

L'occupation des rues comme levier du développement durable



**Mémoire sur le projet de la Politique de stationnement de Montréal
Présenté à la Commission sur le transport et les travaux publics de la
Ville de Montréal**

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Mission

RuePublique oeuvre à améliorer la convivialité des quartiers de Montréal, en ré-imaginant les rues et en faisant la promotion d'un usage amélioré des espaces publics.

CRÉDITS :

PHOTOS, RECHERCHE ET
RÉDACTION

Zvi Leve

À propos de RuePublique

Les rues comme « espace public » sont au cœur de notre projet. Nous portons une attention toute particulière à la formation de communautés vibrantes et au développement du transport actif, public et collectif.

RuePublique entamera des discussions dans le but de dialoguer sur les espaces publics et l'effet que ceux-ci ont sur nos habitudes. Nous organiserons et planterons des projets de recherche, des assemblées, des consultations et des ateliers qui donneront aux résidents les outils nécessaires pour s'exprimer et avoir accès aux idées nouvelles.

À travers ses différentes activités, RuePublique incitera les citoyens à passer de la parole aux actes. Nous croyons atteindre cet objectif en étant une organisation ouverte à la participation et en mettant sur pied des ateliers et des événements afin d'initier les résidents à de nouvelles habitudes de vie et de nouvelles façons de faire.

Nous serons aussi à la recherche d'alternatives sur le plan de l'urbanisme, qui transformeraient le quartier et le rendrait plus sécuritaire, tout en permettant à l'espace public de devenir un lieu d'échange écologiquement viable. Naturellement, nous souhaitons également maximiser l'accès aux modes de transport actifs et en commun et encourager leur usage.

Nous souhaitons encourager l'adoption de meilleures habitudes, afin de confronter au quotidien les défis écologiques auxquels nous sommes confrontés à l'échelle mondiale. Dans le but d'améliorer la qualité de vie ici et maintenant, nous couvrirons divers sujets allant de la sécurité à la santé en passant par l'empreinte carbonique et la réduction de notre dépendance aux carburants fossiles. Des changements d'une telle envergure doivent prendre place peu à peu et doivent surtout se faire dans un climat qui favorise le dialogue.

Les actions de RuePublique visent à :

- REPENSER COLLECTIVEMENT LES ESPACES PUBLICS
- ENCOURAGER LES CITOYENS À S'IMPLIQUER
- TROUVER DES ALTERNATIVES URBANISTIQUES
- IMAGINER UN MODE DE VIE URBAINE ÉCO-RESPONSABLE

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Résumé

Pour RuePublique, les rues sont l'espace public le plus important dans nos villes. Cet espace est précieux pour diverses fins qui sont souvent en conflit les unes avec les autres : stationnement ou circulation, véhicules ou humaines, activité économique ou communautaire, etc. L'aménagement de nos rues aura donc des impacts sur nos habitudes de déplacement, la santé publique, l'activité économique, l'environnement et autres.

En s'inspirant des orientations exprimées par la Ville de Montréal et la Communauté Métropolitaine de Montréal dans leurs documents de planification (le Schéma de développement de l'agglomération de Montréal, le Plan d'urbanisme, le Plan de transport, le Plan de développement durable de la collectivité montréalaise et autres), les priorités de développement de Montréal sont clairement d'améliorer le cadre de vie et de favoriser un développement durable. On veut créer des milieux de vie de qualité, diversifiés et complets, des réseaux de transport structurants, efficaces et bien intégrés au tissu urbain, des secteurs d'emplois dynamiques, accessibles et diversifiés, un paysage urbain et une architecture de qualité....

Clairement la politique de stationnement est un enjeu urbain beaucoup plus large que la simple disponibilité d'espaces de stationnement. À notre avis, la vision de la Politique de stationnement devait énoncer des orientations ambitieuses et structurantes. La rue est la composante structurante de nos milieux de vie et nos réseaux de transports. L'occupation de cet espace par des véhicules immobiles empêche d'autres formes de développement.

