

Toward a Culturalist City: A Planning Agenda for Peripheral Mid-size Cities

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Résumé

Les villes moyennes suscitent de plus en plus d'intérêt. Outre leur taille, ces établissements présenteraient une série de caractéristiques communes qui contribue à leur donner une personnalité propre dans le système urbain. À l'intérieur de ce groupe, les villes situées en régions périphériques vivraient également des conditions particulières, notamment en ce qui touche les conditions économiques et les perspectives démographiques. La ville regroupée de Saguenay au Québec constitue un bon exemple de ville moyenne périphérique faisant face à un complexe original de problèmes d'aménagement et de développement. Dans cette étude, nous visons à décrire et à documenter ce contexte particulier. Nous procéderons à deux études de cas associées à la revitalisation des centres-villes et à l'aménagement des espaces boisés et naturels. L'action des groupes de citoyens et des organismes locaux participant à ces projets d'aménagement peut être interprétée comme un retour à l'approche culturaliste de l'urbanisme à titre de solution aux divers problèmes des villes moyennes périphériques.

Mots clés: Villes moyennes, Saguenay, revitalisation urbaine, espaces verts, boisés urbains, politiques d'urbanisme

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Abstract

Mid-size cities are pertinent subjects of research both on the scientific level and as regards the development of public policy. Above and beyond their size, these human settlements seem to have a series of common characteristics which help give them their own personality. It appears that Canadian cities such as Prince George, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Saint John and Sydney have limited economic and demographic prospects given their location. In Quebec, the newly amalgamated city of Saguenay, 200 km north of Quebec City, is a good example of a peripheral mid-size city facing a unique nexus of planning and development problems. The goal of this paper is to describe and discuss the specific context of peripheral mid-size cities. We will present two case studies associated with the revitalization of urban cores and the preservation of natural and wooded areas. The implementation of principles of culturalist planning based on the values and actions of citizens groups seems to be a way to resolve development problems in peripheral mid-size cities.

Key words: Mid-size Cities, Saguenay, Urban Revitalization, Green Spaces, Urban Woods, Planning Policies

Mid-size cities are pertinent subjects of research both on the scientific level and as regards the development of public policy. Above and beyond their size, which may vary from 50,000 to 500,000 inhabitants according to conventions, these human settlements seem to have a series of common characteristics which help give them their own personality: the absence of traffic congestion, proximity to a rural environment and to nature and, in some cases, relatively strong social ties among inhabitants (Filion and Bunting 2004). Moreover, according to the laws of urban geography, these mid-size cities are numerous and located in every region of the country, as opposed to metropolises. Mid-size cities are thus in a good position to provide public and private services for large areas of the national territory and to become an alternative to the concentration of populations in large metropolitan areas (Bruneau 2000).

Within this group of human settlements, mid-size cities located in peripheral regions seem to experience unique conditions. It appears that Canadian cities such as Prince George, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Saint John and Sydney have limited economic and

demographic prospects given their location (Bourne and Simmons 2003). In Quebec, the newly amalgamated city of Saguenay is a good example of a peripheral mid-size city facing a unique nexus of planning and development problems. Saguenay is located approximately 200 km north of Quebec City along the edge of the Saguenay River. This city has close to 150,000 inhabitants, ranking fourth in population among Quebec's metropolitan areas according to the latest census. Saguenay is a dispersed city, a situation related to the 2001 merger of seven municipalities, including Chicoutimi and Jonquière.

Like most contemporary cities, Saguenay is not exempt from such urban problems as the decline of core areas and urban sprawl (Simard and Gauthier 2004). Moreover, these problems are also combined with the processes of economic and demographic decline, phenomena linked to a fragile economic base and the migration of youth toward larger metropolitan centers. Furthermore, Saguenay has a homogeneous and relatively conservative population, as is the case for the majority of peripheral mid-size cities. These characteristics are contributing factors in creating a difficult context for intervention. In fact, local and regional actors must work with a relatively non-dynamic economic and physical environment with limited means at their disposal.

Planning policies in these urban settings must take this situation into account. The need to adopt a coherent model or vision of development seems especially important in these communities. For the last half century, modern urban planning has promoted low-density suburban developments and standardized commercial zones in Canada (Harris 2004). This latter phenomenon undermines the structuring effects of traditional business districts and green spaces. As concerns the cities of interest in this paper, the regional context accentuates the depreciation and under-use of these spaces. Moreover, planners face a deeply rooted suburban lifestyle that values neither visiting centrally located urban spaces nor making use of green spaces located on the urban perimeter.

