



Green Coalition Brief

Transportation

Thursday, August 18, 2005

8 PM, Montreal City Hall

Oral Presentation
(including extra comments)

Avrom David Shtern,

David Fletcher,

Andrew Dawson.

Madam Chairman, Mr. Dauphin, councilors, My name is Avrom Shtern of the Green Coalition; This is Andrew Dawson, (to my left), a concerned citizen from St. Laurent and a new member of the Green coalition, and, (to my right), David Fletcher of the Green Coalition.

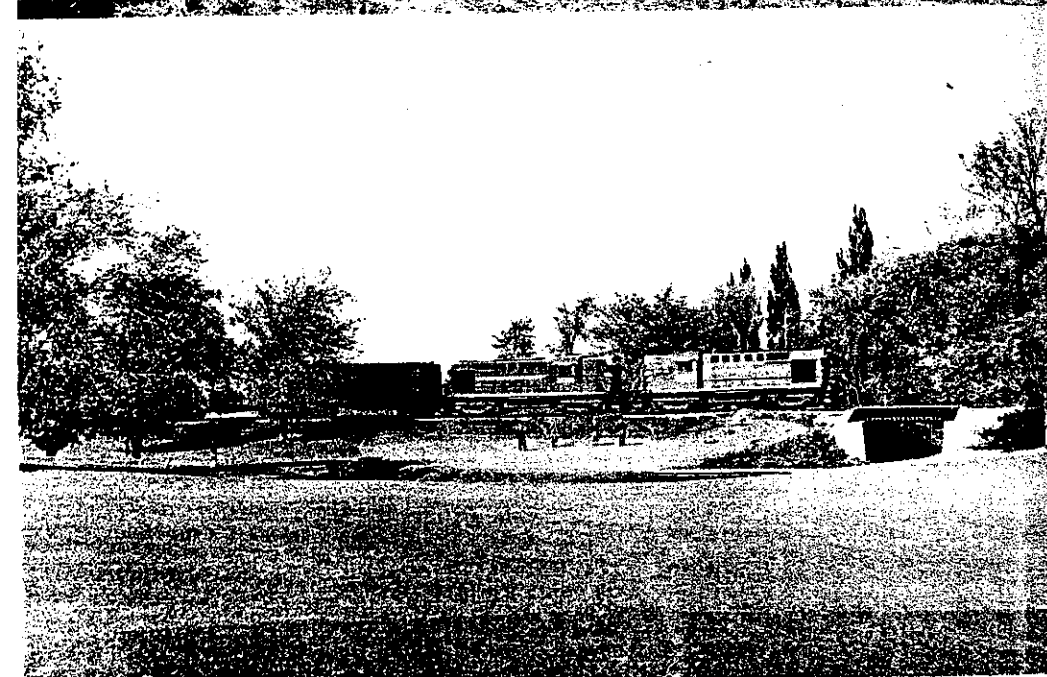
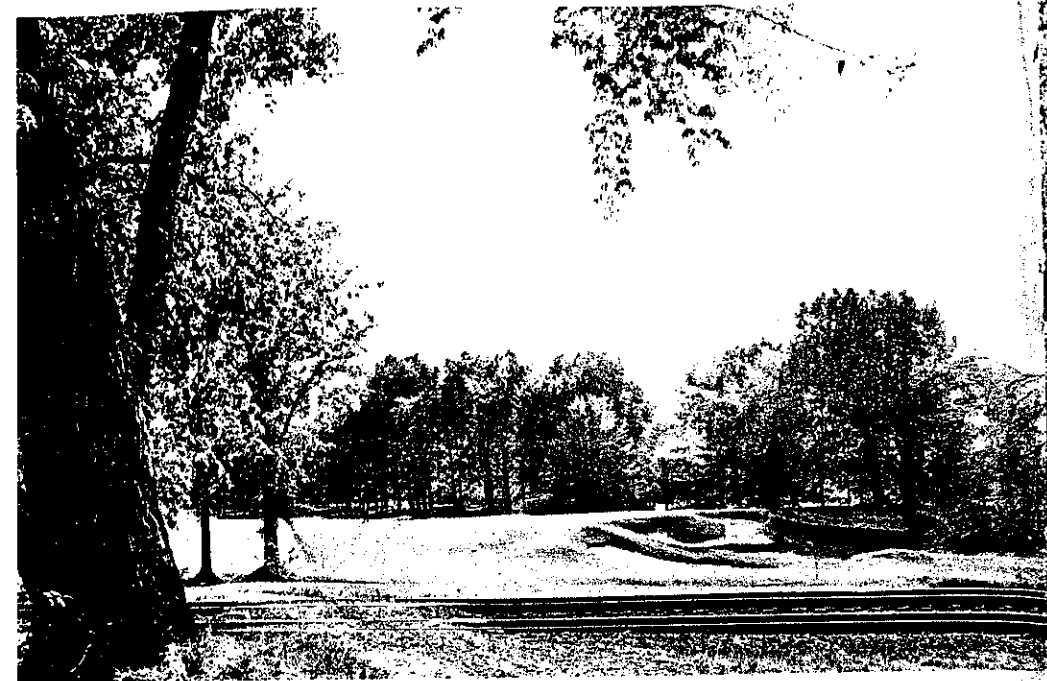
I came here by bus and Metro and I'm proud of that. Andrew took the Metro and the Two Mountains commuter train, and Mr. Fletcher coming from the West Island usually takes the train or Metro -- the access of which is not convenient.

