



**Chambre de commerce
du Montréal métropolitain**
Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

The Montreal Transportation Plan: identifying goals and means of action

Brief presented to the City of Montreal

As part of the consultation concerning the Profile and Diagnosis
component of the Montreal Transportation Plan

By
The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

August 2005
© Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, 2005

Main recommendations of the Board of Trade with respect to the Montreal Transportation Plan development process

- Identify priority projects.
- Ensure the mobility of goods and people on the territory by proposing a sound combination of projects, as well as ensuring coherent action, interventions and investments by the various levels of government.
- Grow the market share of public transit use in relation to automobile use by ensuring users' comfort, reducing travel time, guaranteeing system reliability and improving infrastructures.
- Ensure that the development and implementation of the Plan's various components are harmonized with existing development tools, namely, the MMC's Land-Use Planning and Development Plan, the City of Montreal Master Plan and the projects of the Agence métropolitaine de transport.
- The decision makers should work quickly to ensure that the City – the economic engine of the province – obtains the financial means required to meet its needs in the sphere of transportation, a key element of its development.

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal has some 7,000 members. Its primary mission is to represent the interests of the business community of Greater Montreal and to provide individuals, merchants and businesses of all sizes with a variety of specialized services to help them achieve their full potential in terms of innovation, productivity and competitiveness. The Board of Trade is Quebec's leading private economic development organization.

Introduction

Overall, the Board of Trade is pleased with the development process of the Montreal Transportation Plan as well as the City of Montreal's willingness to make this Plan one of the "main parts of a broader process to boost prosperity and the quality of life in Montreal." Just like many of its competing counterparts around the world, Montreal is preparing to make major investments in transportation and public transit infrastructures to increase the mobility of goods and people on its territory. The strategic importance of transportation for cities, and particularly the key role public transit plays in their economic competitiveness, is well documented. Major cities such as Barcelona, Lyon, Boston, Seattle and San Francisco, among others, have made public transit a focal point in their development strategy.

As Quebec's economic powerhouse, accounting for 50% of the province's population,¹ half of its GDP² and 70% of its exports,³ Montreal needs the appropriate infrastructures to achieve its full development potential.

Because transportation plays a key role in the City's development, the Board of Trade is focusing on transportation issues and would therefore like to see the Transportation Plan become a frame of reference in the same manner as the Master Plan, the Economic Development Plan of the City of Montreal and the MMC's Land-Use Planning and Development Plan.

The Board of Trade is therefore responding to the City's invitation to share its comments and reflections with respect to the *Profile and Diagnosis* aspect of the Plan by presenting a series of general and specific comments, as well as some structuring projects.

1. General comments by the Board of Trade with regards to the consultation document and the Plan

1.1. A necessary Plan for sustained development

- The Board of Trade is pleased with the fact that the vision of the Montreal Transportation Plan is to "meet the mobility needs of all Montrealers by making their city a nice place to live and an economic sector of excellence that respects the environment. To this end, Montreal wants to reduce dependence on automobiles by focusing on increased public and active transportation use." Indeed, in a study it published in December 2004 on public transit in the Montreal region,⁴ the Board of Trade concluded that public transit was not only a key aspect of transportation mobility, but also an absolute necessity for the economic development of the City and Quebec. The Board of Trade therefore concluded that solely from the point of view of economic benefits in the Montreal region, public transit:
 - represents \$1.3 billion in operating and capital expenditures;
 - represents \$937 million in added value generated by the activities of the public transit authorities (PTA), including \$656 million in payroll; and supports the equivalent of nearly 13,000 jobs.

¹ City of Montreal, *Profile and Diagnosis*, June 2005

² City of Montreal, *Profile and Diagnosis*, June 2005

³ Cadre d'aménagement (MAMM), 1999.

⁴ Board of Trade Metropolitan Montreal, *Public transit: a powerful economic development engine for the Metropolitan Montreal region*.

Public transit in Montreal also adds more than \$300 million in revenues annually to provincial and federal coffers, or \$23 per \$100 of expenditures by the PTA. While the revenues collected by the Quebec government are the same as the amount allocated to public transit funding, the combined revenues of the two levels of government are 45% greater than their financial contribution.

The benefits generated by the metropolitan region's PTA are substantial for the economy and even more so for households that use public transit, which are left with considerably more disposable income because they do not own a car. Transposed to the Greater Montreal area, this represents \$600 million a year. As well, the availability of these funds for other expenditures generates nearly double the economic spinoffs for Quebec than if they were spent on automobile-related expenses.

