



Brief presented to the members of the Transport and Environment Commission of the urban agglomeration of Montreal on its *Plan Directeur de Gestion des Matières Résiduelles (PDGMR)*

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Introduction

The City of Côte Saint-Luc welcomes the opportunity to make recommendations on the *Plan Directeur de Gestion des Matières Résiduelles* (PDGMR) to the members of the Transport and Environment Commission of the urban agglomeration of Montreal.

This brief will provide some background information about how the City of Côte Saint-Luc implemented its organic waste collection program, and provide recommendations for the urban agglomeration of Montreal based on our experiences. We hope that our waste diversion program can become a model for cities throughout the island of Montreal.

Also, we wish to reiterate that Côte Saint-Luc supports the brief of the Association of Suburban Municipalities (ASM), which will be presented during these hearings.

About Côte Saint-Luc

The City of Côte Saint-Luc is the third largest municipality on the island of Montreal. Its sports and recreation programs, 28 parks, and modern library make it an attractive residential community in the west end.

Côte Saint-Luc has been a leader in health and safety issues, becoming the first municipality in Canada to require bicycle helmets and one of the first municipalities in Quebec to ban pesticides. It is one of the only municipalities in Quebec to have a volunteer first responder service, which was formed almost 30 years ago. In 2006, it became the first city in the province to introduce a Citizens on Patrol program. Côte Saint-Luc is a bilingual municipality with a diverse, predominantly English-speaking population and has been a leader on human rights issues.

Here are some facts and figures to help understand the population of Côte Saint-Luc:

- Population: 31,395
- Number of households: 13,535
- Median age: 49
- Registered electors: 22,000
- City area: 6.95 km²

- Percentage of rented dwellings: 50.6
- Percentage of owned dwellings: 49.4

Côte Saint-Luc and the environment (2006)

- Côte Saint-Luc recycling rate: 23% (note that in 2006 recycling was not yet implemented in multi-residential buildings)
- Montreal recycling rate: 37%
- Côte Saint-Luc organic waste recycling rate: 3%
- Montreal organic waste recycling rate: 7%

Based on the data above, in 2008 the City of Côte Saint-Luc has been focusing on improving our environmental performance by prioritizing waste diversion programs, including a new blue bin recycling program for apartments and condominiums and the Côte Saint-Luc organic waste collection program for single-family homes and duplexes.

In September 2007, Côte Saint-Luc became the only city on the island of Montreal and one of the only cities in Quebec with a three-stream collection program. We implemented a curbside organic waste collection program in 500 homes and are currently planning the expansion of the program to all single-family homes and duplexes in Côte Saint-Luc in September 2008.

Planning is currently underway to replace all open blue bins (64L) for single-family homes and duplexes with larger rolling bins. This will be implemented in 2009. We hope to be one of the first cities in Quebec to achieve the goal of diverting 60 percent of our waste, set out in La politique québécoise de gestion des matières résiduelles 1998-2008.

1. Jurisdictions - Autonomie Sectorielle

According to the rules governing the agglomeration, collection and transport of residual waste is the responsibility of the local municipality while treatment and disposal is provided by the agglomeration. This artificial division of responsibilities creates an inherent conflict and results in an adversarial approach between the parties involved.

For example, it is commonly perceived that the savings generated by having a free recycling plant at the agglomeration level in 2009 will be more than offset by a substantial increase in the cost of pick-up and transport of recyclable material by the reconstituted municipality. As it is one and the same taxpayer who will be paying for the collection, transport and disposal, then rather than engaging in discourse over jurisdictional lines, we all should be looking to for ways to treat waste in ways that are the most efficient and environmentally sound.

Recommendation 1a: In keeping with the spirit of the purpose of the PDGMR which is *autonomie sectorielle*, meaning treating your waste on the territory where it was created the plan should promote treatment of waste at the most local level wherever possible. This could include delegating authority and finances to the local municipality as was done with snow removal on arterial roads.

Reducing waste, reusing items, backyard and curbside composting are more effective and environmentally sustainable than developing large infrastructure. By promoting 3R+C at source instead of investing in large-scale installations, the cities and boroughs can be more efficient in reaching their targets.

Recommendation 1b: Recognize the major role played by the boroughs and municipalities and ensure their budgets reflect this role.

2. Financing

In April 26, 2006, the Quebec provincial government set up a fund from the royalties for the elimination of waste (*Décret 340-2006, Règlement sur les redevances exigible pour l'élimination de matières résiduelles*). This fund was intended for municipalities to be innovative in the field of waste management (see Annex A-1). Unfortunately, the funds dedicated for the reconstituted municipalities are being held back in trust by the Quebec government awaiting final decision by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, notwithstanding numerous resolutions and opposition of the reconstituted cities (see Annex A-2). At the same, the City of Montreal has received its share in the amount till December 2007 of **\$15,946,742.67** (see Annex B). However, to date, no new innovative programs have been launched with these monies by the City of Montreal.

