


# Feasibility Analysis for the Development of Social Housing in Peter-McGill





December 14, 2021

Maryse Chapdelaine  
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Dear Ms. Maryse Chapdelaine,

Please find enclosed the final phase of LogeToit's project to study the feasibility of potential social housing developments in the Peter-McGill district. The following document includes an aggregate of our work up to this point, which was previously represented in a project proposal, situational report, and table of contents.

Special attention has been paid to the unique nature of the Peter-McGill district, including its location downtown, prime real estate for development, and the historical underrepresentation of social housing within the area. Due to the fast-moving real estate market in Montreal's downtown, the processes associated with the development of social housing have also been examined to better understand the challenges faced by groups working to increase its availability.

The primary new feature of this report is a manual created by LogeToit for the evaluation tool used to assess the feasibility of social housing on the lots previously identified by the Peter-McGill Community Council. This manual details use of the tool and extraction of data, and provides suggestions for how the evaluation tool can be modified and interpreted for different community-based uses and contexts.

LogeToit has been pleased to work in partnership with the Peter-McGill Community Council, and we are grateful to you and the Community Council for this opportunity to work towards increasing housing accessibility in downtown Montreal. If you or your team would like any further clarification on the work that has been presented thus far, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,

[Carter Triana](#) | [Ting-Yeng Yang](#) | [Emma Ezvan](#) | [Cole Gleason](#) | [Ashley Huang](#)



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*Figure 1. Le Mount Stephen hotel on Drummond Street*



## Executive Summary

The Peter-McGill Community Council (PMCC) has been an advocate for people, businesses, and organizations in the Peter-McGill electoral district since 2002. Supporting a diverse and growing population in downtown Montreal, the PMCC serves a unique role in balancing the needs of all people living, working, and traveling through the area. Of particular relevance is the organization's push for the construction of more social housing in the district. Seeking support in working towards this goal, the PMCC selected LogeToit for consultation regarding 13 lots with potential for redevelopment as social housing. In response to this mandate, LogeToit has conducted an in-depth analysis assessing the feasibility of redeveloping the aforementioned lots.

This report summarizes the context of both the district and relevant policy, explores issues surrounding social housing in the area and beyond, and outlines the analysis process undertaken to assess feasibility. It concludes with recommendations for prioritizing lots and next steps to increase opportunities for social housing.

Peter-McGill is a densely populated area of Montreal that plays an important role for commercial and educational activity. Residents are highly educated, with a high proportion of immigrants and young adults. Access to public transit and grocery stores is relatively high, but there is a lack of public primary and secondary schools in the area. Housing stock has increased greatly in the past decades, mostly in the form of dense market-rate rentals and condominiums. A majority of households in Peter-McGill live in unaffordable housing, and there has been difficulty

constructing adequate social housing due to high land costs and competition with private developers.

Analysis of the *Règlement pour une métropole mixte* reveals that developers in the Peter-McGill district are mainly held to a financial obligation rather than being compelled to construct affordable housing. Funding for social housing is managed by the City and social housing proposals must be made in collaboration with various organizations. Several federal programs also provide funding for social housing, granting long-term, low-interest loans to projects receiving funding from other level(s) of government. Interactions between the City of Montreal, citizen groups, for-profit real estate developers, and technical resource groups greatly affect the development of social housing in Peter-McGill.

An evaluation tool for assessing the feasibility of social housing development on each of the lots is then presented. Using this tool, two lots (6 & 11) were identified as high potential, with 3 others (1, 7, 9) identified as medium potential and still worthy of consideration.

The report concludes with recommendations for the PMCC in their continued advocacy for social housing, including increased transparency from developers, more financial investment by the City, the potential for exploration of sites outside of the district, and the use of the evaluation tool by community groups in collaboration with the public.



## Résumé du rapport

La Table de quartier Peter-McGill (TQPM) défend les intérêts des résidents, des entreprises et des organisations de la circonscription électorale de Peter-McGill depuis 2002. Avec une population diverse et croissante dans le centre-ville de Montréal, la TQPM joue un rôle unique pour répondre aux besoins de toutes les personnes qui vivent, travaillent et visitent le quartier. La TQPM exerce une pression importante pour la construction de plus de logements sociaux dans le quartier. Afin de réaliser cet objectif, la TQPM a cherché conseil auprès de LogeToit concernant 13 sites ayant un potentiel de réaménagement en logements sociaux. Pour répondre à ce mandat, LogeToit a réalisé une analyse approfondie pour évaluer la faisabilité du réaménagement des lots mentionnés précédemment.


Le rapport présente le contexte du quartier et les politiques publiques en jeu, explore les questions relatives au logement social dans le quartier et au-delà, et décrit le processus d'analyse entrepris pour évaluer la faisabilité du réaménagement des sites sélectionnés. Le rapport conclut avec des recommandations concernant la priorisation des sites et les prochaines étapes pour accroître les possibilités de construction de logements sociaux.

Peter-McGill est un quartier de Montréal densément peuplé, qui joue un rôle majeur en termes de vitalité commerciale et éducative. Les résidents ont des niveaux d'éducation élevés, avec une proportion importante d'immigrants et de jeunes adultes. L'accès aux transports en commun et aux épiceries est relativement élevé, mais il y a un manque d'écoles

primaires et secondaires. Le parc de logements s'est considérablement accru au cours des dernières décennies, principalement sous la forme de logements locatifs et de copropriétés denses au prix du marché. La majorité des ménages résidant dans Peter-McGill vit dans des logements inabordables, et les coûts élevés des terrains ainsi que la concurrence avec les promoteurs privés ont rendu difficile la construction de logements sociaux.

L'analyse du Règlement pour une Métropole Mixte révèle que les promoteurs dans le quartier Peter-McGill sont principalement tenus à une obligation financière plutôt qu'à une obligation de construire des logements abordables. Les financements pour les logements sociaux sont gérés par la Ville et les projets de logements sociaux doivent être portés en collaboration avec divers organismes. Plusieurs programmes fédéraux fournissent du financement pour la construction de logements sociaux, accordant des prêts à long terme et à faible taux d'intérêt aux projets recevant du financement d'autres niveaux de gouvernement. Les interactions entre la Ville de Montréal, les groupes citoyens, les promoteurs immobiliers à but lucratif, et les groupes de ressources techniques influencent grandement la création de logements sociaux à Peter-McGill.

Le rapport présente ensuite un outil d'évaluation pour évaluer la faisabilité de développement de logement social sur chaque site. Grâce à cet outil, deux sites (6 et 11) ont été identifiés comme ayant un potentiel élevé, et trois autres (1, 7, 9) comme des sites à potentiel moyen, méritant tout de même d'être pris en considération.



Le rapport conclut avec des recommandations pour la TQPM dans le cadre de son plaidoyer continu en faveur du logement social: une transparence accrue de la part des promoteurs, un investissement financier plus important de la part de la Ville, la possibilité d'explorer des sites en

dehors du quartier, et l'utilisation de l'outil d'évaluation par des groupes communautaires en collaboration avec le public.



Figure 2. Peter-McGill district with neighbourhoods

## 1.0 District Analysis

### 1.1 History

Peter-McGill is an electoral district named after Montreal's second mayor that comprises the western part of Montreal's Ville-Marie borough. This diverse district is directly south of Mount Royal and includes the Shaughnessy, Centre-Ville, Victor-Hugo, Percy-Williams, and Trafalgar Square neighbourhoods (See Fig.2).

Shaughnessy Village is the center of Montreal and the most densely-populated area in Quebec, due to a boom of high-rise apartments built in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, it is also an institutional neighbourhood with several colleges, a hospital, and Concordia University, which hosts upwards of 46,000 students each year.

The Peter-McGill district also includes the Golden Square Mile at the foot of Mount Royal. From the 1850s to 1930s, the Golden Square Mile housed the business class of Montreal's banking, rail, shipping, fur, and timber industries. It is currently the location of a large portion of the downtown commercial area, and part of the land is owned by McGill University, which uses it for administrative and academic buildings.

Peter-McGill includes parts of Griffintown, a previously industrial neighbourhood through the 1800s and 1900s. There, workers were employed at the canal and its supporting industries. The area declined in importance with the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, which rendered the Lachine Canal locks obsolete. For the past decade, Griffintown has been the focus of a long-term municipal project to

redevelop the area for residential, commercial, and recreational use, centered around dense condominium development.



*Figure 3. The since demolished Seville Theatre*

The historical characteristics of Peter-McGill impact its current trajectories in housing development, and particularly that of social housing. This is revealed in the relative absence of social housing in the district, influenced partly by past high land costs— at its height, the Golden Square Mile was the most expensive land in Montreal, and business owners there held 70% of the wealth in Canada. As a result, social housing was more affordable and more frequently built in Saint-Jacques and Sainte-Marie, historically working class districts to the east. The legacy of Peter-McGill, as well as its current significance as a heart of home, work, and culture in Montreal's downtown, highlights the necessity for a long-term plan for affordable living for its residents.



## 1.2 Socio-demographics

*The findings of this sociodemographic report have been drawn primarily from the 2011 and 2016 Statistics Canada Census and the Portrait of Peter-McGill produced by Rayside Labossière.*

Peter-McGill is the most densely populated district in the Ville-Marie borough. It has experienced gradual population growth since the 1980s, with residential increases of about 3000 people each decade. Population growth is not consistent across the district, with Centre-Ville showing the sharpest growth over the past five years at 22% and Percy-Walters and Trafalgar Square losing about 5% of its population in that time. Overall, Shaughnessy has the highest population and is also the most dense, at 22,720 people per km<sup>2</sup> compared to the Montreal average of 4,668 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Peter-McGill as a whole is also denser than the rest of Montreal, at 5,791 people per km<sup>2</sup>.