The goal of this study is to describe and document the paradoxical context of peripheral mid-size cities, where both conventional urban problems and specific challenges arising from their size and location coexist. We will present two case studies depicting intervention programs associated with a redevelopment of the core area and the preservation of green spaces and wooded areas in the city of Saguenay. Those studies show that culturalist planning principles based on the values and actions of citizens groups are a way to resolve development problems

in peripheral mid-size cities. Planning policies of the last decades have taken these two types of components of the community environment into relatively little account, compared with issues involving transportation and residential development. Nevertheless, the establishing of an integrated planning agenda at the metropolitan scale must include the structural integration of these spaces.

NORMATIVE THEORIES AND THE URBAN STRUCTURE

Throughout history, various thinkers, from Aristotle to Thomas Moore, have explored ideas about what the ideal city should be like. Closer to home, within a modern context, reformers and visionary architects, namely Fourier, Howard, Le Corbusier and Wright, have developed utopian cities. In this respect, it would seem useful and interesting to review the writings of Choay. Françoise Choay (1965) carried out pioneer work by identifying and classifying a large number of model cities. She categorizes the latter according to three groups: the culturalist model, based on low or medium density and a community character; the progressive model, based on high density and the separation of functions; and the naturalist model which promotes the scattering of natural attributes within a flexible and disjointed urban fabric.

Choay's goal was not to propose a normative theory of city form. However, an analysis of the ideological and political foundations of model cities, especially the culturalist model, could guide us in this respect. The culturalist current is generally illustrated at its best by the garden cities of Ebenezer Howard proposed in 1898. His well-known model proposes a circular city with a radial street pattern whose focal point is made up of public and community buildings. What must be remembered about Howard's plans is the desire to promote civic life and to control urban expansion through the green-belt principle. This technique has been reproduced in various cities, including Ottawa (Wolfe 1994). The human scale of institutions is also emphasized, along with a link to nature.

This model, which has appeared unrealistic for large metropolises, seems especially well adapted to peripheral mid-sized cities, at least in terms of what they could become. These cities are currently developed more along the lines of the *Broadacres City* proposed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1945, an anti-model given that urban and rural activities take place in a scattered manner within space conceived as an endless matrix.

A bungalow-style built-up environment results in a loose urban structure adapted to automobiles with negative impacts on the natural environment and a supplementary cost for public services, as reflected in the debate on urban sprawl (Ewing 1997). Suburban-style development also challenges the liaison and interface functions of city cores and green spaces. These two morphological units are seen as the key elements of the urban structure. Let us rapidly establish the attributes of these functional units.

The city core brings together a variety of urban activities which make it an economic and political nerve centre and give it festive and symbolic functions, both in large and small metropolitan areas. Although core areas are generally the first spaces to be occupied in a city, relatively few inhabitants or businesses can be found in these environments nowadays, compared to suburbs in mid-size cities. The development of suburbs has had tremendous impacts in most cities of this type: “downtown districts deteriorate as services and activities are diverted to suburban malls and higher-income households move to the suburbs” (Jamieson et al. 2000, 463). Their upkeep and revitalization represent a significant challenge for most urban areas, especially in small towns and mid-size cities (Burayidi 2001). Generally speaking, city cores that work well within a small metropolitan context show a whole range of activities and a pedestrian friendly environment (Filion et al. 2004).

As concerns green spaces and urban wooded areas, their role and status are increasingly recognized in Saguenay as elsewhere in Western societies. In this respect, the vegetation cover is again becoming a tool in city modelling and is no longer confined to residual spaces. Green spaces can be of various types: planned or natural, centrally located or at the urban periphery, linear or in a block, etc. These green spaces serve various essential purposes, whether on the social, aesthetic, recreational or climatic level (OECD 2001). The presence of well-planned green spaces is generally synonymous with a good quality of life in urban spaces (Roseland 1997). Vegetation is a significant dimension of the revitalization process for centrally located neighbourhoods (Simard and Mercier 2001). Green-space planning must also take into account the question of rural-urban fringes (Bryant and Charvet 2003).

