



**Airport Rail Shuttle December 2007  
POSITION PAPER**



18, avenue Alliance Montréal, Qc H4K 2C6

**Montreal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International  
Airport-Downtown Montreal Rail Shuttle,  
POSITION PAPER.**

**Avrom David Shtern, Green Coalition Verte, Transportation Issues  
December 2007.**

It is a sad state of affairs when a hearing about public transit is held at an airport hotel that is difficult to access by mass transit and would not exist if it were not for the automobile and government funded highways. The question begs how many came to the conference by bus, metro and train to experience how the other half lives and to witness how long it really takes? Excruciating waits between transfers, inadequate train service are but two illustrations that our current system is inadequate. Hopefully, the follow-up round table in June 2008 will be held at a more transit accessible location.

Certainly there are areas of the island that have relatively constant mass transportation. But Southern Cote Saint Luc and much of the West Island are poorly served. Taking two buses and a metro or train for over two hours is unacceptable. That is why talk of a downtown shuttle that is frequent energy efficient and reliable is so important. Furthering local needs cannot be an afterthought. Without the local commuter component the stand alone shuttle will not fly. Simply put, there are not enough passengers to justify it and make it profitable. By 2040 the ADM may also be moving back to Mirabel. Peak-Oil, Global Climate Change and the loss of biodiversity may change the economics of commercial air traffic in the future.

At the moment Senator Michael Fortier is taking the lead and seems to favour the CP route. West Island Mayors favour it as well. Another route to study is the one proposed by David Seto: As a New York style electric tram-train line with parallel express and local tracks it would run underground from Downtown to Montreal West and then above ground on its second leg to the airport and points west. It merits serious analysis. Although more expensive than an all surface

system, it presents opportunities in terms of Transit Oriented Development and mitigation of noise and aesthetics. (Please consult attached documents.) We at the Green Coalition favour the CPR route as it is the shorter of the two existing railway corridors. It would be less expensive to build, and it would integrate the current local commuter rail line which caters to a huge catchment area, stops at the shallow Vendome metro-rail station that will service the future McGill Hospital complex.

Several issues come to mind regarding the Airport Shuttle:

They include: Reliability, frequency, electrification, emissions, stations, right-of-way, grade separation, railway line improvements, local traffic, energy efficiency, and the like.

### **ISSUES:**

1. The need for local traffic and the non-viability of a stand alone airport shuttle. This project must be viewed in the prism of an integrated region-wide public transit system with them same fare structure.
2. The problems of reliability of the current Lakeshore commuter service and the need to correct them: The recent December 3, 2007 snow storm proved that. Several trains broke down and commuters were frustrated. Trains on this line habitually break down and off-peak runs are infrequent. Service on the Dorion-Rigaud line is inadequate to say the least. Riders are frustrated and potential commuters are discouraged from using the service. In 1974-1975 there were four daily weekday trains in each direction to Rigaud and five to Hudson. Today there is one. This area is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. And it certainly is not because of the lonely commuter train. A high frequency service with shortened headways is the main ingredient for success. Like the metro, one should not have to consult a schedule/timetable for the next train.
3. The issue of pedestrian and bicycle access to the airport.
4. The need to improve Lucien L'Allier Terminal and the destruction of Windsor Station as a railway terminal because of poor planning and decision making by government and para-public authorities. There are of course issues with the dreadful metro station at Luciene L'Allier: Four stories down! Windsor Station must be somehow revived. If the trains were still arriving at Windsor, it would be easier for passengers to get to the more accessible Bonaventure metro station.
5. The need to have grade separation at Westminster-Elmhurst crossing. Safety and traffic flow are important elements. A cut and cover trench must be part of the preliminary study.
6. Intermediate stations and where to place them: Vendome as previously stated is a key stop. Montreal West Station is a good stop as it serves the Loyola Campus of Concordia, several

primary and secondary schools and has the potential of becoming an intermodal stations if and when metro line #5 is extended westward. Several other stops can be included in the local stream.

