

## REPORT

### PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING ON THE RÉSEAU EXPRESS MÉTROPOLITAIN (REM) IN TOWN OF MOUNT ROYAL – OCTOBER 9, 2018

#### Background

##### *The REM*

The Réseau express métropolitain (REM) is a major public transportation project with an estimated cost of \$6.3 billion. The project is managed by the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ Infra). When completed, the system will have 26 stations and cross the greater Montreal area on 67 km of tracks. The proposed REM project will comprise several branches, run 20 hours a day and have a service frequency of 2.5 to 15 minutes, depending on the time of day. The slightly over one-kilometre segment that will cross Town of Mount Royal is the most densely populated in the system and will handle trains connecting downtown with Montréal-Trudeau airport, Deux-Montagnes and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

##### *Town of Mount Royal*

Town of Mount Royal is a garden city whose urban heritage dates back more than a century. The Town is renowned for the quality of its urban landscapes and the peacefulness of its neighbourhoods. The model city of Town of Mount Royal was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 2008. Its impressive history is closely related to that of the railway and the tunnel passing under the mountain. In 2016, the announcement of the REM project was greeted positively by residents, who, at the time, saw it as improving their quality of life as well as that of other commuter train users. However, when the details of the trains' frequency of service were announced earlier this year, locals' enthusiasm quickly dwindled. In addition to all the inconveniences caused by several years of work to build the project, the REM service as currently envisioned by CDPQ Infra would forever change the central areas of the model city and could adversely affect the quality of life of thousands of residents whose homes are located near the railway tracks.

At this point, it was important for Mayor Philippe Roy and Town Council to gauge locals' acceptance of the project, to ensure citizens' voices are heard and to orient the project in ways that will preserve the quality of life in Mount Royal.

Some 300 Townies accepted Council's invitation to attend a public consultation meeting at Town Hall on Tuesday, October 9, 2018. The main purpose was to better understand how citizens see various issues related to the implementation of the REM by CDPQ Infra, which calls for the number of trains passing through the Town to increase from 61 a day to 550.

## Public consultation meeting

Of the 300 citizens attending the meeting, 40 took advantage of the open mic to express their views to all the Town's elected officials and to Anthony Housefather, member of Parliament for Mount Royal. For his part, Pierre Arcand, member of the National Assembly for Mont-Royal–Outremont, was represented by Charlotte Thierry, a political attaché from the riding office.

Many citizens whose homes are located near the railway added their voices to those of the representatives of community, municipal and educational associations to point out that the significant increases in the intensity and frequency of the REM train service were not made public when CDPQ Infra announced the project and that the Town's special position – with three branches of the system converged here (plus passengers from the Mascouche train line) – was not seriously considered by CDPQ Infra. In addition, although CDPQ Infra is both the developer of and the principal contractor for the REM project, it held only two information evenings, in June 2017 and June 2018, but did not hold a true public consultation on the project, a key step in abiding by the principles of sustainable development.

The public consultation held by the Town showed that social acceptance of the project has been extensively undermined by the following issues: increased train traffic, vibrations transmitted through the ground, noise and visual pollution, air quality and the design of the future station and pedestrian bridge located at the intersection of Lazard and Jasper avenues. Other residents, whose properties will experience noise and other disruptions related to REM train operations, fear their property values will fall.

The participants are convinced there is still time to change the project's parameters. However, for the last two years, CDPQ Infra appears to have turned a deaf ear to any and all calls from Town officials and citizens groups to review the project with an eye to reducing its impacts. CDPQ Infra opposes all suggested changes citing cost considerations and tight start-of-service deadlines. Moreover, the developer still has not provided the impact studies and data necessary to ease the concerns of the thousands of citizens who will be affected by the REM's arrival.

Here are the main proposals submitted during the public consultation:

- Extend the railway trench from Mont-Royal station up to the A-40;
- Cover the railway with a closed structure from the mouth of the Mount Royal tunnel up to the A-40 and do so *before* REM service starts;
- Plan and develop the space on top of the covering structure;
- Between the Cornwall and Laird bridges, build a bridge park connecting both sides of the trench, with plantings, a pedestrian path and a bike path;

- Build a universally accessible pedestrian overpass at the intersection of Lazard and Jasper avenues to replace the existing level passage;
- Mandate the Town and its representatives to study all available options for making citizens' voices heard by CDPQ Infra and other bodies and getting the project altered;
- Take whatever action is necessary, including legal action, to stop work if CDPQ Infra refuses to alter the project.

The Town's councillors and administrators have taken note of Townies' many comments made at the consultation. They are now focused on determining the best action to take to re-establish the social consensus whereby the Town's quality of life is preserved even as sustainable development moves ahead.

## Appendix A

### List of speakers

- Ms. Julie Dionne (moderator)
- Mr. Philippe Roy (mayor)
- *The group of residents that launched the petition:*
  - o Mr. Pierre Mouroit;
  - o Mr. Georges Sayegh;
  - o Mr. Catalin Zimbresteanu;
  - o Ms. Diane Henri;
  - o Mr. Marc Debargis
- Mr. Luc Landreville (Commission scolaire Marguerite Bourgeois);
- Mr. Michel Faure (Alliance Mont-Royal);
- Ms. Joan Fraser (Alliance Mont-Royal);
- *Members of the Mount Royal Municipal Association*
  - o Mr. Allen Feldman;
  - o Ms. Kathy Elie;
  - o Mr. Farid Tannous;
- Ms. Geneviève Bordeleau (Conseil d'établissement des Écoles St-Clément);
- Ms. Nathalie Gaetz (Conseil d'établissement des Écoles St-Clément);
- Ms. Tanya Naem (Conseil d'établissement des Écoles St-Clément);
- Ms. Sophie Séguin (Association des parents de Mont-Royal)
- Mr. René Dufour;
- Mr. Gilbert Katchya;
- Mr. Fabio Voltasio;
- Mr. Marc Trudeau;

- Mr. Ross Kennedy;
- Ms. Mona Rizk;
- Ms. Tatyana Litvak;
- Mr. Jean-Marc Séguin;
- Mr. Roman Boyko;
- Ms. Barbara Lapointe;
- Ms. Ghislaine Savard;
- Ms. Anne-Marie Williams;
- Ms. Romana Rogoshewska;
- Mr. Ralph Nobel;
- Mr. André Dumais;
- Mr. Hy London;
- Ms. Renée Larouche;
- Mr. Mathieu Abbott;
- Ms. Colette Kilian;
- Ms. Cecilia McDonald;
- Ms. Laurence Péloquin;
- Ms. Ionna Havanitis;
- Ms. Danièle Couture;
- Mr. Anthony Housefather (MP – Mount Royal)