

« 2007 TAC Sustainable Urban Transportation ” Award »

2007 Transportation Plan



INTRODUCTION

The Montreal Transportation Plan fully meets the four evaluation criteria set out in the nomination guide. This ambitious and even bold plan unequivocally favours public transit and active transportation.

The Transportation Plan puts forward concrete measures designed to achieve a sustainable balance between the public's transportation needs and protection of the environment. At a time when climate change is of increasing concern to specialists and the public alike, Montreal has no choice—effective action is urgently needed.

Henceforth, Montreal will give pedestrians precedence in the urban space. Putting pedestrians at the heart of its priorities will mean taking all necessary steps to make walking a safe and pleasant activity. In so doing, Montreal wishes to reduce the impacts associated with the increasing use of motor vehicles, especially as regards the space they occupy in the urban environment. Montreal also wishes to counter an increasingly worrisome public health problem, namely sedentary living.

This transportation plan is attuned to the public's interests and clearly shows the City's willingness to transform, improve and rethink the transportation system in support of efficient travel, economic growth, quality of life, sustainable development, and responsible management, so that residents can live in a city that has safely and harmoniously balanced the various transportation options.

The Montreal Transportation Plan is innovative in many respects. In addition to proposing the implementation of cutting-edge measures such as bicycle sharing, the establishment of a sustainable mobility observatory, and the creation of green neighbourhoods, it has been the subject of public consultations unprecedented in Montreal's history.

As well, contrary to many other transportation plans, it combines a series of measures designed to improve mobility with various scenarios designed to fund the proposed projects. Indeed, it would have been too easy to ask senior levels of government to fund the projects without explaining how Montreal would go about meeting its share of responsibility.

Finally, based on the interest reflected in the many information requests received over the past six months, we very humbly submit that the Montreal Transportation Plan has already become a model for many Canadian municipalities.

CONTEXT

The City of Montreal, with a population of about 1.6 million, is the cultural and economic hub of the urban area. Roughly two million people live off of Montreal Island in 67 Municipalities that have almost complete jurisdiction over land use, public transit and local roads. A super-regional Metropolitan Municipal Council provides a forum for debating regional issues among the 16 on-island and the 67 off-island Municipalities.

The Quebec government is a major player in the region, responsible for freeways and most major roads while a provincial agency operates an extensive network of commuter trains as well as a number of lanes for high occupancy vehicles.

During the Montreal Summit in 2002, the City and its most important partners expressed the need to prepare a transportation plan, which would promote alternatives to the automobile. In concert with its major partners, three phases were undertaken leading up to the official presentation of the plan. These steps were:

- 1) the preparation of a transportation vision statement including strategic objectives;
- 2) an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the actual transportation system; and
- 3) the description of specific transportation projects, including proposed scheduling and cost sharing.

The Transportation Plan was made public on May 17, 2007. The choice of this date was highly symbolic as outlined by Montreal mayor Gérald Tremblay during the May 17 press conference:

“I wish that this day, May 17, 2007, the anniversary of the founding of the City of Montreal, mark another important date in the City’s history, that of the unveiling of its first Transportation Plan. Today we break with an outmoded approach to urban transportation and adopt a new credo, a new way of thinking about transportation in Montreal, an approach which is directed resolutely at air quality and the quality of life, an approach which will lift us to the front ranks of the world’s most avant-garde environmentally conscious cities.”

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

The Transportation Plan includes concrete proposals focused on individual transportation sectors. Many of the proposals appear bold, but are considered necessary in order to maintain a sustainable equilibrium between mobility and the environment.

Montreal has established collective transportation as its clear priority, thereby choosing to offer to the greatest possible number of its citizen’s convenient, socially responsible access to places of residence, employment, study and leisure. At the same time, the City has emphasized the important role that infrastructure devoted to collective transportation can have on urban form. The Transportation Plan seeks to outline the regional development framework for the entire metropolitan area for the next ten years and to identify Montreal’s place within this framework.

VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: TIME FOR A RADICAL CHANGE IN DIRECTION

The objectives that guide the development of the plan are original and the measures proposed in the Plan are as innovative as the planning approach used to produce them. The Plan’s strategic objectives stress such items as sustainable development, the environment, liveable neighbourhoods, public health and safety, the integration of land use and transportation planning.

Ever more crowded arterial roads, heavily used, yet inadequate public transit, the omnipresence of the automobile, particularly problematic in residential districts, all are features of an undesirable tendency in urban transportation which Montreal has decided to change, now.

Montreal’s transportation vision statement expresses the chosen orientations and shows how local and regional transportation prerogatives will be reconciled:

“To assure the mobility needs of all Montrealers and to make their City a more pleasant place to live and a more prosperous place to work while respecting environmental imperatives. To do this Montreal plans to reduce dependence on the automobile and to encourage the use of all forms of collective transportation as well as active transportation (walking and cycling).”

TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS: STRUCTURING THE URBAN FABRIC

The urban form envisaged by Montreal in its Land Use Plan, adopted in 2005, is founded on encouraging land use that is more strategic in nature and more intensive in scope with a view to facilitating a

greater use of collective transportation. This orientation reflects an awareness of the role of urban planning in encouraging viable cities, acceptable rates of return on investments in public infrastructure, and the increased use of alternatives to the automobile.

