses of local zoning.

As such, our recommendations include:

1. A focus on rail transit versus buses on the trunk lines:
There is ostensible evidence that rail outperforms busways in attracting ridership. BRTs with exclusive rights-of-way – 'Rapibus' -- attract only 1/3 of the ridership as established by US Federal Transit Administration modeling.
2. Inclusion of the Doney Spur as a future Light Rapid Surface Metro.

3. Conservation of strategic rail corridors for future transit use such as the Doney Spur, Lasalle Loop, Montreal&Lachine Railway, Old Port of Montreal Railway, and the South Shore's CSX line.
4. Designation of the CPR line, or something paralleling that line, (as suggested by Mr. David Seto), as the route for the airport shuttle. The CP line is shorter, and would be less costly to build. It would also integrate the local commuter train, and have a stop at the future McGill Hospital at Vendome.
5. Electrify existing diesel operated commuter rail lines and increase their frequency.
6. Encourage more freight on the railways. Build a circumferential railway in concert with Highway 30.
7. Establish proximity rules and regulations between railways and rail yards and sensitive residential areas, as outlined by the Railway Association of Canada [L'**Association ferroviaire** canadienne] and Federation of Canadian Municipalities [**Fédération canadienne des municipalités**] and enshrine it as the law of the land.

Thank You,

Avrom David Shtern, and Maxime Jalbert,
Green Coalition Verte.
www.greencoalitionverte.ca

08-29-2007

Introduction

La Coalition Verte appuie un système de transport très intégré, avec l'emphase sur un réseau public amélioré. Comme société nous devons encourager les automobilistes à utiliser le métro, les trains de banlieue, les tram-trains et les véhicules légers sur rail à la place de leurs voitures. Mais ceci ne peut être possible sans des investissements massifs dans l'infrastructure. Comme tels, nous réclamons un moratoire sur la nouvelle construction des routes/autoroutes jusqu'à ce que le réseau courant soit fixe. Les exceptions possibles sont la prolongation de Cavendish et la conversion de la route 440 en un boulevard urbain. Le projet de Cavendish doit fournir assez d'espace pour un Système Léger sur Rail [SLR]. L'emprise de la 440 comme un boulevard urbain d'accès restreint doit être enclavée dans la perpétuation. Le chemin Morgan ne devrait jamais se relier au boulevard Pierrefonds. L'intégrité des éco-territoires de l'Anse à l'Orme et de l'Île Bizard est très importante. Le maire de Laval, Gilles Vaillancourt, veut construire une autoroute malgré le désaccord de Montréal et les besoins de la ville. Donc, ceci doit cesser.

Nous félicitons l'administration de Tremblay pour la prolongation tant attendue de la véloroute longeant Maisonneuve: C'est une grande nouvelle que le projet est finalement devenu une réalité: "Le nouveau tronçon de la piste cyclable permettra de traverser le centre-ville [...] entre la rue Berri et..." NDG/Montréal Ouest. (Journal de Montréal, Mardi 1er Mai 2007, p.5.)

La marche, le vélo et le concept du transport

Le développement urbain centré sur le transport en commun [TOD en anglais], devrait être encouragé et le développement qui favorise seulement le transport en voiture doit être abandonné: Place Alexis Nihon est un bon exemple

decrivant la bonne utilisation du transport en commun. Cependant, la politique régionale de transport est souvent en conflit avec l'excès du zonage local.

