#### July 6 - 2022 CIP Conference, Whistler







From an outdated Land use bylaw to a Progressive Form-Based Code

Nathalie Martin, Ville de Laval

Mathieu Roy, Ville de Laval

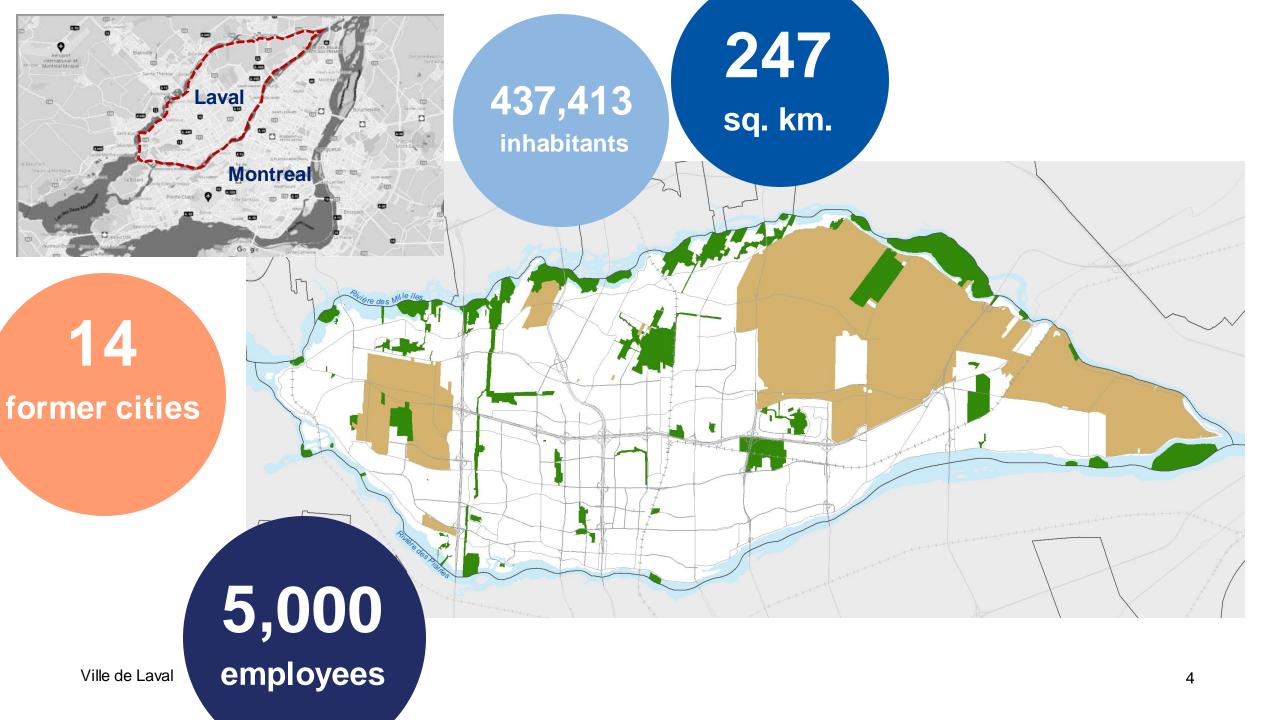
Louis-Michel Fournier, L'Atelier Urbain

Louis Mazerolle, L'Atelier Urbain

### 1. Context of Laval

### Brief description

- The City of Laval is the secondlargest city in the Greater Montreal area
- In 2021, the city adopted the Code de l'urbanisme (CDU), a new formbased code after decades working with the same land use bylaw.
- Since conventional zoning does a poor job for the creation of sustainable cities, Laval can certainly inspire and lead the way for other communities willing to think urban planning differently.



