

CONTEXT AND CLARITY

ON CP'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CITY OF MONTREAL OVER AT-GRADE CROSSINGS

Much has been written and reported in the Montreal media on the issue of constructing new railway crossings for pedestrians and cyclists in a number of neighbourhoods, specifically the installation of new at-grade – or track-level – crossings.

Unfortunately, many of these media reports have been one-sided, occasionally misleading and often inflammatory. I would like to provide the details and context necessary for residents, businesses and all stakeholders to fully understand the issue.

Since Montreal first expressed a desire for new crossings some years ago, CP has repeatedly indicated that we are fully committed to working collaboratively with the city to permit the construction of new grade-separated crossings – pedestrian overpasses in this instance – that would not compromise public safety or hinder the commerce of local merchants or the broader Canadian economy. We have even offered to contribute financially to the construction of certain new grade-separated crossings that would be fully accessible, accommodating the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

The city has refused to consider this safe alternative, however, and instead continues to demand unsafe at-grade crossings.

Following unsuccessful mediation between CP and Montreal, CP committed in 2015 to obtain an independent third-party risk assessment. The assessment – shared with the city in 2016 – concluded that the proposed crossings would increase trespassing activity on the tracks, leading to a high risk of a pedestrian or cyclist collision with a train.

Preventable trespassing incidents are a real and significant safety risk, and they result in tragic consequences far too often. According to data published annually by the Transportation Safety Board, there were 69 trespassing incidents on railway property in Canada in 2016, 46 of which resulted in a fatality. Regrettably, there were 19 more incidents in 2016 than the year before.

CP is resolutely committed to operating the safest railroad in North America. Safety is always our number one priority and is at the heart of everything we do. Given the significant risk to public safety, as well as the negative implications for rail operations in the region, CP cannot support the construction of new at-grade crossings in Montreal.

Contrary to many reports, CP remains committed to working collaboratively with the city and is willing to contribute to the construction of new grade-separated crossings. We recognize that the population is growing and we want to support the growth of local communities and businesses, but, to this point, our offer has not generated any interest.

What CP requires is a partner willing to consider this safer alternative.



Keith Creel
President and CEO
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