Orientation 1 – Simplification et réduction de l'empreinte de stationnement sur le domaine public

- Établir des cibles pour la réduction de stationnement sur rue
- Identifier des zones et corridors à traitements prioritaires

Orientation 2 - Favoriser un partage plus équilibré et équitable de la voirie

- Conception de «rues complètes» adapté à leur environnement
- Établir des voies réservées en site propre pour le transport collectif et actif sur les grands axes

Orientation 3 – Stationnement comme levier de développement durable

- Révision de la réglementation pour encourager le «stationnement communautaire»
- Création d'une Société paramunicipale pour appliquer la politique de stationnement

Introduction

Montréal is one of the few cities in North America whose built environment already has an excellent human-scale. The central parts of the city have a well-balanced mix of commercial and institutional activities with extensive plex-type development which can accommodate a variety of household types in walkable urban neighbourhoods while providing sufficient density for effective public transit service. Despite these inherent advantages, the region of Montréal is following the historical development trends of other North American cities: decentralized development is increasing at a faster pace than infill development in central areas, and the level of vehicle ownership in the region is increasing faster than the population. High demand for accessible urban neighbourhoods is driving up property values and squeezing out lower-income residents. Growing inequalities and conflicts over on-street parking are creating tensions in some central areas.

While our transportation infrastructure is falling into a decrepit state, congestion pressures are mounting across the region. Mobility patterns (distance travelled) and car use vary greatly between different locations¹. Privately owned cars are typically immobile over 90% of the time, yet we have allocated enormous amounts of scarce public space – most of it available free of direct charge - to facilitate car usage and convenient parking². Recent trends toward shared transportation options and driverless vehicles will fundamentally change our parking needs. The future of mobility and parking needs is far from clear, but the allocation of public space will have an important impact on the choices that we make as a society. Despite the rapid development of new technologies, it is clear that environmental and economic pressures are also increasing. We can expect profound changes in many different areas in the coming years. Given the uncertain development climate which we are facing, **RuePublique strongly recommends the adoption of flexible policies which are resilient and easily adaptable in the face of change.**

There are also equity issues associated with our development priorities. We have created cities which require high degrees of mobility, yet public transport is not necessarily a viable option for all people or for all trips. Frequently it is lower income or older populations which are poorly served by public transportation options. The revenues to the city from parking fees are very important, but the cost to the city of providing and maintaining on-street parking is also significant and largely unknown, as is the cost of enforcing the parking policy. Furthermore, the ubiquitous presence of parking leads drivers to expect that car trips will always be convenient and door-to-door; we do not even notice the enormous of public space which is dedicated to 'storing' our private vehicles. **The excessive provision of parking creates powerful incentives to use the car.**

¹ Newman, P., Kenworthy, J. (1999). Sustainability and Cities : Overcoming Automobile Dependence. Island Press, Washington, D.C

² Shoup, D. (2011). The High Cost of Free Parking, APA Planners Press, Chicago.

For RuePublique, we share the perspective that ***we need to fundamentally rethink our relationship with parking***: "Parking lots may be utilitarian and practical, unexceptional, and even unpleasant, but their magnitude and sheer frequency of occurrence merit greater attention. The task is first to rediscover their virtues and common good, and second to elevate their design beyond mediocrity. Even when dealing with the generic, there should be ambition and a desire for perfection³."

Cities exist to bring people together and to facilitate the exchange of ideas, goods, and services. Accessibility has always been an important element in urban development patterns so transportation investment priorities have had a direct impact on urban form⁴. The advent of motorized personal transportation has completely changed land use patterns during the last century, but the limits of this 'development model' are now in sight. Streets comprise more than 80% of public space in cities, but they often fail to provide their surrounding communities with a space where people can safely walk, bicycle, drive, take transit, and socialize.⁵

Given the size of vehicles and the amount of space necessary to accommodate their movement (and storage), an urban area will never be able to compete with a car-oriented location on the basis of ease of parking. Regional and global economic trends are reshaping the city and its role in the region. On the one hand while changes in travel patterns and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies are exerting additional pressures on development patterns. Furthermore, the competition for uses in urban locations is intense – any piece of space can be used for a variety of different purposes. We believe that the Politique de stationnement de Montréal must recognize these factors, and lay out ***a pathway to a more balanced and resilient transportation system in the future.***

In order to assure the adequate application of the Politique de stationnement, we believe that a paramunicipal parking authority would be the desirable administrative structure. This authority should have the mandate to not only manage on-street parking and negotiate partnerships with private parking authorities, but more importantly to negotiate the development of new "community parking structures" which will be necessary as on-street parking space is dedicated to other uses. The paramunicipal authority will also have the mandate to set the pricing schemes in "community parking structures".

