The Transit-Oriented Development Model in Montreal (Canada): Mobilizing a Concept and Negotiating Urban Development at the Local and Metropolitan Scale

L'aménagement axé sur les transports à Montréal: mobilisation d'un concept et négociation du développement urbain à l'échelle locale et métropolitaine.

Maude Cournoyer-Gendron

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Introduction

1   The concept of transit-oriented development (TOD) is an urban planning model that emerged in the wake of the New Urbanism and Smart Growth movements. Alongside the overall trend towards greater emphasis on mass transit in urban planning, TOD is now a fixture in planning documents of metropolitan areas around the world, although more so in North America and Australia (Cervero, 2004; Curtis, 2012; Nasri and Zhang, 2014; Pojani and Stead, 2014; Tan et al., 2014). The Greater Montreal area is no exception, with TOD having become a priority in the region's planning approach. TOD is almost invariably mentioned in project development agendas, especially in the case of real estate projects in proximity to transportation facilities. Albeit a generalized understanding of it, TOD appears to be accepted across the board by Montreal's metropolitan actors[1], and especially by its local elected officials, who have endorsed a metropolitan land use plan whose objectives is to promote TOD projects in the region. Several mayors have also embraced the concept and are working on the development of "innovative" and "exemplary" TOD projects. However, the scope of the TOD concept and its capacities for

transforming urban planning proved to be limited, in particular given the different uses of the concept and the malleable nature of its definition. This article discusses the recontextualization of the (abstract) concept of transit-oriented development in the Montreal context, the specific way in which TOD has been defined by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM), and its meaning for local actors implementing it.

2   We recently saw the transformation of urban governance through the pluralization of its actors, the injunction towards competitiveness and the mobilization of urban actors around socioterritorial projects (Pinson, 2009). Namely, the roles of mayors and local elected officials are often redefined amidst this restructuring of local government systems (Saltztein et al., 2008; Schaap et al., 2009; Lindstrom, 2010; Pinson 2014). Some researchers observe that in this context of global competitiveness, urban development projects take on greater significance in the action of local elected officials (Le Bart, 2009; Pinson, 2009), whereas planning increasingly falls under supra-local jurisdiction. In this sense, the objective of our research is to better understand the political dynamics that govern TOD projects, with a focus on local elected officials. The latter, it was found, do not work in isolation and are instead called on to collaborate in the context of metropolitan governance, particularly in the field of land use planning and development. At that level, best practices, exemplary cases and other concepts from elsewhere are discussed as part of a multi-scalar flow of ideas concerning infra—as well as inter—metropolitan urban planning. In this sense, we agree with McCann and Ward (2012) that while policies circulate globally, they are also built locally and across different levels of governance. TOD is a good example of an urban concept that, due to a combination of circumstances, has "arrived"[2] in Montreal, where it found a favorable environment for its appropriation and translation.

3   In the case before us, we examine how TOD, as one of those "exogenous planning ideas", was shaped and established collectively in the Greater Montreal area or, in the words of McFarlane (2011), how this travelling policy resulted in so-called localized substantiations - as physical entities exemplifying the abstraction of TOD concept. We first try to outline the trajectory of the concept since its first appearance in Montreal's *Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement* (PMAD). Referred to in English by its French acronym PMAD, or as the *Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan,* the PMAD is the main planning document at the metropolitan level. We begin with a review of the literature on the flow of models and ideas in urban planning, the emergence and circulation of the TOD concept and the obstacles surrounding its implementation. We then continue with a presentation of the context that characterized the arrival of TOD in Montreal, and its construction through metropolitan governance.

1. Review of the literature

1.1 Diffusion of ideas in planning

4   The publications on the international flow of urban models and the "big ideas in urban planning" come from a number of research fields and have different epistemological referents. As a result, this large and heterogeneous array of literature has not really produced any prevailing paradigms (Cook, 2015; McCann and Ward, 2015). If anything, there is talk of "urban policy mobilities" (McCann and Ward, 2012; 2015), "transnational flows of planning ideas" (Healey 2013) or the "movement of policies between places"

(Cook, 2015)—all of which are concepts that refer in a more general manner to the mobility and circulation of models, practices, and ideas at the international scale between large and medium-sized cities. In a recent issue of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (IJURR), several researchers tried to define this field of research, which they call "urban policy mobility research" (Baker and Temenos, 2015; Cook, 2015; McCann and Ward, 2015; Robinson, 2015). Baker and Temenos (2015), for example, examine urban policy mobility with a focus on the processes, practices, and resources that are involved in the construction, mobilization and territorialization of these ideas in public policy. McCann and Ward (2015), for their part, observe the significant amount of attention paid to questions of benchmarking, the comparison of cities, and the range of consultants and experts engaged in urban policy mobility research.

5   Three approaches stand out in this field of research. First, in the constructivist tradition of geography, urban policy mobility was addressed in terms of the movement of ideas, practices, concepts, and changes that this mobility entails, whereby the nature of the writings that emerged from this tradition took on a distinctly sociological character (Cook, 2015). In the second approach, other researchers with a slightly more positivist penchant refer to a body of writings on policy transfers coming from political science (e.g., Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000) and focus on the transfer agents, distribution mechanisms, and transfer processes. In the third approach, still other researchers from the field of urban studies and planning address the internationalization of urban planning, models, and practices (Healey, 2013; Cook, 2015; Lieto, 2015). Their studies often focus on contexts in which a policy or model emerges or is being implemented, be it successfully or not. This flow of ideas in urban planning is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it can be likened to colonial cities that were created or changed according to urban planning visions coming from the West (Roy, 2010). Nonetheless, the three approaches to policy mobility research have in common that they focus on the trajectory of the models, ideas or practices, including a phase of decontextualization from their original location and their recontextualization elsewhere.