On the other hand, Côte Saint-Luc has launched its pilot curbside organic waste program without having collected any of our share of the *redevances*, which is currently evaluated at **\$309,704.07** (see Annex B). This amount would be more than enough to cover the cost of providing the new service of providing organic waste collection to all single-family homes and duplexes in our city, which is estimated at \$260,000. This includes the cost of the brown bins, kitchen collectors, DVD information videos, and delivery. Reconstituted municipalities and boroughs are on the front-line of waste management and need the entire *redevances* amount immediately. As the real engine of change, we must be recognized and compensated as such.

Recommendation 2: The *redevances* must be used for the purpose for which it was intended, to finance innovative waste management initiatives, not to cover the cost of basic waste operations.

3. Best Practices

Currently, there is no incentive for reconstituted cities or boroughs to excel in the field of environmental waste management. No additional funding or recognition is given to local councils that are innovative in this field. Furthermore, there is no reference in the PDGMR for cities that are ahead of the pre-set timeline. The PDGMR takes on a top-down approach.

The agglomeration of Montreal should be encouraging local initiatives to reduce waste. Additional funding and support must be set for those cities that are making large gains with respect to diversion targets. There also should be a sharing mechanism among cities on best practices. This is currently done among many reconstituted municipalities by the Regional Environment Committee co-chaired by Kate Coulter and David Pollock, councillors of the Town of Beaconsfield. This needs to be expanded island-wide.

Recommendation 3: A forum of island-wide municipal representatives including Montreal and the reconstituted municipalities should be set to promote and share best practices with respect to the environment.

Recommendation 4: A special green fund should be set up for waste management to reward boroughs and cities that use best practices and achieve large gains in waste diversion.

4. Setting Firm Targets and Timeline

The PDGMR calls for a diversion rate of 60% of all organic material by 2018. The goal for diversion of recyclable material is set at 60% by 2012, which is static in 2018 (page 23, table 2 of the PDGMR). At the same time, the City of Toronto has set a diversion target of 70% to be achieved by 2010. The Town of Markham, Ontario has a diversion goal of 75%.

In the Côte Saint-Luc three-stream pilot project, we have achieved a diversion rate of approximately 50% of our organic waste (collecting approximately 2 tonnes per week) within the first six months. This was achieved with a minimal budget for the entire pilot of 500 homes of less than \$20,000. We have proved that Côte Saint-Lucers, like all Montrealers, are open and willing to adopt this new method of waste treatment, once given the appropriate tools and education. We hope to further improve our results and achieve the provincial goal of 60% for all participating homes by the end of 2008. The targets of the PDGMR are based on the *La politique québécoise de gestion des matières résiduelles 1998-2008* which is expiring this year. We must establish objectives and tighter timelines

Recommendation 5: The plan should set the target of diversion rate of at least 60% for all recyclable material by 2012, including organic waste.

5. Urgent Need for Organic Waste Treatment Site

With respect to the treatment of organic waste, the timeline in the PDGMR is again too slow. Côte Saint-Luc as a local municipality is responsible for pick-up and transport, while the agglomeration is responsible for treatment. By October 2008, the City of Côte Saint-Luc will be collecting organic waste from 5,000 homes. At the present time, there is no licensed site in close proximity to Côte Saint-Luc that can take the projected amounts of food and garden waste which will be generated on our territory.

As the agglomeration of Montreal is currently responsible for waste disposal, it is urgent and imperative that it provide us with an appropriate and permanent disposal site for our organic waste. We cannot wait until 2018 for the large-scale treatment sites to be built.

Recommendation 6: The agglomeration should provide within six months a site for the disposal of food and yard waste collected by local municipalities (ie, Côte Saint-Luc, Westmount and Pointe-Claire) or finance the purchase and installation of a self-contained unit for organic waste treatment in situ (eg, Hot Rot).

Recommendation 7: If the agglomeration of Montreal cannot provide an adequate, permanent licensed site for organic waste treatment within the next six months, it must delegate their authority and the appropriate financing on waste treatment to the local municipality.

6. Plastic

The biggest obstacle to the treatment of organic waste that we have experienced is the plastic bag. Plastic bags make the treatment cost more expensive and diminish the quality of the final product, compost. Instead residents must use either paper bags or compostable bags. Residents placing their green waste in plastic bags should eventually be fined after a sufficient transition period.