³ Ben-Joseph, E. (2015). ReThinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking. MIT Press, Boston.

⁴ Newman & Kenworthy (1999, pp 52-59)

⁵ National Association of City Transportation Officials (2013). [Urban Street Design Guide](#).

Orientation 1 – Simplification et réduction de l’empreinte de stationnement sur le domaine public

Établir des cibles pour la réduction de stationnement sur rue

The current vision of the Politique de stationnement implicitly recognizes the city’s sustainable development goals^{6^{7⁸}} (improving quality of life, assuring economic vitality, reducing auto-dependence, and the impact of the car), but there is no explicit mention of removing parking space from the public domain. Instead, the politique proposes using pricing incentives and ‘intelligent’ technologies to achieve a balanced supply of parking. But what is a ‘balanced supply’ of parking? Clearly the simple existence of parking options is a strong incentive to drive! Furthermore, when on-street parking is available, it is frequently free or at a price which is inferior to off-street private options. It is known that in congested areas, a significant portion of the traffic may actually be drivers cruising the streets and looking for on-street parking. The politique de stationnement already includes a strategy based on ‘real-time’ information about off-street parking options. By maintaining on-street parking, drivers will not necessarily have sufficient incentive to use the off-street options. Removing the option of on-street parking in areas which have off-street parking alternatives will actually improve traffic flow!

RuePublique believes that it is necessary to reallocate street space in a more equitable fashion in order to achieve the city’s sustainable development goals. To this end, we recommend establishing criterion to evaluate alternative potential uses for all on-street parking spaces, and to set targets for reducing the amount of on-street parking which is managed by the city. In our opinion, the city should be seeking out ways to cede responsibility for car parking to the people who own the vehicles.

Identifier des zones et corridors pour traitements prioritaires

We should also note the importance of network effects – mobility requires connectivity, and parked vehicles or drivers looking for on-street parking can significantly disrupt the flow of movement. The ambitious goals of Montréal’s public transportation authorities will require the acquisition of dedicated rights-of-way in order to meet the additional network demand and this will necessitate the removal of on-street parking in certain corridors. When considering travel corridors, it is important to consider the total number of *persons* travelling in the corridor and the respective modes of transportation: one bus can accommodate between 80 to 150 people (depending on the type of bus and the degree of crowding) while six bicycles can fit in the same amount of street space as a single automobile.

⁶ Schéma d’aménagement et de développement de l’agglomération de Montréal (2014)

⁷ Plan de transport (2008)

⁸ Plan de développement durable de la collectivité montréalaise 2010-2015

In traffic corridors outside of the central areas, there is a fundamental conflict between high-speed traffic (at 50 km/h or more) and on-street parking. A large number of fatal traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists occur in these corridors⁹. **What are the safety implications of maintaining on-street parking in high-traffic corridors?** How can these corridors be improved to provide a safe and comfortable mobility experience for all people, not only those people who are travelling in vehicles?