6   This flow of ideas and urban models has its consequences. Decontextualization and recontextualization require that the idea circulating is sufficiently abstract or sufficiently polysemic. This stage of decontextualization can lead to a reification of an experience (e.g., a city that is presented as a model or a best practice touted as exemplary, or benchmarking), which undermines the historical, social and political context in which the idea or model originally took shape. Decontextualization also allows for the strategic depoliticization of some urban issues, so as to mitigate conflictuality (Lieto, 2015; McCann and Ward, 2015). The use of models from elsewhere is called "exogenous planning ideas and practices" by Healey (2013). When using such models, ideas are translated into specific local contexts with consideration of the local circumstances of the adoption of a given idea or practice:

> The "translation experiences" through which exogenous planning ideas and practices become "localized," that is, drawn down, adapted and inserted into struggles over discourse formation and institutionalization in new contexts [...] (Healey, 2013 p. 1520)

7   The flow of these ideas and their local translation thereby raise the question of power: they are inserted, as mentions Healey (2013), into the local political debate. Healey also highlights the contribution of the writings of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon as well as

the actor-network theory (ANT) to shed light on how knowledge and public policies are constructed and on the arenas in which they circulate. Adherence to an idea by a network of actors helps to consolidate and empower that idea and promotes its circulation. Pojani and Stead (2014) identify and emphasize that, based on their study of TOD in Amsterdam, the flow of urban planning models and practices has a self-referential dynamic, whereby it is always the same exemplary cases that become mobilized and reproduced or the same concepts that emerge as paradigms in the debate on planning, regardless of the local context. Thus, ideas, practices, and modes originating from elsewhere can gain momentum and become the centerpieces of the dominant discourse in planning, sometimes as myths (Lieto, 2015) or as storylines (Healey, 2013) and other times as dogmas (Roy-Baillargeon, 2015).

8   There is thus a tension between the global and the local, as well as a political aspect to this flow of ideas and practices around which actors are mobilized. Lieto (2015), who is interested in articulating these concepts in motion, identified this local/global tension for the various registers in which the concepts are embedded, being the structures and forces at work at the macro-scale (globalization, international competition, imperialism, regionalization, etc.) and the specificity of the place and its network of actors. This allows, according to Lieto (2015), to negotiate solutions on the ground while nevertheless echoing a universal or global trend:

> "It recalls ideas or experiences from other contexts and cultures and triggers a dialectics between depoliticized speech and strategic polyvalence" (Lieto, 2015 p. 125).

9   A further tension is the one between cities that compete with each other, at the metropolitan or global scale, yet that nevertheless collaborate across various networks (Cook, 2015).

10   The TOD concept belongs to this cluster of ideas that are circulating in the major cities in North America, Australia and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe, and Asia. It has been revised to adapt to multiple contexts (Curtis et al., 2009; Pojani and Stead, 2014). It seems to be the case in the context of Montreal, where the concept has been reinterpreted in such a way that it partly eludes its original signification.

1.2 TOD concept and its implementation

11   The term "transit-oriented development" (TOD) appeared first in the context of New Urbanism and aims primarily to stimulate a new type of real estate development that promotes, without being limited to, mass transit (Calthorpe, 2011). The concept also aims to cover issues such as the preservation of open spaces, traffic congestion, air quality and affordable housing. However, the topic of transportation, including the links between the different modes of transportation, remains central. For Calthorpe, these different focal points of TOD translate into opportunities for development: 1) inner city revitalization; 2) revival of the immediate periphery of a city (vacant industrial zones, abandoned shopping malls), which has a strong potential but remains unexploited; 3) development of new neighborhoods on the outskirts of the urban area. Essentially, TOD evolved into one of the major urban planning visions in the United States and everywhere where development has been car-centric thus far. Roughly speaking, it focuses on urban development within a perimeter of 800 meters, or 10 walking minutes, of mass transit

facilities (e.g., around tram or train infrastructures). One of the goals is namely to increase mass transit commutes and to reduce car-oriented development (Tan et al., 2014). TOD implies mixed-use development (residential, commercial and employment) and a built environment that promotes walking and cycling (Curtis, 2012).

12   Research on TOD often revolves around the implementation and evaluation of projects, thus examining whether a project had the desired impact on the commutes/movements of the population, or whether infrastructures and facilities align with the TOD concept. In addition, TOD research conducts a content analysis of public policies (Curtis, 2012; Nasri and Zhang, 2014; Tan et al., 2014).

13   Pojani and Stead (2014), in their study of knowledge transfer in the application of the TOD model in the metropolitan area of Amsterdam, investigated the agents of transfer and objects of transfer, that is to say, TOD and what it represents locally. They also described the context in which TOD emerged and the processes behind its import. The authors conclude that public policy transfers are highly dependent on the individuals on site, and in the case of Amsterdam they observed a lack of coordination and fragmentation. Ultimately, TOD has mainly been an inspiration from elsewhere and has not resulted in concrete changes in policy and practice. The researchers also identified a number of barriers that limit the effective implementation of TOD. Some of these barriers are institutional in nature, such as a recent reform pushing for the increased decentralization of planning powers, and the fact that the coalition that was created for the implementation of TOD was a closed circle. Decentralization was shown to leave a vacuum of political leadership, competition between the country's cities for the redistribution of financial resources, and segmentation in the planning of transportation and development (also noted by Curtis, 2012 and Tan et al. 2014). They also point to a lack of political interest in TOD. Other barriers are more related to the nature of the flow of ideas and their local translation, which has its own set and types of limits. Political cycles are considered too short for new ideas to evolve and take shape. The great distance between the cited models and examples and the location, as well as the considerable differences between the institutional arrangements, have also been identified as limits to an effective translation of the concept.

14   A leadership gap at the local levels of government was also identified by Belzer and Autler (2002, p. 25) as one of the main challenges in the implementation of TOD projects, especially in a context of territorial fragmentation. The same was observed by Curtis (2012) in the case of Perth, Australia, where the effective implementation of TOD projects required the intervention of the central government, since local capacity-building, taken alone, proved insufficient. In the Greater Montreal area, by contrast, local elected officials were shown to adhere to the TOD concept. Nevertheless, their adherence to TOD can be characterized by a misuse and distortion of the concept for the purpose of advancing suburbanization, particularly on farmland, making TOD more of a political than urban planning tool (Roy-Baillargeon, 2015).

