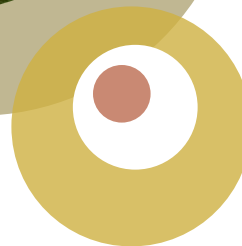


# Developing "sustainable" parking areas

A new bylaw governing the management of parking spaces focused on sustainable development that shows how decision-makers can find alternative ways to "think the city"



## BACKGROUND

The Borough of Saint-Laurent is one of 19 boroughs that make up the Ville de Montréal. Saint-Laurent is home to some 90 000 people and 2500 industrial companies. A major economic hub, Saint-Laurent has the second-largest job pool in the Greater Montréal Area after downtown Montréal, with 87 000 jobs. The borough covers a surface area of 43 km<sup>2</sup> and more than 52 percent of its territory is comprised of employment zones.

The main reasons for Saint-Laurent's economic success are its:

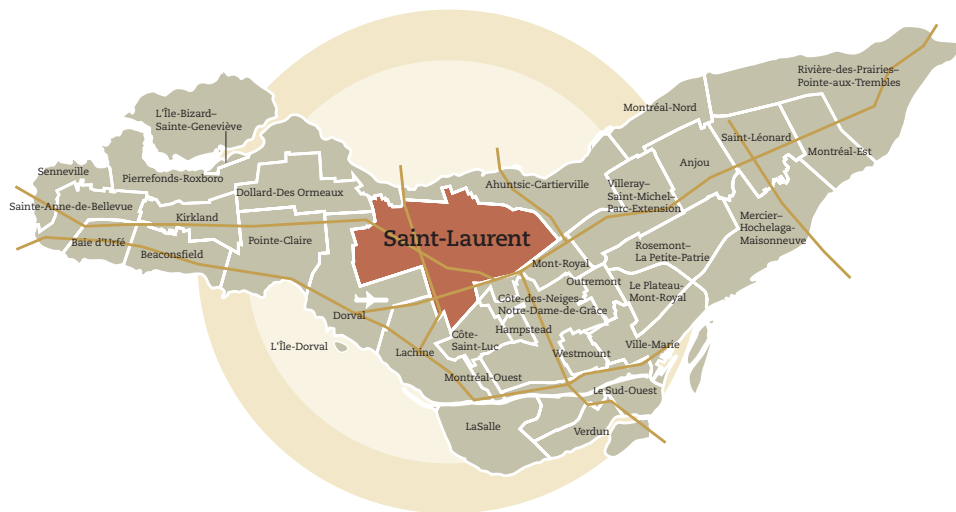
- geographic location at the heart of the Island of Montréal;
- its proximity to Montréal-Trudeau International Airport;
- and, above all, its strategic location at the centre of Montréal's road network—at the crossroads of highways 13, 15, 40 and 520.

Saint-Laurent's development, typical of the post-war period and focused on automobile transportation, resulted in the creation of heavily built-up areas punctuated by vast parking lots.

Indeed, there are some 100 000 parking spaces located on private land in Saint-Laurent. Many of these spaces are under-used, a situation caused in part by regulations that were in effect until 2009.

The Borough of Saint-Laurent, conscious of the debatable environmental impact of these vast paved spaces, and more specifically of the urban heat islands that they generate, took a significant step in 2008 by launching an initiative to rethink the bylaws governing the management of parking lots.

The revised regulations made it possible to adapt to the real needs of businesses operating in the borough and to halt the proliferation of vast paved surfaces.



## PROJECT SUMMARY

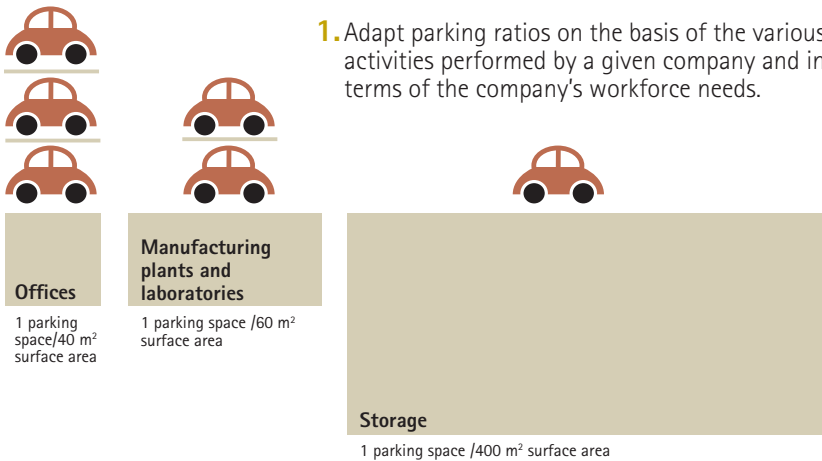
### "Sustainable parking areas": an innovative idea

The new regulations governing the management of parking spaces took effect in 2010. This new and original initiative offers solid proof that municipalities can exert a positive and significant influence on sustainable development in their communities by properly exercising their duly authorized powers.

