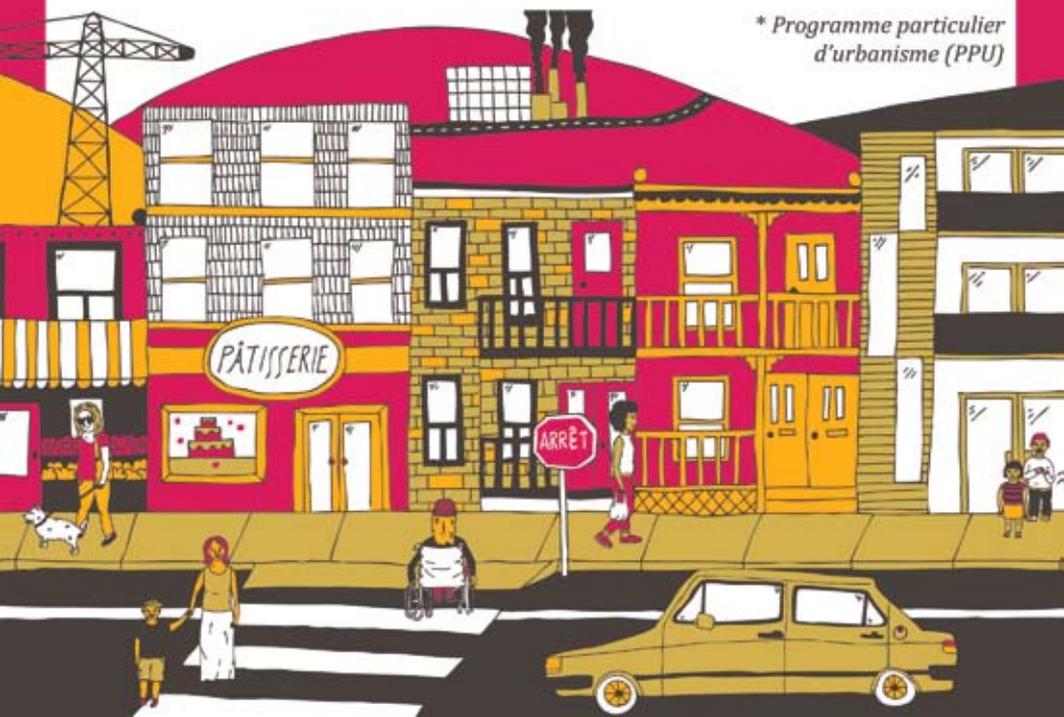


A quick guide to

SPECIAL PLANNING PROGRAMS^{*} in Montréal

What they are, why they're important
and how they work

** Programme particulier
d'urbanisme (PPU)*



What is a **SPECIAL PLANNING PROGRAM (SPP)?**

It's a detailed plan that is created when an area is undergoing or expected to undergo significant change. It sets future goals for the area and describes how they can be reached through new **urban planning by-laws**, improved **public amenities**, and **programs and policies**.

WHAT KINDS OF GOALS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Environmental
- ✓ Economic

WHAT does an SPP **AFFECT**?



URBAN PLANNING BY-LAWS

Rules that the City adopts to determine what activities may occur on a given piece of land, what kinds of buildings may be built and how these buildings can look. This covers many things, from **architectural standards and design guidelines** to **zoning and land use**.



PUBLIC AMENITIES

These are cultural, recreational and community facilities, and public spaces for residents and visitors. They can include parks, playgrounds, libraries, museums, street lights, public benches, sidewalks, alleyways, etc.



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

These initiatives can be used to encourage affordable housing, family housing, renovations, green architecture and landscaping, bike paths and public transit, opportunities for local businesses, restoration of historical buildings, etc.

HELPFUL HINT
Words in bold are defined in the Key Terms section.

An SPP is coming... **WHO CARES** and **WHY?**



NEW RESIDENT

There are many young families like mine moving into the neighbourhood. We need more services and facilities, like a public pool and playgrounds. I am also concerned about increasing traffic. What can be done with streets and sidewalks to ensure that our kids are safe?