An Integrated Mass Transit and Transportation Plan is key to our home, our earth, our city, our environment, because it leaves a smaller footprint than asphalt and concrete of the highway system,

When my Auntie Henie used to say, "car tickets", she did not mean the document given to you by the police! She meant "... a ticket to ride..." the streetcar! That has changed! We have changed! We have no tramways. We have a car culture that imprints and affects everything we do from peace to war. A culture that expects an infinite flow of low gasoline prices.

(Show picture of the Royal Montreal Golf Club at Dixie/Lachine/Dorval. See, The Royal Montreal Golf Club 1873-1973; the Centennial of Golf in North America, 1973, Pp. 66-67.)

In 1916, the minute book for the Royal Montreal Golf Club at Dixie/Lachine/Dorval commented on the excellent commuter rail service provided not by one, but by two railways to the Lakeshore. Many members regarded the automobile as a noisy and dusty intrusion into the peace of the links. Now, can somebody tell me how many members of the Royal Montreal in Ile-Bizard use public transit today?



The South Course at Dixie had a characteristic charm, memorable for graceful elm trees, certain distinctive golf holes — and a railway. (above) No. 6, the "Quarry Hole", a tricky second shot over the railway to a gracefully contoured green, but watch that old quarry in front. (below) Steam locomotives gave way to diesels, but the trains rolled on. No. 4, "The Moat Hole" featuring water on three sides and the railway embankment behind.

(See, the Grand Trunk Railway, [CNR], in the background.).

The celebrated No. 11 of the South Course, 440 yards, par 4. The demanding second shot required the golfer to clear the railway embankment and reach the green with its protective stream to front and right, trees to left, and difficult sloping putts. (below) The First hole of the South Course, 495 yards, a comfortable par-5 with a magnificent giant elm tree as the graceful backdrop to the green. (The protective water course is the Bouchard Stream.)

© The Royal Montreal Golf Club, 1973.

This T-shirt, (point to my T-shirt: Boston's "'NEATH THE STREETS OF BOSTON (T) Rapid Transit Lines"), has a map of the Boston Transit system. Boston is roughly the size of Montreal. It is our historic sister city; (See, Henry Aubin "On Demographics", The Gazette, Tues., August 16, 2005, P.A21.). And, like Montreal it has lost riders from the subway to the car. Its exorbitant, costly, and some say structurally unstable 'Big Dig'/Central Artery Tunnel Project has sucked the lifeblood out of the subway. It has unfortunately taken away the incentives from public transit, and has used up 100's of millions, if not billions of dollars, that otherwise would have been used for better alternatives.

Let's face it, MOTORISTS DON'T WANT TO SACRIFICE! :

"Let someone else do it!"

"Bicycles and pedestrians are an intrusion in our holy space!"
(See, "Fair play for cyclists and walkers", editorial, The Gazette, Sat., Aug. 20, 2005, P.A24.).

"Let someone else climb the stairs while the escalators don't work!"
(See, "Metro Makeover", starting Sept. 10, 2005 in The Gazette.).

"Let someone else listen to the mumbled words of the Metro's public address system!"

"Let someone else be jerked around like an astronaut or test pilot on those low-floor buses!" (Agonizing long waits are not in the cards!).

Unfortunately, many are comfortable with the status quo. It is not a financial, logistical, or technological problem. It is a matter of priorities, public policy and the will of motorists to change their ways; Not just telling a pollster!

For the amount spent on the Laval Metro extension we could have had several LRT/commuter lines.

We don't blink an eye when millions of dollars are spent or even billions for road projects like the bridge to PEI which has led

to further subdivisions and resort development on arable land. The problem with the current system is best illustrated by a personal experience: It took close to two hours to get to Dawson and Claude in Dorval from Walkley and Cote St. Luc... I had to go East to head West!; (103 bus to Villa Maria Metro station to Lionel-Groulx, 211 bus to Dorval Station, 203 bus to Dawson and Claude.). If we had a frequent schedule on the Rigaud line, it would not have taken so long.