### <sup>1636-1854</sup> The evolution of urbanization in Laval













1115, rue du Plateau-Ouimet







255, boul. Ste-Rose

60, avenue des Terrasses







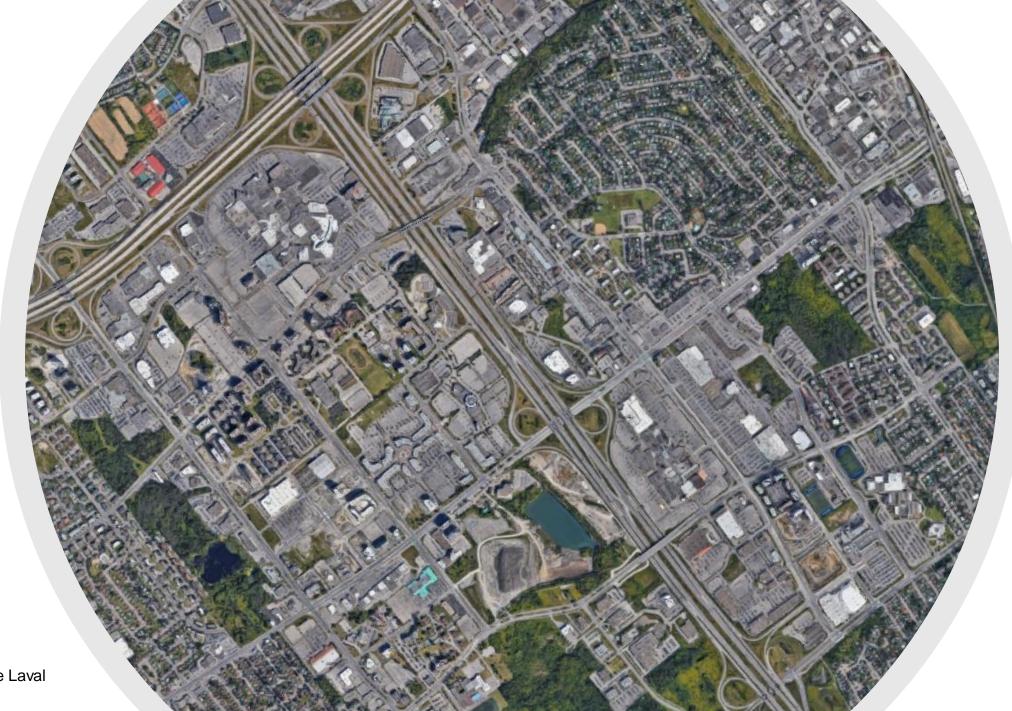




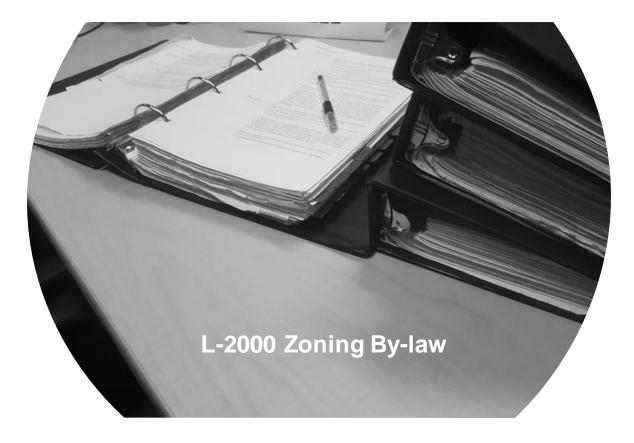


Source : Centre d'archives de Laval





### Why review our urban planning by-laws?





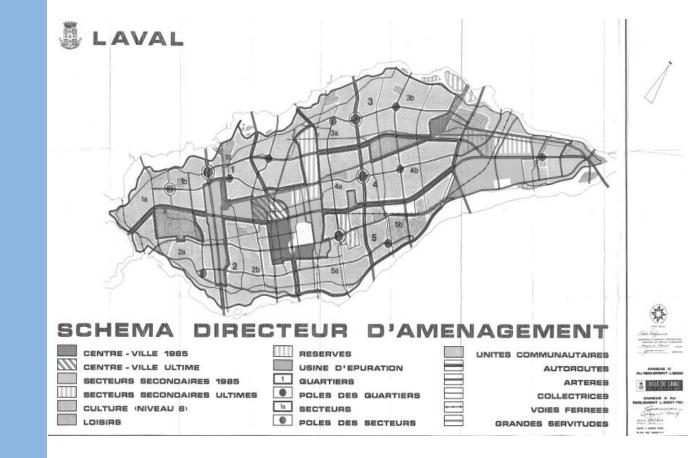








### L-2000 Zoning By-law



### L-2000 Zoning By-law

### **3,500** zones

### 3,760 amendments

**2,039** pages

## **47** illustrations

# Strategic vision



2014-2017

#### Revised Land Use and Development Plan (SADR)

जि

"City and Regional Planning"

Award for Planning Excellence 2018 Canadian Institute of Planners

LAVA

SCHÉMA D'AMÉNAGEMENT ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT RÉVISÉ DE LA VILLE DE LAVAL

### Revised Land Use and Development Plan (SADR)

3 main objectives:

- 1. To manage Laval's land use in an eco-friendly manner
- 2. To stimulate and promote dynamism, innovation and the distinctive character of the City;
- 3. To create comprehensive, inclusive and human-scale neighborhoods.

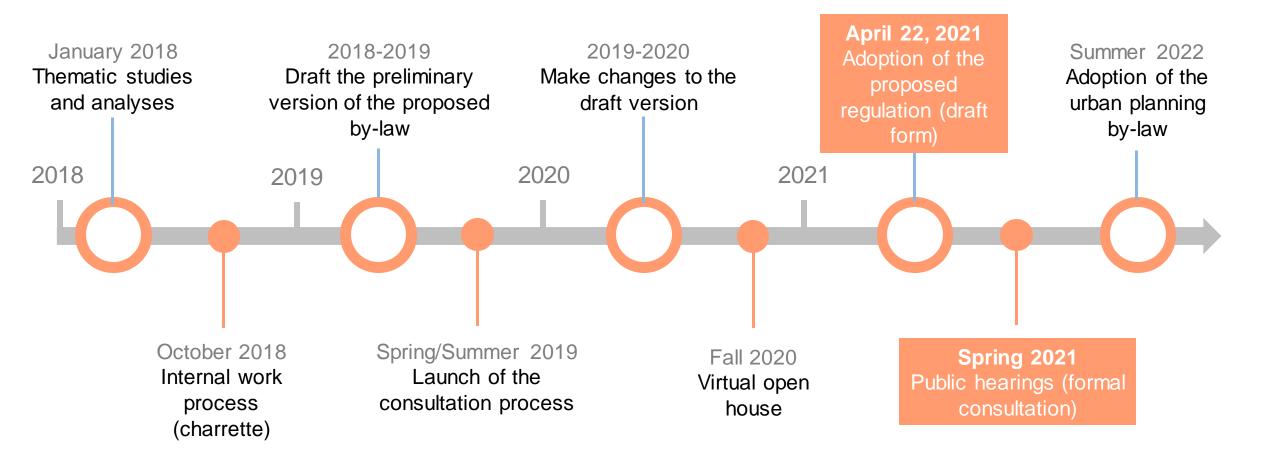
No local planning program

# 2. Project and process

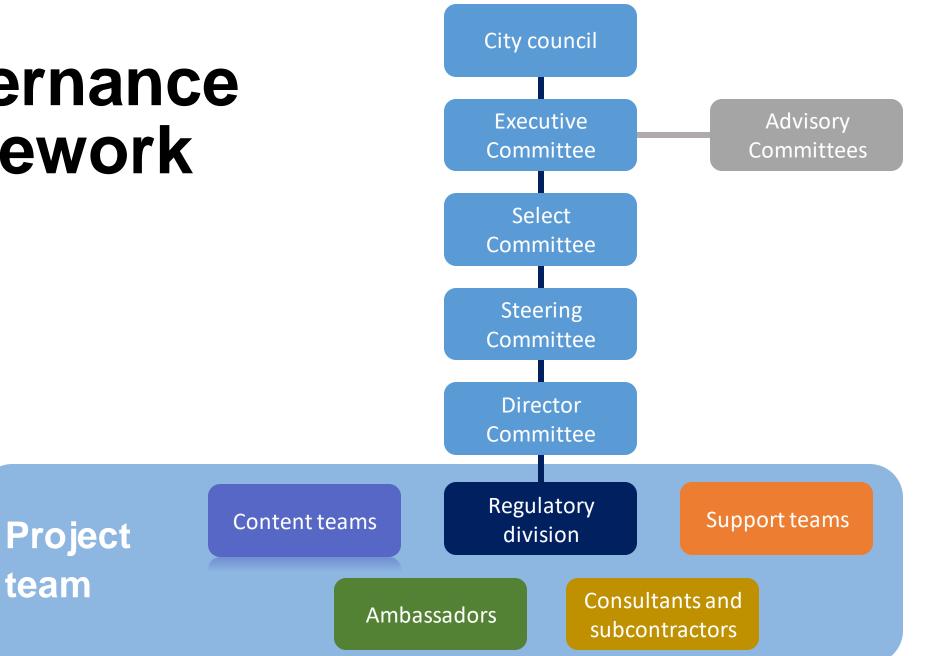
### Guiding principles of the zoning review

