COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS: 2006

Town of Mount Royal, Quebec

The Town of Mount Royal is a historically rich town that was created by the Canadian Northern Railway in order to finance the Mount Royal Tunnel Project. This Model City is one of the few completed projects in the wave of model cities that were planned at the turn of the 20th century.

Today, TMR remains an integral part of the Montreal region and the CN system where commuter trains continue to operate on the original Canadian Northern route. In fact, commuter trains carry more than 60 million riders a year in Canada, reducing road congestion, fuel consumption and emissions.

For decades, Montreal area commuters rode an electrified railway route that was part of a major pre-World War 1 tunnel and terminal project of the old Canadian Northern. Conceived by Henry K. Wicksteed, the railway's Chief Engineer of surveys, the "Mount Royal Tunnel Line" connected the Canadian Northern transcontinental route located north of the City, with downtown Montreal by way of a three mile tunnel under Mount Royal, from which the town of Mount Royal takes its name.

Opened in 1918, the electrified line operated to Cartierville, and was extended west to Deux - Montagnes in 1925. In 1946, it was further extended north to Montreal-Nord.

Using General Electric and English Electric box and "steeple" cab locomotives, these aged machines continued to pull commuter trains through the City of Mount Royal along the Tunnel Line until well into the 1990's.

Today the route has been modernized, and although the old box cabs have now been retired, commuter rail service continues to serve as an integral link in metropolitan Montreal's urban transit network.

A station on the revitalized commuter line near the Town of Mount Royal, near the former "Portal Heights location, has been named "Canora" in honour of the Canadian Northern Railway's role in contstructing the Mount Royal Tunnel Line.

Those interested in the Town of Mount Royal's railway heritage can visit some of the historic railway equipment, including a box cab electric locomotive at ExpoRail, a world class railway museum located at Delson, Quebec. The Canadian Railway Hall of Fame was pleased in 2007 to honour the Town of Mount Royal, and its continued positive interdependency with a historic part of Canada's railway network.