

PRELIMINARY REPORT  
SPECIAL PLANNING PROGRAM  
FOR VALOIS VILLAGE

**City of Pointe-Claire**

January 10, 2017

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# INTRODUCTION

The City of Pointe-Claire has two village hubs: Valois Village and Pointe-Claire Village. The former is more recent than the latter: the development of Valois along Donegani Avenue has been driven by the presence of the Valois train station and the Valois neighbourhood. Today it mainly offers local services and businesses that contribute to the quality of life for the residents nearby, and it plays an important role in the economy of Pointe-Claire. Despite various improvement efforts by the City and the business community, Valois Village suffers from a lack of vitality that is reflected both in its physical appearance and in the calibre of local businesses.

The City is well aware of its worth and its potential, and has identified Valois Village in its Planning Program as a “special planning sector” in order to thoroughly study it and develop a detailed plan that will address its specific issues. This Special Planning Program (SPP) thus constitutes a chapter of the Planning Program devoted to Valois Village.

The SPP is based on a diagnosis prepared by the firm Convercité. To secure a realistic portrait that best reflects the community’s perceptions and expectations, the diagnosis incorporated a public consultation process conducted from May to September 2016. Surveys, focus groups and consultation sessions were held with local residents and businesspeople. They served to identify and validate the main issues affecting Valois, and to test various approaches to a solution.

The Valois Village SPP begins with a summary of the main elements of the diagnosis, and goes on to propose a vision for the future together with orientations, objectives and actions whereby the vision can become reality.

## 1. PORTRAIT OF VALOIS VILLAGE

### 1.1 AREA LOCATION

The Valois Village is located north of Highway 20, at the southeast corner of the City of Pointe-Claire and adjacent with the territory of Dorval. It extends over 800 metres between Valois Park and the Sources / A20 interchange. It is bordered to the south by the Canadian Pacific (CP) railway and to the north by the Valois neighborhood.

**Figure 1. Location of Valois Village**



More precisely, the territory covered by Valois Village SPP includes all properties on both sides of Donegani Avenue and some properties on the side streets. It is characterized by the concentration of shops and businesses, along with the vacant land located at the east end of the village. The Sources / A20 overpass is also part of the territory.

**Figure 2. Area Covered by the SPP**



## 1.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF VALOIS NEIGHBOURHOOD

The first constructions of the Valois neighbourhood were established along the banks of the Grande-Anse. The first phase of urbanization began in the 1870s, a date at which a first train station was built south of the railway tracks.

From the 1910s onwards, the Valois Bay Heights company subdivided the land north of the railway, upon which 15 cottages and larger houses were to be built. Residential development increased place in the 1920s, due to the daily train trips between Valois and downtown Montreal.

From the 1950s, the widespread use of the car as a mode of transportation brought about the construction of Highway 20 which created and remains today, a significant physical barrier between the neighbourhood and Lake Saint-Louis.

Most homes in Valois were built between 1915 and 1965 while businesses settled mainly along Donegani Avenue, which had become the commercial core for the residents of the neighborhood.

## 1.3 ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The SPP takes up the main findings of the diagnosis developed by Convergence. Valois Village assessment is based on two distinct but overlapping approaches:

- A territorial analysis approach carried out by means of observations, ground surveys, regulatory analysis and analysis of statistical data.
- A citizen consultation approach carried out with the help of residents and Valois Village business people.

Several methods and activities were employed in the course of the citizen consultation approach:

- A telephone survey involving 150 residents;
- A face-to-face survey involving 57 merchants;

- A focus group with participants that emphasized social and community considerations;
- A focus group with participants that emphasized economic and commercial considerations;
- Two evenings of forum-style citizen consultations with roundtables and discussions.

The goal of this dual approach is to combine professional analysis with the insights and expertise of citizens and other involved parties. The resulting assessment will be a product of input from the largest possible number of participants and will thereby better guide the formulation of the SPP.

### **1.3.1 The Social Context in the Valois Neighbourhood**

#### **An Attractive Neighbourhood Composed Mainly of Detached Houses**

Valois neighbourhood is an attractive area in the City of Pointe-Claire. Since 2001, its population grew constantly and by 2011, consisted of 4,910 residents of which 70% have lived in the neighbourhood longer than 10 years and 78% are owners of a single family home. Incentives that influenced households to settle in the Valois neighbourhood are varied, but the majority of the respondents surveyed confirm that they moved into the neighbourhood because of the quality of housing relative to the price, the accessibility of services and the neighbourhood's charm.

#### **A Family Neighbourhood**

A third of the Valois neighbourhood population are under 25 years of age and almost a quarter of its residents are 70 years old or more. More than two thirds of the households are composed of families, of which a great number are couples with children (47%), couples without children (36%) and single-parent families (12%).

#### **A High Employment Rate**

The employment rate is 68% in the Valois neighbourhood while the unemployment rate is 5%. Individual earnings are approximately the same as for the City of Pointe-Claire as a whole. The median income is \$32,841 and the average income is \$42,330.

#### **A Primarily Anglophone Neighbourhood**

While a large majority of residents (72%) can converse in both English and French, most of them use English as their principal language at home.

#### **Many Services Available**

The neighbourhood offers community, institutional and social amenities and services: several churches, three schools, a library, a post office, a bank, a community resource centre and sports facilities. Half of the residents participate in community activities. The 40% of the population who do not take part in activities report a lack of time; while 19% refrain due to a lack of interest in the activities offered.

### **1.3.2 The Spatial Context of Valois Village**

#### **Diverse Features That Create an Attractive Neighbourhood**

Valois Village is a mixed sector that attracts businesses, institutions and residences. This co-existence of multiple uses makes it an attractive place that constitutes the village core of the Valois neighbourhood.

#### **A Sparse Area Lacking Visual Identity and Architectural Quality**

The built environment is not ideal from the aesthetic point of view, nor is it characteristic of a sustainable neighbourhood since only 13% of the total surface area is built. This low density can be partially explained by the fact that parking areas occupy a significant amount of space as well as the eastern most landsite which is occupied by a large vacant lot.

In addition to the low built density, the village has a variety of architectural types and street furniture. Most of the buildings are different. There are several styles of benches, garbage bins and street lights. This heterogeneity is not conducive to congering the neighbourhood with its own identity; nor does the lack of architecture harmony and attractive commercial shop fronts encourage a walk down the street.

### **Two Heritage Interest Buildings**

Valois Village has two buildings identified as being of heritage interest: the former railway station and the former post office. These two buildings are well maintained and contribute to the heritage interest of the area.

### **A Layout Designed for Cars**

The present layout favours the use of cars and discourages other modes of transportation (walk, cycling). Parking areas take up a large amount of space, while some such as the ones in front of Valois Shopping Centre are underutilized. There are few pedestrian crossings, sidewalks surfaces are irregular and often obstructed by the presence of large waste bins or parked cars. There are no bicycle links in Valois Village, so cyclists have to share the road with other vehicles.

Excluding the parking areas reserved for Canada Post operations on the east side of the village and the municipal incentive parking lot for the train passengers located in Valois Park west of the village, there are approximately 300 public and private parking spaces, on and off street.

### **A Significant Physical Barrier**

Donegani Avenue, the railway tracks and highway 20, which are all parallel to one another, are combined to create a significant physical and visual barrier and a source of heavy noise pollution.

