

## Racial and social profiling The City of Montreal betrays its commitment to review its municipal by-laws

**Montreal, February 27, 2025** — On the occasion of the end of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) hearings on the homelessness crisis, the Ligue des droits et libertés, the Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM), the Clinique Droits Devant, the Clinique juridique itinérante, the Conseil Québécois LGBT and Stella l'amie de Maimie denounce the decision by the Mayor of the City of Montreal, Valérie Plante, to suddenly stop the process of reviewing municipal by-laws that are sources of social and racial profiling. The mayor informed the organizations in a [letter sent on February 18](#).

### A long process

The review of municipal bylaws was a recommendation arising from a [public consultation in Montreal](#) on combating social and racial profiling in 2017, which the executive committee endorsed in 2018. Following the review initiated in 2019, organizations submitted in 2020 their analyses and recommendations for repealing regulatory provisions that are sources of profiling. The City waited until May 2024 to finally propose regulatory changes that did not meet its human rights obligations. In September 2024, [the organizations asked the mayor directly](#) to issue real proposals that met the issues. In October 2024, the City's Directeur général, Benoit Dagenais, confirmed that the City was continuing the work on the regulation and planned a meeting with the organizations in 2025. It did not happen, because the mayor announced the abandonment of this commitment on February 17.

### Regulations that lead to profiling

Some problematic regulatory offences directly target the behaviours or survival strategies of homeless people or sex workers, such as “vagrancy”, obstructing pedestrian traffic, being in parks at night or sleeping on benches (misuse of street furniture).

Other offences penalize and judicialize social or public health issues with which these people are struggling, such as the consumption of alcoholic beverages or “drunken loitering”. Furthermore, these regulatory offences are worded so broadly that they open the door to discretionary, arbitrary and profiling-generating police application.

### When will we see real leadership in the fight against racial and social profiling in Montreal?

The revision of municipal by-laws was to be an important milestone in the fight against profiling in Montreal. It was supposed to remove the tools that police use to judicialize, monitor, repress, displace and harass. Putting an end to this revision is a failure on the part of the City, which to date has taken no significant steps to effectively counter systemic racial and social profiling and the denial of rights it causes.

The decision to abandon the review of municipal by-laws comes on the heels of a series of increasingly violent actions against people experiencing homelessness, such as the dismantling of encampments, and the prioritization of police repression over respect for human rights by the municipal administration.

Let's not forget that the City also refuses to implement a moratorium on police street checks, another proven source of profiling, despite the [recommendation of a team of independent researchers](#) in June 2023 and the [campaign calling for a ban](#) on this arbitrary practice.

**The organizations are calling on the mayor of Montreal to reverse her decision and continue the revision of the bylaws to quickly repeal several provisions that are sources of profiling.**

## Quotes

“Since 2019, several members of the executive committee have repeated that the administration is firmly committed to revising its municipal bylaws that are sources of racial and social profiling. Mayor Valérie Plante is betraying her commitment and letting down people who are victims of discriminatory police interventions,” declares Lynda Khelil, *responsable de dossiers politiques* at the Ligue des droits et libertés.

“The City can in no way justify its withdrawal from this initiative, and more broadly from the fight against social and racial profiling, under the pretext that it is implementing other measures to help people experiencing homelessness. Profiling tools, like profiling itself, are part of the problem, and it's imperative that the City tackle them,” declares Annie Savage, Director of RAPSIM.

“Have you ever received a ticket for loitering drunk on the public highway? You were probably congratulated for not taking your car. Yet this is the daily life of the most vulnerable members of our society, and this discriminatory judicialization has devastating effects on their prospects for social reintegration,” declares Sophie Sénécal, Director of the Clinique Droits Devant.

“Such abandonment cannot be justified when the City itself has solicited organizations to revise its bylaws. The City is only perpetuating the systemic injustices that our populations, who find themselves at the crossroads of multiple oppressions, already face. Concrete and immediate action must be taken to put an end to this discrimination and honor the commitments made to our communities. The status quo is not an option!” declares Sheba Akpokli, Associate Executive Director of the Quebec LGBT Council.

“The decision to abandon the review of municipal bylaws comes on the heels of a series of increasingly violent actions against people experiencing homelessness, such as the dismantling of encampments, and the prioritization of police repression over respect for human rights by the municipal administration,” declares Sandra Wesley, director of Chez Stella, l'amie de Maimie.

“When it comes to homelessness, Valérie Plante certainly has a nonsense take on the issue! The mayor of the City of Montreal recently decried the Quebec government's lack of action to address the humanitarian crisis facing people experiencing homelessness. At the same time, she put an end to a consultation process with the community aimed at modifying a dozen municipal by-laws that have for decades stigmatized people experiencing homelessness and prevented their social reintegration. The irony of this decision is that Valérie Plante has all the powers necessary to act at this level. Her administration can modify its own municipal bylaws without even asking anyone's permission. In concrete terms, Mayor Plante can act to improve the well-being of people experiencing homelessness with regard to their over-criminalization: she must take action before the end of her mandate,” declares Me Donald Tremblay, Executive Director of the Clinique juridique itinérante.

## **Key facts**

The [2017 public consultation report](#) on racial and social profiling contains 31 recommendations. Recommendation 7 calls for “a review of all regulatory provisions and directives of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) and the Société des transports de Montréal (STM) to identify whether their concrete application has the effect of inducing profiling behaviors.” (our translation)

The list of regulatory provisions to be repealed or amended can be found in the Appendix of [the LDL brief](#) and [the RAPSIM brief](#) submitted in February 2025 to the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) as part of the “Itinérance et cohabitation sociale à Montréal” consultation process.

[Letter from the Mayor of Montreal to community organizations](#), February 18, 2025.

[Letter to the Mayor of Montreal by the organizations](#), September 11, 2024.

[Open letter](#), Lutte contre le profilage racial et social à Montréal – Pas besoin de baguette magique, La Presse, February 23, 2024.

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## **For information and interviews**

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