Generally speaking, contemporary planning must go beyond the model of the dispersed city and harmoniously organize centrally located spaces, green spaces and other functional units, most especially in peripheral mid-size cities. In this respect, the culturalist approach seems

to be the precursor of contemporary currents such as Smart Growth and New Urbanism whose proponents suggest a return to small human-scale communities within a better defined architectural framework (Calthorpe 1993). According to this approach, the street would once again become the central element of civic life, representing a space for interactions and social relations, especially in downtown areas. Its influence can be seen in current revitalization practices as they are applied to older neighbourhoods, the re-designing of public squares and buildings, heritage protection initiatives, and the restoring of urban rivers and lakes (Biddulph 2000).

SAGUENAY: A PERIPHERAL MID-SIZE CITY

Saguenay is a peripheral mid-size city and the hub of the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region. Three other cities of comparable size play a similar role for other regions in the province of Quebec: Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke and Gatineau.¹ These four upper mid-size cities, with populations of between 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants, structure the Quebec urban system, backing up Montreal and Quebec City. Fifty-three percent of the population of the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region lives in Saguenay, a statistic reflecting the concentration of people in Saguenay as well as the sparse population of the city's hinterland. Since 1996, the population of Saguenay has been declining; more than 5,000 residents left the city between 1996 and 2001. This population drain has had repercussions on commercial and residential construction. Saguenay is also a vulnerable peripheral mid-size city given the erosion of its economic base, most notably due to the modernization and closure of plants in the aluminium and pulp and paper sectors² (Polèse and Shearmur 2002).

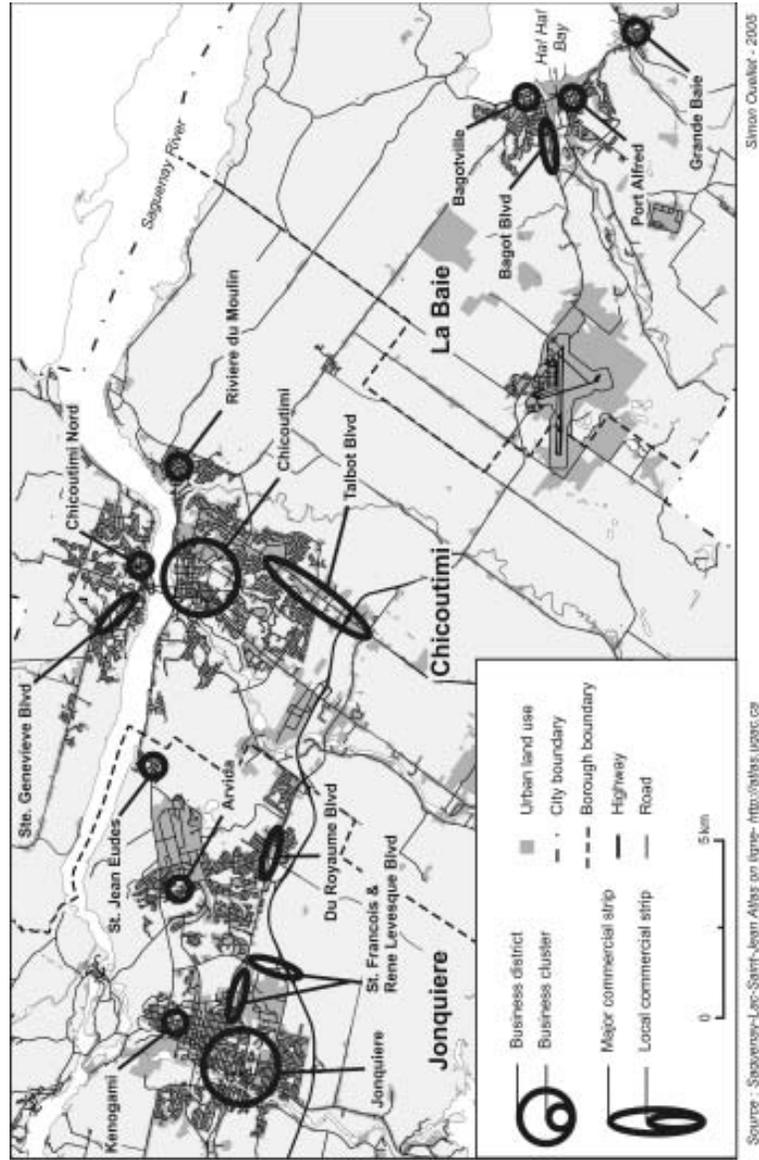
The size of the new city is 1,282 km², one of the largest land areas covered by a local municipality in Quebec. A very large diversity of geographical situations can be found on this territory, with urban, agricultural and forest zones located practically side by side without any buffer areas. According to land-use figures, urbanized space makes up approximately 12 percent of the territory and agricultural and forest spaces make up 15 and 60 percent of the area respectively³ (Simard and Gauthier 2004). The urban perimeter is expanding: between 1977 and 2001 the city increased in physical size by 58.4 percent, while population growth for the same period was 1.9 percent. On the administrative level, Saguenay has had the double status of a city and a

regional county municipality (RCM) ever since the municipal reform was put in place. The city is also subdivided according to the principle of administrative boroughs. The three boroughs have been named after the former cities of Jonquière, Chicoutimi and La Baie. Each borough council manages public works.

