

## **The Concordian online**

**Letter to the Editor Re: Otter Lake, Environmental And Transportation Policy  
by Avrom Shtern Tuesday, November 6, 2007**

Dear Editor,

The characterization of trains as dusty, noisy and dangerous to the population is unfortunate to say the least. Yes trains pollute and railways are not places of tranquility and hushed tones. Surely Highway 20 contributes more to noise and air pollution and creates a larger ecological footprint.

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The Quebec government should be encouraging more freight on trains given the consequences of global climate change and peak-oil.

The provision for a four track railway makes sense. Leaving only two tracks would cripple any efforts to expand. Downtown to downtown passenger service by rail is one of the conveniences that airlines do not provide. Today the Eurostar takes about two hours to travel between London, England to Paris, France. High Speed Rail in the Quebec-Windsor Corridor is only a matter of time and will require this right-of-way to access Central Station.

The idea of pushing railways further west has consequences: Canadian Pacific Railway is planning to build a sprawling intermodal container facility in Les Cèdres off the western tip of Montreal Island. This means the loss of fertile farmland and more trucks on our already overburdened highways. Furthermore, placing Highway 20 and the CN mainline closer to the St. Jacques Escarpment ecoterritory

further isolates this jewel. Also, monies dedicated to an artificial Otter Lake could be used to conserve existing natural spaces.

Recreating Otter Lake is a grand idea. But its resurrection should not be at the expense of existing natural and ecologically sensitive areas or more environmentally friendly and energy efficient forms of transportation.

Avrom David Shtern,  
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