Nos recommandations incluent:

1. L'attention centre sur la transport sur rail versus les autobus: Le nombres de voyageurs demontrent l'evidence qu'ils preferent utiliser le train qu'a l'autobus. Le 'Rapibus' attire seulement 1/3 du nombre de voyageurs avec leur droit de passage exclusif, ce qui a établi par le Federal Transit Administration aux Etats Unis.
2. L'inclusion de l'Antenne Doney comme future metro rapide léger de surface.
3. La conservation des couloirs de chemin de fer stratégiques pour l'usage futur comme l'Antenne Doney, la Boucle de Lasalle, le chemin de fer de Montreal&Lachine, le chemin de fer de Vieux-Port et la ligne de la rive sud du CSX.
4. La désignation de la ligne de CP, ou de quelque chose parallèle a cette ligne comme M. David Seto l'a suggere, pour la navette d'aéroport. La ligne de CP est plus courte, et sera beaucoup moins coûteuse a construire. Elle intégrerait également le train local de banlieu et aurait un arrêt a la futur hôpital de McGill, (Vendome).
5. Électrifier toutes les lignes des trains de banlieu et augmenter leur fréquence.
6. Encourager plus de fret sur les chemins de fer. Construire un chemin de fer circulaire en accord avec l'Autoroute 30.
7. Établir les règlements de proximité entre les chemins de fer et les gares de triages et les secteurs résidentiels sensibles, comme décrit par l'Association ferroviaire canadienne et la Fédération des municipalités canadiennes, et faites-en une loi.

Merci.

Avrom David Shtern et Maxime Jalbert,
Green Coalition Verte.
greencoalitionverte.ca

29-08-2007

AREAS OF CONCERN:

1. Rail Bias and BRTs (Bus Rapid Transitways)

Some planners have advocated running buses in exclusive rights-of-way. They claim that it is cheaper than LRTs. (See: www.lightrailnow.org/facts/fa_brt_2006-089.htm)

There is ostensible evidence that rail outperforms busways in attracting ridership. "RAIL BIAS" of the riding public is a key factor often ignored by the town planning/transport community.

BRTs draw only 1/3 of the estimated ridership established by modeling approved by the US Federal Transit Administration, (FTA). According to a study titled "**Impact on Transit Patronage of Cessation or Inauguration of Rail Service**", Transportation Research Board, 1989 (Transportation Research Record 1221) [6], Edson L. Tennyson, PE..." rail attracts between 34-43% more riders than an equivalent bus service.

Possible Reasons:

- (1) "RAIL BIAS" by the travelling public. That is, people favour trains over buses because of perception. And, perception becomes reality...
- (2) Clearly identifiable railway routes
- (3) More stable and comfortable rides
- (4) Freedom of fumes if the railway system is electrified
- (5) Freedom from excessive noise
- (6) More room. ("**Impact on Transit Patronage of Cessation or Inauguration of**

Rail Service..." op. cit.)

Two Examples When Rail Was Supplanted by Bus or Busways Were Established:

(1) The 1967 conversion of the Ardmore electric trolley (legacy LRT) to a busway in suburban Philadelphia resulted in an immediate drop in ridership (15%). There were also increased operations (more drivers were needed) and maintenance costs increased. Result: A downward spiral... The line today carries only a few hundred daily passengers. (ibid.)

(2) In the Washington, DC area: The Route 18 Shirley Busway opened in the 1970s. Ridership peaked in 1980-1981 (The Second Energy Crisis). This line has since suffered sharp declines in patronage (over 67%). Compare this with ballooning ridership on DC's MetroRail from 135 million annual riders to the current 270 million. (ibid.)

One just has to look across the Ottawa River and see that the City of Ottawa and surrounding municipalities are seriously considering the LRT alternative because OC Transpo's busways are in decline and too many of its buses congest the downtown core.

An emphasis on rail may be politically difficult but it is the only rational way to attract motorists. Please see the following article:

NEAL PEIRCE COLUMN For Release Sunday, August 26, 2007

© 2007 Washington Post Writers Group

SUNBELT TRANSIT STORY:
LEAD -- AT YOUR OWN PERIL

By Neal Peirce

Daring leadership can be a dangerous to your political health. Just ask Pat McCrory, the energetic, non-stop Republican mayor of Charlotte, N.C.

Seven years ago, McCrory convinced voters to approve a sales tax increase to finance an ambitious new regional transit system. The first light rail line is scheduled to open this autumn -- a big milestone for a

Sunbelt town that's grown up, and sprawled far and wide, on private auto use.