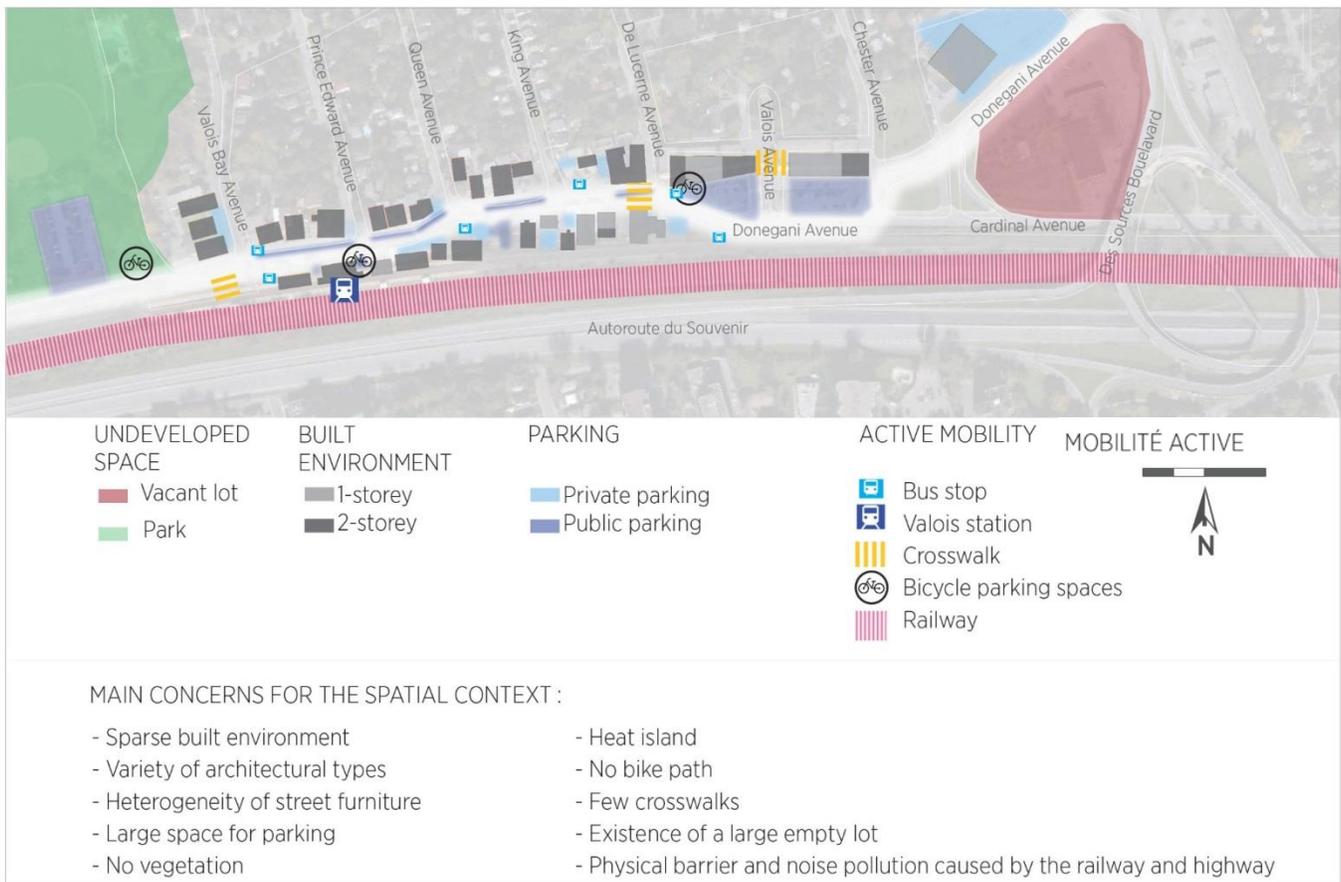
### **A Significant Heat Island**

Valois Village is heavily mineralized. Unlike the Valois neighbourhood which is characterized by an abundance of mature trees, Donegani Avenue constitutes a significant heat island. There are very few grassed areas and the few trees that exist are all located near the train station.

### **An Opportunity for Development**

Carrying out a Special Planning Program is an opportunity to optimize the use of the land and to upgrade the built environment of the Valois Village with development projects that could accommodate interesting amenities, services and shops.

**Figure 3. Cartographic Overview**



### 1.3.3 The Economic Context and service offer of Valois Village

All of the businesses in Valois Village are located on Donegani Avenue or in its immediate vicinity on side streets. This concentration of businesses offers numerous advantages. The first is the accessibility of the services and shops without having to make several trips. This business continuity creates a particular atmosphere which attracts shoppers to Donegani Avenue. More than half of the residents say that they visit the shops on Donegani Avenue while 20% declare that the shops to be places of interest. Despite the satisfaction of the Valois neighbourhood residents for Donegani avenue in its current state, they would welcome the arrival of new shops in the Village, specifically food-related businesses.

The train station's contribution to business vitality should also be considered. Primarily because it is the focal point of a significant number of potential customers for the Village businesses as well as being the residents' favourite location, due to its layout and architecture. The existing shops as well as future establishments in the vicinity of the train station could take advantage of the residents' attraction to this particular area of Valois Village.

Likewise, several elements of the Valois village must be taken into account for commercial planning, such as:

- A commercial blend that is functional and contributes to the area's vitality thanks to:
  - Long-established businesses;
  - Unique and independent shops;
  - A few restaurants and services ensuring commercial traffic;
  - Shops that suit well the village spirit;
- A market area which extends to the whole of the West-Island

- A shared desire by both business owners and residents for new shops, particularly restaurants and food stores.
- The will of the neighbourhood residents to favor local businesses;
- The availability of vacant premises or available land to accommodate new businesses or to increase the number of households who will become customers of the local businesses.
- Zoning by-law that limits the possibilities of commercial sprawl.

### 1.3.4 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b>QUALITY OF LIFE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Valois neighbourhood is appreciated by its residents, particularly for its character, accessibility and services.</li> <li>■ There are two heritage buildings that are representative of the village history. They are in good condition, but require some minor work.</li> <li>■ There is no documented contaminated land.</li> <li>■ The area easily accessible by car and served by two bus lines (203 and 204) and the commuter train station.</li> <li>■ There are sufficient parking spaces.</li> <li>■ There are some bicycle parking spaces.</li> <li>■ Valois Village is adjacent to Valois Park.</li> </ul>	<p><b>QUALITY OF LIFE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The residents prefer the neighbourhood's character to that of the Village, which is valued for the services and atmosphere.</li> <li>■ The architecture is diverse, discordant and the built environment as a whole is not particularly liked by citizens and business owners.</li> <li>■ The street furniture is heterogeneous and does not provide the village with a visual signature. There are plenty of benches but almost all of them are in direct sunlight. There are no recycling bins.</li> <li>■ Valois Village is very mineralized, a true heat island.</li> <li>■ There are a lot of parking spaces but without any landscaping.</li> <li>■ There are no indications that you come into a village centre, neither from the east nor the west entrances.</li> <li>■ The layout favours vehicles, cross walks are few and far between and there are no traffic-calming measures.</li> <li>■ Little is done to facilitate active mobility; the sidewalks are not smooth and are often cluttered with parked cars and/or large rubbish containers. There is no cycle link.</li> <li>■ Valois Village is bordered by the highway and railway tracks, which form a visual barrier to the lake and are a source of noise pollution.</li> </ul>

### ECONOMY AND SERVICE OFFER COMPONENT

- Valois Village is an attractive destination for the residents of the area because of its history and the fact that it accommodates various purposes (residential, commercial, community, service). A third of the residents shop there on a daily basis.
- Valois Village's offer is fairly diversified and concentrated in a relatively small area. The majority of the businesses offer professional or personal services. There are a few restaurants and establishments that sell staples, semi-staples and specialized goods.
- The residents stated that the shops are the main places of interest.
- Almost half of businesses and services receive regular customers on a weekly basis.
- Customer traffic is the same in the summer and winter.
- New businesses have opened, thereby diversifying the existing offer. The current trend is for businesses related to well-being.
- The business owners of the Village have created a Facebook group "Valois Business Association".
- 91% of business owners are happy with relationships with the neighbourhood.