Every addition or modification to the road system, to transportation vehicles or to other elements of the transportation system will be treated as an opportunity to improve urban form and function. Major infrastructure initiatives will be viewed as urban development projects, not just as transportation projects.

Remodelling the transportation systems to provide adequate mobility while adhering to the principles of sustained development will be an immense challenge. The challenge can be more easily met if we recognize the links that connect transportation to urban form and integrate them into a global planning approach. To do this the City of Montreal has decided to contest and confront the overwhelming domination of the private passenger car.

CHANGING MONTREAL BY TRANSFORMING ITS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

For decades Montreal's urban landscape has been in constant evolution. New transportation infrastructure has been built; the economy and its industrial base have diversified; downtown has experienced a boom with the establishment of head offices of a number of large corporations. Suburbs have flourished, creating new pressures on the transportation system.

The Transportation Plan proposes nine targeted initiatives to guide the City's actions and meet the objectives of the transportation Vision Statement.

- 1) *Make the pedestrian a priority by improving the attractiveness of the urban pedestrian environment;*
- 2) *Make public transit the cornerstone of Montreal's development;*
- 3) *Expand cycling infrastructure and implement other measures to encourage an increased use of bicycles throughout the City;*
- 4) *Encourage the shared use of automobiles;*
- 5) *Assume the role of leadership in promoting transportation safety and adopt a philosophy of "zero accidents";*
- 6) *Share public rights of way in order to increase the importance of walking, cycling and shared modes of transportation;*
- 7) *Manage parking as a strategic tool to reduce automobile use;*
- 8) *Give priority to urban goods movement and trips related to economic activity and;*
- 9) *Use innovative high performance transportation technologies.*

Montréal proposes an ambitious undertaking, composed of 21 major initiatives to be implemented in parallel over the next decade which will radically improve the quality of the environment of the island of Montréal and the quality of life of its residents. The Plan makes an appeal to all stakeholders in the transportation sector to become involved, for to become a reality, Montréal's vision must be shared.

This list does not encompass all the initiatives that will need to be undertaken and which are outlined in the Transportation Plan. However, in order to achieve the goals that have been set, the municipal administration and its partners will need to focus on the efficient implementation of these projects, whether island-wide or at the neighbourhood level, because they are the ones most likely to bring about the changes that are being sought.

Major Initiatives

1st	Build a Light Rail Transit (LRT) network in central Montréal
2nd	Build a rail shuttle between downtown and Montréal-Trudeau airport
3rd	Modernize the metro's rolling stock and other equipment
4th	Extend the metro system eastward
5th	Improve the STM's services in order to increase ridership by 8% over five years
6th	Promote ride sharing
7th	Provide for greater public transit capacity in the Champlain Bridge - Bonaventure corridor
8th	Implement a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network on exclusive right-of-way
9th	Implement priority measures for buses on 240 kilometres of roads
10th	Implement mobility management plans
11th	Modernize rue Notre-Dame
12th	Implement the East Island Commuter Train
13th	Double the extent of Montréal's bicycle path network within seven years
14th	Implement the Pedestrian Charter
15th	Strengthen the pedestrian character of the downtown core and central neighbourhoods
16th	Give back to Montréal neighbourhood residents the quality of life to which they are entitled
17th	Improve transportation safety
18th	Maintain and complete the road network on Montreal Island
19th	Facilitate the transportation of merchandise and travel derived from economic output
20th	Review governance
21st	Means that are commensurate with our ambitions

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The process leading up to adoption of the Transportation Plan was an unprecedented exercise in democracy that provided individual Montrealers and interest groups to make their views known.

The Plan received exceptionally high media coverage and was widely debated within the numerous city and town councils. More than 100 memoirs were submitted and more than 125 groups and individuals made presentations.

Information kiosques distributed information about the plan during car-free days in downtown Montreal and at International transportation conferences. The latter initiative resulted in visits from delegations from China, Iceland and Germany interested in the details as to how Montreal had dealt with such a complex initiative.

VISIBLE INDICATIONS OF CHANGE

The Transportation Plan brings with it major changes in the City of Montreal's daily operations. A culture based on efficient traffic flow at the expense of the quality of life in central areas is gradually giving way to a vision of transportation founded on reducing automobile dependency.

Those who not long ago were focused on creating a balanced transportation system based on an equilibrium between the automobile and public transportation are now active promoters of walking, transportation safety, cycling and public transit. The adoption of the Transportation Plan will constitute a veritable marriage of region-wide transportation and urban planning, so long awaited in Montreal.

The first steps toward implementing initiatives contained in the Plan were begun in 2007 and in 2008 work will begin in earnest under the control of a new administrative unit with direct responsibility for implementing those projects under municipal control.

CONCLUSION

Montreal is a pleasant City to live in, a walkable City as the tourists say. It should stay that way, even more so.

To achieve this, the Transportation Plan foresees a new model for sharing street space that favours collective transportation, walking and cycling and which presupposes a redefinition of the importance of the private automobile. The environment, public health and safety, and urban ambiance are the new prerogatives.

Montreal's Transportation Plan is an ambitious project, one that is stimulating and which seeks to bring people together to redefine the future in a spirit of sustainable development and quality of life with the help and participation of all of its citizens.