The urban fabric of Saguenay is loose and discontinuous. The urban development of this area did not originate from a central point and spread out thereafter. It must be recalled that there were once 17 local municipalities on the territory of the current city of Saguenay. The amalgamation served to highlight the existing complex geographic situation, halfway between a fully integrated urban zone and a micro-region bringing together autonomous urban centres located close to one another. Several areas in Saguenay can be characterized as intra-urban nodes given their concentration of offices, businesses and public and community buildings (see Figure I). It is possible to identify sixteen centres within Saguenay: six recently developed commercial strips compete with ten downtown zones associated with the now-disbanded municipalities. The commercial area is thus extremely widespread and could be characterized as having a sort of urban-village spatial structure.

In spite of the efforts made over the last several years, there has been less investment in the former city centres of the three boroughs than in suburban areas. Saguenay faces a number of issues, including those associated with urban revitalization: should the emergence of a CBD-type centre be promoted or not? From this perspective, three alternatives may be considered. The first could be qualified as *laissez faire*, in the sense that the urban area could adapt to market tendencies, with urban space remaining fragmented and decentralized. The second alternative would consist of reinforcing the former centres of the three boroughs, thus making it possible to establish an equilibrium between the former and the new nodes in each borough. The third scenario would be to consolidate the Chicoutimi borough in itself as a large core area encompassing the Chicoutimi downtown and the shopping centres on Talbot Boulevard. Politically speaking, the latter option could lead to heated discussions.

Figure 1: Urban nodes in Saguenay



In spite of the fact that cities are places where people, socio-economic activities and various infrastructures are concentrated, there is no doubt that within their boundaries the natural environment is of great importance as well. In Saguenay, nature marks the urban landscape, most notably by way of the many vistas on the Saguenay River and the numerous changes in elevation. More specifically, the setting of the city is characterized by the presence of wooded areas: hills of crystalline rock, the shores of the various rivers, as well as a network of ravines that reveal the clay-like nature of the soil. Most of these physiographic elements bear witness to the original landscape of the Saguenay area. In fact, green and forest spaces cover more than two-thirds of the municipal territory if we take into account the interstitial green spaces within residential neighbourhoods (Simard and Gauthier 2004). Consequently, it is essential for the natural environment to be taken into account in all planning and development projects.

Urban development in Saguenay has had to confront decreasing population densities as well as the inevitable topographic and pedological constraints limiting settlement possibilities. Traditionally, however, urban development in the region has aimed at uniformity based on both public demand and the private market. As such, preservation of biophysical attributes and soil conservation were not among land-use planning priorities; therefore only the solid hills, the deep ravines and the steep riverbanks could avoid urbanization. As a result, green spaces and woodlands are gradually shrinking in area with every passing year. At the same time, the urban development of the last few decades has progressively given way to a movement to protect and develop green spaces and woodlands (Désy 2004). During the last decade, the landscaping of Chicoutimi's old port area and the construction of Jonquière's boardwalk along the aux Sables River also illustrate the return of substantial green spaces to the centre of the two boroughs.

TWO PLANNING EXPERIMENTS IN SAGUENAY

Local authorities and citizen groups are confronted with a large number of planning issues in peripheral mid-size cities. These specific problems constitute a challenge for the local system of governance. The openness of the decision-making process to citizens groups and community organizations represents a strategy that has proven to be positive in numerous localities (Pierre and Stoker 2000). This political phenomenon has opened the door to imaginative ideas that often lead

to projects and reflect values close to the culturalist current described by Choay. In Saguenay, various planning experiments have been inspired by this approach even though one cannot really speak of a generalized culture of participatory governance. The participatory approach is not limited to peripheral mid-size cities, but does seem necessary in such surroundings given the importance of the problems and the restricted number of means available to address them. In addition, projects emerging from the grass roots seem inclined to favour principles and forms of the culturalist type.