- Participate in the fight against climate change
- Conserve and enhance natural environments
- Densify while respecting what already exists
- Enhance heritage and landscapes
- Provide quality architecture and public spaces
- Encourage sustainable mobility

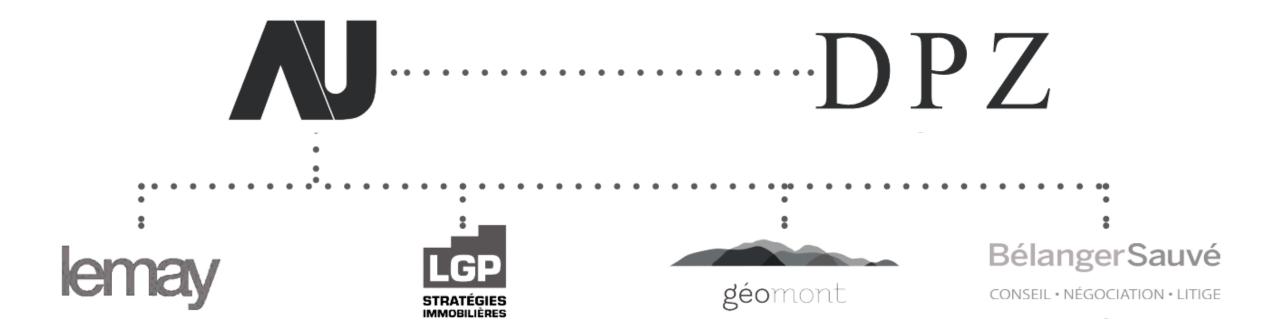
### **Project timeline**



#### Governance framework







Et 4 autres collaborateurs :



VIVRE EN VILLE la voie des collectivités viables





Claude Marois Professeur

# One year of preparatory studies

- 1. Gas stations
- 2. Signs
- 3. Agriculture
- 4. Organizing the territory (FBC)
- 5. Document that complements the SADR
- 6. Acquired rights
- 7. Land use classification
- 8. Height and density
- 9. Animation of public spaces
- 10. Accessory dwelling units
- 11. Yards and setbacks definitions
- 12. Climate change and sustainable development
- 13. Parking and mobility
- 14. Secondary and complementary uses
- 15. Development and redevelopment districts
- 16. Places of worship
- 17. Inspection & permits

## Additional studies

### Produced during the project term

- Typomorphological study
- Implementation of the requirement of the development plan (SADR)
- Industrial and commercial districts
- Environmental best practices
- Form-Based Code, applied to Laval
- Architectural tests of CDU preliminary standards
- Air quality and public health criteria near highways
- Benchmark study of other cities
- Explanatory videos



### Charrette led to the major strategic decisions



5 days, more than 80 participants
205 pages drafted, 70 sketches
55 3D models
140 zones redefined

10 strategic decisions (Laval transect, all in one by law, table of contents...)

1 presentation to directors

# Drafting the Code

#### 2019 - Preliminary draft

- Iterative process
- 6 months of inhouse brainstorming with the consultant
- Drafting (consultant) Verification (city)

#### 2020 - Validating the draft version

- Jan. 2020: first draft of the by-law
- Content validation blitz
- Various decision-making committees

# Adoption of the Code

#### 2021 - Adoption of the draft by-law

Final draft of the by-law

Preparation of the final version of the by-law

2022 - Adoption and entry into force of the final by-law <text><text><text>

### **Consultation process**



Public launch

**2020** Virtual open house

2021 Public hearings

Documentation available (French only): repensonslaval.ca/revision-urbanisme 31



Accueil Pourquoi révise-t-on la réglementation? Quelle est la nouvelle réglementation proposée?

Envie d'en savoir plus sur l'approche réglementaire? Avez-vous une question? Consultation publique

Sondage d'appréciation

#### **Portes ouvertes virtuelles**

Future réglementation d'urbanisme

Quelle est la nouvelle réglementation proposée?



Envie d'en savoir plus sur l'approche réglementaire?



Pourquoi révise-t-on la réglementation?

une quest

**@** 

Avez-vo

Gold Award "Communication tool"

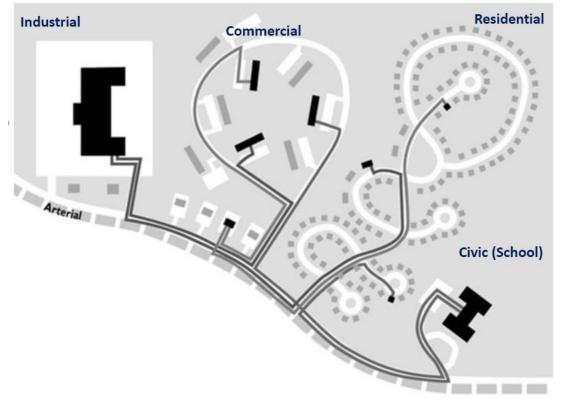
**Excellence Award 2020** 

Société québécoise des professionnels en relations publiques

### 3. Theory behind Form-Based Code

### FBC: In response to conventional zoning

#### Mid 20th century zoning

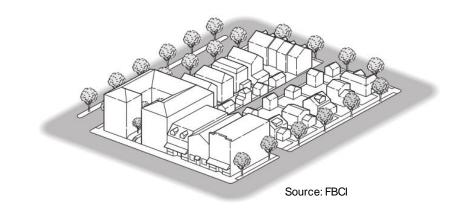


Source: CNU ...segregation of uses, housing types, incomes races

Starting in the 1980's « zones » defined by physical characteristics and mix of uses and housing types

### Form-Based Code

#### /fôrm-bāsed kōd/



- a set of land development regulations
- predictable built results
- > a high-quality public realm
- uses physical form rather than separation of uses — as the organizing principle

# Theory of FBC

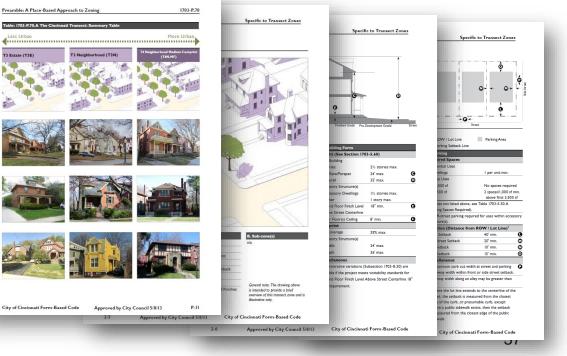
- Focuses on what happens outside the buildings-form
- Includes standards for both public and private development
- Ensures that the approved vision or plan for the area is realized
- Maintains physical character of that vision over time.

