

Greener alternatives to proposed railway

Re: New CPR Intermodal Terminal; Constructive Suggestions For An Environmentally Friendly Railway Yard. Here are a number of measures that are necessary to make the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway terminal more ecologically friendly: The West Island Gazette, Mailbox October 18, 2007, Page G7

1. Existing marshland, river courses and forested areas must be inventoried and conservation measures implemented.
2. The creation of a permanent setback and the protection of natural buffers near sensitive residential neighbourhoods are essential. For railway freight yards, the Railway Association of Canada and Federation of Canadian Municipalities proximity guidelines suggest 300 meters from the property line (fence), to the closest home. It is vitally important that St. Lazare and Les Cèdres not build right up to the railway terminal. Permanent natural buffers are essential to quality of life. Other steps should include sound barriers, berms, continuous welded rail, insulated foundations to mitigate vibrations, secure fencing and tree - planting in buffer zones.

This summer, the Green Coalition, the city of Côte St. Luc and the Town of Montreal West requested that the RAC/FMC guidelines be made the law of the land. CN and CP also support the creation of proximity rules and regulations. Ontario is the only province to have any laws and regulations regarding proximity from railway installations.

3. Make use of ultraviolet lights or pavement under the ballast to avoid future toxic spraying. Weeds destroy the integrity of the trac, making it unsafe.
4. Replace conventional railway ties with sleepers made from recycled rubber and plastic, concrete or steel. Creosote-laced ties may be carcinogenic. Many railway workers get sick because of vapors/aerosols from creosote, weed sprays and diesel fumes.
5. Use the most energy-efficient and least polluting locomotives. This has been recently mandated in California.

As such, CP's intermodal yard can be built without externalizing the costs of human health and environmental degradation.

Avrom Shtern,
Green Coalition,
Transportation Issues