Off-street parking on rue de Terrebonne

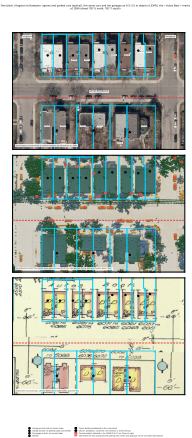
What the 1954–55 fire-insurance plans, today's aerial imagery and the City's LiDAR show, building by building

Rick Hoge, PhD 2026-11-12

Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Insurance plan of the city of Montreal, vol. 7, 1954–55 (BAnQ, notice 0000174390). Reading: the author, one row per building. Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0.

60 % of the buildings on Terrebonne were built with a garage

- 126 residential buildings with a Terrebonne address, west end of the lane to Girouard, on the sixteen 1954–55 sheets available
- 75 were built with a garage (north side 57 of 90, south side 18 of 36)
- By dwellings (City roll): 168 of 289, 58 %
- The plans mark garages, not driveways: a lower bound for “garage or driveway as built”



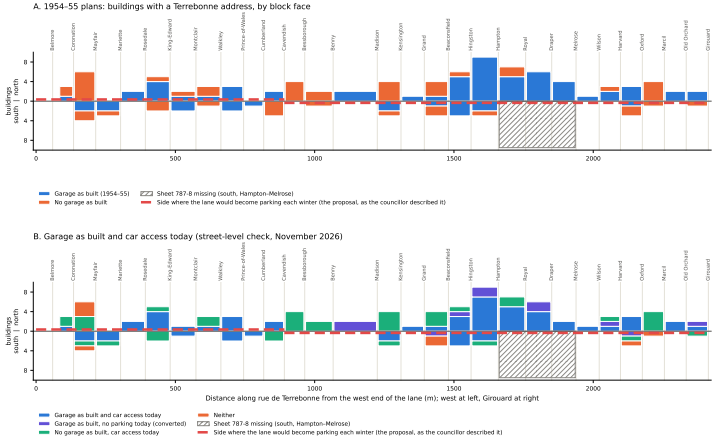
Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Insurance plan of the city of Montreal, vol. 7, 1954–55 (BAnQ, notice 0000174390). Reading: the author, one row per building.

Today, 84 % have car access; 93 % a garage as built or access today

- Every building checked by the author from street-level imagery, Nov. 12, 2026: 118 judged, 4 could not be told (one 1954 house, now inside a school lot, left out)
- Car access today (at least one private place): 99 of 118 (84 %); by dwellings 87 %
- Garage as built *or* car access today: 110 of 118 (93 %)
- Parking turned to another use: 12 with none left, 16 with some left (the 1954–55 plans take precedence where they show a garage)
- Replaces the aerial reading of Oct. 25, 2026 (72 %): from above, 32 driveways were missed

Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0. Base: Ville de Montréal open data, CC-BY 4.0 (géobase, assessment roll). Reading: the author.

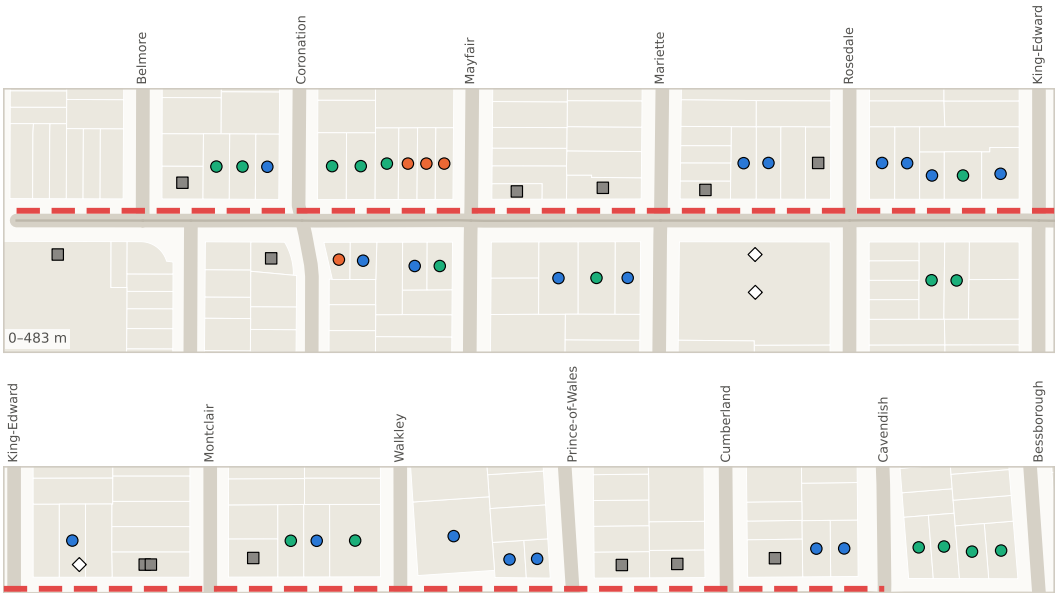
Where the garages and driveways are, along the whole street



