PRESS

RELEASE

**For immediate release**

The east end of Montréal will have its own Réseau express métropolitain

**A new and sustainable mobility solution with 32 km of light rail and   
23 integrated stations to support development of this vast area**

**Montréal, December 15, 2020** – This morning, two years after the signature of the declaration to revitalize the east end of Montréal, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (through its subsidiary CDPQ Infra) has unveiled, together with the Gouvernement du Québec and the Ville de Montréal, a new Réseau express métropolitain (REM) project for the sector.

This new public transit project, consisting of 32 km of light rail and 23 new stations, will meet a historic demand in Montréal’s east end and, together with the entire REM project, create one of the largest automated transit networks in the world, with 99 km of rail and 49 stations.

Following the Québec government’s mandate, this transit solution was identified after a thorough study of the technical and economic aspects. This study confirms that the project is viable: it meets the transportation needs of local communities, and allows CDPQ to generate the necessary returns to meet the expectations of its depositors while supporting Québec’s economic recovery in the years to come.

**Significant economic impacts and benefits for communities**

This brand new network represents an investment of approximately $10 billion, the largest amount ever invested in a public transit project in Québec. During the construction period, this investment will create more than 9 000 direct and indirect jobs per year.

Ultimately, by accommodating more than 133,000 users per day, REM de l’Est will improve the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of people and will support the development of numerous public spaces, while strengthening various types of economic activity and knowledge in this territory.

Furthermore, by offering a fast and reliable alternative transit on the island of Montréal, this new, 100% electric network will save the city more than 35,000 tonnes of GHGs each year.

“Thanks to the innovative spirit and world-class expertise of our teams in developing major infrastructure projects, we are putting forward a public transit system proposal that meets both the needs of our six million depositors, and the need for mobility in the eastern and northeastern sectors of the island. This is a sustainable investment that will contribute to Quebecers’ retirement plans and generate significant benefits for the economy, the environment and communities. At CDPQ, we call this constructive capital, since it allows us to combine performance and progress.”

* *Charles Emond, President and Chief Executive Officer, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.*

“I am very happy that today, we are fulfilling one of our major promises for Montréal’s east end. We are announcing the largest investment ever made in public transit in Québec, with major economic benefits. The east end of Montréal has great economic potential, but at the moment, public transit services in this part of the city are not up to par. We promised that a CAQ government would change that. I’m extremely proud that we’re delivering on our promise. This project will improve the quality of life for thousands of Québecers on a daily basis, create wealth not just for east end of Montréal but all of Québec, and help us reduce our GHG emissions.”

* *François Legault, Premier of Québec*

“Our government has invested more in public transit than any other government in the history of Québec. With REM de l’Est, we will provide users with comfortable trips that are priced fairly and, most importantly, operate twice as fast as anything currently available. This time saved is valuable time that workers, students and senior citizens will have for themselves and their families.”

* *François Bonnardel, Minister of Transport*

“Montréal’s east end has definitely begun its recovery. This project will enable the region to reach its fullest potential, both economically and socially. Thanks to the interconnected modes of transit, a world of opportunities is opening up to the population—for access to quality jobs and higher education. With a green, modern mode of transportation offering picturesque river views, the entire image of the region will be transformed, and the future of the East will be shaped.”

* *Chantal Rouleau, Minister for Transport and Minister Responsible for the Metropolis and the Montréal Region*

“This project has the potential to transform mobility in the east and northeast of the metropolis and to become a formidable engine for economic recovery. This new access to downtown public transit will open up horizons for several Montréal neighbourhoods, including Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montréal-Nord, Saint-Léonard and Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. In order to make it a real lever for urban redevelopment, the urban integration and architectural signature will have to be exemplary. The REM de l’Est will have to be an architectural success, both on board and around the train.”

* *Valérie Plante, mairesse de Montréal*

“The arrival of this mobility solution is an opportunity to create user-friendly facilities, develop neighbourhoods on a human scale, and reclaim the banks of the St. Lawrence River. It will transform the nature of transit in Montréal’s east end with time savings of up to 70 per cent, while bringing neighbourhoods closer together and accelerating the revitalization of this vast territory with enormous potential. REM de l’Est will provide a distinctive entrance to the downtown area by integrating a unique architectural structure inspired by the best practices from around the world.”