7. The Green Coalition supports a station at Meadowbrook Golf Course only if it remains a year round recreational green centre. Imagine a first class golf and ski centre with a motel with reception facilities for special occasions 10 minutes from the airport or downtown Montreal. Meadowbrook does not lend itself to a residential development. Conservation of an ecosystem and buffer zone surrounded by railway yards, and railway trunk lines on three sides, toxic zones and sensitive residential areas are essential.
8. Use of an electric light rail tram train which would use similar amounts of energy as a metro. According to AQTR statistics fully loaded buses use 450 Joules/KM whereas a fully loaded metro uses only 130 joules/KM which is the equivalent of the human metabolic rate it takes to ride a bike. In terms of energy used, it is about 1/4 the amount used by a bus. Thus, even though upfront costs for a train are more expensive, longer term operating costs for energy consumption and manpower are less. Electrification is the most efficient way to go. The success of the Two-Mountains line proves that. (Please see attached David Seto document regarding the Two Mountains line.)
10. Adoption of California Diesel Emission Standards if the train is to be conventional. Current Diesel-electric locomotives idle because they have no anti-freeze.
11. The third track from Vendome to Montreal West would have to be relayed; Also, installation of a few new power switches, seamless continuous welded rail and computerized centralized traffic control west of Dorval would have to be considered. There are of course issues with the dreadful metro station at Lucienne L'Allier: Four stories down! Windsor Station must be somehow revived. If the trains were still arriving at Windsor, it would be easier for passengers to get to the more accessible Bonaventure metro station.
12. Montreal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport should become an intermodal hub with local and intercity buses, VIA Rail trains, and future light rail lines.

Dorval Mayor Edgar Rouleau recently was quoted as saying that "...the priority should be linking Montreal to the airport, with the remaining links to the West Island coming in afterward." (**West Island Chronicle**, Nov. 15, 2007.) We will be painting ourselves into a corner if we place priority on airline passengers. There is not enough of a market to justify a stand alone air-rail shuttle especially along the longer more expensive and circuitous CN line. London England's Gatwick Express was almost cancelled because improved local commuter rail service was deemed more important and the airport shuttle was getting in the way. It was also considered a drain on resources. The primary

focus should be to cater to local needs. The demand is there to make the shuttle a success.

By all means integrate the airport with a fast, frequent, energy efficient and electrified Dorion-Rigaud commuter line.

Unfortunately, service on the Dorion-Rigaud line is inadequate to say the least. The demand is there to make the shuttle a success. The population is growing especially points west of Montreal.

Montrealers have been crying out for improved rail transit: The Two Mountains line is overcrowded and is in need of expansion; A light rail surface metro along CNR's Doney Spur slicing through the West Island's central core to Fairview and the Lakeshore General Hospital has been championed by the Green Coalition as it would be the only dedicated rail line exclusively for West Island use. New Jersey Transit's RiverLine proves that freight and light rail passenger rail can coexist.

It is time to put up or shut up. Governments cannot tell motorists to use nonexistent public transit. Saying things are green does not make them so. Transportation planners and politicians should get out of their limousines and ivory towers and ride the inadequate system for once in their lives. Why should it take someone travelling from Cote Saint Luc to the Lakeshore in Dorval by bus and metro over two and one-half hours? How can this fact reduce the use of the automobile?

Avrom David Shtern  
Green Coalition  
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[adirdacks@gmail.com](mailto:adirdacks@gmail.com)

***The following items include three letters written by Avrom Shtern, and one by Susan Belanger as well as two articles and a comment about the Toronto regional transit plan and a report on***

**the US National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's passenger rail working group:**

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Subject: RE: Dorval-downtown train project resurrected, Article online since November 15th 2007, 12:30, The Chronicle, Letter To The Editor, Avrom David Shtern, Green Coalition, Montreal.  
To: [raffy.boudjikianian@transcontinental.ca](mailto:raffy.boudjikianian@transcontinental.ca), [editor@transcontinental.ca](mailto:editor@transcontinental.ca)



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RE: **Dorval-downtown train project resurrected**, Article online since November 15th 2007, 12:30, **The Chronicle**, Letter To The Editor, Albert Kramberger, by Avrom David Shtern, Green Coalition, Montreal.