But the late November ribbon-cutting for the shiny new South Corridor line may be a dreary affair. Conservative activists have launched a referendum campaign to repeal the sales tax increase. The cut-off measure is on the November 6 ballot and is believed to have a good chance of passing. McCrory's in some danger of losing his own re-election bid to a Democratic opponent that day; he might even be upset by an opponent in the Republican primary.

So what's this mayor's problem? The short answer: cost overruns. Original cost estimate for the initial, South Corridor rail line was \$227 million; the latest figure is \$462 million. Why? Some mismanagement by contractors for the transit agency, which McCrory admits he should have discovered earlier. But mostly inflation -- especially ferocious nationwide run-ups in cement, metal and other construction costs.

*Opponents had detested the idea of rail and the half-penny sales tax increase from the start; now, alleging gross mismanagement and waste of taxpayer dollars, they found a golden opportunity to challenge it. A conservative Republican businessman put up significant cash to hire professional petition gatherers, who gathered signatures in front of Wal*Marts and post offices.*

McCrory complains of a pincer movement -- the right wing, fuelled by talk-radio support, fighting the tax and claiming Charlotte's too small for a light rail system, and sceptics on the left, ready to axe the tax because the first rail service isn't serving their various parts of the city.

So why did McCrory become his region's lead advocate for public transit at all? One reason was purely pragmatic. While the exciting idea of rail service got the most attention in the 1998 sales tax referendum, McCrory had another, bigger worry. The city had a dilapidated, poorly-run bus system, supported by the city property tax. McCrory explains: "I thought a region wide sales tax would be better--people driving in from outside sharing the burden."

In fact, 65 percent of the proceeds from the expanded sales tax that opponents are attacking actually finance an expanded, successful new bus system. If the sales tax gets repealed, notes McCrory, "the entire bus system cost gets transferred back to Charlotte property taxpayers. I'm a conservative; I want to protect them."

Economically, the repeal would make zero sense. The city has wisely zoned and insisted on higher density, both business and residential, at the South Corridor stops; one result, say backers, is over \$1 billion in new development, or redevelopment of blighted areas, along the line. The experience isn't unique. Just one example: some \$8 billion in increased tax revenue and economic activity is claimed for Dallas's new 45-mile DART light rail system and its planned 48-mile extensions.

Indeed, while doubters nationwide carp about high rail system costs, evidence of big-time net benefits -- in property values, tax receipts, and transportation alternatives in ever-more carbon-conscious times -- continue to roll in.

But why should an elected official take all the grief for pushing a new concept? Public transportation and land use planning were nowhere on the agenda, McCrory acknowledges, when he ran in 1995. But a few weeks into office, he read a prior mayor's neglected "Committee of 100" report on public transportation. The report's thrust: The fast-growing Sunbelt city would choke on its expansion without quality bus and rail transit lines.

Then McCrory noticed for himself - "When I took my nephews out on strollers, we couldn't get to the street because there were no damned sidewalks. We had no connectivity or pedestrian access--just total reliance on the car." He began to see alternative futures: Charlotte could have tree-lined streets with bikeways and sidewalks, or "traffic lights every 15 feet, strip malls and unlimited pavement."

But could a Republican mayor sell public transit and its big up-front costs? McCrory took the Committee of 100 report to his mentor, retired Duke Power Chair Bill Lee, who was dying of heart disease. With analogy to his disease, Lee suggested: "You can wait until pain is great, but it's likely too late. Or you can act in anticipation. It will cost less; you'll have more chance for success. But it's a hard sell."

Says McCrory: "Some 12 years later, I never imagined how long and how hard the sell would be." When I announced the transit plan, "my own party thought I was nuts."

Indeed, the politics remain perilous. But why be mayor -- for indefinite terms, or for the legacy of a better city?

