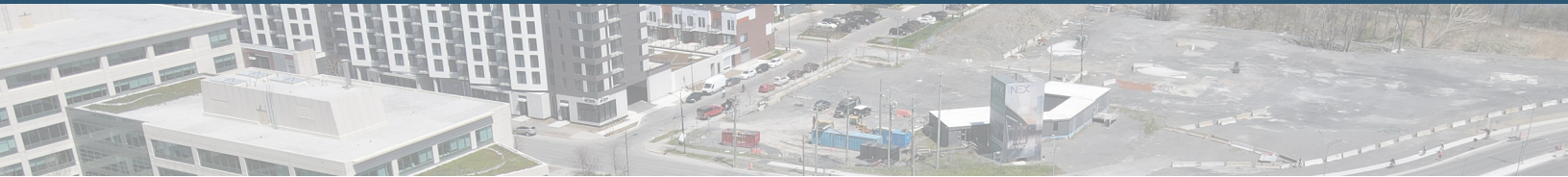


What can Zoning bylaws tell us about transit-oriented development in Montréal, Quebec?



The Issue

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has been widely encouraged as a strategy to increase urban density, reduce car dependence, and enhance neighborhood diversity. In line with the construction of a \$6.9B light-rail transit system - the Réseau Express Métropolitain (REM) - policy makers in Montréal are aiming to redevelop neighborhoods surrounding REM stations in accordance with TOD goals. To assess the extent to which municipalities are making regulatory changes to accommodate TOD plans, we conducted in-depth policy and geospatial analysis measuring bylaw changes and land-use patterns in the 1-km area surrounding light-rail stations from 2016-2022 (since the announcement of the REM).

Findings

- Pre-existing TODs:** These four light-rail stations located in the central part of the city made limited bylaw changes given that they are already located near metro stations and benefit from appropriate zoning. Nevertheless, some of these stations were able to re-zone underused areas and reduce parking minimums to further maximize TOD benefits, including the provision of additional greenspace.
- Developing TODs:** Out of the additional 21 stations currently under construction (excluding the airport), only four stations undertook significant bylaw and land-use changes, including the rezoning of commercial, industrial, and parking areas to allow for more compact, diversified developments and the construction of adequate multi-family housing.
- Non-TOD Without Changes:** These 11 stations implemented no or minimal bylaw changes, despite having high land availability (11.46%). These stations are dominated by low density residential areas (at 25.93% of the total land-use).
- Non-TOD With Changes:** These six stations benefited from some increased floor-area ratios and maximum building heights. However, these bylaw changes were done sparingly, despite having the highest percentage of industrial (13.79%) and available land (13.54%).
- Affordable Housing:** Only four stations in two boroughs have undergone changes to allocate affordable-housing units in new development projects due to a city-wide policy within the city of Montreal. Over half of REM stations are not subject to any affordable housing policies.
- Parking minimums** remain mostly untouched surrounding the 17 non-TOD stations



	Pre-existing TOD (n=4)	Developing TOD (n=4)	Non-TOD, with changes (n=6)	Non-TOD, no changes (n=11)
Land Use				
Residential				
Low-density (Single dwelling)	5.72%	22.17%	17.39%	25.93%
Medium Density (2-4 dwellings)	3.60%	1.80%	2.06%	4.39%
High Density (5+ Dwellings)	11.10%	4.90%	5.97%	6.23%
Employment				
Industrial Zone	3.26%	0.49%	13.79%	3.80%
Commercial Zone	7.64%	13.44%	11.66%	6.78%
Offices & Institutions	30.38%	7.56%	6.88%	6.33%
Green Spaces				
	2.66%	3.31%	5.11%	3.15%
Constructable land				
	6.36%	8.69%	13.54%	11.46%

Policy Recommendations

- » Ensure that municipal zoning bylaws are appropriately designed to support mixed-land uses, adequate multi-family housing, and reasonable density around transit stations in line with TOD goals.
- » Increase affordable housing policies around REM stations, including stations outside of the city of Montreal, to facilitate an equitable distribution of TOD benefits.
- » Adjust parking ratios (i.e., reducing parking minimums) around REM stations to provide space for TOD and to encourage the use of active and public-transport modes.