

Mme la présidente,

Je me dois de m'insurger contre ce que je crois fermement être une série de fausses informations diffusées par les représentants de la RTL et l'AMT lundi soir à la clôture de l'audience publique. Si vous me le permettez, je vais rétablir les faits tels que je les connais. Vous pardonnerez les explications en anglais, mais je répondais à un journaliste de la Gazette qui les publiait. Je vous les transmets:

*(Affirmation du représentant de l'AMT): Pour l'AMT, l'axe de l'A-10 Pont Champlain a toujours été un axe prioritaire pour le transport collectif entre la rive-sud et le centre-ville de Montréal. C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi l'AMT a réalisé les études pour un SLR dans cet axe. Lors des études, l'implantation d'une voie réservée aux autobus sur le pont Victoria faisait partie des dix scénarios étudiés par l'AMT. Celui-ci n'a pas été retenu en raison de contraintes techniques d'implantation importantes.*

### **LRT (SLR) to the South Shore**

Indeed the AMT did commission a study with Tecsum in 2007 for the study of the optimal LRT route to the South Shore and came up with the Champlain Ice Bridge option as the winner. It was then determined that the immense cost of bridging the water gap over the Seaway was prohibitive and so the project was shelved until such time as the Champlain bridge was rebuilt (we now have to wait 15 to 20 years for Prime Minister Harper to act, not a realistic solution). In the Tecsum study, the Victoria Bridge route was said to have been studied, but no serious examination of Victoria Bridge was done.

In essence what the study said was that since the CN engineers declared that the cantilevered roadways could not safely support busses, the weight of an LRT was therefore deemed to be impossible to consider. No independent engineering advice on the bridge structure was sought, nor was the substructure even examined. When Tecsum presented their study, Pierre Brisset and I both asked them how was it then that the same bridge had carried trams until 1955 on the very same cantilevers (which, by the way, were just rebuilt by CN in 2000). The consultants were flabbergasted and didn't know what to say. They admitted they had no idea that trams had once used the bridge. On this phony study rests the AMT's assertions that trams cannot use the bridge.

The reason, by the way, that busses cannot use the bridge while trams can is simple. The cantilevers are triangular, the widest part being attached to the bridge, the narrowest part being at the extremities where the railings are. A bus wanders over the entire width of the cantilever, including the weaker extremities, while a tram is restricted to the portion close to the bridge piers, where the strength is strongest. In a Pabeco study presented to Transport Canada in Feb 2009, Pierre and I demonstrated how this worked and how, up to 1955, tram-trains made up of four wooden cars (weight when full: 128 tonnes) or two steel cars (weight when full: 79 tonnes) maximum, routinely crossed the cantilevered section daily.

This AMT dogma, that an LRT cannot be supported on Victoria Bridge, is based on a phony study and is why we have no serious LRT proposal in the pipeline today. And, of course, the Société du Havre de Montréal has simply accepted the AMT's assertions that the options have been studied. This is a perfect example of the long-term damage these bad studies cause (like the infamous SHM "study" presenting us with Dalhousie as the "optimal" choice for a bus corridor based on the narrowest of parameters possible with no planning, community, residential or heritage parameters included).

*(Affirmation du représentant de l'AMT): Les créneaux horaires d'un SLR seraient affectés par la Voie maritime et les écluses.*

As for the Seaway interfering with the potential LRT traffic, this is a serious miscomprehension of how the bridge works around the Canal. That is exactly what makes the Victoria Bridge attractive over the alternatives. It wraps around the St-Lambert lock with a bridge and cantilevers on each side, a twin bridge if you will. So just as the train traffic is never interrupted (it simply switches to the alternate bridge when a ship enters the lock), so to with the LRT traffic on the adjacent cantilevers. That is exactly why this is the ideal bridge.

*(Affirmation du représentant de l'AMT): Il serait impossible avec le train d'offrir une capacité de transport (achalandage) similaire à celle offerte actuellement par la voie réservée dans l'axe A-10 Pont Champlain (qui est d'environ 13 000 déplacements dans chacune des directions. Donc le train de banlieue ne correspond pas à la demande dans ce corridor.*

### **Commuter train on the St-Hubert to Laprairie branch**

Of course the Champlain Bridge bus corridor already fulfills the role such a commuter train would fill. But what is not said is that the busses are over capacity, packed to the gills with commuters, and lined up downtown every morning on Inspector and St-Jacques desperately trying to get into the 1000 Lagachetière terminal, which itself is so overburdened that many busses have now been thrown out of the terminal in the cold of the surrounding streets. This is what the RTL spokesperson was referring to on Dec 10 when he said that the Dalhousie bus corridor does not solve their problem. And more bus purchases are being planned??? Shame on both the RTL and AMT for such weak planning. And we wonder why people prefer their cars. Besides diesel busses pollute as much as cars, according to a US study, because they do four trips daily (two of them empty) instead of two for cars (which stay downtown). This is why a commuter train is needed, to skim off the overloaded bus traffic AND TO PROVIDE A SEPARATE ALTERNATIVE DURING DEMOLITION.

*(Affirmation du représentant de l'AMT): Il y a un problème avec les créneaux horaires. Le pont appartient au CN dont la ligne principale des marchandises vers les Maritimes passe dessus. Il est déjà difficile de négocier des créneaux horaires pour la ligne de St-Hilaire qui passe par le pont.*

Of course the bridge belongs to the CN main line and I acknowledge that the AMT has trouble scheduling commuter trains on it. Statistics will show, however,

that the bridge once carried far more traffic during World War 2 (freight and passenger combined) than is the case today. As with other major metropolitan centres all over North America, Government has to negotiate seriously with the railways to obtain capacity. It is a matter of will and perhaps money. I believe up to three new commuter trains per hour could be accommodated without any great difficulty. Besides, the CN should be required to route at least its more dangerous through trains (chemical notably) off the island and via the Valleyfield bypass (on the old Canada-Atlantic RR right-of-way owned by CN). If one of those daily trains should derail in Point St-Charles, as has happened in several US cities, it would cause a death toll of epic proportions. Another case of Governments not serving the public interest. We are playing Russian roulette instead.

*(Affirmation du représentant de l'AMT): Nous n'avons pas le matériel roulant pour offrir un tel service. Ça prend de 2 à 3 ans suite à un octroi de contrat.*

Finally, the AMT, in pleading that it would need to order new trains, which take years, ignores my already stated conclusion that new equipment is arriving now and in the coming year (the double-decked cars and hybrid locomotives previously ordered). This new equipment frees up a whole fleet of former GO Transit cars and older locomotives for use on this experimental low-cost corridor. Such a temporary corridor cost only about 13M\$ in 1997, I believe, when the experimental service to Blainville was established during reconstruction of a bridge on autoroute 15. It turned out to be a wild success and the train was made permanent with further investments. That represents smart economical planning. I therefore maintain my assertion that a commuter train corridor is needed immediately to prepare commuters for the major disruptions of this important urban infrastructure project. An LRT can follow later.

Yours respectfully,  
David Hanna, professor of Urban Studies, UQAM