

THE REM: A KEY PROJECT FOR THE GREATER MONTREAL AREA

BRIEF ON THE RÉSEAU ÉLECTRIQUE MÉTROPOLITAIN

City of Pointe-Claire
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PREFACE

The City of Pointe-Claire welcomes the REM, an innovative project from CDPQ Infra that will have a significant positive impact on the greater Montreal area.

Using clean, renewable energy, the REM will leave a limited ecological footprint. It will optimize the existing transit network on the Island of Montreal and is perfectly in line with the principles of sustainable development to which the City of Pointe-Claire subscribes.

The City of Pointe-Claire supports the proposals made by all cities on the Island of Montreal. However, out of respect for Pointe-Claire citizens and in view of the major impact the project will have on Pointe-Claire territory, City authorities believe it is essential for Pointe-Claire to present its own brief to the BAPE. In this way, crucial issues for the development of the city centre will be highlighted, ensuring that recommendations are developed and followed in a harmonious, effective and efficient way that will benefit Montreal's West Island as a whole.

Success for a project on this scale can be achieved only if all public institutions involved in the project work together in terms of finances, territorial management, sustainable development and transportation.

Our brief presents the Pointe-Claire context, the benefits and issues associated with inserting the REM in the existing urban fabric, and recommendations to ensure the successful integration of this key project.

In terms of priorities, the City of Pointe-Claire would like to make sure that special attention is paid to seamless integration into the urban environment, accessibility, active transportation, continued operation of the commuter train, and financial fairness for all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Planning Program adopted by the City of Pointe-Claire in March 2011 maps out an ambitious vision: to establish a new city centre that will be a genuine economic and social catalyst for the West Island.

Located in the core of this new city centre, the REM project provides a unique opportunity to give concrete form to this vision. The City of Pointe-Claire welcomes the REM as an innovative project and a key transit infrastructure for Montreal Island as a whole.

In order to support a densified, multifunctional development based on the fluidity and seamless integration of different means of transportation, the REM must be an effective and strongly attractive transit network that will justify decisions to settle nearby, whether to work, do business or, better yet, create a home. This means that development and welcoming structures must be well organized.

The Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations must strengthen the urban character of their environment, particularly through an architectural approach emphasizing quality, adaptation, and life on a human scale. More than just attractive, they must be models to be followed.

The Pointe-Claire territory is divided into three parts by Autoroute 40, Autoroute 20, and railway rights-of-way. Crossing these corridors is challenging for public transit vehicles and motorists as well as pedestrians and cyclists, even though the existing network includes facilities designed to promote active and safe transportation.

Saint-Jean, Des Sources, Brunswick and Hymus boulevards are already congested at rush hour, and if nothing is done, the advent of the REM will aggravate the problem. The REM's success will largely depend on how easy it is for users to access it. Joint action on the part of all parties – i.e. the Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports (MTMDET), the Montreal Agglomeration, and the City of Pointe-Claire – will be required to redesign Saint-Jean and Des Sources interchanges and either reconfigure or reconstruct the intersections and transit roads providing access to the REM network.

Completion of the Jacques-Bizard road corridor, already identified and recognized as essential by all parties, must include construction of an interchange providing a connection with Autoroute 40. The local and regional bicycle path network must also be extended, and the STM bus service must be improved. These investments are crucial to ensure optimal access to the Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations, for the benefit of all users.

At the local level, maintaining the route originally proposed by CDPQ Infra between the Holiday Avenue/Saint-Jean Boulevard intersection and the Autoroute 40 crossing is absolutely required in order to preserve the City of Pointe-Claire's main entry point and the existing urban fabric, in

functional, urban planning, and aesthetic terms, and to foster and support the development of the emerging city centre.

Considering the geographical and urban configuration of the West Island, even if the REM is implemented, it will still be vitally important to maintain the Vaudreuil-Hudson commuter train line, including the Cedar Park, Pointe-Claire and Valois stations, to ensure consistency and continuity with planning carried out and resources invested by various government levels and public administrations in order to ensure easy access to public transit for all Montreal Island residents.

A final point is that the implementation of a high-quality public transit network such as the REM, which is beneficial to society as a whole, must be carried out according to principles of social, economic and tax fairness that apply to society as a whole and not solely on the basis of the momentary needs of one or several parties.