### ECONOMY AND SERVICE OFFER COMPONENT

- The dominance of service offerings combined with the limited shopfront animation do not give citizens an incentive to walk down the street.
- Almost half of the residents of the neighbourhood do not go to Valois Village at all.
- There is a high vacancy rate for business premises (18%).
- The commercial offer, though diversified, appears incomplete. There is a shortage of cafés, restaurants and food related businesses.
- There is little cooperation or association amongst business owners.

### OPPORTUNITIES

### THREATS

#### QUALITY OF LIFE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Elaborating a SPP is an opportunity to change some aspects of the current regulations to enhance the built environment.
- The large number of unbuilt open spaces provides opportunities to create new landscaping, reduce heat islands and increase rainwater infiltration.
- The width of Donegani Avenue permits an improved layout in favour of active mobility (cycling, walking).
- Developing the vacant land to the east of the area could enhance the entrance to Valois Village.
- The absence of a comprehensive vision could trigger some regulatory changes, which would perpetuate the current issues of Valois Village.
- Using the open spaces for building construction and not for developing public spaces or planting trees could exacerbate the heat island problem.
- Developing Donegani Avenue according to criteria that are not consistent with the village spirit could be a detriment to the dynamism and appeal of the area.
- The Cardinal/Donegani intersection could hinder the development of the vacant land if its physical geometry is not revised to ensure safe and fluid movement for all modes of travel.

#### ECONOMY AND SERVICE OFFER COMPONENT

- The presence of vacant premises and vacant land could be a chance to diversify the commercial offer.
- Improving the built environment of Valois Village could attract new customers, encourage people to visit the premises and revitalize the area.
- Valois Village's lack of appeal and anonymity could hinder attraction of new businesses and therefore the diversification of the offer.
- Establishing a new commercial pole in the eastern end of the village, near the Sources Boulevard interchange, which would serve a strictly automotive clientele and would be physically detached from the village, could compromise the commercial vitality of the village hub, especially if the new customers are not incited to visit the village shops.

### **1.3.5 Planning Challenges Summary**

To conclude the diagnosis, five challenges which encompass the observations regarding the social, spatial and economic contexts of Valois Village are put forward. These five issues were presented to the citizens during the public consultation of September 27, 2016. The citizens' comments provided a better understanding of these issues and identified possible solutions, which they would like undertaken in the short to medium term.

#### **The distinct visual identity of the Village**

Valois Village is an appealing area with a unique character. It has a variety of functions and a uniform building density. Two heritage buildings reflect the history and charm of the Village. Nevertheless, several buildings would benefit from upgrades and renovation. The architectural heterogeneity of the Village and the lack of uniformity in street furniture contribute to the mismatched style of the area. Lastly, Valois Village does not have adequate signage and its entrances are not well identified.

#### **The quality and conviviality of the living environment**

The location of the Village is interesting due to its proximity to Lake Saint-Louis and Valois Park. However, it is heavily mineralized with large areas for parking, which generate considerable heat islands.

The vacant land adjacent to Sources Boulevard could redefine the image of the Village and contribute to its attractiveness.

#### **Safe accessibility for all types of travel**

Valois Village is easy to access as it is close to the highway and the train station. However, it is more difficult for pedestrians and cyclists due to the lack of traffic-calming measures, the absence of cycle links and the small number of pedestrian crossings.

Furthermore, parking on the sidewalk directly in front of the shops can hinder the flow of pedestrians, who must venture into the street to avoid the parked cars.

Widening and standardizing the walkways, making intersections safe and developing bicycle links are important elements. The eastern entrance to the Village plays a vital role in calming traffic and it would be important to modify its geometry for everyone's safety and comfort.

#### **Attractiveness and complementarity of the commercial offer**

It is fortunate for Valois Village that almost all its shops are located on Donegani Avenue, thereby contributing to the creation of a genuine village core. The businesses are independent, long established and well appreciated by the citizens.

However, the shop fronts are sometimes unattractive and, combined with vacant premises, affect the economic vitality of the street. The citizens specifically stated that food-related businesses (grocery stores, market, restaurants, cafés, bistros, etc.) are lacking.

The vacant land plays a prominent role in the appeal of the street, as it could accommodate a flagship, mixed-use and attractive project, which the Village lacks at the moment.

#### **Harmonious co-existence with the highway and the railway**

Despite the fact that the railway tracks and highway contribute to the accessibility of Valois Village, they also isolate the area and cause certain issues, which are not necessarily related to noise, but are visual and physical. A more direct and open link to Lake Saint-Louis would be welcomed.

### 1.3.6 Urban and Landscape Analysis

In addition to the diagnosis by Convercity, a brief analysis was conducted in order to distinguish the sub-sectors that constitute Valois Village. This allowed four areas to be defined that differ in terms of their urban and landscape characteristics, such as: use, land coverage, building volume, architecture, landscaping, street dimensions, street layout, etc.

The four sub-sectors are the following (from west to east):

- The train station area;
- The Village core;
- The commercial sector;
- The redevelopment sector.

It can also be noted that these sectors reflect the historical evolution of Valois Village. Moving from west to east, from a village setting with historic buildings of heritage interest to a more heterogeneous and modest village setting, then to a small shopping center and finally to a vast, vacant or semi-commercial, area dominated by the automobile.

Figure 4. Analysis Sub-Sectors



## 2. DESIGN VISION AND ORIENTATIONS

On the basis of the municipal orientations expressed in the Planning Program, the findings of the diagnosis and the expectations expressed by the community, a vision was developed for the future of Valois Village. Guided by the principles of sustainable development, it describes Valois as it should be 15 years from now. This vision is the central core of the SPP in that it shapes all the major orientations, objectives and actions that will be implemented in order to make it a reality.

### 2.1 VISION STATEMENT

More than 150 years after the first train arrived at the Valois Station, the village is well established and has developed with respect for its history and identity. It has continued to develop as a compact neighbourhood on a scale, in which pedestrians are central to its design. It has also been able to reinvent itself and innovate in order to stand out.

As a dynamic local commercial hub, Valois Village offers a full range of businesses and services that attract residents both from Valois itself and from nearby neighbourhoods. The Village is the residents' preferred destination for their daily purchases, since they can find all the goods and services they need. The public market is very popular. Valois is also appreciated for its restaurants and cafés, which make it a lively and bustling place during the day and in the evening. Customers particularly appreciate, in good weather, the terraces set up in front of some buildings. Public transit users are also regular visitors to Village businesses.

In addition to being an essential destination, Valois Village is also a living environment for its residents, who enjoy the presence of businesses and services, the train station, Valois Park and neighbourhood schools, all which are within walking distance. Housing coexists naturally over commercial space, while new residential buildings have replaced the empty lots at the eastern entrance to the village.

Visitors come to Valois Village on foot or on their bicycles, both to shop and to take the train. The street design encourages drivers to slow down, and allows for safe coexistence of the various users. With its broad sidewalks lined with trees and plantings, and its shop windows and terraces, Donegani Avenue provides a pleasant and comfortable environment that encourages walkers. Designed as a true public space, it offers a number of public squares that accommodate artistic playful installations and activities. Donegani Avenue serves both as a transport corridor and as a place for people to meet and relax.