## **Conventional Zoning**

VS.

## Form-Based Code





Ville de Laval

## **Conventional zoning vs. FBC**



- Single-use zones
- Forms follow function
- Rely on discretionary review of (poorly design) project

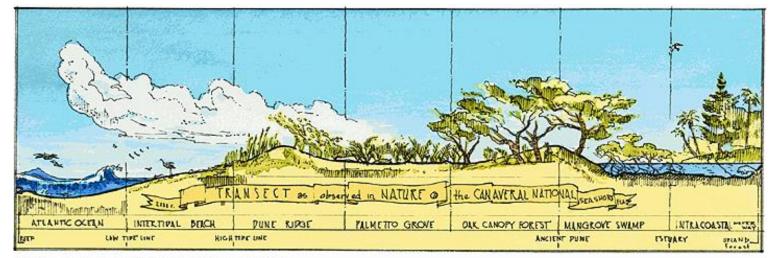


- Building placement
- Street frontage and openings
- Parking location
- Mix of uses

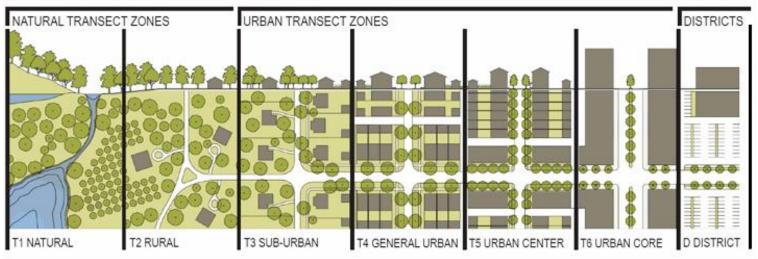
## **Conventional Zoning vs. FBC**

Conventional Zoning	Form-Based Code
Focus on density	Focus on placement and form
Ignore streetscapes	Focus on streetscapes
Little detail	Considerable detail
Mostly text	Highly illustrated
Focus on specific uses	Focus on form of buildings and streets
Reliance on discretionary review	Reliance on clear, by-right standards
Emphasizes on use and density as development controls	Reduces the role of use and density
Relies greatly on permit process	Reduces the role of the permit process
Neglects the role of form	Emphasize the role of form

## Transect: from natural to human habitat



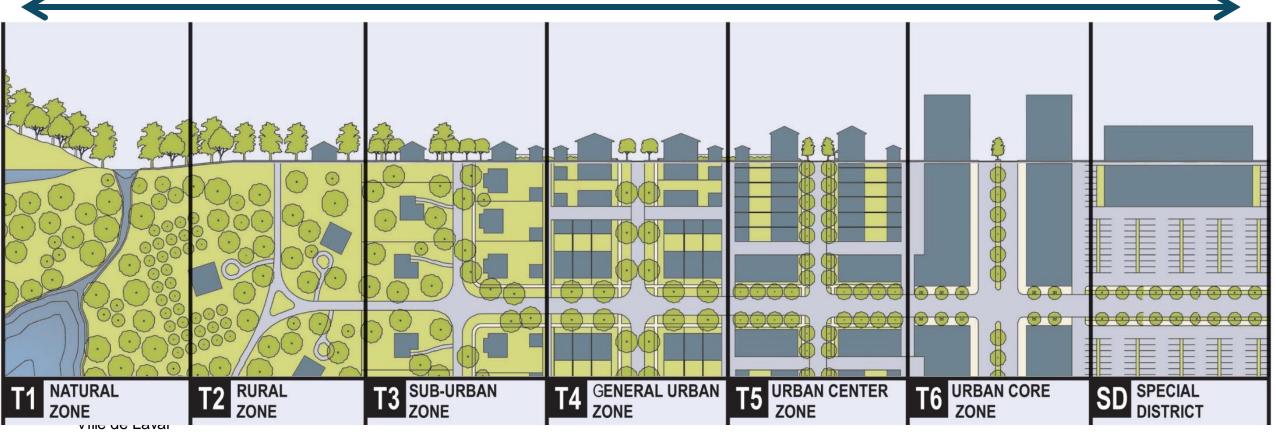
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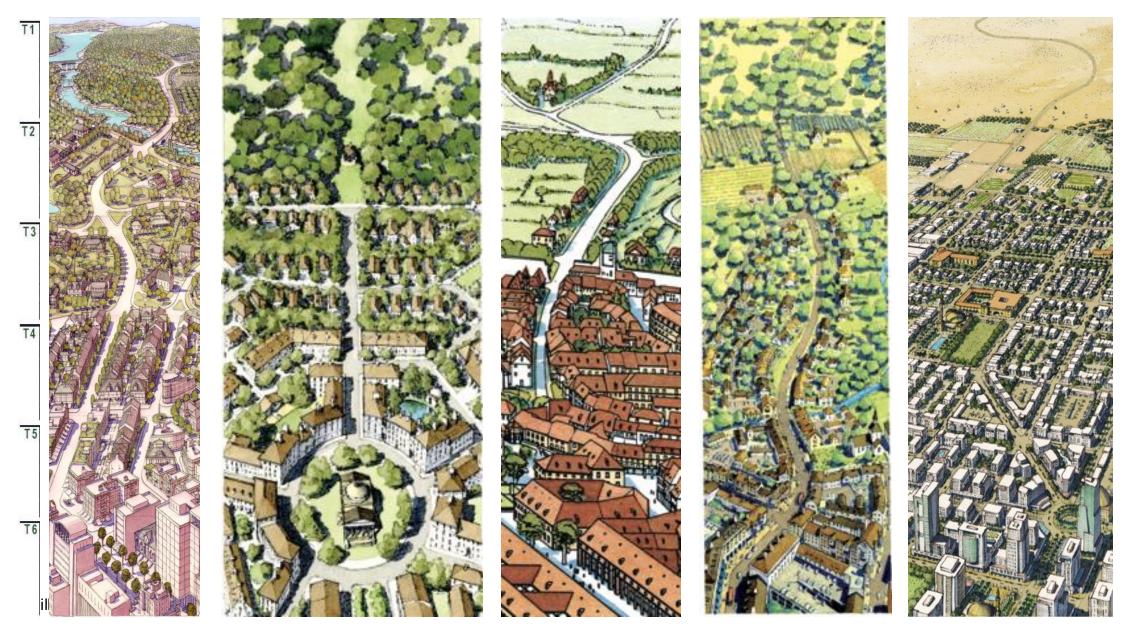
Ville de Laval

