REM Light Rail - Phase 1

Montreal, Quebec

The REM is an automated driverless light rail system that serves more than four million Canadian commuters in Montreal's urban area. Phase One opened in 2023 and when the second phase opens in late 2024, the total network will have 42 miles of rail line and 26 stations. The total cost is estimated to be $7.5 billion USD.

On July 31st, 2023, Phase One of the long-awaited REM Light Rail system opened for public use. This 10-mile, five-station line connects the island city center with suburbs on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River. The line uses elevated sections, bridges, and tunnels as well as on grade railbed. This section was completed first as it is the most urgently needed due to severe congestion on the bridges crossing the Saint Lawrence River in the Montreal area.

With the financial challenges of urban light rail projects, the designers focused on initial and ongoing costs to minimize the risk of repeating ➡

Low initial cost, renowned exceptionally long and low maintenance service life, factory-controlled reliable quality and tight product control and identification, extremely high abrasion resistance. What's not to like about the hot-dip galvanizing story for mass transit?

Galvanizer
Corbec Inc.

Architect
Bisson Fortin

Engineer
Zilco Inc.

General Contractor
Réseau Express Métropolitain / Kiewit-Eurova

Fabricators
Structures XL, Quirion Métal, Canam

Erector
Structures de Beauce

Owners
Réseau Express Métropolitain (CDPQ)

Most Distinguished

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Montreal, Quebec

the financial disaster that has befallen so many mass transit projects around the world. Fully automated driverless trains are a high-profile example of these cost reduction efforts. Less publicized, but perhaps far more important, was the effort to reduce construction costs, especially on-site labor. Montreal has the highest construction labor rates on earth, so every opportunity was examined.

Hot-dip galvanizing brought powerful benefits to the project, especially when considering the damp cold climate and the widespread use of de-icing chemicals. The long-proven low-cost performance of hot-dip galvanizing on corrosive Canadian roadway conditions was well known to engineers but less well known were the precision product control capabilities of modern galvanizing plants. Consistently high-quality finishes and bar-code-controlled bundle identification streamlines on-site erection and the amazing impact durability of zinc coated steel eliminated almost all costly onsite damage remediation. Additionally, the project's quick turnaround further contributed to lowering costs and speedy completion schedules.

Well over a million riders have already enjoyed zipping past freeway gridlock on their daily commutes. Hot-dip galvanizing has contributed to speeding up the availability of this essential service, lowered its construction cost and will also extend the service life and lower the operating costs of the project. The REM Light Rail is a great and high-profile example of the amazing value equation of today's hot-dip corrosion stopper! ■

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