Dear Editor,

Dorval Mayor Edgar Rouleau says that "...the priority should be linking Montreal to the airport, with the remaining links to the West Island coming in afterward." This is absurd. There is not enough of a market to justify a stand alone air-rail shuttle especially along the longer more expensive and circuitous CN line. London England's Gatwick Express was almost cancelled because improved local commuter rail service was deemed more important and the airport shuttle was getting in the way. It was also considered a drain on resources. The primary focus should be to cater to local needs. The demand is there to make the shuttle a success.

By all means integrate the airport with a fast, frequent, energy efficient and electrified Dorion-Rigaud commuter line. In fact, Montreal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport should become an intermodal hub with local and intercity buses, VIA Rail trains, and future light rail lines. Pedestrian and bicycle access should be made easier as well.

According to a report in your sister publication the **Wesmount Examiner**, Senator Michael Fortier, the Montreal point man for Prime Minister Harper, has a "... clear preference for the CP route and improvements to the suburban service, which

West Island mayors have been campaigning since the spring." ("Shuttle planers return to CP route through Westmount", **Westmount Examiner**, Don Wedge, Nov. 1, 2007.)

No doubt improvements would have to be made to the line. These include: Relaying the third track from Vendome to Montreal West; Grade separation at the Westminster-Elmhurst crossing; the installation of a few new power switches and computerized centralized traffic control west of Dorval.

There are of course issues with the dreadful metro station at Luciene L'Allier: Four stories down! Windsor Station must be somehow revived. If the trains were still arriving at Windsor, it would be easier for passengers to get to the more accessible Bonaventure metro station.

Fast, frequent and reliable commuter rail service to the Lakeshore is the ticket to ride. But mix it with a little common sense because Montreal has had enough white elephants.

Yours Sincerely,

Avrom David Shtern,  
Green Coalition Verte,  
Transportation Issues.  
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[adironacksub@gmail.com](mailto:adironacksub@gmail.com)  
514-482-4882

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Subject: RE: "Airport train studies underway"/By Kristin Morency/  
The Suburban/West Island News, 2007-11-21/Dorval Shuttle Letter/  
To: [suburban@thesuburban.com](mailto:suburban@thesuburban.com) , Abram Shtern < [adironacksub@gmail.com](mailto:adironacksub@gmail.com) >

**RE: "Airport train studies underway"/By Kristin Morency/The Suburban/West Island News, 2007-11-21**

Dear Editor,

Integrating the airport train shuttle with the existing suburban railway network is the only way to make the project viable. There is not enough of a market to justify a stand alone air- rail shuttle especially along the longer more expensive and circuitous Canadian National Railway line. London England's Gatwick Express was almost cancelled because improved local commuter rail service was deemed more important and the airport shuttle was getting in the way. It was also considered a drain on resources.

The primary focus must be local. Service on the Dorion-Rigaud line is inadequate to say the least. Off-peak trains are infrequent. Trains habitually break down. Potential riders are therefore discouraged from using the service. But, the demand is there to make the shuttle a success. The population is growing especially points west of Montreal.

Montrealers have been crying out for improved rail transit: The successful Two Mountains line is overcrowded and is in need of expansion; A light rail surface metro along CN's Doney Spur slicing through the West Island's central core to Fairview and the Lakeshore General Hospital has been championed by the Green Coalition but has been put on the back burner by the authors of Montreal Island's Transport Plan.

It is time to put up or shut up. Governments cannot tell motorists to use nonexistent public transit. Saying things are green does not make them so. Transportation planners and politicians should get out of their limousines and ivory towers and ride the inadequate system for once in their lives. Why

should it take someone travelling from Cote Saint Luc to the Lakeshore in Dorval by bus and metro over two and one-half hours? How can this fact reduce the use of the automobile?

By all means integrate the airport with a fast, frequent, energy efficient and electrified Dorion-Rigaud commuter line. Reliable rail service to the Lakeshore from the more direct line out of Lucien L'Allier Terminal is the ticket to ride. But mix it with a little common sense because Montreal has had enough white elephants. Make the virtual into reality!