There is a high proportion of young adults in the district, with a majority between the ages of 20-34. As a result, there is a smaller percentage of children and older adults in Peter-McGill compared to the Montreal average. Consistent with this trend, the majority (55%) of households are single-family and fewer families have children in this district compared to the rest of the city. Factors that may contribute to this demographic distribution include a lack of public primary and secondary schools, the

scarcity of multi-bedroom housing, and rising housing costs, potentially discouraging residents from having children and encouraging families to move outside the district.

Adults in Peter-McGill have obtained more formal education than the Montreal average, with 96.2% of residents holding a certificate, diploma, or degree, compared with the citywide rate of 82.2%. A high concentration of students due to two large universities in the district likely contributes to this: Concordia University with 46,000 students and McGill University with 40,000 students.

Peter-McGill has a higher concentration of immigrants than the rest of Montreal, at 37.5% compared to the Montreal average of 15.7%. Nearly half of residents in the district consider themselves a visible minority, of which Chinese residents comprise the highest proportion at 29%, Arab residents at 27%, and South Asians at 13.5%. More than half of Peter-McGill residents speak both French and English. According to the 2016 Census, Indigenous people make up only 0.4% of the population in Peter-McGill, however, this only includes individuals with stable housing. Peter-McGill is also home to a large population of unhoused Indigenous people, with a high concentration in Cabot Square.

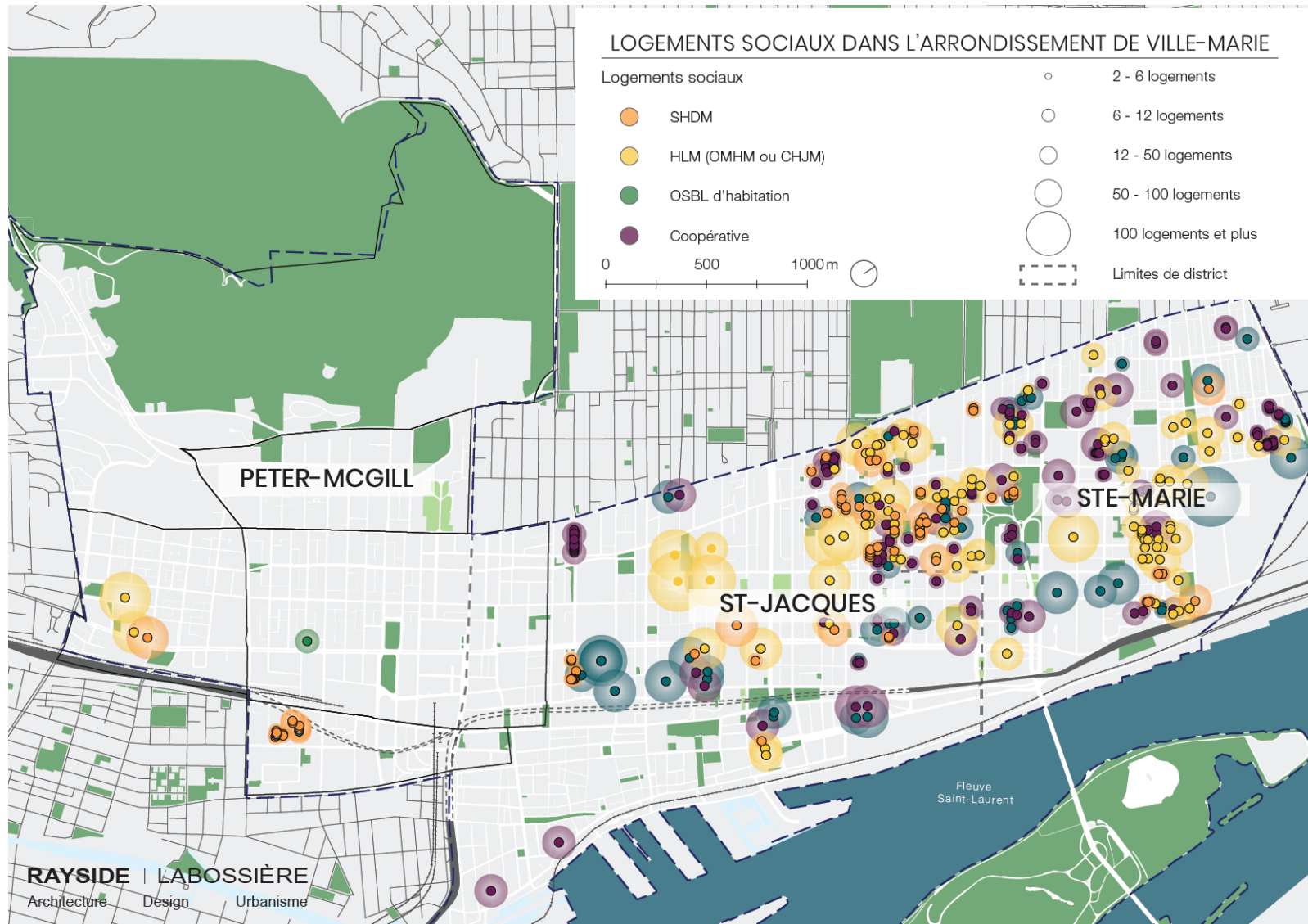


Figure 4. Location of social housing in the Ville-Marie borough

### 1.3 Housing

Residential housing has been increasing in Peter-McGill over the past decades, with a 12.9% rise in number of units from 2011 to 2016. Housing tends to be dense in the district; 79% of housing is in buildings of five or more storeys. Shaughnessy in particular has many high-rise rental buildings occupied by students who attend higher education institutions in the neighbourhood. As a result, single bedroom and bachelor units are overrepresented at 60.7% in the district compared to the Montreal average of 32.9%, with lower proportions of three bedroom units, and a very low proportion of units with three bedrooms or more, at 3%.

There are different rates of turnover in housing stock across the district. In Centre-Ville, 52.7% of housing was built between 2006 to 2016, while in Trafalgar Square, the proportion is 1.7%. This reflects the rapid rates of construction that have taken place at the foot of the mountain in recent years. In part due to this influx of new buildings, across the whole of Peter-McGill a lower percentage of housing is in need of major repairs, at 6.5% compared to the Montreal average of 8%.

Peter-McGill is home to a high concentration of renters, at 75.4% compared to Montreal at 63.2%. Shaughnessy has the highest proportion of renters in the district, at 90.6%, attributable to the high number of students. Both Shaughnessy and Centre-Ville have experienced a sharp rise in condominium development, with increases of 59.7% and 66% respectively. This is not consistent across the district; condominium

development in Victor Hugo and Percy-Walters has decreased by about 5% in that time, which follows trends in construction in the area.

Housing value in Peter-McGill is the highest of all Montreal boroughs at an average of \$709,500 compared to Montreal's \$430,000. The price of tenant housing is higher in this district as well, with tenants in Peter-McGill paying \$300 more per month than the rest of the city. This cost is increasing over time, with a 12.2% jump between 2011 and 2016, similar to other parts of the city. Owner households in Peter-McGill also pay more, at \$450 per month more than the Montreal average.

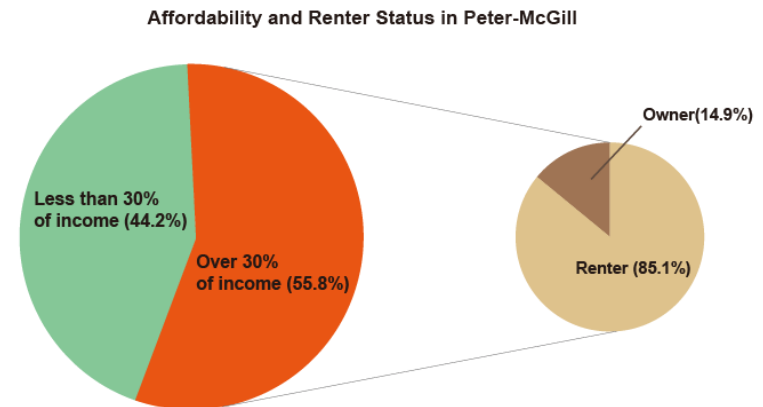



Figure 5. Housing affordability in Peter-McGill



Affordability of housing is a major issue in Peter-McGill. Just over half of households in the district spend more than 30% of their income on housing, which classifies them as living in unaffordable housing. This is compared to a Montreal average of 30.8%. Within the high proportion of those in Peter-McGill living in unaffordable housing, a large majority are renters at 85%. This means that renters in Peter-McGill are a key population that would benefit from housing assistance, such as social housing conversion or construction.

Construction of new units in Peter-McGill is booming, with current construction slated to create over 6,000 new units and increase the housing stock in the district by 31.4%. However, the entire district has only 440 social housing units, comprising less than 3% of private households. About half of these units are low-rent housing belonging to the *Office Municipal D'Habitation de Montréal*.

There are currently two social housing projects under construction in the area: the non-profit organization *Montagne Verte* began construction of a 136 unit housing cooperative in 2020, and there are plans for a 60 unit building on rue La Fontaine between rue du Havre and rue Frontenac.

It is worthwhile to note that the Peter-McGill district is underrepresented by social housing (See Fig.4). While it houses 40% of the population of the borough, and experiences higher housing unaffordability, the district contains only 5.9% of the social housing in Ville-Marie. Instead, social housing is concentrated in Saint-Jacques and Sainte-Marie to the east. This distribution is influenced partly by historically high land costs in the Peter-McGill district, including high costs in the historic Golden Square Mile.

## 1.4 District Amenities

The Peter-McGill district has 21 grocery stores, most of which are ethnic stores carrying East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern products. Grocery stores, including two of the three large stores, are concentrated to the west of Rue Guy on or near Rue Sainte-Catherine. There is therefore a general lack of easy access to grocery shopping in the district east of Rue Guy. *Dépanneurs* are fairly evenly distributed throughout the district, but most are located north of Boulevard René-Levesque (See Fig.15 in the Appendix).

