

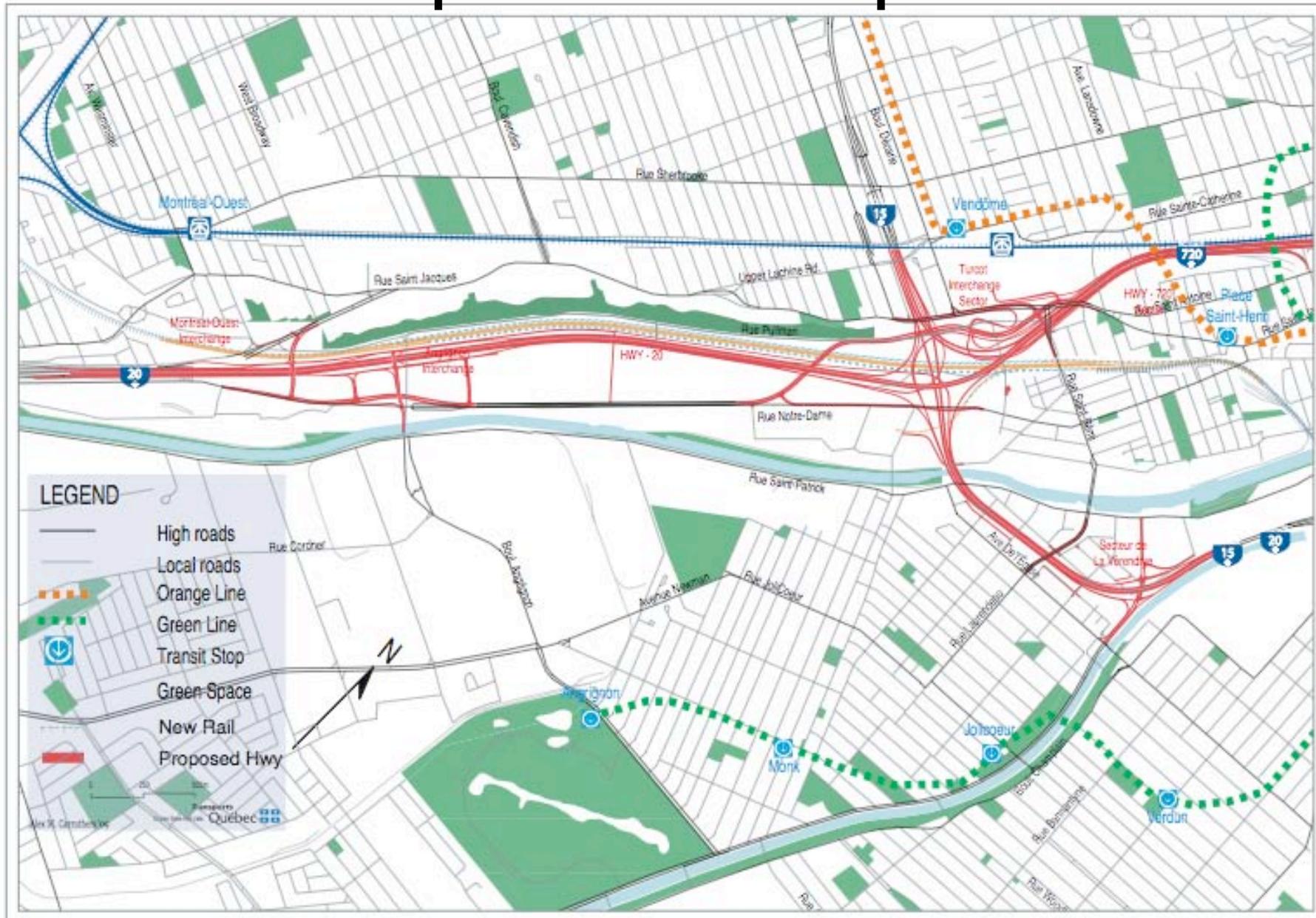
Re-development area: A closer look

A brief for the BAPE hearings

June 17, 2009

By Alex Carruthers

Proposed Complex



Introduction

My name is **Alex Carruthers**

I am:

- A graduate of Concordia's school of Urban Planning.
- **A citizen** living in St Henri,
- **A member of McGill's CURA** *making mega-projects work for communities,*
- and I administer the website **turcot.wordpress.ca**

“What is your interest in this project?”

My interests in this project are as a local resident, an academic, and a father.

This will be the largest infrastructure project in Canada and its design deserves broad based, focused, and world class attention.

In an era of diminishing oil resources and new understandings of the automobile's influence on urban communities it is important that the design of this new infrastructure seizes the opportunity to improve the character of Montreal's and Quebec's transportation infrastructure for subsequent generations

This means:

- protecting the walkability of the existing communities, and proposed developments.
- Exploring new solutions in public transit.
- Avoiding re-entrenching our dependence on automobiles by building bigger highway infrastructure.

“How will [this proposal] influence the environment and quality of life?”