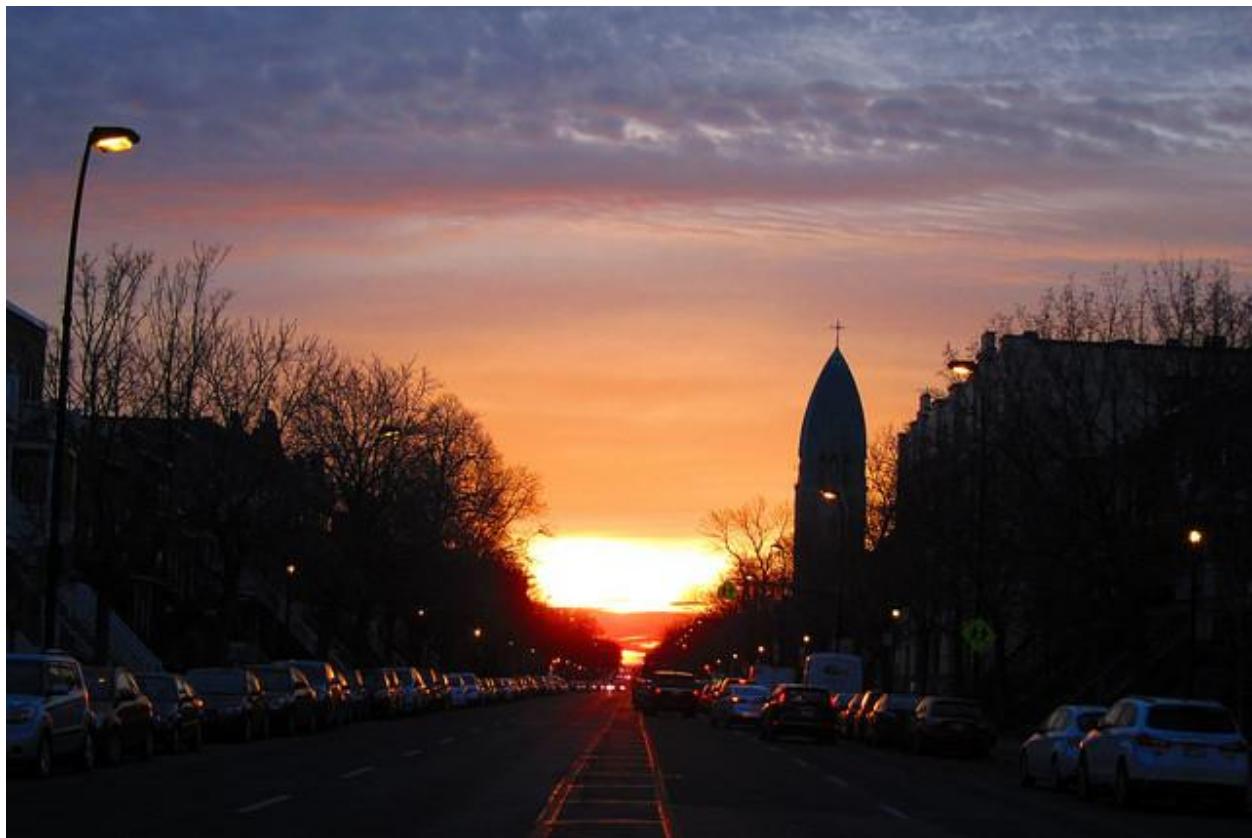


Image 1 Corridor scolaire Ave Christophe Colomb : heavy traffic volume and on-street parking are a dangerous combination

In our opinion, traffic corridors should prioritize the mobility of people over vehicles. If we want public transportation to be the preferred choice for trips, it is not sufficient that buses move at the same speed as traffic (and get stuck in congestion caused by cars) – **buses must have a clear and reliable traffic corridor which allows them to avoid congested road conditions at all times**. A similar logic applies to active transport such as walking and cycling. If we want to encourage people to favour active transport for their mobility needs, we need to create safe and comfortable networks which efficiently bring people to their desired destinations. We can no longer continue to treat pedestrians and cyclists as second or third class travellers. **We must create networks which facilitate and even prioritize mobility by active transport using filtered permeability¹⁰ to avoid conflicts with motor vehicles.**

⁹ Directeur de santé publique (2013). La sécurité des piétons à Montréal : améliorer les aménagements routiers

¹⁰ Transitzied blog. What is filtered permeability? <http://transitzied.com/concepts/what-is-filtered-permeability/>

Projets pilotes recommandés

RuePublique promotes 'light' interventions which can be used for demonstration purposes. Such pilot projects can be extremely important to evaluate the potential for the permanent removal of on-street parking. ***We believe that the proactive use, evaluation, and follow-up of pilot projects should be one of the strategies specified in the Politique de stationnement.***

Central Business District

For the purposes of evaluating the impact of removing on-street parking on circulation patterns, we recommend beginning in areas which are already well-served by off-street parking options. The Centre-ville is clearly the most relevant site for such a pilot project: Initially the pilot project area could be along Ste-Catherine and de Maisonneuve (including the side-streets between the two), bounded by St-Laurent and de la Montagne. Perhaps begin with a trial effort during a few weekends. We recommend analysing the off-street parking occupation rates at the off-street parking facilities and also performing a more detailed analysis of the traffic circulation patterns in the area (both before and after the intervention). Once initial analysis has been performed, the project zone could be expanded to include the area between Sherbrooke and Réné Levesque and perhaps between Berri and Atwater.