The Village finally has an identity and a character of its own. It has acquired a distinctive style through the renovation of a number of buildings to reflect traditional village architecture as well as various stages of Village development. As a strong identifying factor, the train station is enhanced by a distinctive setting that marks the entrance to the Village. The new buildings at the eastern entrance are distinguished by their contemporary and innovative architecture. They provide a showcase for the Village, symbolizing its renewal in the 21st-century.

## 2.2 MAJOR ORIENTATIONS AND DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Based on the vision statement, major orientations, objectives and actions have been developed for its implementation.

### **ORIENTATION 1.**

#### **CREATE A SAFE, COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT GEARED TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLES**

##### **Objective 1.1. Make the pedestrian experience more enjoyable**

- Action 1.1.1 Redesign sidewalks to provide better separation from the roadway while ensuring compliance with the principles of universal access and with the addition of street furniture and plantings
- Action 1.1.2 Reduce the number and width of driveways by encouraging their consolidation
- Action 1.1.3 Negotiate with the Agence Métropolitaine de Transport (AMT) for a new pedestrian access at the eastern end of the train platform

##### **Objective 1.2. Improve bicycle access to the neighbourhood**

- Action 1.2.1 Complete the development of the bicycle path on Donegani Avenue west of the train station
- Action 1.2.2 Develop new bicycle connections towards the village and the train station within the Valois neighbourhood parallel to Donegani corridor, in order to provide a less congested alternative route
- Action 1.2.3 Mark the Donegani corridor as a designated route to be shared with cyclists
- Action 1.2.4 Provide bicycle racks in public spaces (streets and squares)

##### **Objective 1.3. Ensure safe and harmonious cohabitation of different road users**

- Action 1.3.1 Redesign Donegani Avenue in accordance with a concept that integrates traffic calming measures (physical and visual narrowing of the pavement, distinctive surfaces, additional plantings, etc.), the safe redesign of intersections (marks on the pavement, regrading, sidewalk extensions, etc.) and simplification of the geometry of the Donegani, Chester and Cardinal avenues intersection
- Action 1.3.2 Conduct a traffic study to validate the proposed change in geometry and guide the detailed design for the improvement of Donegani Avenue
- Action 1.3.3 Conduct a parking study that takes into account the needs of customers, workers, residents and public transit users, with recommendations for improved management (reserved parking badges for residents, for example)

### **ORIENTATION 2.**

#### **RESTRUCTURE THE VILLAGE AND BESTOW DISTINCT IDENTITY THAT COMBINES HISTORY AND MODERNITY**

##### **Objective 2.1. Give the Village a uniform visual signature**

- Action 2.1.1 Develop a master landscape plan for the improvement of public areas in accordance with a single, consistent concept (street furniture, surfaces, signage, plantings etc.)
- Action 2.1.2 Plan a specific design for Donegani/Chester and Donegani/Baie-de-Valois intersections so to visually identify them as main entrances to the Village
- Action 2.1.3 Develop a program for the installation of dynamic installations and urban art to encourage play and social interaction in the squares and public areas

**Objective 2.2. Reinforce the urban character with a better street setting, and continuity of building alignment**

- Action 2.2.1 Modify the centreline of Donegani Avenue to re-establish its continuity and allow the construction of buildings to the south of the new location
- Action 2.2.2 Revise planning by-laws to favour the redevelopment of vacant or under-used lots in accordance with the form-based code (FBC) approach to land development

**Objective 2.3. Improve the landscaping of business front yards**

- Action 2.3.1 Allow and guide the development of commercial terraces in front yards
- Action 2.3.2 Consider setting a program offering financial incentives for the redesign of front yards by property owners, in particular by favouring the planting of trees when there is insufficient space on the public right-of-way
- Action 2.3.3 Encourage landscaping that helps to conceal parking areas in front yards

**Objective 2.4. Recognize and enhance the built heritage in the vicinity of the train station**

- Action 2.4.1 In cooperation with property owners, create a unified and distinctive design for the street right-of-way between the train station and the former post office, including a lighting plan
- Action 2.4.2 Consider having the train station and its surroundings declared a heritage site under the Cultural Heritage Act of Quebec, and prepare a heritage restoration agreement with the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications for financial assistance for renovations

**Objective 2.5. Improve and enhance the buildings of the Village**

- Action 2.5.1 Adopt a Form Based Code (FBC) by-law that allows reinforcement of the distinct characteristics of the train station area, the Village core and the commercial sector
- Action 2.5.2 Study the possibility of establish a grant program for the renovation of facades and commercial signage

**Objective 2.6. Favour the emergence of contemporary flagship projects on the vacant properties at the eastern entrance**

- Action 2.6.1 In the short term, amend the zoning by-law for this sector to allow a quality mixed-use or residential development with a certain density
- Action 2.6.2 Adopt a Form Based Code (FBC) by-law favouring contemporary and innovative architecture for all other properties in need of redevelopment located at the eastern entrance to the Village

**ORIENTATION 3.**

**REINFORCE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE VILLAGE AS A LOCAL COMMERCIAL DESTINATION**

**Objective 3.1. Maintain and consolidate commercial activity in the heart of the Village**

- Action 3.1.1 Maintain permitted uses so as to restrict uses that are less compatible with the desired people-friendly character
- Action 3.1.2 Favour the presence of ground-floor businesses on Donegani between Valois Park and Chester Avenue
- Action 3.1.3 Relax the requirement for businesses to provide parking spaces

**Objective 3.2. Attract new businesses and diversify the commercial offer**

- Action 3.2.1 Commission a business positioning study to identify the types of business that should be sought after to ensure a good commercial mix and meet residents' needs
- Action 3.2.2 Ensure better coordination of interactions between the City and other parties involved in commercial development

Action 3.2.3 Assess the opportunity of hiring a business development and revitalization officer in partnership with PME MTL West-Island

## **ORIENTATION 4.**

### **MAKE THE VILLAGE A FRIENDLY AND ACTIVE LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Objective 4.1. Attract new residents**

Action 4.1.1 Allow mainly multi-family residential buildings on the Canada Post property and the vacant lots at the eastern entrance to the Village

Action 4.1.2 Encourage diversity in property tenure (renting, joint ownership) to suit a diverse clientele; encourage promoters to refer to technical resource groups familiar with affordable housing to facilitate the incorporation of such units in their development projects

Action 4.1.3 Favour a mix of uses in buildings in the Village core (commercial on the ground floor and residential upstairs)

#### **Objective 4.2. Manage the constraints related to proximity to the rail and autoroute networks and improve connections towards Lake Saint-Louis**

Action 4.2.1 Ensure that projects located on land adjoining the railway or the autoroute interchange that are intended for sensitive uses, such as housing, comply with the provisions of the zoning by-law respecting safety, noise and vibrations

Action 4.2.2 In collaboration with the owners of property adjoining the railway right-of-way and railway companies, develop a program for improvements, including planting, along the railway

Action 4.2.3 Provide better signage to indicate access to the tunnel and the footbridge across the highway; improve the landscaping of public spaces providing access to the overhead footbridge; use urban art, mosaics or murals to beautify the footbridge and the tunnel

#### **Objective 4.3. Promote encounters, activities and a feeling of belonging to the Village**

Action 4.3.1 Design a series of public squares that can accommodate artistic playful structures and flexible installations

Action 4.3.2 Set up one or more competitions for the installation of public art works

Action 4.3.3 Promote and support the development of the “New Valois” partnership by means of a charter or code of behaviour developed by a committee representing residents, merchants and institutions, designed to make the Village a lively place and encourage community involvement

## **2.3 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION CONCEPT**

The spatial organization concept is the expression on the ground of the orientations, objectives and actions referred to in the previous chapter. It is a schematic illustration of the design intentions set out in this SPP:

- Redesign and realignment of Donegani Avenue to make it a unifying element that provides structure;
- distinctive design to mark the entrances to the Village;
- safety enhancements at intersections, and traffic calming measures to encourage all users to share the road;
- the creation of bicycle connections to the Village and the marking of designated lanes along the Donegani corridor;
- the creation of a network of public spaces with flexible design to allow diversified programming that will help to enliven the Village;
- the enhancement of heritage buildings – the train station and the former post office – through distinctive design;
- consolidation of the building alignment and of commercial activity through the construction of mixed-use buildings on vacant and under-used lots;
- residential redevelopment of land at the entrance to the Village in the form of a flagship project.