In the following pages, we will focus on two planning experiments initiated by community organizations. In terms of methodology, we have chosen two organizations for our study: the Chicoutimi Cultural District and the Green Acres of the Fjord.⁵ These organizations were selected for their scope and the ongoing nature of their actions, their deep community roots, and their capacity to go beyond local projects in order to promote a comprehensive vision of urban development. They have these points in common in spite of differences with respect to their focal areas: older neighbourhoods versus suburban wooded spaces. We have interviewed key actors from each organization, posing various thematic questions concerning their respective mandates, histories and achievements, as well as their visions of urban development and their relationship with the municipal administration.

Case Study #1: The Chicoutimi Cultural District (CCD)

Initiated in 1996 by the Chicoutimi downtown merchants board, the Chicoutimi Cultural District project has drawn upon the research and initiatives of the Quebec network of artistic and heritage cities, towns and villages. This network promotes the use of cultural resources and institutions existing in local communities in order to foster the arts, culture and heritage from a community economic development perspective, a strategy that has already been used elsewhere in Canada, for instance in Kelowna BC (Curry 2004). The CCD project is seen as a driving force bringing together museums, workshops and other institutions and businesses that are all part of the cultural and tourism infrastructure of Chicoutimi's borough-centre. These facilities are located within an elliptical strip of land stretching, east to west, from the Chicoutimi cathedral to the old pulp mill, in other words comprising most of the Chicoutimi core area. The area of this zone is approximately 150 hectares, and the zone is home to over 3,000 residents.

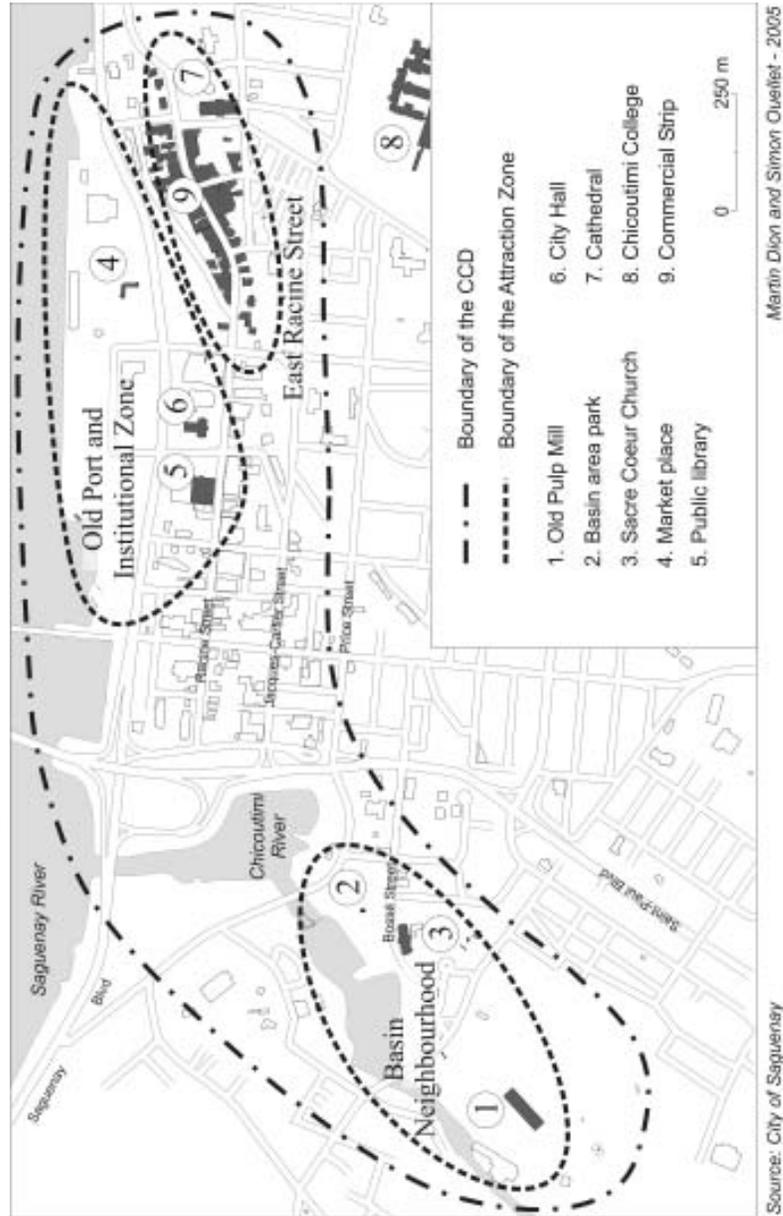
The CCD includes the area that has been most marked by history within the former city of Chicoutimi. The community took shape on the south shore of the Saguenay River, on a hilly piece of land, during the second half of the 19th century. Nowadays, three zones, featuring major attractions, may be identified within the territory of the CCD: East Racine Street, the old port and institutional area, and the basin neighbourhood. The latter is particularly well endowed with tourist facilities and heritage buildings in spite of the after-effects associated with the urban renewal projects of the 1970s and the floods of 1996.⁴ Especially remarkable is the presence in this district of Chicoutimi's old pulp mill complex where a museum is located (see Figure II). Also of note is the design of the basin area park, featuring, at its centre, the emblematic little white house commemorating the local struggle against the floods.