The area is served by four metro stations on the green line and two metro stations on the orange line, with two additional orange line stations just outside of the official district boundaries. The Gare Centrale station also lies within the boundaries, providing access to VIA Rail and EXO commuter rail service. The Lucien-L'Allier station also serves as a terminus for three commuter rail lines. 45 bus routes run through or near the district and 43 Bixi stations are located in the area.

A combined private primary and secondary school lies just outside the eastern edge of the district, with the only other private secondary school located on the district's western end. There are notably no public primary or secondary schools so most students attend schools in neighbouring areas, such as the St-Leon-de-Westmount primary school to the west. The district also has three technical colleges, four CEGEPs, and two universities. 29 daycare centers, both nonprofit and for-profit, are distributed within or just outside the study area, with most concentrated

in Centre-Ville, and some in Shaughnessy and Percy-Walters (See Fig.32 in the Appendix).

The Montreal General Hospital is a large health institution located within the district and three smaller clinics also provide medical services in the area. In addition, 10 pharmacies have served as vaccination sites during the pandemic.



Figure 6. Intersection of St Catherine Street and Mansfield Avenue



## 1.5 Market Analysis

Montreal's real estate market is recovering from a drop in commercial and residential sales in the past year. Though total sales have decreased, sale prices have continued to increase throughout the Montreal region. November 2021 saw a 7.7% increase in commercial property sale prices and a 21% increase in residential property prices compared to November 2020.

Real estate prices are much higher on average in Peter-McGill than in surrounding districts, due primarily to high, and persistent, demand for corporate, retail, and residential properties in Shaughnessy and Centre-Ville. The value of land in these neighbourhoods remains high even as real estate values fluctuate elsewhere in Peter-McGill and in the rest of Montreal. Unfortunately, housing is also the most unaffordable in Shaughnessy and Centre-Ville, and, as mentioned, there is a marked absence of social housing in these areas.

The need for social housing in the district is clear. Yet the price of property is a serious barrier to the acquisition of land for social housing. As has been acknowledged by the Peter-McGill Community Council, the purchase of surface parking lots is a potential avenue to build housing in the downtown area, which is otherwise largely built-out. The majority of current surface parking lots in Montreal's Ville-Marie range in value from

\$1.5 million to \$8 million, though their development potential is much higher.

Partnerships with the City of Montreal in the past have helped to temper the high costs of property acquisition. The Green Mountain Cooperative is a social housing complex that is currently being built on the border of Shaughnessy and Griffintown. This project will be completed using a total of \$19 million in funding from the City of Montreal, and will be the largest social housing cooperative in the city when it is completed in 2022, with a total of 136 units. Commercial land in the area around the Green Mountain Cooperative ranges from \$1-5 million, less expensive on average than other neighborhoods in Peter-McGill. This land can also accommodate higher density than land for the same price in areas of Shaughnessy or Centre-Ville that are more central to downtown.

Balancing high land costs in Peter-McGill with the urgent need for social housing will be an ongoing challenge for community development. Considering the relative affordability of commercial land compared to residential, a possible avenue for future exploration of feasible development is to acquire commercial parcels that are on the periphery of the densest pockets of the Peter-McGill district.

## 1.6 Community Programs and Funding Sources

### *Règlement pour une métropole mixte (RMM)*

The *RMM* is a policy document that regulates the mandatory contributions to social housing by real estate developers in Montreal. The creation of this by-law was announced by *Projet Montréal* in 2019 and it has been in effect since April 1st, 2021. It replaces the former *Stratégie d'inclusion* adopted in 2005. While the latter relied on an incitative approach, the *RMM* defines the terms of a mandatory inclusion of social (subsidised housing), affordable (below market-rate) and family housing (defined as having at least 3 bedrooms and sufficient space for a family), and is thus presented as a more efficient tool.

The *RMM* applies to all developments over 450 m<sup>2</sup> that include the construction of new residential units. Thus, it applies to building conversions but does not apply to renovations of residential buildings that do not include the creation of new residential units. All new developments affected by the by-law have to include or contribute to the social, affordable and family housing stock in Montreal: the issuance of a building permit is conditional on an agreement with the City regarding the housing provision.

The *RMM* defines five value sectors for social housing and different affordable zones, with different requirements. As Peter McGill is located in sector 1, which includes the entirety of Downtown Montreal, we will only present the requirements for sector 1. This sector has no affordable

zones, meaning that the requirements in terms of affordable housing are only financial. The financial contribution is calculated as follows:


(residential surface area of the private project above the first 4500 m<sup>2</sup>) \* 35,3\$

For example, for a residential project of 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> (approximately 150 units) in sector 1, the financial contribution will be:

$$(10\ 000 - 4500) * 35,3 = 194\ 150\$.$$

However, this contribution can be reduced by 20% for each 1% of the project which is affordable housing. This incentivises developers to build affordable housing in their projects to reduce the affordable housing contribution costs.

The creation of social housing can be realised through the sale of a building to the City in exchange for a small financial compensation (552\$ per square meter of the residential surface area), through a financial contribution, or through a combination of these two options. The lot sold to the City has to be located within sector 1, which means that new developments in Peter-McGill may fulfill the requirements with land outside of the district, located somewhere else in sector 1. The site has to allow for a residential surface area dedicated to social housing of at least 20% of the total surface area of the project. For example, for a residential project totalling 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>, the lot to be ceded must allow the construction of a social housing project of at least 2 000 m<sup>2</sup>. The financial contribution is calculated by multiplying the surface area of the private



project by the value levels of the sector, as detailed in Table 2 in the Appendix.

For example, for a residential project totalling 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> in sector 1, the financial contribution is calculated this way:

59\$ per m<sup>2</sup> between 450 m<sup>2</sup> and 1800 m<sup>2</sup>

74\$ per m<sup>2</sup> between 1800 m<sup>2</sup> and 5000 m<sup>2</sup>

Total: 316 450\$

If the ceded lot does not allow for the required 20% of social housing, a financial contribution (using the values presented above) will be needed to meet the requirements. For example, for a residential project totalling 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> in sector 1, a lot allowing for a social project of 675 m<sup>2</sup> is ceded. This lot, since it only corresponds to 13,5% (instead of 20%) of the surface area of the residential project, is insufficient. Therefore, the ceded lot covers the first 3 375 m<sup>2</sup> of the project (because 675 m<sup>2</sup> corresponds to 20% of 3 375 m<sup>2</sup>), and an additional contribution of 74\$ per m<sup>2</sup> between 3 375 m<sup>2</sup> and 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> (a total of 120 250\$) will be required.

Finally, for all residential projects of 50 units or more, at least 5% of family housing is required and has to be realised within sector 1.

One limitation of this by-law is that it does not clearly mention how the financial contributions will be used by the City.

### **Funding sources**

Most funding for social housing in Montreal is managed by the city under the new agreement between the province of Quebec and the City of

Montréal. The primary funding given by the city is through the program *AccèsLogis Montréal*. The city is granted a budget by the province, but funds are managed and allocated by the branch of city government called the *Service d'habitation*. The total budget of the *Service d'habitation* for 2021, including municipal and provincial contributions, is 140 million. *AccèsLogis Montréal* requires organisations wishing to create social or community housing to collaborate with *Groupes de ressources techniques* (GRTs), which act as an intermediary between community groups and the *Service d'habitation*. GRTs are social and community housing development experts, who the city trusts to ensure the viability of potential housing projects.

The federal government has several programs for affordable and social housing as well. The National Housing Co-Investment Fund has a new construction stream, which grants long-term, low-interest loans to affordable housing projects. In order to qualify, housing projects must have received funding from another level of government. For housing projects located in Montreal, this will require them to have qualified for the *AccèsLogis Montreal* program in most cases. The Rapid Housing Initiative is another funding program that targets affordable housing. The program has two separate funding streams. The first is a lump-sum budget granted to particular cities and the second is money granted to individual project applications. Under this program a community housing organization can directly apply to the federal government for funding without needing approval from another level of government.



## 1.7 Stakeholder Identification

### City of Montreal

In accordance with its interest in supporting affordable living and increasing the stock of social housing, the City of Montreal is permitted to exercise a right-of-first-refusal to purchase properties to build social housing. Since 2020, the City has exercised this pre-emptive right on 300 properties in Montreal's boroughs and surrounding areas. The lots examined in this report have all been earmarked for the City's pre-emptive right, and the City will have the option to bid first on the properties if they become available for sale.

### Peter-McGill Community Council (PMCC)

The PMCC is a non-profit organization and coalition of neighbourhood residents, business owners, workers, and students that works towards improving quality of life in the district. One priority of the Council is the need for social housing, which in part has contributed to this report to examine the feasibility of developing certain lots for social housing within the Peter-McGill borders.

### Community Groups

#### *Comité Logement Ville-Marie*

A non-profit community organization that works to support tenants' rights and build social housing, the *Comité* offers tenant information services and builds cooperative social housing complexes. Its current project is the Green Mountain Cooperative, a 136-unit project with four bedroom units

for families, which is expected to be completed in 2022. This community group has demonstrated capability to build and facilitate social housing and is a possible candidate for a municipal-non-profit project partnership.

#### *Projet Organisation Populaire, Information et Regroupement (POPIR)*

*POPIR* is a citizen group that works towards the right to housing and campaigns for tenants rights in the neighbourhoods of St. Henri, Little Burgundy, Côte-Saint-Paul and Ville-Émard. They offer information services and combat rent increases and gentrification in Montreal's western downtown area.

#### *Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU)*

*FRAPRU* is an urban development citizen activist group that has a long history of lobbying for better living conditions and social housing. From public demonstrations to grant funding, this organization represents a community that is committed to affordable, liveable housing in Montreal.

### Technical Resource Groups (GRTs)

In Montreal, organizations that wish to develop social housing projects must be guided by a GRT. These consultancy groups are recognized partners of the City of Montreal and ensure that projects are socially and economically viable. One example of a GRT is the *Conseil en Développement de l'Habitation*, which consults on the current Green Mountain Cooperative social housing project.

