



## **Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development and renovation**

Various decisions made over the years have determined the evolution of the city's economic development. Amongst those, we find:

- Favouring residential development and foregoing the creation of an industrial sector
- Favouring the Boulevard des Promenades as a commercial sector
- Favouring the construction of first-time owner housing developments
- Restricting construction conditions to buildings no higher than 5 stories

These choices have defined the City of Deux-Montagnes as a bedroom suburb. As well, decision makers have largely invested in the construction of sports, cultural and community buildings over the past years. These infrastructures are usually financed through a strong industrial and/or commercial sector or high residential assessment values in order to avoid creating high residential taxes.

On the other hand, many people pass through Deux-Montagnes including more than 1,500 cars per hour (peak period) that travel via Oka Road. As well, more than 3,200 people take the commuter train each weekday including 1,400 non residents.

Despite these significant numbers, very few people purchase anything in Deux-Montagnes mostly because of a lack of retail establishments on our territory.

This situation reflects the fact that each residential citizen must pay for most of the services supplied by the City. In fact, this category of citizen must absorb 90% of the total municipal tax bill while only 10% is paid by the commercial sector, even though that sector only represents 3.9% of the properties.

In Saint-Eustache, officers in charge rely on a strong industrial park and commercial sector. The ratio paid by residential taxpayers is only 64% of the total budget while owners of commercial buildings and industrial land pay the remaining 36%.



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This difference between our cities was not evident as long as residential development remained strong in Deux-Montagnes with the new money influx each year. This time has passed and now we must question ourselves on the future of our city.

Should we rethink our choices?

Try to bring in new businesses?

Create small industrial sectors?

Review the building height by-laws?

All in an effort to create more wealth for the city and let our taxpayers breathe a little easier.

### **1- Retail businesses**

In Deux-Montagnes, retail businesses and industries are taxed at \$2.40 per \$100 of assessment while a residential owner pays \$.923 per \$100 of assessment.

This means that a business owner assessed at \$200,000 pays \$4,680 in taxes while a home owner only pays \$1,846 for the same value creating a difference of \$2,834 which the City does not collect and which is not applied to services supplied to citizens by the City.

In view of these facts, do you think it might be important for Deux-Montagnes to create a stronger retail sector?

A city's main street, in addition to bringing in tax revenues, enables the population to socialize, to create a sense of belonging, to improve the quality of life and, while helping reduce the coming and going. This would be environmentally and economically beneficial for everyone.

Oka Road is our main artery and we should ask ourselves the following questions:

**Do we have enough retail establishments?**



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**Should we try to attract other new businesses? Which ones and how should this be done?**

**What motivates merchants to set up a business in a city?**

**Why do our citizens go elsewhere to shop?**

**What can be done to encourage our merchants to invest in their own business?**

### **2- Densification**

Vacant square footage and/or areas to be redeveloped are limited in Deux-Montagnes. There are few available land properties and they are precious. In view of these facts, we should reflect on the possibility of further developing certain properties.

Do we want to go that route?

If so, what height should be allowed for new buildings?

Which areas should we favour?

### **3- Renovation**

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation tells us that home renovation generates more economic revenues than new constructions. Presently, some of our neighbourhoods are starting to show their age and some houses are in serious stages of disrepair. The apparent neglect of some properties is also harmful for adjoining properties that see the value of their houses decrease because of this situation. Given this situation, various questions should be asked:

- Should we intervene to ensure that some owners perform the repair work required to refit their homes?
- Should this be done when the house is sold while ensuring the new buyer is committed to performing the required work?
- Should we implement a tax credit program or other incentive program for renovations?



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- Should we be concerned about the short- and long-term financial impacts these programs would have on the City?

### **4- Industry**

Non-existent on our territory.

In view of the financial and social benefits which could be gained by the close proximity of a workplace for the population in general and the attraction for a commercial sector:

**Should we rethink our choices?**

**If so, what would be our preferred fields of economic activity for these industries (light industry versus heavy industry) (high technology versus primary industry)?**

**Where would we like to see these industries implemented?**

**Do we want to make room for them? Where?**

**Should we think about the old shopping center location near the Grand-Moulin station, some parts of Oka Road, or some portions of 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue or 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue or near the 640?**

### **5- Arts, culture and tourist and recreational activities acting as wealth builders**

In your opinion what does 'tourist and recreational activities' imply?

What are the benefits for a city such as Deux-Montagnes to have a strong tourist and recreational sector?

Do you think that interesting tourist and recreational venues could attract and retain visitors who pass through our City by commuter train?

What are the tourist and recreational attractions in our city?



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What can be done to improve these venues?

Should we improve our bicycle paths?

What about a public market in one of the parking areas of the two train stations?

What benefit would we gain from a continuous show venue?

Do we want to remain a bedroom suburb regardless of the constant tax increases and decrease of services?

Lastly:

**Do we want to create wealth for Deux-Montagnes?**

**What branding should the city have, what should its trademark be?**

***Other comments and suggestions.***