After a few years of reflection and cooperative endeavour, the CCD project really got off the ground in 2001. That was when the former city of Chicoutimi fully endorsed the project by integrating it into the city plan and when a development agent was hired to look after the project. Subsequently, a task force was formed and put in charge of developing a thematic master plan. Various public meetings were also held as a means of mobilizing stakeholders, mainly the artists, retail merchants and residents of the Chicoutimi borough downtown area. Along with these organizational initiatives, a number of artistic and heritage initiatives were also put forward: an advertising folder, a colloquium, a heritage rally, artistic shop windows, outdoor shows, special street furniture and signs, etc.

All these projects helped promote the CCD and yielded short-term results with respect to mobilizing local actors, especially those from artistic circles. In fact, the project proved to be a good example of participatory planning. The City of Saguenay and Quebec's Ministry of Culture and Communications are top-rank partners in the comprehensive CCD development project, supporting the revitalization of this zone by banking on its cultural and heritage assets. In addition, the City of Saguenay's brand-new cultural policy takes the CCD into account by targeting this zone's heritage and urban-framework development. From this perspective, culture and the arts could become assets for tourism in the downtown area as well as for the Chicoutimi borough as a whole.

However, the local actors behind the project are faced with a number of challenges. Firstly, the CCD covers a very large area and this

Figure II: The Chicoutimi Cultural District



Source: City of Saguenay

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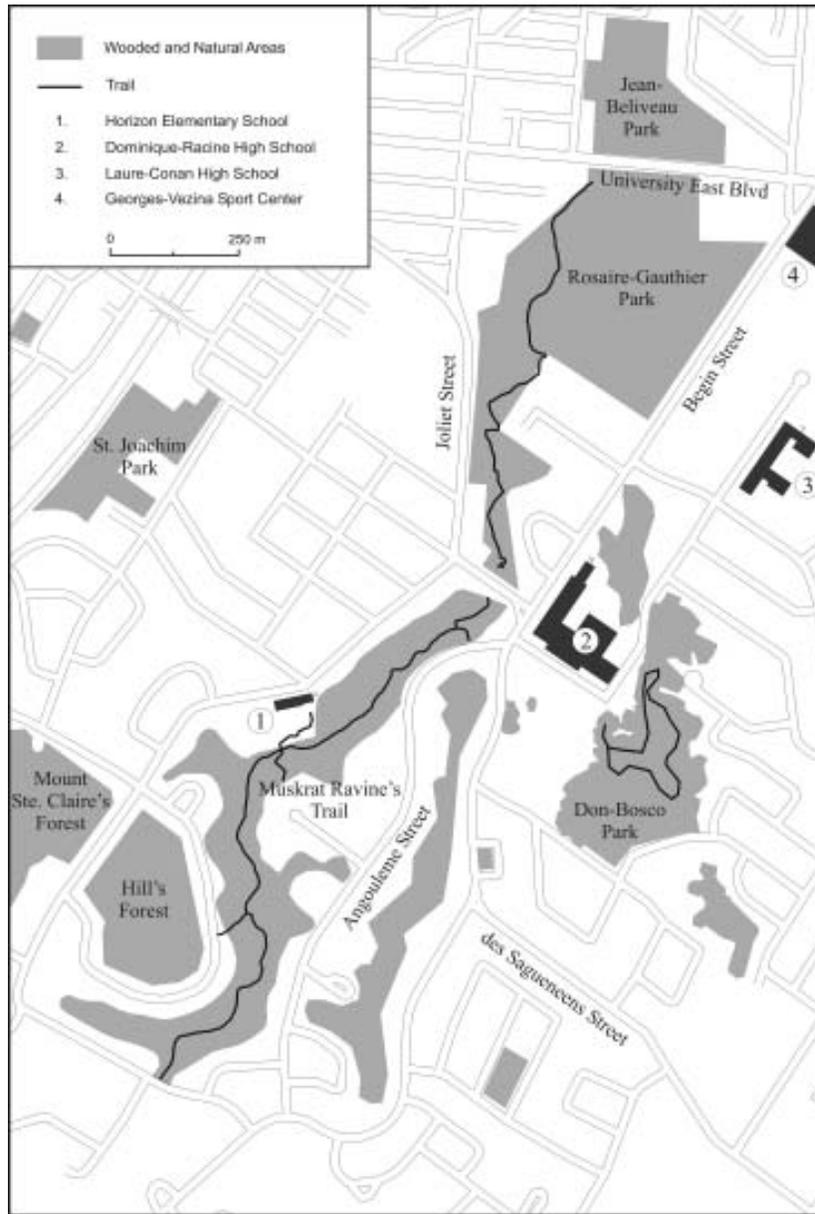
represents an obstacle as regards the unity of the concept. Secondly, its three component zones, centres of attraction as described earlier in this paper, are not joined by efficient and clearly delineated communications networks. In this respect, Saint Paul Boulevard comes across as a discontinuous line between the basin neighbourhood and the rest of the CCD. Generally speaking, local stakeholders may have to look at developing the CCD as an integrated neighbourhood while banking on improving the local environment and promoting the festive and heritage character of the area. Taking into account the needs and ideas of the various population groups is also essential. A number of steps remain to be taken in this direction in order to ensure that the project does not become elitist by concentrating exclusively on the interests of downtown merchants.