2. The Doney Spur as a Light Rail Surface Metro

The Doney Spur as a rail transit corridor is not a priority in the Montreal Transport Plan. It should be. This omission needs to be corrected. We need to use and reuse reserved railway lines such as the Doney Spur for fast, frequent light rail Surface Metros. Tram-Train service akin to Ottawa's O-Train or New Jersey Transit's RiverLine can be put into service on lightly used railway lines in the Montreal area. Electrification can follow at a later date.

As then Pointe Claire borough chairman Bill McMurchie said:

"It would be an excellent idea; [...] It would be absolutely top-rate to have rapid transit downtown available. The location is great. It's not only the geographic centre for Pointe Claire, but for all of the West Island." ("The Mid-Island Line? New rail link eyes disused spur", Jason Magder, The West Island Suburban, Wed., Sept. 4, 2002, p.A-8.) Imagine a line with metro-like headways linked to an extended metro Orange Line #2 at Bois Franc Station.

Regarding Tramways on Streets:

Light rail lines, including smaller tramways, should be placed in reserved lanes or corridors as much as possible. This will sidestep the problems of interference with vehicular traffic and increase the energy efficiency of the LRVs, (Light Rail Vehicles). It also makes it possible for the LRV to travel faster. Quicker rides attract more ridership.

(For further information on the innovative Tram-Train technology please consult the following article: "Moving on up... Local rail travel could be revolutionised if proposed trials of continental-style 'tram-trains' in the North are a success. MARK FORSTER talks to one of the men behind the plan -- and a company that believes it's already found the solution." Mark Forster, RAIL, #567, June 6-June 19, P.49.)

3. Conservation of Strategic Rail Corridors and Rail Banking

The Quebec Transport Ministry (MTQ) or a related body should purchase the Doney Spur, Lasalle Loop, Lachine Canal South Bank Line, Montreal and Lachine Railway, Old Port of Montreal Line and South Shore CSX line and

protect them from future obstructions like the new Home Depot at the Terrarium Shopping Centre in Pointe Claire.

Since the late 1980's the Green Coalition has advocated a rapid light rail surface metro on CNR's, (Canadian National Railway's), Doney Spur through the heart of the West Island and paralleling HWY 40, (the Trans-Canada) -- one of the most congested and CO2 and pollution creating arteries in Canada.

The new Home Depot may not end the dream of a light rail line taking single occupancy vehicles off the road, but it makes it much more difficult. Decisions such as granting permits adjacent to and on strategic assets like rail lines should not be deemed irreversible.

We are talking about a legacy. Do we encourage the use of energy efficient and more environmentally friendly rail transit, or do we do nothing and let nature take its course?

Rail lines should not end up at local councils being subdivided piecemeal. Like roads, rail lines are a regional if not national asset and should not be treated with such apathy and indifference.

As the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision put it: The City of Vancouver is well within its rights to tell CPR, (Canadian Pacific Railway), that it can't build condos on its industrial land.

Yes it can run trains if it wishes, but Vancouver has the right to rezone the Arbutus Corridor as a greenbelt and for future rail transit.
See, Arbutus Corridor Plan:

http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/newsreleases2006/NRarbutus_uphold.html

As such, we the Green Coalition would like to see a new rail banking policy implemented whereby railway corridors could be used for green belts and bikeways, etc. until such time a railway is rebuilt and revived. The presence of urban green belts has increased property values in such centres such as Boulder, CO. Such a program would require proximity guidelines and measures to prevent building on the servitude.

Please see the following photographic image clearly showing the Doney Spur obstruction, (New Home Depot in the background; Avrom Shtern and Andrew Dawson in the Foreground; picture by David Fletcher, June 2007.):



4. Regarding Proximity Issues and a Circumferential Railway

Jim Wrinn, editor of Trains magazine talking about the new Transportation Security Administration and the transportation of hazardous materials, (usually in tank cars or covered hoppers), says: "Most routes through non-urbanized areas disappeared years

ago, we have fewer but busier mainlines and housing is built up to the edge of the right-of-way." (April 2007).