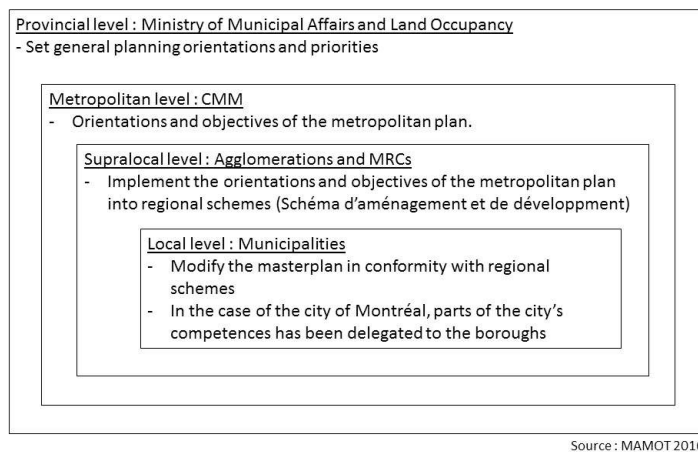## 1.3 Circulation of TOD model: From New Urbanism to metropolitan planning

15   Hence, the circulation of TOD ideas is not limited to the Greater Montreal area. It has been major at the international level - and more forcefully in North America and Australia. A lot of cities in North America have adopted a TOD strategy in some ways,

within which most cited experiences being Portland and Arlington. Stated reasons for implementing TOD strategies are plural and context specific. TOD projects can be seen as a « repair for some of the current planning ills » (Pojani et Stead 2014, 365), they can be driven by uncertainties surrounding economic recession, be a mean to draw and direct attention to a positive and successful image of the city (what McCann, 2013, would call policy boosterism), be a part of a city revival movement (Pojani et Stead 2014), be seen as a way to pursue sustainable development objectives, or they can be related to funding opportunities (McCann 2013; Pojani et Stead 2014). By looking at its adhesion and implementation in Montreal, we will try to reflect upon its seeming prevalence as a planning idea. Precisely, how was the TOD shaped and established collectively in the Greater Montreal area and trough metropolitan planning instruments? How was TOD defined by local elected officials and what were the obstacles confronting their implementation? And finally, how was this notion used as a mean of legitimization and negotiation by local elected officials in the context of a multi-layered planning governance?

2. Elements of context: Montreal's region planning structures and tools

16   Like so many other cities, the territory of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) has undergone its share of restructuration of local government systems since the early 2000s, with municipal mergers, a wave of demergers and the creation of the metropolitan governing body (being the CMM). The CMM comprises 82 municipalities, including Montreal, Longueuil, and Laval, as well as municipalities of the North Shore and the South Shore. Founded in 2001, the CMM acts as a planning, coordinating and funding organization in the field of regional planning, economic development, social housing, mass transit and the environment. The institutional framework of Montréal's planning is constituted of the articulation of four levels of interventions and competencies (provincial, metropolitan, regional and local). First of all, the CMM has to set regional orientations and objectives in accord with provincial planning orientations. Then, agglomeration and regional counties[3] have to conform to the metropolitan orientations and objectives and implement them into regional Schemes (*Shéma d'aménagement et de développement*). Last, municipalities have to modify their masterplan accordingly to the regional Schemes. In the case of the city of Montreal, planning competencies have partly been decentralized toward boroughs, adding yet another level.

Figure 1. Institutional framework of Montreal's metropolitan area

Provincial level : Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy
- Set general planning orientations and priorities

Metropolitan level : CMM
- Orientations and objectives of the metropolitan plan.

Supralocal level : Agglomerations and MRCs
- Implement the orientations and objectives of the metropolitan plan into regional schemes (Schéma d'aménagement et de développment)

Local level : Municipalities
- Modify the masterplan in conformity with regional schemes
- In the case of the city of Montréal, parts of the city's competences has been delegated to the boroughs

Source : MAMOT 2016

Since February 2012, the adoption of the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan (PMAD) forced the elected officials of Greater Montreal to consider the territory of their municipality as part of a larger entity within which planning issues are interconnected. The development of the PMAD was driven by a strong mobilization of stakeholders from civil society and municipal officials alike. This change in the context of metropolitan governance makes the territory of the CMM particularly interesting for the study of political processes at work in the field of land-use planning.

Figure 2. Structure of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal

82 municipalities
- 5 geographical areas : agglomeration of Montréal, Laval and Longueuil, municipalities of the north shore and municipalities of the south shore

Administrative Board
- 28 members
- Mayor of Montréal (chairman), 13 delegates of the agglomeration council of Montréal, mayor of Laval and 2 delegates, mayor of Longueuil and 2 delegates of the agglomeration of Longueuil, 4 mayors of the north shore and 4 mayors of the south shore

Executive Board
- 8 members
- Mayor of Montréal (chairman), mayor of Laval, mayor of Longueuil, 3 delegates of the agglomeration council of Montréal, 1 mayor of the north shore and 1 mayor of the south shore

3. Methodology

17   Although the participation of civil society in planning processes has been extensively studied in recent years, the role of local elected officials in this regard remains poorly documented. Our research project thus aimed to study the function of mayors in planning

operations, in order to shed light on the local political systems at work at the metropolitan level and in the creation of TOD zones in particular.

18   The results presented in this article are based on the thematic analysis (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2003) of data coming from three sources: 1) the local and national press (2012–2014), 2) documents and reports from the CMM and, especially, 3) material obtained from semi-structured interviews with a dozen elected officials from the Greater Montreal area.