Image 2 On-street parking in central areas reduces space to improve the 'street-environment'

Commercial zones

The commercial section of St-Hubert between Beaubien and Jean Talon is one of the few commercial streets which already have ample off-street parking structure in proximity. Can removing on-street parking revitalize this area? Ideally the entire corridor beginning from metro Rosemont and extending North of Jean Talon should receive a coherent treatment.

It is easier to manage incentive pricing schemes in off-street parking facilities. To encourage short-term parking, one can use an incrementally increasing hourly parking rate, for example \$1 for the first hour, \$2 for the second (two hours=1+2=\$3), \$3 for the third (three hours=1+2+3=\$6), etc. Such facilities can also include separate sections for 'member rates' where people may purchase access at a monthly or annual rate.



Image 3 Mixed-use parking garage on Bélanger near St-Hubert

Institutional setting

The streets around the Université de Montréal's campus are filled with parked vehicles, but there are also off-street pay-parking options. Removing the parking spaces which border the campus could permit the creation of a much more pleasant multi-usage circulation space for pedestrians and cyclists. Continuing this treatment toward Boulevard Côte de Neiges could help to integrate the campus with the neighbouring residential and commercial areas while also promoting a smoother flow of buses and other vehicles along Edouard-Montpetit.



Image 4 Parking structure and busy street scene at Université de Montréal. Note the limited space for pedestrians and cyclists

Congested traffic corridors to prioritize collective and active transport

Once again, we recommend beginning trial projects in an area where off-street parking opportunities already exist. The area between Sherbrooke and Avenue de Pins is extremely congested and also contains a number of off-street parking options. We would recommend beginning the trial projects on St-Urbain and St-Laurent and evaluating the impact on the reliability of the 51 line. The trial area could be expanded to also include Avenue du Parc and the 80 line.