Yours Sincerely,

Avrom David Shtern,  
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**Unpublished Version:**

Date: Dec 3, 2007 10:53 PM

Subject: RE: "Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says" by, Cheryl Cornacchia, Montreal Gazette, Dec. 3, 2007/Letters/Avrom David Shtern

To: [letters@thegazette.canwest.com](mailto:letters@thegazette.canwest.com)

Dear Editor,

According to AMT spokesperson Mélanie Nadeau "...snow caused mechanical difficulties for some of the trains..." on the Dorion-Rigaud commuter rail line. ("**Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says**" by, Cheryl Cornacchia, Montreal Gazette, Dec. 3, 2007.) Cancellations and delays were the order of the day. However, trains on this line habitually break down and off-peak runs are infrequent. Service on the Dorion-Rigaud line is inadequate to say the least. Riders are frustrated and potential commuters are discouraged from using the service.

The AMT's excuse is unacceptable. Mechanical difficulties are a symptom of mismanagement on the part of the AMT and the operator Canadian Pacific Railway. Thirty years ago track walkers and section gangs would be working into the night removing the snow for the daily commute. In no flat time switches would be cleared of ice. When all else failed, the train was still seen as the reliable alternative. Because of cutbacks in personnel this is no longer the case.

Notwithstanding Environment Canada's forecast of an impending snow storm, CPR crews only started their work in earnest during the daylight hours.

CP cannot plead poverty. It is earning record profits and the Lakeshore line is one of its busiest in Eastern Canada. The AMT on the other hand is better at providing absolutism than reliable service.

This comes at a time when there is renewed interest in using the CPR line for the airport



shuttle. No doubt this right-of-way is the logical way to go as it is shorter than CN's and it has the potential of serving local commuters as well. But before any decisions are taken, the chronic problems of the Dorion-Rigaud commute must be solved post-haste.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Published Version: The Gazette**, Dec 6, 2007, P.A28,

## Letters

**The Gazette**, Thursday, December 6, 2007.

## Letters

Page a28

### [Newcomers need some English, too](#)

Re: "Newcomers get \$4.5 M boost from Quebec" (Gazette, Dec. 4).

### [Article celebrated student excellence](#)

Re: "They're making history in Grade 10" (Gazette, Nov. 30).

### [Bergeron is the man](#)

Re: "Montrealers need mayor with ideas" (Editorial, Dec. 3).

### [Name confusion](#)

During a hospital stay of some duration, I wondered why my family in Ontario didn't contact me. Simple: They never thought to try my maiden name.

### AMT falls short

Re: "Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says" (Gazette, Dec. 3).

### Streets uncleared

On Wednesday, major streets in the Côte des Neiges area were still not cleared. Hospitals zones, which are supposed to get priority treatment, had not been touched. In fact, there were places in front of the Jewish General where cars had to alternate, using the one available lane. Where were the crews of Notre Dame de Grâce/Côte des Neiges borough?

### A strange notion of readiness

When Mayor Gérald Tremblay said "we are ready for this storm," I had no idea that his concept of "ready" was so completely opposite to the common perception of this word.

### Autoroutes too slow

Re: "The problem with speed limits is that they are too low" (Opinion, Dec. 4).

### RIP Orwell

Bashir Hussain writes that "Pakistan's martial law is in the name of democracy."

## **Page f06**

### Seniors in need face a difficult future

The recent Gazette articles on seniors and home care, both in the West Island and main sections, lead me to comment on these problems.

## **Page f07**

### Late Gerry Snyder left great accomplishments

Two weeks ago, in the Voices of the Community, I discussed the Snowdon Fastball League of the 1950s and the Snowdon Oldtimers Association that followed - and underscored the accomplishments of Pointe Claire resident Gerry Snyder, a moving force in both organizations.

# AMT falls short

## Letter

Published: 8 hours ago

Re: "Afternoon commute should be better, AMT says" (Gazette, Dec. 3).

According to Agence métropolitaine de transport spokesperson Mélanie Nadeau "snow caused mechanical difficulties for some of the trains" on the Dorion-Rigaud commuter rail line.

The excuse is unacceptable. Mechanical difficulties are a symptom of mismanagement by the AMT and the Canadian Pacific Railway. Thirty years ago track walkers and section gangs would work into the night removing snow and clearing switches. But because of cutbacks in personnel this is no longer the case. Notwithstanding Environment Canada's storm warnings, CPR crews only started their work in earnest during the daylight hours. CP cannot plead poverty. It is earning record profits and the Lakeshore line is one of its busiest in Eastern Canada. The AMT, on the other hand, is better at providing absolution than reliable service.