Our efficient Metro is grand. But, we have hidden a public transit system from view into cavernous tunnels as if we were ashamed of it! Metaphorically speaking, symbolically that is, "CARS ON TOP, METRO ON THE BOTTOM". The priorities are clear enough. We are catering to our basest needs and imperious egos.

People will not flock to buses, Metros, LRT's, Trains, etc., at \$2.00/Litre, at \$3.00/Litre, or even at \$6.00/Litre, (gasoline), unless we rethink our approach: Require lateral thinking, thinking outside the box, be innovative, change the goal posts, rewrite the agenda and reject the notions of the last 60 to 80 years!

Dismiss the promise of sexy and expensive toys like the Metro extension to Laval or Loto Quebec's dream of a monorail! That is a non-starter! (Be reasonable and realistic, not extravagant!; Incremental improvements are key!).

We need strong leadership and political will to set new priorities; Give voice to the voiceless and enact a coherent and integrated mass transit and transportation system. (Ex: Mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg rides the subway daily to work!).

The most essential elements include:

- Protection of natural parks and natural and green spaces from new

roads;

- Implementing the Kyoto accord, (Notwithstanding its imperfections, it is a start.);
- Increasing frequency and implementing the most direct route for buses;
- Stress the use of bicycles and walking;
- Discourage single occupancy vehicles;
- Recognizing the railway as an essential utility, and not a nuisance, like waterworks or Hydro, (Railways were regarded so highly in the past that the A&P Supermarket chain was named after the first US transcontinental line, i.e., The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.).
- Conservation of dormant rail corridors for future light rail/commuter use -- especially, the Doney Spur in the West Island;
- Recognize the value of railways and their servitudes as greenways providing links for birds, other animals and natural habitat, (Rail-Trail corridors are compatible.);

and,

- Diversion of truck traffic not destined for Montreal, off-island, and onto rail where possible.

Incentive options for Integrated Public Transit and Transport would include:

Carpooling, Shuttle Buses, Bus Convoys, Preference for High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes, "Commun-Autos and Commun-Bikes and Scooters", Fare Rebates...

- The Doney Spur as the backbone of LRT/commuter transit in the West Island; A "Surface Metro" on the cheap, so to speak; (Use Ottawa's O-Train technology at first!).
- Future LRT's on all major roads like Pie IX, Notre-Dame, St. John's, etc...
- An interurban LRT to the South Shore on the Ice Bridge; (Use off-the-shelf technology!).

- Full service commuter rail service, day and night, between 30-20 minute headways or intervals, especially, the Rigaud line, (So people would not have to consult a schedule!);
 - Increased parking at all commuter rail stations, future LRT terminals, and strategic catchment Metro stations, like Namur and Vendome;
 - Roll-on-Roll-off continuous platform unit trains for conventional truck trailers and containers on chassis like CPR's Expressway service.
 - A circumferencial railway on the South Shore that carries domestic containers and trailers diverted from Montreal, with destinations outside the province;
 - Regional passenger rail service to Sherbrooke, Hull/Gatineau, etc..., (As in Ontario.); *Auto - Train Services;*
 - Post 9-11 security measures, so long as they do not violate civil rights;
 - Grade crossing elimination/safety improvements;
 - Air quality/emissions testing programs for polluting cars, trucks and trains/crack down on idling;
 - Use of alternative environmentally friendly fuels and engines;
- and most important,
- Energy efficiency!

(Disincentives):

We must remove parking downtown, increase parking fees

throughout the island, and leave the road network in good shape, but as is! That is, no new roads!

The proposed "Spaghetti Network" of roads in the West Island will destroy many of the remaining Natural Spaces on the island.

And, one further note:

- Regarding the proposed airport rail shuttle:

- a) We need a true intermodal, (integrated), terminal at P.E. Trudeau Airport in Dorval which compliments the Rigaud line and doesn't undermine it;
- b) The CPR line is the most direct, and therefore, the shortest route. CNR's line crosses the Lachine Canal twice; Deja-vu anyone?
- c) The most successful train-to-plane services have an interface with intermediate suburban catchment stations. Vendome station clearly comes to mind. Especially, with the advent of the new Super Hospital and many out-of-town visitors going to the Shriner's.

People in the greater West End of Montreal, from Cote St. Luc/NDG to Western downtown/Westmount will not head East to go West! Do it as the crow flies!

Thank You! And now a few words by David Fletcher on Roads, motorists and the Twelve Step Program and the conservation of Natural Spaces... (Not in text.).