Case study #2: The Green Acres of the Fjord (GAF)

The Green Acres of the Fjord land trust is another experiment initiated mainly by citizens and community groups. Created in 1996, the land trust is a non-profit organization that essentially sees to the long-term preservation of wooded areas intertwined with the urban fabric. The objectives of the Green Acres of the Fjord project are to protect, develop and make accessible Saguenay's wooded spaces for the benefit of the local population and their descendants. More precisely, this non-profit organization operates under a board of directors made up of members registered either as individuals or as representatives of social, environmental or other organizations. The GAF currently has twenty board members, half being active members participating in the decision-making processes, while the others provide financial support for the cause of woodland rehabilitation.

Up until now, Saguenay's land trust has carried out many studies concerning the management and recycling of urban woodlands and ravines, mainly in the Chicoutimi and Jonquière boroughs. According to an inventory of thirty urban woodlands carried out in 1999, twenty are suitable for development, five should instead be recycled and five should be preserved as they stand. These assessments were based on the following criteria: the nature of the wildlife habitat, the attractiveness of the landscape, their recreational/educational potential, land tenure, and types of morphological units. Moreover, a number of urban forestry interventions have taken place during the last few years, for instance, redesigning the shores of the Du Moulin River in Chicoutimi,

Figure III: The Green Acres of the Fjord



Source: The Green Acres of the Fjord

Simon Ouellet, 2005

redeveloping the Jonquière college woodlot and the Muskrat River ravine in Chicoutimi (see figure III), and removing diseased willows in the Arvida district, i.e. the former model town created by Alcan in 1926.

By carrying out studies and interventions, the land trust is endeavouring to put a permanent stamp on the development projects already completed. In this regard, a voluntary conservation project, initiated in 2003, was designed primarily to promote the conservation and maintenance of urban woodlands by way of agreements reached between landowners and the GAF. The project was a success given that seventeen out of thirty owners agreed to sign a formal contract involving twenty-five wooded areas with a total area of 3 km². Moreover, the Green Acres of the Fjord organization also initiated, in 2002, a walking-in-the-woods project as a way of combining environmental and preventive health concerns. A consciousness-raising and promotional tool was also developed, the urban walker's kit, to encourage this activity. Lastly, consciousness-raising initiatives also involve the participation of schools: a primary and secondary school, as well as two colleges, are partners in the land trust project.

