

**REM – Réseau Electrique Metropolitain**  
**BAPE – Bureau d’Audience Publique sur l’Environnement**  
**September 2016**

Prepared by Louise Chenevert

For this Audience I am presenting arguments against the proposed REM project.

I submitted and presented two briefs; M060 pertaining to green spaces in September 2011 and M055 regarding transportation in May 2012 for the PMAD – Plan Metropolitain d’Amenagement et de Development. There were hundreds of briefs presented by concerned citizens, non-profit groups, organisations as well as from various professionals offering their expertise. We trusted the process as we were consulted. I received the An Attractive, Competitive and Sustainable GREATER MONTREAL by mail where many suggestions had been applied. And thus, I expected that there would be political will to implement the final Action Plan 2012-2017. The REM train project having been announced this spring 2016 does not fulfill the PMAD’s 3 challenges: land use, transportation and environment, nor its 5 year objectives, especially not the environmental ones regarding Land Use.

PMAD An attractive, competitive and sustainable Greater Montreal 2012-2017, page 79

POLICY DIRECTION 1: A Greater Montreal with sustainable Living Environments

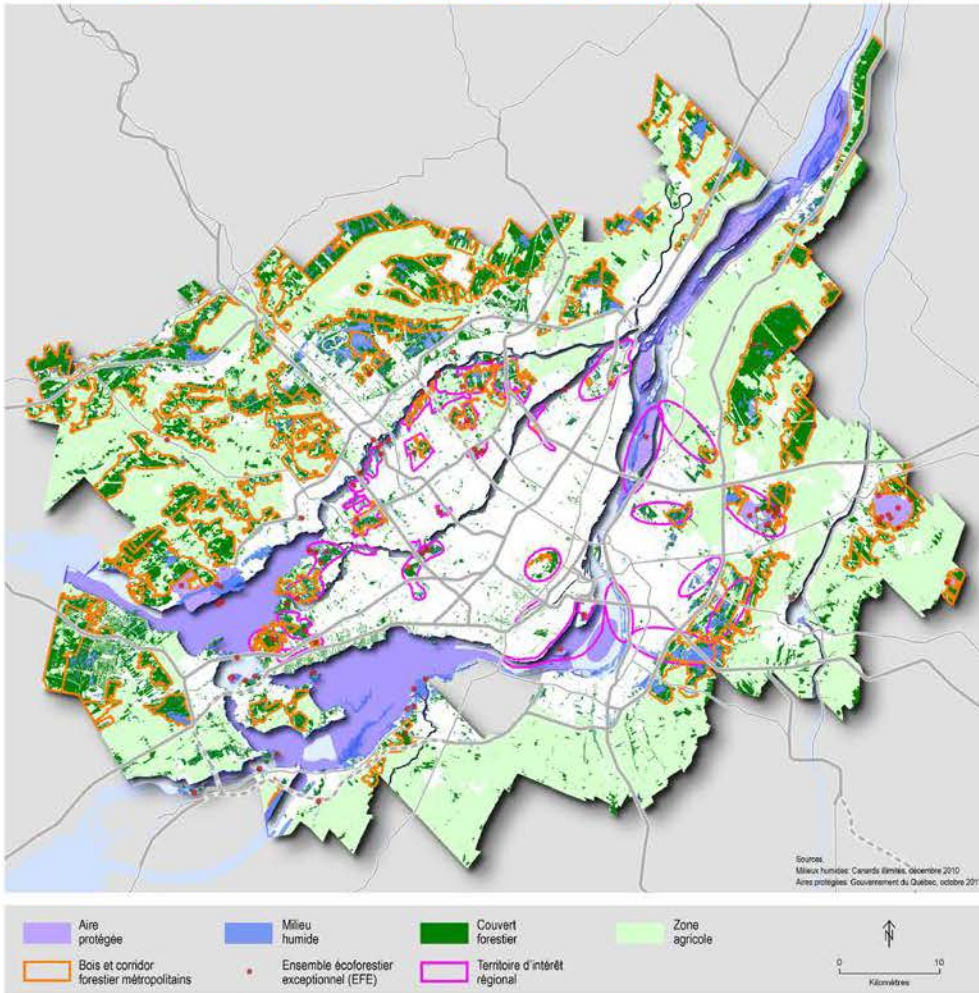
- 1.1 Direct 40% of household growth towards structural metropolitan mass transit network access points
  - 1.1.1 Location of Transit-Orientated-Development (TOD) zones
  - 1.1.2 Definition of minimum density thresholds applicable to TOD zones
  - 1.1.3 Development of TOD zones
- 1.2 Optimise urban development outside of TOD zones
- 1.3 Promote optimal occupancy by increasing the area of cultivated land
  - 1.3.1 Increase of 6% in surface area of cultivated land

