

Montreal Vision 2050: Land-Use and Mobility Plan

1. **Adopt a Form-Based Code** (e.g. Calgary, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, Denver)
 - a. A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by **using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code**. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation. (Source: <https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/>)
 - b. Instead of separating residential, commercial, and industrial uses, municipal codes should specify the physical form of buildings (heights, setbacks, etc.) and allow the people living in the community to populate those buildings in the way they see fit; this allows for resiliency over time and mixed use, which eliminates most trips outside the immediate area and therefore reduces congestion.
 - c. A Form-Based Code can still outlaw certain noxious or dangerous activities, such as meat packing or explosives manufacturing; however, the guiding principle should be to allow citizens the maximum of liberty in deciding how to populate and utilize their built environment.
 - d. **Recommendation:** The City of Montreal and all its boroughs should adopt a simplified Form-Based Code and streamlined approval process for projects that do not require derogation. This will allow new housing development and enable small-scale and community developers.

2. **Eliminate Single-Family Zoning**
 - a. Montreal is known for and defined by its plexes; namely, attached and semi-detached dwellings of 2-8 units across two to 4 storeys (a defining feature in Montreal is that each unit usually has its own entrance from the street, leading to the landmark exterior staircases)
 - b. Single-Family Zoning is a product of the automobile age and has proven disastrous to our urban fabric; the most desirable and successful neighbourhoods are always multi-family yet human-scaled, usually built as streetcar suburbs (the original Transit-Oriented Development). They are characterised neither by the looming condo towers of today, nor the detached single-family home of the 1950s, but the low- and mid-rise plexes and blocs of the Plateau. These conditions create walkable, human-scaled neighbourhoods with enough density to support local business without losing the human scale of the built environment.
 - c. Therefore, Montreal and all its boroughs should eliminate the antiquated notion of Single-Family Zoning and allow multiple units in 2-3 storey buildings by right; these buildings fit easily into a low-density Single-Family environment while greatly increasing density and ensuring efficient land use.
 - d. At the same time, the City should encourage the development of Accessory Dwelling Units in municipal alleyways, which would allow homeowners to

convert their detached garages and sheds into new dwellings opening onto the alleyway (as frequently done in the U.K. where they are called Mews, and Vancouver where they are called Laneway Houses).

- e. **Recommendation:** The City of Montreal and all its boroughs should eliminate Single-Family Zoning and allow the construction/conversion of plexes and accessory dwelling units by right.

3. Eliminate Mandatory Parking Minimums

- a. It is totally absurd to require parking minimums while trying to encourage people to use other means of transit; parking minimums drive up the cost of housing. After the U.S. city of Minneapolis eliminated parking minimums in 2015, the number of new housing units doubled in just 5 years. With our excellent and ever-expanding transit and cycle networks, it just doesn't make sense to have parking minimums unless our elected officials are working for the auto and oil industries instead of their constituents.
- b. **Recommendation:** The City of Montreal and all its boroughs should eliminate mandatory parking minimums for all new developments AND for any business permits.

4. Return Power to Small-Scale Developers

- a. When large sites come up for development, the City should subdivide the area into individual plots and plan the street network to tie into the existing grid; it should then sell those plots to individuals for development rather than favoring large developers.
- b. This form of development was common until the post-WWII era.
- c. Large developers favour quicker projects that are easier to build but do not necessarily provide walkable, human-scaled neighbourhoods (see: Griffintown).
- d. **Recommendation:** Ensure an integrated street grid and allow small-scale developers by taking back control of sub-dividing large development areas.

5. Build New Pedestrian Neighbourhoods and Invest in Smaller Emergency and Service Vehicles

- a. Instead of building condo towers, the City should encourage the development of tightly-packed 3-4 storey multiplexes with commerce on the ground floor and narrow, pedestrianized streets (about the width of a condo building corridor) similar to the "megablocks" or Barcelona or the more picturesque areas of Italian and Greek hill towns.
- b. This would require investment in smaller and more nimble emergency vehicles and potential adjustments to services (such as adding underground waste

containers) but it would provide the best living environment and gentle density to support local business while creating a destination with strong sense of place.

- c. The relative high density combined with low infrastructure need would make these areas cash-flow-positive additions to the City tax base.
- d. **Recommendation:** explore alternatives to condo towers, think holistically about neighbourhood development to create walkable and pedestrianized neighbourhoods with “gentle density”.