

**City of Montreal  
SOUTHWEST BOROUGH**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADA POST SITE  
1470-1500 OTTAWA STREET**

PREPARED FOR:  
URBAN AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT SECTION  
AND  
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN PLANNING  
AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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Note: This document has been produced in French for the City of Montreal. The translation has been made by the Advisors. The French version is the official one.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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In relation to the sale of the building located at 1470-1500 Ottawa housing a sorting centre of Canada Post, the Department of Urban Planning and Corporate Services of the Southwest Borough and the Urban and Economic Development Section of the City of Montreal have developed an approval procedure for development projects proposed for this site.

Located close to downtown, bordered by the Lachine Canal and in the centre of a dynamic real estate area, the site has enormous development potential. The City of Montreal and the Southwest Borough would like to see an overall plan structured to showcase and revitalize this part of the Griffintown community.

Considering the size of the site and the many possible uses, the objective of this document is to present development opportunities for the site, show how it can be used to greatest advantage, and set out some urban integration principles. These are flexible to allow some creative expression. They have been based on meetings with local stakeholders and a study conducted in 2001 on the best use for the William area and the Saint-Gabriel basins by the B.R.I.C.<sup>1</sup> Workshop. This study is **available on demand**.

The process for implementing the site development proposals and the site optimization criteria are inspired by many considerations, such as:

- Economic development and keeping jobs in the sector by introducing a variety of functions;
- Revitalizing Notre-Dame Street;
- Maintaining the local population by creating an affordable rental market;
- Improving quality of life by creating green space and integrating the functions in the urban environment;
- Promoting recreational tourism along the Lachine Canal by providing a hospitality infrastructure;
- Showcasing the historical aspect of the site by focusing on the canal and its structures.

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<sup>1</sup> B.R.I.C., Workshop, THE WILLIAM SECTOR AND THE SAINT-GABRIEL BASINS, a strategy for reinventing a significant sector in the urban development dynamic, City of Montreal, final report, December 2001

Finally, the whole process and criteria take into account the site's relationship to the following structural elements:

- The Peel basin and Peel Street;
- Old Montreal, McGill and Cité du Multimédia;
- The Old Port;
- The Atwater market.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

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## **2. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE**

Considering the size of the site and its structural effect on the environment, its development and eventual use should take place gradually to keep pace with market absorption and intake capacity of the receiving environment, which is currently being re-defined in terms of its urban functions.

Consequently, an overall development plan should be filed by the developer. The plan must have flexibility in the selection of functions and their location on the site. There should be provisions for gradual implementation.

### **2.1.1 Project Flexibility and Phasing-In**

To ensure the flexibility of the plans and to allow phase-by-phase development, the following should be considered in the overall development plan:

- The infrastructure required to service the site and users should be developed as a first priority;
- Development should be implemented gradually to ensure maximum flexibility of development in the later phases;
- Meeting the guideline principles of the overall development plan;
- Reserve the site of the old basins for public areas to preserve and showcase the historical integrity of the canal through the future development of the esplanades or the excavation of one of the basins.

### **2.1.2 Filing of Overall Development Plan by Developer**

All development plans requiring zoning changes for the site should be submitted to the City for approval of the overall development plan. The City will not allow any development or land subdivision during this process.

The overall development plan should include, but is not restricted to, the following components:

- spatial distribution of the different uses of the site, detailed description and any nuisance factor;
- a preliminary land subdivision plan by phase of development and use;
- the type of construction planned, architectural scheme, implementation, construction restrictions and proposed occupation load;

- road layout and connection to the urban network;
- location of public areas (green and blue spaces) and their treatment;
- schedule for each project implementation phase;
- environmental impact study.

### **2.1.3 Proposal Approval Process**

The proposal approval process will include the following steps:

- Development by the District of a general regulation requiring an overall site development plan indicating the proposal evaluation criteria (L.A.U. art. 145.9);
- Public consultation concerning the regulation;
- Adoption of the general regulation affecting the overall development plan;
- Filing of an overall development plan by the developer;
- Review and evaluation of the plan and recommendation of consulting authorities;
- Holding of a public consultation meeting about the plan;
- Board decision on plan approval;
- Procedure for amendment of urban planning and zoning regulation for integrating approved development plan;
- Public consultation meeting and approval by referendum if applicable.

Considering these steps, we estimate that the approval period for the overall development proposal will be approximately 12 months from the date of the deposit of the overall development plan by the project developer.

### **3. PURPOSE, GUIDELINES AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

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### **3. PURPOSE, GUIDELINES AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

This section contains the overall development parameters for the site and the development criteria used to evaluate the overall development plans submitted by developers. As provided in the act respecting Land Use Planning, these parameters and criteria will be included in the regulation on the overall development plans currently being prepared.

#### **3.1 FUNCTIONS**

New types of economic activity have found an interesting niche for development in the sector. Developing these new niches will contribute to the renewal of the sector's economic structure. However, these functions should be supported by guidelines to ensure their compatibility and integration into the target environment. The proposed plan should ideally integrate economic projects initiated into or supported by the area.