#### **Form-Based Code**

Spectrum of urban environments (transect zones) ranked by intensity



#### **Transect in different contexts**

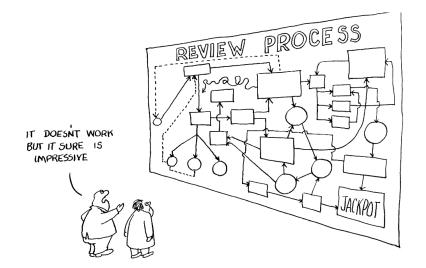


## Why do communities choose a form-based code?

- 1. To revitalize downtown
- 2. To protect historic neighborhoods
- 3. To enable transit-oriented development (TOD)
- 4. To enable traditional neighborhood development (TND)
- 5. To retrofit suburban sprawl

## Why do communities choose a form-based code?

- 6. To adopt rules to implement a vision for newly annexed land
- 7. To transform an auto-centric corridor into a walkable neighborhood
- 8. To streamline complicated approval process
- 9. To revitalize a mature city or neighborhood



## 4 The Code de l'urbanisme (CDU)

Ville de Laval

- 1. A simplified and user-friendly by-law
- 2. A new zoning strategy
- 3. New provisions
- 4. Complementary tools

# Important new features of the CDU

## 4.1 A simplified and userfriendly regulation



#### A single urban planning regulation

Replaced with one: the urban planning code Eleven by-laws:

- L-2000 Zoning and PIIA
- L-9500 Land subdivision
- L-Construction and permits de l'urbanisme
- L-9502 Minor variations

M.R.C.L.-8 - Woodlands of interest

.-9 - Residential density

L.-10 - Maximum height

M.R.C.L.-11 - Wetlands of interest

- L-280 and L-11807 Pools
- L-8556 Retail of fruits and vegetables

• L-8127 – Retail of flowers

Title 1 Intent

- Title 2 Statements and explanations
- Title 3 Land Subdivision
- **Title 4 Construction**
- **Title 5 General Development Provisions**
- Title 6 Land uses

Appendix

Ville de Laval

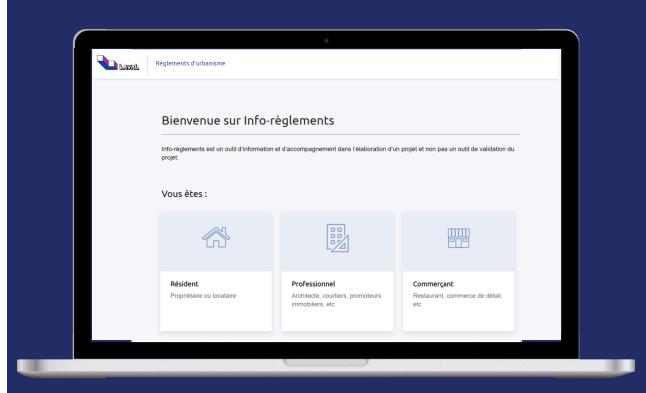
- Title 7 Transect Zones (Types de milieux)
- Title 8 Special Areas, Projects and Buildings
- Title 9 Non-conforming structures and uses protected by acquired rights
- Title 10 Administration and procedures

## STRUCTURE

- A single urban planning regulation
- Addition of more than 500 illustrations

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				Ville de Laval	CODE DE L'URBANISME // 489
				Compared pages 200	

- A single urban planning regulation
- Addition of more than 500 illustrations
- Unique online search tool



### 4.2 A new zoning strategy



### **Transect of Laval**



T1	T2	Т3	T4	T5	Т6
Naturel	Agricole	Suburbain	Urbain	Urbain compact	Centralité urbaine