PMAD An attractive, competitive and sustainable Greater Montreal 2012-2017, page 183

POLICY DIRECTION 3: A Greater Montreal with a Protected, Enhanced Environment

- 3.1 Protect **17%** of Greater Montreal’s surface area
  - 3.1.1 Identification of protected areas, metropolitan woodlands and forest corridors
  - 3.1.2 Identification and characterization of wetlands.
  - 3.1.3 Protection of metropolitan woodlands and forest corridors
  - 3.1.4 Adoption of a wetlands conservation plan

## CARTE 21 – Potentiel de conservation des bois, des corridors forestiers et des milieux humides



Ce document n'a aucune valeur légale. Pour consulter le document officiel, il faut se référer au Règlement numéro 2011-51 sur le Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement adopté par le conseil de la Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal.



## ENVIRONMENT

### MAP 21 – Conservation Potential of Woodland Areas, Forest Corridors and Wetlands, Page 186 (see attached)



Some of the areas marked green and outlined in purple are l'Anse a l'Orme, Senneville and Ste Anne de Bellevue and the Technopark in Ville St Laurent. These areas were known and identified as Conservation areas in 2012 yet, the REM line to Ste Anne de Bellevue has been planned to cut through them. The construction of the line, the building of infrastructure of stations and parking lots on these areas is a violation of the vision of protection as well as compromising the goal 3.1 Protect **17%**.

#### L'Anse a l'Orme, Senneville

Is the last green space available for protection. Without it, the **17%** goal is unachievable. Further more over a dozen endangered species of birds, plants and amphibians have been identified. Planning a train station to serve a future housing development is a reversal of the TOD concept. Development is to first be done around existing transportation hubs. This will only increase urban sprawl and GHG. *"It also advocates the densification of the built environment on land that is vacant or slated for redevelopment outside such TOD zones."* page 9. There are plenty of these in the downtown core and industrial areas within the MMC.

#### TECHNOPARK wetlands Ville St Laurent

The REM proposed line to the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Airport will run through (or under, via a tunnel with a 250m trench) a fragile highly critical eco-territory of varied wetlands consisting of ponds, marches, streams as well as woodlands, which are highly used by migratory birds as a stop over in spring and fall as it is a rich feeding ground. It is the summer home to many nesting species. Several pairs of Least Bitterns have been identified during the nesting period with their young chicks proving that it is a viable site for these endangered species to reproduce. There are only **1500** left in Canada! They are federally protected under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The federal recovery strategy 7.1.3 requires a **500 meter** radius around each nest. The proposed path of the REM violates this federal ACT.

#### **The Least Bittern** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) *Petit Blongios*:

[https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=392157E3-1#\\_Toc295472458](https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=392157E3-1#_Toc295472458)

#### **7.1.3 Critical habitat identification for the Least Bittern**

Critical habitat is identified in this recovery strategy as the area of suitable habitat with **500 m** of documented breeding activity.

## Rive-Sud to du Cartier, Brossard



Agricultural Zone



Forest cover



Forest Corridors

The terminal of the REM south shore line begins at the proposed station Rive –Sud and will travel through agricultural zones as indicated in light green and forested cover in green and forest corridors as indicated in orange on MAP 21, prior to arriving at the proposed station of du Cartier in the sector 10/30

<https://www.google.ca/maps/search/10+30,+Candiac,+QC/@45.4268194,-73.437924,6266m/data=!3m1!1e3>

This is not a TOD and violates the Land Use objectives.