This proposal suggests building the entire Turcot complex brand new in such a way as to:

- Dramatically increase the footprint of the roadway compounding the highways influence as a divider and barrier between people.
- Ensure continues and increased Automobile use well into the future, a liability for future generations
- Provide for increased automobile traffic down town, a public health and safety issue.
- Recommend the development of new automobile dependent community in isolation from it's surrounding neighbourhoods, risking the promotion of social alienation and further automobile dependence.

Increasing the number of cars downtown is not favorable progress for the environment and quality of life of Montrealers.

Is this project acceptable to the community? Why?

Re-examining the possibilities for the Turcot complex opens up a wealth of interesting possibilities for improving life in Montreal. This project has is a rudimentary attempt at remaking our Ailing complex. It needs refinement and more attention before it is acceptable for Montreal, the best city in North America. Area's which need reconsidering are the following:

- **The land for development** is not suitable for a residential community
- **Public transportation** is what Montreal needs.
- **Surrounding communities** ought to be made a priority.

The land to be developed.

The Turcot yards are well suited to accommodate a hub for new rail new Rail transit and large uses which do well in isolation.

This area is poorly suited for residential development. The canal along this stretch should not necessarily be considered an asset for residential communities. It is singularly industrial in nature.

The proposed residential development would suffer from isolation in all directions from its neighbouring communities. It will also be surrounded by highway infrastructure a very dirty dangerous and impermeable boarder.

This Isolation means a risk of social alienation and a future ghettoization.

Using this opportunity to add residential development to sites within existing communities would be a more responsible, more lucrative and more feasible initiative than trying to develop a community out of nothing in the middle of nowhere.

Transportation

Communities to the west of the complex are currently poorly served by public transportation. Commuters, given the option, will choose to use alternate modes of transportation because highway congestion is a universally repugnant experience. This is an opportunity to substantially improve transit service to the west Island and NDG.

Increasing the capacity of the Highway will ameliorate flow in the short term but it is commonly acknowledged in transportation planning that improving capacity of a motorway does not solve the problem of congestion.

Planning for continued and increased automobile use in Montreal is to proceed in ignorance of broadly acknowledged facts about the dwindling global supply of cheap oil, and the unfavorable environmental consequences of automobile use and culture.

The capacity of Montreal's highways should be diminished or, at the very least, maintained at the same size.

Surrounding Communities

St Henri, St Raymond, and Cote St-Pierre, neighbourhoods which make direct contact with the Turcot complex, already suffer from extreme local traffic by virtue of proximity to the highway.

Improving the capacity of Highway will augment traffic downtown and increase the number of cars passing by the Turcot's neighbouring communities

Claims that the new configuration will diminish traffic on local roads are insulting. No Studies have been conducted on how local traffic will change and the reconfiguration of Pullman will ensure that traffic from NotreDame's East West axis will be re- routed to St Antoine and St Jacque, already very busy and very dangerous local thoroughfares. This section of St Henri does not need the influence of increased commuter traffic further threatening it's pedestrian population.

In your opinion, are there elements of this project that should be modified? What are these elements and how should they be modified?

- I believe the Highway's configuration should be left as it is. A complete re modeling of the infrastructure seems excessive and unnecessary.
- I think repairing and reinforcing the existing structure is a more constructive and cheaper alternative to demolishing and re-building.
- This option would save the Housing in the tanneries, save public money, and save the residents of the local communities and down town Montreal from having to deal with increased automobile traffic on their streets.
- Opening development potential along the canal should be re-examined. This is potentially a poor strategy given the area's isolation. Realizing the development potential of existing sites in surrounding communities (Ex. CN land St Henri, Carfour Angrignon environs...) rather than trying to create a new neighbourhood in the Turcot yards where non presently exists.

In your opinion, should authorization be granted for this project? Why?

In my opinion not authorizing this project would a strong show that Quebec is capable of sophisticated reflection, and it would allow for changes to be made to the plan which would better suit the surrounding communities and the ability of future generations to live in a better Montreal

This project:

- misses the realities of global oil exhaustion, the global environmental crises, and the bad effects automobiles have on urban communities.
- has not properly examined the exciting alternatives afforded the planners by virtue of the situation of this site and its surroundings.
- Is generally of poor quality, the product of crisis planning, and the misguided notion that automobiles are critical for the economy of Montreal.
- has shown no commitment to altering the plan since it's inception except to add features of dubious utility.

These are a small sample of the project's weaknesses.

Do you have other suggestions?

- I think the Turcot Yards, as they are now, are well suited for hosting large uses like storage and a depot for future public transit options (Light rail, and expanded bus fleet, etc.)
- In the mean time they will serve as a convenient location for manufacturing the necessary structures for re-enforcing the elevated portions of the interchanges.
- The alternatives presented by this city's academic and professional community have proven to be much more dynamic than what's been produced by this consortium under the direction of Transport Quebec. (see:turcot.wordpress.com/alternatives/)