Donegani Avenue is the backbone of the Village. A new design for this street that is uniform and distinctive will have a unifying effect on the various sections. New street furniture with a timeless design (benches, streetlights, garbage containers), planting of trees and the paving of sidewalks will help to make it a friendly environment in which pedestrians feel comfortable. The centreline of Donegani will be shifted northward in the commercial sector to bring it closer to the buildings and thus re-establish a traditional commercial alignment. The intersections of Donegani with Chester and Baie-de-Valois avenues will be given a distinctive design to visually identify the entrances to the Village and thus assert its identity.

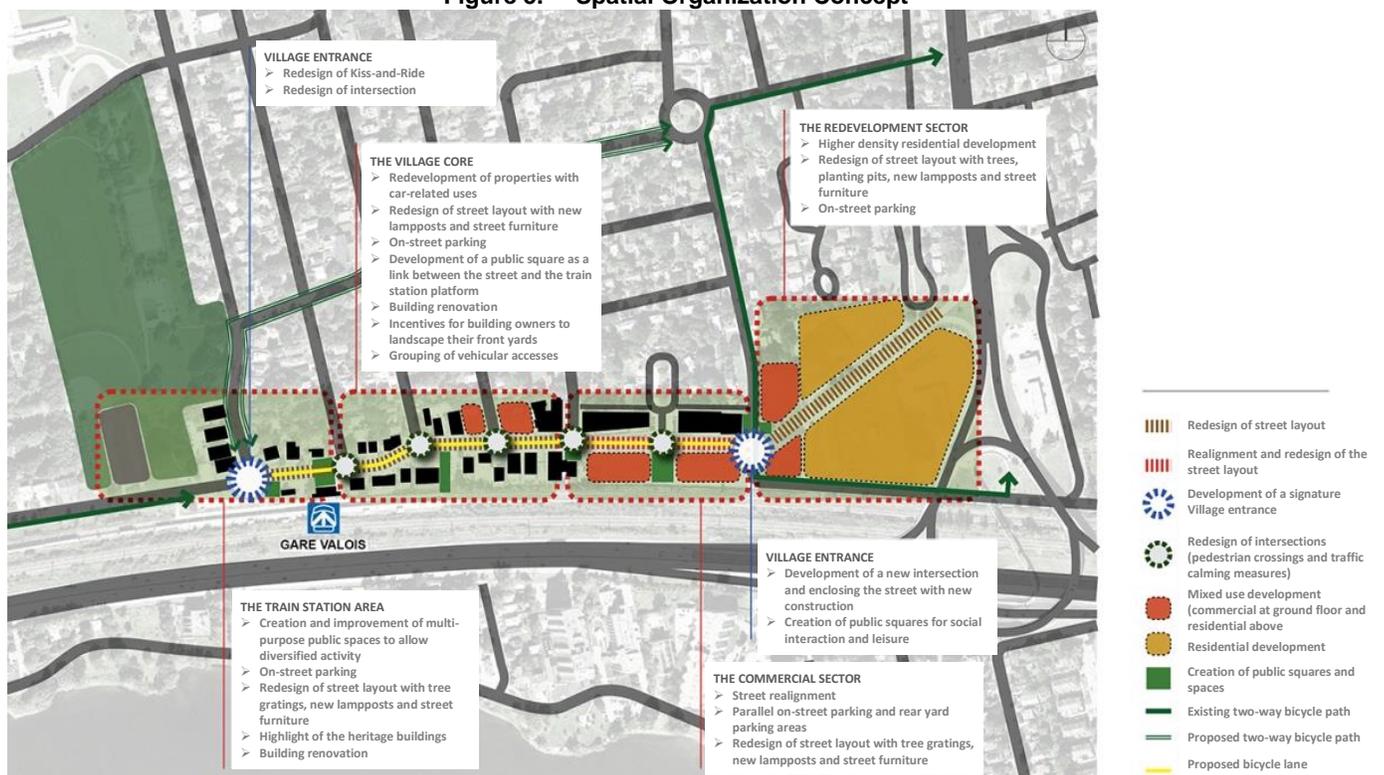
The street design and the traffic calming measures will encourage drivers to slow down and share the road with other users. Cyclists will be able to ride safely on the street. Intersections will be designed to improve security for pedestrians. New connections will be created around the Village in the form of bicycle paths and lanes providing easy access to the Village from adjacent neighbourhoods.

A number of public squares will be developed along Donegani Avenue. They will add to pedestrian enjoyment by providing additional places to relax, and will accommodate unusual and playful structures to attract visitors. With their flexible design, a variety of events and facilities that will help to make the Village a lively place can take place. This will strengthen social connections between residents and draw potential customers for businesses. The space between the train station and the former post office will be developed as a large plaza that will highlight and enhance the architecture of these two witnesses to the Village history.

New mixed-use buildings will complete the urban fabric, and help consolidate business activity. New buildings could also be constructed on the vacant lots facing the Valois Shopping Centre. They will enclose the south side of Donegani and serve as a noise barrier for the railway line. In the short to medium term, pending possible redevelopment and the conclusions of the parking study, some of this land could be used to relocate existing parking. In the Village core, lots currently occupied by small buildings surrounded by expanses of asphalt could also be redeveloped. They could accommodate new mixed-use buildings located closer to the street, which would be more compatible with a village environment.

At the eastern end of the Village, a new residential sector will bring in more residents, whose presence will support commercial activity. Emblematic of Village renewal, it will include multi-family buildings with contemporary and innovative architecture.

**Figure 5. Spatial Organization Concept**



# 3. DESIGN CONCEPT

A design concept has been developed to illustrate the future appearance of the Village in greater detail. As a concept, it should not be interpreted as prescriptive or definitive. It gives expression to the design principles previously stated and provides a visual indication of the desired results. Improvements in public spaces will require the development of detailed design plans supported by appropriate studies. To provide a better understanding of what is proposed, detailed concept plans for each sector are provided in the sections that follow.