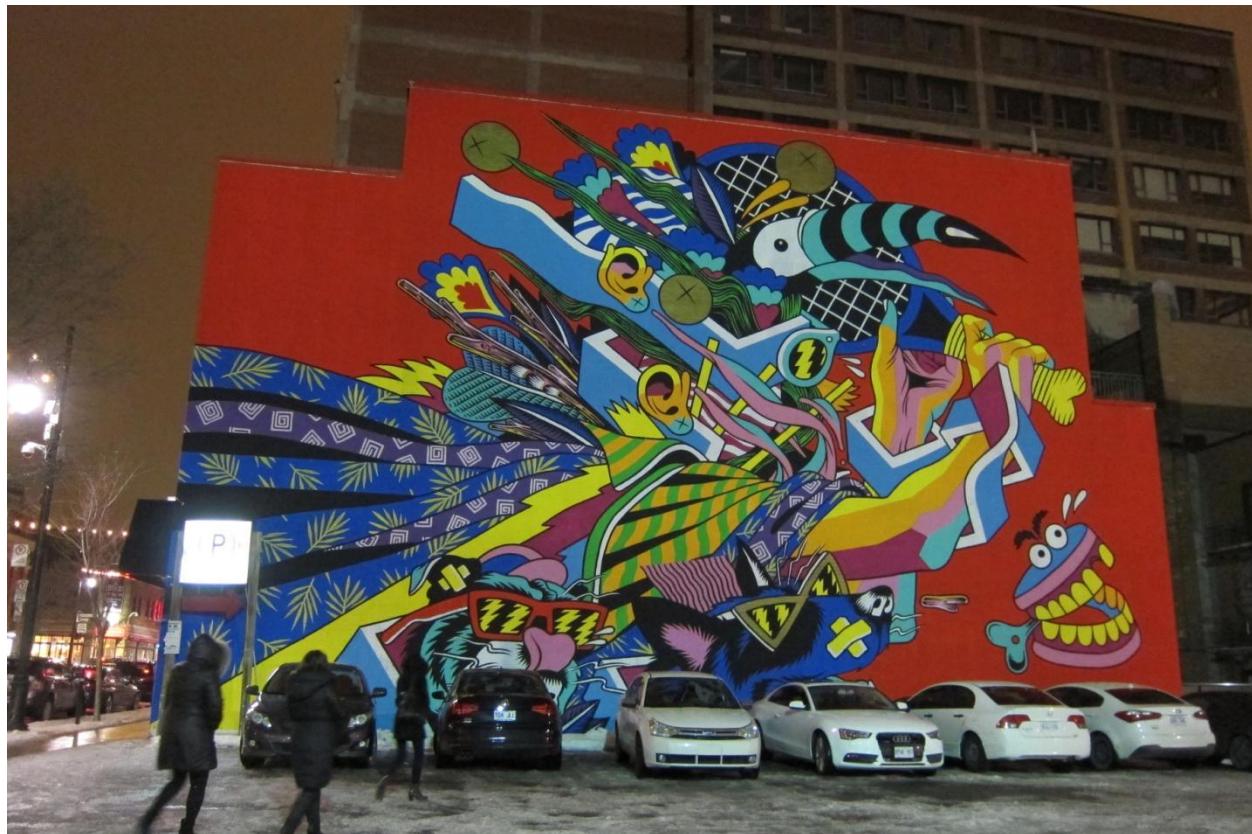


Image 5 Off-street parking lot on St-Laurent. On-street parking is full, off-street is almost empty.

Orientation 2 - Favoriser un partage plus équilibré et équitable de la voirie

For many years we have been shaping our cities to accommodate cars; it is now time that we start shaping our cities to accommodate people. This transition will certainly require the removal and/or repurposing of parking space from the public domain in order to reallocate that space to other more important uses.

Conception de «rues complètes» adaptées à leur environnement¹¹

Parking for bicycles and vehicles which have a 'shared usage' structure is no less important than parking for cars. For cyclists, bike parking remains a significant challenge in both commercial and residential areas, particularly during the winter months when the on-street bike parking supports are removed. When applying the 5 meter rule indicated in the CSR (which actually should be more than five meters in the direction facing traffic), we believe that this space on residential streets can effectively be used for on-street bike parking. Whenever curb extensions are planned for an intersection, bicycle supports should always be integrated with the project in addition to other greening elements such as trees.



Image 6 Supports for bicycles in the 5 metre zone – these should be protected with bollards and maintained year-round

¹¹ Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (2012). [Complete Streets by Design](#)

Streets and supporting infrastructure make up approximately one-third of our built environment. With the exception of certain limited access facilities, these streets are in fact public spaces which belong to all of us. For RuePublique, we believe that it is important to recognize that there are competing uses of this street space. Providing street access to private off-street parking spaces impinges upon the public domain for pedestrians and cyclists. This type of access for individual housing units should be discouraged.



Image 7 Entrances to private parking and parked vehicles hinder pedestrian and cyclist circulation

Projets pilotes :

- Stationnement sur-rue anglé¹²
- Utilisation du stationnement comme moyen d'apaisement de circulation
- Cases de stationnement réservées aux véhicules en libre-service

¹² Bourque P (2006). Stationnement incitatif sur rue. Présentation au congrès CITE.
<http://pabeco.com/rapports/Stationnement%20incitatif.pdf>

Établir des voies réservées en site propre pour le transport collectif et actif sur les grands axes



Image 8 Avenue du Parc – both buses and cyclists need a protected right-of-way in this high volume corridor. On-street parking is hindering such efforts.