### **For-Profit Real Estate Development**

Social housing in Montreal can be constructed in partnership with a private developer, such as a private condominium development with some social housing units. However, negotiations between private developers, non-profit organizations, and the City of Montreal can become complicated, as was the case of the old Montreal Children's Hospital in 2021. While 174 units of social housing were initially expected to be built at the site of the old hospital, there was a sudden change in the agreement between the developer and the City, resulting in the social housing units being removed from the plan without community input. The relationships between private real estate interests, the municipality, and the community can directly impact the feasibility of social housing projects in this area.



*Figure 7. Redevelopment of the Children's Hospital*



## 2.0 Lot Analysis

### 2.1 Overview of Lots

Thirteen lots were identified by the PMCC for their potential to be transformed into social housing (See Fig. 8). This was based on the lots' vacancy and the ability to acquire the lots using the City of Montreal's right of first refusal (pre-emptive right), which gives the City the opportunity to purchase properties for the development of social housing before private purchasers. Of the identified lots, two have existing residential buildings (sites 1 and 10), one has a vacant office building (site 4), one has a commercial building (site 11), one is unused land (site 7), and eight are surface parking lots (sites 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). The median valuation by the City of Montreal for the lots is \$3,366,650 and the median surface area 1,139.76 m<sup>2</sup>. More information about the individual lots can be found in the Appendix (Table 1).

During the course of this project, two lots have been slated for development, with another undergoing rezoning and potentially also being developed:

- Site 5, located at 1455 Rue de la Montagne, was sold for \$48.5 million in July 2021. Plans include an 11-19 floor condominium tower with street level commercial space. The development will have 235 units, most of which will be 1- and 2-bedroom units, 142 underground parking spaces, and 54 bike spaces.
- Site 3, located at 1200 Rue Mackay, is undergoing development for the construction of an 11-floor building with 125 student market-rate housing units. Included in the plan are 20 underground parking spaces, bike racks, and storage. This lot was last purchased in early 2020, with construction beginning at the beginning of November 2021.
- Site 1 may also undergo development soon, with a project proposed in September 2021 to increase the height of the existing residential building to accommodate more units. The project could include 24 units, 11 of which would be 3-bedroom units.

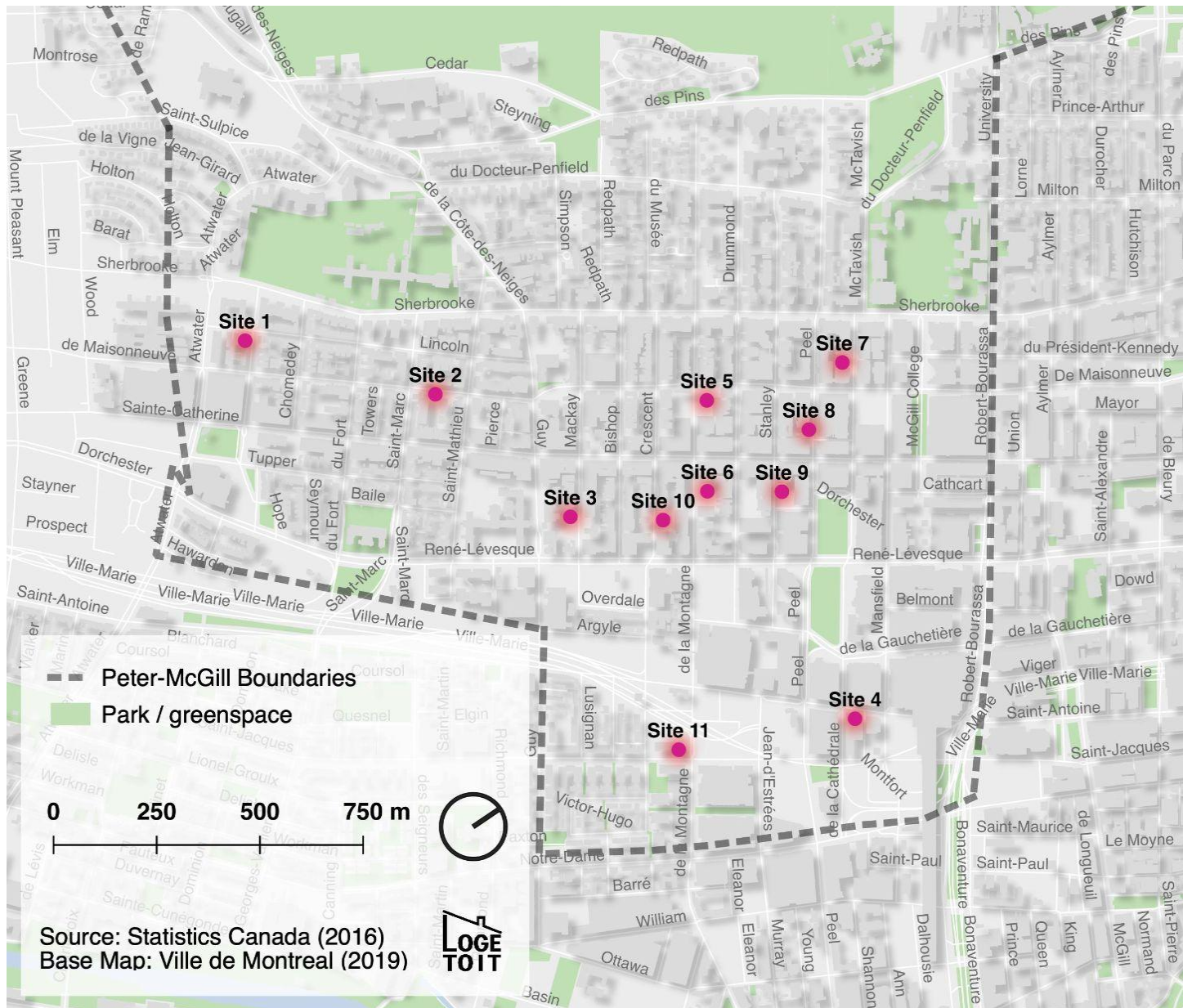


Figure 8.  
 Location of the  
 13 lots



## 2.2 Conversion study

### **Adaptive reuse as a solution for housing issues**

Retrofitting existing infrastructure to accommodate housing has been a popular solution suggested to combat the housing crisis. It has potential to achieve sustainability goals and address behavioural changes in transportation and work patterns. A report studying parking lot conversion feasibility in Vancouver demonstrates that the drop in car ownership and exceeding parking supply justify the adaptive reuse of underused parking lots. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis led to an increase in remote work and a subsequent decrease in the use of offices. Cities are therefore beginning to see potential in converting underused office spaces for residential use.

### **Challenges in adaptive reuses**

The concept of innovative redevelopment seems to be promising, but conversions are still uncommon because their implementation is very challenging.

#### *Financial feasibility*

Acquiring land ownership is the first financial challenge. In a surface parking lot conversion in London, Ontario, the scarcity of public-owned lots (less than 20% of surface parking is owned by the city government) made the project harder to implement. Thus, the city called for a partnership with private developers. In the case of affordable housing, limited resources are another barrier. These projects frequently receive

public funding, benefitting from resources from federal, provincial and municipal governments and from non-profit housing trusts. Limited funding sources make these projects difficult to realise. Finally, significant retrofitting costs might impact the feasibility of a project. These costs vary according to the condition of selected buildings. Several elements need to be considered: the existing concrete structure, the size of the floor plate, the layout of stairs, the location of windows, and heating and air-circulation systems.

#### *Physical design suitability*

Adaptive reuse of parking lots and office buildings pose different challenges in terms of physical suitability. Contrary to basement and tower parking, for which conversions are constrained by the existing structure, surface parking conversions are less complex, and only require consideration of the surroundings and nearby building heights.

The physical qualities of offices are quite different from those of residential buildings. For example, larger offices often have a habitable ring around the outside of the building, but the interior space has no access to natural light once closed rooms are added to an open floor plan. These sorts of offices are rarely suitable for conversion to residential space. The following criteria should be taken into account when realising such a conversion: size, height and depth of building, space, layout, access and circulation, and building structure and envelope (See Groningen's case study).



### *Regulatory barriers*

On the legislative side, when amendments to zoning regulations are met with resistance from the public or the government, implementing conversion projects can be challenging. An agreement and consultation beforehand can be helpful. Additionally, proposals should consider meeting the criteria of different zones regarding density, amenity, and public space requirements.

In cases of office-to-housing conversion, it is important to note that residential use is often more strictly regulated than commercial use in terms of safety and quality of life. This means commercial buildings may not fulfill certain building code requirements for residential housing, and require expensive modifications. For example, in conversion cases in the Netherlands, the entrance, stairways, elevators, and other safety features required in the building code were carefully examined, to ensure that they were adaptable to residential needs.

### *Locational accessibility*

Though the 12 lots to be analysed are all located in the downtown area, the access to green space, food and grocery stores, public services, and transportation accessibility differs from one site to another. A location lacking amenities in the surroundings will be relatively disadvantaged in reuse development. A comprehensive evaluation of amenities should be conducted before choosing which site(s) to develop for social housing, in order to ensure that residents have easy access to important services.

Geraedts & van der Voordt provide a list of criteria to assess transformation potential, including distance to shopping for daily errands,

meeting place, bank, medical facilities, sport and educational facilities, etc. The list can act as a starting point for site selections.

## Case Studies: Parking Lot Conversions

### Verdun, Montreal

Four parking lots, both elevated and surface lots, near Verdun metro station are to be converted into social housing. There is not much information about these conversions as the project is still at the very beginning of the planning process.

The main difference with the Peter-McGill case is that the targeted parking lots in Verdun are on public land, which removes many financial constraints and makes the conversion easier to implement.