**Figure 6. Conceptual Development Plan**



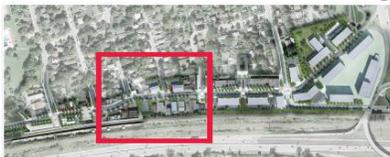
**Figure 7. Detailed design concept for the train station area**



- 1** Proposed two-way bicycle path
- 2** Redesign of the train station access and intersection
- 3** Proposed bicycle lane
- 4** Building renovation
- 5** Redesign of street layout with trees, lampposts and street furniture
- 6** On-street parking
- 7** Creation and improvement of multi-purpose public spaces
- 8** Highlight of the heritage buildings
- 9** Redesign of intersections (pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures)



**Figure 8. Detailed design concept for the Village core**



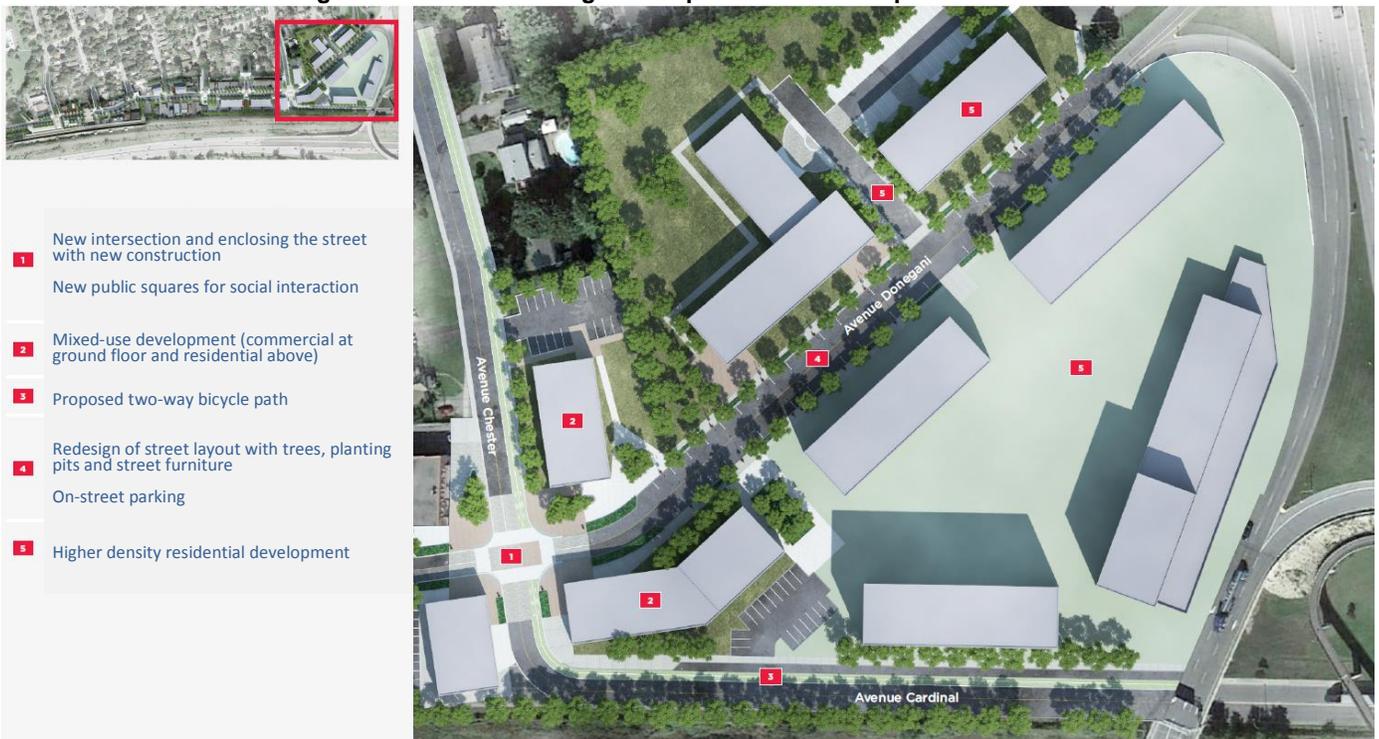
- 1** Building renovation
- 2** Redesign of intersections (pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures)
- 3** Creation of a public square to link the street tot the strain station
- 4** On-street parking
- 5** Redevelop properties with car-related uses
- 6** Mixed-use development (commercial at ground floor and residential above)
- 7** Incentives for building owners to landscape their front yards
- 8** Redesign street layout with street furniture
- 9** Marking for designated shared roadway (bicycles and cars)



**Figure 9. Detailed design concept for the commercial sector**

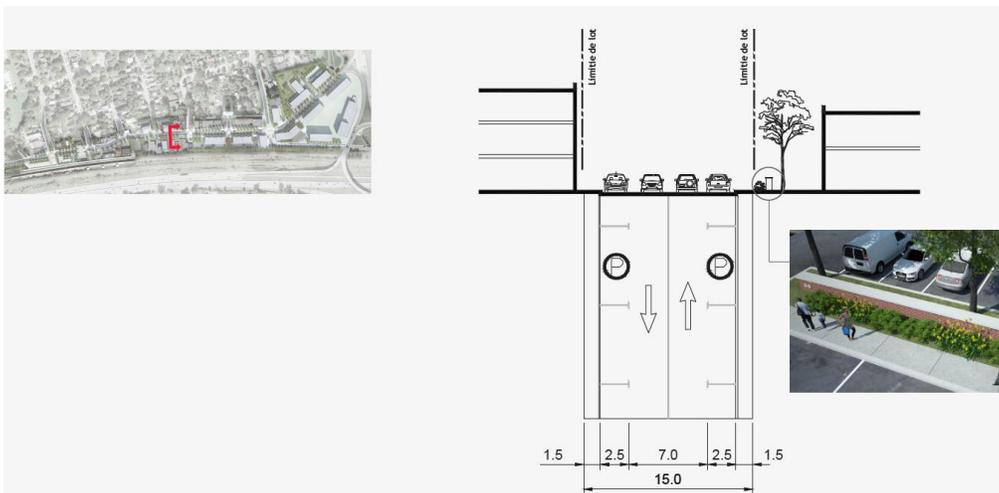
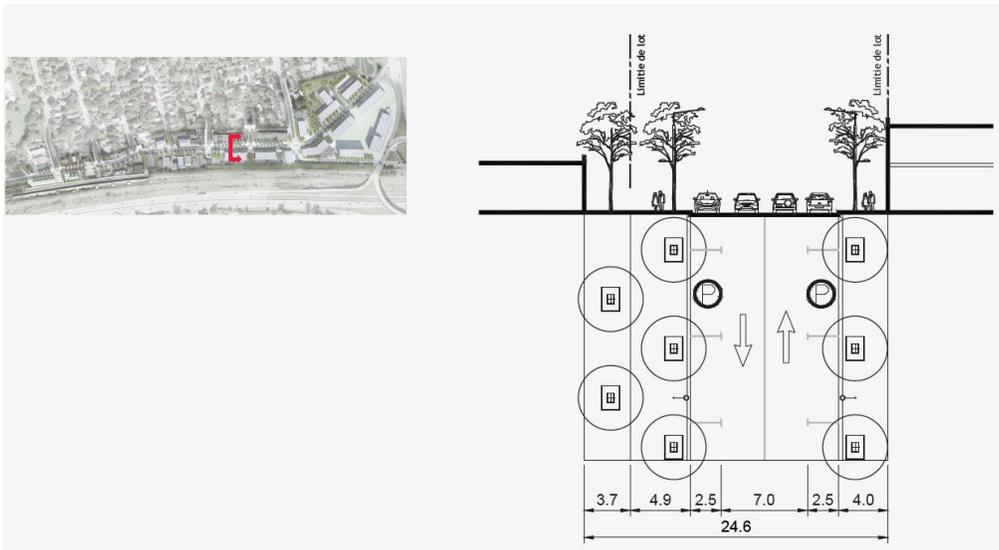
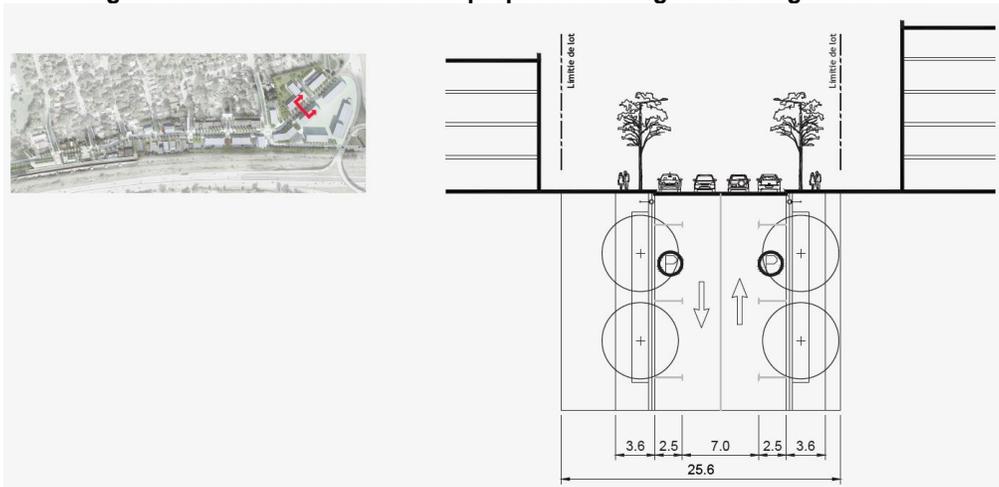