A number of actions will be undertaken over the upcoming years. The organization is putting pressure on municipal authorities with the goal of eliciting a commitment to protecting and developing green spaces in urban settings. The main demands of the GAF are as follows: 1) the inclusion of woodlands in the city and regional county municipality development plans as areas of ecological, aesthetic and even cultural interest; and 2) the formulation and adoption of a comprehensive urban forestry program to develop the wooded patrimony. The organization is also asking authorities to adopt a regulation concerning the management and safeguarding of trees and wooded spaces on the city perimeter. In addition, the Green Acres of the Fjord wishes to involve the population directly in the management of protected and developed wooded spaces, using the following means: land acquisitions made through legal channels (purchases, donations, landed servitude, etc.); and private ecological stewardship through the negotiation and application of a management project concerning land for which it does not have ownership.

CONCLUSION

The urban environment represents a complex space undergoing constant change. Like metropolises and large cities, peripheral mid-size cities are constantly evolving even when stagnating or shrinking.

Although such changes may appear to be negative, the socio-economic and demographic transformations that affect such urban areas may serve as a pretext for the development of a planning program along the lines of the culturalist movement. This is what our study of the Chicoutimi Cultural District and the Green Acres of the Fjord experiments demonstrates. In fact, urban revitalization and green space redevelopment strategies are part and parcel of the same integrated planning and sustainable development approach. Such integration appears to be essential for small metropolitan human settlements.

In the first place, traditional city cores are particularly vulnerable to competition with suburban commercial strips. Thus, it would seem that any form of revitalization of urban cores must take place through cultural activities, entertainment and tourism. In Saguenay, there is no district with a genuine urban atmosphere to foster urbanity, encounters and exchanges. Indeed, one has to wonder whether there is not a link between the migration patterns of young people and the fact that this urban area lacks a living pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood where they might gather. The city is largely designed to meet the needs and values of blue-collar workers; i.e., it is based on single-family dwellings and nuclear families. In spite of these constraints, the CCD is attempting to foster an arts, culture and heritage development movement, which seems essential to maintaining a good quality of urban life.

In the second place, green spaces and urban woodlands are also in a delicate situation in a number of mid-size peripheral cities. Erroneous ideas about infinite nature, the attraction of low-density housing, and a widespread belief that the natural environment has to be pushed aside still persist in many strata of local communities. One has to keep in mind that these areas constituted frontier settlements only a few decades ago. For many years, these phenomena contributed to the destruction of green spaces and to encroachment on peripheral natural areas. The industrial pollution affecting large areas in Saguenay (as it does in Sudbury and elsewhere) must also be taken into consideration. A land trust along the lines of the GAF could therefore help solve the problems of peripheral mid-size cities. This strategy combines progressive principles of conservation with rules of the market through real estate strategies.

Considering their past history, a sound and comprehensive planning agenda is especially important for peripheral mid-size cities. A number of elements serve to justify this contention: the scarcity of resources, a slower urban dynamic and an aging population. In this neoconservative era, it seems that citizens and community groups are in the best position

to put forward a vision of good city form, and this vision is often related to culturalist values, expressed in civic spaces and institutions and green spaces in mid-size human settlements. The point is not to reject the dispersed city form as a whole but rather to adapt it. In this respect, Choay's culturalist model coincides with and includes various currents of contemporary thought, especially New Urbanism and Smart Growth, in addition to synthesizing a number of past proposals.

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Notes

¹ The new city of Gatineau is the result of an amalgamation of the municipalities of Aylmer, Gatineau, Hull and Masson-Angers. This city acts as a centre of influence and attraction much like other Quebec regional metropolitan areas, but its potential for particular attraction connected with its integration into the metropolitan Ottawa region must also be considered.

² Saguenay experienced two important plant closings in 2004 leading to a total loss of about 1,000 jobs: Abitibi Consolidated's Port Alfred plant and a section of Alcan's Arvida complex.

³ The remaining 13 percent is taken up by areas of water, mainly the Saguenay River and Lake Kenogami.

⁴ The floods that affected the Saguenay region in July 1996 can be linked to heavy rains in the mountainous area of the reserve faunique des Laurentides (Laurentian wildlife reserve) to the south of this region. The tributaries of the south shore of the Saguenay River, such as the aux Sables (Jonquière), Chicoutimi (Chicoutimi) and à Mars (La Baie) rivers overflowed in their downstream areas. In spite of its spectacular character, the "deluge" did not leave a significant mark on Saguenay's urban fabric, except in the La Baie borough. In Chicoutimi, a few buildings were demolished in the Basin district and two blocks were merged in order to create a commemorative park.

⁵ In French: "le croissant culturel et touristique de Chicoutimi" et "les verts boisés du Fjord."

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