The legislative and tax measures that will eventually be set up, particularly in order to capture the increase in land value, must be fair for all taxpayers and all cities. Adequate funding of the REM project is certainly essential, but it is equally essential to maintain and even improve our cities' financial capacity if we want to ensure effective management of this new chapter in the social and economic development of our metropolitan area.

1. OPTIMIZING URBAN INTEGRATION

1.1. BACKGROUND

The City adopted its Planning Program in March 2011. The plan includes strengthening Pointe-Claire's role as a West Island city centre by intensifying and diversifying its activities, increasing the number of people who go to the city centre, and promoting access to active transportation.

Pointe-Claire's ambitious vision for this area took shape in 2012 when a detailed plan was developed for the city centre. Figure 1 shows the city centre limits, which lie on both sides of Autoroute 40 and Saint-Jean Boulevard.

Located in the core of the city centre, the REM project provides a unique opportunity to give concrete form to this vision by making the city centre more accessible through an amenity that is easy to reach and that will have a lasting positive effect. It is important, therefore, that the REM be integrated into the surrounding urban area in order to support the development of this area and reduce any negative impacts.

Figure 1. City centre limits



Source: Comprehensive Development Plan for Pointe-Claire City Centre, 2012

1.2. ISSUES

Impact on the built environment

In developing a densified, multifunctional city centre based on fluidity and the seamless integration of various modes of transportation, planning for the REM track and station are a critical issue for Pointe-Claire.

They must be seamlessly integrated into the urban fabric with the objective of maximizing lasting beneficial effects and reducing negative and irritating effects.

The station is to be located near Saint-Jean Boulevard, just north of Autoroute 40, near the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) bus terminal as well as a large park-and-ride facility. Consequently, as part of CDPQ Infra's electric train network, Pointe-Claire will become a significant intermodal station in West Island.

The REM track, between Saint-Jean Boulevard and Autoroute 40, was initially to be located behind the Business Centre (6700 Trans-Canada Highway) and the Holiday Inn (6600 Trans-Canada Highway), with trains passing through the parking lot behind these two buildings before crossing above Autoroute 40 on a diagonal.

The track placement currently proposed by CDPQ Infra still lies between Saint-Jean Boulevard and Autoroute 40 but in front of the existing buildings, namely the Business Centre (6700 Trans-Canada Highway) and the Holiday Inn (6600 Trans-Canada Highway). Following this new proposed plan, the track will cross above Saint-Jean Boulevard on a long diagonal, then take up the Autoroute 40 right-of-way.

Shifting the REM track barely 50 metres in this way, so that it passes in front of the above-mentioned commercial buildings instead of behind them as originally planned, is an aesthetic and urban planning disaster for the main entry point into Pointe-Claire.

Saint-Jean Boulevard, particularly at the Autoroute 40 intersection, is the City of Pointe-Claire's main urban thoroughfare and the local entry point that is the most seen and the most used by our residents, our businesspeople and their clients. Furthermore, it is the core of our projected city centre. We are working tirelessly on this project and have dedicated a significant amount of resources and energy to visually improving the entry points to our city, particularly on Saint-Jean Boulevard.

Location of the Pointe-Claire station

The current plan is for the Pointe-Claire station to be located west of Fairview Avenue. The suggested land for the station consists of an unused, unoccupied wooded area that will be

developed as the city centre is built. The first phase of development is planned east of Fairview Avenue on what is already urban land. It would be preferable for the station to be located there.

In order to create a dynamic central hub, it would be appropriate for the REM to take the future development of this site into consideration and connect the new station with an area where a large portion of urban activity will be concentrated. This will create the synergy required to make the REM a success.

The REM station will then become an indispensable hub for traffic flows serving mixed use buildings, the residential area in the north, office buildings in the west, as well as the eight million customers who visit the Fairview Shopping Centre every year. Figure 2 shows the proposed development of the lots located on each side of Fairview Avenue.