**Figure 10. Detailed design concept for the redevelopment sector**



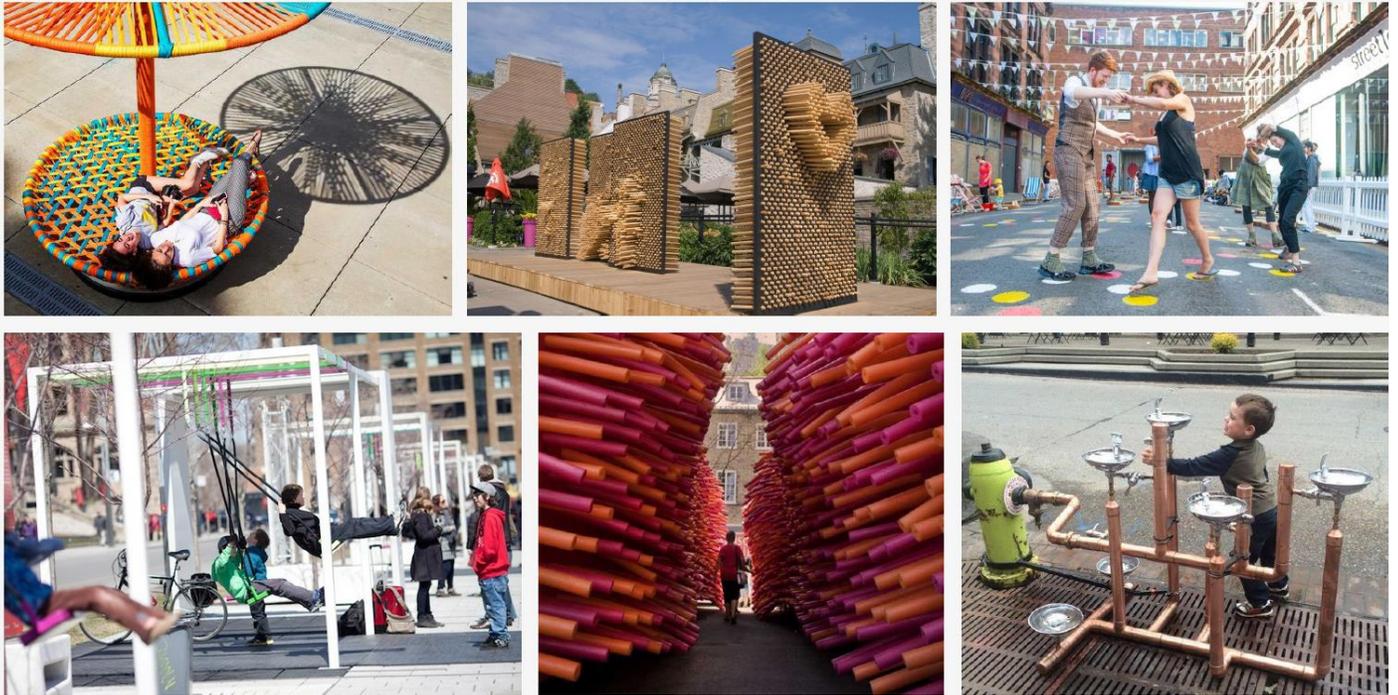
### 3.1 DONEGANI AVENUE REDESIGN

Figure 11. Cross-sections of the proposed redesign for Donegani Avenue



### 3.2 PUBLIC SQUARES

Figure 12. Ideas for the design of public squares



### 3.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Figure 13. Plan for bicycle paths and lanes



### 3.4 PARKING

**Figure 14. Proposed parking plan**



The Village currently has 315 public parking spaces between Valois Park and Chester Avenue:

- 23 along Donegani Avenue,
- 179 in off-street public lots, the largest of which is opposite the Valois shopping centre (142 spaces),
- 113 spaces in Valois Park.

According to the proposed design plan, there would be approximately 274 public spaces, with 222 between Valois Park and Chester Avenue:

- 63 spaces on Donegani Avenue between Valois Park and Chester Avenue,
- 52 spaces on Donegani Avenue east of Chester,
- 46 spaces in public off-street lots,
- 113 spaces in Valois Park.

With the realignment of Donegani, some of the existing parking opposite the Valois shopping centre could be relocated to the south side of Donegani Avenue while preserving some 60 existing spaces in place. The total number of spaces available between Valois Park and Chester Avenue would then be 282, which is close to the current 315, to which we should add 52 spaces further east.

In a sustainable development context, reducing the number of public parking spaces is coherent with the transformation of the Village into a neighbourhood on a human scale that promotes active transportation. The measures proposed in this SPP make life much more enjoyable and safe for pedestrians and cyclists, which will encourage increasing numbers of residents to leave their cars behind. This would reduce the demand for parking.

As is now the case, public parking will be for a limited duration to promote a rotation of vehicles, and to prevent all-day parking by public transit users. The same restriction could be applied to parking in Valois Park, which is currently used as incentive parking. A system of residents-only badges could also be set up on streets perpendicular to Donegani Avenue.

The sidewalk redesign will also lead to a reduction or elimination of access to properties via driveways, which will prevent the parking of cars directly in front of businesses, in accordance with the existing zoning by-law. However, existing parking for which a certificate of authorization has been issued could continue to be used. Parking requirements will be relaxed, with businesses being able to arrange parking beside or behind buildings, if they so desire.

A parking study could identify more suitable measures to meet the needs of various users.

### 3.5 VILLAGE ENTRANCES

Figure 15. Looking west from the intersection of Donegani Avenue and Chester Avenue



**Figure 16. Looking west along Donegani from opposite the train station**



**Figure 17. Looking east from the intersection of Donegani and Baie-de-Valois avenues**





## 3.2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

### ZONING BY-LAW

Amendments are required to the zoning by-law to implement the land use objectives and actions. The following is a non-exhaustive list of changes to be undertaken:

- Adopt the form-based code (FBC) approach to regulating land development;
- Review zone boundaries;
- Revise permitted uses in detail;
- Revise provisions regarding lot coverage, height, architectural and density;
- Revise provisions regarding use and design of front yards;
- Revise lot dimension provisions;
- Adjust parking ratios for commercial uses, and prohibit all parking in front yard;
- Revise provisions regarding signs.