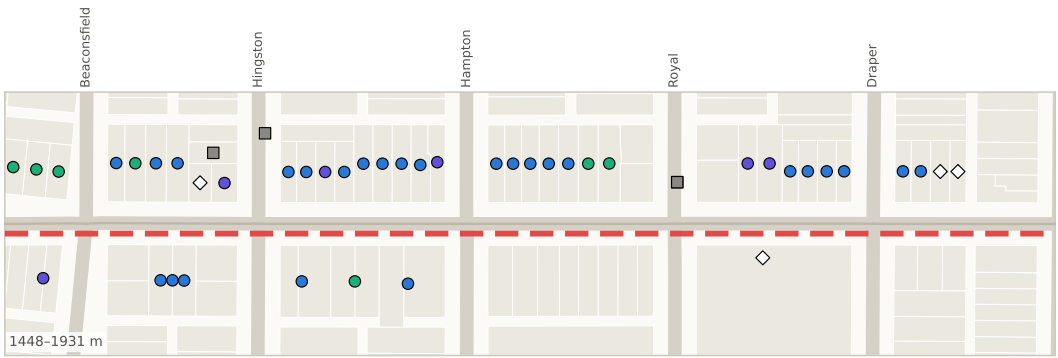
Dashed red: the side where the lane would become parking each winter under the proposal, as the councillor described it.

Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Insurance plan of the city of Montreal, vol. 7, 1954–55 (BAnQ, notice 0000174390). Reading: the author, one

On today's parcels: garage as built and car access today



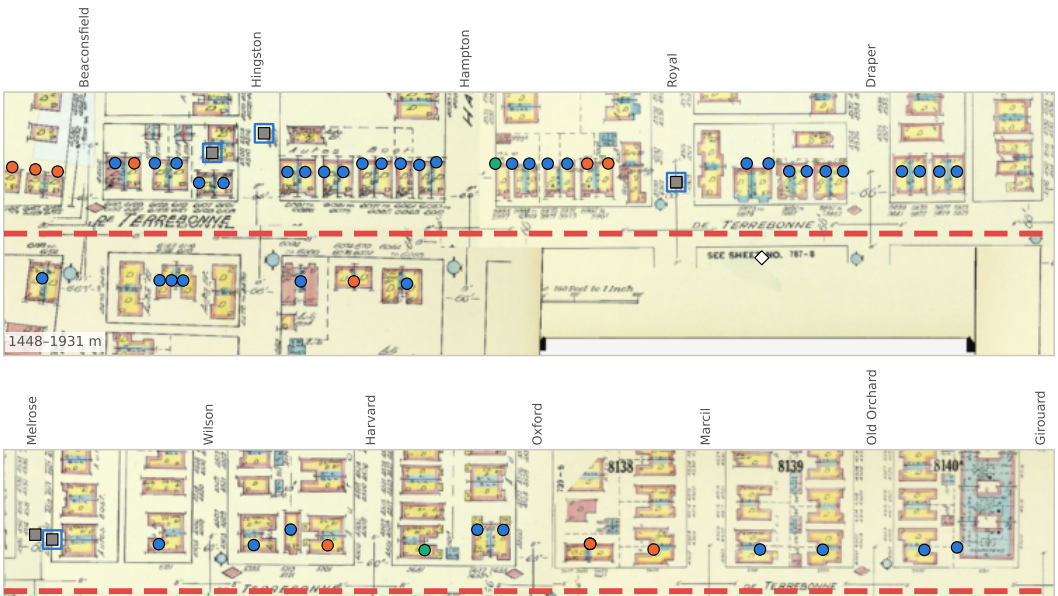
On today's parcels: garage as built and car access today



The 1954–55 plans, georeferenced: every garage is written “Auto”



The 1954–55 plans, georeferenced: every garage is written “Auto”



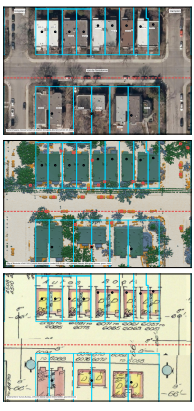
Three sources, one frame



Aerial imagery (optical), the City's 2015 LiDAR as height above ground, and the 1954–55 sheets, all georeferenced into the same street frame.

Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0. Source: Underwriters'

One block in the three sources: Hingston to Hampton

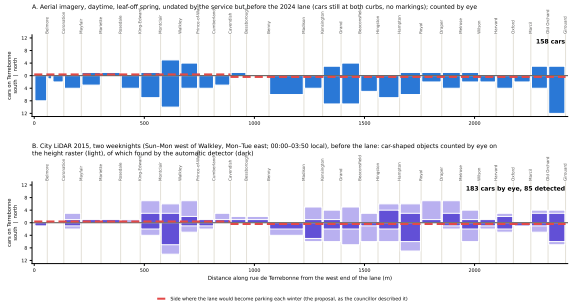


Aprons and parked cars (optical); the same cars and the garages as 0.5–3.5 m objects (LiDAR, red squares = automatic car detections); the “Autos Bast” of 1954.

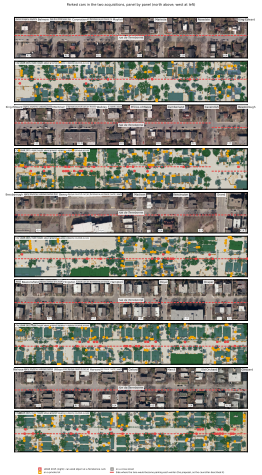
Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0. Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Insurance plan of the city of Montreal, vol. 7, 1954–55 (BAnQ, notice 0000174390). Reading: the author, one row per building.

Cars parked on the street: two acquisitions, two moments

- Daytime, leaf-off spring, undated but before the 2024 lane (aerial imagery): 158 cars on Terrebonne (north 30, south 128)
- Two weeknights, 2015, before the lane (City LiDAR, Sun–Mon and Mon–Tue, 00:00–03:50): 183 cars on Terrebonne by eye (north 93, south 90); an automatic detector finds 85, plus 253 car-sized objects on private lots within 45 m and 70 on the cross streets
- Both before the lane, some years apart, one by day and one by night: each describes its moment, not a before-and-after



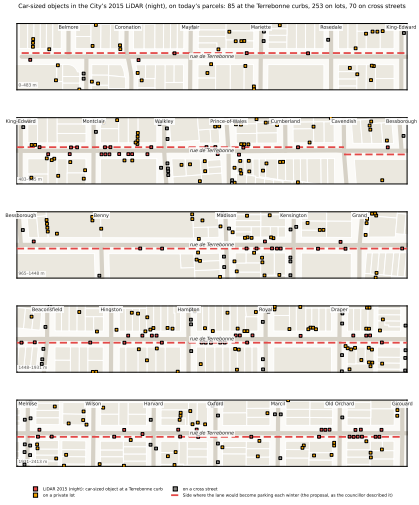
Where the cars were: both acquisitions, panel by panel



Daytime image (by-eye count per block, north | south) above the 2015 night height raster; squares = the detector's cars (red at a Terrebonne curb, orange on a lot, grey on a cross street).

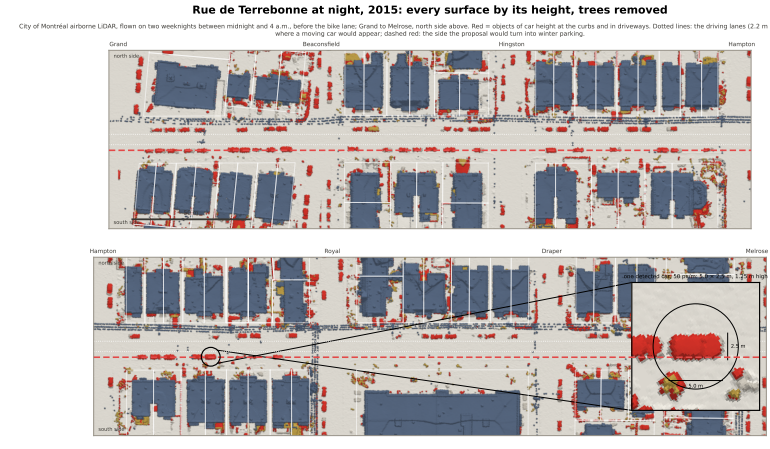
Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_QO, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0.

Every car-sized object the night LiDAR detector found, on today's parcels



Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0.

