

# **CCMP Brief for the Montreal Public Consultation on Fossil Fuels**

## **By Nathan McDonnell**

*Summary: The CCMP is a citizen's organisation in the Milton-Park neighbourhood that, during its long history, has been involved in mobilizing for housing rights, community control, ecological transition, heritage protection and livable neighbourhoods. We strongly believe in the necessity of Montreal transitioning to a climate-neutral city as soon as possible because we envision a city that is ecologically sustainable; democratic and participative; cleaner and healthier; a localized, community-controlled economy; and a just city that is accessible for all, fulfilling everyone's needs. We believe that such a transition is only possible through also fostering a truly democratic and egalitarian city. We agree with the sentiment of the goal of climate-neutrality by 2042, though we believe that the goal should be sooner, that it should involve reductions of all emissions (not only carbon emissions and not only Montreal's emissions that are emitted locally) and that emissions be measured and reported on through a biennial agora that involves public consultation, criticism and input. We acknowledge that such a transition would include aspects like making Montreal less of a car-dependent city, transitioning off fossil fuels to develop renewable energy, promoting local, ecological and just food systems, promoting a green and caring economy, reducing consumption and waste, promoting ecological building construction, improving water management, fostering local democracy, decentralizing municipal power and opposing aggressive free trade agreements.*

The CCMP is a citizen's organization that is active in the Milton-Park neighbourhood (between University St, Sherbrooke St, Pine Avenue and St Laurent Boulevard). Since the late 1960s, it has a long and important history mobilizing for housing rights, community control, ecological transition and heritage protection.

Thus, we believe in the goal of urgently transitioning Montreal to a climate-neutral city. We agree with the sentiment of the goal of carbon-neutrality by 2042, though we believe that the goal should be sooner, that it should involve reductions of all types of and not only carbon emissions (hence the term 'climate neutral'), that it include Montreal's emissions that are off the island (e.g. through imports, agriculture, mining, deforestation from off the island) and that emissions be measured and reported on through a biennial agora that involves public consultation, criticism and input.

We are concerned about Montreal's dependence on fossil fuels because we want a city that is:

- Ecologically sustainable
- Democratic and participative
- Cleaner and healthier

- A localized, community-controlled economy
- Just and accessible for all, fulfilling everyone's needs.

We firmly believe that such a transition is only possible with the empowerment of citizens to participate in the ecological transition and social transformation of our city.

**CCMP Initiatives:** The CCMP is involved in fulfilling these goals through its many important initiatives. Housing co-operatives are an important part of the neighbourhood given that the Communauté Milton-Parc, the biggest non-profit housing co-operative project in Canada, is situated in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, we try to prevent over-development and housing speculation in the area. We are leading a coalition of community organisations in a campaign to save the Hotel-Dieu Hospital from being privatized and to instead ensure that it is used for a mixture of social housing, healthcare, social work organisations and culture. In collaboration with the borough, we are involved in transforming three of our lanes between Pine Ave and Milton St into green lanes. Together with Heritage Montreal and other groups, we are involved in protecting green spaces such as the Notman Gardens. In collaboration with McGill students in SSMU, we are involved in a census of the cleanliness and the litter on our streets. In collaboration with the local stadium and the SPVM police force, we are working to ensure noise reduction and clean, safe neighbourhood after games at the stadium.

**Less of a Car Society:** We want a city that is accessible to all without the need for a car. This means making public transport more affordable and expanded. We are concerned that, since the 1960s, Montreal has been planned and built as a city for cars. Montreal's provision of public transport has not increased since 2012; meanwhile, 10 000 new cars are added to our city's streets every year. Furthermore, Montreal is already the second most polluted place in Canada. On the other hand, public transport is often very poor in a large majority of the island and the cost of \$80 per month or \$3.25 per trip is challenging for many low-income residents and students. Decreasing our dependency on cars also requires an improved metropolitan train system so people can easily travel between the centre of Montreal and the periphery without using a car. We also need to empower the use of bicycles and make more streets safe for cyclists through bicycle lanes. We also need more car-free, pedestrian friendly streets. An important aspect of reducing dependency on cars is designing cities where affordable housing does not sprawl in the far peripheries of the city but is built in centres that also provide essential services and employment; in decentralizing the city, this reduces the need to commute long distances and increases residents' quality of life.

**Transitioning from Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy:** We want a city that is powered through alternative energy sources to fossil fuels. It is a shame that Montreal hosts the huge industrial project of the Suncor oil refinery, something that greatly pollutes our air and contributes to international polluting industries. We are also concerned about the approval of the inversion of Line 9, the threat of the construction of the Energy East pipeline as well as the numerous other fossil fuel projects planned across Quebec. Quebec has an abundance of water, sun and wind and these should be used by renewable energy systems rather than oil, tar sands or natural gas. Ideally, renewable energy industries should be decentralized and community controlled to allow

for maximum citizen participation and accountability. We also encourage institutional divestment from the fossil fuel industry.

**Food and Agriculture:** We want a local, sustainable, healthy and just agricultural system. We want our food consumption patterns to be sensitive to ecological impacts, especially due to meat and dairy consumption, imported produce, pesticides, monocultures and other ways modern agricultural systems are damaging the earth. We also need to waste less food and to compost more.

**Green Economy:** We need to promote a green economy where everyone's needs are provided for in an ecologically sustainable way, reducing the dependency on destructive extractivist industries like fossil fuels and deforestation. We need to promote care industries like healthcare, education and social work and other socially important industries like culture.

**Consumption of Goods:** We want a city where consumption is not excessive, where it is locally sourced and where waste is reduced. Our consumption patterns depend on the pollution-heavy transportation of goods from distant manufacturing economies that where poor labour is exploited. Many such goods are plastics which are produced through fossil fuels and are not easily re-used, often being readily disposed though they are polluting. We need to find ways to re-use goods, to share, to buy locally and to waste less.

**Building Construction and Design:** We want a city where buildings are constructed sustainably, especially using sustainably sourced and recycled construction materials to reduce excessive deforestation and mining. We also want buildings to be heated and powered sustainably through renewable energy rather than gas, oil and coal.

**Protects and Promotes Green Spaces:** We want a city that protects current green spaces and promotes the greening of urban spaces. This is important for trying to impede the least on surrounding ecosystems, guaranteeing Montreal's air quality and promoting the quality of living and happiness of Montreal residents.

**Water Management:** We want a city that values water. Montreal, constructed on top of numerous streams, has an old and problematic water management system, a result of which was the dumping of seven billion litres of raw sewage into the St Lawrence River a vast and complex ecosystem that is already vulnerable. We need to have a water management system that is more concerned about protecting water quality.

**Free trade agreements:** We are concerned about the various impending free trade agreements hovering over Canada for how they will seriously affect environmental standards, as well as the integrity of our food systems, labour standards, local control and economic autonomy. Although this is far beyond Montreal's jurisdiction, we want the City of Montreal to take a clear stand against such free trade agreements.