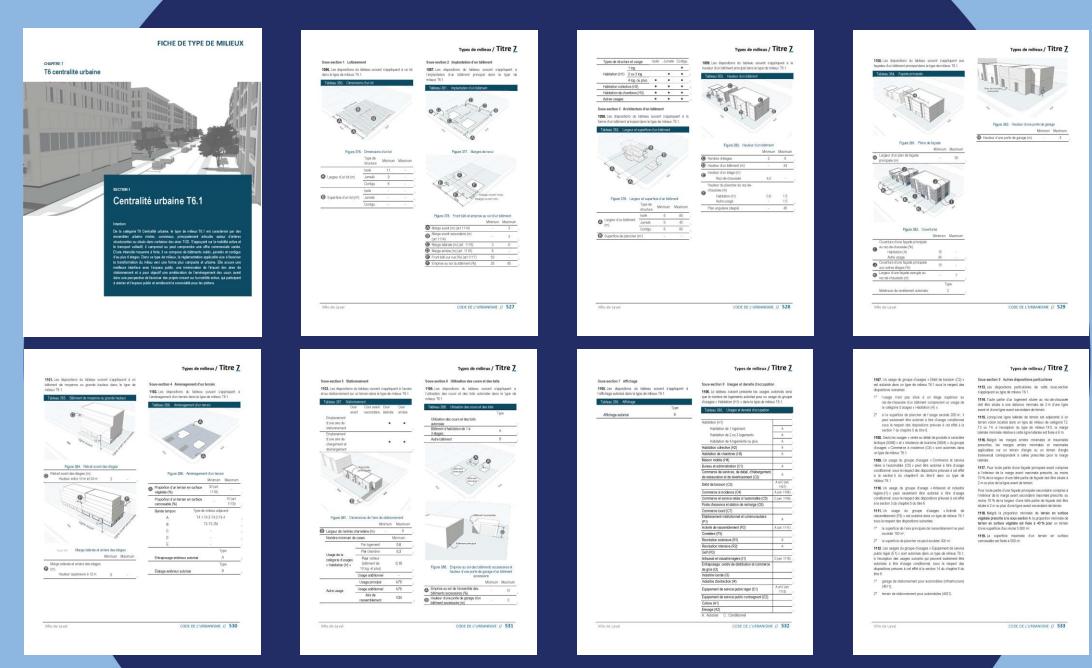




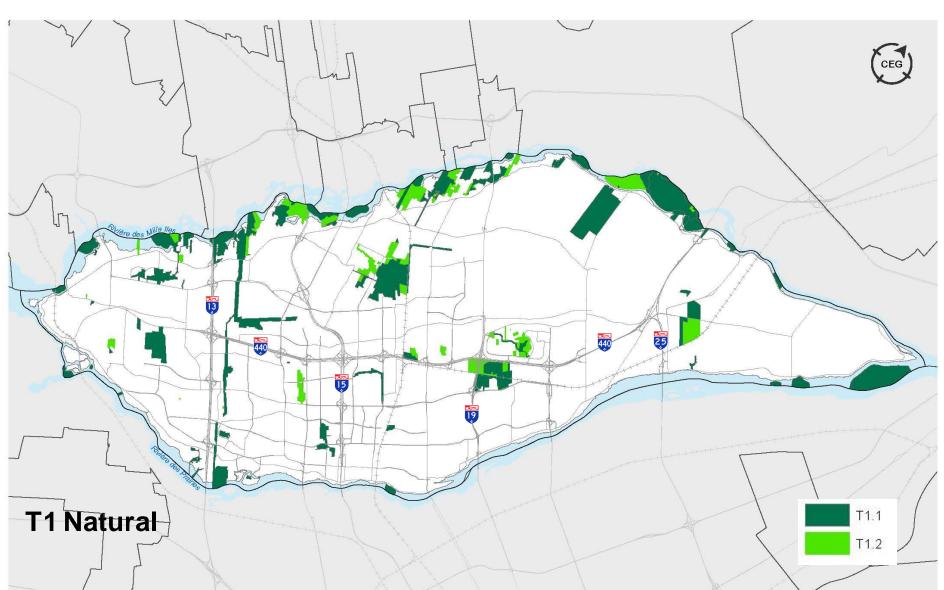
#### Analysis of the territory and zoning review

Zoning completely revised across the territory :

- Starting point : actual zoning (L-2000)
- Step 1 : Adapting land-use and development plan (SADR) and preparatory studies guidelines to zoning
- Step 2 : Redrawing zoning though the *maintain/evolve/transform* approach
- Step 3 : Detailed analysis of urban form (setback, height, lot size, etc.) and uses
- Step 4 : Adapting typo-morphological analysis to zoning
- Step 5 : Review of proposed zoning by city planners
  - Step 6 : Final adjustments following public consultation