We as a society have to improve the situation in existing neighbourhoods with rail facilities. Improvements like: Noise/sound barriers, berms, improved and safer rail, welded rail and the possible reactivation of out-of-service moribund lines such as Montreal's South Shore CSX line (Montreal Secondary/now called St. Lawrence Subdivision), to divert some freight and intermodal container and trailer traffic off Montreal Island. Create a circumferential railway akin to the planned ring road "Highway 30". The Montreal Maine and Atlantic Railway is interested in purchasing and improving this line and this shows promise for the future.

"The next step in intermodal transportation..." should be CPR's Expressway roll on/roll off service of un-reinforced highway trailers. CP's innovative Expressway train currently serves the Montreal-Toronto-Windsor Corridor. It should be extended to other city pairs and used by all major railways thereby establishing and propagating "... an environmentally-friendly technology that reduces emissions and fuel consumption [...] and reducing highway congestion and general wear and tear on equipment and the nation's infrastructure." (**The Next Step In Intermodal Transportation; Vision drives progress. In the pursuit of that vision, a new high performance intermodal transport system is emerging: Iron Highway** [now Expressway], CSX Intermodal, CP Rail System, 1994.)

There must also be a "give and take" between railways and affected communities. Communications between city authorities, concerned citizens and grass roots groups and railway representatives must always be open. This is essential for safe operations and a safer community. A dialogue is always better and less energy intensive than a shouting match.

But for future sensitive residential areas adjacent to rail yards and main lines or natural spaces and green zones like Meadowbrook Golf Course that must be conserved, the new Federation of Canadian Municipalities' and Railway Association of Canada Proximity guidelines must become the law of the land to avoid development on such precious buffer zones such as Meadowbrook and to mitigate calamities such as chemical spills, derailments near residential neighbourhoods... These setbacks guidelines would also reduce noise, vibrations etc which can affect the health of individuals.

[From the Railway Association of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities joint research report entitled 'Proximity Guidelines and

Best Practices" in Nov. 2006:

"- The recommended minimum vibration influence area is 75 meters from a railway corridor or railway yard.

- Development review of residential or other sensitive land uses proposed within these influence areas should include noise and vibration studies to assess the suitability of the proposed use to recommend mitigation requirements.

- For a rail freight yard, there is a 300 meter setback for residential uses (and) for a mainline, a 30 meter minimum setback from the property line.

- Other recommendations include a three meter minimum height acoustical fence and a 2.5 meter earth berm, as well as foundation isolation for residential structures."]

If this were law, Meadowbrook could not be developed!

[For further information please see:

www.proximityissues.ca

Proximity Guidelines at:

http://www.proximityissues.ca/english/MaterialsContent/2006_Guidelines_eng.pdf]

According to CN, this is a "... multi-jurisdictional challenge."

[Canadian National Railway Submission: See Pp.19-21:

http://www.tc.gc.ca/tcss/RSA_Review-Examen_LSF/Submissions-Soumissions/CN-4.pdf]

Only the Province of Ontario has similar guidelines in force and even those should be updated

to follow the RAC-FCM report. (Ontario's original setbacks' guidelines only dealt with rail yards.)

However, the Federal Government should show the way. CNR believes that Canada has the power to regulate lands adjacent to railway corridors. For example, when Mirabel Airport was being planned, the Federal Government expropriated vast lands in order to create effective buffer zones to surrounding and future communities. This created a lot of tension:

Federal action would step on many Provincial toes and may not be the best way to advance these sound policies. But, we at the Green Coalition Verte believe that the Federal Government should at least come out with a strong statement endorsing these guidelines and encouraging all provinces and municipalities in Canada to adopt them.

5. Airport Rail Shuttle

The Canadian Pacific Railway route, (Westmount/Vaudreuil Subdivisions), or the line suggested by Mr. David Seto should be selected since they would serve a larger catchment area. The CPR line is shorter than the CNR route and would be less costly to build. It has a dedicated passenger railway east of Ballantyne in Lachine. A third track could easily be placed from Vendome to Montreal West Station.