#### Project goals:

- reduce the number of urban heat islands and limit the environmental impact of parking areas through greening initiatives;
- remain competitive in order to attract and retain companies and businesses;
- favour public transit as well as active transportation;
- favour urban density;
- improve the built environment.

## The reform: 10 key elements



1. Adapt parking ratios on the basis of the various activities performed by a given company and in terms of the company's workforce needs.

7. Include green spaces within parking lots having 20 or more spaces and require that a canopy of mature trees cover 40% of all parking spaces.

This is another important provision of the new bylaw. This represents a high percentage of plant coverage and is comparable to the requirement in effect in Portland, Oregon.



Source : [www.local ecology.org](http://www.local ecology.org)

2. Reduce the number of parking spaces required for certain uses.

Shopping centres (-20%); office buildings (-15%); multifamily dwelling units (drop from 1.5 to 1.1 parking spaces per dwelling unit).

3. Reduce the minimal width of parking spaces from 2.75 m to 2.60 m, a 5% decrease.

4. Require more underground parking. For example, all parking spaces for multifamily dwelling projects must be located underground, with the exception of those reserved for visitors. In industrial and commercial buildings, underground parking will be required when the number of required parking spaces exceeds the minimum requirement by 125%.

5. Establish a cap on the number of parking spaces that could be planned per property. For example, a company that, under the bylaw, must have a minimum of 50 parking spaces shall be allowed a maximum of 75 spaces, that is, 150% of the required minimum. Furthermore, the number of spaces that exceed 125% of the required minimum must be located underground.

6. Adapt parking requirements to the public transit offering. The number of required parking spaces is reduced by 40% in the Vieux-Saint-Laurent sector and in areas located less than 500 m from a Métro station, and reduced by 20% in areas close to existing commuter train stations and projected Métro stations. This zone shall be extended to 800 m in 2011.

This is probably one of the most important changes to the parking bylaw. Fewer parking spaces will be allowed in areas close to a Métro or commuter train station.

8. Eliminate the obligation for a parking layout when it has been shown that there is no need for parking facilities (applicable to industrial facilities and single-family dwelling units only). This provision enables a company to significantly reduce costs associated with the planning of parking spaces while at the same time making it possible to preserve additional green spaces.

9. Authorize the use of permeable paving for the repaving of parking lots in order to favour the retention of rainwater.



Source : [www.umich.edu](http://www.umich.edu)

10. Require that all new companies having more than 100 employees draft a commuter travel plan (an Allego-type program that aims to implement initiatives that provide alternatives to single-passenger car travel (carpooling, etc.)).

## EXAMPLE OF HOW THE BYLAW IS APPLIED

Industrial facility built in 2010 at  
5600, rue Kieran, Saint-Laurent



	WITHOUT the new bylaw	WITH the new bylaw
Parking:	Unlimited	Maximum number of allowed parking spaces: 76 outdoor spaces and 20 indoor spaces.  NOTE: The promoter chose to install 74 outdoor parking spaces only.
Greening:	8 trees	60 trees to achieve 40% plant covering upon maturity.

## RESULTS

According to analysis conducted, it is believed that the new bylaw will alter the urban landscape in the long term because of the requirement to apply greening initiatives, to reduce the size of parking lots, and to the potential for \$100 million worth of property development resulting from the lower ratios and the possible enhancement of spaces that shall not be used for parking.

Other anticipated positive spinoffs:

- Converting parking lots: starting now, property owners may use surplus parking land to expand their building or green their property;
- Reducing certain costs: this new bylaw will help lower construction and maintenance costs associated with parking lots by making it possible to delay the development of parking spaces—which is now allowed;
- Adapting to climate change: the greening of vast parking lots will reduce the number of heat islands and the volume of greenhouse gases and foster better rainwater retention;
- Set an example: this is an excellent example of how sustainable development can be integrated into the very heart of an urban development bylaw.

## CONCLUSION

The overhaul of the bylaw governing the planning of parking spaces **represents a new way to think the city.**

The new bylaw is very audacious and confirms that the city has a role to play as an engine of its communities' sustainable development. The Borough of Saint-Laurent has shown itself to be a pioneer by taking action to implement this new bylaw, which will serve as an example for other municipalities throughout Québec.