19   This analysis of the newspaper articles and the documents published by the CMM was used to design preliminary interviews held with staff from the CMM and the Secrétariat à la région métropolitaine. This allowed identifying exemplary cases of municipalities where the principles identified in the PMAD were taken up by local elected officials. Subsequent to holding preliminary interviews, we conducted 10 semi-structured interviews of a duration ranging between 1 and 2.5 hours, with elected officials active in the metropolitan scene and particularly involved in an urban development project. The interviews allowed to get a picture of the vision of local officials regarding their metropolitan governing body, being the CMM, their understanding of the local and metropolitan issues, their assessment of the implementation of the PMAD, and their vision of urban development projects on their territory, including TOD projects. While we were unable to meet with elected officials from each of Greater Montreal's 82 municipalities, we tried to be as representative as possible by selecting interviewees from each of the broader sub-regions of the metropolitan area.

4. Decontextualization and recontextualization of TOD in Montréal: A favorable context

20   When examining the reasons why the Greater Montreal area arrived at TOD, we have to reflect upon its rootedness in its territory and in history. In fact, the idea of an urban development focused on mass transit (which is essentially TOD) has a history in the Greater Montreal area. Montreal has been a national hub for rail transit until the 1960s and is still a regional hub for rail and bus transit. From the beginning of the 20th century on, the development of Greater Montreal revolved around mass transit, as shown by its then extensive tram and train network. Some of Montreal's existing neighborhood were rail-based development such as the "streetcar suburb" model (e.g., Mile-End or Villeray) and train suburbs like Town Mount-Royal. Even today, the urbanized area of the Greater Montreal is well served by a mass transit service when compared to other major North American cities. The TOD concept is therefore not so far removed from the urban development model of the early 20th century. While the latter can be described as "development-oriented transit" rather than "transit-oriented development" it did seek to align mass transit with residential development. The transit metropolis' model put forward in the PMAD and through the proposition for TOD developments is, to some extent, in continuity with the ways in which the city-region has developed throughout the 19th and part of the 20th century. For some urban actors, the TOD concept thus evokes the notion of a shared urban history.

21   Also, to understand why TOD ideas saw a favorable context to be translated in Montreal, we have to go back at the founding of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montreal (CMM) in 2001, and to the hard work that led to the adoption of the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan (PMAD). We emphasize the role of the land-use and planning

professionals who are employed by the CMM. Their important contributions as advisers for various projects was mentioned by the elected officials we encountered. A number of studies also highlighted the role of the expert in the flow of urban models, and the Montreal case is no different. For example, Robert Cervero, researcher at Berkeley University who has written extensively about TOD, was instrumental for the emergence of TOD in Montreal. He had met with elected officials and CMM professionals on many occasions, quite evidently with results. We think only of a symposium organized by Forum Urba 2015 in 2006, where Robert Cervero made a presentation, or the Entretiens Jacques-Cartier in 2010, where he was a keynote speaker on a panel chaired by Massimo Iezzoni, director general of the CMM. Finally, we also point to the delegation of Montreal's municipal government officials and staff that went to Washington, DC in 2012, where they were invited to observe and be inspired by recognized examples of TOD. This mission was organized by Vivre en Ville and the CMM. Initiatives of this type have been termed "policy tourism" in the words of Olivier Roy-Baillargeon (2015), where local elected officials and professionals are looking for "what works" and "best practices" from elsewhere (McCann 2013). In the case of Montreal, the region's professionals were important agents in the diffusion of TOD ideas and played their parts in the adhesion by the larger network that constitutes the CMM.

5. TOD as conceived by the CMM

22 With the adoption of the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plan (PMAD) in February 2012, and the negotiation process that led up to it, the local elected officials from Montreal's municipalities have had to take an interest in urban planning at the broader, metropolitan scale, in particular due to the anticipated repercussions on the local level of the goals set out in the PMAD. The context in which the PMAD took shape reflects not only the modernist tradition of producing an urban plan but also a process characterized by a dialog between actors, different stages in the development, the implementation and monitoring of goals, and discussions between stakeholders (Pinson, 2006). The development of the PMAD was essentially driven by a strong mobilization on the part of the stakeholders, including both civil society and municipal officials.

23 TOD, in the context we are examining, is a concept that is part of the main planning tool devised and used by the Greater Montreal area, the PMAD. In fact, the TOD concept is central to objectives 1.1 and 1.2 of Challenge 1 of the PMAD:

24 Challenge 1 – A Greater Montreal with sustainable living environments:

1. Optimize urban development inside and outside of TOD zones; and
2. Orient 40 % of household growth towards 155 TOD zones (by 2031)

25 In all, the Plan designates 155 TOD zones across Greater Montreal. These zones are located around train stations, subway stations and commuter parking lots as well as infrastructures that do not yet exist but that are projected (e.g., plans to add a reserved lane on a highway or to build a light rail system). The densification objectives of these zones are mainly residential, and they vary from 40 units / ha for a train station to 80 units / ha for a metro station. TOD was also identified by a CMM professional and TOD expert[4] as a way to meet the three challenges presented in the PMAD: residential densification; increased use of mass transit; and land protection. The TOD concept is a

public policy instrument allowing to align various interests on the metropolitan territory, as Dushina et al. (2015) demonstrated in a case study of the TOD zone of Sainte-Thérèse.

Table 1- Main findings: TOD in metropolitan planning documents

Preeminence of TOD	Quantitatively (word frequency) Qualitatively: objective 1 and 2 of PMAD's no. 1 Challenge
Mainly residential	Mixed-use is stated, but only residential density goals are identified
Lack of transit infrastructures	Development around transit hubs that are yet to come
Way to achieve sustainable development	Presented as a way to achieve the CMM's slogan for a competitive, attractive and sustainable Montreal
CMM's role	Coordination Financial incentive (small) Expertise
No hierarchy of projects	Only a small selection of exemplary and innovative projects amongst the 155 TODs, but no priorities explicitly stated

26   TOD thus figures prominently, if not as the centerpiece, in the new discourse of the CMM. Transit-oriented development can also be easily subsumed under sustainable development, an equally vague and polysemic concept. Thus, when packaged as part of the much promulgated sustainable development, TOD lends itself additionally to being promoted by the CMM.

