

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Montreal Mergers and de-Mergers

Until 2001, the island of Montreal was divided into 28 municipalities: the city of Montreal proper, and 27 independent municipalities. On January 1, 2002, the 27 independent municipalities of the island of Montreal were merged with the city of Montreal, under the slogan : "*Une île, une ville*" ("One island, one city"). This merger was part of a larger provincial scheme launched by the Parti Québécois all across Quebec, resulting in the merging of many municipalities. It was felt that larger municipalities would be more efficient, and would be more able to withstand comparison with the other cities in Canada, which had already expanded their territory, such as Toronto which merged with its neighbouring municipalities in 1998 to form the large City of Toronto.

As happened elsewhere in Canada, the city mergers in Quebec were bitterly contested by a significant part of the population, especially on the island of Montreal. Many street protests were organized, law suits were filed, 15 municipalities appealed to the Court of Appeal of Quebec, but it was all to no avail.

The merged city of Montreal was divided into 27 boroughs (known in French as "arrondissements") in charge of local administration, while the city above them was responsible for larger matters such as economic development or transportation issues. It is only a coincidence that there were 27 independent municipalities before 2002, and 27 arrondissements in the merged entity. In fact, in most areas the arrondissements did not correspond to the former municipalities, cutting across the territory of the former municipalities.

At the provincial elections of April 2003, the Liberal Party of Quebec defeated the Parti Québécois. One central promise during their campaign was that they would allow merged municipalities to organize referendums in order to demerge if they wished to do so. Indeed, on June 20, 2004, the referendums were held throughout Quebec. On the island of Montreal, referendums were held in 22 of the 27 previously independent municipalities. Following the referendum results, 15 of the previously independent municipalities have recovered some of their independence. These are

predominantly English-speaking municipalities, with some French-speaking municipalities.

Despite the demerger referendums held in 2004, the controversy is still present in Quebec. It is now focusing on the cost of demerging. Here are some of the areas of concerns:

- The recreated municipalities may incur substantial financial costs, thus forcing them to increase taxes (a startling prospect in the generally wealthier English-speaking municipalities of Montreal).
- Continuing social disparity between richer (often de-merged) and poorer areas of the island.
- Boroughs' new found autonomy could mean a lack of city-wide continuity. (ex. Boroughs may move in directions independent of the city's vision)
- Community groups no longer know who to address. There is confusion as to the responsibilities of each council.

List of 27 independent municipalities until 2001

- *Anjou*
- Beaconsfield
- Baie-d'Urfé
- Côte Saint-Luc
- Dollard-Des Ormeaux
- Dorval
- Hampstead
- Kirkland
- *Lachine*
- *LaSalle*
- *L'Île-Bizard*
- L'Île-Dorval
- Montréal-Est
- *Montreal North (Montréal-Nord)*
- Montreal West
- Mount Royal (*Mont-Royal*)
- *Outremont*
- *Pierrefonds*



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- Pointe-Claire
- *Roxboro*
- Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
- *Sainte-Geneviève*
- *Saint-Laurent*
- *Saint Leonard (Saint-Léonard)*
- Senneville
- *Verdun*
- Westmount

Boroughs listed in italics are now part of the city of Montreal, which is divided into 19 arrondissements.

27 Boroughs under "Une île, une ville" (2002-05)

- Ahuntsic-Cartierville
- Anjou
- *Beaconsfield—Baie-d'Urfé*
- Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
- *Côte Saint-Luc—Hampstead—Montreal West*
- *Dollard-Des Ormeaux—Roxboro*
- *Dorval—L'Île-Dorval*
- *Kirkland*
- Lachine
- LaSalle
- L'Île-Bizard—Sainte-Geneviève—*Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue*
- Mercier—Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Montreal North (*Montréal-Nord*)
- *Mount Royal (Mont-Royal)*
- Outremont
- Pierrefonds-*Senneville*
- Le Plateau-Mont-Royal
- *Pointe-Claire*
- Rivière-des-Prairies—Pointe-aux-Trembles—*Montréal-Est*
- Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie
- Saint-Laurent
- Saint Leonard (*Saint-Léonard*)
- Le Sud-Ouest

- Verdun
- Ville-Marie
- Villeray—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension
- *Westmount*

Boroughs or parts of boroughs listed in italics are former municipalities that voted to return to being independent (15 in total), effective in 2006.

19 boroughs of City of Montreal (post 2006)

- Ahuntsic-Cartierville
- Anjou
- Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
- Lachine
- LaSalle
- Le Plateau-Mont-Royal
- Le Sud-Ouest
- L'Île-Bizard—Sainte-Geneviève
- Mercier—Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Montréal-Nord
- Outremont
- Pierrefonds-Roxboro
- Rivière-des-Prairies—Pointe-aux-Trembles
- Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie
- Saint-Laurent
- Saint-Léonard
- Verdun
- Ville-Marie
- Villeray—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension

This document is based on a variety of sources including the following entry:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreal_Merger#Merger_and_demerger, and *2005 Montreal Elections: What is at stake* created by TROVEP (Table régionale des organismes volontaires d'éducation populaire de Montréal), which was translated by COCo. Feel free to share your differing or complimentary knowledge with each other, and with COCo organizers throughout the day.