Montréal has one of the most intensively used transit systems in North America¹³ and is second only to NYC in terms of metro usage in North America. Both the STM and the AMT have ambitious goals for future public transport ridership¹⁴. Yet our buses, metros and trains are frequently over-crowded, and bus service suffers from significant reliability problems due to traffic congestion and other obstacles on the roads. As long as buses are stuck in traffic congestion, public transport will struggle to attract and retain additional ridership. Most of the city's reserved bus lanes are only reserved for certain times of the day. This is a compromise solution which in our opinion is inadequate. ***Not having a completely dedicated right-of-way limits the ability to properly design and maintain the corridor. The shared use also detracts from preferential treatment for collective and active transport.***

¹³ Casello, J. M., Yeung, K. (2014). Global Transit Investments and Ridership Assessing Canadian Cities' Challenges and Opportunities, http://www.civil.uwaterloo.ca/wpti/documents/WPTI_Global_Rapid_Transit.pdf

¹⁴ Répondre aux défis de la mobilité durable mémoire de la stm dans le cadre de la consultation publique sur la politique québécoise de mobilité durable (2013)

Montréal remains the 'cycling capital' of North America¹⁵ and Bixi has greatly expanded the importance of cycling in the city's transportation mix, but this position is due to historic factors rather than investments in a quality cycling network. Other North American cities are rapidly gaining ground in this area, and Montréal's actions in creating a unified and continuous cycling network have been inconsistent. Much of the recent network expansions have been painted bike paths and efforts to create 'shared space' on residential streets, but the ever-growing number of cyclists riding on the city's major arterials demonstrates that the cycling network is clearly not responding to the demand. RuePublique believes that high-quality cycling infrastructure must be created in parallel to dedicated rights of way for buses. More and more cyclists are recognizing that the bicycle is an extremely practical mode of transportation for urban mobility needs. We can no longer treat cycling as a sport or recreational activity – it is a legitimate mode of transportation which must be planned for accordingly.



Image 9 St-Urbain: on-street parking limits space for reserved bus and cycling lanes

¹⁵ Vélo Québec. L'état du vélo au Québec en 2010. [Zoom sur Montréal](#)

Orientation 3 – Stationnement comme levier de développement durable

We need to develop new centers and rejuvenate existing ones at a human scale which favours active transportation. Concentrating parking in off-street locations will reduce the effort necessary to find parking while also reducing parking costs assumed by the city.

Révision de la réglementation pour encourager le «stationnement communautaire»

In order to achieve our goals of significantly reducing on-street parking, it will be necessary to stimulate the development of flexible off-street parking structures and financing arrangements. Flexible parking structures can be well integrated into the surrounding environment and can even be designed to facilitate repurposing when the demand for privately owned motor vehicles eventually diminishes. Such structures can be designed to accommodate a variety of different uses, from permanent commercial spaces to enclosed public markets on weekends. In less central locations, such structures can even become a unifying element for communities – all residents go to the same place to get their cars!

