

## CULTURAL POLICIES AND AGENDA 21 IN BAIE-SAINT-PAUL



**MEMORY** ATTRACTIVENESS **TRADITION** HERITAGE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **CULTURE** ENVIRONMENT  
SUSTAINABILITY PARTICIPATION **PUBLIC SPACE**

### 1. Context

Founded over 350 years ago, the 'Art and Heritage town' of Baie-Saint-Paul is nestled in a valley crossed by the Gouffre and Bras rivers and located on the northern shore of the Saint Lawrence River in the tourist region of Charlevoix. It is an inhabited zone in the Biosphere Reserve of Charlevoix (UNESCO). It has a population of 7,300 people and is an exceptional heritage town with remarkable landscapes and a very unique cultural vitality. Since the beginning of the 20th Century, Baie-Saint-Paul has inspired great Canadian painters and has become a favourite haunt for artists looking for authenticity. Its arts and culture are blossoming and the town was designated as the Cultural Capital of Canada in 2007. Baie-Saint-Paul is becoming a very fertile ground for artistic creativity. The revitalized town centre and the installation of around 30 galleries, restaurants and shops are attracting a growing tourist clientele. Products from the region, its heritage, unique landscapes and bustling cultural life make this town a major tourist town, welcoming more than 400,000 visitors per year. In the 1980s, shopping centres had a different effect on the vitality of town centres, cities and Quebec villages. In

order to help the towns keep their town centres lively and animated, the government of Quebec created the 'Main Street' program. Thanks to this program, the town has been able to carry out an initial survey of its heritage buildings.

## THE TOWN HOPES THAT THESE POLICIES WILL GIVE EVERYONE A NEW SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY: PARTICIPATING IN THE CREATION OF A STRONG, CULTURAL IMAGE AND REALITY FOR BAIE-SAINT-PAUL.

Baie-Saint-Paul adopted its cultural policies in 2000; this marked the successful completion of work that had been initiated in 1998. The principles and guidelines defined in these policies allow the majority of citizens to get involved, to participate and to become acquainted with cultural life. They recognize the need for freedom of expression from creators and collective input to create a living environment that everyone can be part of. These policies essentially aim to ensure that citizens claim back the tools necessary for the cultural development of their community. The town hopes that these policies will give everyone a new sense of responsibility: participating in the creation of a strong, cultural image and reality for Baie-Saint-Paul.

With a wealth of assets and faced with pressure for full-scale development, the Town has had to pave the way and play a leading role in local development. Its cultural specificity has been its branding image since 2005. Baie-Saint-Paul is establishing itself as an Art and Heritage Town. It is committed to sustainable development, through the adoption of the local Agenda 21 in 2006, which meets the expectations voiced by citizens during an economic summit held in 2003. The population is using this local Agenda 21 and carrying out each step of its implementation. As an essential part of sustainable development, culture forms the backdrop for the implementation process and becomes an integral part of the local economy and quality of life.



## 2. Baie-Saint-Paul and Culture

To date, the cultural policies adopted in 2000 and the local Agenda 21 adopted in 2006 have been in set up to ensure the continuity of cultural initiatives. Baie-Saint-Paul is already characterised by its exceptional heritage and cultural vitality. For example, the town centre has been renovated since 1985 with the 'Main Street' program. Furthermore, in 1999, it established a revitalisation program for buildings, using almost \$400,000 of municipal funds for building work that came to more than \$1 million. The 'heritage circuit' was set up to showcase the local architecture: interpretive panels point out the architectural and historical qualities of the patrimonial residences at the heart of the village. In addition to the citizen's initiative, the town has also set up the circuit of historic plaques and monuments, which pay homage to the great Canadian painters that have come to Baie-Saint-Paul, in the form of bronze busts installed around the town.

It was Baie-Saint-Paul's initiative to integrate culture and sustainable development that put it on the national stage. The Mayor, Jean Fortin, has been invited to several conferences to testify to the town's initiatives and success. He is the former co-Chairman of Franco-Quebecois workshops on decentralised cooperation and sustainable development and local authorities in 2008 and is a former member of the liaison committee for developing Quebec's Agenda 21 for Culture through the Ministry

of Culture and Communications in Quebec. He has also been Chairman of the 'Les arts et la ville' (Arts and the City) network since 2012 and a member of the Community Culture, Leisure and Life commission for the municipalities of Quebec.

Baie-Saint Paul demonstrates a continued and active commitment to acknowledging culture as **an essential part of sustainable development**. Its local Agenda 21 cultural policies are important tools for citizen participation. Although the population had requested the adoption of a sustainable development policy, Agenda 21 appeared to be the most likely way of encouraging citizens to participate in creating, appropriating and evaluating such a policy.

## AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE FORMS THE BACKDROP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Baie-Saint-Paul's cultural policy and local Agenda 21 have greatly impacted **the inclusion of culture in land-use** in order to develop a territory that complements and respects its heritage. The adoption of municipal legislation for land planning has guaranteed the **protection of the heritage and the spirit of certain places**.

This land initiative, support for cultural vitality in public spaces and a policy for **public arts** have resulted in the creation of attractive streets and spaces that are lively and have a strong identity. The town has promoted good quality cultural opportunities in connection with protective measures, which has preserved its authenticity and the distinctive characteristics of its art, culture and heritage, despite tourist and town-planning pressure.

Ultimately, the local Agenda 21 cultural policy has made culture an essential part of sustainable development by improving the appeal of the area for tourists, businesses and new residents. It has also developed the living environment and the inhabitants' sense of attachment and pride to the same extent. The combination of its cultural policy and local Agenda 21 has strengthened the interweaving between cultural policy and other public policies and has promoted sustainable development.



### 3. Objectives and implementation of the project

#### 3.1. Main and specific objectives

The town already enjoys a flourishing cultural life but is looking to create structured cultural initiatives for future development, meanwhile protecting and promoting its distinctive cultural characteristics. The policies adopted in 2000 concern culture in a broad sense and in its many different forms. They are built on five fundamental principles:

- Recognition of Baie-Saint-Paul's cultural identity;
- Affirmation of the right to culture;



- Recognition and affirmation of Baie-Saint-Paul as a place of creativity and dissemination of art in Quebec;
- Increasing the contribution of cultural activities towards Baie-Saint-Paul's economic development;
- Development of the the cultural creativity and expression of the citizens.



"Among the many local issues, both the town and its citizens recognize the great value of its cultural heritage, which has contributed towards moulding Quebec's current identity. Additionally, the town wants long-term involvement in this initiative in order to preserve its heritage, so that future generations may also benefit from it."

### 3.2. Culture, heritage and land development

The town adopted a cultural policy with the aim of supporting local cultural vitality, improving the quality of life and enhancing the appeal of Baie-Saint-Paul for tourists and artists. Its local Agenda 21 is based on 4 fundamental concepts: economic development, protecting the environment, social equity and **cultural vitality**. Thanks to the complementary nature of the local Agenda 21 and the cultural policy, the town has succeeded in making culture a cornerstone of its tourist and economic development, by preserving and revitalizing its distinctive cultural characteristics.

Stronger support for the provision of culture has ensured an impressive cultural vitality for a town of its size. The town has found a place on the national and international stage thanks to its festivals, symposiums and infrastructures. It has also put in place programs and town planning regulation in order to protect its heritage, urban landscape and spirit, despite strong economic development and significant pressure from town planners (by governing architectural standards for construction, public displays, etc). The town has also been successful in creating outstanding urban areas, which provide lively and attractive places to live for traders, as well as visitors and inhabitants. The cultural policy was followed by plans of action that have been successively renewed thus far.

## THROUGH ITS LOCAL AGENDA 21 AND CULTURAL POLICY, CULTURE HAS BECOME A CORNERSTONE OF THE TOWN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ]

By involving itself in a sustainable development initiative, Baie-Saint-Paul is the first municipality in Quebec to adopt a **Local Agenda 21**, in collaboration with participants from different business sectors. More than 200 citizens have participated in the 6 joint-work workshops to develop the vision, the guiding principles and the 2006-2009 Agenda 21 plan of action. Culture lies at the heart of the town's sustainable development initiative. Among those issues identified, cultural heritage is a component that shapes economic and social development.

Although they are part of the same vision, local Agenda 21 and cultural policy are separate tools. In 2010, the **updated diagnosis for sustainable development and the 2006-2009 Agenda 21 plan of action summary** were tied together. Together they present a summary of 10 years of cultural policy for the town and the cultural plans of action that have been fulfilled to date. Cultural policy is becoming

a key tool for promoting objectives and strategies for sustainable development. The local authorities will carry out a large participatory consultation for the creation and adoption of a new **2011-2016 Plan of Action**. Through its local Agenda 21 and cultural policy, culture has become **a cornerstone of the town's sustainable development**.

THE LOCAL AGENDA 21 CULTURAL POLICIES HAVE MADE CULTURE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BY IMPROVING THE APPEAL OF THE AREA FOR TOURISTS, BUSINESSES AND NEW RESIDENTS. IT HAS ALSO DEVELOPED THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND THE INHABITANTS SENSE OF ATTACHMENT AND PRIDE TO THE SAME EXTENT.

