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The Gazette

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Mount Royal delay a given: union

Says revamp of Camillien-Houde
was already 'heading for a wall'

LINDA GYULAI

The Projet Montréal administration's \$89-million plan to remove cars and redevelop Camillien-Houde Way was doomed even before party leader Luc Rabouin announced on Monday that he will modify and postpone the project if he's elected mayor, says the union representing Montreal's municipal engineers.

"I'm not surprised," Gisella Gesuale, president of the Association des scientifiques et ingénieurs de Montréal, said in response to Rabouin's declaration, adding that the project was "heading for a wall because it wasn't well planned."

A public transit shuttle that Rabouin now wants added to the project "is a major change," she said. "In my opinion, they're back to square one."

On top of that, the city is in the midst of cost-cutting, Gesuale said. The city announced in July that it's seeking to eliminate about 200 municipal positions to save \$50 million a year.

Gesuale asks whether Montreal has \$89 million to fulfil a political desire to ban cars on Mount Royal when there are pressing infrastructure projects.

For example, the price tag to double the capacity of the Langelier collector in St-Léonard borough, a need that was identified in 2022 due to increased risk of back flow and flooding for 20 per cent of the

borough during torrential rainfalls, is pegged at \$151 million but only scheduled to begin in 2029.

Rabouin, who was chosen by Projet Montréal members in March to replace Valérie Plante as the party's leader and mayoral candidate in this fall's municipal election, said in his announcement this week that he wants to focus on other priorities and said the Camillien-Houde project "cannot move forward until we have confirmation that it is possible to integrate public transit links to reach the summit." SEE PLAN ON **A3**



ALLEN McINNIS

BYE MOM, I LEARN NOW

Arnaud briefly breaks from the pack to wave to his mother as he waits for his class to be called to enter École primaire Maisonneuve for the first day of school yesterday.

Former digital minister tells inquiry he didn't know SAAQclic's cost

ANDY RIGA

Two years into his mandate as digital transformation minister, Éric Caire didn't know the cost of one of Quebec's biggest information-technology projects and, despite being aware of cost overruns, never asked how large they were, a public inquiry heard Wednesday. Caire, who resigned in February after a scathing auditor general's report into SAAQclic, was shown a September 2021 email in which he said the project "had long been experiencing cost and

schedule overruns." Melanie Tremblay, a lawyer for the inquiry into the SAAQclic fiasco, asked Caire if he knew the full extent of the extra costs. Caire said he knew the project was a year behind schedule, but had only "unquantified" information about budget excesses. "Did you follow up on that?" Tremblay asked. "That was not my team's responsibility," Caire answered. Tremblay asked the former minister if he tasked anyone with looking into the escalating costs. Caire

responded that he had not, nor did he inform then-transport minister François Bonnardel. SAAQclic aimed to digitally modernize the province's automobile insurance board. It was originally budgeted at \$638 million. The final bill is expected to be \$1.1 billion — \$462 million more than expected, the auditor general found. In response to a followup question, Caire acknowledged that he did not know the cost of SAAQclic in September 2021. SEE PRICE TAG ON **A2**

O CANADA

HISTORY

How the iconic
Jetliner almost
dominated
the skies **A8**

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