27   The CMM, in order to meet its objectives, offers financial assistance for the realization of TOD projects that have been identified as innovative. For example, it has provided funding packages of $ 100,000 each to six projects in 2012 and to 11 projects in 2015. Such incentive package is fairly small[5], and one could note that only 17 projects are targeted in a pool of 155 planned TOD projects which is not substantial. To be considered innovative, a project has to be based on the principles of sustainable development and aim to consolidate the urban fabric, to reduce car dependency, and to promote mixed use, social diversity, friendly urban environments, and the development of public spaces, the protection of the natural environment and heritage, and sustainable buildings (CMM, 2015 p. 46). To advance the realization of these innovative projects, the CMM set up an instance whereby each TOD project brings together the various stakeholders involved, including professionals from the municipalities, representatives of government departments, representatives of the Agence métropolitaine de transport (now, the Autorité régional de transport métropolitain – ARTM), Quebec's regional county municipalities and developers. A TOD project is thus realized in a process of mediation between the different types of actors.

28   While the term "TOD" has always figured in the principal documents of the CMM, it became more prevalent over the years in the implementation and monitoring documents

of the PMAD, as seen in the table below.[6] In that sense, TOD appears to have become symbolic of the concrete realization of the goals and challenges set out in the PMAD.

Table 2- Frequency of the term "TOD" in official CMM documents

Document	Number	Rank no.
PMAD	132	33
Report of the Agora métropolitaine de 2013	27	34
Monitoring Report 2015	197	4

Figure - 3 Word clouds of "TOD" in official CMM documents

The TOD concept is consequently used by a large number of local and metropolitan actors, with elected officials being no exception. There is an obvious adhesion to TOD by the CMM and its actors – being mayors and professionals. In that sense, the term takes on a particular significance in the context of the Greater Montreal area, where it holds a key place in the metropolitan discourse generated by the CMM and where it is relayed in particular by local politicians, who use it for various purposes.

6. What's in a TOD? Mayors' points of view on local urban development

29   The discourse analysis of the elected officials from Greater Montreal shows the multiple meanings and understandings of TOD, thus pointing to the consensual as well as malleable nature of the concept. Embedded in a larger regulatory framework, TOD is restricted in the mode and scope of its local implementation, whereby it is often associated with constraints and difficulties. Nonetheless, TOD also constitutes a means and legitimation for local elected officials to take action and intervene in the field of planning.

Table 3- Thematic analysis of TOD

Theme	
A TOD project is inserted in planning legislation	Referred to as a « regulatory obligation » Multiple references to the Metropolitan plan and to the concordance of regional schemes and local master plan
Characteristics associated with TOD projects	Density Mixed-use development Proximity Active transportation Public spaces Sustainable development
Difficulties and constraints	Land-use and the protection of agricultural land Regulatory framework and « strict rules » Terrain constraint Ownership of the land NIMBY and citizen's opposition or reluctance Transport infrastructure Government relations and multilevel governance Distribution of powers between the actors related to planning
A polysemic concept and a malleable definition	Different temporalities of the TOD: described as a transformation that spans over many years before manifesting the traits of new type of occupancy, but with clear densification objective stated in the PMAD An emphasis on the different realities of the metropolitan area and a plea toward flexibility: e.g. "we can't apply the same realities everywhere."
Participatory planning and processes	Strategic planification and prospective approach (e.g. Châteauguay 2020) Public meetings and consultations
A mean to build legitimacy	A mayor to defend the city's best interests in front of another level of governments or in front of developers: e.g. "who develops the territory for the better"

30   According to the elected officials met, TOD is associated with excessive regulations, and referred to as a "regulatory obligation". It was also well recognized as being one of the objectives of the PMAD, one goal of which is to orient at least 40 % of new residential buildings into TOD zones. For the local elected officials, this 40 % target translates into the densification of parts of their territory, prompting them to set their own densification targets and to call for the regulatory obligation to plan for densification[7]. Thus, density and densification were often mentioned in the context of TOD. It should be noted, moreover, that the densification targets in question concern primarily the residential function.

31   However, some elected officials recognized that the planning and urban design features promoted by TOD go well beyond density. Among the features mentioned were the mixed-use development, that is to say, that a residential area can integrate a commercial service offer, institutions such as hospitals, and recreational offers. Some elected officials also discussed the issue of proximity to services and stores, between people's workplaces and homes, and to mass transit (train stations, park-and-ride lots and major arteries that lend themselves to being equipped with a mass transit infrastructure) as well as compactness. Other officials discussed active transportation, in other words, walking and cycling, and the concomitant need for a bike-friendly infrastructure and disincentives for using cars. There was also questions around the development of new public places, as a means to increase the quality of life and allow for an encounter between citizens. The environment and sustainable development, for their part, were mentioned primarily because TOD is seen as a mean to avoid urban sprawl, make maximum use of the territory, and reduce the impact on the environment. Thus, TOD was also associated with green building concepts such as green roofs, urban farming, white roofs, rainwater harvesting and energy saving. Elected officials from the Great Montreal area, not least in

an effort to champion themselves, also promote their TOD projects as pilot projects, eco-neighborhoods or places for innovation.

32   Transit-oriented development is a concept that is reflected in practice. It takes shape on the ground in concrete projects, whereby it necessarily encounters many constraints and difficulties in its implementation. One of the major challenges identified concerns zoning. In Quebec, since the late 1970s, the *Act Respecting the Preservation of Agricultural Land and Agricultural Activities* prohibits residential constructions in designated agricultural zones. Yet for some proposed TOD projects, the radius of the stipulated number of meters from the train station (or park-and-ride lot) includes protected lands. The zoning of such parcels of land can be changed, yet involves submitting a request to the *Commission pour la protection des terres agricoles* (CPTAQ), with no guarantee that the requested change will be accepted. Some elected officials directly affected by this issue have also proposed to offer compensation in exchange for the authorization to use the land as they see fit. Their argument stated that the parcel was fragmented and that agriculture is not the best use of the land given its proximity to a mass transit facility. For example, one elected official told us that "the future of Quebec agriculture" is not played in that land, thereby downplaying the importance of the plots in question[8].

