

Lachine makes tramway pitch URGING CITY TO REVIVE RAIL LINK Part of borough's plans to revive Victoria St.

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Lachine is making a plea and even setting aside land to build a tramway line between the westend borough and downtown.

Lachine council and local residents and businesses are to ask the city to revive a former commuter rail line between Lachine and downtown at public consultations on Mayor Gérald Tremblay's 20-year transportation plan this week, Lachine Mayor Claude Dauphin said last night.

"We are pleading very hard for a tramway from Lachine to downtown," he said in an interview. "When I was three years old, Lachine had a tramway, and maybe now, in the same spot, we'll have another tramway."

The route, which would follow the path of the former Montreal and Lachine Railway and run through LaSalle, Verdun and Southwest borough, is part of Lachine's broader plans to revive Victoria St. with commercial and residential development, he said.

And since the Quebec government has announced it will level part of the Turcot Interchange, the tramway would be an ideal alternative route during reconstruction between the west and downtown, Dauphin said.

The borough is about to acquire a 5,405 square-foot parcel of land at 18th Ave. and Victoria for \$1 from Canadian National to set aside for the project, he said.

The parcel is the continuation of 18th and in the corridor of the former rail line, though the tracks have been removed.

The Montreal Island Council, which manages common services for Montreal and the demerged suburbs, will be asked at a meeting on Thursday to approve the purchase, along with two other parcels in the area.

CN will sell the two other parcels at Victoria and 18th and Victoria and 21st Ave. for \$121,926, or \$1.76 per square foot, which represents their market value minus decontamination costs, says a civil service report that will be presented to the island council.

The two parcels will be used for commercial development and to create parking for the Lachine's recently renovated public market, Dauphin said.

Avrom Shtern, a member of the Green Coalition ecology group and a train buff, called the rail corridor the borough is about to acquire "a significant asset."

"It would be an ideal place for a light-rail line connecting either to the proposed Lachine Canal tramway (in the Tremblay plan) or to the closest métro station, like Angrignon or Vendôme."

It could also eventually be pushed westward to Trudeau airport and Donegani Ave., Shtern said.