Figure 2. Development concept



Source: Cadillac Fairview

Visual impact

The REM structures crossing Saint-Jean Boulevard and Des Sources Boulevard will have a significant visual impact. These entrance points to the city provide access to major commercial hubs – the Fairview Shopping Centre and Mega Centre des Sources – in addition to being access routes to Pointe Claire’s industrial park. Any construction or expansion in the areas located at City entrance points must comply with criteria set out in the Planning Program and the Site Planning and Architectural Integration Plan (SPAIP).

User safety

The planned layout also includes an overhead viaduct above Saint-Jean and Des Sources Boulevards. There may be safety concerns for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists at those locations.

1.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintain the initial route and establish a perpendicular crossing above Saint-Jean Boulevard

In order to foster the integration of the REM into the urban fabric, the City recommends maintaining the initial route proposed by CDPQ Infra, passing behind the Business Centre (66700 Trans-Canada Highway) and the Holiday Inn (6600 Trans-Canada Highway). This will preserve both the positive impact of the buildings and their field of vision. The City of Pointe-Claire also recommends a slight change at the Saint-Jean Boulevard crossing to reduce the size of the overhead structure and establish a crossing that is more perpendicular to the boulevard.

In addition to maintaining the visibility of the businesses along Autoroute 40, the initial route meets the objectives of the Planning Plan and provides a more interesting visual environment. This route also provides optimal safety for users on Saint-Jean Boulevard because encroachment on this urban road would be minimal compared to the second proposed route.

A perpendicular crossing would reduce the length of the overhead structures above Saint-Jean. As a result, the REM support piles could be placed farther from the roadside, improving visibility for motorists and thereby making it safer for everyone. This is an essential aspect, especially for users travelling south on the Saint-Jean viaduct above Autoroute 40, since the REM structure will limit their visibility at times.

Implementation of the REM must also ensure the safety of all users travelling underneath the structures. In addition to facilitating active transportation and access to all locations for persons with reduced mobility, the project must propose a design that respects the cycling network.

Locate the Pointe-Claire station to the east

To provide the best possible access to the future Sainte-Claire station and ensure optimal development of the city centre, it is essential that the station be located east of Fairview Avenue. This will help to create a synergy among shopping centre patrons, mixed residential, commercial and business development users, and REM users, whose activity will enliven the key core area of a vibrant city centre designed according to transit-oriented development (TOD) principles.

Provide appropriate architectural treatment for structures and stations

The Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations must contribute to the urban character of their sites, particularly for the city centre area. A high-quality architecture designed for community life on a human scale, with a minimal footprint and a streamlined design, is essential. As seen below, the City of Melbourne successfully incorporated a major infrastructure into an urban environment,

creating user-friendly shared spaces by providing maximum space on the ground for pedestrians and cyclists.



Murrumbeena Railroad Station (Melbourne, Australia)

(Source: www.theage.com.au/victoria/16-billion-elevated-rail-project-to-replace-level-crossings-on-dandenong-line-20160206-gmni0p.html)

2. ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY

2.1 BACKGROUND

The City is divided into three areas by transportation corridors: Autoroute 40 in the north, and railway rights-of-way and Autoroute 20 in the south. This increases vehicle traffic on the main north-south corridors, namely Saint-Jean Boulevard and Des Sources Boulevard. The Fairview bus terminal, a connection point where STM buses converge every day, also produces significant traffic that contributes to road congestion in addition to reducing the harmonization of active modes of transport, rather than contributing to it.

In addition to this reality, active transportation is difficult given that highways have to be crossed. For the Pointe-Claire station, the current network lacks structures that promote active and safe transportation for pedestrians and cyclists.

In 2013, as part of the city centre planning exercise, the City studied current road network conditions and the foreseeable impacts of developing the city centre. The study revealed a higher number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists on Saint-Jean Boulevard in the area where the future Pointe-Claire station is to be located.

The main conclusions of the study are as follows:

- There is a lack of north-south links in the area.
- Traffic conditions are difficult on Saint-Jean Boulevard during rush hour.
- Access to the Fairview bus terminal is complicated for buses.
- There are many pedestrians and cyclists despite the lack of safe cycling and pedestrian links.

- There are safety issue for crossings located at the access ramps to the Autoroute 40 and Saint-Jean Boulevard interchange.
- Conditions will foreseeably deteriorate in coming years with the development of many urban projects.

