

4.8

Lachine Canal

The Lachine Canal is of major strategic importance to Montréal's urban development due to its structuring effect, its undeniable potential as a recreational and tourism site and its special industrial heritage. The continued involvement of the federal government and the Québec government's support are essential in order to ensure appropriate improvement of the area. The design and implementation of interventions must be completed in cooperation with the numerous stakeholders involved, including partners in the private and community sectors as well as residents. The development potential at the eastern and western ends of the Canal will require specific planning for Griffintown (4.8.1) and East Lachine (4.8.2).

General goals

- Make the Lachine Canal and its surroundings a place of superior quality by intensifying and diversifying activities and reinforcing the overall character
- Improve the area's accessibility, specifically between the Canal and its adjacent sites
- Improve the quality of the adjacent living environments
- Reinforce the area's recreational and tourism vocation and protect its built and archaeological heritage



Planning issues

Cradle of Canadian industrialization, the Lachine Canal connects the Old Port with Lac Saint-Louis. Inaugurated in 1825, it contributed greatly to the industrial development of the southwestern part of the City, where a number of working-class neighbourhoods grew.

After the Canal was closed in 1970, extensive work was done to improve the area. In 1978, Parks Canada designated the Lachine Canal a National Historic Site and proceeded with the creation of a linear park along its banks. Between 1997 and 2002, more than 100 million dollars were invested by the federal government and the City. As a result each of the Canal's locks was restored, the Peel Basin was rebuilt, new bridges were built, new paths have been laid out and many new green spaces and public spaces were designed. In 2002, the Canal reopened to pleasure boating.

The private sector has also invested in the area. A growing number of new economy firms are moving into the area and several residential projects have been completed. However, an in-depth review in conjunction with the numerous stakeholders is required in order to continue the enhancement of an area deeply rooted in Montréal's identity.

Numerous lots and buildings located along or near the canal remain vacant or underused. In the area east of Highway 15 and in East Lachine a high vacancy rate in industrial buildings points to an excellent opportunity for conversion to mixed-use development. The Canada Post site, occupying almost 500 metres of Canal frontage near the Saint-Gabriel locks, is an example of this potential. The area also contains vacant lots with economic potential, most located between the CP-Rockfield bridge and Highway 15. Many of these lots will require substantial rehabilitation efforts for which the support of the federal and Québec governments will be essential.



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(continued)

As part of Montréal's waterside roadway, the Lachine Canal will require interventions to reinforce the coherence of its urban landscape and architecture while respecting the diversity of the adjacent areas. Work is also needed to improve views of and access to the water.

The railway and expressway corridors that run parallel to the Canal impede access to certain sites, especially north of Highway 20. Encouraging the development of these sites will require improving their accessibility. The redesign of the Turcot interchange by the Ministère des Transports du Québec will be an opportunity to conduct a wider study of nearby infrastructure.

While several residential projects have been built in the area, an integrated approach, developed in cooperation with different stakeholders, is desirable in order to improve living conditions for residents. Actions are also required to reduce nuisances, generated primarily by industrial activities, the expressway and rail networks.

Important work remains to complete the enhancement of the Lachine Canal and its surroundings and the reinforcement of its vocation as a recreational and tourism attraction. Interventions will also be necessary in order to ensure that the various users of the Lachine Canal recreational path (pedestrians, cyclists, etc.) can share it safely and harmoniously.

Finally, the Lachine Canal and its surroundings are sites of great built and archaeological heritage value. The preservation of the numerous industrial buildings and engineering works found there, such as the LaSalle-Coke crane, is essential to the area's enhancement.



Planning guidelines

- 1 Favour the conversion to mixed uses (including housing, offices and retail stores) of the vacant or underused sites in certain parts of the area, for example in the East Lachine Detailed Planning Area and east of Highway 15.
- 2 Encourage the maintenance and consolidation of economic activity in certain parts of the area, especially the Cabot district and between the CP-Rockfield railway bridge and Highway 15.
- 3 Support the rehabilitation of contaminated sites in order to allow their development.
- 4 Respect the character of the built environment that is representative of each part of the area, by favouring quality architecture and urban design that is adapted to its environment.
- 5 Improve access to isolated sites and reinforce links between the neighbourhoods located on either side of the Canal.
- 6 Consider developing a public transportation link along the Canal between the Old Port and the Borough of Lachine.
- 7 Undertake intensive and integrated action in living environments to be revitalized, particularly by improving the quality of housing and the interface between heavy industry and the expressway network.
- 8 Evaluate the relocation of certain enterprises that are incompatible with their surroundings.
- 9 In partnership with Parks Canada, complete the improvement of the Lachine Canal (parks, public spaces, pedestrian trails and bikeways), while giving special attention to public access to the Canal and the enhancement of the basins.
- 10 Design the public realm along the Canal in order to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, public transportation and automobile travel.
- 11 Foster the preservation of buildings and equipment of heritage value and take the archaeological potential of the area into account when carrying out excavation work to ensure the preservation or documentation of archaeological finds.