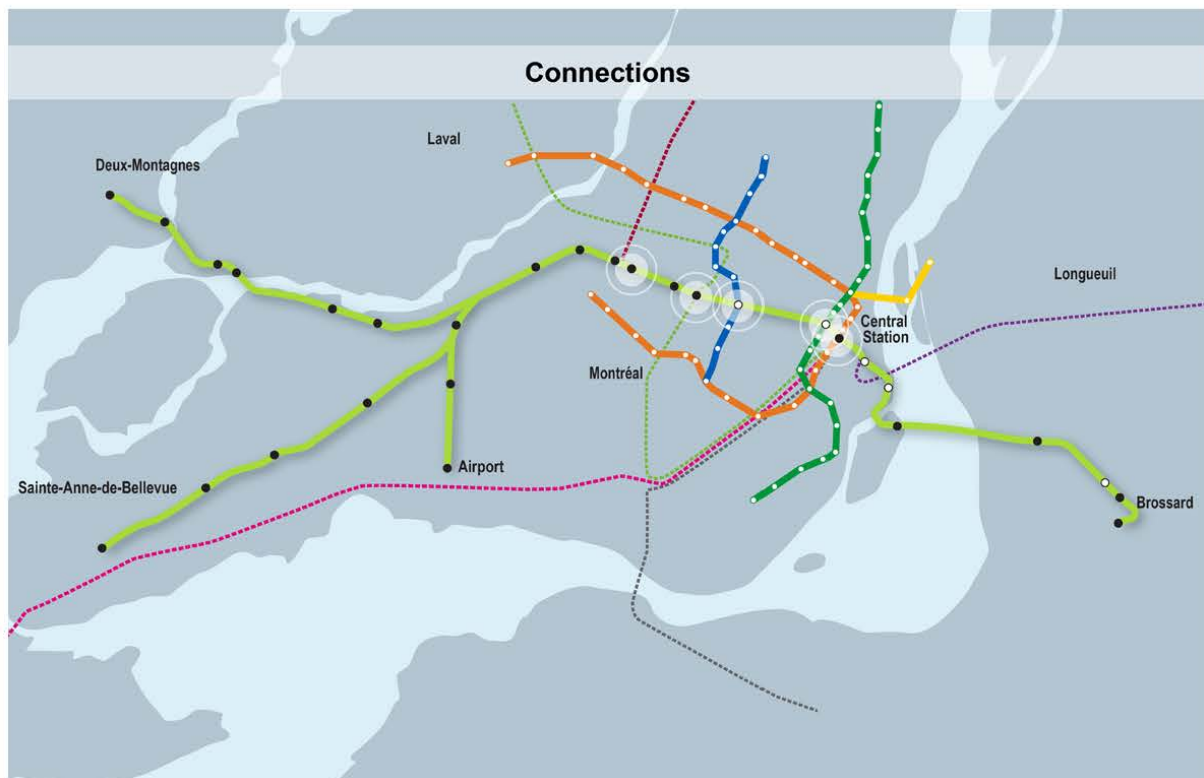
Vaudreuil-Dorion and Ile Perrot have lost vast areas of prime agricultural land to housing projects. They are very dense, insignificant green spaces and visually boring. Losing agricultural land impoverishes sustainability, which is one of the main goals of the PMAD and increases urban sprawl.

## La Falaise st Jacques

Has been identified on MAP 21 as a forested Conservation Area of regional importance. It is a greenbelt running along the southern boarder of NDG. It is a vital area as it acts as a sound buffer and a pollution filter from the industrial area below and thus is an essential in countering the heat island effect. It is also a migratory bird flight path as well as home to much urban wildlife. And can be made into a local green oasis for the residents of the borough. Unfortunately, it has been compromised by the MTQ's Turcot project where close to an acre of trees have been cut as well as a wetland area has suffered from dumping of loads of earth.

Although this eco-territory will not be directly affected by the REM it serves as an example how large projects affect local green spaces. There needs to be more transparency and proof that the voice of the people will be taken seriously and policies such as the PMAD 2012-2017 will be strictly adhered to.