1.2. A necessary Plan for coherent development

- While transportation mobility for goods and people has a direct and significant impact on the City's economic development, it goes without saying that it also greatly affects the quality of life and location of its citizens. Thus, the Board of Trade is pleased to see that the documents submitted for consultation accurately portray the transportation situation in Montreal and highlight the many issues confronting the system. In this regard, the document identifies six elements that "connect transportation and human activities on the territory" and that, in our view, should be taken into account when developing and implementing the Plan:
- Offer optimal travel conditions in terms of time, comfort, safety and cost;
- Sustain the Montreal economy;
- Integrate harmoniously into the urban space and contribute to its structure;
- Improve the quality of life of citizens in terms of health and safety;
- Be designed to improve the quality of the environment;
- Be managed responsibly, efficiently and equitably.

The Board of Trade noted with interest that the Plan is primarily aimed at "improving conditions for the mobility of goods and people." In fact, in its public transit study, the Board of Trade stated that this type of transportation should be viewed as a major contributor to development in many respects and primarily because it helps reduce traffic congestion in the Montreal region, which accounts for \$1 billion in annual losses for Montreal businesses. The study furthermore shows that the various levels of government would do well to invest in public transit because these investments, when they help improve user comfort and increase the market share of public transit over automobile use, reduce the number of vehicles on the road and, by extension, alleviate traffic congestion as well as facilitate the transportation of goods and boost business productivity.

In light of these observations, and because the various levels of government do not have the means to finance all the desired projects to structure transportation in Montreal, special attention should be paid to upgrading existing infrastructures. Indeed, Montreal already has many widely used transportation infrastructures that urgently require major upgrades. Replacing Montreal metro cars that have reached the end of their useful life or redeveloping Notre-Dame Street are notable examples.

Lastly, at a time when many initiatives have been implemented to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gases and to achieve the Kyoto Protocol objectives, promoting public transit use is a

concrete solution to effectively improving transportation mobility and substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

1.3. A necessary Plan for integrated transportation infrastructures

Insofar as the development of transportation infrastructures is closely tied to urban development, the Board of Trade is of the view that it would have been relevant for the Montreal Transportation Plan to be part and parcel of the development process recently carried out for the City of Montreal Master Plan. Notwithstanding this fact, when undertaking this exercise, the City should ensure strong cohesion between its urban planning and the transportation infrastructures as well as the implementation of flexible, cost-effective complementary measures such as reserved bus and carpool lanes and the implementation of intelligent transportation systems for dynamic traffic management. Special attention should also be paid to providing transit services to the industrial areas in the western and eastern part of Montreal based on existing work shifts.

The City of Montreal would stand to gain in many respects by studying and fashioning its transportation projects after those implemented in such cities as Bordeaux, Barcelona and Boston where the transportation infrastructures have been developed with the view to improving the urban fabric and ensuring spatial, social and economic continuity.

The Board of Trade places tremendous importance on the quality of the transportation infrastructures Montreal is about to acquire because, given their impact on the urban fabric, they reflect the quality of the City's and region's development. Therein lies one of the main reasons the Board of Trade identifies, in the next section, certain transportation infrastructure projects that it believes are the most structuring for the development of our City and urban agglomeration.

2. Specific comments pertaining to the consultation document and structuring projects

The development stage of the Transportation Plan, which is currently the subject of a consultation, is an opportune time—mainly due to the state of the public purse—to identify priority projects that will most benefit the City. As well, in our view, these priorities should be established according to such criteria as improving transportation mobility on a metropolitan scale, as well as enhancing the City's urban fabric and boosting its competitiveness.

The Board of Trade believes that through the right combination of projects, coherent actions, interventions and investments, Montreal will be able to optimize the mobility of goods and people on its territory.

2.1. Public transit infrastructures and service offer

The public transit system is not only a key element of Montreal's economic development because of the billion dollars it generates in the metropolitan economy, but also because it contributes to the City's development by improving the mobility of people and reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

We feel that Montreal must endeavour to increase public transit use, and more importantly, improve its market share over automobile use. To do so, **the Board of Trade has identified four conditions that merit consideration:**

- **Ensure user comfort** by upgrading certain public transit infrastructures and building new ones adapted to user needs;
- **Improve travel time and frequency** to increase the appeal of public transit over automobile use;
- **Ensure system reliability**, because this element constitutes a major comparative advantage over vehicle use and the attendant vagaries of traffic and weather;

- **Improve infrastructures.** The STM alone needs some \$3.5 billion in the next ten years to replace and modify metro cars and to renew fixed equipment such as concrete structures and ventilation systems.

