

Executive Summary

In response to the worsening garbage problem in the Downtown area of Montreal, this report, requested by the government of the city of Montreal, has been developed with the intention of addressing this problem with realistic and cost effective solutions.

Over the course of two months, meetings were held, observations taken, and this report created.

The report includes the methodology and the results of the study, as well as recommendations to correct the problem.

This process was a learning experience for all groups involved and we are pleased to offer comprehensive findings and recommendations to the city of Montreal and the borough of Ville-Marie.

Methodology

On June 6, 2005, a meeting was held at Eco-Quartier Peter McGill. In attendance were Mr. Yves Girard, from the City of Montreal, Mr. Babak Herishi, from the Borough Ville- Marie, Mr. Dean Hannon from Clean City Project, and Mrs. Maricarmen Tagliero from Eco-quartier Peter McGill. During this meeting there was an agreement that the accumulation of garbage in the downtown area and specifically the Peter McGill area has become a serious issue and needs to be addressed.

The result of this meeting was a request by Mr. Girard for a specific detailed report of the garbage problem and it's sources, which he could present to the mayor of the city.

A second meeting was held between the following community groups on June 16, 2005:

Clean City Project
Peter McGill Community Council - Environment and Cleanliness Committee and,
Eco-Quartier Peter McGill

The purpose of this meeting was to determine the area, which was to be researched and to set the parameters for the report.

Eco-Quartier was instrumental in this meeting, given their expertise in the community and their knowledge of specific streets and blocks in the area. They have observed and documented numerous by-law violations in the past. This information was derived from documented information and complaints received at the Eco-Quartier office in the past 2 years.

The area chosen was the quadrilateral bordered by the West by St-Marc, on the East by Guy, the North by Sherbrooke, and the South by Ste-Catherine. The study would take place over four weeks between Mid-June and Mid-July in the eight streets of the quadrilateral.

All five participants were to observe and documented incidents using existing by-law S-0.1.1 (see annex 1). We have focused on these 5 articles because they were judged to be most permanent and in order to create a workable model.

The first stage of the process was to observe the area over a two-week period, at least 5 times a week (from 20 June to 03 July) . Each street was visited at least 10 times in order to understand which addresses we should focus on for the report.

Another meeting was held after the first two-week period. The group agreed to narrow the research to the worst offenders on each street. Each volunteer determined which addresses should receive repeat visits and which properties should be focused on for detailed recommendations and solutions.

The report concentrated on the focused list over the final week (from July 11 to July 17) with at

least 4 visits to each street by the researcher.

The following section will provide the results of the many hours of research by volunteers and community groups, as well as previous similar research performed in previous year by the Eco-Quartier Peter McGill (annex 2).

Results

These buildings present daily/weekly problems and create unsanitary conditions for the neighbouring residents and workers.

Chronic Residential Offenders

Street

1845 De Maisonneuve: (see annex...)

Infraction

Wrong time,
Wrong container
Bulky items

1650 de Maisonneuve: (see annex...)
(exit for garbage/recycling on Pierce st.
in front of garage door)

Wrong time
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not recycling

Ruelle de la Police: (see annex..)
(devant Éco-quartier Peter McGill)

Wrong time
Wrong place

1445A St Marc: (see annex...)

Wrong time
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not recycling.

1441 St Marc : (see annex...)

Wrong time
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not recycling.

1427 St Marc: (see annex...)

Wrong time,
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not recycling.

1419 St Marc: (see annex...)

Wrong time,
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not recycling.

1430 St Marc (back alley) infractions: (see annex...) Wrong time
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items
Not Recycling.

1869 Lincoln: (see annex...) Wrong time,
Wrong place
Wrong container
Bulky items.

1820 Lincoln: (see annex...) Wrong time,
Wrong place
Wrong container
Not recycling.

Notes:

- 1445A, 1441, 1427, & 1419 St-Marc are all owned by the same landlord. There have been many complaints lodged over the past two years regarding this specific landlord and his properties on St-Marc & de Maisonneuve.
- The addresses listed, as mentioned. have been deemed to violate the by-laws of the city on a daily / weekly basis and represent some of the largest residential polluters in the district Peter McGill. They not only pose an eyesore but also pose a health and safety risk to the neighbourhood.
- Addresses above represent a cross-section of offences to illustrate problems, which can be corrected by the application and enforcement of existing by-laws.
- No garbage bags opened for inspection of recyclables. Addresses marked as ‘not recycling’ had recyclables visible from outside garbage bags.