##### **3.1.1 Description of Functions**

*Ensure a high degree of site development flexibility enabling a wide variety of functions to be integrated into the environment to meet the sector's developing requirements*

This objective leads to the following guidelines:

- The importance of creating new residential accommodations on the site and integrating them into the environment to satisfy different types of customers expressing different requirements;
- Reaching a minimum threshold in the number of projected residences and residents on the site to justify the equipment and services to serve customers;
- Integrating different types of residences to accommodate various types of customers and market trends;
- Including in every development plan a proportion of affordable accommodation sufficient to allow a social mix reflecting the needs of the population in this matter;
- Potentially maintaining the industrial function as long as it is compatible with the presence of accommodations and does not have environmental impact on the site (craft workshops, multimedia productions, printers, etc.);

- Adding new development niches such as cultural production industries (sound, cinema, video, communication, publicity, etc.) and design (clothing, furniture, design, printing, etc.);
- Developing rental space for offices;
- Adding uses other than residential, preferably on the ground floor of the buildings to promote street animation;
- Promoting cultural and tourism activities based on the richness of the sector's industrial history;
- Creating green and blue spaces when residential plans are implemented.

### **3.2 IMPLEMENTATION AND URBAN INTEGRATION**

In developing the Canada Post site, a link should be formed between the canal and the urban and architectural environment of the area. Development of the site should be based on the best features of the area and the canal while at the same time integrating contemporary architecture into the setting.

The blocks bordering the site are mostly unstructured and will be reclassified in the near future. For example, the north frontage of Ottawa Street consists of one-storey buildings in which the spaces are for rent and vacant. Originating from an old industrial environment, the area is being redefined between de la Montagne, Guy, des Seigneurs Streets and the canal.

As for the industrial buildings on the south border of the Lachine Canal, such as Redpath and Belding Corticelli, they are landmarks of impressive bulk, six to eight storeys high.

Since the intrinsic features of the sector's urban environment are being rebuilt or consolidated, the following guiding principles should be followed in any new development plan:

- a continuous building texture occupying a large proportion of the land, surrounding the public spaces;
- buildings with heights varying between 9 to 20 metres to be built near the public thoroughfares;
- covering materials to blend in with the area's domestic and industrial architecture.

Development plans should rest on these reference points to ensure harmonious integration with the built-up environment of the area and the canal. There should be an internal coherence to the development of the site.

In terms of accessibility, any road network and parking space on the site is yet to be determined. The developer must consider any impact on local traffic and provide for improving the links between the canal and the city.

The downtown view and the canal are important visual points of reference on the site. The beautiful panoramas from and towards the Lachine Canal should be preserved. As well, the network of roads and green spaces should contribute to highlighting the views towards downtown, the canal and the mountain.

### 3.2.1 The Urban Environment

*Open up the sector and establish a relationship with the surrounding area, downtown Montreal and the canal*

This objective leads to the following guidelines:

- Create access to the canal and links to the community by developing a north-south public way;
- Develop an east-west public way along the Lachine Canal;
- Preserve and optimize the views towards downtown and Mount Royal along Guy Street and from the banks of the canal; preserve the views on the canal itself and the existing landmarks (Redpath, silo, etc.) from Richmond Street.

### 3.2.2 Implementation

*Favour implementation that maximizes the site's potential while promoting a harmonious integration of the different completed projects through the definition of height and density limits.*

This objective leads to the following guidelines:

- The height of the buildings should vary between 9 and 20 metres and present a balanced gradation inside the site and in relation to the built-up area of the community and the canal;
- Keeping the overall occupation ratio of 3.0 in terms of the maximum occupation load of the site;
- Overall minimum and maximum settlement rate of 30% to 70%;
- A minimum setback from public roads, the public spaces and the canal;

- Buildings maximize available sunshine while ensuring a building density sufficient to ensure the cohesion of the built-up area;
- Maintaining open space at the edges of the old basins in order to maintain the view on the canal and downtown Montreal.

### **3.2.3 Architectural Treatment**

*Ensure the quality of construction designs, adequate location of the access and the harmonious integration of architectural framework during any new development project.*

This objective leads to the following guidelines:

- Developing a traditional and/or contemporary architectural treatment integrated into the environment and with local history;
- Observing coherence and internal integration in terms of architectural structure and composition;
- Erecting windowed façades bordered by public roads, public spaces and the canal;
- Integrating parking spaces inside the buildings to maximize developed land and eliminate their visual impact;
- Using construction materials in harmony with each other and the environment.

### 3.3 HERITAGE

In terms of heritage, the presence of the Lachine Canal is a major asset with respect to the economic expansion of the site due to the multipurpose nature of its banks and its potential as a unique attraction. Its proximity to the Saint-Gabriel locks provides it with privileged status to support the necessary infrastructure for the interpretation of the canal's industrial history. The strategic location of the locks in relation to the other ends of the canal, the presence of numerous industries of historical value justify the designation of this area as a location for the interpretation of the industrial history of Montreal and Canada.

#### 3.3.1 Showcasing the Canal and Featuring the Old Basins

*Enhance the historic aspect of this body of water and the dominant features of historical value in the urban landscape on the canal banks.*

This objective leads to the following guidelines:

- Architectural integration of new construction with the industrial buildings of historical value on the south shore of the Lachine Canal (Redpath, Switch and Spring, Belding Corticelli) ;
- Taking advantage of the central location of the Lachine Canal by creating links with the community through the development of public spaces (esplanades) and basins;
- Maximizing interaction with the body of water by recreating the spirit and the history of the waterway (basins), through the excavation of the original basin along Guy Street (or an equivalent proposal to excavating the historic basins);
- Creating links between the Saint-Gabriel locks and the site;
- Creating a link with the archeological park at Pointe des Seigneurs;
- Maintaining the visual link with the canal and the Saint-Gabriel locks through the development of a public way bordering the canal;
- Providing public access to green and blue (basins) spaces.