

As I was taking the 41 bus along the 41st Avenue, to the Oak and 41st intersection, the prosperity and strength along the 41st astonished me. Different from the commercial circle, which all people are trying to squeeze in, to shop, eat and hang around, the linear public space here fulfills people's basic needs with rapid transportation, a reasonable walking distance along the street as well as possibilities for future growth. The street thronged with pedestrians.

The intersection of 41st and Oak Street is one of the numerous points on the old streetcar grid. The 60-year-old picture is quite blurry so I can hardly identify the type of buildings along the road. I think most of the buildings in the picture along the road were bungalows rather than stores. Although the streetcar line is no longer in existence, street-fronting buildings such as "Night and Day Grocery" and "Bank of Montreal", replaced the original tax-lots, are flourishing due to the streetcar arterials. Because of the incremental population density of this area, the demand for consumption increased; at the same time, stores along the smooth-flowing interconnected road are able to serve larger areas. The increase in both supply and demand molded the Oak Street into the thriving one now.

Because streetcars were replaced by buses ultimately, residents who lived there due to the convenience of streetcars had no choice but to try to be adapted to the new transit, buses, or to buy automobiles. From my experience of taking the 41 bus, I was pleased by the reliability of the bus, which comes every 8 minutes and bus stops are easy to locate. But a staggered old lady and an exhausted young mother with her baby stroller reminded me that low-floor streetcars are mountable at grade and are free of any lateral or orbital rocking motion, which provides much more convenience for them.

I also noted Oak Street's change in width. The original two-lane road was renovated to a six-lane one. Not only the road becomes wider, an increasing number of automobiles also shuttled back and forth in a rush. I could only identify two cars in the old photo while there appeared 13 cars on my new photo. The most distinct object in my picture is the Chevron gas station. It demonstrates that despite public transit is of great importance in our transportation choices, we are still living in an auto-oriented city. The diesel buses and gasoline automobiles produce dramatic amount of GHG emissions,

pouring much more harm into the atmosphere than streetcars had ever done.

When we talk about private cars, we are likely to imagine witted businessman and businesswoman in suits; but as for buses and sky trains, we are more likely to imagine students, the old and the poor who are sensible to prices and cannot afford the expenses of cars. This kind of stereotype provides an indispensable reason for many people to buy affordable cars. Under such condition, the width of the street expands as the needs of private cars rises.

Above all, the original streetcar arterial provides today's booming Oak Street with healthy pedestrian and transit friendly lifestyle, a reasonable arrange of stores and convenient transportation. I hope the scenario today is going to be a step to a sustainable low-carbon future.