LONG-TERM RESIDENT

I have lived in my neighbourhood for over 20 years and I've seen many changes take place. I would love to see those vacant lots near my home turned into green spaces like community gardens.



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER

SPPs affect my clients, projects and profits. They determine how high I can construct my buildings, my construction schedules, how much parking I have to provide, what architectural standards I have to follow, and what types of housing I can build (for example, family-friendly units vs. loft-style condos).



LARGE INSTITUTION

We will be taking over large parcels of land and bringing hundreds of new jobs to the neighbourhood. How can our arrival help improve the area in ways that benefit our new neighbours as well as our employees and clients?



COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Many residents in our neighbourhood can no longer afford the rent or are in need of jobs nearby. We want to ensure that future developments include affordable housing for low-income residents and bring new jobs.



CITY PLANNER

The City of Montréal defines an SPP as a "component of the Master Plan that allows for more detailed planning in specific areas. Adoption of an SPP by city council is an amendment to the Plan and is preceded by a public consultation process." Once adopted, it is my job to work with architects and developers to ensure that they integrate the different elements of the SPP into their projects.



BUSINESS OWNER

I want my business to be easily accessible by transit, foot, bike and car. My customers need to be able to get here! I would also like for the rundown facades around my business to be renovated and for the sidewalks to be widened so that I can make outdoor displays.



ELECTED OFFICIAL

An SPP is a great opportunity to improve the neighbourhood for its residents. I want to take advantage of the upcoming public consultation to better understand the neighbourhood's vision according to its residents and to learn more about certain present and future concerns.



What does *that* mean? **KEY TERMS**

Architectural and design guidelines

Guidelines that determine the physical and aesthetic qualities of construction projects. This can include landscaping, building materials, terrace and awning sizes, and access to and location of parking lots (behind or underground). Building proposals can also be evaluated according to how well they fit into the style and character of an area.

City council and executive committee

City council is made up of 65 elected officials (mayor of Montréal, 18 borough mayors, 46 city councillors). It is Montréal's main decision-making body, and as such it is involved in major planning projects like the Master Plan and SPPs. From city council, the mayor selects 11 members to form the executive committee. This committee makes recommendations to city council on issues such as budgets and by-laws. They also have decision-making power in a number of areas, including grants and contracts.

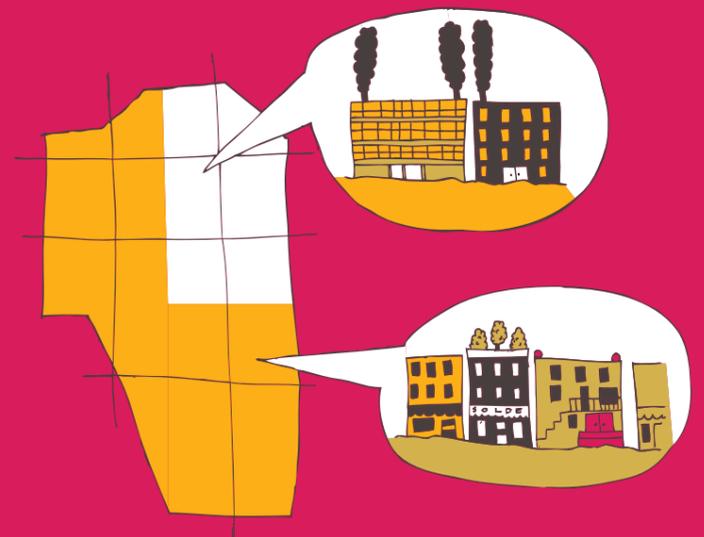


Density

A measurement of the number of people, housing units or square meters of construction relative to a given piece of land. In general, the more people, housing units or buildings there are in an area, the more dense it is.