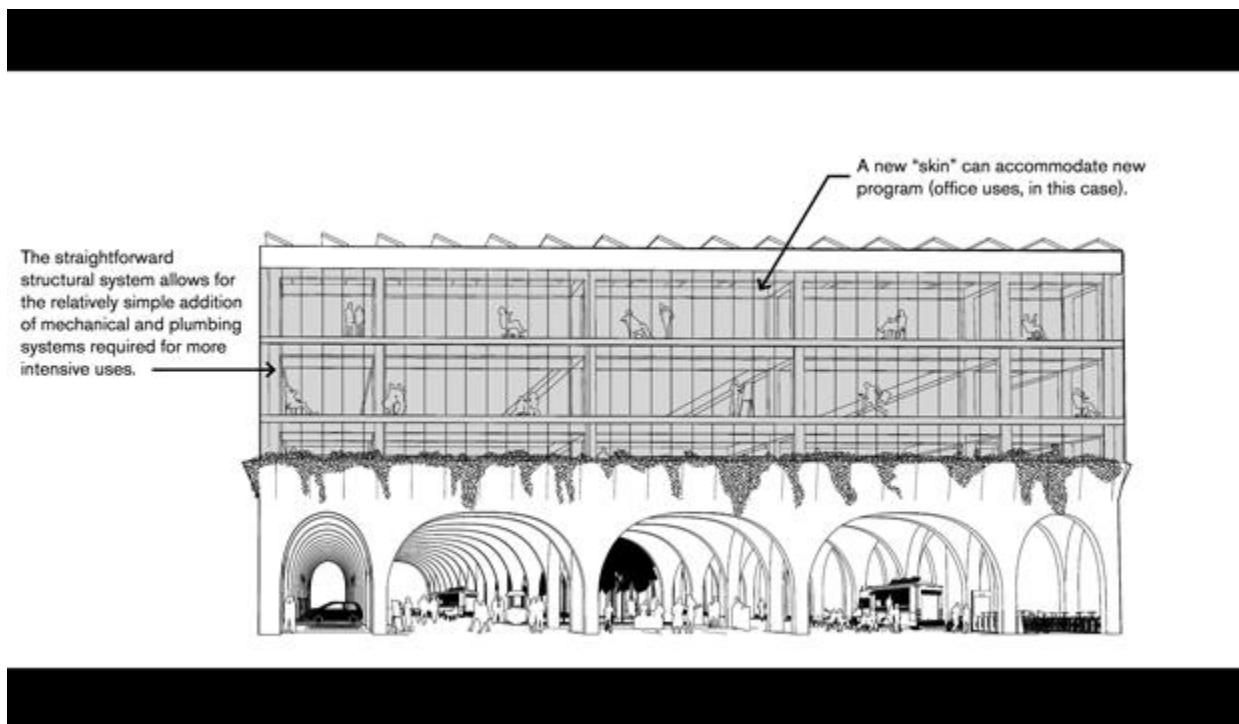


Figure 1 Parking structures need to be designed to accommodate transitions, from parking alone to other uses as parking ratios decline with further mixed-use development, shared parking, and increased transit¹⁶

¹⁶ Macht, W (2014). [Flexible Parking Structures as Civic Catalysts](#). Urban Land Institute, Chicago.

RuePublique strongly recommends the complete removal of all car parking minimums for new developments. According to the noted parking expert Donald Shoupe "Requiring all new buildings to provide ample off-street parking spreads the city over a larger area, reduces density and makes cars the default way to travel. Parking requirements also undermine public transit and make life harder for people who are too poor to own a car.... minimum parking requirements subsidize cars, increase traffic congestion and carbon emissions, pollute the air and water, encourage sprawl, raise housing costs, exclude poor people, degrade urban design, reduce walkability and damage the economy.¹⁷." As a general strategy, we believe that the politique de stationnement should encourage the 'decoupling' of parking from housing and other activities and encourage flexible requirements. Parking should be available and easy to find, but at a cost which reflects the true value of the space. Furthermore, requiring people to pass by the public domain in order to access their private vehicle will make it more likely that they will consider other travel options and also that they will demand that the public demand be well maintained.

Création d'une Société paramunicipale pour appliquer la politique de stationnement

The elimination of significant amounts of on-street parking will require an increase in off-street parking options. But how much off-street parking will be necessary? Who will provide it and where? Improving collective and active transportation options should reduce the need for automobile mobility, but it may also shift travel patterns toward more distant locations where parking options are more accessible. How can this transition period be managed? It may take some time for the re-appropriation of the public domain to translate into shifts in mobility patterns and it will be difficult to forecast the impact of new mobility technologies and services. The Downtown Parking District of the City of Santa Monica California initiated an experiment where developers could pay to opt out of minimum parking requirements. The revenues generated by the flexible parking requirements were used to finance the construction and operation of public parking structures¹⁸.

Conclusion

Given the stated vision of the politique de stationnement to improve the citizen's quality of life and assure the economic vitality of the city while reducing our dependency on the private car, we believe that only a paramunicipal structure can balance the competing claims to public space.

It is well known that a physical environment which disproportionately allocates space to cars can have a detrimental impact on social relations. By breaking the link between parking and other activities, RuePublique believes that we can return our attention to the public domain. Our streets belong to all of us, and it is imperative that we use their value to further sustainable development goals.

¹⁷ Shoup, D. (2016). [How parking requirements hurt the poor](#), Washington Post, 3 March 2016.

¹⁸ Rubin, C. (2013). [Curbing Downtown Parking Requirements: Its Effects on Santa Monica Land Uses, Urban Form and Municipal Finances](#).