# Map of the Réseau électrique métropolitain (REM)



## **TRAINS**

### REM

At first, the idea of an electric train appears to be a great ecological idea. But, with further analysis there seems to be money being spent in unnecessary infrastructure, parking lots and of replacement of existing functional equipment without regard for Nature Parks, wetlands and present TODs.

### Hudson-Vaudreuil

I frequently take the Hudson-Vaudreuil line. It is well designed and well served with 17 stations. I am pleased with its punctuality of the westbound schedule. I can make it to Cedar Park on a Sunday from Montreal West train station in 20 minutes and to Beaurepaire in 26. Yet, the eastbound leaves much to be desired. It has taken me 2 to 2.5 hours to return by the buses. Some improvements could be made: An increase of the frequency of the eastbound trains especially in the evening and week-ends. Ridership would increase on off peak times if passengers had a guaranteed return.

Suggestion GHG reduction: I agree that the engines being diesel may not be the most ecological choice. Couldn't the engines be converted to biodiesel? The Concordia University shuttle buses have run on biodiesel for close to a decade.

### Deux-Montagnes

I noticed that the REM – Deux-Montagnes have the same station names; Bois Franc, Du Ruisseau, Montpellier, Canora. Does this mean that this line, engines and cars will be disposed of? I have never taken this line. Yet, I have seen it running in TMR and in Pierrefonds. It seems to be in good shape. It is, according to a colleague.

Suggestion Cost savings: So why spend money replacing something prior to the end of its lifespan when it is not needed?

### Dorval Airport

Suggestion Bus vs Train: I have learnt from a bus driver which is presently enrolled in a training that the STM and Pierre Elliot Trudeau Airport have made an agreement where there will be coach buses on the 747 express. A bus route which presently exists and takes 38 minutes to Peel and Rene Levesque. Coach buses have comfortable seats, A/C and are faster as well have storage below - ideal for the frequent business traveler. I believe this is a great upgrade at a smaller cost than to run a train North-east for a trip of 11 stops with an unrealistic target time of 25-30 minutes. Once the Turcot exchange project is completed the 747 coach will be that much more convenient. This is an excellent example of (BRT) Bus-Rapid Transit.



## **FARES**

The present fares of the Metropolitan transit systems of buses, Metro and commuter trains are not integrated. The plans for the REM have not provided how these will be integrated nor the proposed rates when the system will be open. These are essential information for the public transportation users, which have not been provided. This shows a lack of transparency and reduces the trust in the process.

## **REQUESTS to the QUEBEC GOVERNMENT**

As this project has a huge investment of over 5.5 billion dollars probably closer to 8 billion of public monies of the retirement plans entrusted by the Caisse de Depot:

1. That the Metropolitan transportation challenges be put out to tender so that all the possible options; Electric Trains, Tramways, LRT (Light-Rail-Transit) and/or (BRT) Bus-Rapid-Transit have the opportunity to be studied. Give the opportunity to engineering and architectural companies to design and present their vision of a well integrated public transit system with the existing transportation system with the present on and off the Island of Montreal bus lines, the Metro and various commuter trains as well as integrating the fares. They would also be required show their financial plan from construction, building the vehicles, fares structures and future maintenance.

Then the selection would be brought down to 5-6 proposals which would then be discussed in a subsequent BAPE hearing by all concerned to choose which one make the most sense in terms of; respecting the PMAD goals and objectives of saving as much eco- territories, serving the MCC commuters, and has the lowest price tag.

2. That the present BAPE hearings be postponed in order to hold a parliamentary commission to evaluated this project.
3. Postpone this project till after the rebuilding of Champlain bridge and the completion of the Turcot interchange (as it a 5 year project). As these are creating complex traffic problems. The labor and skilled technicians will be on short supply and thus the REM risks going over time and thus over budget.
4. Large Transportation projects should be done in phases. For example, if the Two-Mountain line is to be abolished it should be phased out as the equipment reaches the end of its usefulness.

Louise Chenevert

[LRChenevert@gmail.com](mailto:LRChenevert@gmail.com)