Avrom David Shtern

Côte St. Luc

© Author 2007

AMT falls short

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# Letters, The Gazette, Saturday, Dec. 8, 2007

Page b06

## **\$105 buys plenty**

what does my \$105 per month paid to the Agence métropolitaine de transport get me?

## **\$105 buys plenty**

### **Letter**

Published: 8 hours ago

What does my \$105 per month paid to the Agence métropolitaine de transport get me?

Trains that are inoperable during a snowfall (and many other times during the year). Message to the AMT: We live in Quebec; you can expect some snow. Put plows on the front of the locomotive if you have to.

Trains that don't arrive on schedule.

No announcements from AMT personnel as to the reason for the delay.

No sign of train personnel when we are unceremoniously dumped off the train in Montreal West and told to wait for the next one. And no information as to which platform to wait on.

Inadequate clearing of snow and ice from the train platforms.

The frustration of knowing the people who refuse to use public transit take half the time to reach their destination that those of us who do use it do. And that's when the trains run on schedule.

Apologies for inconveniencing passengers - yeah right.

There's one thing for which I must commend the AMT: They're never late to charge my credit card for my monthly pass.

Susan Belanger

Beaconsfield

# METROLINX IN TORONTO

FROM:

To: [Canadian-Passenger-Rail@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Canadian-Passenger-Rail@yahoogroups.com)  
From: [d.hately@sympatico.ca](mailto:d.hately@sympatico.ca)  
Date: Wed, 5 Dec 2007 05:08:16 +0000  
Subject: [CanPassRail] Finally, Some Clear Thinking

A CTV Toronto News report tonight at 11:30, about a group studying ways to reduce the traffic mess in the GTA, was all about rail!! Ideas mentioned were high speed rail between Toronto, Hamilton and Oshawa, rail lines parallel to existing highways, rail lines on hydro corridors, and tolls on all 400 Highways. There was no hint of building any more roads.

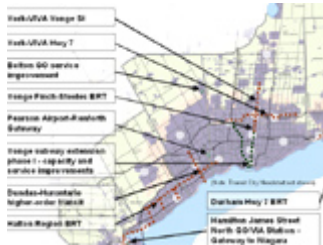
Doug Hately

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## CTV Toronto

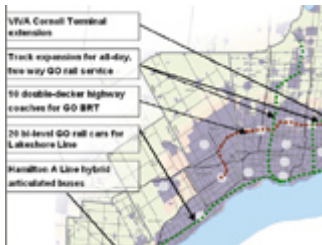
Tue. Dec. 4 2007 1:39 PM ET

 View larger image



Metrolinx, working collaboratively with municipal and GO Transit partners, is moving forward with early, concrete steps to implement the provincial government's MoveOntario 2020 vision for rapid transit expansion (part two).

View larger image



Metrolinx, working collaboratively with municipal and GO Transit partners, is moving forward with early, concrete steps to implement the provincial government's MoveOntario 2020 vision for rapid transit expansion (part one).



Rob Maclsaac, chair of newly named Metrolinx, speaks with CTV Toronto.



Adam Giambrone, chair of the Toronto Transit Commission, speaks with CTV

Toronto on Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2007.

## **GTTA wants new transit plan for southern Ontario**

[toronto.ctv.ca](http://toronto.ctv.ca)

The Greater Toronto Transportation Authority has a new name and a new mandate to improve transit throughout the region.

Now known as Metrolinx, the provincial organization kicked off a consultation process Tuesday with a report on transportation trends and outlooks for the region.

Some new ideas about the future of transit were discussed a meeting in downtown Toronto hotel. Road tolls, high-speed trains, more light-rail transit systems are just some of the ideas that were mentioned.

"My own view is that there are so many people coming to such a limited area, we can't build enough roads to accommodate all the cars that are coming," said Metrolinx Chair Rob Maclsaac.

"It's inevitable that life in the GTA going forward will be a lot more about public transit that it has been in the past," he told CTV Toronto. "People will still have choices though."

Adam Giambone, Toronto city councillor and chair of the TTC, said road tolls is something that should be considered as one of those options. Those tolls could affect not only the major highways but also high-occupancy lanes as well.

