



QUALITY CHARTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES OF QUEBEC

1. PREAMBLE: REVIEW OF THE QUALITY CHARTER ALREADY IN THE GENERAL BY-LAWS

1.1 Charter objective

The Association of Most Beautiful Villages of Québec was established in 1998 with the goal of protecting and enhancing rural villages recognized as being the most beautiful in Québec.

This Charter defines the terms and conditions for granting, using and withdrawing membership in the Association.

The objective of the Charter is to foster the preservation, improvement and cultural and economic promotion of villages and hamlets which are most representative of human settlement of Québec territory considering their geographic, historical and cultural features. They present authentic and harmonious ensembles of the natural, human and architectural heritage that form a landscape of exceptional quality.

1.2 Eligibility criteria

In addition to their rural setting, villages and hamlets must offer a heritage whose quality and value will be judged by the following obligatory criteria:

Site quality

Beauty and/or uniqueness of the natural site, diversity of elements in the physical environment, scenic beauty, visual interest (views, perspectives, lookouts, panoramas), site that is unique or typical of a style or period, preservation of the natural vegetation.

Architectural quality

Existence of an architectural heritage of historical and cultural value, remarkable for its extent and / or quality, and having a unique or typical character. Architectural harmony and homogeneity, a significant share of historic building stock conserved, respect for original density and construction styles, authenticity of architectural ensembles.

Upkeep and preservation: Good overall upkeep of buildings and good preservation of authenticity. Respect for the architectural features of buildings and characteristics of ensembles.

Planning Quality

Overall integrity of the village, harmonious integration of public equipment, balance between tourism activity and original village functions, nuisance by-laws (noise, odors), harmonious commercial development, secluded parking, appropriate signage, adaptation to change while respecting authenticity. Quality, homogeneity and unobtrusiveness in commercial and public signs. Layout, scenic character, flowers, upkeep of public and private spaces (public squares, private lots, parks, riverbanks etc).

1.3 Evaluation criteria

Although not compulsory, these criteria serve to evaluate heritage quality and the degree of involvement of the municipality.

Municipal policies for heritage enhancement:

- Town planning: A master plan identifying zones to be protected and improved, and setting guidelines for conservation and improvement, automobile traffic and architectural integration
- Planning by-laws: presence of classified or designated buildings, municipal commitment to protect against demolition or alteration, appropriate zoning;
- Existence of a planning advisory committee to advise elected officials in land use and heritage restoration choices
- Existence of an embellishment committee, involvement in flower planting
- Promotion: visits, printed information available, signs indicating attractions, tourist services, existence of a tourism committee;

- Activities: cultural events, existence of covered or open-air areas of assembly, quality reception.

General atmosphere

- Authentic way of live
- Presence of arts or crafts activity, economuseums or traditional activities.

Public recognition

Sites of interest are mentioned in regional, national or international tourist guides.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE QUALITY CHARTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES OF QUÉBEC

Whereas:

- ❖ *Individual and corporate citizens and public authorities share responsibility for recognizing, improving and protecting the village appearance within its municipal boundaries and applying the criteria of the association's Quality Charter.*
- ❖ *The village appearance is a public asset with a considerable impact on the quality of life of residents and the perception that visitors form of the community.*
- ❖ *The quality of the village appearance has an economic and environmental value.*

2.1 Member villages of the Association agree to abide by these principles

- ❖ The municipality must show concern for the village appearance when any projects are undertaken on its territory, either by itself or which fall under municipal control or regulatory power.
- ❖ Any project by the municipality :
 - Must take into account the uniqueness and special features of the existing village appearance with a view to preserving its authenticity
 - Must be based on adequate knowledge of the historical, geographic, economic, heritage, cultural, environment and aesthetic dimensions of the village appearance.

- Must be based on a democratic and participatory process involving the community to ensure fairness in any decisions on zoning or projects affecting the village appearance.
- Must provide for sustainable economic development based on the right of residents to enjoy a framework for living that reflects their culture

2.2 Implementation of the Quality Charter

To apply the association's Quality Charter principles, member villages, with possible technical help from government departments and agencies or heritage and town planning groups such as Fondation Rues Principales, shall take the following steps:

- ❖ Form a group of residents and municipal officials with responsibility for the village appearance (embellishment committee, heritage committee, or other).
- ❖ Undertake a consultation to identify distinguishing features of the village appearance and adequate public information using different means of communication
- ❖ Undertake a consultation to identify strengths and weaknesses of the village appearance and opportunities for improvement to better conform to the association's Quality Charter.
- ❖ Adopt correction, improvement and prevention measures decided in a consensual framework (where not yet done). Measures could include:
 - A Site Planning and Architectural Integration Programs by-law (PIIA - Plan d'intervention et d'intégration architecturale)
 - A program to educate residents and merchants on best practices (technical aid, work guides)
 - A program to improve public and private facilities (street furniture, commercial and public signs, burial of electrical wiring, public parks, interpretation panels, screen planting, framed views, access to water bodies, Rues principales project ,etc.)
- ❖ Introduce a process by which the municipality recognizes efforts made by residents and commercial buildings.

Adopted unanimously by the General Assembly held at Kamouraska on May 27, 2005