

THE CULT OF THE VIEW:

Comparing and Evaluating the Effectiveness of View Corridor Protection in Montréal and Vancouver

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report compares and evaluates the effectiveness of view corridor protection in two Canadian cities. The view corridors in Montréal, Québec toward Mont-Royal and in Vancouver, British Columbia toward the North Shore Mountains were chosen for their Canadian context and because they are the only cities in Canada that protect views of mountains. This report examines the extent

and why?

CONTEXT

Montréal is located in southeastern Québec and was named after Mont-Royal, one of the
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Montréal at 232.5 metres above sea level, or 175.5 metres above the St. Lawrence River. The
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VLJQL¿FDQFH WR 0RQWUƧDOŧV LPDJH DQG LGHQWLW\

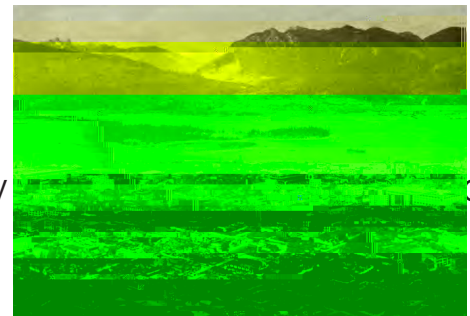
Vancouver is situated on a peninsula in the southwest corner of British Columbia. Growth is constrained by surrounding water bodies including the Strait of Georgia, the Fraser River and the Burrard Inlet. The city is also bordered by the North Shore Mountains, which are part of the Coastal Mountain Range. The heights of the mountains vary from 1,015 metres to 1,788 metres above sea
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Vancouver’s signature view.

for the
Ville-Marie District, which included 12 views toward Mont-Royal from locations within the District. Today, there are 110 protected views: 23 from the Mountain to the St. Lawrence River and 87 from the city to the Mountain. The views were most recently amended in the 2004 Montréal Master Plan



Montréal and Mont-Royal from St. Helen's Island, 1831

City Council adopted Vancouver's View Protection Guidelines in 1989 to preserve selected threatened views around the city. The Guidelines were most recently amended in 2011 and currently include 36 protected view cones and selection criteria and were observed for this report.



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Bartholomew in 1928

RESEARCH METHODS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

A comparative case study method was adopted for this report using Montréal and Vancouver as units of analysis. Data was collected using qualitative research methods including a preliminary literature review, a document review, direct observation, document photography, Google Street View where available and interviews with two industry professionals in each city. Direct observation was conducted for view corridors that transect the downtown core. The evaluation criteria for data analysis were determined from the initial literature review and were organized into four sections:

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Montréal

The analysis of policy and legislation demonstrates a strong commitment to view corridor protection in Montréal. Building heights are limited to the summit of Mont-Royal at 232.5 metres above sea level, not including building apparatuses. The increasing availability of technological tools to review and simulate building heights prior to their construction has helped ensure that buildings do not impede view corridors. The Comité d'architecture et d'urbanisme (Architectural and Planning Committee) functions as an urban design panel and assists to mitigate any attempts to build within

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Clustering the tallest buildings within the Central Business District (CBD) creates a hill-and-bowl VN\OLQH VKDSH \$ 3GHPRFUDWLF VN\OLQH LV PDLQWDLQHG E\ UH RI 0RQW 5R\DO 7KLV HQVXUHV WKDW QR LQGLYLGXDO EXLOGLQJ dimensions (fd) of the buildings in Montréal do not match the shape of the Mountain. This creates

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7KH GHFLVLRQ PDNLQJ SURFHVV LQ 0RQWUpDO IROORZV WKH U
National Capital Commission (NCC) and uses a mixture of experts and non-experts to determine
which views to protect. However, information could not be found about how consensus was made
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Of the views examined, two were moderately well protected, with 28 assessed as well protected based on Montréal's view protection policies.

Recommendations for Montréal:

1. Implement the proposed amendments in the Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan (2009)

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3. Ensure all views are publically accessible

Vancouver

Vancouver's View Protection Guidelines are comprehensive and easily understood. Angular control planes are used to limit building heights, however there are various instances of buildings that have entered a protected view cone or view cone sub-sections. Additionally, a policy allows buildings to surpass the permissible building height and enter a protected view if they are in the view shadow of a tall building. An urban design panel advises on building proposals and policies. However, the

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