Given that the road network is already saturated around the location of the future Pointe-Claire station, several interventions are required for the planned development. Figures 4 and 5 present the level of service during morning and evening rush hour. In both cases, traffic conditions are difficult on the section of Saint-Jean Boulevard between Brunswick Boulevard and Hymus Boulevard.

Figure 4. Traffic conditions during morning rush hour, 2012



Source: Traffic Study, City of Pointe-Claire, 2013

Figure 5. Traffic conditions during evening rush hour, 2012



Source: Traffic Study, City of Pointe-Claire, 2013

2.2 ISSUES

The success of the REM greatly relies on easy user access. Pointe-Claire's traffic issues raise questions regarding access to the REM not only for motorists, but also for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users.

The chosen location for the Des Sources and Pointe-Claire stations is outside current active networks, which makes it more difficult to access them by foot or by bicycle. The REM will therefore have major consequences on the network by considerably increasing traffic, which will create even more road congestion and will change short-term perspectives for development.

In addition to the fact that the current road network presents shortcomings for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in the area of the future Pointe-Claire Station, public transit routes with a stop at the Fairview bus terminal are complex. It is essential that these impacts be taken into consideration for future and planned developments.

Since the success of the REM greatly depends on its ridership, it is also essential that station access include and favour all forms of transportation.

High-capacity parking lot creating heavier traffic

During the first part of BAPE hearings, CDPQ Infra indicated that the future Pointe-Claire station would have the most users in the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue branch, notably because of the convergence of bus routes and the number of planned parking spaces. The table below presents CDPQ Infra's estimates of the number of users.

Table 1: Number of users boarding at stations

Gares	Ouest-de-l'île			Gares	A10		
	2022	2031	2041		2022	2031	2041
Autoroute 13	1 380	1 470	1 520				
Des Sources	1 540	1 670	1 740				
Pointe-Claire	2 220	2 400	2 500				
Kirkland	1 160	1 220	1 260				
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	1 940	1 970	1 990				
Technoparc	270	330	370				
Aéroport	180	260	310				

Source: CDPQ Infra

According to data presented at the first series of public hearings, 1500 parking spaces will be available at the Pointe-Claire station. Given current traffic conditions, which are difficult at rush hour in that area, this addition could be problematic.

2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Extend the Jacques-Bizard corridor

In response to the issues presented, adding an additional multifunctional road crossing above Autoroute 40 is part of a development vision aimed at inciting users to use public transport. This project, which has been planned for several years and is part of the agglomeration's public transport plan, will help improve access to the area around the Pointe-Claire station and reduce traffic on Saint-Jean Boulevard. The new crossing should be designed to encourage active transportation in an environment that is user-friendly and safe for everyone.

Creating this additional corridor is a success factor for the REM. For it to happen, the MTMDET, CDPQ Infra, the Montreal Agglomeration, the City of Pointe-Claire and neighbouring cities will have to be involved.

The City therefore recommends that the creation of this viaduct and the extension of Jacques-Bizard Boulevard between Hymus Boulevard and Brunswick Boulevard be incorporated into the REM project. It also recommends that environmental impact assessments, as well as any studies

required by the BAPE, be conducted as part of the CDPQ Infra project to help facilitate the quick creation of this link, which is indispensable for the REM project to succeed.

Figure 6 shows the new Jacques-Bizard Boulevard crossing integrated into the current road network, offering motorists additional access to both directions of Autoroute 40.