Rue de Terrebonne at night, 2015: every surface by its height, trees removed



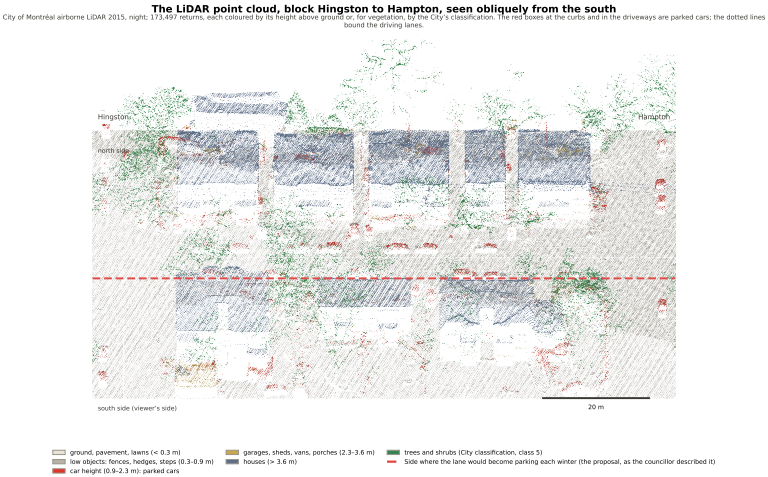
Grand to Melrose; red = car height at the curbs and in the driveways; dotted lines = the driving lanes, where a

The LiDAR surface of one block, seen obliquely: the parked cars stand out



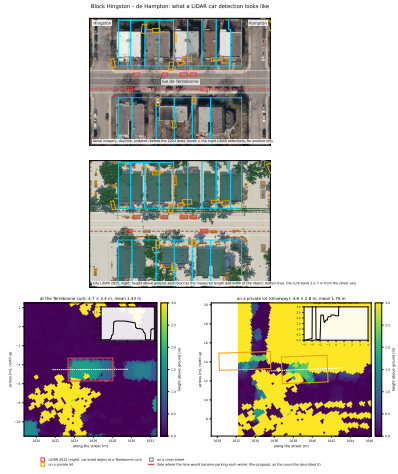
Height above ground on a 0.4 m grid, vegetation removed, lit from the north-west and coloured by height class:

The LiDAR point cloud itself, one block, seen obliquely



Every return coloured by its height above ground (car height in red) or, for vegetation, by the City's class: the cars at the curbs and in the driveways, the garage ramps and the sheds are all resolved.

What a LiDAR car detection looks like



Each box has the object's measured length and width; dotted lines bound the curb band (2.2–7 m from the axis) that separates street from lot. Below: a car at the curb and one in a driveway at 40 px/m, with the height in metres; a flat top at 1.4–1.5 m over about 4.5 m.

Checks on the method

- Georeferencing: each sheet fitted on its intersections, residuals under 3.3 m on 14 of 16 sheets (7 m at one point); checked against the City's parcels on every sheet
- The 1954–55 reading agrees with the author's independent June 2024 marks on all 126 buildings
- The present-day check: the author, lot by lot from public street-level imagery, answers filed as exported; the earlier aerial reading (Oct. 25) is kept as a record
- LiDAR car detector checked by eye on all 29 blocks: 85 of 183 car-shaped objects found at the curbs (46 %); the by-eye count is the one reported
- A census of the frontage, not a sample; every number scripted from public inputs

Caveats

- Garages as built, not driveways: the 1954–55 share is a lower bound
- As built, as usable: the street check does not see inside a garage (workshop, storage); a 1930 garage may be too small for today's vehicles; garage interiors not counted
- Buildings, not households: a duplex pair has two to four flats and one or two garages
- One sheet missing in 1954–55 (south side, Hampton to Melrose); readings graded medium or unclear are flagged row by row
- Everything is in the table: one row per building, checkable by address

Where to find it

- Web page, note, maps, tables:
  `https://openmobilitydata.github.io/Terrebonne-open-sources/1954-underwriters-plans-terrebonne-garages/`
- The sheets themselves: BAnQ numérique,
  `https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2244199`
- Repository:
  `https://github.com/OpenMobilityData/Terrebonne-open-sources`

Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau, Insurance plan of the city of Montreal, vol. 7, 1954–55 (BAnQ, notice 0000174390). Reading: the author, one row per building. Base: Ville de Montréal open data, CC-BY 4.0 (géobase, assessment roll). Reading: the author. Imagery: Gouvernement du Québec (Imagerie_GQ, fetched Oct. 25, 2026). LiDAR: Ville de Montréal 2015, CC-BY 4.0.