*Figure 9. Elevated parking lot in Verdun*

### Halifax, Nova Scotia

In Halifax's North End, an underutilised large parking lot is being converted into two six-storey affordable apartment buildings that will provide 57 one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Construction will begin in early 2022 and will last 12 to 18 months. The federal government provided \$1.5 million as part of a national housing initiative to purchase the property, and the Nova Scotia government committed \$3 million toward the development of the site.



*Figure 10. Parking lot conversion to affordable housing in Halifax*

## Toronto, Ontario

The city's plan to convert a parking lot in an East York neighbourhood into a three-storey building with 64 units of affordable housing for homeless people is facing fierce opposition from residents. They argue that it is not the appropriate place for such a project as it is located near facilities used heavily by children (elementary school, daycare, public pool, hockey rink), and the parking lot is used by parents dropping kids off at school. They also believe they were not adequately consulted. The project will benefit from \$10.5 million in federal funding if it continues.

This case is interesting for multiple reasons. The location of the site presents several advantages since it is located near many amenities. However, the choice of a space that is used on a daily basis by the community and the subsequent backlash has highlighted the challenges associated with NIMBYism.

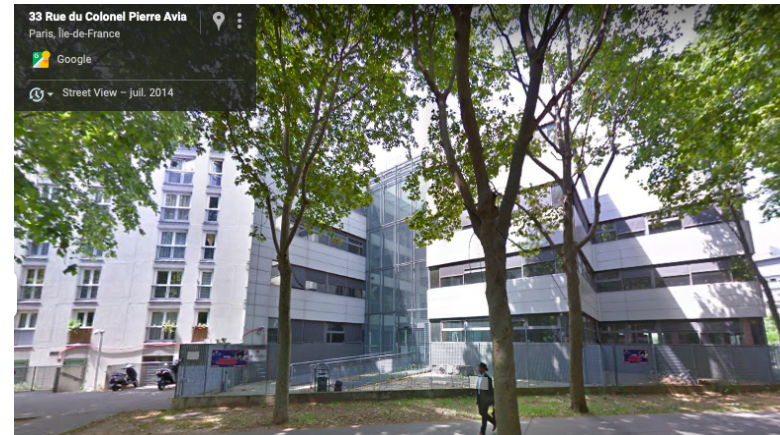


*Figure 11. Parking lot conversion to supportive housing on Trenton and Cedarvale Avenues in East York*

## Case Studies: Office Building Conversions

### Bertelotte student residence, Paris, France (2020)

4,400 square meters of offices were transformed into 138 social housing units for students. This conversion required a general restructuring of the existing buildings and a volumetric adaptation. The central atrium was demolished in order to create two distinct buildings. A cleaning phase was then undertaken in order to preserve the initial structures. One building benefited from an extension, the other was raised. Individual bedrooms of 18 to 20 square meters were created, as well as small apartments of 30 to 38 square meters. New openings were created in order to allow direct sunlight. The operation lasted 40 months and cost 18 million euros, approximately 4000€ per m<sup>2</sup>. There is no information about whether demolishing the old building and constructing a new one instead of conversion would have been cheaper. However, it seems that the conversion was quite an expensive option, considering that in 2018 in France, the cost of constructing a building more than four storeys is estimated to be up to 3100€ per m<sup>2</sup>.



*Figure 12. Bertelotte residence (before)*



*Figure 13. Bertelotte residence (after)*

### Student housing, Groningen, The Netherlands

An office building built in 1980 was converted in 2017 to 200 rooms of 20 to 25 square meters for students. All the rooms have their own kitchens and bathrooms. The walls between the units were made soundproof and fireproof thanks to an innovative design solution, but this structural change increased the total cost of the conversion. Some elements made it easier to convert the building. Most windows could open manually, which is not always the case in office buildings. The building also had an elevator at its centre and staircases, thus meeting fire escape requirements. Contrary to the Parisian example, little was changed about the design of the building. In terms of location, the site has a lot of advantages and is particularly suited for student housing as it is close to the city centre and to public services. Unfortunately, no information on the cost of the operation could be found.

### The Cube, Calgary (2019)

An old 62,000 square-foot, seven-storey, office building, was converted into a residential building with 65 one- and two-bedroom market-rate rental units, and included street-level retail. It was the first office-to-residential conversion in Calgary, followed by several other similar operations to address high office vacancy rates. The building is located in the Beltline (west end of Calgary's city centre), close to many amenities (grocery stores, entertainment district, public transit) and within walking distance to the downtown core. The renovation took one year and cost \$25 million.

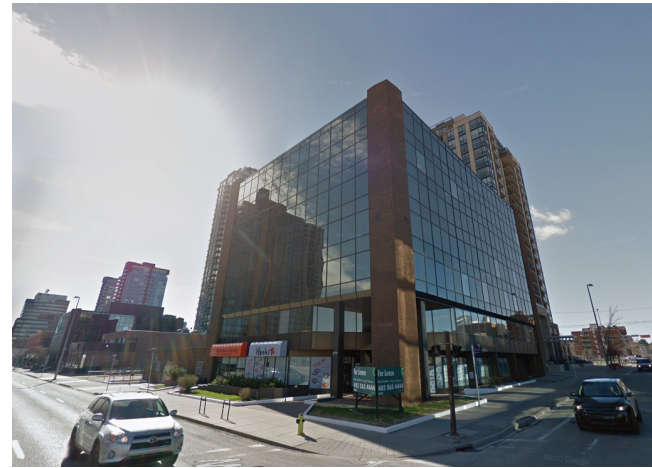


Figure 14. The Cube (before)



Figure 15. The Cube (after)



### **Permitted development rights, United Kingdom (2013)**

To deal with the housing crisis, permitted development rights were introduced in 2015. They are a form of planning control deregulation and make it easier to realize building conversions. Indeed, no planning permission is required, only a prior approval by a local planning authority needs to be granted regarding transport and highway impacts, contamination and flooding risks. This process is less constraining than a regular planning permission application. Though the introduction of permitted development rights can be seen as a solution to the housing crisis as it makes it easier to convert underused buildings into housing, it has been criticised for several reasons, namely that the lack of regulation and requirements tends to result in the creation of low-quality housing and in fact contributes to the social housing shortage.

### **Conclusion**

As shown in the evaluation table below, feasibility analyses for parking lot or building conversions will include financial, physical, regulatory and amenity-access criteria. Developing publicly-owned land, private-public partnerships, and establishing diverse funding sources will increase the feasibility of the project. Mixed-use developments can also be considered as they might attract more investors and contribute to the district's overall diversity. Finally, key considerations include the needs and preferences of the target population, which should be assessed through public consultations.



## 3.0 Evaluation

### 3.1 Introduction of Tool

There are a wide variety of factors that influence the feasibility of social housing construction on a particular lot. These include very practical construction and cost concerns on one end of the spectrum and subjective aesthetic and lifestyle concerns on the other end. In order to capture all these factors, we developed an evaluation grid that reflects what we consider to be the most important criteria for the choice of lots (see Fig.16). The grid contains 4 categories divided into subcategories, and each subcategory was graded on a scale of 1-5. The categories and subcategories were weighted to reflect their importance, a process which will be discussed in more detail in the Evaluation Tools section. A total score on a 1-20 point scale was generated by adding up the points, with 20 being the most positive possible score.

#### **Description of the categories and subcategories**

In the “building potential” category, the volume and quality of potential housing was evaluated, based on the physical limitations of the lots or buildings. Sites received higher scores if they had potential to produce a greater number of housing units, if they were more adaptable for residential building layouts, if they were well maintained (in the case of sites with pre-existing buildings), or if they had potential for onsite greenspace. For example, building depths and widths will ideally be between 5 and 20 metres. If sites allowed for buildings within this range they scored higher in the “adaptability for residential space” subcategory. Zoning by-laws and the surrounding architectural context will influence

the maximum height potential of the building, and therefore the number of units of social housing which can be constructed on the site. Sites which were able to legally and aesthetically provide for more units of housing scored higher in the “usable square footage” subcategory.

The “environment” category includes aesthetic, sensory, and psychological evaluations of the site context and environs. This included sunlight levels, accessibility, noise levels, street traffic, and the presence of trees for heat mitigation and beautification, surrounding architecture, and safety. Here, we considered what it will feel like to be living in and moving through the site and its surroundings, with points given or taken away based on the quality of the environment. We recognise that these categories are simultaneously highly subjective and very important for many people’s satisfaction with their living situation. In light of this tension, we suggest a way to combine our score with a community evaluation of these subjective categories in section 3.3.