### SITE PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRATION (SPAIP) BY-LAW

The SPAIP by-law should be revised to include provisions specific to each sector:

- Train station area: promote restoration of the heritage buildings to emphasize the historical aspect of this sector;
- Village core sector: promote building renovation following a flexible approach that allows, among other things, the use of affordable, high-quality facing material;
- Commercial sector: promote building consolidation with new construction that is consistent in volume, shape and architecture style with the existing commercial centre (flat roofs, masonry, etc.);
- Redevelopment sector: promote the development of flagship projects with contemporary and innovative architecture.

## 3.3 ACTION PLAN

For each action, the table lists the type, timeline, estimated cost and parties involved.

ACTION	TYPE OF INTERVENTION			TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	PARTIES INVOLVED	
	STUDY	WORK	MEASURE				
1.2.1	Complete the development of the bicycle path on Donegani Avenue west of the train station		•		Short	To be determined	City
1.2.4	Provide bicycle racks in public spaces (streets and squares)		•		Short	See 1.3.1 and 4.3.1	City
1.3.2	Conduct a traffic study to validate the proposed change in geometry and guide the detailed design for the improvement of Donegani Avenue	•			Short	\$10K to 15K	City
1.3.3	Conduct a parking study that takes into account the needs of customers, workers, residents and public transit users, with recommendations for improved management (reserved parking badges for residents, for example)	•			Short	\$10K to 15K	City
2.1.1	Develop a master landscape plan for the improvement of public areas in accordance with a single, consistent concept (street furniture, surfaces, signage, plantings etc.)	•			Short	\$350K to 500K	City
2.1.3	Develop a program for the installation of dynamic installations and urban art to encourage play and social interaction in the squares and public areas	•			Short		
2.3.3	Encourage landscaping that helps to conceal parking areas in front yards			•	Short	-	City/Property owners
2.4.2	Consider having the train station and its surroundings declared a heritage site under the Cultural Heritage Act of Quebec, and prepare a heritage restoration agreement with the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications for financial assistance for renovations			•	Short	\$8,500	City
2.5.2	Study the possibility of establish a grant program for the renovation of facades and commercial signage	•			Short	\$75,000	City
2.2.2	Revise planning by-laws to favour the redevelopment of vacant or under-used lots in accordance with the form-based code (FBC) approach to land development			•	Short	\$35,000 (overall cost of by-law changes)	City
2.3.1	Allow and guide the development of commercial terraces in front yards			•	Short		City
2.5.1	Adopt a Form Based Code (FBC) by-law that allows reinforcement of the distinct characteristics of the train station area, the Village core and the commercial sector			•	Short		City
2.6.1	In the short term, amend the zoning by-law for this sector to allow a quality mixed-use or residential development with a certain density			•	Short		City
2.6.2	Adopt a Form Based Code (FBC) by-law favouring contemporary and innovative architecture for all other properties in need of redevelopment located at the eastern entrance to the Village			•	Short		City
3.1.1	Maintain permitted uses so as to restrict uses that are less compatible with the desired people-friendly character			•	Short		City
3.1.2	Favour the presence of ground-floor businesses on Donegani between Valois Park and Chester Avenue			•	Short		City
3.1.3	Relax the requirement for businesses to provide parking spaces			•	Short	City	
4.1.1	Allow mainly multi-family residential buildings on the Canada Post property and the vacant lots at the eastern entrance to the Village			•	Short	City	
4.1.3	Favour a mix of uses in buildings in the Village core (commercial on the ground floor and residential upstairs)			•	Short	City	
3.2.1	Commission a business positioning study to identify the types of business that should be sought after to ensure a good commercial mix and meet residents' needs	•			Short	\$20,000	City
4.3.3	Promote and support the development of the "New Valois" partnership by means of a charter or code of behaviour developed by a committee representing residents, merchants and institutions, designed to make the Village a lively place and encourage community involvement	•			Short	-	City/merchants/residents/institutions
1.1.1	Redesign sidewalks to provide better separation from the roadway while ensuring compliance with the principles of universal access and with the addition of street furniture and plantings		•		Medium	\$6.5M	City
1.1.2	Reduce the number and width of driveways by encouraging their consolidation		•		Medium		City/Property owners
1.3.1	Redesign Donegani Avenue in accordance with a concept that integrates traffic calming measures (physical and visual narrowing of the pavement, distinctive surfaces, additional plantings, etc.), the safe redesign of intersections (marks on the pavement, regrading, sidewalk extensions, etc.) and simplification of the geometry of the Donegani, Chester and Cardinal avenues intersection		•		Medium		City
1.2.3	Mark the Donegani corridor as a designated route to be shared with cyclists		•		Medium		City
2.1.2	Plan a specific design for Donegani/Chester and Donegani/Baie-de-Valois intersections so to visually identify them as main entrances to the Village		•		Medium		City
2.4.1	In cooperation with property owners, create a unified and distinctive design for the street right-of-way between the train station and the former post office, including a lighting plan		•		Medium		City/WIAIH*/CP * West-Island Association for the Intellectually Handicapped

ACTION		TYPE OF INTERVENTION			TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	PARTIES INVOLVED
		STUDY	WORK	MEASURE			
2.2.1	Modify the centreline of Donegani Avenue to re-establish its continuity and allow the construction of buildings to the south of the new location		•		Medium		City
1.1.3	Negotiate with the Agence Métropolitaine de Transport (AMT) for a new pedestrian access at the eastern end of the train platform		•		Medium	-	City/AMT
1.2.2	Develop new bicycle connections towards the village and the train station within the Valois neighbourhood parallel to Donegani corridor, in order to provide a less congested alternative route		•		Medium	To be determined	City
2.3.2	Consider setting a program offering financial incentives for the redesign of front yards by property owners, in particular by favouring the planting of trees when there is insufficient space on the public right-of-way	•			Medium	\$100,000	City/Property owners
4.2.2	In collaboration with the owners of property adjoining the railway right-of-way and railway companies, develop a program for improvements, including planting, along the railway			•	Medium	To be determined	City/Property owners
4.2.3	Provide better signage to indicate access to the tunnel and the footbridge across the highway; improve the landscaping of public spaces providing access to the overhead footbridge; use urban art, mosaics or murals to beautify the footbridge and the tunnel		•		Medium	To be determined	City/AMT/MTQ** **Ministère des Transports du Québec
4.3.1	Design a series of public squares that can accommodate artistic playful structures and flexible installations		•		Medium	\$2M	City
4.3.2	Set up one or more competitions for the installation of public art works	•			Medium	To be determined	City
3.2.2	Ensure better coordination of interactions between the City and other parties involved in commercial development	•			Ongoing	-	City/ PME Mtl West-Island
3.2.3	Assess the opportunity of hiring a business development and revitalization officer in partnership with PME MTL West-Island	•			Ongoing	\$45,000/yr	City / PME Mtl West-Island
4.1.2	Encourage diversity in property tenure (renting, joint ownership) to suit a diverse clientele; encourage promoters to refer to technical resource groups familiar with affordable housing to facilitate the incorporation of such units in their development projects	•			Ongoing	-	City/Developers
4.2.1	Ensure that projects located on land adjoining the railway or the autoroute interchange that are intended for sensitive uses, such as housing, comply with the provisions of the zoning by-law respecting safety, noise and vibrations			•	Ongoing	-	City/Developers

