



PRESS RELEASE
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Service Cuts and Increased Bill in the public transit: Jean-Marc Léveillé blasts the ARTM

Longueuil, June 7, 2021 — In recent days, the media have revealed that the citizens of Longueuil would be the big losers in the Montreal metropolitan area, while the Agence régionale de transport métropolitain (ARTM) anticipates a deficit of \$936 million for the period 2021-2024. The ARTM would therefore consider service cuts in the bus routes of the Réseau de transport de Longueuil (RTL) of 2.7%, an average annual indexation of 4% of user fees and an increase in the contribution for the municipalities of the Agglomération of Longueuil. An intolerable situation for the candidate for Mayor of Longueuil, Jean-Marc Léveillé, which could compromise the success of the economic recovery on the South Shore and the fight against climate change.

“The Réseau de transport de Longueuil (RTL) is the only one among the transport companies to have achieved its objectives in 2020 with cuts of 10% that will continue in 2021 and 2022. And now we should do more than all the others with additional reductions in services of 2.7% per year, while these reductions will be 2.2% and 2.6% for Laval and Montreal, respectively. The citizens of Longueuil do not have handles on their backs. We are not here to pay the structural deficits of the entire metropolitan region”, said Jean-Marc Léveillé.

The failure of the ARTM

For Jean-Marc Léveillé, it is clear: the ARTM is becoming a bureaucratic monster of inefficiency that seems incapable of adequately defending the interests of public transit users in the greater Montreal area. The organism should be reformed.

“The role of the ARTM was to coordinate and effectively plan transportation in the metropolitan area, but today it does the opposite. While cities and transport companies plan their development to encourage the use of public transport, the ARTM now wants to force them to manage the decline in services for the next 10 years. It doesn't make any sense! Especially if we consider the government's GHG reduction targets, not to mention the quality of life of all citizens. The ARTM should limit its action to regional planning and financing of public transit”, declared the candidate for Mayor of Longueuil.

An announced catastrophe

For Jean-Marc Léveillé, there is no doubt that the ARTM suffers from “structuritis”, a disease which is expensive and which gives no results. For an organization with 60 employees, the ARTM held 123 meetings of its board of directors or its various committees in 2020.

“As they meet, the Eastern REM and the Blue Line will cannibalize each other in obvious planning failure. Of course, it is the citizens of all municipalities who will ultimately foot the bill for this announced disaster. And on the other hand, in Longueuil we might have to wait another 10 or 20 years, if not more, for a structural link along the Boulevard Taschereau axis. What are we supposed to do while we wait? The population of the South Shore will continue to increase significantly and without a coherent planning of public transport services, cars will simply continue to be added to our roads. Currently, we are guaranteed to miss our GHG reduction targets.”

Political leadership is necessary

“The excesses of the ARTM are possible because Longueuil and the South Shore have no real political weight.” Jean-Marc Léveillé therefore appeals to the unity of the elected officials of the Agglomeration to develop a real balance of power with the other regions and the Government of Quebec.

“We've been following the others for years when it comes to investing because we've been bickering for years. Settling the old rivalries in the Agglomeration will come at a cost, but not doing will continue to cost us all a lot more”, concluded the mayoral candidate for Longueuil Citoyen. He invites all electoral candidates in the Agglomeration to show a united front against the ARTM.