### 3.3. Access to culture

There is a long list of cultural offerings provided and supported by the town: it is really quite an extraordinary provision for a town with only 7,300 inhabitants. The town has supported large new and existing projects including festivals (Rêves d'automne, festival of Painting), infrastructures (René-Richard Library, Museum of Contemporary Art) and symposiums (International Contemporary Art Symposium). In 2004, it gained fame by taking over management of the *Carrefour culturel Paul-Médéric*; a cultural meeting place at the heart of cultural vitality. Baie-Saint-Paul's important role in the protection and presentation of its cultural heritage earned it the title of 'Cultural Capital of Canada' in 2007, which celebrated 40 years of cultural excitement and revived a new generation of artists and craftsmen who came together to work on 7 cultural sites and 22 projects with the involvement of several partnership organisations and more than 500 players from the cultural sector. The celebration launched the Baie-Saint-Paul Cultural Triennial initiative, which ended in 2009 with the *Waking Giant* as an homage to the 25 year anniversary of the Cirque du Soleil, which originated in Baie-Saint-Paul.

### 3.4. Ensuring the vitality of the town centre and a harmonious living environment

Baie-Saint-Paul has a rich history and heritage, which represent a key part of its identity. Large town planning programs put in place to protect the town's heritage and urban landscape have arisen from cultural policy and its Agenda 21, particularly through the avant-garde Site Planning and Architectural Integration Program (PIIA) in Quebec. These plans have helped protect the built heritage and have preserved the spirit of certain places despite the influence of tourism. The town also provides a subsidy plan for renovating buildings with heritage value and a support service for renovation. It has also been successful in creating outstanding urban areas, which provide lively and attractive places to live for traders, as well as visitors and inhabitants. It has also adopted a public art policy, with an aim to manage, develop and encourage the production of works of art in the area and to foster their development. Over the last decade, Baie-Saint-Paul's cultural expenses have been constantly on the rise, from \$266,189 to \$572,846 from 2000-2009: an average growth of 12% per year.

## 4. Impacts

### 4.1. Impact on the town's local government and cultural officers

The local Agenda 21 is a participatory governing tool: it requires participation from everyone including councillors, citizens and partners in order to reach common goals. The local government is no longer solely responsible for community development; it is now everyone's responsibility. What follows is the appropriation of a development program that requires participation from everyone in order to implement the plan of action. Adopting a cultural policy has led to the creation of the position of cultural officer, who has been elected to liven up the cultural sector. The cultural policy provides a framework for livening up this sector. As part of its principles, Agenda 21 recognizes the importance of culture and heritage. Moreover, the Agenda 21 guidelines aim at protecting and showcasing the local cultural heritage.

### 4.2. Impact on the town and population

Cultural policy and local Agenda 21 have both had a substantial impact on quality of life, by embellishing places and revitalizing the culture. They have enabled a concerted effort from local partners such as the regional municipal counties and the Ministry of Culture and Communications in Quebec, as well as artists, craftsmen and the local population.

#### 4.3. Cross-cutting Impacts

Cultural policy and Agenda 21 have had significant impacts on tourist and economic development. Culture, preservation of heritage and town improvements have had a remarkable effect on the appeal of the area and the number of tourists. The quality of the living environment and cultural vitality have attracted new arrivals, which provides stability for the population (while the majority of rural regions have seen a net outflow of tourists). The town's involvement in sustainable development and culture has enabled the construction of an independent place of living in terms of energy, which was the focus of a TV5 television series '*Les compagnons du rebut global*'. This area is now the centre of Baie-Saint-Paul's sustainable development. Moreover, the installation of a tourist recreation project (4-star hotel, train station, multi-functional room for performing artists and incoming tourists) represents a total investment of \$30M.

THE TOWN HAS A FLOURISHING CULTURAL LIFE BUT IS LOOKING TO  
CREATE STRUCTURED CULTURAL INITIATIVES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT,  
MEANWHILE PROTECTING AND PROMOTING ITS DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL  
CHARACTERISTICS.

The plans of action from the cultural policy and local Agenda 21 have led to the creation of an exhibition of identity that showcases the town's heritage and culture at the *Carrefour culturel Paul-Médéric: Espace Baie-Saint-Pau-Expo Experience*. This is the first permanent exhibition in Baie-Saint-Paul on its history, heritage and cultural dynamism. Espace Baie-Saint-Paul provides visitors with an innovative technological design, which allows them to choose the subjects that interest them. Following the exhibition, a free online application for smart phones and tablets has been created: it allows the user to move around the local area to discover the town's charms via different journeys on foot, by bicycle or by car. Each journey provides new information and uses the on-site experience to present various details about the cultural heritage. The exhibition brings its walls to life and turns the town into an open-air museum.

#### 4.4. Continuity

The town will continue with the implementation of its 2011-2016 plan of action.

### 5. Further information

The town of Baie-Saint-Paul was a nominated candidate for the first 'UCLG International Award - Mexico City - Culture 21' (January-May 2014). The awards jury produced a final report in June 2014 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to promote this project as a practical example for the implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture.

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