Vendome, (metro/rail), is an ideal intermediate point as it is shallow and easy to access. It will also serve the future McGill and Shriners Hospitals.

The integration of the Dorion-Rigaud commuter line would make this service more viable in the longer term as it will generate a lot more local traffic. An intermodal passenger terminal combining rail, bus, taxi and future light rail service should be created at PET, (Pierre Elliot-Trudeau), Airport. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic should be made easier as well...

6. Electrify Existing and Future Diesel Operated Commuter Rail Lines

Although costlier in the shorter term, electric service brings efficiencies and increased frequencies as witnessed by the Two Mountains line. There would be less Greenhouse Gas Emissions as well as a reduction in toxic diesel fumes.

Some planners suggest that commuter trains may cause or increase sprawl. The Suroit, (Vaudreuil-Soulanges), is one of the fastest growing areas in Canada. Highways 20 and 40 and the promise of the future Autoroute 30 have made it so, not railways. In 1974-1975, there were four daily local trains to Rigaud and five to Hudson. (Town Train service le Train-de-ville timetable, CP Rail, 1974-1975, October 27th to April 26th/du 27 octobre au 26 avril.) Now there is one lonely train to both destinations.

As such, all commuter lines should have increased headways and hours of operation. A new commuter line to Chateauguy on the out-of-service CSX line should be considered.

Regarding the Blainville-St. Jerome line's connection with the Mt. Royal Tunnel:

Should the AMT proceed with this link, commuter rail service in Cote Des Neiges, (ideally Canora), Namur, and Cote Saint Luc as project in the Montreal Urban Plan would be very much in doubt. Montreal's West End is deserving of rail transit service, (either commuter rail or the extension of metro line #5 [blue] from Snowdon/Clanranald to Montreal West Station/Elmhurst.)

Also, the costly and ill-conceived Train de l'Est east of Lachenaie must be reconsidered. Rail service to Terrebonne/Mascouche makes more sense on the QGRY, (Quebec-Gatineau Railway), line via Laval. It would be a lot faster and would be able to compete with the ill-advised Highway 25 extension.

7. Assure the Future Viability of Central Station as a Transportation Hub

Canadian National Railway has sold Central Station to another company. The AMT has proposed an alternate Downtown terminal for its CN commuter trains: McGill metro. On Friday, August 26, 2007, a major crack was discovered in a concrete slab adjacent to that metro. What would have happened had the AMT's plan been a reality? Would have it been possible to use Central Station as a temporary terminal?

The McGill College commuter rail station is a novel concept. It would attract many new riders to commuter rail. However, why terminate the trains there? Central Station is a primary gateway to Montreal and should remain as such.

VIA Rail uses it and has every intention of staying there. There is also the prospect of future high-speed rail. The South Shore Transit is nearby.

Do not repeat the same sad mistake with Central as Montreal planners and Federal authorities did with Windsor, Bonaventure or Viger Railway Stations. Ideally, the Forum should be resurrected at the magical nexus of Ste. Catherine Street West and Atwater Ave. allowing for the rebirth of Windsor as a railway hub.

8. The Future of Morgan Road and Pierrefonds Blvd.

On page 102 of the proposed Montreal Transport document it is implied that Pierrefonds Blvd. will cross the 440 servitude to the west to link up with a future Morgan Road extension. Should that occur, the l'Anse a l'Orme ecoterritory would be severely compromised. The Green Coalition is against such a proposal because Montreal has very few natural spaces left. This natural space is one of the most pristine examples of the Maple/Hickory forest in south-western Quebec.

9. Turcot Interchange/St. Jacques Escarpment

Transport Quebec has proposed placing the Ville Marie Expressway, (Highway 20), and CNR's rail line adjacent to the St. Jacques Escarpment Ecoterritory. Presently this green area is almost inaccessible and is bombarded by the din of turbulent automotive traffic 24/7. If Highway 20 and the CNR are moved even closer, how do we square transportation policy with the public's right to access a natural space?