Commercial Chronic Offenders

1805 Ste Catherine (see annex...)	Not recycling
1825 Ste Catherine (see annex...)	Not recycling
1866 Ste Catherine (see annex...)	Not recycling
1869 Ste Catherine (see annex...)	Not recycling

- Problems on the street Ste-Catherine are mainly related to lack of recycling by commerce (no back alleys were inspected). The addresses above represent the largest problems witnessed over the 4-week period and more. They use the public garbage system twice a week and have been warned about the relative by-law several times. No improvement observed.
- No garbage bags opened for inspection of recyclables. Addresses marked as ‘not recycling’ had recyclables visible from outside garbage bags.

Recommendations

Assign inspectors exclusively to apply by-law S-O.1.1 concerning collection services in cases where tenants and businesses are the problem. Fine those who violate the by-laws, they should be punished for continuous offences of the bylaw to ensure compliance in the future.

Provide citizens and community groups with the cleaning schedules (time and place) of city workers. This includes schedules of cleaning, street cleaning, garbage pick-ups and recycling (in the form of a sticker, fridge magnet, etc).

Change current by-laws related to cleanliness. According to research done by the environmental/cleanliness committee of the Peter McGill Community Council from June 2004 to January 2005 the applicability of by-law S-O.1.1 concerning collection services is very limited, nearly impossible (see annex...) Our research has reaffirmed this conclusion. Two important points:

- First, due to the transient nature of a significant amount of residents of the Peter McGill district, it is very hard to fine those who break the current by-law. At the same time, landlords derive an income from these tenants and has the power to evict them if they don't follow the rules upon signing the lease. Landlords should be responsible for sensitising their own tenants. That is, every citizen should be responsible for the cleanliness of the perimeter of their property.
- Second, landlords must have a secure area to dispose garbage in a building with 3 or more apartments with a common door. Attempting to charge individual tenants in buildings where facilities are not provided for the disposal of trash has proven ineffective. Landlords who do not provide facilities for tenants must be made to offer an alternative to street dumping.

Extend tolerance time for garbage deposit on sidewalk from 3 hours to 12 hours (that is, from 5a.m. to 8p.m. the night before). Extended time will demand less inspection and therefore more compliance to the by-law. It will also give those who don't wake up early the option of putting out their garbage bags before going to bed or work. As inspectors are currently not working past 5PM, the current law is unenforceable.

Introduce recycling pick-ups in commercial areas (inside Ste-Catherine) twice a week. Many entrepreneurs complain they have little space to keep their recyclables.

Conclusion

The current 'garbage problem' situation in the downtown area is unacceptable. Streets, sidewalks and alleyways are continually piled with garbage, which is put out in improper containers, on the wrong days, in the wrong place. This causes areas of downtown to be an eyesore for locals and visitors alike. This is not to mention the potential health hazards that are associated with garbage strewn on our streets. Residents are upset and tourists are shocked.

We understand that the city does what it can to better the situation within the constraints of a questionable collection by-law and very limited resources (nearly, one inspector for every city by-law per district).

History is experience. We know that the cleanliness situation of Montreal needs fundamental change. According to extensive research, A complete change in this behaviour will only happen with stringent enforcement of the current bylaws and/or the introduction of by-laws which will make landlords and business owners responsible for their own business.

We feel that responsible landlords, business owners and citizens should not be the ones accountable for paying the cleaning bills of a small minority, which pollute our community. The city should not offer extra cleaning services which only act as a Band-Aid for the current problems. This has been the case for many years.

Those who pollute have been warned and "educated". We need continuous bold action from the City of Montreal, the borough of Ville-Marie, as well of the citizens of the city. Only with all of these groups working in concert will we correct this problem.

We feel that the recommendations given above are the right first steps in order for us to take back the city from those who have polluted it for so long.