

June 23, 2004

A Citizen's Response regarding the
Master Plan of Montreal; A written
Statement by:

AVROM SHTERN

Dear Sir or Madam,
Please find enclosed some comments
on Montreal's Plan d'urbanisme. This
Submission was written on behalf of no
one except myself. Most of my comments are on
transportation issues.

Yours Sincerely,

A.D. Shtern

P.S.: I have made a submission on behalf of
Les Amis de Meadowbrook and I was cited in
the Green Coalition brief. However, the following statements
are purely my own.

Plan d'urbanisme / OCPM

(1)

Socioeconomics :

The City of Montreal states clearly that its priorities are waterworks and road reconstruction and repair. These are of vital importance. However, a plan needs a vision for the longer term as well. It has been said that environmental issues are merely the playground of the upper middle class; that the lower classes are concerned with more mundane issues like putting bread on the table. If they are concerned at all with other issues, it would be redevelopment and enrichment of their sector and not the Doney Spur line, LRTs, buses, or Meadowbrook... This is a fallacy! Redevelopment usually displaces the disadvantaged. Likewise, everyone requires breathable air and a sound environment!

"Sauvegardez les emprise ferroviaire SUP!"
Railbanking :

There is a great need to preserve underused / unused rights-of-way before it is too

late. This is especially true in pre-automotive cities such as Montreal. (2)

The Lasalle Loop, (CPR), for example, is under extreme pressure of development. A housing project, "Jardins du Parc", has blocked a small part of the line near the Angrignon Metro station.

In the short term, these linear corridors can be used as bikeways, trails, etc... In the longer term, when the constellations of politics and economics are "in-sync", LRT's could be built. (Light Rail Transit)

Lines such as the Lasalle Loop, Doney Spur, ^{Lachine} Canal Bank lines, (North and South), should be acquired by the AMT or the city for the public good.

LRT's Attract People From Their Cars :

True, buses are cheaper to produce than LRT's. But, they do not attract people from their cars. In general, buses are patronized by

Students, the elderly and those who cannot afford to drive a car. One wonders if city planners ever rode the MTC's (STM's), low-floor buses. What misery!

Increase The Frequency of Commuter Rail Lines:

The Blainville and Lakeshore (Rivard), runs should become full-service lines. This would attract many more passenger. Computer technology and signaling and infrastructure improvement would make this possible. The Two Mountains line is near capacity and needs to be expanded.

Placing of the Molson/Bell Centre on the Windsor Station site was a mistake. Not only is there not enough room in the corridors of the arena, but it has cut off the tracks from the original station. Windsor Station has become a mausoleum. Future expansion of rail service via Lucien L'Allier will prove difficult, but not impossible. If the Canadiens ever decide to move again, Windsor Station should return to its old vocation -- a passenger train station!

Laval Metro:

(4)

The almost billion dollar Laval Metro project is sucking the lifeblood out of other pressing mass transit projects.

For the amount spent on the Laval Metro, a few LRT lines could have been built. Put another way, at least 2 electrified full-service commuter rail lines could have been authorized.

Recommendation: Politics should be taken out of mass transit planning. Rigorous technical/financial planning should be the standard.

Biofuels:

Buses, taxis and diesel commuter rail should use biofuels. These fuels are less polluting and relieve the pressure from the overheated oil market.

Railways Are Key To Relieving Traffic Chaos:

Society must strike a balance between legitimate economic activity, (like railways), and protection of its citizens, (like noise abatement). The city

also has to recognize that trucks are not a panacea, and that a strong profitable, efficient, and environmentally friendly rail network is most beneficial to Montreal. (5)

Public money is used to build, maintain, clean and police highways. Government authority is used to expropriate land for the construction of tax-exempt highways. New highways inevitably lead to the destruction of fertile farm land, suburban sprawl, more pollution, and congestion. More gridlock might also encourage road rage. Trucks do not pay the full price for highway upkeep and development. Freight railroads pay for their own infrastructure. It is only fair that CN, CP and other railways either secure a permanent tax break or get public funds, (public private partnership / PPP), for their infrastructure as the nationalized highway system has received since the early 1900s.

Alternatives to our road system are needed to act as safety valves and keep our highways fluid and efficient. This is so true post 9/11. Intermodalism between trucks and trains should be

the standard, not the exception.

(6)

- CPR's intention to move its car compounds should be studied carefully:
- What impact will this have on highway traffic?
 - Where will the new facilities be placed?
 - How will the new neighbours react?
 - Will there be 300 meter setbacks between the St. Luc Rail yard and the vacated land? (The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has setback regulations for Class-3 industries such as rail yards, but Quebec Province or Montreal do not!)

Please note; The car compound adjacent to the Meadowbrooks Golf Course is on leased land owned by Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, (the same owner of Meadowbrook). This land may have been part of the golf course in the past.

Also, with respect to rail terminal restructuring and modernization, please consult Chicago's, (IL), "CREATE" project.

The Seaway Project:

There has been serious talk^{about} a "Post Panamax" canal between the Atlantic and the U.S. Midwest. The dredging of the St. Lawrence would not only

destroy important wetlands and the general environment, but could impact water levels and the economic viability of the Port of Montreal and its rail services. This matter must be dealt with as soon as possible. Montreal must unite with all interested parties such as the railways, the port and the State of New York and oppose this menace!

I Remain,

Avrom David Shtern