33   Another difficulty concerns having to make do with the existing location and land of a project. For example, in one of the municipalities, the train station is located on the outskirts and wedged between highway ramps. In other cases, the projects have to navigate around existing structures or contend with physical constraints such as the presence of a street, river, wetlands, contaminated land, or railways. For some TOD projects, the identified territory is thus partially or completely built, requiring a densification of the existing infrastructure. This type of "urban retrofitting," as it might be called by urban planners, brings with it challenges not encountered when building on vacant land.

34   There is also the issue of ownership of these lands, with some belonging to either a developer, several developers, individuals or government agencies, which complicates the coordination of the project. Some TOD projects have also experienced reluctance or opposition on the part of citizens. In one case, the mayor decried the densification associated with TOD, claiming that this is not what the people in the suburbs have chosen, then opposing quality of life and density. Another mayor stated that the inhabitants of the suburbs do not subscribe to that mindset. The local administrations of the municipalities, for their part, have had to take up the concept ("TOD...I believe in the concept, a lot") and share, explain and popularize it with their populations. Moreover, in the Greater Montreal area, TOD projects are sometimes part and parcel of a larger strategic planning and public consultation scheme. The latter might include a grand vision to "rethink" the city, a prospective approach, or the mandating of a firm hold public meetings. The idea being that consultations create bonds of trust and allow to better explain and improve the acceptance of projects.

> "For the vast majority, it's well received...when it's well explained! When I said that some people had questions that were true. But their questions have been heard and addressed." (Interview 6)[9]

35   In some TOD projects, it proved necessary to ensure that other transportation infrastructures were in place as a precondition to starting the project. In fact, many of the 155 TOD areas and some of the selected innovative projects were in need of a more

adequate mass transit. Some of them are planned around transits that are already saturated, and others, around transport infrastructures that are yet to come. For example, a planned park-and-ride facility connecting people to the subway system via a shuttle bus depended in the enlargement of the highway through the implementation of a reserved lane. In the case of train-related TOD projects, it should be noted that, in Canada, railway companies are privately-run companies that are interested primarily in the transport of goods, and therefore generally reluctant to give up their tracks for commuter travel. At present, railway commuter travel is secured during the morning and evening rush hours only, and the available rides during these peak hours are usually already used up to capacity. An increase of the railway service offer, therefore, depends on tight negotiations with the private railway companies. Further challenges mentioned were difficult relationships with government agencies and departments, such as Montreal's former Agence métropolitaine de transport or Quebec's Ministry of Transport, whose actions are not always aligned with the city's declared vision. Given these constraints, some elected officials seriously question whether they can find the means to realize the vision worked out in the project.

36   Many elected officials also see in TOD a motor of development for the territory, a job creator, incentive for the introduction of a new service offer for citizens, and significant source of land revenue, which is particularly attractive for municipalities that have little land to develop. TOD translates into income and land-use potential for a municipality and, indeed, is subject to cost-benefit estimates, analyses and calculations that are then referred to by the elected officials.

37   It appears, moreover, that TOD, in the Greater Montreal area at least, is a malleable concept. In the case of municipalities with very little vacant land, the concerted effort toward even more residential densification is seen as a step in the evolution of a municipality that has reached maturity. Such a city must then focus on redevelopment, whereby TOD constitutes a transformation that spans over many years before manifesting the traits of a new type of occupancy (denser residential infrastructure and presence of shops and services). TOD is thus realized across different types of temporalities. The politicians likewise advocated for more flexibility with regard to the implementation of TOD, in the form of nuances and variants for example, given what they consider to be excessively strict regulations and standards. This applies especially to TOD zones that are located in the periphery or remote suburbs, since "we can't apply the same realities everywhere." Moreover, there is no consensus among the elected officials of the Greater Montreal area as to what a TOD is. A number of them claim to know what a "true TOD" is, implying that there are "false TODs" out there. One of the encountered politicians also mentioned that there is not (yet) a true TOD neighborhood on the CMM territory.

> "In my mind, there are plenty of TOD projects that aren't TOD projects. For a lot of people, it seems to mean developing anything on a field. But that has nothing to do with it!" (Interview 8)
> "I would say that there aren't really any true TODs in Greater Montreal. [...] We went to Washington and visited several TOD neighborhoods. Those were real TOD projects around mass transit, with trains called light rail systems [...] commuter trains, subway systems, etc." (Interview 6)

38   One elected official, who was initially among those who were the most opposed to realizing a TOD project on their territory, raised the possibility of soliciting firms to

locate their back offices in his TOD zones. In fact, the idea was initially proposed by the very firm that was commissioned to carry out a TOD plan on this official's municipality. Although an interesting idea, and one that is not necessarily in conflict with the TOD concept (according to Calthorpe or Cervero), it does not align with the PMAD, which focuses on residential densification only. All this goes to say that, in keeping with the malleable nature of the TOD concept, there are many ways in which a TOD project can be translated and adapted to the reality of the field and oriented to the interests of local elites.

7. TOD as a mean of legitimization and negotiation

39 To act locally on planning issues, municipal elected officials navigate within a framework of multi-level governance. An urban plan of a smaller municipality has to be in line with the scheme of its regional county (RCM), which must, in turn, align with the orientations stipulated in the PMAD. For this, the elected officials must collaborate with Quebec's Department of Municipal Affairs, Department of Environment and Department of Transport in most major planning projects. In this sense, we argue that TOD contributes to strengthening the powers of local elected officials regarding their capacity for action in planning. As Le Bart (2009) observes, local elected officials are in a paradoxical position they have to prove themselves along two very different registers: being a strong public figure and defending their territorial base, and on the other hand, being connected with multiple networks, managing different projects and showing flexibility. With regard to the latter role, Le Bart points to the academic discourse revolving around projects and the "projective city" (*cité par projet*)[10] and its implementation through narrative communication tools. The issue is thus no longer one of administering the municipality and providing services, but of positioning the territory in a competitive market and to work to make it attractive (particularly through territorial marketing and place branding). Thus, while the idea of the projective city is present in the rhetoric of local politicians, the ideal of the elected official who is strongly rooted in the community persists on the part of the population (Le Bart, 2009). To reconcile these often times contradictory demands, the officials increasingly avail themselves of notions or strategies such as participatory democracy or territorial marketing.