Figure 6. Jacques-Bizard crossing



Source: Traffic Study, City of Pointe-Claire, 2013

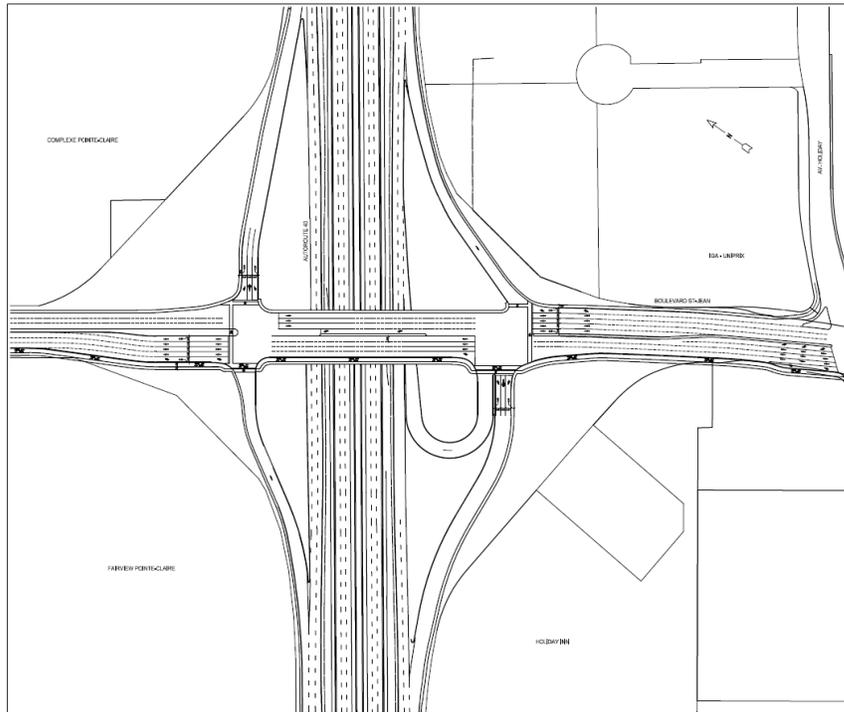
Redesign the Saint-Jean and Des Sources interchanges

The Saint-Jean Boulevard and Des Sources Boulevard interchanges have been identified as inadequate and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

The City of Pointe-Claire recommends that the MTMDET consider redeveloping these interchanges into an "H" intersection (Figure 7). This configuration would help reduce pedestrian and cyclist traffic to two crossings, controlled by traffic lights, and designed to enable users to cross Autoroute 40 safely. It would also help decrease vehicle speed and turns, while maintaining high flow capacity.

This redesign requires collaboration from several authorities, including the MTMDET, the Montreal Agglomeration and the STM, to ensure that it is carried out effectively and efficiently.

Figure 7. Redevelopment of the Saint-Jean Boulevard and Autoroute 40 intersection (concept proposal from the City of Pointe-Claire)



Source: City of Pointe-Claire, 2016

Reorganize bus routes and convergence at the station

As indicated in the traffic study, the road network conditions around the Pointe-Claire station impede fluid bus movement and make it difficult to access the existing Fairview bus terminal. Under current road network conditions, and with the arrival of the Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations and the development of the city centre, access to buses and REM will be restricted.

Moreover, there are few pedestrian and cyclist crossings on the highway, which limits active transportation to both the Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations.

To ensure the project is successfully carried out, the City recommends optimal coordination between the current public transport network and the REM project so that users can access the Pointe-Claire station and the Fairview bus terminal. Promoting the modal shift of motorists to public transit as a way of accessing the REM stations will reduce pressure on the road network. The STM and the City of Pointe-Claire will have to be involved to ensure that this recommendation is implemented in a way that provides users with the best possible services and respects the urban fabric.

Extend the cycling network

In 2015, the City developed its bicycle path network plan to implement measures that promote active transportation.

Creating a cycling link along the Jacques-Bizard overpass with a safe crossing of Autoroute 40 will help promote the use of bicycles as a way to access the area of the future Pointe-Claire station, and to get around between the city centre's residential and commercial areas. In addition, shifting part of the traffic on the Saint-Jean interchange to the new Jacques-Bizard interchange will allow for the viaduct design to be revisited and for the pedestrian and cyclist functions of the viaduct to be improved, thereby promoting safe and active transportation.

To improve access to the station and promote active transportation, not only does the road network need to be improved, but developments must also be planned to link the Des Sources and Pointe-Claire stations to pedestrian and cycling networks. Figure 8 shows the bicycle path network plan. Additions will need to be made to serve the Pointe-Claire and Des Sources stations.

Figure 8. Bicycle path network envisioned by the City of Pointe-Claire



Source: Bicycle Path Network Plan, City of Pointe-Claire, 2015

Lastly, locating parking spaces along the western branch of the REM project will also help limit pressure on the road network near the Pointe-Claire station. Current public transit routes can be changed to efficiently serve park-and-ride facilities along the western branch and provide motorists with easier access to facilities near Pointe-Claire station.

