



SHAWINIGAN

Professional and collaborative expertise

When the City of Shawinigan launched a revitalization initiative in the Saint-Marc neighbourhood in 2015, it decided to build on a previous partnership with the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, which had introduced the principles of participatory urban planning to the city. The municipality wanted to apply the same approach to their devitalized downtown core, and joined Active Neighbourhoods Canada.

The neighbourhood's urban fabric is favourable for active transportation, and it also has dynamic and engaged community organizations. Despite those advantages, the area had few amenities for active transportation. It is also characterized by a socioeconomically disadvantaged population, a large number of urban heat islands and a severe shortage of public spaces.



LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM THE CITY

Wishing to seize the opportunity presented by the planned resurfacing of Saint-Paul Street, bordering the Shawinigan public market, a “project enhancement” meeting was organized with the municipality’s professionals. In addition to exploring different layout scenarios for Saint-Paul Street, the meeting was also an experiment in multi-sector work – several city departments worked together (engineering, planning, public works etc.) as part of an effort to change established practices. An interesting redesign idea emerged from the meeting, entailing the removal of several parking spaces around the market and transforming them into parklets that would serve as rest areas for the market’s shoppers and facilitate active transportation.

THE FIELD STUDY: A RELEVANT AND CONVINCING TOOL

What was the best way to convince merchants that it was a good idea to reduce the number of street-parking spaces surrounding the Saint-Marc market?

A field study was conducted to assess the feasibility of the proposal, determine the occupancy rate of parking spaces

around the market, and identify the best locations for the parklets. The study took place over several days and at different times, thanks to the support of several volunteers and interns.

The exercise revealed that there were more than enough parking spaces to meet visitors’ needs. The revitalization project committee has listened to these findings with interest. It will take them into consideration when designing a space that, ideally, includes significant support for active transportation and new public spaces.

The study’s conclusions will remain a decision-making aid, supporting the city’s professionals in their work and helping them make stronger cases for their proposals.

The ANC project in Shawinigan demonstrates that participatory urban planning does more than empower community groups and professionals: it also encourages them to break down the barriers separating them and talk to each other. Shawinigan’s planning and engineering departments are now in the habit of approaching their projects from a multi-disciplinary perspective. And that is how you create active, healthy living environments!

Active transportation: good for business!

- Motorists are often the most visible users of a commercial street, because cars take up plenty of public space. For that reason, the number of drivers is typically overestimated, even when they do not make up a majority of shoppers. (Convercity, 2004; University of the West of England and Carvill Associates, 2010).
- The implementation of traffic calming measures, the redesign of public space and the sharing of streets among all users, with emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists, led inevitably to an increase in the number of pedestrians on commercial streets (University of the West of England and Carvill Associates, 2010).
- Each square metre of space allocated to cars generates \$6/hour in spending, while each square metre allocated to bicycles generates five times more (\$31/hour) (Lee, A. and March, A., 2010).



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Aménagements favorables aux déplacements actifs pour le quartier Saint-Marc
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