As well, in our view, employment areas located outside the downtown core should be better served by public transit. St-Laurent and Anjou are notable examples of industrial areas where workers who do not have cars have trouble getting to work using public transit due to poor service in the evenings, at nights and on weekends.

2.2. Road transportation infrastructures

Given that investments of \$7.2 million over ten years⁵ will be required to rehabilitate Montreal's infrastructures, including \$3.8 million to upgrade municipal roads, and given the lack of funding to meet all these needs, the Board of Trade believes it is important to set priorities.

In its brief presented in June 2004 to the Office de consultation publique de Montréal as part of the consultation on the City of Montreal Master Plan,⁶ the Board of Trade identified certain transportation infrastructure projects among those proposed by the City that could improve the flow of people and merchandise, i.e., redeveloping Notre-Dame Street, the Crémazie-Metropolitan Autoroute junction, the access roads in the l'Acadie-Chabanel area and at the Glen and Turcot sites, and opening access to Décarie-Cavendish-Jean-Talon.

2.3. Transportation system planning and governance

Since some boroughs that are currently part of the City of Montreal will de-merge in January 2006, the Board of Trade believes that transportation systems should be planned on a metropolitan scale. For this reason, the Plan, both in terms of its development and the implementation of its various components, should harmonize with existing development tools, namely, the MMC's Land-Use Planning and Development Plan, the City of Montreal Master Plan and the projects of the Agence métropolitaine de transport.

2.4. Parking

The Board of Trade believes that the quality of Montreal's urban framework would benefit from an analysis of how parking and vacant lots are used on the island, particularly downtown. Because these lots have extensive development potential and could be used to erect buildings that while densifying the downtown area would improve the City's urban framework and landscape, serious thought must be given to their use.

The development phase of the Montreal Transportation Plan is, in our view, an opportune time to reflect on the role of outside parking lots in Montreal.

2.5. Emerging transportation modes and active transportation

For the Board of the Trade, adding to the system, at relatively little cost, transportation technologies that improve mobility is certainly an avenue to explore. Intelligent transportation systems, preferential measures for buses and reserved lanes are examples of techniques that can in some cases resolve traffic problems without having to build costly infrastructures.

Initiatives facilitating active transportation are broadly recognized as those that contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Board of Trade therefore believes that special attention should be paid to these transportation modes, especially since the City of Montreal,

⁵ City of Montreal, *Profile and Diagnosis*, June 2005.

⁶ Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, *Making the City of Montreal's Master Plan a major development tool for the City* June 2004

with its recent announcements of new bicycle path projects, is a North-American pioneer in this regard. Executing these projects would not only enhance its citizens' quality of life, it would make Montreal a North-American leader in cycling infrastructures. This stature could then be incorporated into the City's branding and greatly enhance its image on the international scene.

As well, of all the projects required to upgrade Montreal's transportation infrastructures, these are, in the Board of Trade's view, the ones with the greatest impact on the development of Montreal and Quebec and that therefore merit priority implementation.

Conclusion

By submitting this brief and its recommendations, the Board of Trade wanted to participate in the early stages of the Montreal Transportation Plan development process and help identify certain initiatives that it feels should be given priority in order to ensure the transportation system is developed in a coherent manner that is in harmony with existing development tools, and that are apt to improve the transportation of people and goods in Montreal.

Insofar as urgent upgrades to the public transit and road infrastructures are necessary, the Board of Trade believes that the decision makers must move quickly to make sure the City and economic engine of the province has the financial means it requires to meet its needs in the sphere of transportation, a key element of its development.

Lastly, the Board of Trade would like to highlight its intention to play a contributory and responsible role and to work closely with the stakeholders to promote concrete, structuring transportation initiatives and projects. The Board of Trade reiterates its intention to work together with the City of Montreal to develop and implement the Montreal Transportation Plan. Montreal already has an extensive, widely used transportation infrastructure, but one that is in need of major upgrades.

The development and implementation of the Montreal Transportation Plan is not just about planning the transportation system. It is an opportunity to decide what role we really want transportation to play in the development of Montreal and the region. In our view, this process is the perfect opportunity for the decision makers to take the necessary actions to give Quebec's economic engine the resources it needs to fully reach its transportation potential.