3. PRESERVING THE COMMUTER TRAIN

3.1. BACKGROUND

The City of Pointe-Claire, in keeping with the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan (PMAD), its development plan and its planning program, has planned to develop three TOD (transit-oriented development) areas at the Cedar Park, Pointe-Claire and Valois commuter train stations on the Vaudreuil-Hudson line.

Building projects have both resulted from this and depend on this, and commuter train services are crucial for the people who live and will live there. Consequently, financial commitments have been made to improve public services at these locations.

The REM proposal jeopardizes the TOD designation, the quality of existing environments, and the development potential for these areas.

3.2. ISSUES

Under these circumstances, the City of Pointe-Claire is concerned about the future of the Vaudreuil-Hudson commuter train line. If the REM leads to reduced or even discontinued service at one or several stations in southern Pointe-Claire, public transport services will be reduced significantly for the majority of Pointe-Claire residents. This will compromise the vitality of certain urban cores (e.g. Valois Village, Pointe-Claire Village and the civic centre area) as well as plans for building developments based on the existence of current stations.

This will also result in another negative impact: an increase in the commuter train's operating deficit, which is partly funded by the cities. This will then add to the burden on Pointe-Claire taxpayers.

Shifting users to REM stations located next to Autoroute 40 will also lead to a greater increase in road traffic than currently expected in the REM project. Consequently, the only two corridors currently available (Saint-Jean Boulevard and Des Source Boulevard), which are already insufficient, overused and lacking safe pedestrian and cyclist links, will quickly become an issue in terms of users' quality of life and safety.

The Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT) has recognized that ridership on the Montréal – Vaudreuil-Dorion commuter train line will be affected by the arrival of the REM, and it is analyzing various scenarios for the future of the line. There is a contradiction between the financial interest in

the short term to ensure the REM is profitable and the potential negative consequences in the medium and long term that could result from terminating or significantly reducing service on the Montréal – Vaudreuil-Dorion commuter train.

The future of the Montréal – Vaudreuil-Dorion commuter train line will be entirely dependent on the willingness of the Government of Quebec and metropolitan authorities responsible for public transport to technically and financially support the western commuter train's essential role in a crucially important metropolitan transportation network. The City of Pointe-Claire is concerned by the fact that the commuter train will be an easy target to reduce the costs of the metropolitan transport structure in order to make the REM more profitable.

3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Pointe-Claire recommends maintaining the same level of service for the Vaudreuil-Hudson commuter train, with the same bus services to Cedar Park, Pointe-Claire and Valois stations.

The creation of the Jacques-Bizard corridor, in collaboration with the MTMDET and the Agglomeration of Montreal, will also help optimize the north-south transportation network and make it easier for motorists, cyclists and public transport users to travel to the commuter train

4. ENSURING FINANCIAL FAIRNESS

From a financial perspective, the REM is a major \$5.5 billion project.¹ It is imperative that the City of Pointe-Claire assess the impacts it will have on its financial situation.

CDPQ Infra's basic premise for the REM is that the project must be profitable, and that the "land value capture" (LVC) concept could be used to provide a portion of the funding.

This new funding method in Quebec is based on the principle that the creation of the REM will lead to more building development around stations. CDPQ Infra would like to secure some of the value of these new developments to help fund the REM, specifically through exploiting the air rights above stations, collecting development royalties from property developers and collecting some of the property tax associated with this added value from municipalities.

CDPQ Infra has mentioned that the terms and conditions for applying these measures are still being negotiated with the government. The Government of Quebec therefore needs to ensure that the LVC mechanisms that are put in place are clearly defined before being applied, and that they in no way encroach on or negatively influence municipalities' and taxpayers' debts.

According to the rules generally established for this type of program, funding (which is set according to pre-defined financial parameters) is collected by the cities from developers and/or owners within a specified area when a site is developed or redeveloped. If this principle is used, the basis of this principle must be respected. Cities cannot take on a development and the corresponding revenues simply to pass everything on to CDPQ Infra and thereby strain their financial flexibility and borrowing limit.

Similarly, the government cannot delegate the responsibility of the expected added value near a station to municipalities when that value might not be created over time, out of fairness to the residents who would consequently be penalized.