Master Plan

An official document that lays out the urban planning vision for the City of Montréal, summarizes priorities for public interventions, and gives general guidelines for building heights, land use and density. The Master Plan includes plans for the different boroughs and for SPPs that are adopted. Whenever a change is proposed to the Master Plan, a public hearing must be held.



Zoning and land use

Specific bylaws that determine where and what types of activities can take place for each type of property (residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional). These bylaws also determine certain physical characteristics of buildings, such as height, distance between buildings, number of parking spaces available, etc.

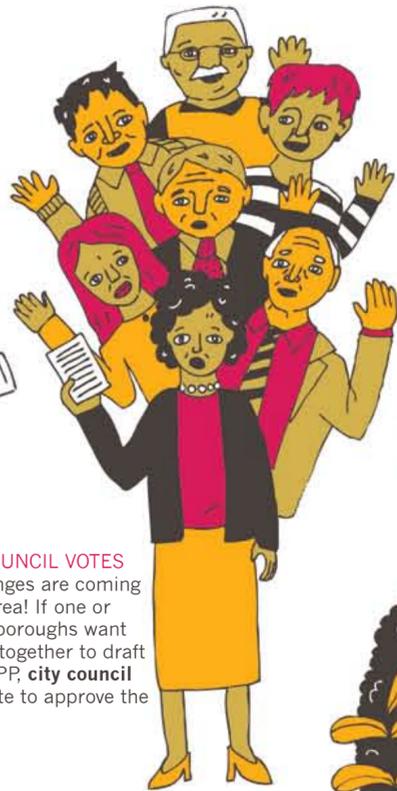
SPP STEPS

1. IDENTIFYING THE AREA
Our city is constantly evolving, but some parts are being transformed more significantly than others. Montréal's **Master Plan** identifies areas where major changes are expected and where in-depth planning is needed so those changes are beneficial to all. SPPs can be initiated by elected officials or by citizens.



Who writes an SPP?
Urban planners working for the City lead the creation of SPPs, sometimes with the help of other professionals. Ideally, throughout the drafting process residents, property owners, business people and community groups are consulted. In this way, everybody can help write an SPP.

2. CITY COUNCIL VOTES
Big changes are coming to the area! If one or several boroughs want to work together to draft up an SPP, **city council** must vote to approve the process.



3. PORTRAIT
Before a plan is made, studies are done to better understand the area and how it is changing. These studies help determine what is needed and what elements should be part of the SPP.

Early involvement
Sometimes a public consultation is held during the portrait phase, before the SPP is drafted. This visioning exercise allows the community to be involved at the beginning of the process.

What kinds of studies are done?
Some studies that might be done include an inventory of commercial and industrial activities, infrastructure, public spaces and facilities, traffic flows, heritage, population characteristics and housing needs, potential for economic development, real estate opportunities, etc.



4. WRITING THE SPP
The SPP identifies goals for the future of an area as well as urban planning by-laws, public amenities, and programs and policies that will help reach these goals. But how can we make sure the proposed changes will not cause new problems? More studies can be done to help understand the likely impacts of the plan.

Typically, the major sections of an SPP include:
1. Context: portrait and challenges
2. Vision and objectives for the future
3. Action plan: tools needed to reach goals and relevant actors



6. COUNCIL SIGNS OFF
The **executive committee and city council** vote on whether or not to adopt the SPP as is or to make any recommended changes based on public consultation findings. The **Master Plan** is then modified to incorporate the SPP. The borough's detailed **zoning by-laws** are also changed to reflect what was said in the SPP.

What is the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM)?
The OCPM is an independent body that is responsible for holding public consultations on many major urban projects, including SPPs. OCPM consultations are followed by a detailed report that includes recommended changes. The OCPM has no decision-making power—it offers recommendations that highlight community concerns and help elected officials and others in power to make informed decisions.

