

[Unofficial translation by Mo Laidlaw, 3 hours unpaid, not perfect. 26 October 2015.]

The land use and development plan (schéma d'aménagement) is a planning document that sets out the main guidelines and objectives of management and development of the territory of MRC over a period of 10-15 years. The adoption of this document by the MRC is mandatory under the provisions of the Law on planning and development.

Summary of the second draft of revised land use and development plan and strategic vision statement

The revision of the land use and development plan:

Pursuant to the Planning and Development Act, the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais must periodically conduct a review of its development plan. Besides this legal obligation, the revision is made necessary because of the changing socio-economic and political context since the coming into force of the current development plan in 1998. In June 2015, the Council of MRC Mayors adopted the "Second draft of revised land use and development plan" (PSADR). This document must be submitted to a public consultation process, so that the population of the municipalities of the MRC can have input to development issues and the developments discussed in the document. In this regard, the MRC will hold public consultation meetings at the following locations and times:

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Wednesday, November 4, 2015, at the Community Centre (Luskville sector) of the Municipality of Pontiac, located at 2024, Route 148, starting 7:30 pm.

...

The key issues of the revision of the development plan and development:

The revision of the development plan and development of the MRC focuses on eight (8) major issues, namely:

1. The management of urbanization:

In the last ten years, the MRC has experienced intensive development, particularly residential. More than 4,000 new homes were added to the housing stock of the MRC. In most cases, these homes were located outside the village cores designated by the "urban perimeter."

In this regard, the Québec government asks the MRC to prioritize the development of urban perimeters and ensure better control of urban sprawl on its territory. To meet this requirement, the MRC proposes to restrict new developments outside various urban perimeters and foster the strengthening of the latter as local service centres. Also, the MRC intends to propose measures to this effect, such as:

- Prohibit the opening of new residential developments in certain rural areas
- Promote the establishment of businesses inside the urban perimeters and limit their number in rural areas
- Advocate the establishment of public facilities and infrastructure inside the urbanization perimeters (eg. Water and sewer systems, community centre, library, sports complex, etc.)

The MRC sets out the major focus for urban management:
"Consolidate existing urban perimeters by controlling urban expansion outside these."

2. The protection and enhancement of farm land

The agricultural zone of the MRC covers more than a third of its territory (35.4%). More than 220 farm businesses were recorded in 2013. The Act on the protection of farm land and agricultural activities (LPTAAQ) aims to promote and develop the farmland of Québec, and controlling non-agricultural activities in the green zone. Also, through its development policy, the Québec government asks the MRC in its development plan, to set up measures to prioritize agricultural development in agricultural areas and restrict nonagricultural uses.

Given the above, the MRC proposes to limit nonagricultural uses in the green zone, especially homes and businesses. Also, parts of the farm zone will be exclusively dedicated to the development of agriculture while inside less active agricultural sectors, homes will be allowed only under certain conditions. The MRC also wants to establish strategies to promote the development of farm businesses in its territory, through a "farm zone development plan" (PDZA).

The MRC sets out the following major focus for farm land:

"In a sustainable-development perspective, to plan management and development of farm land, giving priority to agricultural and farm activities, respecting the specific character of the area, to promote economic development of the MRC, and encourage organic farming."

3. Recreational tourism development

The recreation and tourism sector of the MRC includes:

- 657 lakes
- Three (3) major rivers (Ottawa, Gatineau and LeLièvre rivers)
- A strong cottage presence (4112 cottages and vacation homes)
- Important recreational tourism areas (ski resorts, golf courses, campgrounds, Gatineau Park, etc.)
- Recreotouristic events
- Etc.
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For recreational tourism development, the MRC wishes to encourage tourism by focusing on natural and cultural assets, as well as sports and outdoor facilities. To do this, the MRC proposes among other things to:

- develop niche markets with strong potential, for which it has competitive advantages (e.g. outdoor adventure)
- identify a marketing brand
- contribute to the recognition and strengthening of the tourist centres of the MRC
- create a regional park, Parc du Sault-des-Chats (Chats Falls Park)
- update and implement its tourism development plan

The MRC therefore sets out the following major focus:

“Increase the number of tourists visiting the MRC by offering visitors a quality experience, highlighting its natural and cultural distinctiveness, sports and outdoor facilities.”

4. The environment

One of the main challenges for the MRC is to reconcile environmental protection and development of its territory (sustainable development). The second draft of the MRC land development plan proposes several measures related to environmental protection:

- conservation of aquatic ecosystems and wildlife (banks, shorelines of lakes and streams)
- protection of sources of drinking water
- wetlands (buffer strips, restriction of activities, etc.)
- management of waste materials (e.g. recycling in the MRC)
- protection of wildlife habitats (heronries, deer, waterfowl, etc.)
- etc.

For the environmental focus of the second draft of the land use and development plan, the MRC proposes "Ensuring environmental protection in a perspective of sustainable development."

5. Transport

The road network plays a pivotal role in the spatial organization of the MRC's territory. It is an essential element for the socioeconomic development of the regions. It is important to ensure the maintenance of roads, to facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people. The main components of the road network of the MRC are:

Autoroute 5

Route 105

Route 148 [I've added this, which is not in the French summary! - Mo]

Route 307

Route 366

Route 309

Route 315

Highway 50 (small section - Municipality of L'Ange-Gardien).

Among the characteristics of the road network of the MRC, is that it is mainly oriented north-south and there's no east-west major road. The MRC wants to improve the status and functionality of roads on its territory. In this regard, municipalities have made several requests to the Ministry of Transport of Québec as part of the revision of the development plan. In addition, the MRC intends to manage residential and commercial development along the provincial road network, including the establishment of rules to improve traffic flow, road user safety and quality of life of local residents.