"I don't have a problem with region-wide road tolls," he said. "We have heard a lot of people say it's not just about downtown Toronto. Putting a toll on the Gardiner on the DVP doesn't pay for a \$17 billion program. You need to consider it region-wide."

Each idea will be considered throughout the consultation process and a report will be drafted by next year with the goal of coming up with a comprehensive transit plan.

"Today we are taking the first step in improving the choices people have when they need to go from place to place around the region," Maclsaac said in a news release. "Less than a year from now, the people of this region will be presented with a comprehensive plan for a coordinated, seamless, sustainable transportation system."

Transit officials and residents from Hamilton to Durham, Toronto to York will have a chance to participate in the discussions.

Future discussions will also include service-oriented traffic, such as trucks that are delivering services or moving goods. The final Regional Transportation Plan is expected in fall, 2008.

*With a report from CTV's Paul Bliss*

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## **CTV Toronto**

©Tue. Dec. 4 2007 3:07 PM ET



Ontario Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller speaks during a press conference at Queen's Park.

## Road expansion, salt bad for environment: report

[toronto.ctv.ca](http://toronto.ctv.ca)

Road salt is hurting the environment and governments need to find other ways to make Ontario roads safe in the winter, the province's environment commissioner said Tuesday after releasing his annual [report](#).

Gord Miller made his comments the afternoon after salt trucks took to Ontario roads for the third day in a row after the province was walloped by snow for several days.

He said modern technology exists that would work just as effectively as road salt.

A computerized system, already used by the Ministry of Transportation, monitors road temperatures, and allows for road salt to be distributed more efficiently on 20 per cent of Ontario roads.

"They are demonstrating daily that they can reduce the impact and the amount of salt going into the environment," Miller told The Canadian Press.

However, municipalities are exempt from the Environmental Protection Act which means they are allowed to blanket road salt on the remaining 80 per cent of provincial roads.

Road salt endangers drinking water, aquatic life and is harmful to plants, the report says.

"The upward trend of road salts usage - as well as the ensuing runoff from roadways, salt storage yards and snow disposal sites - have contributed to elevated chloride levels in surface water, soil and groundwater in Ontario," the report says. "Road salts can contaminate aquifers and compromise drinking water quality for communities relying on well water. Road salts also contaminate soils and damage terrestrial ecosystems.

According to the report, an estimated two million tonnes of road salt is dumped on Ontario roads each year. Urbanization and increased traffic has contributed to the increased usage.

Miller called on the Liberal government to take action, despite the added costs of expanding the computerized system.

"We know there are direct ecological impacts from road salt. Clearly, I think the time is right," Miller said. "(The Liberal government) has the authority, the power to drive this if they choose to."

### More money on transit, not highways

The report called on the government to tackle urban sprawl in the Golden Horseshoe region by investing more in public transit rather than spend money on expanding highways.



"The Ontario government's 2007 budget dedicates \$6.5 billion to the provincial highway system and \$4.5 billion to transit improvements," the report says. "Preventing further infringement on agricultural and green space by road-based transportation will be difficult if the majority of transportation spending continues to be dedicated to highway and road expansion."

The number of people who own a car increases each year in Ontario, according to the report. Currently, there is roughly one car for every two Ontarians, or 48,000 automobiles for every 100,000 residents.

The report singled out a number of highway expansion and construction projects in Southern Ontario and questioned their impact on surrounding green space.

"Without a change in the car-based culture, we are going to see a million more cars trying to use the roads of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and these will only spawn more congestion, more pollution and the unceasing demand for more roads, which will consume even more of the limited green space remaining on this crowded landscape," said Miller.

A spokesperson for the Sierra Club of Canada said problems around road salt and expanding highways are inextricably linked.

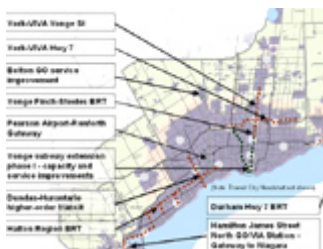
"Fewer roads would mean less road salt," said Dan McDermott, with the Sierra Club of Canada. "More transit would mean less road salt."