* *Jean-Marc Arbaud, Managing Director of CDPQ Infra*

When added to existing transit systems (metro, trains and buses), the REM will complete an integrated, competitive and environmentally friendly transit system across greater Montréal area—one that reflects a 21st-century vision.

**An architectural signature for integration with the downtown area**

Numerous studies were conducted to establish the route which the REM de l’Est will take; they resulted in the development of new north–south and east–west travel axes, while adding a new light rail line in the heart of downtown Montréal between the metro’s orange and green lines. The addition of four stations in the René-Lévesque Boulevard corridor, which is a busy and strategic artery, will significantly improve transit options for downtown.

The elevated structure and stations will receive special attention in their architectural treatment, to ensure they endow downtown Montréal with a modern and symbolic aesthetic.

An advisory committee will be set up in collaboration with the Ville de Montréal so recommendations can be submitted prior to project design, with the aim of maximizing the network’s architectural integration into the communities along its route. Well-known experts in urban planning, architecture, heritage, arts and culture, business and the environment will sit on the panel and provide their input. Architectural firms from Québec will also be mandated to ensure the structures and stations integrate harmoniously with the existing environment.

**Next steps and factors for success**

Today’s launch marks the start of a consultation process, one that includes a tour to discuss the matter with the general public, civil society and with all project stakeholders. In the coming months, during every stage of the project, CDPQ Infra will maintain an ongoing dialogue through active, regular and transparent communication.

CDPQ Infra will set up technical workshops with the relevant authorities so as to enhance and optimize the project. The REM de l’Est project will be submitted to the *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement* (BAPE) for review as early as 2021.

In managing this project, CDPQ Infra will act with strict due diligence throughout the procurement process, and its governance structure will be inspired, as in the past, by global best practices for efficiency and transparency.

The public is invited to consult the new online section for this project at [cdpqinfra.com/en](https://www.cdpqinfra.com/en) and to follow the project stages by subscribing to our newsletter.

The media are also invited to consult the [technical presentation](https://www.cdpqinfra.com/en/technical-sheet-rem-est) and can access all the visuals and videos in the [media kit](https://www.cdpqinfra.com/en/medias).

Follow the project on Twitter @CDPQInfra

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TECHNICAL

DATA SHEET

**Benefits of the new proposed network**

With a total of 32 km of light rail, divided into two branches that converge toward downtown Montréal, as well as 23 new integrated and universally accessible stations, this network will link Montréal-Est and the boroughs of Rivière-des-Prairies – Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montréal-Nord, Saint-Léonard, Rosemont-Petite-Patrie, Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Ville-Marie.

The arrival of this transit network in the east and northeast will relieve road congestion, reduce pressure on the metro, spur investment, increase use of the river and its access points, and act as a springboard for development projects.

This new light rail network will offer significant gains:

* a major improvement in public transit options and direct access to downtown, now 30 minutes from Montréal-Nord, 25 minutes from Pointe-Aux-Trembles and 10 minutes from Maisonneuve Park (Viau);
* improved quality of life thanks to 25 to 70% time savings per trip, and less time lost in traffic;
* a new network to facilitate travel that is well-integrated with other transit networks, generating more than 133,000 users per day;
* a competitive alternative to solo driving, thereby decreasing the impacts of traffic congestion, estimated at more than $4 billion per year;
* a project that benefits future generations and the environment by saving more than 35,000 tons of GHGs per year;
* a high-quality transit service: fast, frequent, reliable, universally accessible, with a free Wi-Fi network and a platform screen door system meeting some of the highest safety standards in the world;
* a connection to employment, education and health centres by linking, for example, Cégep Marie-Victorin, Pointe-aux-Prairies nature park, Maisonneuve-Rosemont hospital, the Olympic Park, Maison de Radio-Canada, UQAM, CHUM, Place des arts and Place Ville-Marie;
* its role as an important vector for rehabilitating contaminated brownfields in the east end of Montréal;
* acceleration of projects already under development, including the Notre-Dame Street project for reclaiming the river and its access points.