

NEWS & ANALYSIS

Trent says province must pay fair share for public transport

By P.A. Sévigny
The Suburban

According to Westmount's Mayor Peter Trent, the city could have saved itself a lot of money if they could have started thinking about finding alternative sources of revenue for Montreal's public transport system over 20 years ago. According to a short brief he recently presented to the MMC (Montreal Metropolitan Community) on the part of the ASM (Association of Suburban Municipalities), Trent believes the province must begin to identify and consolidate new sources of potential funding revenue in order to offset the ever-increasing operating costs required to operate Montreal's ever-expanding public transport system.

"It's simple," said the mayor during a brief telephone interview. "Instead of trying to merge the island's municipalities, the government should have tried to merge some of its own administrative structures."

Due to the massive growth of Montreal's offshore suburbs, Trent said the need for new and improved public transit systems have now become the MMC's billion dollar baby. Aside from what he described as "...a \$23 billion dollar shopping list," the mayor also told The Suburban that he's also concerned about the transit system's so-called 'planners' who continually under-estimate major public infrastructure projects such as the infamous Laval Metro extension where the project's original

\$180 million price tag grew into a \$850 million dollar nightmare.

"People should understand that capital costs are one thing," said Trent. "Operating costs are quite another story."

While Trent's numbers continue to demonstrate that the Ryan reforms have cost the island's taxpayers over \$270 million (in today's dollars) over the past 20 years, they also demonstrate how the government has managed to reduce its financial contribution to the island's public transit system by 18 percent while forcing both the island's taxpayers (+9 percent) and the its motorists (+7 percent) to make up the difference.

"It's clear the government has come out of this as the big winner," said Trent.

In order to solve at least some of the MMC's present public transit problems, Trent believes the provincial government should consider a number of structural reforms that could slice through much of the expensive waste in human resources which has come to define the planning process for public transit infrastructure in Quebec. With over 20 separate transport organizations (including three transport services to serve Montreal, the south shore and Laval.) Trent described the island's chaotic transport planning as a tragic waste of human resources because there's absolutely no way "...to know who's on first".

"The government should realize that over 70 percent of day's public transport that

takes place in the province takes place in or around the island," he said.

Aside from his belief that the government should move away from its regional approach in which Montreal is considered to

be "just one" of the province's 17 different administrative regions, he also believes it should get used to doing more for the island's metropolitan community as well as its public transit infrastructure. ■

CSL requiring landscape, snow removal contractors to have city permits

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Côte St. Luc council passed a bylaw at last week's public meeting to require landscape and snow removal contractors who work at the homes of residents to obtain a permit from the city.

Mayor Anthony Housefather pointed out that several other municipalities have passed similar bylaws.

Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who moved the bylaw, explained that there have been problems with some contractors who have been pushing snow and blowing leaves onto local streets.

"One of the things we are hoping to have by passing this bylaw is a regulation that forces contractors to get a permit, and allows the city to better regulate the situation, and we are hoping we'll have less snow on the roads in the winter and safer streets, and in the summer, we'll have less leaves and garden waste on the roads," Erdelyi said.

"Those can also be a hazard, as the leaves can create a slippery road if they get wet. The leaves also make the city look unsightly. We're hoping the contractors will follow our bylaws, and its rules and regulations, more closely with this permit."

The bylaw came into effect as of the May 14 council meeting, but contractors have until June 15 to get a permit from the city.

Côte St. Luc resident Sidney Margles congratulated the council for passing the bylaw, and also asked how council will pass on the information and whether the bylaw will be enforced.

"Let's be realistic," Margles said. "Drive around the streets on lawn mowing day and you will see the grass out on the streets. They don't give a damn. A leafblower bylaw should be the next stage."

Housefather said a leafblower bylaw will be considered. The mayor added that the public works department will be conveying the information to gardeners and that the bylaw will indeed be enforced. ■

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2012 ALOUETTES HOME GAMES

Pre-season			
W	WINNIPEG	Thursday, June 14	7:30 p.m.
Regular season			
W	WINNIPEG	Friday, July 6	7:00 p.m.
C	CALGARY	Thursday, July 12	7:30 p.m.
A	TORONTO	Friday, July 27	7:30 p.m.
H	HAMILTON	Thursday, August 23	7:30 p.m.
B.C.	B.C.	Friday, August 31	7:30 p.m.
S	SASKATCHEWAN	Sunday, September 16	1:00 p.m.
A	TORONTO	Sunday, September 23	1:00 p.m.
W	WINNIPEG	Monday, October 8	1:00 p.m.
E	EDMONTON	Sunday, October 28	1:00 p.m.