#### **Protecting natural environments**



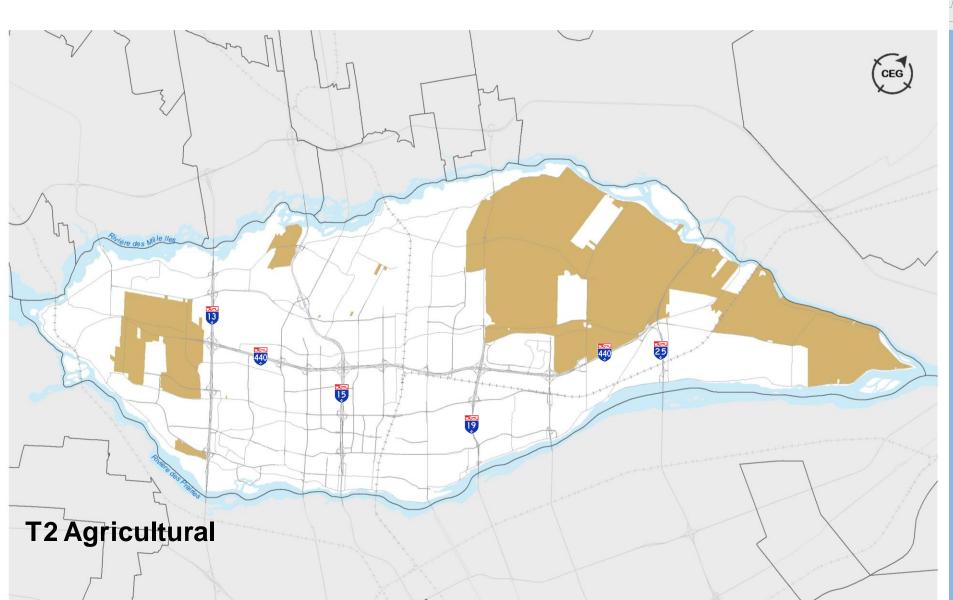


Large number of natural environments

T1.1 - Conservation: Very limited development and construction

T1.2 - Protection: Low-impact housing permitted with conditions

#### Maintaining agricultural zones



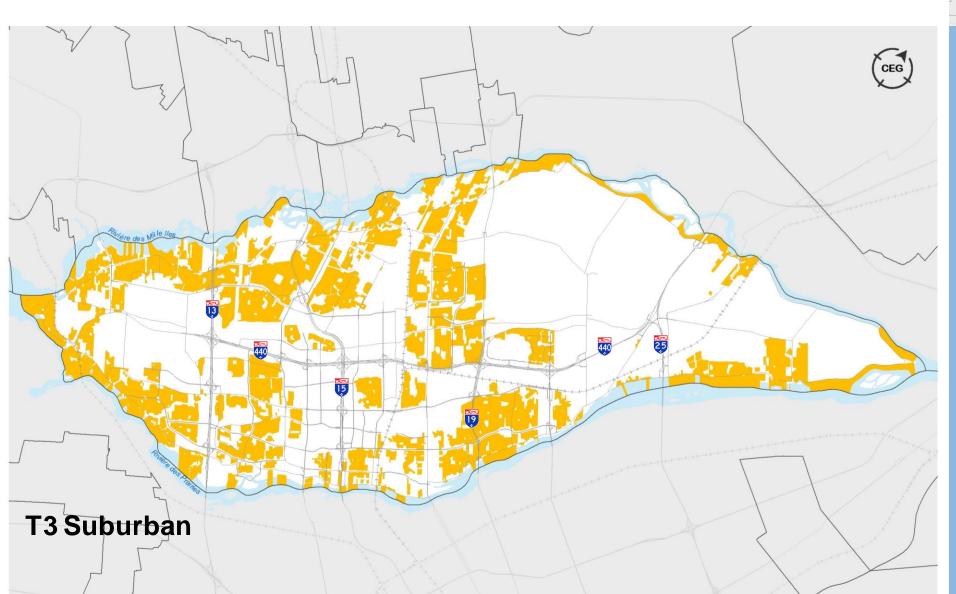


Protecting and enhancing agricultural activities

#### Permitted uses:

- Crops
- Livestock
- Extensive recreation
- Agricultural producer's home

## Maintaining existing low density residential neighbourhoods

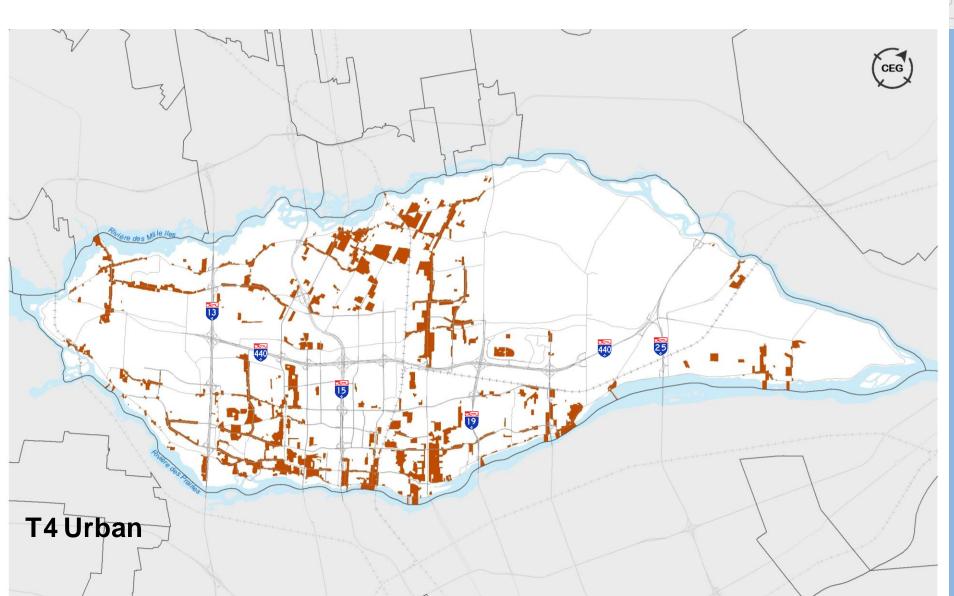




#### Uniform residential areas

- Single-family dwellings permitted
- No higher than 2 to 3 storeys
- Limited mineralization and increased greening

## Moving slightly towards denser and more diversified living environments

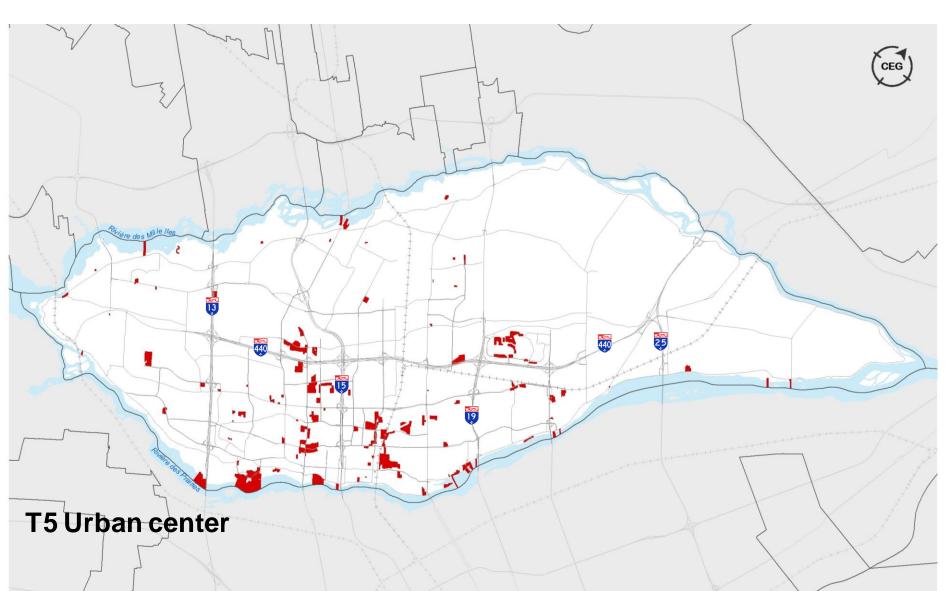




Mixed urban spaces at human scale

- Medium density
- Buildings of 2 to 3 storeys
- Local businesses allowed in certain locations
- Urban spaces of heritage interest

## Maintaining high density residential projects

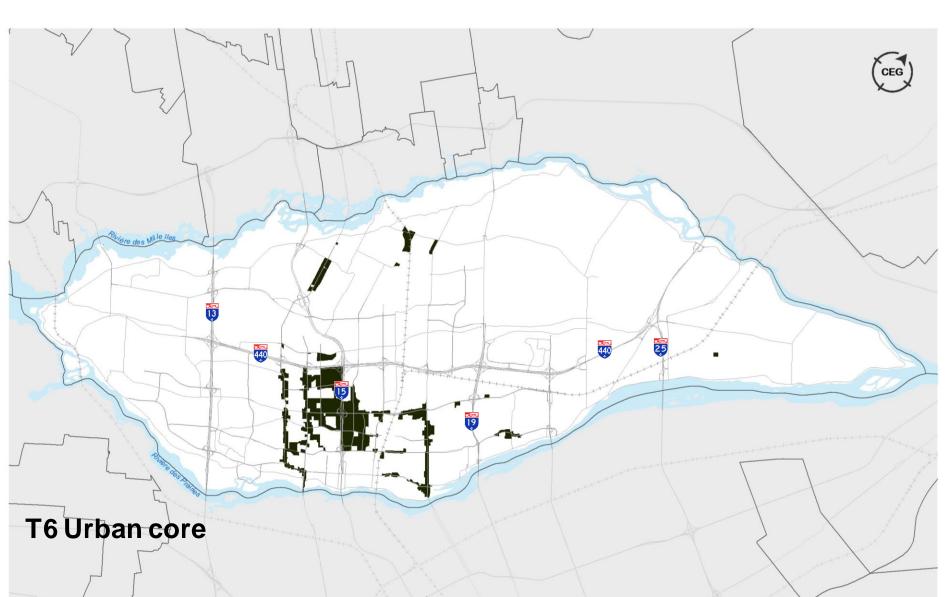




Diversity of medium and high density residential buildings

- Height of 4 to 15 storeys (with some exceptions)
- Building set back from the street
- Mostly residential

