

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,
Cote Saint Luc, QC