For public, collective and handicapped transport, the MRC and its constituent municipalities want to offer an optimal service to their citizens. The municipalities of Cantley, Chelsea, La Pêche and Val-des-Monts have public transit while the MRC remains responsible for collective and handicapped transport on its territory. We should mention the existence of intercity transport from Maniwaki (to Gatineau-Ottawa) and in the Pontiac sector.

Rail infrastructure is rare in the territory of the MRC and is disappearing due to the abandonment, by the CN, of the section located in the western sector of the region [Bristol? Why do they even mention this? - Mo] and the abandonment of the steam train to the municipalities of La Pêche (Wakefield) and Chelsea.

Finally, note the presence of regional and national recreational trails in the MRC (snowmobiles, ATV, bicycle).

Concerning transport, the MRC retains the following major focus:
“Ensure efficient transport in the MRC.”

6. Industry and business

Overall, the industrial sector remains underdeveloped in the MRC. There is one large business park in the municipality of L'Ange-Gardien, and a second one developing in the municipality of La Pêche. About 80% of workers living in the MRC work outside the MRC.

Despite a population of 50,000 inhabitants, industrial and commercial development remains a challenge in the MRC, particularly because of the attraction exerted by the cities of Gatineau and Ottawa. Commercially, there are two regional centres in the territory, Chelsea (Old Chelsea) and La Pêche (Wakefield). One of the difficulties in business development is the lack of an urban centre of importance in the MRC, and the low density of population in the territory. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure such as mains water and sewer in some village centres can make industrial and commercial development difficult.

For commercial and industrial development on its territory, the MRC states the following major focus:
“Promote the creation of commercial centres and attractive (light) industry in the MRC.”

7- Public services

Public services in the MRC are mostly provided by the municipalities, the health sector and social services. Municipalities offer a range of services to their citizens: road maintenance, garbage collection, recreation and sports, fire safety and police, etc. In health and social services, the population has access to CLSCs in four municipalities of the MRC. There is also a hospital in La Pêche (Wakefield). Note that government services are hardly present on the territory of the MRC and remain concentrated in

Gatineau. Four school boards serve the MRC. There's only one high school in the MRC (in La Pêche) and no higher education institution.

The MRC population has been growing steadily for several years. So the municipalities of the MRC must take account of this to provide their citizens with adequate services. As mentioned earlier, government services are virtually absent in the MRC, forcing citizens to travel outside the MRC (mainly to Gatineau) to access them. Some services are increasing, including social housing, which however remains rare in the MRC compared to the rest of the region.

The MRC suffers from a lack of recognition by public and parapublic organizations. There are several territorial jurisdictions that are not based on the idea of belonging to the MRC (e.g. 4 school boards, 2 SADC, etc.). Failure to respect the administrative boundaries of the MRC contributes to confusion among the local population and does not encourage the development of a sense of identity with the MRC.

The MRC states the following major focus:

“Promote the development of public services in the MRC to meet adequately the needs of communities.”

8. The forest

The forest in the MRC is:

- 76% private land
- 5.4% public forests
- 2.5% public forests managed by MRC
- 16% Gatineau Park

Among the issues raised by the forest management are:

- reconciling tree harvesting with other activities (recreational tourism, cottage country, etc.)
- supervision of forest practices on private land (tree cutting regulations)
- the involvement of the population in the management of forest land

In forestry management, MRC retains the next big focus:

“Strive for rational and harmonious use of forest resources.”

The major uses or zones of the territory:

The MRC is divided into eight (8) major land usages:

1- Urban: This corresponding to the service centre of each municipality (village centre) and includes residential, commercial, institutional and industrial, as well as public facilities (school, community hall, library, mains water and sewer, etc.)

2- Industrial: Designates areas suitable for the development of industry and business compatible to industry

3- Multifunctional: Secondary service centre, hamlet, where some homes and businesses are permitted

4- Agricultural: Agricultural zone (provincial), dedicated to the development of agriculture as a priority

5- Rural: transition area between the village centres, and the farm zone and forest areas, where residential, cottage, commercial and farming activities are allowed, with restrictions

6- Recreotouristic: Corresponds to regional recreation centres dedicated to developing recreational tourism

7- Park: Zone matching the boundaries of Gatineau Park and the proposed regional Parc du Sault-des-Chats, Chats Falls Park

8- Forest: Area promoting forests, characterized by low density development. Homes are prohibited

The strategic vision statement:

Under the *Law on planning and development*, the MRC must adopt a draft strategic vision statement concerning the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of its territory.

The selected draft statement reads as follows:

"In 2030, the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais is recognized for its leadership which combines economic growth, citizen participation and preservation of the environment. It ensures access to economic opportunities, to nature, and to nearby services while offering an exceptional quality of life."

Through the strategic vision statement, the MRC des Collines-de-Outaouais will continue its efforts to contribute to a tangible improvement in the quality of life of its citizens. The statement gives direction to the development of the MRC and a comprehensive picture of what it wants to become over a period of several years. The strategic vision defines the spatial planning and territorial development targets, of which the main objective is sustainable development of the community, by including social progress, preservation of the environment, economic efficiency and cultural development.

You may consult the "Second draft of revised land use planning and development" (in French) by visiting the website of the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais at the following address:

www.mrcdescollinesdeloutaouais.qc.ca

Prepared by: Sylvain Létourneau, aménagiste Planning Service and the Environment in September 2015

[Strategic plan, English “coming soon”

<http://www.mrcdescollinesdeloutaouais.qc.ca/6-planification-strategique>

This seems to be the previous one, dated 2007! (as of October 26, 2015)

http://www.mrcdescollinesdeloutaouais.qc.ca/upload/userfiles/files/planification_strategique.pdf

So much for consulting the "Second draft of revised land use planning and development" (even in French)...]