Property tax

Property tax is the main source of funding for municipalities in Quebec. According to the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMOT), overall 84% (see the table below) of cities' own-source revenues (total revenues minus funding from the government) come from property tax (residential and business tax, payments in lieu of taxes, transfer tax, etc.). Only school boards receive some of their revenues with this field of taxation, which is used almost exclusively for municipalities.

¹ Based on CDPQ Infra's numbers.

**Table 2. Relative amount of revenues associated with property tax
Budget forecasts for Quebec municipalities (2015)**

Description		Montants
A	Revenus totaux	17 666 528 325 \$
B	Transferts	1 482 972 612 \$
C = A - B	Solde	16 183 555 713 \$
D	Taxes	12 232 240 564 \$
E	Compensations	746 519 604 \$
F	Droits de mutation immobilière	421 109 755 \$
G	Contributions des promoteurs	127 043 782 \$
H = D+E+F+G Sous-Total		13 526 913 705 \$
H / C	Importance relative	84%

Source: Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMOT)

Given that this type of taxation is regressive since it does not take account of owners' ability to pay, the use of property tax is already limited. It is even more limited in that could be argued that it is already being used to its full potential.

Under these circumstances, collecting a portion of the property tax related to the added value generated by the REM's implementation would create a historic precedent in Quebec. It is important that the Government of Quebec protect taxpayers from injustice in that regard, on behalf of municipalities. New residents in areas where added land value is expected will use the same municipal services and will therefore have to cover the costs in the same proportions as other residents.

The government should also take into account the fact that municipalities will have to absorb a financial loss that is directly related to the REM's implementation because of significant and unrecoverable decreases to the land value of buildings affected by the infrastructures and train operations.

This reality will stem from the direct, negative and permanent impacts of the REM's infrastructures and operations on existing properties that are far from the potential redevelopment areas near stations. Areas in the immediate neighbouring vicinity of this rail network will be negatively impacted by noise as well as ground and above-ground structures. For residential buildings, trains passing by every 20 minutes near second and third floor windows as well as balconies will inevitably reduce interest in those buildings, resulting in a loss in value. For commercial buildings, reduced real or perceived visibility will be cited as an obvious cause of depreciation. In addition, a large number of these buildings in Pointe-Claire were built recently and are high-quality buildings.

This provides them with significantly greater economic viability and sustainability than the average, which will be irremediably affected.

Another negative consequence will be the City's loss of revenue for the areas where the REM will use an above-ground structure, unless site planning for those structures were to allow for a development to be integrated at ground level.

Different realities

The principle put forward by CDPQ Infra for using LVC as a funding method is based on the fact that the creation of the REM will result in economic gains for certain stakeholders. Some of those gains should therefore be used to fund the creation of this new, collective amenity. The two stakeholders identified by CDPQ Infra are property developers and cities.

For businesspeople, the advantages are fairly easy to identify. The potential of a site with the capacity of 500 housing units will be significantly improved with the arrival of the REM. For example, suppose that the new market conditions would allow for 1000 units to be constructed on that site, and what is more that their average selling price would be higher. The developer would be inclined to pay certain development royalties, as proposed by CDPQ Infra. Even if the average profit per unit was decreased by the development royalties to be paid, the gain per unit for the developer could remain higher than it would have been initially.

This reasoning does not apply to cities because their goal is not to make a profit, but rather to provide services. With an infrastructure like the REM, property developers and cities are stakeholders with completely different realities and objectives. It is therefore difficult to treat them in the same way in terms of funding for this project.

Additional costs and services

Unlike property developers, cities will ultimately have additional costs and services associated with the REM.

Once again using the example of the site with double the potential, the people occupying the additional 500 units would use the same amenities and services funded by the City (public works, parks, leisure activities, etc.). These new residents would have the same needs and behaviours as other citizens. The government must take this into consideration, because the City will have to offer them the same services at the same costs. It will not be able to do so with decreased revenues.

This aspect is even more significant given that implementing an REM station could also lead to additional indirect costs for the City of Pointe-Claire, notably in terms of integrating this new form of public transport into the urban fabric, whether that means changing, shifting or transforming existing infrastructures to facilitate REM implementation or to facilitate access to it. The

government must consider sharing these costs between the City and CDPQ Infra to distribute those impacts.