*With files from The Canadian Press*

## CTV Toronto

Tue. Dec. 4 2007 1:39 PM ET

[View larger image](#)



Metrolinx, working collaboratively with municipal and GO Transit partners, is moving forward with early, concrete steps to implement the provincial government's MoveOntario 2020 vision for rapid transit expansion (part two).

**Houston Chronicle**

Dec. 6, 2007, 2:13PM

## **Commission Calls for Rail Expansion**

By SARAH KARUSH Associated Press Writer  
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WASHINGTON — Experts convened by a federal transportation policy commission are recommending a \$357.2 billion investment \_ or \$8.1 billion a year \_ to significantly expand intercity passenger rail service by 2050.

The recommendations were released Thursday by the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's passenger rail working group.

The ideas have been adopted by the commission and are expected be part of its final report to Congress, said Frank Busalacchi, Wisconsin's secretary of transportation and the commissioner who convened the working group. But a spokesman for Transportation Secretary Mary Peters said the commission has not officially endorsed the plan.

"The secretary will review this and all other reports submitted to the commission for consideration," spokesman Brian Turmail said.

The country should rebuild and expand its rail network to meet a growing demand for alternatives to congested highways, the report said. It cited several benefits of train travel, including safety, energy efficiency, and the need to provide alternatives to driving as the population ages. Expanding rail travel on heavily traveled corridors of a few hundred miles also can help alleviate airport congestion, the report said.

"The majority of the public are going to continue to use the automobile," Busalacchi told The Associated Press. "But if we make it reliable, clean and convenient, people will take the train." The commission, chaired by the transportation secretary, was formed by Congress in 2005 to study the future needs of nation's surface transportation system, as well as funding options. A final report is expected in January.

Busalacchi, chairman of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, said he formed the passenger rail working group because of a lack of comprehensive data about the country's rail network. The group's members are proponents of rail travel and include representatives of Amtrak and the National Association of Railroad Passengers, as well as state and regional transportation officials. "For the last 50 years ... the nation has had no vision for intercity passenger rail," the report said. "In many parts of the nation, rail lines have been abandoned. Our federal funding policy emphasis has been on the highway and aviation systems, which are now congested." Since 1971, when Congress relieved freight railroads of their obligations to provide passenger service, intercity passenger rail in the U.S. has meant Amtrak. But Busalacchi said expansion of the network does not necessarily have to be done by the government-owned corporation. "I don't think anybody is taking the position that Amtrak is going to have a monopoly on this," he said.

What is certain, however, is that federal funding will be needed, Busalacchi said. The report calls for federal matching funds to help states establish rail corridors. Amtrak, which has contracts with 14 states to provide corridor service, has been pushing for matching funds. The report said the federal government should pay 80 percent of the cost, while the states would pay 20 percent the same ratio that is used for highways. Such projects could be funded by a portion of the gas tax that currently pays for highways and transit, the report said.

The plan is broken down into three phases. By 2015, existing service would be upgraded and new service that is already in the pipeline could be added. That would include parts of a high-speed rail corridor in California and a rail link from Milwaukee to Madison, Wis. The estimated cost of the first phase is \$66.3 billion.

By 2030, the California high-speed corridor would be completed and new corridors such as Los Angeles to Las Vegas; Tulsa, Okla., to St. Louis; and Salt Lake City to Boise, Idaho would be added. The second phase is forecast to cost \$158.6 billion.

By 2050, even more routes such as Louisville, Ky., to Cincinnati and Raleigh, N.C., to Greenville, S.C. would be added and existing service would be upgraded in many places. The last phase is projected to cost \$132.3 billion.

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National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission:  
<http://www.transportationfortomorrow.org>

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The Green Coalition is a non-profit association of grassroots volunteers. Its member-groups and individual members are dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment. Members have been actively involved in many issues such as saving Montreal's last natural green spaces, preventing road building through established Nature-Parks and other green spaces, boosting public transit strategies; promoting alternatives to pesticides, pressing for the clean up of waste-water runoff and polluted creeks, and for responsible waste reduction and management. In short, the Green Coalition has worked vigorously in Montreal, to shape a sustainable development city. In recent years we have turned our attention to the urgent conservation needs in the broader Montreal region.