Also, several years ago the AMT, (Agence metropolitaine de transport), had planned to build a new commuter rail yard and locomotive repair facility in the former Turcot Yard. It would have been connected to Canadian Pacific Railway's Westmount Subdivision via the derelict Imperial Tobacco Industrial Lead. New plans call for such a facility at CP's Sortin Yard in Lachine. The Borough of Lachine has expressed its opposition against the new plan because it would create too much noise. Perhaps it is time to reconsider and make revisions to the Turcot plan

10. The Concept of User Pay, PPP and the Tax Burden on Railways.

An even playing field must be established between railways and highways. In general, railways pay for their own infrastructure. Highways are bought and paid for by the taxpayer. As such, former Quebec Transport Minister Sam Elkas in cooperation with Revenu Quebec and the Quebec Municipal Affairs Ministry introduced a fairer tax rebate system for energy efficient and environmentally friendly railways in June 1993. It "... considerably eased the municipal tax burden for both CN and CP -- legislation which both railways greatly appreciated." (Letter by former Quebec Transport Minister Sam Elkas to Avrom David Shtern, Transport Quebec, Montreal, Nov. 5, 1993, p.1.). Please see following page:

Le ministre des Transports

Montreal, November 5, 1993

Mr. Aaron David Shtern

Montréal (Québec)

Dear Mr. Shtern,

It was with considerable interest that I read your letter of October 15th last in which you raise several questions regarding rail and commuter train issues affecting Quebec.

Allow me to begin by stating that the 278 M \$ modernization project involving the Two-Mountain-Montreal line is on schedule and should be completed by September 1995. This capital investment was completely funded by my ministry and the Government of Quebec. Our expectation is that following the modernization, ridership on that line will increase from 4,100 commuters to 10,800 users during morning rush hours.

To answer your second question, the VIA route between Sherbrooke and St-John, New Brunswick is under the jurisdiction of the federal government which announced last month that a delay of six months will be granted to study alternatives to abandonment. Our position has always been that rail line abandonments should not be authorized pending the articulation of a basic national rail network which all parties adhere to and which will be safeguarded. Upon my insistence, my ministry has a basic rail network for Quebec. Unfortunately, our partners across Canada have yet to follow Quebec's lead in this area.

Thirdly, the question of municipal taxation was dealt with last June, when our government adopted legislation which considerably eased the municipal tax burden for both CN and CP - legislation which both railways greatly appreciated.

Fourthly, the Government, upon my request, did authorize the purchase of the abandoned rail corridor between St-Jerôme and Mount-Laurier. This 200 km. corridor will be converted into a recreation and tourism project which will generate considerable economic spin-offs for that region while at the same time ensuring that the Government has a right to use the corridor in the event that a future public need is identified.

Finally, as regards the expansion of the commuter train network, I am confident that our plan to expand beyond the existing two lines will materialize very shortly. A number of financial considerations have still to be refined but I expect to announce our plan publicly in the very near future.

Thanking you for having shared your interest in these important issues, I am,

Yours sincerely,

The Minister

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sam Elkas".

SAM L. ELKAS

Highway Congestion Charges, (User Pay):

Highway Congestion Charges on automotive traffic can help pay to repair Quebec's and Montreal's existing road and transit infrastructure. Part of the monies could be set aside for new rail transit projects as well. Wireless and electronically monitored technology makes this proposed policy possible.

Public/Private Partnerships:

PPPs should be just that. There must be shared responsibility between the public and private sector with clear-cut targets indicating who pays for what. Many PPPs are glorified subsidies covered by a fig leaf of privatization. For example, Toronto's Highway 407 was sold off for 3 cents on the dollar leaving taxpayers 97% of the bill.

Wednesday, August 29, 2007.