The “neighbourhood amenities” category contains a list of the key services residents will need access to to thrive in a new residential development, such as groceries, health and education services, and leisure spaces. These categories were assigned points based on the proximity of these essential services, with more points given to locations with more proximate amenities. The scores were generated via GIS analysis using an 800 m (about a 10-minute walk) radius around each site, and counting the number of each distinct service provider in the



## Feasibility Analysis

### Descriptive elements

- Current site usage: Residential
- Address: 2100 Rue Lambert-Closse
- Cross Street: Avenue Lincoln
- Height of neighbouring buildings: 3-7 floors
- Site map:

• Site map:



Aspect	Point Criteria	Data Source	Score	Notes
<b>Building potential</b>				
Total usable floor footage area	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	Zoning by-law / on-site inspection	0.3	1,139 m <sup>2</sup>
Building height potential	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	Zoning by-law / on-site inspection	1.1	3 floors
Potential outdoor space	(1) if in bottom quintile, (2) if in second quintile, etc.	On-site inspection	1	
Adaptability for residential	(1) if difficult to adapt, (5) if easily adaptable	Info sheet	0	Currently residential
Building maintenance	(1) if derelict - (5) if well maintained	On-site inspection	3	
<b>Environment and context</b>				
Perceived safety	(1) if perceived as unsafe - (5) if perceived as safe	Neighbourhood studies	5	
Building façade	(1) if derelict, should be demolished - (5) if attractive, reusable	On-site inspection	4	
Architecture in surrounding buildings	(1) if plain, clashing - (5) if attractive, harmonious	On-site inspection	4	
Street noise level	(1) if noisy - (5) if tranquil	On-site inspection	5	
Street traffic level	(1) major arterial, (3) minor arterial, (5) residential	On-site inspection	4	
Sunlight access	(1) if minimal sunlight - (5) if significant sunlight	On-site inspection	4	
Front and rear accessibility	(1) if low accessibility - (5) if high accessibility	On-site inspection	5	
Presence of street trees / greening	(1) if minimal tree cover - (5) if high tree cover/greening	On-site inspection	5	
<b>Neighbourhood amenities</b>				
Greenspace	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS / on-site inspection	2.9	
Grocery Stores	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	4.2	
Public transportation	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	4.3	
Health services	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	3.0	
Childcare and early childhood education	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	1.6	
Primary school	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	5.0	
Secondary school	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	3.3	
Cultural institutions	(0-1) if in bottom quintile, (1-2) if in second quintile, etc.	GIS	4.0	
<b>Cost</b>				
Upfront costs	(1) if unusually high upfront costs, (5) if standard costs	Precedents	0	
Cost per M <sup>2</sup>	(1) if in bottom quintile, (2) if in second quintile, etc.	Altus Construction Cost Guide	1	\$470,000 per unit

Figure 17. Evaluation grid sample for Site 1



## 3.2 Evaluation Details

### Weighting System

The evaluation grid was designed to guide our decision making process by giving a more objective framework to the lot rankings. However, we recognise that decisions about where to locate social housing are full of subjective factors. The relative importance of the cost of construction compared to the walkability of the neighbourhood or the presence of street trees will be very different for the various stakeholders involved in a housing project. Our final weighted score was chosen because we felt that it represented a balanced ranking of the various criteria which would represent the concerns of the city, contractors, the community, and future residents. For the sake of transparency we also included scores generated by different weighting systems which emphasised certain categories over others. In this way we have made it clear what influence increasing the value of or devaluing certain categories has on the final ranking.

In the final weighted score that we chose, two subcategories were weighted with a multiplier of 4, “cost per m<sup>2</sup>” and “total usable square footage”. This gives them more presence in their respective category scores. One category, “building potential”, was weighted with a multiplier

of 4 as well. This gives the entire category more weight in the final score. We chose this weighting system to reflect what we felt the relative importance of each category was. Since there are very few vacant lots available, few opportunities to build social housing, and land values are extremely high downtown, we decided that the amount of social housing a site could provide was important enough to justify an increased weight in the final score.

Figure 17 shows the final scores of each site in the second column in bold. The table is colour coded by score tertile. The sites with highest tertile are marked in dark red, the sites in the middle in light red, and in the bottom tertile in light brown. Beside the final scores of the evaluation are a series of columns showing what the scores would be if the weighting system was changed. The two highest potential lots score well no matter which categories are considered most important, which we consider a positive indication that multiple stakeholders could be satisfied with social housing constructed on these sites.



### 3.3 Applicability for Public Use

The evaluation tools we provide are based on the planner perspective through a lens of feasibility, accessibility and living quality. To make the evaluation results even more comprehensive, we propose two approaches: first, the form could be made publicly accessible. Also, we suggest the inclusion of other stakeholders' perspectives in the feasibility analysis for the development of social housing, especially community members and potential future residents of a new social housing development. In other words, the evaluation tool is meant to be flexible and replicable in different contexts and able to be used by various actors.

#### **Flexibility for the input from different stakeholders**

The proposed evaluation form includes four main themes: building potential, environment, amenities, and cost. These are not fixed categories: new criteria can be added, others can be removed. Also, open-ended questions asking for feedback can be added in every section.

When used by the community, quantitative criteria such as the building potential and cost categories could be removed and left to planners and other specialists. Additional qualitative elements that are harder to evaluate for planners who do not live in the area such as the experience of the street where a site is located and of the surroundings, could be added. The final column ("Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements

removed") in the evaluation scores table (Table. 1), reflects a score using only measurable quantitative categories. This could be paired with a form containing only subjective subcategories, such as those in the "environment" category on our evaluation tool, to be scored by community members or potential residents of future social housing.

In order to improve the evaluation tool, an extra section for "importance" could be added in the public access version. After filling out the survey, users would be asked to rank the different themes in order of importance and give a score to each theme on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being "not important at all" and 5 being "extremely important". The score of importance could then be converted into a set of customized weighting coefficients. This would give a result that reflected both participants' score for a particular category as well as their sense of how important the category is.

Our evaluation tool was designed to be as balanced as possible, to reflect a realistic potential for social housing development--limited as it is by physical, financial, and political constraints. However, we consider community input about the aesthetic, sensory, and value categories more valuable than our own, and do not wish to substitute our opinion for the opinions of those people who will be living and occupying the sites in question!

## 4.0 Evaluation Results

### 4.1 Evaluation Scores

See Table 4 in the Appendix for a detailed result table.

Site	Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
Site 1	<b>10.1</b>	11.2	9.0	10.9	12.9	8.2
Site 1 (Zoning Amended)	<b>12.5</b>	13.9	14.1	11.4	14.7	11.1
Site 2	<b>9.1</b>	10.1	8.4	9.5	11.5	8.6
Site 2 (Zoning Amended)	<b>11.6</b>	12.9	13.5	10.3	13.3	11.7
Site 4	<b>9.9</b>	9.8	10.1	9.7	9.8	9.7
Site 6	<b>14.3</b>	14.9	16.4	12.9	14.7	14.3
Site 7	<b>13.1</b>	13.3	14.5	12.1	12.9	14.1
Site 8	<b>11.3</b>	12.1	13.4	10.0	12.0	11.8
Site 9	<b>12.8</b>	13.1	13.1	12.6	13.3	13.0
Site 10	<b>9.8</b>	9.7	7.6	11.2	10.6	9.5
Site 11	<b>15.7</b>	15.1	17.3	14.7	13.8	16.2

Table 1. Evaluation scores

## 4.2 Explanation of Scores and Recommendations for Prioritization

Sites were categorized into 3 types: sites with low, medium and high potential, in order to help the PMCC direct the City’s attention to sites that should be prioritized if they become available. While low potential sites are not seen as good options for the construction of social housing for the reasons we highlight below, lots with medium potential should also be considered if they become available for purchase.

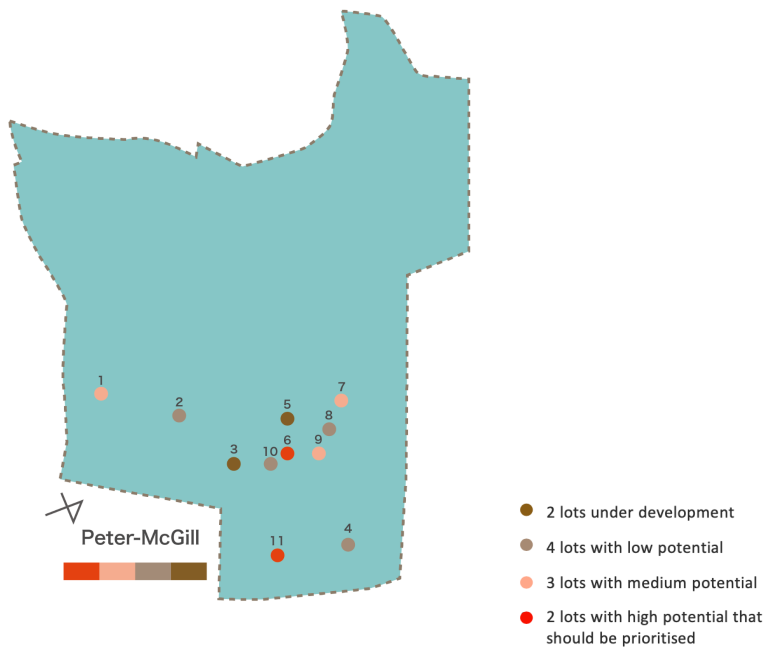


Figure 18. Categorization of the lots

### Sites with low potential

Four sites scored very low: sites 4, 2, 10 and 8, with respective scores of 9.9, 9.1, 9.8 and 11.3.

Site 4, located at 1000 rue Saint-Antoine Ouest, scores very low in all categories and in all weighting systems. It is currently an office building and its conversion to a residential building would be challenging. As explained, physical qualities of office buildings tend to significantly differ from those required of residential buildings. The floorplate of the building is particularly wide, raising concerns over access to light: creating units that all have access to sunlight would require major physical changes and would be costly. Likewise, lot 2, located at 1840 Boulevard de Maisonneuve Ouest, received a very low score for adaptability for residential use. This site is narrow and deep, making it difficult to construct a building that both has ample light access and does not block natural light from surrounding buildings.



Figure 19. Site 4

More generally, the sites that scored lower are sites that have limited access to amenities and reduced environmental qualities, including a

general lack of green spaces and street greening. They also tend to be located near large arterial roads that are noisy.

### Sites with medium potential

Three sites have medium potential: sites 1, 7 and 9, with respective scores of 10.1, 13.1 and 12.8. Lot 1 is a residential building that has been vacant since 2006. It received very good environment and amenity scores, but scored very low on total usable square footage since it is zoned for a maximum of three stories. However, there is a current potential project that aims to add three floors to the building and increase the number of units. This would increase its score to 12.5.

Sites 7 and 9 are sites worth considering for the construction of social housing. They have high density potentials and good scores in terms of environment and access to amenities.