40 In the case before us, TOD also allows playing on these different registers. First, the register of the onsite politician, representative of his or her population is used to face constraints coming from all the other, higher, levels of government (metropolitan, provincial, federal). The argument put forward is that the local level is theirs (the mayors') and that they will be subject to criticism at City Council and not the director general of the CMM. The same register is also mobilized when dealing with developers, with the goal of overseeing the development of the municipality. The mayor thereby has the role of defending the interests of his or her citizens, and is described as a person "who develops the territory for the better," who "develops the city by and for the people." In that context, TOD is a tool for retaining some control over the development occurring within the municipality, since, with the PMAD in hand and TOD in mind, local politicians are in a better position to negotiate with developers about their proposed projects. For example, an elected official will have more leverage to ask a developer to include a public space or park in exchange for what he or she considers to be a concession. This allows to remove some of the pressure which local politicians are subjected to from the developers.

Being able to say "I'm in a TOD" allows requesting that the project is part of a more comprehensive planning process (a particular urban plan, a comprehensive plan, or other). This change in dynamic with the developers has not gone unnoticed by the elected officials, who increasingly want to offer a vision rather than simply accepting a turnkey project presented by real estate developers. Conversely, TOD is also used by developers to propose projects that are denser, and therefore more profitable, and to obtain exemptions, such as regarding building height or the prohibition to build in wooded areas. Finally, the developers, too, try to exploit the TOD concept and the objectives of the PMAD for their own interests, at least to a certain extent and from the perspective of the elected officials. In this case, the elected officials present themselves as defenders of a quality of life and the interests of citizens vis-à-vis the developers.

8. Discussion

41   In this article, we examined how transit-oriented-development, a concept that first emerged from the United-States and saw an international diffusion, was applied and translated at the local and metropolitan level in Montreal, and why it was embraced by a majority of the local elected officials. In addition to having a historical resonance, TOD, as it was appropriated in Montreal, served to rally local representatives around a metropolitan project. In this way, the actors of the Greater Montreal area came to adopt the TOD concept, which is part of a broader topological spatial imagination (Robinson, 2015), as a continuation of the vision of Montreal as a city of mass transit, and in a political context where the metropolitan actors are called on to create a vision. The idea of TOD contributes to the realization of the CMM's vision of an attractive, competitive and sustainable metropolitan area, and thus to rally local representatives in support of this metropolitan project. Nevertheless, TOD does not question urban development and even serves to support it, encouraging (some) developers and the political elite at once.

42   The elected officials from Greater Montreal were well aware that TOD is part of the broader regulatory framework of the PMAD, which, carrying the signatures of all municipal representatives, has clout as regards to channeling local action. TOD was derived from a normative and standardized concept developed by New Urbanism (Devisme, 2007). It promotes a set of desirable characteristics for the built environment and land planning in TOD zones, among them density, mixed use, mass transit, active transportation, sustainable development and public spaces. However, when it comes to local projects, most of which are still in the planning stage, the targeted characteristics tend to differ. Thus, they propagate an ideal urban form, yet without an instructions manual. The TOD concept, being malleable, is being redefined by some elected officials to suit their own goals, be it getting a train station, a park-and-ride lot or more frequent service for their constituency. According to them, we need a TOD concept that is adapted to the reality of the suburbs, where, so they claim, citizens do not want density.

43   In the literature on the implementation of TOD projects, we have seen that there is a leadership gap among local elected officials, including in the United States (Belzer and Autler, 2002) and Australia (Curtis, 2012). This is, however, not the case in the Greater Montreal area, where the TOD concept figures prominently in the area's planning and development plan. Our field research has shown that local politicians have appropriated the TOD concept, seeing in it, in particular, a development opportunity for their municipalities. That said, there is overall consensus around TOD. Yet does consensus

alone suffice to meet the challenges of an institutional nature as well as those to be expected when adopting an idea that emerged elsewhere?

44 In the case of our field of investigation, we can answer these questions with a "no," namely for five main reasons. One, most TOD projects are still in the planning stage – although it would be fair to mention that this is no surprise after only five years since the adoption of the metropolitan plan. Two, TOD projects do not guarantee an increase in mass transit services in a network that is already saturated, according to the actors met. Three, many TOD projects identified in the PMAD are also located around projected transportation infrastructures, which brings us to the chicken-or-the-egg debate: Should we densify an area in order to get mass transit service there, or should we equip an area with a service and then densify around it? Four, while mayors have some power in establishing a TOD zone, the goal of increasing the mass transit service or obtaining infrastructure can only be achieved through negotiations with Montreal's ARTM or the provincial government. And finally, the proliferation of definitions of the TOD concept and the propensity to creating nuances and local variants suggests some dilution of the concept, which is indeed utilized and exploited when opportune.