Recommendation 8: The agglomeration government should work with industry and business associations throughout the island to agree upon a timetable for all businesses on the island to transition from plastic bags to compostable or paper bags (eg, SAQ, see Annex C)

Recommendation 9: The agglomeration of Montreal needs to ban the use of plastic bags for the collection of leaf and garden waste. The agglomeration government should ensure that paper and compostable bags are available at retail locations and municipal facilities throughout the island.

One of the obstacles in reaching our target for diversion of recyclable material is the commercial use of type 6 plastic (polystyrene, aka Styrofoam). Type 6 plastic is currently not recyclable in the Montreal area. This leads to confusion among residents when separating their plastic, metal and paper.

Recommendation 10: The agglomeration of Montreal needs to work with industry to encourage the implementation of a facility to recycle type 6 plastic.

Recommendation 11: If it is not possible to create a facility that can recycle type 6 plastic, the agglomeration of Montreal needs to work with industry and business associations throughout the island to agree upon a timetable for to phase out permanently type 6 plastic for household products.

7. Detailed Turnkey Plan

The PDGMR is a good starting point for discussion but municipalities need to be supplied with a detailed template to facilitate implementation of an organic waste collection program.

The City of Côte Saint-Luc has prepared a detailed plan of how we implemented our curbside program. The plan includes key points related to collection, bin size and type, what material to accept and communication (see Annex D). We are ready and able to help other cities implement their program and hope we can be of assistance to the Agglomeration's Commission on Transport and the Environment.

Recommendation 12: The Agglomeration government needs to work with the City of Côte Saint-Luc and other cities that have implemented organic waste collection to produce a turnkey (*clé en main*) plan that municipalities and boroughs can easily follow to implement their own curbside organic waste collection program.

8. Education

One of the problems in the implementation of a new program is the lack of education. Before implementing our pilot organic waste collection program, volunteers from our environment committee (CSL EcoAction), green patrollers hired as summer students and city councillors from Côte Saint-Luc went door-to-door to explain the program. The plan is to continue this and knock on every door in Côte Saint-Luc before implementing the second phase of the program in September.

When implementing this program island-wide, a large amount of education is going to be needed (see Annex E for samples from Côte Saint-Luc), which should be accompanied with a re-education on recycling in general.

Recommendation 13: The agglomeration of Montreal must increase the amount of public awareness through a widespread media campaign on waste management including more detailed education on what is and isn't recyclable and organic waste collection.

9. Innovation through Partnership and by Example

In 2008, if we look at other cities around Canada and the world, we see a great deal of innovative ideas. The City of Toronto is offering its residents four sizes of residual waste bins and charging them based on the amount of garbage they produce. Many cities have begun selling their carbon offset credits on the market as they divert waste from landfill.

Composting organic waste produces 25 times less harmful greenhouse gases than dumping it in landfill. Many cities are looking into public-private partnerships to deal with their waste management costs. Others are promoting commercial establishments based on recycling industry such as vintage clothing. In many countries, there is a tax on plastic bags used in stores. Several jurisdictions have also begun occasional curbside collection of hazardous waste material. Putting all our money into large installations would prevent us from benefiting from new approaches.

Recommendation 14: The plan must promote and encourage local business enterprises to implement new technologies transform, sell, recycle and exchange all the resources which result from post-consumer waste.

Municipalities, as managers of their own equipment and buildings, can lead by example.

Recommendation 15: Municipalities on the island of Montreal should adopt buy green policies to increase the demand for products made from recycled materials and post-consumer waste.

Conclusion

The *Plan Directeur de Gestion des Matières Résiduelles* is a good beginning for discussion but needs many improvements. Local municipalities and boroughs need the financial assistance through the *redevances* that they are entitled to. In order to move forward, faster, we must set hard targets and there must be rewards for those cities that excel.

We have a legal framework of split jurisdictions that has been imposed upon us by the Quebec provincial government. We must find a way to work within this framework to our mutual advantage (ie, through delegation and sharing of responsibilities and funding).

We must all promote innovative technologies by adopting new local methods in our cities and boroughs and not rely exclusively on large-scale infrastructure installations based on projections that can evolve over time.

Annexes

- Annex A-1 Law creating the *redevances pour l'élimination de matières résiduelles*
- Annex A-2 Four resolutions from the City of Côte Saint-Luc (16 October 2006, 12 March 2007, 13 August 2007, 21 January 2008), and article in La Presse (21 August 2007)
- Annex B Letter from the *Ministère du Développement durable et de l'Environnement et des Parcs* dated December 18, 2007
- Annex C Advertisement from the SAQ regarding bags
- Annex D Outline of Côte Saint-Luc brown bin curbside organic waste collection pilot program
- Annex E Communication material used in pilot project