Figure 20. Site 1: 2100 rue Lambert-Closse



Figure 21. Site 7: 2044 rue Metcalfe



Figure 22. Site 9: 1245 rue Stanley

## 5.0 Site Modeling

Two sites (6 and 11) were identified as high potential. These sites scored well in each category in the final score and even continued to score well when different factors were weighed more or less heavily. These sites should be prioritized for purchase if they become available. The following development scenarios present the physical potential of the sites (number of floors, number of units, potential for outdoor space, etc.) in more detail. These scenarios take into consideration the current zoning regulations (maximum height allowed, buildable surface) as well as the physical characteristics of the surroundings.

A unit composition standard was used in scenario development for both sites: 30% 1-bedroom units (46 m<sup>2</sup>), 40% 2-bedroom units (60 m<sup>2</sup>) and 30% family housing (86 m<sup>2</sup>). This composition was in part decided based on the Peter McGill Community Council's goal of addressing the current lack of family housing in the district.

### 5.1 Site 6

#### 1201 rue de la Montagne

The site is currently a large surface parking lot located in an animated part of Downtown Montreal. It has very good access to amenities and notably benefits from many stores and restaurants located on Sainte-Catherine Street (See Fig.35 in the Appendix). There is another large parking lot across the street beside the former Académie Bourget, which is slated for transformation to a primary school, making this site conducive for family housing.



Figure 23. Site 6



Figure 24. Location of site 6

The lot is particularly wide and is surrounded by high buildings, providing much potential for future construction. In the proposed scenario, two buildings are created and the current alleyway that connects Drummond Street and de La Montagne Street is preserved. The two buildings are seven-storey high which is the maximum height allowed by zoning regulations. A small section of the lot is converted into a public space.

In this scenario, the total livable surface area is 7391.3 m<sup>2</sup> (65% of the total buildable area multiplied by the potential number of floors). 26 family units, 47 one-bedroom units and 49 two-bedroom units are created.

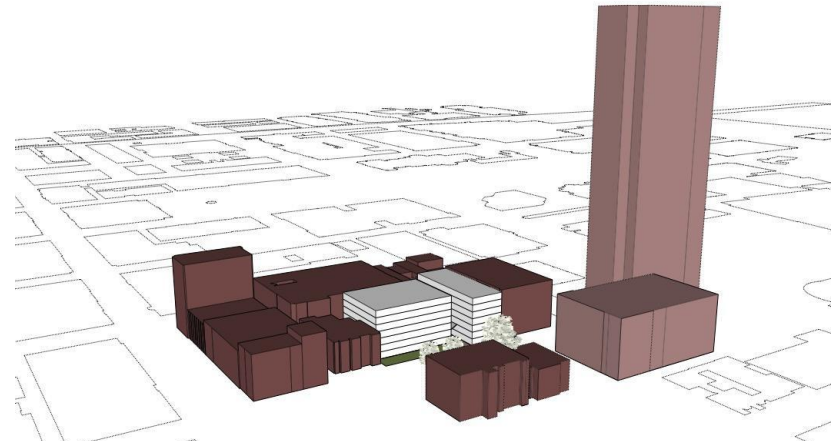


Figure 25. Development scenario for Site 6



Figure 26. Rendering for Site 6

## 5.2 Site 11

### 1313-1355 rue Saint-Jacques

Site 11 is located at the border of Griffintown, not far from the Ville-Marie Expressway. A relatively good number of amenities are located within a 10-minute walk, in both Ville-Marie and Griffintown (See Fig.37 in the Appendix). There is a small public park across the street, and the site has a good amount of street greenery in its immediate surroundings.



Figure 27. Site 11

The site currently has a two-storey commercial building. It scores high notably because of the very high potential number of units: the site is very wide, and zoning regulations allow for a 30-meter high building, corresponding to a 10-floor building. The total surface area of the site is 2746 m<sup>2</sup>, allowing for the potential creation of 388 one-bedroom units. Moreover, the zoning by-law allows a 65-meter height extension (“surhauteur”). Therefore, two different scenarios were created, one without and one with the height increase.

The current building is U-shaped and a significant area of the site is occupied by parking spots. In both scenarios, the existing building is demolished and a new one is built in order to better exploit the potential of the site. A more in-depth analysis of the cost difference between a demolition and a conversion is needed to better assess the feasibility of this scenario.

In the following redevelopment scenarios, the new building has a surface area significantly higher than that of the current commercial building since the height and size of the building have been increased.

#### Scenario 1

The building has different tiers, each aligned to the various heights of the surrounding buildings. The highest tier is 10-floor high. While a single 10-floor tower could accommodate more units, the proposed tiered building allows for better harmony with the surroundings. In this scenario, 217 units, composed of 45 family units, 85 one-bedroom units and 87 two-bedroom units, are created, with a total of 13, 155.36 m<sup>2</sup> of livable surface area.

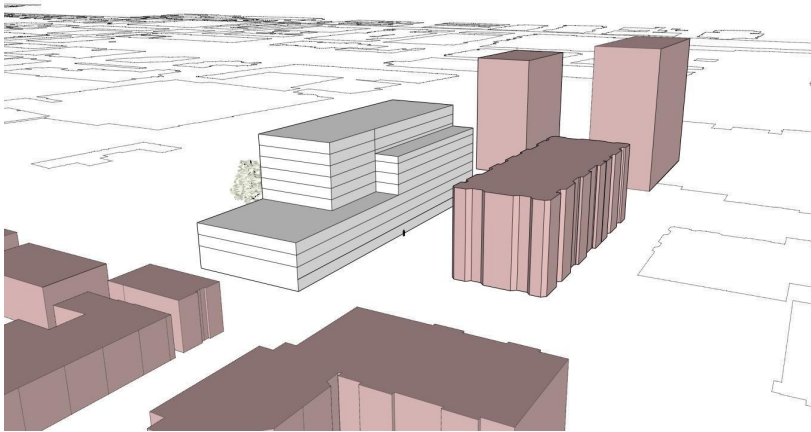


Figure 28. Development scenario 1 for Site 11

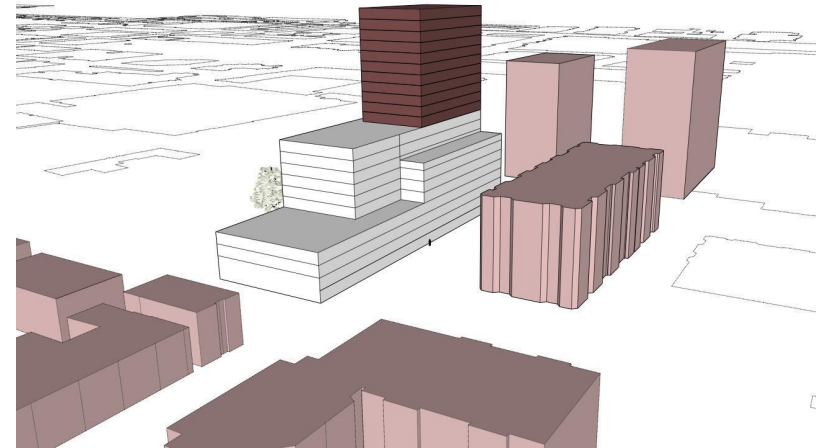


Figure 29. Development scenario 2 for Site 11

## Scenario 2

The second scenario, inspired by a Swedish development (See Fig.38 in the Appendix), adds an additional tower to the building shown in the first scenario. As mentioned, zoning allows for a height extension: this procedure is intended to allow the construction of a tower exceeding the maximum prescribed height, set back from the main facade. The addition of an 11-floor tower significantly increases the number of units: 130 additional units can be created, composed of 27 family, 51 one-bedroom, and 52 two-bedroom units. This would bring the total number of units to 347, with 72 family, 136 one-bedroom and 139 two-bedroom units.

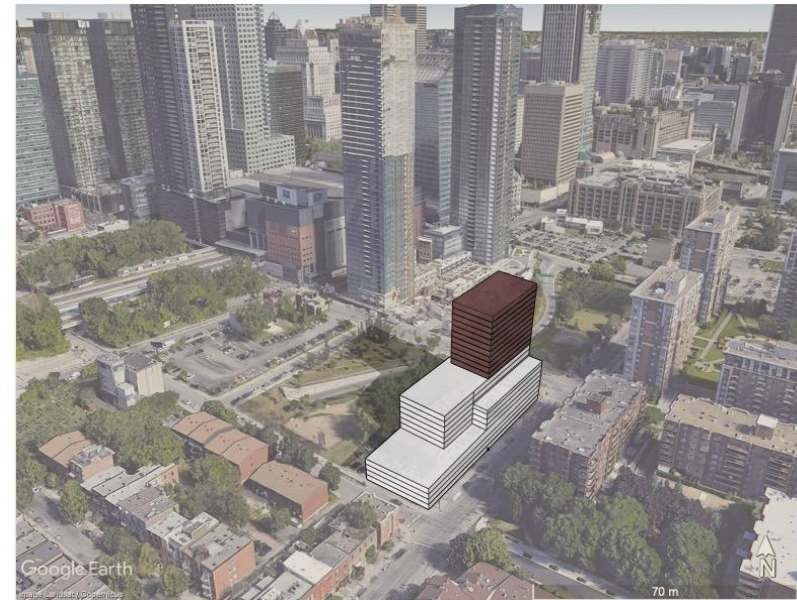


Figure 30. Rendering for Site 11



## 5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

In addition to previous recommendations regarding the prioritization of lots for the construction of social housing, several additional recommendations have been developed for the PMCC as it continues its work in the Peter-McGill district.

### **Transparency**

There is a need for increased transparency between the various actors who are involved in the development of land downtown, including, but not limited to, private developers, the City, and community groups. As previously mentioned, two (and potentially three) of the thirteen initially identified lots have been slated for development over the course of this project. The PMCC was only made aware of these changes through on-site visits, where marketing material and/or construction was seen. Greater transparency surrounding the sale or development of land, especially land identified by the City for use of its pre-emptive right, would allow for more focused efforts by the City and involved community groups. As land in downtown is in constant flux, an established system of transparency would allow actors working to increase social housing to act more swiftly and decisively to increase the chances of achieving their goals.