## Developing the downtown core and main arteries

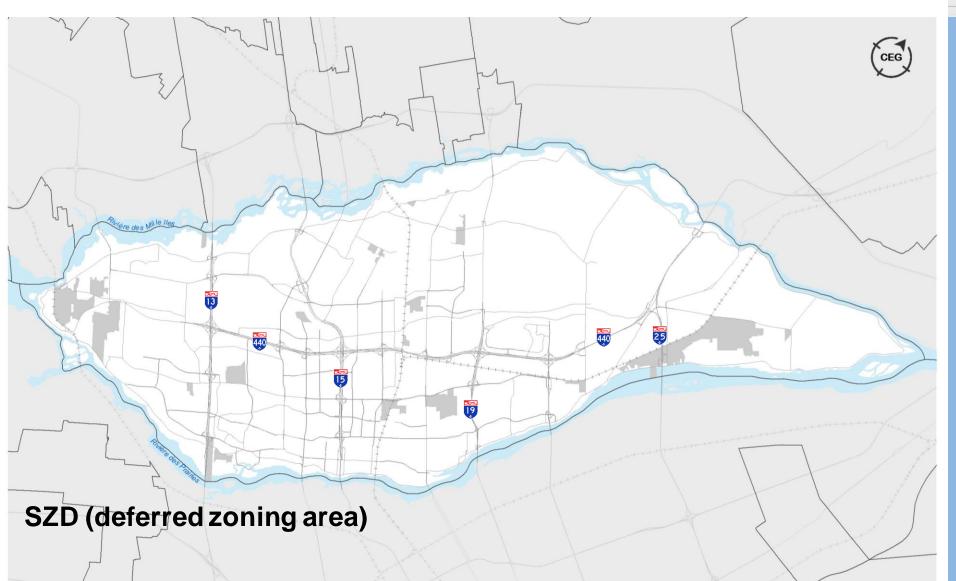




Mixed and compact urban areas

- High density
- Height of 6 to 25
   storeys
- Buildings close to the street
- Standards to ensure cohabitation with lower intensity sectors

## Framework for future development projects





#### Large vacant areas

- Specific planning objectives and criteria
- Ensures quality projects
- Fosters citizen participation

## Additional categories of special districts

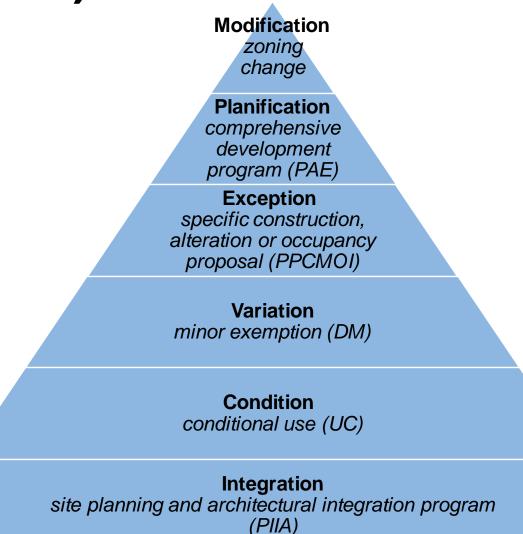
- Civic (CI):
- Open spaces (CE):
- Extraction (ZE):
- Industrial (ZI):
- Mobile homes (ZM):
- Commercial (ZC):
- Public services (ZP):
- High technology (ZH):

- Recognition of public buildings
- Recognition of parks and other public spaces
- Mining industry recognition
- Recognition and development of industrial sectors
- Recognition of mobile home parks Maintaining and containing big-box stores Maintaining heavy public service equipment
- Consolidation of high-tech industries

#### 4.3 Complementary approvals



## Complementary discretionary approvals (by elected officials)



Ville de Laval

## Challenges and opportunities

Ville de Laval

No development freeze is planned before the CDU comes into effect

## Transition regulations

#### **Objective**

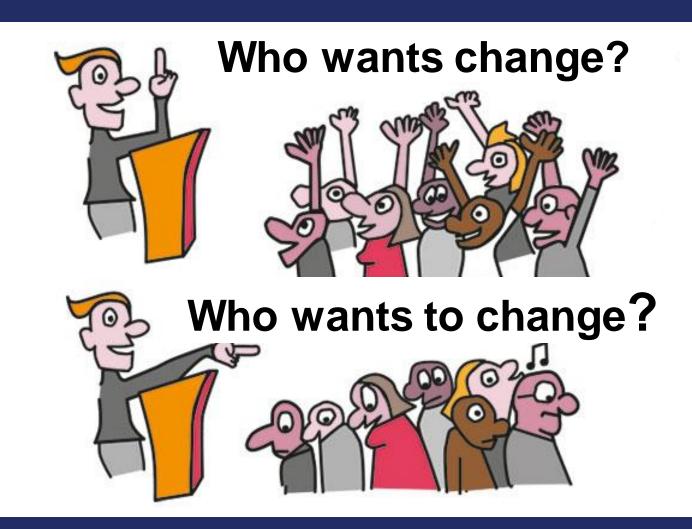
Allow for pending permits under the old by-laws to be issued, once the CDU comes into effect

## Transition regulations

Creation of a **transitional plan** to facilitate the processing of applications

The transitional regulations will only be effective on the day the CDU comes into force

## Major changes comes with major challenges



#### **Lessons** learned

- A turnkey approach is impossible for a project of this scale and need constant resetting
- Providing the necessary guidance and validation to the consultants and transferring city's detailed knowledge require considerable effort on the part of the city
- Rigorous planning review at each phase of the project is crucial (creative work methods to be put in place)
- An internal project team that is not dedicated to the project can cause speed and efficiency issues.
- Citizen and elected representatives participation and consultation takes time but are the key to the success of the project

### The winning conditions

- A rigorous project planning and a project manager entirely dedicated to the project with leadership skills
- A project prioritized by the entire organization
- A committed, available and mobilizing Urban Planning Department
- A dedicated, experienced project team with an extensive understanding of the territory
- Skilled, innovative and efficient consultants
- Effective communications across all teams

## Thank you

Nathalie Martin, Ville de Laval Mathieu Roy, Ville de Laval Louis-Michel Fournier, L'Atelier Urbain, Imfournier@latelierurbain.com Louis Mazerolle, L'Atelier Urbain, Imazerolle@latelierurbain.com