Cities will also have to deal with new costs related to REM infrastructures, notably in terms of cleaning, maintenance and snow-removal operations that will be carried out on and under the above-ground railroad tracks of the electric train network. Emergency and relief measures will also have to be adapted to this new, high-flow infrastructure, notably for evacuations, fires or accidents.

Cities will also have to adjust existing infrastructure networks to the new, denser property developments stemming from the future stations.

Nearly half of taxes going to the agglomeration

Based on available information, it appears that some of the property taxes generated from additional housing could be shared between the City and the REM developer. The current reality, however, for reconstituted cities is that nearly half² of their revenues are sent directly to the Agglomeration of Montreal to cover the cost of shared services (police, firefighters, water, transportation, etc.). This percentage would also apply to the 500 additional housing units in the above-mentioned example.

Vaudreuil-Hudson commuter train

Another indirect cost associated with the creation of the REM is the dreaded increase in the existing operating deficit for the Vaudreuil-Hudson train line. Cities, including Pointe-Claire, contribute to the operating deficit for this service. It seems that this train line may be maintained even with the arrival of the REM. However, if ridership decreases because of the REM service, it is very likely that its operating deficit will increase. In that situation, the costs covered by the cities would also increase.

²This percentage varies from city to city while remaining in this proportion. In Pointe-Claire, 45% of taxes collected are sent to Montreal.

CONCLUSION

The City of Pointe-Claire is in favour of the REM project proposed by CDPQ Infra. A station at the heart of its city centre would present an opportunity for development that would benefit not only the City, but also the Montreal Agglomeration and the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM).

The purpose of the City's brief is to make all parties aware of issues specific to Pointe-Claire and recommendations proposed to ensure the REM's success. Seamlessly integrating the REM into the urban fabric, ensuring access to the REM, maintaining the commuter train, and financial fairness for taxpayers and institutions are issues for the City of Pointe-Claire in relation to the goal of ensuring a high quality of life for residents while optimizing public transport and active transportation methods.

CDPQ Infra

In order to foster the REM's integration into the urban fabric, the City recommends maintaining the initial route proposed by CDPQ Infra in order to preserve the City of Pointe-Claire's main entry point in functional, urban planning, and aesthetic terms. Locating the Pointe-Claire station east of Fairview Avenue, with the track crossing Saint-Jean Boulevard and Autoroute 40 perpendicularly, would also contribute to optimal integration with the existing environment, in addition to fostering and supporting the development of the city centre.

Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports Agglomeration of Montréal

In terms of accessibility, creating the Jacques-Bizard corridor, redeveloping the Saint-Jean and Des Sources viaducts for active transportation, extending the cycling network and improving the bus network are essential to ensure optimal accessibility to stations for all users. To ensure access to stations and the success of the REM project, all the following partners must be systematically involved throughout the entire process.

Also in relation to accessibility, Pointe-Claire recommends maintaining the Vaudreuil-Hudson commuter train line at Cedar Park, Pointe-Claire and Valois stations, in collaboration with the AMT and STM. This recommendation will ensure that the southern area of the City continues to be served by the commuter train.

Government of Quebec

A final issue is fairness for residents and institutions, which is fundamental for the City of Pointe-Claire. Implementing a high-quality public transport network is beneficial for all of society, not only

for the areas where access points are located. Improving the fluidity of movement and reducing greenhouse gases have effects beyond municipal limits.

One of the principles of fairness in public economics is that all those who benefit from a service or facility are asked to help fund it. This principle has historically been recognized and used in public transport in Quebec. Capital investments required to set up a large-scale network have always been the responsibility of the Government of Quebec, with the most recent example being the metro extension in Laval.

Residents of Pointe-Claire and other cities where a station will be built are not the only ones who can benefit from increased public transport services. People who use the park-and-ride facilities, and who may live in other areas, also benefit.

The legislative and financial measures implemented for LVC should be fair for all taxpayers and their cities. The REM clearly needs to be funded, but maintaining and even improving cities' financial capacities is even more important in order for them to be able to efficiently and appropriately manage the responsibilities associated with this new chapter of social and economic development for our region.