### **Increased Financial Investment**

There is a clear need for greater financial investment by the City in order to build more social housing in the Peter-McGill district. Although the City's pre-emptive right allows it privileged access to purchasing land, it must still compete with private developers. As evidenced by the sale of

Site 6, valued at \$11 million, but sold for \$48 million, land in the district is sold at a much higher price than its valuation by the City. In addition, the City's land acquisition budget for affordable housing is \$35 million, all but preventing it from matching competing offers made by private developers in the expensive downtown market.

### **Exploration Outside District**

With high land costs and little publicly-owned land, the Peter-McGill district is a difficult location to construct social housing. The district's location in downtown means that it benefits greatly from Montreal's public transit network, which easily moves people to and from downtown. Although housing within the district is ideal, sites elsewhere in the city that maintain good connectivity to the downtown should also be explored for their potential to accommodate social housing. In addition, land costs elsewhere in the city are lower compared to downtown and may offer more opportunity and flexibility for development.

### **Public Use of Tool**

The evaluation tool used in this analysis can be adapted for use by community groups like the PMCC to better understand the community perceptions regarding potential sites for social housing. Public input is especially insightful for the category of "Environment", in which criteria can also be modified and/or added. Community groups like the PMCC can then use this data to advocate for the prioritization of specific locations based on public opinion.

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# 7.0 Appendix

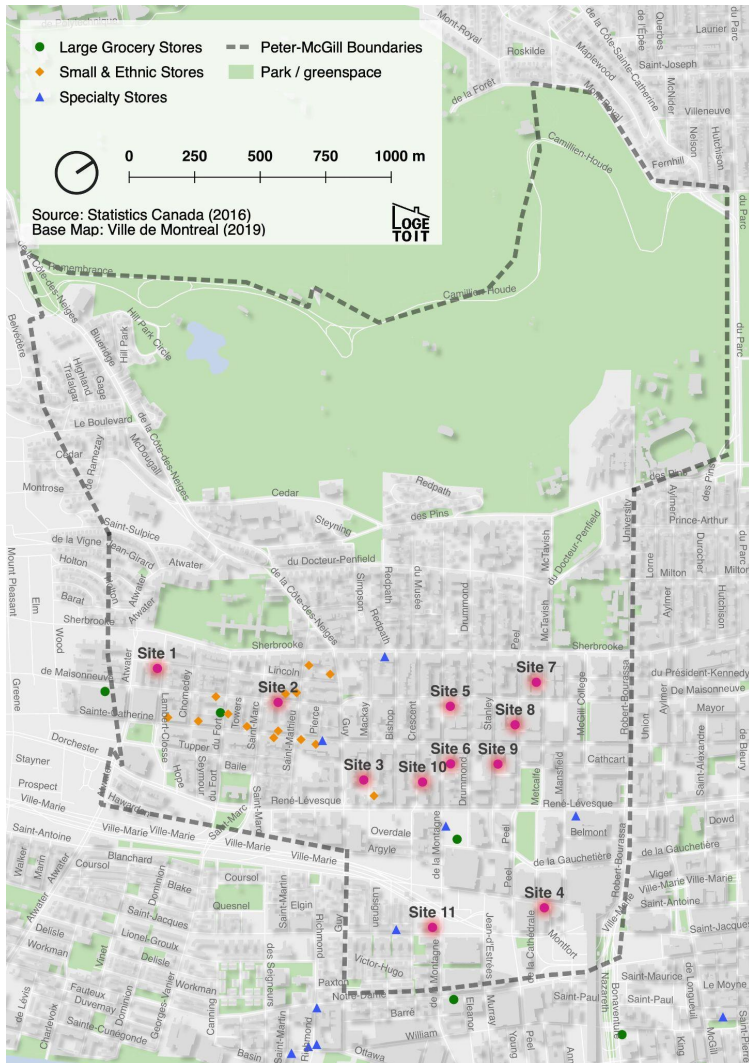



Figure 31. Grocery stores in Peter-McGill



Figure 32. Educational institutions in Peter-McGill



Sites	Valuation (CA\$)	Zoning	Current use	Surface area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Max density	Surface %*	Stories	Height (m)**	Lateral margin	Back margin
1	1,982,000	R3	Residential	690.27	3	85	2-3	14	2.5	3
2	1,989,900	M3C	Parking lot	1,021.00	3	85	2-3	14	2.5	3
3	4,743,400	M7C	Parking lot	1,258.52	6	100	3-4	16 (35)	2.5	3
4	13,502,700	M7C	Office	3,302.10	12	100	No limit	16 (120)	3	4
5	11,148,100	M7C	Parking lot	2,949.70	6	100	No limit	11-44 (65)	3	4
6	8,232,500	M7C	Parking lot	2,186.60	6	100	No limit	11-23 (35)	3	4
7a	1,050,800	M7C	Unused	280.20	12	100	No limit	16-44 (120)	4	4
7b	897,100	M7C	Parking lot	280.20	12	100	No limit	16-44 (120)	4	4
7c	973,600	M7C	Parking lot	258.60	12	100	No limit	16-44 (120)	4	4
8	1,596,500	M7C	Parking lot	422.5	12	100	No limit	16-44 (120)	4	4
9	6,853,400	M7C	Parking lot	1,827.10	9	100	No limit	11-23 (65)	3	4
10	11,270,000	M7C	Residential	3,587.90	6	100	3-4	16 (35)	2.5	3
11	5,017,300	M4C	Commercial	2,746.10	6	100	3-4	11-30 (65)	3	4

Table 2. Detailed information for each lot



Paliers de superficie résidentielle	Montant par secteur de valeur pour le calcul de la contribution financière				
	Secteur 1	Secteur 2	Secteur 3	Secteur 4	Secteur 5
0 à ≤ 450 m <sup>2</sup>	0 \$	0 \$	0 \$	0 \$	0 \$
> 450 à ≤ 1 800 m <sup>2</sup>	59 \$	49 \$	41 \$	31 \$	23 \$
> 1 800 à ≤ 9 000 m <sup>2</sup>	74 \$	62 \$	51 \$	38 \$	28 \$
> 9 000 à ≤ 12 500 m <sup>2</sup>	88 \$	74 \$	61 \$	46 \$	34 \$
> 12 500 à ≤ 22 500 m <sup>2</sup>	103 \$	87 \$	76 \$	54 \$	40 \$
> 22 500 m <sup>2</sup> et plus	118 \$	99 \$	82 \$	61 \$	46 \$

Table 3. Values per sector used for the calculation of financial contributions (source: Règlement pour une métropole mixte)

Table 4. Result table

**Site 1**

2100 Rue Lambert-Closse

- Valued at \$1,982,000
- Residential building in residential neighbourhood
- Current project proposed for height extension by 3 floors

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
10.1	11.2	9.0	10.9	12.9	8.2
12.5	13.9	14.1	11.4	14.7	11.1

\*Second row shows result with amended zoning



**Site 2**

1840 Boulevard de Maisonneuve Ouest

- Valued at \$1,989,900
- Narrow and deep site
- Height restrictions

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
9.1	10.1	8.4	9.5	11.5	8.6
11.6	12.9	13.5	10.3	13.3	11.7

\*Second row shows result with amended zoning



**Site 3 (sold)**

1200 Rue Mackay

- Valued at \$4,743,400
- Market-rate student housing under construction
- Lot last sold in early 2020

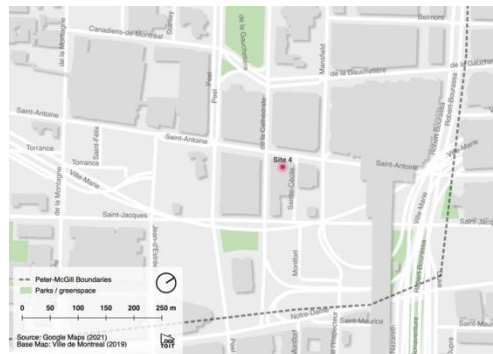


**Site 4**

1000 Rue Saint-Antoine Ouest

- Valued at \$13,502,700
- Office building, difficult to convert to residential
- Low access to amenities/greenspace

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
9.9	9.8	10.1	9.7	9.8	9.7



### Site 5 (sold)

1445 Rue de la Montagne

- Valued at \$11,148,100
- Sold for \$48.5 million
- Condominium development



### Site 6

1201 Rue de la Montagne

- Valued at \$8,232,500
- Large lot across from potential public primary school
- High density potential

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
14.3	14.9	16.4	12.9	14.7	14.3



### Site 7

2044 Rue Metcalfe

- Valued at \$2,921,500
- High density potential
- Good access to amenities

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
13.1	13.3	14.5	12.1	12.9	14.1



### Site 8

1422 Rue Peel

- Valued at \$1,596,500
- Narrow lot
- Height limitations

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
11.3	12.1	13.4	10.0	12.0	11.8



**Site 9**

1245 Rue Stanley

- Valued at \$6,853,400
- Good access to amenities
- Large lot

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
12.8	13.1	13.1	12.6	13.3	13.0



**Site 10**

1189-1235 Rue Crescent

- Valued at \$11,270,000
- Mixed use: parking lot, residential, commercial
- Existing residents and businesses

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
9.8	9.7	7.6	11.2	10.6	9.5



### Site 11

1313-1355 Rue Saint-Jacques

- Valued at \$5,017,300
- Current commercial use
- Located across the street from under-construction social housing

Final Score	Unweighted	Cost weighted more heavily	Cost removed from analysis	Amenities and environment weighted more heavily	Aesthetic, lifestyle, and value judgements removed
15.7	15.1	17.3	14.7	13.8	16.2





Figure 34. Site 6: Public transit accessibility



Figure 35. Site 6: Access to amenities



Figure 36. Site 11: Public transit accessibility



Figure 37. Site 11: Access to amenities



*Figure 38. Swedish inspiration for Site 11*