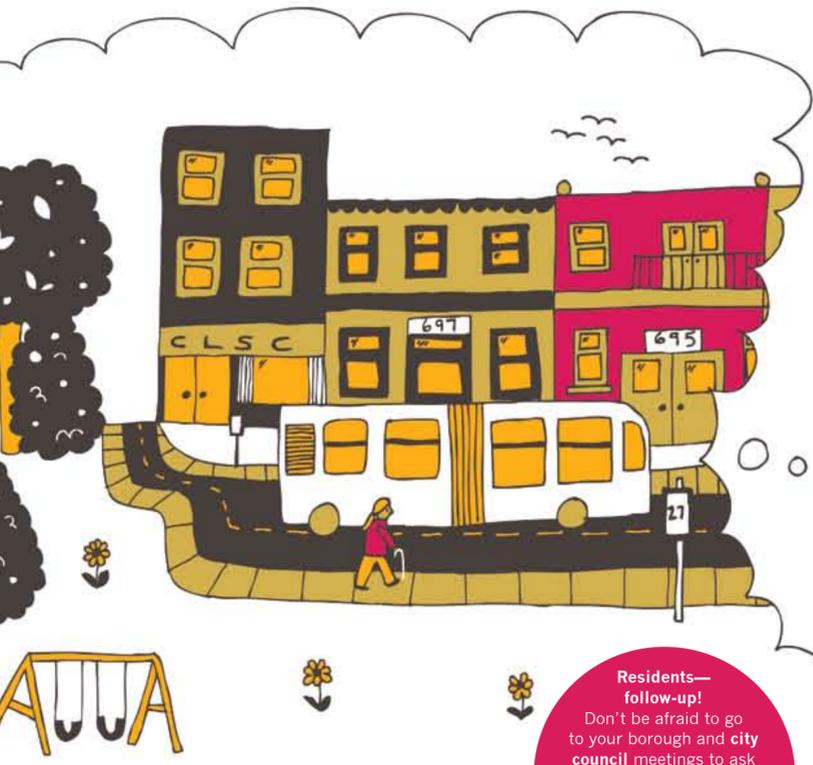
5. YOUR INPUT! PUBLIC CONSULTATION
Nobody knows about the day-to-day life of a neighbourhood more than its residents. During the creation of an SPP, residents and others who are interested in the future of the area are given an opportunity to voice their ideas, concerns and needs. This is usually done through a public hearing, but can also be complemented by focus groups, workshops, questionnaires, interviews, etc.

THE CONSULTATION LOWDOWN
1. It's happening: the consultation is announced in the local media and information about the SPP is publicly posted on municipal websites and/or the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) website. Either the borough or the OCPM leads the public consultation.
2. What it's about: urban planners and other experts (e.g. representatives from environment, heritage, architecture, etc.) present the project during public information sessions.
3. Your opinion: public hearing(s) take place where residents and groups can voice their opinions verbally or in written form.
4. Ideas to consider: a borough or OCPM report is released with a summary of concerns. In the case of OCPM reports, a transcript of public hearings and recommendations for changes are included.



Residents—follow-up!
Don't be afraid to go to your borough and **city council** meetings to ask how certain SPP actions are progressing. Borough and City budgets are key in allocating money for future projects. Check them out!

7. ONLY THE BEGINNING!
Some actions proposed in the SPP happen quickly, while others take several years or even decades. The success of an SPP does not only depend on urban planners—it also depends on the willingness of different levels of government, businesses, institutions, residents and the cultural and community sectors to work together to carry out this shared vision.



WANT to know MORE?

Guide to decision-making in urban planning - Special Planning Program (Ministère des affaires municipales, régions et occupation du territoire - MAMROT)

<http://goo.gl/GQSMMb> (Available only in French)

SPPs in Montréal

<http://goo.gl/6Ama2S>

Montréal's Master Plan

<http://goo.gl/1d6cfm>



The Office de consultation publique de Montréal is an independent organization whose mission is to hold public consultations relating to urban planning and development projects under municipal jurisdiction, as well as any project designated by the council or the executive committee.

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