45 In Montreal, a recontextualization of this exogenous concept took place especially because politicians saw it as an opportunity to increase their influence on local and metropolitan action in planning in a context of a changing metropolitan governance. Thus, TOD has been translated in local and metropolitan political debate and is used both as an argument and a legitimizing tool by local officials in the Greater Montreal area, particularly with regard to their involvement in planning. It is defined by the elected officials as a development tool for their municipality, allowing for the entry of money through property taxes, which is attractive in a context where municipalities are facing hard times. TOD is also a way for municipalities to stand out and position themselves at the regional level (or even global level). Local elected officials thus avail themselves of the register of a project (Pinson, 2006) to legitimize and strengthen local public action in land-use development vis-à-vis developers and citizens on the one hand and vis-à-vis the metropolitan instance on the other. In pursuing their TOD projects, elected officials seek from the metropolitan instance not only financial support but also "moral" support and backing, namely through negotiations with the ministries and other institutions that have an influence on city planning (Ministry of Transport, Ministry of the Environment, Commission de protection des terres agricoles, Agence métropolitaine de transport, etc.). In each of the projects under consideration, the constraints were discussed with the various stakeholders and the TOD concept was mobilized to negotiate advantages for the project, such as obtaining a zoning change in a TOD zone, acquiring a transportation infrastructure, or getting a more frequent train service. Negotiations around TOD projects are embedded in local/global tensions deriving from international competition, as well as local/metropolitan tensions of regional competition between cities; where places that compete, yet collaborate with each other through different networks.

46 The role of the mayor is no longer defined only by the management of the municipality: they must innovate and rally the entire territory around a project that is supposed to concern everyone (Le Bart, 2009). TOD projects allow elected officials to bring together local and metropolitan interests and to increase their local empowerment. TOD is well established as a metropolitan discourse emerging from both myth (Lieto, 2015) and dogma (Roy-Baillargeon 2015). Moreover, malleable and abstract, it is readily seized by local elites who then reframe it and adapt it to suit their own agendas. The use of the

term itself represents a "dialectics between depoliticized speech and strategic polyvalence" (Lieto, 2015, p. 125) Local elected officials have every incentive to be in favor of TOD. It is a way to get funding from the CMM and, given a certain degree of (negotiated) flexibility in the implementation of a project, it can serve to build recognition at the metropolitan level and gain legitimacy in the exercise of their local power in planning. The TOD concept generally undergoes a depoliticization (Lieto 2015; McCann and Ward 2015) when applied locally, where politicians tend to refer to the concept by associated regulations and norms when called upon by developers or antagonistic citizens. Yet, TOD also undergoes a repoliticization (Healey, 2013) when elected officials try to gain visibility and power and to mobilize resources for their projects at the metropolitan and national levels.

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NOTES

1. We refer to Van Neste (2011) in our definition of metropolitan actors. They are actors that act or intervene on a metropolitan issue (in this case, metropolitan planning objectives) either because they envision their mission in relation to the metropolitan space (such as the CMM) or because that space is deemed relevant to pursue local goals and objectives (for instance local-elected officials, or environmental groups).

2. Or, how Montreal arrived at TOD, to paraphrase Jennifer Robinson (2015) in her article "Arriving at' urban policies." The article examines the flow of ideas, including the local construction of those ideas and their rootedness in the territory and in the memory. She evokes the topological and topographic aspect of this construction.

3. MRC, municipalité régional de comté –are supralocal councils of mayors detaining some competences related to planning and development

4. Verbal communication at URBA Forum on January 28, 2016

5. A total of 1,7M$ budgeted from 2011 to 2015 is not much considering the CMM's budget. For example, the CMM's budget forecast of 2017 attributed 105,45M$ to financial interventions for development activities (including land protection and enhancement) (CMM 2016). If TOD is very present in the CMM's documentation, such importance is not translated in its budget – perhaps reflecting a somewhat half-hearted commitment to the TOD policy?

6. We measured word frequencies in official CMM documents, excluding pronouns, adverbs and articles. We noted that the term "transit-oriented development" occurred 132 times in the PMAD (ranking 33rd among the most used words), 27 times in the Agora 2013 report (34th position) and 197 times in the 2015 Monitoring Report, where it was the fourth most used word. Of course, these documents did not have the same objective, with the Agora focusing specifically on issues of citizen participation, and the monitoring report being a more technical document. Still, the fact that TOD arrives in 4th place, after "Montreal," "PMAD" and "great" is indicative of the importance that TOD has taken in the implementation of the PMAD.

7. Let it be noted that actual process of urbanization tend toward densification : housing starts in the Montréal census metropolitan area are predominantly semi-detached, townhouses or apartments, and some TOD areas were close to or had already reached the density targets of the PMAD when it was adopted - for example, Namur or Assomption metro station in Montréal (CMM 2012).

8. Development on farmland was a major point of friction between local-elected officials and CMM's professionals. One « exemplary TOD » lost its title over such disagreement. As the mayor refused to let go the idea of developing a parcel of protected land, both parties agreed in the withdrawal of the financial incentive for this TOD development.

9. Translated from French for the purpose of this article.

10. The idea of the projective city has been elaborated by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) in The New Spirit of Capitalism, where the project is understood as a compromise formation between antagonistic exigencies, as « mini-spaces of calculation, wherein orders can be generated and justified » (p. 166). Pinson (2009) situated the idea of projective city in the transformations of urban governance, where the project is a way for cities to respond to a context of urban competition, to the pluralization of actors, to make way for anticipation into planning practices. The project is, in his sense, a way to govern in a context of complexity and uncertainty.

ABSTRACTS

The concept of transit-oriented development (TOD) has now become a fixture in planning documents of metropolitan areas around the world. Looking at the Greater Montreal area, this article discuss the recontextualisation of the (abstract) idea of TOD and the specific ways in which it has been defined, implemented and used by local and metropolitan actors. Set up into a centerpiece of the dominant discourse in metropolitan planning, the TOD also serves as a mean of negotiation and legitimization for local elected officials in a context of multi-layered governance.

Le concept d'aménagement axé sur le transport en commun (AATC ou TOD) est maintenant une figure majeure de la planification métropolitaine à travers le monde. En posant un regard sur la région métropolitaine de Montréal, cet article met en lumière la re-contextualisation de la notion (abstraite) de TOD, ainsi que les façons précises dont la notion a été définie, mise en œuvre et utilisée par les acteurs locaux et métropolitains. Le TOD, érigé en discours hégémonique par l'organisme de gouvernance métropolitaine, sert aussi d'outil de légitimation et de négociation pour les élus locaux, dans un contexte de gouvernance multi-niveau.

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