

Limiting businesses with drive-through service

The experience of the Borough of Saint-Laurent in Montreal

On May 6, 2014, the Borough of Saint-Laurent adopted a zoning by-law¹ prohibiting drive-through service for business use in commercial zones bordering a residential zone.

Background

The Borough of Saint-Laurent is located in the northern part of the Island of Montreal and constitutes one of the largest territories of the city. It has a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants and is home to the 2nd largest industrial park in Quebec. The borough is growing rapidly thanks, in particular, to development of the Bois-Franc sector, a 200-hectare area where over 4,000 new dwellings have been built in the past 20 years.



The adoption of a zoning by-law prohibiting drive-through service is in keeping with the land use and development orientations stipulated in all the urban planning tools available at both the regional and local level, which lean towards the development of higher-density, mixed-use areas favouring active transportation and public transit.

The development of businesses offering drive-through service runs counter to the demands of medium- to high-density development, aside from contributing to create urban heat islands and to saturate the borough's arterial thoroughfares operating at maximum capacity.

Though this by-law was driven by urban planning concerns, the fact remains that it will have positive repercussions on the health of citizens.

Chronology of actions leading to the adoption of the zoning by-law:

1- Review of Montreal's Master Plan

On June 21, 2005, Montreal City Council passed a by-law amending its Master Plan to include a chapter concerning the Borough of Saint-Laurent². The chapter centred on two major orientations, one of which was to ensure the quality of life of residents through a sustainable development approach.

¹ By-law number RCA08-08-0001-70 amending by-law number RCA08-08-0001

² Official website of the Borough of Saint-Laurent Montréal, under *Business and economy - Urban planning*.

Retrieved from http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=7937,87197981&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

2- Adoption of a by-law to achieve the borough’s sustainable development objectives and support active transportation in favour of pedestrians

In 2008, in keeping with its sustainable development objectives, the borough adopted by-law number RCA08-08-0001-17 aimed in particular at:

- Substantially reducing the minimum number of parking spaces required for certain uses;
- Imposing a cap on the number of parking spaces allowed;
- Reducing the number of parking spaces allowed within a 500-metre radius of subway, bus and train stations;
- Reserving for visitors only all outdoor parking spaces allowed for multifamily dwellings;
- Raising the greening ratios for lots and setting the minimum canopy coverage for parking lots at 40%.

3- Adoption of a by-law prohibiting drive-through service for business use in commercial zones bordering a residential zone.

On June 3, 2014, the Borough of Saint-Laurent adopted by-law number RCA08-0001-71 prohibiting drive-through service for business use in commercial zones bordering a residential zone and in two other specific zones.

Businesses in these zones with existing drive-through service will be subject to a grandfather clause. The by-law took effect June 18, 2014. Adoption of the by-law was preceded by a public hearing (April 30, 2014) attended by some 40 people.

RCA08-08-0001-71 amending the zoning by-law	
April 30, 2014	Public hearing held
May 6, 2014	Second draft by-law adopted
May 8, 2014	Public notice given for applications requiring that by-law be subject to approval by referendum
May 8–12, 2014	Applications received
June 3, 2014	By-law adopted
June 18, 2014	Certificate of compliance delivered – by-law takes force

The borough’s urban plan covers the entire territory and stipulates among its orientations the densification of the zones concerned and the promotion of active transportation and public transit.

Success factors

- Solid argumentation consistent with the Master Plan implemented in 2005.
- Urban plan favouring pedestrians, active transportation and public transit, based on principles of transit-oriented development (TOD) and sustainable development.

Challenges faced

- Industry representatives present at public hearing and borough council meetings raising different arguments regarding revenues generated, charitable causes supported, environmental issues relative to increasing the number of parking spaces, and the indispensability of drive-through service both for persons with reduced mobility and for parents with children.

Repercussions

Following the adoption of this by-law, the Borough of Rosemont-Petite-Patrie undertook to pass a similar by-law to prohibit drive-through service. The by-law was adopted on November 3, 2014.